

Part II

Geographical

Analysis

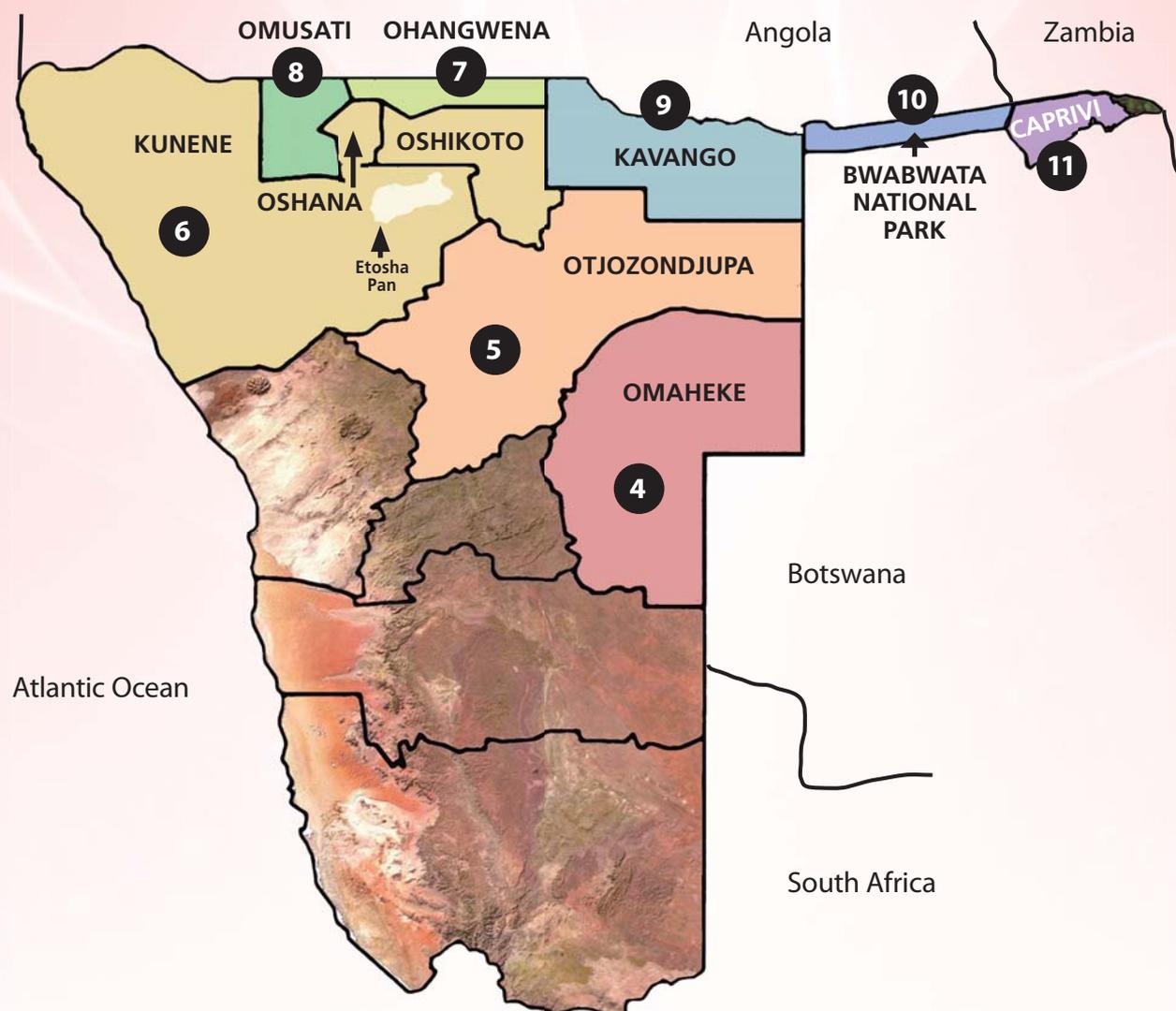


Photo: A Hai||om elder with Hai||om children in Etosha.

A note about the arrangement of the regional chapters

The regional chapters (4-11) are arranged in a 'circular' pattern *and* according to the area of habitation of the different San language groups, thus this arrangement provides for some continuity in reporting on San groups whose cultures and traditional practices are the same or similar. Starting in Omaheke (Chapter 4), we move north-west and then east, ending in Caprivi (Chapter 11). Ohangwena precedes Omusati in this pattern because the San in Ohangwena are Hai||om and !Xun, as in Kunene, Oshana and Oshikoto.

For ease of reference and navigation, these chapters are colour coded as indicated in the map below.



Chapter 4

Omaheke Region

By Erik Dirkx and Maarit Thiem



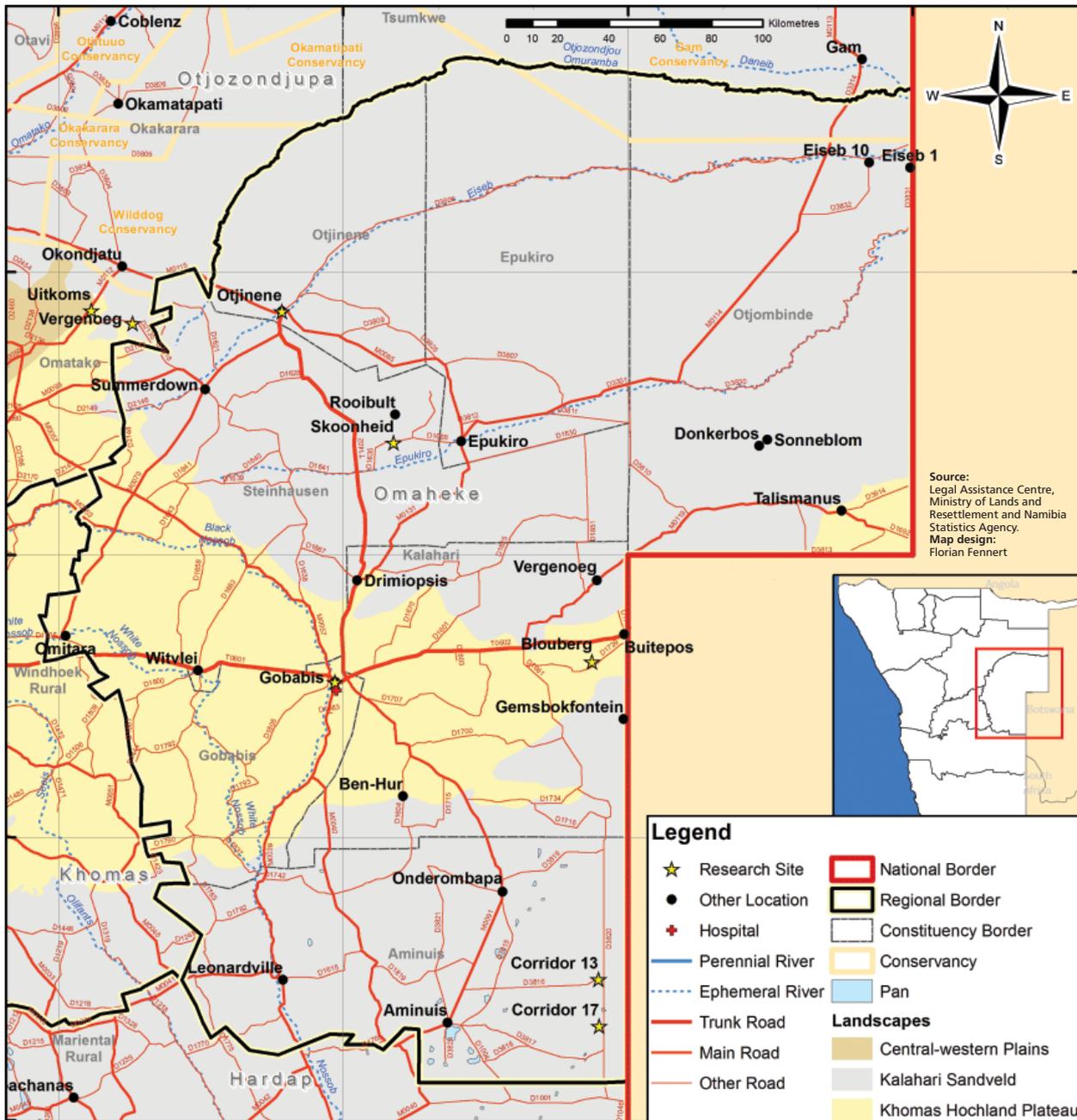
Jul'hoan women carrying firewood for domestic use in Skoonheid, Omaheke Region (Photo by Velina Ninkova)

4.1 General background

Omaheke Region consists of the former Gobabis District and the former homeland/reserve areas of Aminuis, Tswanaland and part of Hereroland East. The borders of the region enclose an area of about 84981 km². The bordering regions are Otjozondjupa Region to the north and north-east, Khomas Region to the west and south-west, and Hardap Region to the south; to the east Omaheke borders Botswana. Omaheke Region comprised seven constituencies at the time of the research: Aminuis, Gobabis, Kalahari, Otjinene, Otjombinde, Steinhausen and Epukiro. The administrative centre is Gobabis (National Planning Commission (NPC) 2006a: 1).

Mean annual precipitation varies across the region, ranging from 250 mm per annum in the south (Aminuis Constituency) to 400 mm per annum in the north. The areas north of Gobabis show an average rainfall of 350-400 mm per annum (NPC 2006a: 3). The dominant vegetation zones are

Omaheke Region and the research sites



typical of the central and southern Kalahari Basin, consisting predominantly of camelthorn savannas and mixed shrublands, with isolated forest and woodland savannas. There are no perennial surface water sources and the only notable drainage channels in the entire Omaheke Region are the Black and White Nossob Rivers and the shallow *omiramba* (ancient river beds) of Eiseb, Epukiro and Otjozondjou. Only the Nossob Rivers are active, however, flowing after exceptionally good rains; the porous sands of the Kalahari make almost all rainfall infiltrate immediately. The Tilda Viljoen and Otjivero Dams are the only notable surface water reservoirs, impounding the ephemeral rivers and supplying Gobabis with water; however unreliable dam capacities result in a continued reliance on groundwater and boreholes (NPC 2006a: 5).

According to the findings of the Namibia 2011 Population and Housing Census, Omaheke Region has a population of 71 233 persons, which constitutes 3.4% of the total population of Namibia. The population density is low (0.8 persons/km²) compared with the Namibian average (2.6 persons/km²);

in fact Omaheke has the lowest number of inhabitants of all Namibian regions. The census found 16 174 households in the region, with an average household size of 4.3 persons (Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) 2013: 17).

Almost 50% (3 543 044 ha) of the land in Omaheke is privately owned by individuals or companies under the freehold tenure system. The largest parts of the western, central and south-western areas are occupied by freehold farms comprising around 900 households (NPC 2006a: 1); the remainder of the land is communal land. In 2001, approximately 800 commercial farms with an average size of 7 000 hectares were registered (Werner and Odendaal 2010: 54). Most of the commercial farms are owned by Afrikaans- and German-speaking farmers. The local authorities of Gobabis, Leonardville, Witvlei and Otjinene control a small percentage of the land, and the central government holds the remainder through communal lands, resettlement farms and experimental agricultural farms (NPC 2006a: 9).

Due to scarcity of water and fertile land, Omaheke is regarded as having a low suitability for crop production; rain-fed agriculture is not very reliable due to poor soil quality and rainfall variability. Therefore, extensive cattle ranching dominates land-use patterns in Omaheke. Inhabitants of the region refer to it as the “‘cattle country’ – it has some of the best grazing areas in Namibia” (Werner and Odendaal 2010: 54).

In recent years commercial farmers have increasingly diversified their income strategies by expanding into game farming, hunting and tourism activities. Werner and Odendaal report that although there are no figures available, anecdotal evidence indicates that this aforementioned shift has been substantial for commercial farms wishing to complement income derived from cattle farming (Werner and Odendaal 2010: 54).

4.2 The San in Omaheke Region

The San were the earliest inhabitants of Omaheke Region (Sylvain 1999: 22). They practised a nomadic lifestyle, relying on hunting and gathering. Around the turn of the 18th century, new inhabitants, mainly Mbanderu, Herero and Tswana people, started settling in the area. These stock herders began to push the San into the western fringes of the Kalahari Desert and started to use them as an occasional labour force. However, until white settlers arrived in the region at the beginning of the 20th century, the San were only temporarily incorporated into the broader political economy and managed to resist penetration into their lands to a certain degree. White settlement in Omaheke began after the Herero-German war (1904-1907), and the biggest influx of white farmers took place in the 1920s when the League of Nations granted the mandate of the Territory of South West Africa to the Union of South Africa. Impoverished South Africans relocated to Omaheke Region, and a decade later Angolan Boers were also resettled in the area. By the 1950s, more than 700 farms were established in the area, with fencing being well advanced (Sylvain 2001: 719).

As the influx of white farmers resulted in increased pressure on the land, the Union Government established reserves for the ‘natives’. Epukiro (later Hereroland East) and Aminuis were established as ‘native reserves’, chiefly for the Herero and Mbanderu people. Later, as more people moved in, the Eiseb and Rietfontein areas were incorporated – these were occupied by Ju|’hoansi San at that time (Sylvain 1999: 46). Although the San were the first inhabitants of Omaheke Region, they were not granted any land for themselves as a group throughout this process since only pastoralism was recognised as a viable land-use option. The establishment of the native reserves, as well as the fast-growing number of fenced commercial farms, reduced the area in which the San could still hunt and gather. Simultaneously they were being incorporated into the wider political economy

as farmworkers. Initially, many reverted to the veld in the rainy season and returned to the farms when food and water were becoming scarce. With the introduction of the Masters and Servants Proclamation of 1920, however, these practices ceased, as the farmers were granted the right to pursue farmworkers who left the farm without the farmer's permission. Consequently many San abandoned hunting and gathering (Suzman 1999: 38). The Odendaal Commission's recommendations further prohibited free movement in corridors and between the farms by declaring all unoccupied areas as state property at the beginning of the 1970s (Suzman 1999: 39-40).

Today the San are the fourth largest language group (7.0%) in Omaheke Region, after the Herero (39.0%), Nama/Damara (27.0%) and Afrikaans-speaking people (12.0%) (NSA 2013: 14). There are three main San groups: the Ju|'hoansi, living primarily in the northern and central areas; the Naro in the east; and the !Xoon in the south (Sylvain 2006: 132). There are also a small number of 'N|oha families living in the southern part of the so-called 'Corridor area' in southern Omaheke.¹

There are two San traditional authorities (TAs), each with their own chief. Chief Frederik Langman of the Omaheke Ju|'hoansi was elected in 1996, but was formally recognised by the Namibian Government only in 2009. This delay in recognition meant that neither he nor his TA could exercise any power in the intervening 13 years. Chief Sofia Jakob (popularly known as "Chief Sofia"), with her TA representing the Omaheke !Xoon, Naro and 'N|oha, was elected in 2003 and recognised in 2009.

Commercial farms employ about 60% of the Omaheke workforce (NPC 2006a: 10). Sylvain reported in 2001 that 4 000 out of 6 500 Ju|'hoansi in Omaheke worked on commercial Afrikaner farms, comprising 27% of the workforce at the time (Sylvain 2001: 719). Other groups of San are working on communal farms, but estimates of the numbers could not be obtained as information on San communal farmworkers is scarce. Our analyses indicate that the total number of San farmworkers has dropped in the last decade as farm owners are more and more reluctant to employ San; they would rather employ workers from other language groups (see Chapter 12 on San farmworkers). The CEO of the Gobabis Municipality reported in an interview that the influx of former San farmworkers to Gobabis has grown considerably in the last few years, and the growing number of people living in the informal settlements presents the town with increasing difficulties.

Most San who are not presently living and working on commercial farms are living in communal areas, or on resettlement farms, or in the informal settlement of Epako in Gobabis, and some are living on the road verges between commercial farms.



The *Omaheke Regional Poverty Profile* report published by the NPC in 2006 describes the San of this region as "... the most vulnerable in most localities because of the nature and mode of their livelihoods" (NPC 2006a: 41). Traditional ways of securing food have been limited by government regulations, the fencing of land and the prohibition on hunting game: "In the opinion of the San, poverty has been artificially created by modern-way developments such as fencing off land, laws that prohibit hunting, and the erosion of culture and way of life. In their perception, poverty was a hitherto unknown phenomenon among the San." (NPC 2006a: 37)

¹ 'N|oha speak the same language as !Xoon (Taa) but a different dialect.

4.3 Research sites in Omaheke Region

This section introduces the six research sites in Omaheke Region: Skoonheid, Kanaan (Epako), Blouberg, Corridor 17-b, Corridor 13 and Goreseb (Otjinene). Table 4.1 below summarises the main characteristics of these sites. The sites selected for the research in Omaheke cover the spectrum of remote rural locations to urban informal settlements. These sites also represent different types of land tenure, the different San language groups and San majority and minority populations in this region, and different types of institutional support provided to San at these sites.

Table 4.1: Main characteristics of the Omaheke research sites

Research site	Urban/rural status	Land tenure	San language groups	Population status (numerical)	Institutional support*	
					GRN	NGOs and others
Skoonheid	Rural	Resettlement project (on a former commercial farm purchased by the GRN)	Ju 'hoansi	San majority with Damara minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MLR ● MGECW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DRFN ● Habitafrica Foundation ● Dr De Kok ● NGSIP
Kanaan (in Epako)	Urban	Informal settlement on town land	Naro and Ju 'hoansi	San minority among various other groups	No specific support reported beyond normal GRN services	None
Blouberg	Rural	Resettlement project (on a farm inherited from the pre-Independence Damara Legislative Authority)	Naro, Ju 'hoansi and !Xoon	San and Damara	No specific support reported beyond normal GRN rural services	None
Corridor 17-b	Remote rural	Communal land (formerly a farm under the Odendaal Plan)	!Xoon, Naro and 'N joha	San groups only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAWF ● NPCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WIMSA ● OST ● Kalahari Garden Project ● Komeho Namibia ● Catholic Church
Corridor 13	Remote rural	Communal land declared as a settlement (not proclaimed)	!Xoon, Naro and 'N joha	San minority among Herero, Tswana and Kgalagadi people	Various line ministries have offices/facilities here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NAMPOL ● MoHSS ● MoE ● MAWF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WIMSA ● OST in the past
Goreseb (near Otjinene)	Rural	Communal land	Ju 'hoansi	San minority surrounded by Damara majority	No specific project or institutional support	None

* Abbreviations/acronyms:

MAWF	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	NPCS	National Planning Commission Secretariat
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare	DRFN	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
MLR	Ministry of Lands and Resettlement	NGSIP	Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme
MoE	Ministry of Education	OST	Omaheke San Trust
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services	WIMSA	Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa
NAMPOL	Namibian Police		



4.3.1 Skoonheid

Scoonheid Resettlement Project is located 120 km north of Gobabis, some 10 km north of the road from Farm Du Plessis to Epukiro Post 3. The government bought the original farm in 1993 and initially resettled about 12 families there, mainly Ju|'hoan and Damara. The number of families gradually increased as other beneficiaries moved in over time. The government enabled the influx of new people by constructing approximately 60 brick houses for the project within a few years of acquiring the farm. By 2010 the project population had grown to 63 households, comprising approximately 280 individuals who resided at Skoonheid on a near-permanent basis. The average household size was 4.6 persons (Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 5).² Ju|'hoan households comprised 66% of the population, and Damara households 24%. The remaining 10% comprised Owambo, Kavango and Herero households (Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 14). The former commercial farm originally encompassed 7 104 ha, but by late 2010, an area of only 2 100 ha (30% of the farm area) was available for San and Damara beneficiaries. The remaining part of the farm was occupied by 14 farmers whom Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) officials had 'temporarily' settled at Skoonheid in

² The household definition applied by the NSA for the Population and Housing Census was used in computing these figures. Accordingly, a household member who is not present for at least four days in the week before the day of the interview is not considered to be a regular household member. Given that many children at Skoonheid (and other rural sites) stay in school hostels in other communities during the school term, the household and total population sizes computed in this study may be somewhat smaller than figures cited in other reports.

1995 (GRN 2010: 52). According to this 2010 report, the influx of laid-off San (former farmworkers) to the Skoonheid Resettlement Project was still continuing.

The ablution facilities in most of the project houses were connected to a sewerage system, with water supplied from four boreholes equipped with solar water pumps. Skoonheid had a kindergarten, and a Dr De Kok ran a clinic there on a fortnightly basis. Resettled beneficiaries made a living by means of on-site rain-fed and irrigated crop production. Livestock (large and small) were also important, and the large-stock population increased to 640 units following a donation of livestock by the Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme (NGSIP) in 2009. However, given that only 30% of the original farm area was available for the resettlement project, the project site became overstocked, resulting in livestock losses during the dry season. Other income-generating activities at Skoonheid were brickmaking and craft production.

4.3.2 Kanaan (in Epako, Gobabis)

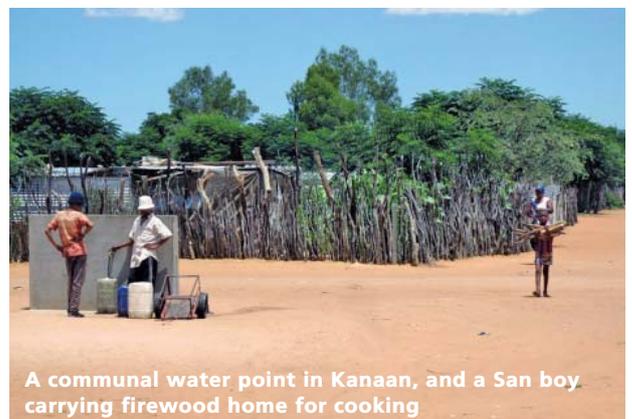
Epako lies some 4 km east of Gobabis. Most residents of the settlement are Damara, Herero, Tswana, Owambo and Nama, and there are a number of San residents, i.e. Ju|'hoansi and Naro. The different sections of the settlement have names such as 'Freedom Square' and 'Independence Island', but the research team found that most Epako residents still referred to the sections by their ethnic designations, such as 'Hereroblok' and 'Damarablok'. Most San of Epako live on the borders of different sections, some in corrugated-iron shacks, and some in dwellings constructed of various scrap materials including plastic bags – a situation which has persisted for several years (see Sylvain 2006: 139).

The research discussions were held with San living in Kanaan, a neighbourhood of Epako with a mixed populace of Owambo, Damara, Herero, Tswana and San. Discussion participants explained that they had moved to this neighbourhood from one named 'Do Not Fight'. They decided to call the new neighbourhood 'Kanaan' after the biblical land of milk and honey.

For their livelihoods the San in Kanaan depended primarily on doing piecework (temporary manual work) for their neighbours: fetching water, washing, ironing and other kinds of domestic work. There was no electricity in the neighbourhood, therefore residents used firewood for cooking. However, at times it was difficult for them to access firewood as the surrounding area did not offer large quantities of such wood for collection. If there was none to be found, they bought firewood from the surrounding farmers who offered the wood at prices that were sometimes unaffordable for the San. There were public water taps – 25 litres cost N\$1. There were no toilets in Kanaan; the residents had to use the surrounding bushes for this purpose.



San dwellings in Kanaan – made of corrugated iron and/or scrap materials, and sometimes only plastic bags



A communal water point in Kanaan, and a San boy carrying firewood home for cooking

4.3.3 Blouberg

Blouberg Resettlement Project is situated some 20 km south-west of the Buitepos border post on the border with Botswana, in the eastern part of Omaheke. At the time of the research the Blouberg community consisted of 32 Damara and 35 San households – the San being Ju|’hoansi, Naro and !Xoon. Although the farm is relatively close to the Buitepos-Gobabis tar road, the community should be considered as remote. Apart from a government primary school and the constituency councillor’s regular visits, no government institutions provided services at Blouberg at the time of the research. In 2011, a private donor – working through the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) and the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination (DWSSC) – made some improvements in the water-supply systems at Blouberg. According to beneficiaries, this was the first time that the government had been involved in working on the project’s water-supply systems.

Today Blouberg is a resettlement farm. At Independence the government took the farm over from the Damara Legislative Authority. Two other resettlement communities, i.e. those at Farms Vergenoeg and Gembok in Omaheke, have a similar history. The three former commercial farms had been acquired by the Damara Legislative Authority in 1981 with the permission of the South African authorities under a legal framework that evolved from the Odendaal Plan. This was in order to address a shortage of grazing land in Damaraland during a drought in the early 1980s. After the drought, the Damara farmers returned with their livestock to the area from which they had come, but the Damara Legislative Authority decided to keep the farms so that other Damara farmers (i.e. those from what is now Omaheke Region) would get more access to land in their area. The San who had been working for the previous farm owner were allowed to remain at Farm Blouberg as they had nowhere else to go. Later, relatives and other San who were retrenched from farms nearby also found a place to stay at Blouberg. According to a former member of the Damara Legislative Authority, the decision to allow the San to remain at Blouberg was also informed by the joint history of the San and the Damara people. As former farmworkers, the San of Blouberg did not have any livestock or other assets with which to make a living. Consequently they depended on doing piecework for the Damara settlers at Blouberg and on work at farms in the vicinity. The socio-economic situation of the San at Blouberg has remained more or less the same to date.

4.3.4 Corridor 17-b

Farm Corridor 17-b is situated some 25 km south of the settlement of Corridor 13, in the south-eastern corner of Aminuis Constituency in southern Omaheke. The farm is located at the southern end of the so-called ‘Corridor area’ (a.k.a. ‘the Corridor’), a narrow area of communal land along the border with Botswana, designated by the Odendaal Commission in 1964 as the Tswana homeland. The distances from Corridor 17-b to Aminuis and Gobabis are 100 km and 300 km respectively. !Xoon, ’N|oha and Naro have lived in this part of the country for a long time, but they settled as farmers at Corridor 17-b only as recently as 1990. At the time of the research there were 20 San households at Corridor 17-b, with different linguistic backgrounds: there were !Xoon and ’N|oha, and there were Naro (see Table 3.2, page 23). At present the farm is not shared with people of other language groups – unlike the San at Corridor 17-a, Corridor 17-c, and Corridor 18 (all in the vicinity of Corridor 17-b) who share the land with Herero, Kgalagadi or Tswana farmers.

Over the years, the San at Corridor 17-b have received assistance from the Catholic Church and four NGOs: WIMSA, the Omaheke San Trust (OST), the Kalahari Garden Project and Komeho Namibia. Corridor 17-b was also the ‘home base’ of Chief Sofia Jakob of the Traditional Authority

A water point at Corridor 17



representing !Xoon, 'N|oha and Naro of southern Omaheke. The government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) and the Rural Poverty Reduction Programme (RPRP) of the National Planning Commission Secretariat (NPCS), provided assistance for a revolving goat project in the past. Recently the San Development Programme (SDP) of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme (NGSIP) initiated assistance for this San community.

Corridor 17-b represents a very remote rural farm where !Xoon, 'N|oha and Naro people reside and farm relatively autonomously, i.e. without having to share the farm's resources with people of other ethnic groups. It also represents a community which has received a fair amount of support and attention from the Catholic Church, NGOs and the government over the years.

4.3.5 Corridor 13

Corridor 13 is a small settlement in south-eastern Omaheke and the base of various government agencies and services in Aminuis Constituency. At the time of the research, Corridor 13 had a clinic, a police station, a primary school with a hostel, an MAWF extension office, a few churches, three auction pens, two kindergartens, an open market, five shops, one service station, two traditional courts (Tswana and Kgalagadi³), a brickyard and a project of the Build Together Programme.

³ The researchers were informed that the Kgalagadi (*Bakgalagadi* in Setswana) are a minority group in the Corridor area, with their own TA and traditional court at Corridor 13. Their heritage is a mix of Tswana and San, but their language is closer to Tswana than any of the San languages spoken in the Corridor. They originated in Botswana.



Children being schooled at Corridor 13

The population of Corridor 13 comprised 26 San households and many more households of different origins and cultural backgrounds. The San families, as in Corridor 17-b, were !Xoon, Naro and 'N|oha. They had come to the settlement from various places in Namibia, such as Aranos, Aminuis, Leonardville, other cattle posts in the Corridor area and other farms in the vicinity of the Corridor area. Most San in Corridor 13 made a living from piecework for farmers, local shops (including *cuca* shops, a.k.a. *shebeens*⁴) or domestic work on a casual basis. Agricultural livelihoods were virtually non-existent within the boundaries of the settlement.

4.3.6 Goreseb, Otjinene

Goreseb village is situated approximately 40 km north-west of Otjinene in Omaheke Region. At the time of the field research there were approximately 20 Ju|'hoan households in the village, many of which consisted of former farmworkers and their families. They had originally settled in Goreseb on communal land with the permission of the Damara Traditional Authority. As few Ju|'hoansi could afford to buy new iron or zinc sheets, dwellings were made of corrugated-iron collected in the village surroundings, or of a plaster made of mud and dung. Although the land at Goreseb belongs to the Ju|'hoansi, discussion participants said that people from other language groups, especially Damara families, had invaded their land recently – to the extent that only the land around their dwellings had remained for the use of Ju|'hoansi. The Ju|'hoansi of Goreseb made a living from cattle and small stock farming, and by doing piecework for Herero and Damara farmers in the area. Six Ju|'hoan families of Goreseb owned animals; the most successful farmers had 10 cattle and two goats per household, while the other farmer had 19 goats. The Old Age Pension also featured as a major source of income and basically provided for the supply of maize-meal (the staple food) to the community. Formal employment opportunities in Goreseb were very limited: only two San were employed (as a kindergarten teacher and a primary school teacher), while a third individual had found work with the Office of the Prime Minister. Piecework for men primarily comprised fencing and looking after cattle, whereas women carried out domestic chores for other farmers.

⁴ A shebeen is bar or club where excisable alcoholic beverages are sold (with or without a licence). In Namibia such an establishment is also known as a 'cuca shop'. Some people in Namibia also use the term *bierhuis* (Afrikaans for 'beer house') in referring to a cuca shop or shebeen. In this chapter, the term 'cuca shop' will be used. Some cuca shops sell food and other items in addition to alcohol.

4.4 Research findings

4.4.1 Livelihoods, employment and income opportunities

In this section we report on the various livelihood strategies employed at the Omaheke research sites. After an analysis of the different livelihood options, the food security of the San in Omaheke will be discussed. Finally poverty, wellbeing and social mobility will be described.

Table 4.2: Livelihood strategies of San in six locations in Omaheke Region in 2011/12

Livelihood strategies	Skoonheid	Corridor 17-b	Corridor 13	Blouberg	Kanaan (in Epako)	Goreseb (near Otjinene)
Agricultural (subsistence) production	Rain-fed and irrigated crop cultivation	Irrigated crop cultivation			Small backyard gardens	
Cattle and small stock farming	Goat rearing	Revolving goat project				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock farming • Revolving cattle scheme (NGSIP)* 					Small stock rearing
Casual labour	Casual farmwork for farmers in the vicinity	Farm work for farmers at Post 17-A or 17-C (e.g. looking after goats)	Domestic work: cleaning, laundry and ironing	Casual farmwork for neighbouring farmers (e.g. looking after goats)	Domestic work: cleaning, laundry and ironing	Piecework on farms in the vicinity (e.g. fencing and herding)
			Looking after goats and cleaning goat skins	Caretaker of water point(s)	Piecework in the vicinity	
			Piecework at cuca shops: making fire and fetching water and firewood	Domestic work for staff at the local school (very few opportunities)	Piecework at cuca shops: making fire and fetching water and firewood	
Regular employment	Kindergarten teacher		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hostel work • Police 			Farmworkers
Grants	Pension	Pension	Pension	Pension	Pension	Pension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income-generating activities • Veldfood gathering 	Craft production	Craft production no longer supported by OST*			Remittances from children/relatives in Windhoek	
	Brickmaking project	Looking for veldfood and occasionally small game		Looking for veldfood	Looking for veldfood and occasionally small game	Looking for veldfood and occasionally small game

* Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme
Omaheke San Trust

The income-generating opportunities for San at the six research sites varied considerably. In general it should be noted that, with the exception of Kanaan (in Epako), all research sites were rural and should be considered as remote areas where the opportunities for formal employment are generally limited.

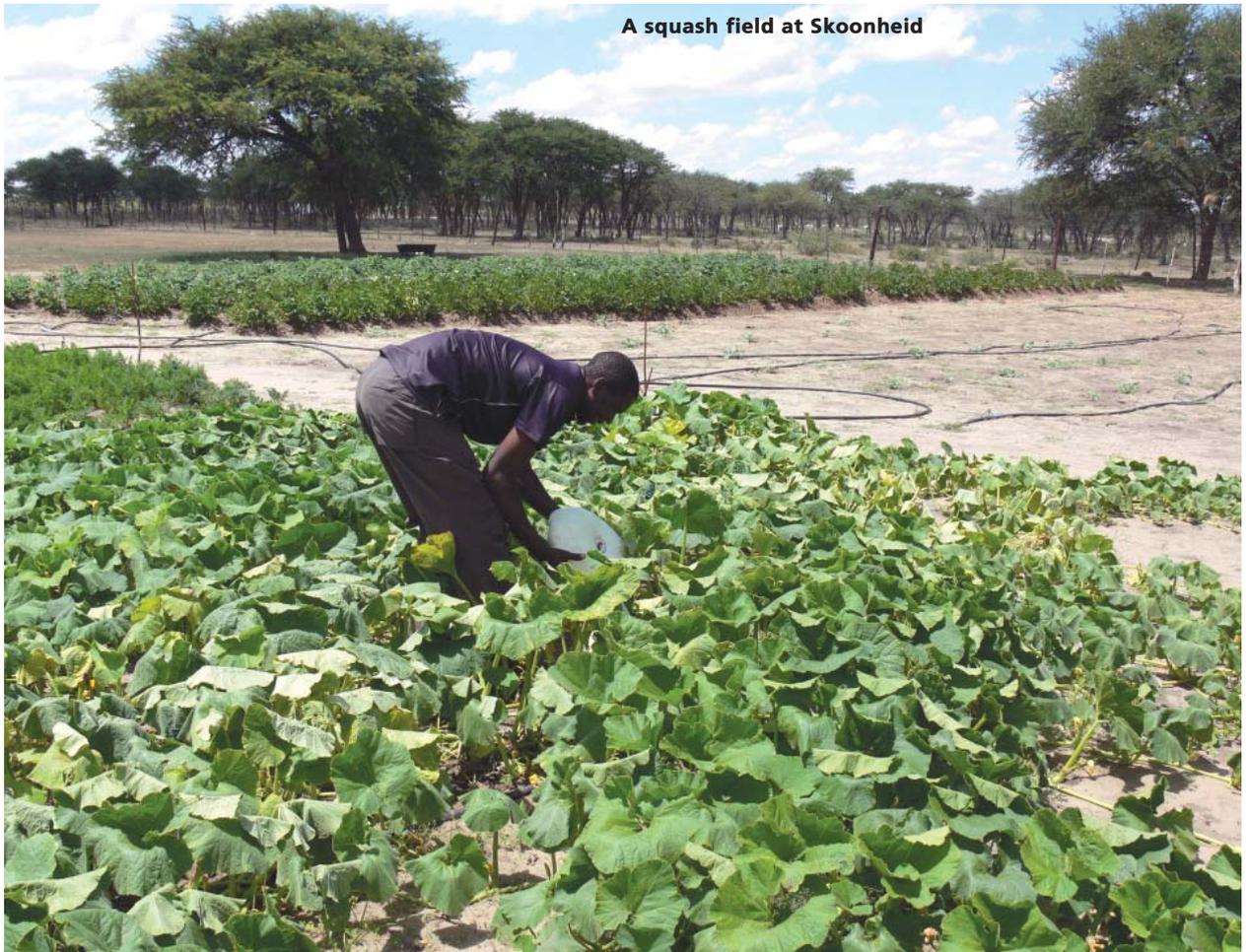
Table 4.2 shows that the Old Age Pension played an important role in the livelihoods of the San at all six sites. Although the Old Age Pension was often complemented by subsistence farming and non-farm income, it was the most regular income – and usually the largest amount of money – received by elderly people and their families. As such it served as a safety net for many San in the rural areas and the urban area.

Table 4.2 underscores that San people's best opportunities to eke out a living as subsistence farmers were on the resettlement farms, such as Skoonheid, or in relatively homogeneous San communities on communal land in the Corridor area, provided that the lands were not being illegally fenced off. The San at Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b made a living by means of rain-fed and irrigated crop cultivation, farming with small stock (Corridor 17-b), or farming with both small stock and cattle (Skoonheid). On resettlement farms there were also some opportunities to obtain non-farm income, e.g. at Skoonheid a small group of men made additional income by means of brickmaking and about 55 men and women were engaged in a craft project. (Similar income-generating opportunities have been created at other resettlement projects in Omaheke which were not visited for this study, e.g. craft production is also supported at Drimiopsis (15 beneficiaries) and Donkerbos-Sonneblom (30 beneficiaries), and brickmaking also takes place at Drimiopsis.) These subsistence farming and non-farm income-generating activities had been made possible through support by the following programmes and agencies, among others:

- Livelihood support initiatives such as the Livelihood Support Programme (LISUP, Phases I and II) and the Water Supply and Sanitation in Namibia (WATSAN) projects implemented by the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and the Habitafrica Foundation in Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom, in partnership with the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR).
- Gardening initiatives of the Kalahari Garden Project and later Komeho Namibia in the Corridor area.
- Brickmaking at Skoonheid received support from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW), and at Drimiopsis from the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (MYNSSC). LISUP-II/WATSAN also renders additional support to these brickmaking projects and at times serves as a client.
- Livestock (cattle and small stock) development projects at Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b were supported by the first phase of the NGSIP and by the Rural Poverty Reduction Programme (RPRP) respectively, in collaboration with the GRN (the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and the National Planning Commission respectively).

The livelihood opportunities for San living on the Blouberg Resettlement Project farm were far more limited than for San at Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b, as the San on this farm had merely been allowed to stay on land that had been acquired by the Damara Traditional Authority in the early 1980s (prior to Independence). The San residents of Blouberg did not receive any external support. The San who had been working on the previous commercial farms, and San who were later retrenched from farms in the area around Blouberg, were allowed to stay at Blouberg as they had nowhere else to go to. These San usually did not have any livestock or other assets from which to make a living, as they had always been employed as farmworkers.⁵ Although nearly 30 years have passed since the first San people found refuge at Blouberg, the majority of the San there still did not own any livestock or any other farm assets; they merely had a place to stay – usually an informal corrugated-iron dwelling – and access to water points. As a consequence of this, and because of the farm's remoteness, the San were dependent on the Damara livestock farmers who control the

⁵ Before Independence, farmworkers did not have the right to keep livestock of their own on the land of the farmer they worked for.



Blouberg grazing land, and on commercial farmers, for employment or piecework. However, the opportunities were in both cases rather scarce and not necessarily very rewarding – for example, a few farmworkers in 2012 earned approximately N\$200 per month when they took care of the goats of local farmers. For jobs on commercial farms, farmworkers could be paid as much as N\$600 per month, although some of that money might be deducted for food rations (see Chapter 12 on San farmworkers). As a consequence of these socio-economic conditions, the San of Blouberg still had limited means to survive, and this may explain why veldfood gathering was a relatively important source of income and food for them (see section 4.4.2 on food security in Omaheke).

In contrast to the situation at Blouberg, the livelihoods of former Ju|’hoan farmworkers in Goreseb village near Otjinene was partially based on cattle or small stock rearing, as this could be combined with long-term farm employment or doing piecework for farmers in the vicinity. Nevertheless, they faced challenges with access to grazing land, because, according to discussion participants, more and more communal land in the vicinity of Goreseb was being fenced off. The Ju|’hoansi concerned claimed that the fences were erected illegally, and constrained their livestock farming practices as they could no longer access grazing areas. This was a matter of concern as the lands in question were believed to belong to the Ju|’hoan community, as they had settled at Goreseb before any other farmers.

In Kanaan, Epako (an urban area) and at Corridor 13 (a rural settlement), piecework appeared to be the main source of income and employment for San – men and women alike. Women were mostly involved with domestic piecework, consisting of house cleaning and doing the laundry and ironing. In Corridor 13 the San women complained that the opportunities were relatively scarce

and irregular, and that they could earn only about N\$20 per day from such work. Some women indicated that they could barely make a living this way. Men carried out piecework such as fencing and herding goats and other livestock on farms in the vicinity of Corridor 13. For men in Kanaan the piecework opportunities were of a slightly different nature to those in the rural areas: for example, they could earn money by offloading trucks in Gobabis.

Some of the San at Corridor 13 and in Kanaan were dependent on doing piecework at local *cuca* shops, but some of the tasks, such as fetching water and firewood, were very basic and yielded little income (N\$1 or N\$2 per job or task). Slaughtering, de-skinning and cleaning the carcasses of goats and sheep were also common piecework jobs at *cuca* shops. Much of the money earned from these odd jobs was directly spent at the *cuca* shops. Community members felt that the San who survived in this manner were addicted to beer (“they are in the beer”). It was also said that the San concerned tended to sleep at the premises of the *cuca* shops as they did not have any shelter or other belongings of their own. Moreover, some of the people concerned allegedly could not resist offers to ‘share a blanket’ with someone in return for food, money or other privileges. The reasons for such behaviour were said to be hunger, loss of all hope, and being under the influence of alcohol. It was not only young girls and women who engaged in this practice; young men would also render sexual favours to older women in return for money.

Box 4.1: Group resettlement farms in Omaheke Region

A few group resettlement farms in Omaheke (e.g. Skoonheid, Vasdraai and Donkerbos-Sonneblom) were acquired by the GRN in the mid-1990s for resettling primarily San or a mix of San and predominantly Damara people. In addition, considerably smaller numbers of people of other language groups (e.g. Tswana, Herero, Mbanderu and occasionally Owambo and Kavango people) were resettled on these farms. Other farms (e.g. Blouberg, Vergenoeg and Gemsbok), first acquired by the Damara Legislative Authority of Justus Garoëb from the South African authorities in the 1980s, were taken over by the GRN after Independence and placed under the control of the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR). Mostly San and Damara live on these farms. (Farms such as Drimiopsis and Tsjaka/Ben Hur were inherited from the Tswana Legislative Authority after Independence in a similar way.) The San – as former farmworkers on the commercial farms acquired by the Damara or Tswana authorities prior to Independence – were allowed to stay on these farms as they had no other place to go to. As former farmworkers, the vast majority of the San had no livestock or other assets, and to make a living they undertook piecework for the new settlers. In many instances the socio-economic situation of the San has not changed much since that time; they still rely on piecework for other livestock farmers on a number of these resettlement farms.

The remainder of Box 4.1 summarises the situation at three resettlement farms – one of which was a research site for this study and two of which were not research sites: **Skoonheid** (covered in section 4.3.1), **Drimiopsis** and **Donkerbos-Sonneblom**.

Drimiopsis is located about 45 km north of Gobabis and covers around 2 262 ha. After Independence the MLR took over the farm from the Tswana Legislative Authority and started to support the eight beneficiary households in 1993 – with the intention of accommodating more people as the GRN constructed about 60 houses there. By 2007 the Drimiopsis Resettlement Project had 82 households comprising 668 individuals (DRFN and FCEAR 2007: 10), and by 2010 there were 140 households comprising close to 830 individuals (Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 8), as new inhabitants continued to move in unchecked: “These illegal settlers interfere with the support programme to the extent of vandalizing the project properties.” (GRN 2010: 54-55) The GRN report (2010) recommended that the MLR ‘wean off’ the farm after the expiry of the support contract with the DRFN and transfer it to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLGH) (GRN 2010: 72).

Donkerbos-Sonneblom, located 230 km north-east of Gobabis, is a unique resettlement project as it was established in 1995 following efforts of the Mbanderu Traditional Authority and Mbanderu residents in the Rietfontein area to initiate the Omaheke San Community Project in 1993/94. The aim of this project was to resettle San from Omaheke Region on farm land in the Rietfontein area, and to provide financial assistance for infrastructure and livestock development to enable the San to become self-sufficient. Subsequently Headman E. Kahuure allocated close to 13 000 ha of communal land (farms 895 and 906) to the San. Thereafter, 43 households settled next to two boreholes drilled close to the Steenboklaagte *omuramba* in the north-western part of the project farm.

All three farms together currently accommodate approximately 1 300 people, the majority being San. However, due to a high influx of new inhabitants and the high fluctuation in the numbers of San moving in and out in the pursuit of employment, an exact estimate is difficult (Mouton 2013: 8).

The MLR initiated a post-resettlement support programme for these three and other resettlement projects in Omaheke in the early 1990s with the aim of empowering the new farmers to manage the land productively. A range of line ministries, donors and stakeholders have assisted the MLR with the support programme since its inception. As far as the GRN is concerned, the MLR caters for the maintenance and upgrading of farm infrastructure (such as water points and fences) with technical support from the MAWF Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination (DWSSC). The MAWF Department of Extension and Engineering Services (DEES) renders agricultural extension services to a few resettlement projects in addition to its work in the communal areas. The period of post-settlement support was originally defined as five years, whereafter the farms were supposed to work independently in a sustainable manner. However, the original goal could not be achieved due to a range of challenges, and only two of the 21 farms could be weaned off by 2009 (GRN 2010: 3). Various agencies (e.g. the Omaheke San Trust (OST), Health Unlimited, Catholic Aids Action, San Alive, Omba Arts Trust and the Centre for Research Information Action in Africa, Southern Africa – Development and Consulting (CRIAA SA-DC)) have at different stages implemented support at these three resettlement farms (and others) since the 1990s in areas such as human rights, HIV and AIDS awareness, home-based care, and craft production and marketing. Three group resettlement projects – i.e. Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom – still receive post-resettlement support today through Phase II of the Livelihood Support Programme (LISUP II) implemented by the DRFN and the Habitafrica Foundation, Spain, in partnership with the MLR and the Omaheke Regional Council. LISUP is an integrated rural development programme aimed at improving living conditions and food security in the resettlement projects by building capacity and developing skills. The first phase (LISUP I) ran from 2007 to 2010. At the end of LISUP I, beneficiaries at all three farms were still struggling with a range of livelihood issues, so a second phase was designed to ensure sustainable and integrated livelihoods. LISUP II is co-sponsored by the MLR and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), with the DRFN and Habitafrica again providing technical support. LISUP II started in October 2010 and will end in March 2014 (DRFN 2010: 10-12).

The LISUP II mid-term evaluation report describes the impacts of the programme since 2010, and shows that the support for agricultural activities and capacity building contributed to improving livelihoods: “The project has been effective in strengthening technical knowledge and skills on sustainable (agricultural) practices through training, mentoring, monitoring and the provision of sufficient agricultural equipment and tools for beneficiaries.” (Mouton 2013: 39)

LISUP II continued with initial efforts under LISUP I to change the approach from providing support on a collective basis to allocating support on an individual basis. In order to enhance sustainability and self-reliance, the focus was further shifted from providing infrastructural inputs to providing mentoring and capacity-building support. This shift appears to have resulted in stronger beneficiary involvement and ownership. However, the evaluation suggests that sufficient time has to be allowed for continued ownership development, as six years of project support proved insufficient to nurture a sense of ownership of ‘one’s own development’ effectively (meaning the degree to which beneficiaries can manage the farms independently) (Mouton 2013: 69).

Nonetheless, LISUP has been able to raise sincere interest in vegetable gardening among individual beneficiaries, resulting in advances in food security (Mouton 2013: 9, 39-40). LISUP II reports also underscore that 70% of households at both Drimiopsis and Skoonheid were able to consume three meals per day during the post-harvest season (May to August/September). During the dry season (September to November/December), 45% of households at these two projects could consume three meals per day (DRFN and Habitafrica 2013: 32, 76). Therefore, the evaluation suggests that continued capacity building for irrigated vegetable gardening could continue to advance food security.

However, challenges remain, since successful gardening is dependent on external environmental factors over which the beneficiaries have little control, such as rainfall and pests, as well as human factors such as attitudes and behaviour (e.g. unwillingness to pay for seeds and water), management capacity, and collaboration (e.g. irregular support by borehole caretakers). The evaluation shows that good governance and learning to manage shared land and water resources require adequate time to develop. Mismanagement of funds occasionally occurs, which leads to mistrust among community members as well as members of the development community. Resettled beneficiaries also do not constitute homogenous units, and local dynamics and power relations have to be taken into account – even if it might be time consuming to understand them. The influx of outsiders to the resettlement farms further weakens the coherence of the communities (Mouton 2013: 11).

The production and marketing of art and craft products help to supplement the few sources of cash income, as craft sales in the three LISUP II-supported projects increased to N\$158 000 in 2012 (Omba Arts Trust 2013: 5). In 2011, 7% of the heads of households on the three farms regarded arts and crafts as the main source of income for their households (Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 35). In addition, for 12% of households in Skoonheid and 34% of households in Donkerbos-Sonneblom, crafts constituted the most important secondary source of income. However, despite the positive impact of craft production, challenges were reported: a lack of understanding of trading and marketing processes due to a high illiteracy rate, and sometimes a lack of ownership of the activities in which they are engaged (Mouton 2013: 10).

For all three farms, the high influx of outsiders poses a serious risk to development, and the influx seems to go unchecked since the MLR is not taking a major decisive role. The influx increases the vulnerability of the San on the resettlement farms as resources have to be divided among a greater number of beneficiaries, overgrazing is taking place, etc. (Mouton 2013: 66).

Notwithstanding the challenges encountered, it is noteworthy that “[m]ost community members appreciate resettlement farms as the only way in which they can make a living, as they have nowhere else to go” (Mouton 2013: 70). They particularly appreciate that they have a place for themselves, where they can try making a living by means of small-scale farming with the support of LISUP II.



Drimiopsis: community meeting on the establishment of a communal tap-stand system and revenue-collection system



Skoonheid: winter vegetables – one of the many successes of the LISUP support in 2012

4.4.2 Food security

Number of meals per day and type of food consumed

The San communities visited in Omaheke had difficulty achieving a reasonable degree of food security. The majority of the people interviewed did not necessarily consume three meals a day, but the data indicates that the San living on resettlement farms had higher food security as they could rely on agriculture to some extent. There was a fair amount of seasonal variation in this regard: in the dry season many San households struggled to eat enough because little food was available from gardens or in the veld. At this time of the year many households consumed only one meal a day, and this was usually supplemented by tea with sugar several times a day. Only some families manage to retain some food for a second meal.

During summer, or the rainy season, the majority of San in Omaheke ate two or more meals a day. San residents of Kanaan (Epako) appear to be the exception as discussion participants said that they usually ate only once a day. A few San households in Kanaan managed to improve their food situation by cultivating home gardens on their erven or on the outer borders of Epako, with differing degrees of success: the soils were reportedly not very good, theft of crops was common, and some gardens were simply too small to support families over longer periods as the erven in Epako are not very large.

Table 4.3: Main sources of staple food by research site in Omaheke Region, 2011/12

Importance / frequency	Skoonheid	Corridor 17-b	Corridor 13	Kanaan	Blouberg	Goreseb
Main source	Maize porridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maize porridge ● Tea ● Potatoes 	Maize porridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maize porridge ● Tea with sugar 	Maize porridge	Maize porridge
Secondary source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beans (cowpea) ● Fresh corn 	Beans (cowpea)	Tea with sugar	Milk or fat	Veldfood	Milk
Third source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea with sugar ● Milk 	Fresh corn	Sour milk and vegetables (after pension payout)	Some meat	Soup or meat	Veldfood
Fourth source		Sometimes meat from small animals		Veldfood		Occasionally meat from small animals

“Tea is the boss,” said a man at Corridor 13 in discussing the most common types of food consumed by San in Omaheke. Others were of the opinion that maize porridge is the most common and most important type of food consumed in the Omaheke San communities. Table 4.3 shows that the type of food consumed by communities was not very diverse, e.g. tea with sugar was a source of food at four of the six sites. Maize porridge was often just prepared with water and salt as there was no relish of any kind available. Most of the time maize-meal was purchased with income from piecework or Old Age Pensions. Another important source of maize-meal was the government drought relief programme coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), through which food is distributed by the regional council in each region. San in Omaheke, however, underscored that drought relief arrived only once in a while, e.g. every three or four months rather than on a monthly basis. Other complaints regarding drought relief were that: the quantities of maize-meal did not suffice; the supply of cooking oil was not guaranteed; and the drought relief did not reach the intended beneficiaries, but sometimes ended up in the hands of intermediaries or wealthy people.

The second and third most common types of food consumed by the San in Omaheke were beans (cowpea) and fresh corn respectively, especially in communities where households had access to rain-fed or irrigated gardens, but also tea as well as milk or fat from livestock. In a few communities (e.g. Blouberg and Skoonheid) veldfoods were important additions to the maize staple, but it was not always easy to obtain. The Ju|'hoansi of Goreseb, for example, complained that they were forced to enter other people's farms to gather veldfood as more land in the vicinity of Goreseb came to be fenced off illegally. San in Kanaan apparently also collected veldfood on the boundary of Epako township or even on neighbouring farms. At a few research sites, soup or meat constituted only the third or fourth most important source of food (i.e. it took the form of relish) as it had to be purchased or traded for labour. At Blouberg and Corridor 13, some San occasionally obtained some *afval* (internal organs) if they assisted other farmers (Blouberg) or cuca shop owners (Corridor 13) with slaughtering animals.

At sites such as Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b where San are engaged in rain-fed and irrigated gardening with the support of the GRN and NGOs, the majority of households manage to consume two or three meals a day from the late summer season onwards.⁶ Of course the amount of fresh produce available for families is subject to the amount of rainfall during the rainy season, but following a reasonably good rainy season, maize porridge and tea may be complemented by fresh corn, cowpeas or other vegetables (e.g. spinach, melon, squash, butternut or pumpkin) for a period of three to four months after the harvesting season (i.e. up to July/August). As households also rationed the crops harvested, certain families managed to store (and consume) fresh corn for up to six to seven months after harvesting (i.e. up to October/November).⁷ Cowpea is usually sold off at an earlier stage because it gets more easily infested with bugs if stored in common maize-meal bags.⁸ In the late dry season (September to December), vegetables such as carrots, beetroot, onions and green peppers may be harvested from irrigated gardens.^{9,10} The LISUP II annual report for 2012 underscored that in the post-harvest season at Drimiopsis and Skoonheid, 70% of the households are able to consume three or more meals a day, and in the dry season 45% of households at these sites could consume three meals a day (DRFN and Habitafrica 2013: 76). Therefore it may be concluded that the livelihood support received contributed to advances in the number of meals and the diversity of the food consumed by the beneficiary communities during an important part of the year.

Against this background it is regrettable to note that the future of support from Komeho Namibia for the gardening activities at Corridor 17-b and other communities in the Corridor area is not very clear, with potentially negative implications for the food security of the San families in question in the near future.

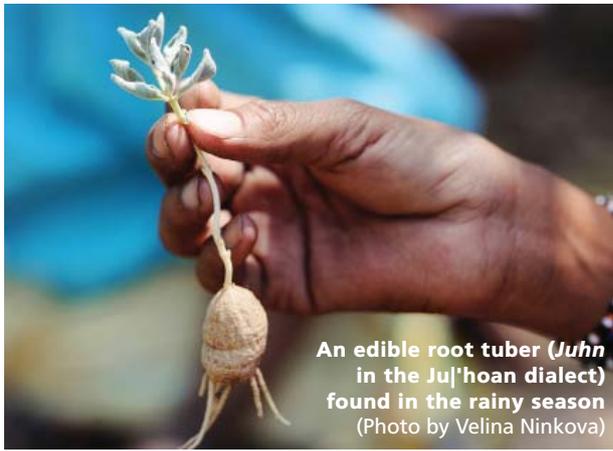
⁶ LISUP provides seeds for rain-fed and irrigated crop cultivation in Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom Resettlement Projects on a subsidised basis: beneficiaries need to contribute from 10% up to 33% of the value of seeds. Extension support is further provided to improve crop-management practices.

⁷ In 2012, Skoonheid's farmers complained of very limited rain-fed yields due to late rains, among other factors.

⁸ In 2013 LISUP II started to improve the storage capacity at household level to address some of the constraints encountered by beneficiary households with storing grains and pulses.

⁹ The cultivation of winter crops such as carrots, beetroot, spinach and onions is not as popular as planting corn, cowpea, pumpkin and melons under irrigation during the hot dry months (October/November) or in rain-fed and irrigated fields during the normal rainy season. Local customs as well as the effort needed to ensure that crops survive the colder winter months appear to play a role in this regard.

¹⁰ The San at Corridor 17-b complained that technical challenges and a lack of spare parts affected the distribution of water to their gardens during the winter (dry) season. A water-distribution schedule seemed to be lacking, resulting in a 'first come, first serve' culture, while the water point committee did not collect any household contributions for maintenance and repairs. The supply of seeds by Komeho Namibia to garden owners at Corridor 17-b and other San communities in the Corridor area was no longer guaranteed as the support seemed to have been discontinued.



An edible root tuber (*Juhn* in the Jul'hoan dialect) found in the rainy season (Photo by Velina Ninkova)



A Jul'hoan child at Sphoonheid eating maize porridge (Photo by Velina Ninkova)

In a few communities, discussion participants admitted that they still hunted for small game, such as hares, porcupines, duiker, steenbok and jackal, but stressed that they only consumed meat occasionally as it is difficult to hunt with traps. The quantity of small game was very limited at all but one of the six sites, the exception being Sphoonheid. Participants at all six sites hesitated to discuss this matter with the researchers as hunting is no longer legal and people who are apprehended for hunting could face stiff sentences, especially if large game were involved. However, bushmeat was reportedly eaten relatively often at Sphoonheid. Two to three households hunted on a regular basis and supplied the inhabitants of the resettlement farm with meat 'exchanged' for money. It was also possible to order game meat in advance, and the hunters would go and hunt for it. Warthog seemed to be the most common species hunted, together with small antelope and sometimes kudu too. In winter more species were hunted as it is easier to detect the animals. The bushmeat compensated for the veldfood that is not available in large quantities in winter.¹¹

4.4.3 Poverty and wellbeing

The data on poverty and wellbeing is based on criteria reported by discussion participants to the research team and therefore represents a subjective picture. Factors defining poverty and wellbeing – like social networks which can be activated in times of need – encompass more than measurable factors, but the indicators provided by the participants focused very much on measurable economic factors – the most visible and easiest factors to observe on the ground. Nevertheless, the discussions of these factors did allow for an assessment of the importance of other factors (e.g. social support networks in time of need), which are also reported on in this section on poverty and wellbeing.

Poverty was common among the San at all six research sites, and was most often associated with a dearth of meaningful employment opportunities in remote areas and the high degree of illiteracy among the San. When San found work, the remuneration was usually very low, and participants also complained that they often received information about potential employment opportunities too late. However, there were differences from site to site in the degree of deprivation suffered. To analyse the degree of wellbeing and social mobility, the San at each site identified three to five wellbeing groups in their own community, based on criteria that they chose themselves. The majority of San households (70% or more) at all six sites considered themselves to be 'poor' or 'very poor', and some households belonged to a 'halfway' or 'middle' group. Hardly any San families belong to the class referred to as 'better off' or 'moving forward', let alone to the 'wealthy' or 'middle-class' categories (see Table 4.4 on page 60).

¹¹ Information provided by Velina Ninkova.

Poverty and wellbeing in remote rural areas

In rural areas where people's livelihoods are informed by farming activities (Skoonheid, Corridor 17-b, Blouberg), the **'very poor'** in general lacked any assets; did not own any livestock or goats; did not cultivate gardens; and did not receive any assistance or support from extended family members. There was consequently a relatively high risk of these households going hungry from time to time, as was mentioned at Blouberg.

'Poor' people in rural locations are distinguished from the **'very poor'** in their communities due to the fact that they cultivate irrigated and/or rain-fed gardens (i.e. at Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b) and they may own a small number of cattle (1-3 head) and/or a couple of goats. In Blouberg, however, **'poor'** people did not have any cattle or goats, and could not afford to cultivate irrigated gardens as they would have to pay even more for water than they were already paying. A Blouberg household was basically categorised as **'poor'** if a household member carried out piecework and if the family lived in a corrugated-iron dwelling.

The **'halfway'** group of households in remote rural areas may be distinguished from the **'poor'** group by the fact that at least one household member received a pension or another regular source of income. Consequently the households concerned were allowed to buy food from local shops on credit, or they opened a bank account to receive their pension. In contrast to Blouberg, where none of the **'halfway'** households owned any livestock, at Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b some **'halfway'** households managed to keep a small number of cattle or goats. It can therefore be concluded that due to the support rendered by government (MLR) and donors (AECID and NGSIP), the livelihood options for **'poor'** and **'halfway'** households have become more diversified. The receipt of the state Old Age Pension and other social welfare grants (e.g. the Maintenance Grant, the Foster Care Grant and the disability grants for adults and children), in the perception of discussion participants, also elevates a family to a higher standard of living or wellbeing.

Households in the **'better-off'** or **'moving forward'** category in rural remote locations tended to have a household member with a regular salaried job, often with the government. Alternatively, a household member would have found employment elsewhere and sent remittances back home. If a household was capable of investing in cattle or goats rather than receiving livestock from a donor-funded project, it was also considered to be **'moving forward'**. The households concerned were also often considered to have animal husbandry skills: they were "good with livestock".

'Wealthy', **'middle-class'** (in the sense that this word is normally understood) or **'rich'** people could be found in remote rural San communities, albeit in small numbers. They tended to have well-built houses, operated a small business or shop, and may have had a car. They often had a household member with a government job, and owned lots of cattle, goats, chickens, donkeys and/or horses (i.e. more than 25-30 head cattle in addition to goats, donkeys and horses). This group was not identified at Corridor 17-b; at Blouberg it was identified, but only comprised non-San people; and at Skoonheid, three out of roughly 58 households were classified as **'rich'** or **'wealthy'**. Access to information and greater physical mobility were perceived as a characteristic of the **'rich'** at Skoonheid.

Poverty and wellbeing in rural settlements and urban informal settings

In rural settlements and urban informal settlements, such as Corridor 13 and Kanaan (in Epako, Gobabis), poverty appears to have more severe dimensions than in rural areas, as the characteristics of the livelihoods of **'very poor'** reveal starvation and hunger, a lack of any sort of income, or a

reliance on running errands for owners of cuca shops. Other characteristics are a lack of shelter, a heavy reliance on drinking, and varying degrees of hopelessness and deprivation – to the extent that other San individuals allege or assume that some of the individuals concerned cannot refuse offers ‘to share a blanket’ in return for food or other privileges (e.g. this characterises the perception of the San of Corridor 17-b about very poor San at Corridor 13).

The ‘poor’ at Corridor 13 and Kanaan, on the other hand, have at least one meal per day, which they obtain by looking in rubbish bins, and by cleaning the skins and intestines of slaughtered animals. “They clean intestines” for owners of cuca shops, but they do not have any regular type of work with a monthly salary, unlike domestic workers and farmworkers. Some people do casual work such as house cleaning, laundry and ironing, or looking after other people’s goats. The ‘poor’ tend to live in houses made of plastic bags or other scrap material (Epako) or loam/clay (Corridor 13), rather than in corrugated-iron or zinc structures. The ‘poor’ cannot afford school fees for their children. Drinking out of hopelessness was also common in this category.

The livelihoods of the households in the ‘halfway’ and ‘moving forward’ categories at Corridor 13 and Kanaan were different from those of ‘poor’ households because household members had stopped drinking, had started listening to other people’s advice, and had found a low-paid but regular job. Some households in this category also received a pension, whereas others got remittances from family members who worked elsewhere, which enabled them to buy groceries from local shops on credit. Those classified as ‘moving forward’ simply held jobs with more security than the jobs held by members of the ‘halfway’ class. In Kanaan, some households in this group had also taken the initiative of cultivating home gardens on their erven or on the boundaries of Epako.

As in some of the remote rural settings, ‘wealthy’ or ‘rich’ people in Kanaan were usually non-San. According to the San, they owned well-built houses, worked for the municipality, owned land or an erf, and often owned a car and cattle. At Corridor 13 participants listed the same criteria, the difference being that only a few wealthy San households had a car, but nearly all had a TV. Some lived in a Build Together (national housing programme) house.

The research team did not cover the analysis of poverty and wellbeing in Goreseb near Otjinene as the team aimed to investigate farmworker issues in this community.



Table 4.4: Characteristics of wellbeing categories by research site as defined by discussion participants, Omaheke Region, 2011/12

Wellbeing category	Skoonheid	Corridor 17-b	Corridor 13	Blouberg	Kanaan
Very poor or "Very weak life"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack assets • No livestock • No support from children or extended family • No gardens 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat once a day or not at all • Run errands for cuca shops • Drink <i>tombo</i> (home-brewed beer) or eat leftovers from other people • Lack a dwelling/shelter • Sleep elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack assets • Lack any income • Are hungry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack food • Go hungry or starve • Lack drought relief • Heavy drinking
Poor or "Weak life"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own very few livestock (cattle or goats) • Some get a pension • Some have many children • Have a garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No livestock • No goats or only very few goats • Garden only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual work for other people, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic work • goat herding • cleaning skins or intestines • One meal per day and lots of tea • Loam/clay houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No livestock (cattle or goats) • Zinc houses • Irregular income (piecework) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One meal per day • Cannot afford school fees • Plastic/scrap houses • Food from rubbish bins • No work • Drink out of hopelessness
Halfway group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have cattle, goats and chickens • Get a pension • Have some savings or a bank account • Have donkeys and/or carts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as the poor above, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get a pension and • some have a few goats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual work for other people, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic work • goat herding • cleaning skins or intestines • Elderly receive pension • Can buy food on credit • Loam/clay houses 	Have a monthly salary or many goats (>50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as the poor but stopped drinking • Found a job • Family support • Started listening to other people's advice
Better off or "Moving forward"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of cattle and goats, which they bought • Good with livestock • Donkey-carts • Household member has a job • Can stand on own feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household member has a government job • Remittances from household or extended family • Some have more goats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have government jobs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found a low-paid job • Have a garden
Wealthy / stable / rich / middle class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of goats and horses • Run local cuca shops or other businesses or have a job (salary) • Some own a vehicle, so are mobile • Access to information 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have jobs • Have livestock • Have Build Together houses • Have a TV • Few own a car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own cattle, goats and sheep • Well-built house • Can look after themselves • Never hungry • All households in this group are non-San 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work for municipality • Brick house • Own land or an erf • Car • Cattle • Only non-San people

Comparisons of the wellbeing of the San and neighbouring communities

Participants in the discussions with the researchers also compared the degree of wellbeing in their communities with the quality of life in neighbouring communities. The following points summarise the findings for Corridor 17-b and Skoonheid only, as similar comparisons were not made at the other research sites due to time constraints.

The San at both Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b thought that the quality of life of farmers at neighbouring cattle posts and in neighbouring communities was better than their own. Most of those farmers were Herero or Kgalagadi people, and they managed to keep sheep, goats and cattle and to employ San as farmworkers. Their San workers were usually paid in kind (with food), or they received a little money and were allowed to eat with the farm owner's family. It should be pointed out that these situations were not necessarily seen as exploitative, as the two groups (the farmer and his workers) "helped each other". In line with these statements, the San at Corridor 17-b were of the opinion that the quality of life at Corridor 17-a and Corridor 20 was better than in their own community (i.e. Corridor 17-b). Similarly, the people of Skoonheid felt that farmers at Epukiro RC, Rooibult, Rosenhof and the outer cattle posts of Skoonheid all had a better quality of life than the richest people of Skoonheid Resettlement Project, as they had their own cattle posts with lots of cattle which they were sometimes able to sell. Furthermore, they owned cars and they allegedly worked harder than the San in Skoonheid.

In addition, it is notable that the San at Corridor 17-b and Skoonheid considered the quality of life of fellow San living in rural settlements and urban informal settlements, such as Corridor 13 and Epako, to be worse than their own. The San at Corridor 17-b seemed to look down on the majority of the San at Corridor 13, who, according to them, existed only as water carriers for the local *cuca* shops in return for *tombo* (home-brewed beer). Allegedly these people did not have any shelter and were often sick (suffering from TB or HIV/AIDS). Similarly, the Ju|'hoansi at Skoonheid were of the opinion that the San living in Epako were the most poor and most vulnerable in Omaheke Region because they usually drank a lot and didn't do anything to support themselves. It may tentatively be concluded that the perceptions of the San living in remote rural areas about the more urban San seem to be informed by a negative picture of the most destitute people in the informal settlements of Kanaan (Epako) and Corridor 13.¹²

4.4.4 Social mobility

According to the San who were consulted for the study in Omaheke Region, it is possible to move ahead in life and to become wealthier, even though it is considered difficult. Discussion participants identified certain factors as being responsible for upward social mobility. In order to attain a better quality of life, they stated that San needed to do the following:

¹² There is a general tendency among San at many of the research sites in Omaheke and elsewhere in Namibia to claim that everyone else is better off than the San. According to Velina Ninkova, the Ju|'hoansi at Skoonheid have said that the San residents of Epako have a better life than those of Skoonheid because they are close to town and have access to goods and services that are lacking at Skoonheid. At the same time, they often pity those in Epako for the poor conditions in which they live. They reportedly also said that the San in Botswana are better off, as are the San in the north (Tsumkwe) and in the Corridor area in southern Omaheke. These comparisons might have to do with the fact that they talk to outsiders whom they perceive as potential helpers, and/or the fact that individuals don't want their wider community to perceive them as too well off on a personal level, thus they transfer this attitude to the whole group.

- Stop drinking and smoking.
- Get an education.
- Get a job, work hard and save money.
- Receive or buy livestock and use it wisely (meaning that the animals should not be slaughtered off for consumption).
- Have children who get an education, work hard and thereafter support the family or at least their parents.
- Earn some extra income by making crafts – although Ju|'hoansi at Skoonheid said that this no longer improved their quality of life, but only provided a small buffer which allowed them to retain the quality of life thus far achieved.
- Cultivate gardens, as these provided food for the family at certain times of the year, and if the harvest was decent, then they could also sell some food to make a little income.

However, according to participants, it was far easier to become more vulnerable and poorer in life than to become wealthier. They identified certain conditions that could place a family at risk of becoming poorer:

- Having many children or grandchildren to look after, especially given the costs involved in the education of children.
- Having a poor health status and/or the death (of a breadwinner) in the family, as both could lead to debts.
- A shortage of manpower in the household, so not enough work could be carried out on time.
- The impact of seasonal variations and droughts.
- A lack of ownership in respect of cattle or goats donated by the government. This constrained people's efforts to move ahead in life as they first had to pay off their debt to the government's revolving scheme (one calf or goat for each cow or goat received from the donor) before they were allowed to make money by selling cattle or goats to third parties themselves.¹³
- Possessing only limited farming skills.
- Not knowing how to save money.
- Experiencing a loss of hope, drinking and abusing alcohol.
- Physical abuse by other people, e.g. after disagreements over pay for farmwork or casual labour.

Farmworkers whose salaries were reduced by deductions to cover the costs of the food, wood or power that they consumed were also at risk of becoming much poorer, as their salaries diminished more and more. They could then end up feeling that their work was useless, which could result in a decision to leave the job altogether, and they would then be forced to rely on piecework at *cuca* shops. Participants stated that farmworkers with little or no education were especially susceptible to such circumstances.

Similarly, San who had recently been employed in entry-level positions in the civil service (such as the police force and school hostels) were sometimes vulnerable, as they might not be used to the demands of a regular job. They might feel that they were being bossed around or even discriminated against, as they were not necessarily used to being told what to do on a daily basis. This could cause stress, and the individual concerned might leave the job for a week or two and then return to work, with negative consequences. In other instances a person might not return to work at all, or might lose the job after recurring absences without leave.

¹³ In situations where group resettlement projects are overstocked and rangeland conditions are poor, such guidelines meant that the livestock (cattle and small stock) populations increased rather slowly and thus delivered hardly any tangible benefits for livelihoods of the project beneficiaries.

4.4.5 Alcohol, drugs and violence

Alcohol and drugs were considered a major concern at most of the Omaheke research sites. Stories and statements across this region underscored that drugs and alcohol had had a significant negative influence on the standard of living of the San. Participants at Blouberg related that the little money that San earned was often used to buy alcohol in the local shops, rather than food. At Skoonheid participants said, “Tombo and wine run like honey,” and a much-used phrase at both Corridor 17-b and Corridor 13 was, “They are in the beer.” This statement referred to San who had left their farms to go to Post 13 and lived around the cuca shops. Many of the individuals concerned had turned into homeless beggars, who were prepared ‘to share a blanket’ for food or money, and many had given up all hope after encountering problems and setbacks in life. Drugs were also having an increasingly bad influence on some communities. A person at Skoonheid said, “Dagga roams around like a lion.” The abuse of alcohol and drugs caused domestic violence, including rape, and could also lead to deaths in San communities. The community of Skoonheid had recently been disturbed by a case of a man who had raped and stabbed his spouse when he was under the influence of alcohol. When he was reported to the police, he had threatened those who had reported him.

In contrast to some of the people affected, certain participants in the research discussions described how they had found the willpower to choose differently: “I have decided not to drink any beer, but to make crafts. In that way I can maybe earn about N\$500 a month. I will not throw my house away.” Similarly, some individuals said that they did not understand why people wanted to continue using alcohol or drugs: “When you drink, you cannot improve your life.”

Therefore, a few San communities, such as those of Skoonheid and Donkerbos-Sonneblom, had decided that alcohol should no longer be sold in their community. But banning alcohol does not necessarily prevent community members from drinking, as alcohol is occasionally sold by outsiders in the very communities that banned its sale, and community members may still choose to drink outside the community or brew their own beer illegally. Still, in remote communities the decision to ban the sale of alcohol locally may still have some merit as the ban limits the opportunities for San to drink on a regular basis. However, a decision to ban the sale of alcohol on a farm or in a community requires the support of people of other language groups who live or work there: because money is made from the sale of alcohol, agreements to ban alcohol in a community may not be reached easily, or may be circumvented by those who want to make money from vulnerable people.

4.4.6 Social support networks

Generally, to address some of the adverse conditions described in the previous two subsections, San individuals sought assistance from each other – and especially from family members or friends – in situations where they were short of food or had some other pressing need.

It was also very common for them to help each other when someone had fallen seriously ill and when a person had died. The government renders financial assistance to the families of formally registered pensioners who have passed away, but when a younger person dies, and the government cannot assist, the family and community members were usually expected to assist with covering the costs of the burial. The assistance of churches is generally limited to spiritual support, benediction and some help with the burial. Given that many San have limited means, bodies may sometimes remain in the morgue for several months before the descendants and family members have the money to arrange for a coffin, transport and a burial.

However, the traditional authority in southern Omaheke had received some government funds to assist San families with the burial of deceased family members when such families did not own anything and were without any source of income. The budget catered for approximately N\$4 000 per deceased person to cover costs of the morgue, the cleaning and preparation of the body, the coffin, transport and the burial. But in many cases the amount provided was inadequate to cover all these expenses, and family and community members would also be expected to pay for food during a funeral.

4.4.7 Education

Many elderly San had hardly received any education and were illiterate. San at several Omaheke research sites stated that times have changed; they emphasised that nowadays, having an education is very important for achieving a better standard of living. At school, San children are expected to learn to speak proper English, and to acquire certain vocational skills, such as sewing or brickmaking skills. School also occupies the children's time, reducing boredom and potential social concerns. The following subsections describe the educational backgrounds of elderly and younger San in Omaheke.

Educational background

Educational backgrounds were evaluated in detail with discussion participants in Goreseb and with a group of women at Skoonheid. Due to time constraints the research team could not cover the educational backgrounds of all participants in the research discussions, and of their children, elaborately at all sites. To address this shortcoming, this section on education also refers to information gathered in the *2011 LISUP Baseline Survey*. In Skoonheid only three women in the discussion group had attended school, and they had completed only grades 2, 3 and 4 respectively. None of the other women who took part in this discussion had received any education. This information is substantiated by the *2011 LISUP Baseline Survey* carried out in Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom in 2011. This study underlined that the majority of the heads of households in the three projects did not have any form of formal education (see Table 4.5). There were hardly any major differences in this pattern if gender factors were taken into consideration, as 67% of both the male- and female-headed households had not received any form of education (Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 15).

Table 4.5: Educational background of the head of household by resettlement project, 2011

Level of education	Drimiopsis		Skoonheid		Donkerbos-Sonneblom		Grand total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No education	79	62%	44	76%	23	72%	146	67%
Lower primary	15	12%	5	8%	1	3%	21	10%
Upper primary	16	13%	5	9%	4	13%	25	11%
Junior secondary	12	9%	2	4%	2	6%	16	7%
Senior secondary	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Adult literacy	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%	2	1%
Missing data	4	3%	2	3%	0	0%	6	3%
Grand total	128	101%	58	100%	32	100%	218	100%

Source: Dirkx and Alweendo 2012: 15.



The prevailing levels of education of household heads were associated with high degrees of illiteracy: in the three resettlement projects concerned, only 19% of the household heads could read and write, and another 6% could read but not write. This implies that 75% of the household heads were fully illiterate. Skoonheid had the highest percentage (86%) of illiterate household heads. In terms of gender, the proportion of female household heads who were illiterate was higher than the proportion of males (78% and 71% respectively) (Dirkx, Alweendo 2012: 16).

Of the literate household heads, 50% are literate in Afrikaans and 5% are literate in English. Two percent are literate in Damara/Nama and another 2% in a San language. Twenty-four percent did not mention what language they are literate in.

In Goreseb village, where 16 men and women in total participated in a discussion on their educational backgrounds and those of their children, the picture was not very different. What is worrying from the pattern depicted in Table 4.6 is that many San children still did not attend school: in a rural setting like Goreseb only 43% of children attended school, whereas 34% of the San children did not attend school at the time of the research, or had never attended school. In addition, nearly a quarter of San children had dropped out of school long before reaching Grade 10, let alone Grade 12, and many of the parents could not explain why this had happened. Since relatively few San children had managed to complete secondary school, the importance that San parents ascribed to education did not seem to have had repercussions, in practical terms, for their children.

Table 4.6: Educational attainment of San parents and their children in Goreseb, Otjinene, 2012

	Number of adults	Number of adults who had not attended school	Number of adults who had received some education	Combined number of children	Number of children who do go to school	Number of children who do not go to school	Number of children who had dropped out
Men	6	4	2	8	1	7	0
Women	10	9	1	36	18	8	10
Total	16	13	3	44	19	15	10
Percentage	100%	81%	19%	100%	43%	34%	23%

Box 4.2: Gqaina Primary School in Omaheke Region

By Velina Ninkova

The necessity of a school for meeting the educational needs of the large population of children of Ju|'hoan farmworkers in Omaheke Region was the driving force behind the establishment of Gqaina Primary School. A small site was set aside on Farm Ramba, and in 1981 the school opened its doors for its first batch of Ju|'hoan learners, numbering 49. There were no classrooms, blackboards or desks, but only the sand to write in, and a few magazines to look at, all set up under a big tree. This gave the schooling project its name, Gqaina, meaning 'big tree' in Ju|'hoansi. After 10 years, the farm on which the school was established withdrew from the initiative, and in November 1990 the school was closed down.

The history of the New Gqaina, as the school is sometimes referred to today, started in November 1991 with the establishment of the Gqaina Trust, which initially comprised some commercial farmers and later the government as well. Immediately after Independence, the trust managed successfully to establish contacts with donors from Germany, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. A new site was secured on Farm Du Plessis (100km north of Gobabis), and in 1993 the school reopened for 132 learners in Grades 1-3. Since the school did not have enough children in Grade 3, Herero children were also admitted. In 1997 the school started its pre-school class and expanded to Grade 5. But then, in the same year, the farm on which the school was situated was sold to the government, which resulted in the withdrawal from the school of many Ju|'hoan children whose parents had lived on the farm. After being appropriated by the government, Farm Du Plessis was populated with Damara people whose children were also enrolled in the school, which more or less resulted in the learners' composition found today. In 2001 the school expanded to Grade 7, and as of the 2013 school year, the school has a total of 359 learners, 172 of whom are San, most of whom come from neighbouring commercial farms, Farm Du Plessis and the Skoonheid Resettlement Project.

Gqaina is the only school in Omaheke Region offering mother-tongue instruction in a San language. The language spoken by the Ju|'hoansi was introduced as a medium of instruction in 1996 when a local farmer's wife, Mrs Labuschagne, a fluent speaker of the Ju|'hoan dialect, joined the school staff. Since there were no materials developed, Ju|'hoansi was first introduced as just a language subject, and only in 2001 did the school have its first Grade 1 class taught entirely in Ju|'hoansi. Mrs Labuschagne retired in 2007 and today the school has only one teacher fluent in Ju|'hoansi, therefore mother-tongue instruction is again restricted; it is taught only as a subject, and only in Grades 2 and 3. The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) is currently working to translate and adapt materials for Grade 4, but the lack of qualified Ju|'hoansi-speaking teachers is hindering the full implementation of the language across all grades in the school.

Mother-tongue instruction in a San language has been one of the most characteristic features of the school. Despite the fact that English has become the main language of instruction in Namibia in formal education since Independence, and despite the limited hours of Ju|'hoan classes offered in the school, most ex-learners who are in their early adolescence now can still read and write in Ju.

The school has attributed its success in retaining a large percentage of its learners (more than 95%) to a set of factors apart from its Ju|'hoan classes. The two most critical periods for Gqaina learners are when they first come to school in pre-school or Grade 1, and when they graduate to Grade 8 and transition to secondary schools. The pre-school class has made a considerable difference in this respect, and since its introduction in 1997 it has successfully worked to enable a smoother transition of children from their home environment to a school setting. During their pre-school year, children familiarise themselves with the school rules, learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, learn to respond to and use their official non-San names, and get accustomed to a new daily schedule. The pre-school caregiver, who has worked at the school since its establishment, despite not being of Ju|'hoan origin herself, is fluent in the language and communicates freely with the new learners.

Another characteristic feature of the school is its good infrastructure. Classrooms and hostels are well equipped, and teachers readily report that the school trust provides for their teaching needs with whatever materials they may require. Ju|'hoansi-speaking hostel and kitchen personnel are also present on site, thus providing a tolerant atmosphere for the learners in their off-school hours. The school environment is very secure and children feel safe in the hostels at night.

Grade 7, however, being the last year of (upper) primary school, marks the end of the educational career of many learners, despite the school's best efforts to guide learners in their choice of secondary school as well as provide financial support for ex-Gqaina learners. Although most children enrol in secondary schools, a large number of them drop out during the first year, with data showing that girls are more vulnerable than boys, and are more likely to drop out during the first year of secondary school. Various factors contribute to this tendency, including a poor economic standing, social stigma, an insecure school environment, remoteness from home and a number of cultural differences. The fact that the majority of Ju|'hoan learners to date have not completed their secondary education can be attributed to these factors primarily.

Another major difficulty reported by the school is the lack of involvement by most Ju|'hoan parents. Parents are often described as being disinterested in their children's schooling, and thus unwilling to spend the little money they may have on their children's education. Parents, for their part, report feeling uneasy when at the school site due to their socio-cultural background. They have asked for more culturally sensitive materials to be incorporated into the curriculum, with an emphasis on traditional Ju|'hoan practices and values. It must also be noted here that with time, a larger number of parents have come to be involved in their children's education, mostly because of the current mass enrolment of Ju|'hoan children in the primary school. In sum, this school is a good example of a successful educational practice for educationally marginalised children.



Constraints in education of the San

Discussions in the various San communities underlined that elderly San had not gone to school because their parents had not necessarily recognised the importance of getting an education. Instead, they would have been sent out to work at a relatively young age, as money was needed to survive in a society that became increasingly determined by the demands of communal and commercial farming, and offered less and less scope for a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle. Furthermore, the nomadic lifestyle and traditional dress of the San had a negative impact on school attendance, in that the wearing of traditional clothing had prevented children from fitting into a school environment that required a school uniform.

Box 4.3: The educational background of Frans Kiewiet

Frans Kiewiet (19) originally came from Drimiopsis. He had attended primary school at Hippo Farm and subsequently went to Isaac Bays Secondary School for Grades 8-10. He had just completed senior secondary school at Wennie Du Plessis High School in Gobabis, and stated that he had succeeded thanks to the support and motivation given by his parents. The farmer at Hippo Farm had assisted him with transport during his time at Isaac Bays Secondary School. When he was in Grade 10 he had wanted to be a doctor, but he needed 27 points to get into the Grade 11 trajectory that would have allowed him to study Mathematics and Biology. Since he passed Grade 10 with only 25 points, he was compelled to take Development Studies and Geography instead. Unfortunately his marks in Grade 12, i.e. a mere 13 points for his subjects, did not allow him to register at the University of Namibia or any other tertiary institution. Now he is interested in getting an opportunity for further training at a Community Skills Development Centre (COSDEC) or with !Khwatlu (the San Cultural and Educational Centre in South Africa) in order to find work later. His schoolmates who had also failed Grade 12 had already started looking for jobs on farms around Gobabis and in town. Frans explained that he would have liked to learn hunting skills, as this was part of his tradition, but the elders did not want to teach these skills any longer and anyway there is no land on which to hunt.

Younger San attending school today are still at a high risk of dropping out before reaching Grade 10 or Grade 12 (as the previous subsection conveyed). There are several reasons for the lack of progress of San children in Namibia's education system. Firstly, among the families who participated in the research discussions, financial constraints played a major role, due to the absence of decent living wages for farmworkers, or because the families' subsistence-orientated livelihoods were not sufficiently rewarding, so they were unable to cover the costs associated with schooling (e.g. hostel fees, books and stationery, school uniforms, and the toiletries, blankets and mattresses needed in hostels). Another major constraint was the distance to school, or the absence of a school in the village where a family lived at the time that the children had to be enrolled in school. Many learners in Omaheke had to travel 30-70km to reach their schools, and hitching a ride on the main roads required a financial contribution, or parents had to do some casual work in return for a child's ride. This led to learners returning to school late after school holidays and long weekends. To address this issue the OPM recently decided to reimburse private people for bringing San learners to their schools.

San children living with their parents on commercial farms were in a vulnerable position due to their dependency on the farm owner for transport to schools/hostels, but also due to their parents' financial dependency on their employers. Some farm owners demanded that San children leave school early in order to work on the farm.¹⁴

Box 4.4: Short-term vocational training for San youth at COSDEC in Gobabis

In 2012, 10 San youth (three boys and seven girls) were enrolled in a training programme of the MYNSSC targeting San youth at the COSDEC in Gobabis. They received training in brickmaking and carpentry. The youth stated that they appreciated the opportunity to participate in vocational courses that targeted the San specifically, because they felt better when they were (trained) among themselves. The youth were very enthusiastic because this opportunity gave them a chance to learn to make something tangible with their hands. They also expected that they would now be able to get jobs more easily.

¹⁴ Information provided by Velina Ninkova.



The cultural background and languages of the San constitute other barriers to San children's progress in education, as an interview with the school principal in Corridor 13 underscored. She explained that the high mobility that the San had to develop in order to be able to secure employment still affected the education of San learners to a certain extent as their parents moved around to look for work. They usually took the whole family along with them, including children who were enrolled in school. As a result, children suffered gaps in their education during the school year, and sometimes dropped out completely. In addition, San learners in Omaheke are often taught in other languages (e.g. Setswana and Otjiherero) due to the lack of mother-tongue teachers in various San languages. As a result, many San learners struggle with languages and with education in general.

The change from primary school to a more remote secondary school – often located more than 100 km from home – was detrimental to the educational progress of many San children, as they encountered an unknown environment with hardly any parental guidance or other relatives to support them. The hostels could constitute a strange and harsh environment, and all the more so when parents did not have the means to support their children by providing toiletries and other personal necessities. Bullying and theft of personal belongings by non-San children, especially in secondary school hostels, tended to affect San children, who appeared to experience this quite regularly. Reportedly some San children also got discouraged when their classmates performed better in school. The vulnerability of San learners was exacerbated by a lack of understanding on the part of parents and guardians regarding what exactly was involved in getting a good education. San parents seemed to recognise in principle the importance of having an education, but not having had one themselves, they found it difficult to understand what difficulties their children might experience in, for example, Mathematics or Life Science. The drinking habits of parents may have further compounded the lack of encouragement faced by San children.

There were also substantial differences in the views of educators and San parents regarding what constitutes parental support, and what was needed from learners and parents in order to realise it. As San parents did not necessarily contribute in any of the expected ways, educators often had the impression that San parents were not sufficiently involved in the education of their children, or that they were not interested in the development of both the school and their children. San, on the other hand, explained that the teachers were aware of the fact that they had very little means and could not always afford the contributions expected. As a consequence they found it difficult to understand why the teachers continued asking for money for uniforms, cutlery, mattresses and toiletries. As one participant stated, “They are crying over money that we do not have.” What was apparent was that principals and teachers may be lenient with the San parents in practice when it comes to fulfilling their obligations to contribute (parents in Blouberg admitted as much), but the day-to-day verbal and written requests they nevertheless received seemingly had a negative impact on the parents and contributed to a frustrating partnership between them and the local teachers (and likely contributed to misunderstandings and school dropout).

Box 4.5: San street children in Gobabis

Authorities in Gobabis shared with the researchers their concerns about the large number of San children who lived on the streets of the town, begging for money or food. The children were forced onto the street because their parents were unemployed and were compelled to beg for money from tourists. The children might bring in N\$10 or N\$20 on average per day, so they became a source of income for their parents. Interviews with street children themselves underscored that their daily takings ranged from N\$5 to N\$50 (if they were lucky). They used the income to buy food and water, which they took home to their parents. The children stated that they themselves did not spend the money on alcohol, but their parents allegedly did. A community worker who looked after the needs of some street children said that the children sometimes bought glue to sniff. An official from the municipality explained that even though a committee had been established to deal with the plight of the street children in Gobabis, it was difficult to address their needs given that the children and their parents hoped for support in the form of money, whereas the committee’s support was focused on getting and keeping the children enrolled in school.

Finally, gender factors have affected the educational progress of some female San learners who entered sexual relationships at a relatively early age and got pregnant and/or dropped out of school before finishing their secondary schooling. Adolescent girls and young women were thus prone to ending their education early and losing any prospects for the future – not necessarily because of teachers’ discrimination or that of other learners but because they were more interested in having boyfriends or sugar daddies who could give them toiletries and other goods that their parents could not afford. All of this could lead to teenage pregnancies, which usually had negative implications for finishing school. Adolescent girls who dropped out effectively diminished their own prospects of a better standard of living in the future, and therefore basically inherited the same poverty faced by their parents and grandparents – as, indeed, did their male fellow dropouts.

4.4.8 Political participation and representation

Consultation with central government and national organisations

The communities studied were consulted by officials from central government to different degrees. Community members acknowledged visits by officials of the OPM’s SDP, and generally appreciated

the donations of blankets or mattresses, or the support for revolving goat schemes (e.g. at Corridor 17-b). At Blouberg the San recognised that the OPM had ensured that the community hostel was upgraded, and they were also receiving government support, but they had mixed feelings about the fact that they were now being asked to contribute hostel fees. Residents of Corridor 13 and Blouberg were grateful that the OPM had discussed their problems concerning access to land, giving some San the impression that they might be resettled. Other San were appreciative that the government was looking into the matter of theft at Corridor 13.

An illustrative example of the consultations undertaken by central government with San communities was the campaign through Omaheke initiated by the OPM's SDP in May 2013 to celebrate the start of NGSIP-funded projects for San communities of, for example, Aminuis, the Corridor area, Donkerbos-Sonneblom, Epukiro Post 3, Eiseb and Otjinene. These projects include the construction of school hostels and extra classrooms, the development of water infrastructure, and donations of cattle or small stock through revolving schemes. The projects may have substantial impacts for San livelihoods and for the educational facilities in San communities, provided that: (a) there is sufficient assistance and training for the recipient communities after the projects commence; and (b) the nature, intensity and duration of support to recipient communities are set out clearly. The start of such projects is usually accompanied by a lot of publicity and public speeches to the beneficiary communities, characterised by well-meant (but often paternalistic) advice about the changes expected in the attitude and behaviour of San which would render them citizens who can fully participate in, and benefit from, Namibian society, but the question of whether such messages always reach the intended recipients or get lost in translation has yet to be answered with regard to these projects.

The San at Corridor 13 also remembered being trained by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC – based in Windhoek) on the rights of indigenous people. Other San residents of the Corridor area thought that national (and regional) San support organisations, such as WIMSA and the OST, were no longer very beneficial as they hardly appeared to visit their area.

Consultation and representation at regional level

When evaluating their consultations with authorities at regional level, people in the communities studied mostly talked of the regional councillors, but did not generally mention officials of line ministries. At Skoonheid, for example, participants recounted that in 2009 the regional councillor had set up a livestock committee for managing the cattle donated by NGSIP. At Blouberg the San stated that the regional councillor was very active in their community, although certain meetings specifically targeted wealthier livestock farmers. In short, many communities visited considered regional councillors to be important. Discussion participants at all six research sites emphasised that government officials listened to San community members and the San representatives, but that this did not necessarily imply that their concerns were taken into consideration sufficiently. Some San felt that they were consulted merely at election time, whereafter the officials would not return for a long time, and for this reason they felt that the San were not heard.

Staff of LISUP II have recently made efforts to strengthen relations between local (San) committees and the Kalahari, Steinhausen and Otjombinde Constituency Development Committees (CDCs). In 2012 the DRFN, the MLR and the regional councillor joined forces when a farm management committee was re-elected at Skoonheid. Thenceforth the farm management committee could serve as the village development committee in the regional decentralisation structures. Similar linkages between the farm management committees of Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom

and their respective CDCs (Kalahari and Otjombinde) have been realised. In principle this means that opportunities for participation of the San in decision making at constituency level have been created. The next step is to make this a reality and to overcome practical challenges such as holding CDC meetings regularly and offering transport between the farm and the constituency office.

Representation by San traditional authorities (TAs)

TA structures in Omaheke Region and their impact

In historical times, before San began working for the white farmers, the Ju|'hoansi of the Omaheke area were living in small family groups in the bush and still hunting, each group having its own leader, called *//'aiha* (see subsection 4.4.13 on culture and identity). The traditional leadership structures of the San disappeared when the white farmers came and took the land. The Ju|'hoansi were then under the de facto authority of the white farmers, a relationship later enshrined through national legislation. Soon after Independence, most of the San of Omaheke – especially those who were not employed by communal or commercial farmers and did not have access to communal land of their own – were resettled by the government on resettlement farms. In 1996, the resettled Ju|'hoansi of Omaheke elected Frederik Langman as their chief, but it was only in 2009 that the government formally recognised him as chief. Chief Sofia Jakob of the !Xoon, Naro and 'N|oha San was elected in 2003 and recognised in 2009. Relatively elaborate structures have been established for their respective TAs in northern and southern Omaheke. The !Xoon TA in southern Omaheke, for example, has 12 councillors (six senior and six junior) serving Blouberg, Tsjaka/Ben Hur, Omukara, Aminuis, and Corridors 10, 13, 15, 17-b, 18 and 21, and Chief Langman has councillors serving Rietfontein, Otjinene, Eiseb, Epukiro Post 3 and some other areas where Ju|'hoansi live.

Chief Langman was of the opinion that the TAs have to play a role in keeping San traditions and languages alive: “If you can't talk in your language, if you only speak other languages, you cannot know your tradition. We make sure that other people don't come and tell us what we have to do.” He explained that the responsibility of TAs and their councillors was to listen to people's problems, communicate decisions taken by the TA council, and acquire an understanding of what the San wanted to do for their own development, so that this could be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities.

Both Chief Langman and Chief Sofia (as she is popularly known) acknowledged that the government had been listening to them since their recognition. But, Chief Langman added that language barriers influenced the interaction with high-level officials, and so, inasmuch as officials listened, San concerns were not necessarily taken into consideration or addressed.¹⁵



¹⁵ Chief Langman believes that he has less leverage than Chief Sofia has with the constituency councillor and the governor. It is not clear whether the fact that he is not a SWAPO member has an effect on his perceived lack of influence. Chief Langman himself blamed it on the fact that he cannot speak Otjiherero, whereas Chief Sofia can, with the result, he claimed, that he had less access to the officials concerned. In particular he mentioned that the governor did not agree that central government officials needed to be convinced that the farmers on the outer cattle posts at Skoonheid had to be resettled so as to render the whole Skoonheid farm available for the people living on the Skoonheid Resettlement Project site.

He also felt that the OPM had paid more attention to the needs of the Ju|’hoansi at Skoonheid when Dr Libertina Amathila was the deputy prime minister, whereas few officials had come to Skoonheid since she left office. Chief Sofia was more positive; she felt that when San chiefs requested support from the government, they no longer returned to their communities empty-handed. As a result, some positive developments had come to San in the Corridor area, for example: the DWSSC assisted with repairs to the borehole at Corridor 17-b; five San persons benefited from the Build Together programme at Corridor 13; San parents at Corridor 13 no longer had to pay school fees;¹⁶ school dropouts were allowed to resume their education if they wanted to; and 21 San of the Corridor area had found employment in local school hostels and the Namibian Police. The examples shared by Chief Sofia underscored that improved access to government services (e.g. in the education, health and water sectors), shelter for San families and employment of San persons are important for the San TAs, whereas productive development projects which are implemented and sustained by San communities do not necessarily enjoy similar attention from the TAs.

San perceptions of the support received from San TAs and its impact

The formal recognition of the two chiefs as leaders of their respective TAs was welcomed by the Ju|’hoansi in northern Omaheke – who nowadays are also called *#Kao//’aesi* (‘People from the North’) – and the !Xoon, Naro and ’N|oha in southern Omaheke. San at Corridor 13 reported that the OPM now listens to the TA in southern Omaheke. People in Kanaan (Epako, Gobabis) were also positive about Chief Langman, stating that he regularly visits the informal settlement.¹⁷ Notwithstanding positive feedback and impressions of the TAs and the two chiefs, the following concerns, issues and challenges were raised by San participants in the discussions at different research sites, and by some of the TA councillors interviewed:

- Some communities did not feel represented by their respective chiefs because the chiefs hardly ever visited them.
- The relationship between San community members and their TA councillors was sometimes constrained. For example, local TA councillors stated that few community members came to listen when they provided feedback about meetings and workshops, and people had stopped reporting problems to TA councillors because it took a long time to get a response from government agencies when the councillors reported issues to higher-level authorities.
- There were misgivings and allegations regarding the misappropriation of equipment (e.g. sewing machines taken from one location to another) and the privatisation of what were formerly community initiatives.
- There were allegations that only people who are closely related to the chiefs have access to information, or benefit from opportunities for training and employment or from project support.
- There were disagreements as to the succession of councillors and the division of seats between different San language groups (!Xoon, Naro and ’N|oha) since certain councillors had passed away, which appeared to have caused a division between the ’N|oha and the !Xoon.

The Omaheke San Trust

In terms of its mandate, the Omaheke San Trust is an important organisation for the Omaheke San because it is in a position to support programmes targeting San communities and is intended to strengthen the capacity of the region’s San in addressing human rights issues. However, the OST’s

¹⁶ In January 2013 (i.e. after the field research), the legal obligation to contribute to the School Development Fund (i.e. pay school fees) was abolished for all learners in all government primary schools. However, as widely reported in Namibian newspapers, some schools are still asking parents for monetary contributions for specific activities.

¹⁷ It should be noted that Chief Langman attended the meeting in Kanaan, and his presence may have influenced the statements of others in attendance.

capacity to render support has fluctuated considerably over the years due to financial constraints, staff turnover and possibly poor management. Discussion participants at all six research sites generally agreed that they did not know what they could expect from the OST at present, as the OST had hardly bought any crafts from the producer groups in the region; the scholarship programme did not seem to be operational; and it was not clear if the human rights focal persons were still active or received any support from this organisation. The OST operations have been suspended since mid-2012, and the organisation's future was unclear at the time of writing.

Participation in decision making at local level

Apart from national and regional agencies, TAs and rights-based organisations with a mandate to address the concerns of San people, it is important that development is driven by the people themselves so that it addresses their needs in a targeted and holistic manner. Therefore the research team evaluated the participation of San people in decision-making structures (farm management committees, water point committees, school boards etc.) at local level.

Farm management and development committees in resettlement projects

Farm management and development committees (FMDCs) have been set up with the support of LISUP I and LISUP II in Skoonheid, Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom. Over the last few years, attempts were made to get regional authorities to acknowledge the FMDCs so that FMDC representatives could be delegated to CDC meetings. This has now taken place in the Steinhausen, Kalahari and Otjombinde Constituencies.

San residents of Skoonheid admitted that the FMDC had not functioned very well during the year before the research team visited the project, despite some suggesting that the gender balance in favour of women (nine women, four men) ought to mitigate against such inefficiency. Community members complained that the MLR sometimes overruled decisions taken by the FMDC, and that there were also internal problems:

- “We don't have a sense of responsibility. We are used to working for white farmers, never having a say or any decision-making power, so we don't have initiative.”
- “We don't trust each other; we don't believe that our people can do this. And we feel that our decisions are not taken seriously – in particular not by ourselves.”

Both the final review of LISUP I and the mid-term review of LISUP II underscored that similar problems with the FMDCs were ongoing at Drimiopsis and Donkerbos-Sonneblom (Mouton 2013: 43). In summary, FMDCs do not necessarily take decisions independently, i.e. in the absence of LISUP II staff. Implementing decisions and plans also takes a lot of time, and committees share too little information with the wider community. The handling of equipment, money or seeds creates problems and thus requires adequate supervision from the implementing NGO. The limited degree of collaboration between different factions and groups in the resettlement projects also affects the functioning of the committees.

Committees in the Corridor area

At Corridor 17-b the San formed a campsite committee, a water point committee (WPC) and a kindergarten committee (the latter being closed at the time of the field research so the committee was not functional). The Sa-Ta-Koo campsite was established many years ago with support from WIMSA and OST, and was still open to the public at the time of the field research, although the facilities were dilapidated as the number of visitors and the income generated had been rather small. Over the

years there were also problems with campsite managers who had embezzled funds earned from the campsite. The committees at Corridor 17-b are small in composition and therefore easy to manage. They also exhibit an equal gender balance; men and women were nearly equally represented on all three committees. However, the committees suffered from interference from the TA which had advised, for example, that San should not pay for water, allegedly because leaders wanted the San to receive water for free. This had some negative implications as small repairs could not be financed by the community, thus the community had become dependent on support from Komeho Namibia and the DWSSC.

San residents at Corridor 13 regarded the TA, the WPC and land board as important decision-making bodies. The latter was important because the San did not have any title deeds for the erven on which they had constructed their informal dwellings. Applications for erven were handled by the constituency office, and the San felt that the registration fees were too high and the process was too time-consuming. Only a single San individual was represented on the land board committee, and there was no San representative on the WPC, thus discussion participants felt that the latter was not properly covering the interests of the San. They said that the fees for water were too high and the distance to the water point was too far.¹⁸

Committees in Kanaan (Epako)

San residents of Kanaan had established a local committee to bring community problems to the attention of relevant agencies. The committee was not formally recognised, thus it was difficult for this body to liaise with government agencies or councillors. Sometimes the municipality consulted residents with regard to new developments in Epako, but allegedly only at a late stage, i.e. when a project had already started.

Water point committees and the school board in Blouberg

At Blouberg, the WPC and the school board were the most important bodies for decision making at local level. Two San persons had been elected to the school board so that the interests of the San in the community could be heard and understood. There were also three Damara community members and four teachers (mostly Damara) on the school board. The San were of the opinion that the school board requested too many in-kind and financial contributions from the parents (school and hostel fees, firewood, cleaning school uniforms, buying mattresses and cutlery for the hostel, etc.). San parents in general felt understood by the school board (since their children would not be sent away from school if they could not afford the requested contributions, for example), but they also felt that the board did not always act in the best interests of the San parents and children. As a result, participants wondered if the San members of the board had been trained in respect of their responsibilities, or if only the chairperson and the vice-chair had undergone such training.

There were a few WPCs for different water points at Blouberg, but the San were represented on only the single WPC serving Posts 10 and 11, and the sole representative also operated as the caretaker of the single borehole serving these cattle posts. San wished that more San would be appointed to the WPCs so that their concerns and interests could be understood. They had the impression that other people were making decisions on their behalf in the existing situation. At some posts there were no reservoirs for the San houses, so they received water only when the pump was switched on.

¹⁸ The research team received conflicting information about the amount of money that San were requested to pay for water: some participants said that they had to pay between N\$50 and N\$100 per month, but Chief Sofia said that only N\$20 had to be paid. The water point was about 250 m from the informal houses on (so-called) San Street.

Payment for water supply services generally was a problem for the San as well as for local non-San livestock farmers and absentee or weekend farmers. The delays in payment by all these groups caused disruptions in the supply of water.

4.4.9 Health and healthcare services

San perceptions of common and severe diseases in their communities

The researchers investigated which diseases were common among San at the Omaheke research sites, and also evaluated which diseases participants considered to be severe. Table 4.7 indicates that pulmonary complaints – ranging from a simple cold or cough to chest pain, asthma and TB – affected the San population quite severely. Perhaps the prevalence of such diseases among San is not surprising, given that smoking is a common habit among them and the majority are not well nourished.

High blood pressure, arthritis and rheumatism were also considered to be common. Neck and back pains were reported to be common ailments among men at a number of research sites, given that they were involved in heavy labour on farms and at shops. Stomach ache and bacterial infections due to poor hygiene conditions were also mentioned as common ailments.

The main health problems for children, according to participants, were coughing, tonsillitis and diarrhoea. Regarding problems with babies (infants and older), participants mentioned premature babies, hydrocephalus, shivering, and again asthma and bronchitis. For babies, polio was regarded as a health risk, and was allegedly associated with a limited intake of breast milk.

Table 4.7: Perception of most common diseases among San by research site, Omaheke Region*

Skoonheid		Corridor 13	Blouberg	Kanaan	Goreseb
Women's group	Men's group				
Asthma	Asthma and TB	Malaria and HIV/AIDS	Flu/colds	TB	TB
High blood pressure	High blood pressure	Asthma	Stomach ache	HIV/AIDS	High blood pressure
Rheumatism	Arthritis	Rheumatism	TB	Asthma	Malaria
TB	Diabetes	TB	Chicken pox	Gout	Coughing and chest pain
	Flu/colds	Back pain	Pink eye		Colds
		STIs	Malaria		Neck and back pain
		Infections (from bacteria and dirt)	HIV/AIDS		Kidney problems

* Due to time constraints this information was not gathered at Corridor 17-b.

Surprisingly for an arid region such as Omaheke, where malaria is not endemic, this illness was perceived as one that occurred commonly at Corridor 13, Blouberg and Goreseb. The researchers wondered if the listing of malaria was possibly informed by the training and awareness-raising efforts of Health Unlimited in the past, since these focused on strengthening capacity to identify common and major diseases so that patients could be referred to clinics in a timely fashion, if necessary. During interviews with health officials, malaria was not mentioned as a common disease in the area.

Box 4.6: Main health problems in the Corridor area

An interview with the nurse at the clinic at Corridor 13 supported some of the San participants' perceptions regarding the most common diseases in their communities. The nurse had found the following diseases to be common among the San in the Corridor area, and she explained why they were common:

- **Bronchitis** (chest problems) and **TB** were common because San families lived in small dwellings and kept infecting each other by means of coughing and sharing cups and pipes.
- **Pregnancies** were a problem mainly because the period between deliveries of children was too short and children were weaned too early as a result – this being a problem especially for San who had no access to cow's milk.
- **Teenage pregnancy** was a serious problem because it involved girls under the age of 16. The record showed that every year in the Corridor area, at least one teenage girl got pregnant. The girls often suffered from complications due to their bodies not being well developed.
- **HIV/AIDS and STIs** were a big concern in the area.

Malnutrition (among infants and children) was *not* a major health concern, according to the nurse, because many San in the Corridor area stayed with and/or worked for Herero farmers and were therefore able to access milk for their children. Also, San women tend to breastfeed their babies (a practice that the MoHSS strongly encourages through ongoing campaigns).

Apart from these health issues, the nurse highlighted the **San's caring and cooperative nature** as a positive aspect of their culture: "San people are very friendly people; they like to live together and they care for each other. Basically these people have something money can't buy."

On a few occasions HIV was mentioned in connection with TB, but the knowledge of the risk of co-infection of TB with HIV seems to be rather fragmented. San in Kanaan (Epako), for example, had not heard of multi-drug-resistant TB and thus did not necessarily understand the risks of defaulting on TB treatment. It also became clear that the stigma of HIV/AIDS is still far worse than for TB: a participant at Skoonheid alleged that health workers would inform a patient who had been tested for HIV on the initiative of medical staff that he or she – if found to be HIV positive – had contracted TB rather than HIV. Only patients who had voluntarily tested for HIV would be informed of their status. A stigma also seems to apply to other STIs. These illnesses were considered to have been uncommon among San in the past because all their sexual partners were San, but nowadays some San sell their bodies when hungry, and the individuals concerned risk contracting STIs as a result. This risk was associated with living around *cuca* shops and abusing alcohol, and such behaviour is frowned upon.

In connection with STIs, the San had been advised to circumcise their children (as many Herero people do). However, some of the San at Corridor 13 stated that they did not like the practice of circumcision because "God made them [boys] the way He made them." Opinions were divided and some female participants seemed to prefer circumcised men as this was held to be more hygienic and limited the risk of contracting STIs.

At most Omaheke research sites (Skoonheid, Corridor 13, Blouberg and Kanaan), TB, asthma, HIV/AIDS and other STIs were not only considered to be common, but were also categorised as severe diseases. Cancer was also mentioned as a severe disease that affected some San, but it was less frequently mentioned, suggesting that it is not a common disease. Some women did suffer from cervical or breast cancer. Women also recorded suffering from varicose veins, especially when they did not take sufficient time to rest, which resulted in swollen feet and hip pain.

Healthcare

Healthcare services are available at the Corridor 13, Epako/Gobabis, Buitepos and Otjinene clinics. At Skoonheid a private doctor runs a clinic every fortnight. San of Blouberg who need medical attention go to the Buitepos clinic (20-25 km away), and San at Corridor 17-b and Corridor 18 go to the Corridor 13 clinic (25 km away).

Access to healthcare services

Various efforts have been made in Omaheke over the years to improve access to healthcare. San at various research sites could, to varying degrees, rely on community-based resource persons (CBRPs) – locals trained by Health Unlimited to address challenges posed by the long distances that patients had to travel to access healthcare. The CBRPs were trained in some aspects of home-based care, such as recognising certain diseases, so that patients could be referred to a clinic in a timely manner. They were also trained to support patients with the treatment of specific chronic diseases such as TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS. CBRPs were available at Corridor 13, Corridor 17-b, Skoonheid and Blouberg at the time of the field research. In addition to the CBRPs, some trained traditional birth attendants (TBAs) were available in the Corridor area. Although they were trained to assist with deliveries if necessary, their primary purpose was to advise pregnant women to seek support at the Corridor 13 clinic. In more recent years, some of the functions originally performed by CBRPs (e.g. TB Direct Observed Treatment Support (TB-DOTS) and home-based care) were taken over by local volunteers of two NGOs, namely Advanced Community Health Care Services Namibia (CoHeNa) and Catholic Aids Action (CAA).

The extent to which San make use of the services of CBRPs and TBAs in their communities varied from site to site. At Corridor 17-b some women who had been trained as CBRPs or TBAs appeared to have useful knowledge of the subject matter, suggesting that they were quite active in assisting patients with administering drugs and with advice in the event that a patient had fallen pregnant. At Skoonheid the CBRPs reportedly did not do very much as they had not received any follow-up training, nor any medication for local patients, and they had no means of transport to take patients to the clinic. Some CBRPs had found employment or had moved out of the area.

Despite the above-mentioned efforts to improve the San's access to healthcare services in Omaheke, access to healthcare generally is challenged by the following factors: the distance to health facilities and the costs of transport; restricted opening hours of health facilities; the infrequency of the mobile clinic visits to remote areas; and the fees charged for treatment by a nurse or doctor.

The distance to clinics is a general concern for people living in Namibia's rural areas, and the San at a number of the Omaheke research sites are no different in this regard. Ju|'hoansi at Skoonheid, for example, reported that their main health problem was the distance to the clinic at Epukiro RC (20 km from Skoonheid),¹⁹ even though Dr De Kok visited Skoonheid nearly every fortnight to attend to residents' medical needs. Women at Skoonheid often have home births as the distance and lack of regular traffic constitute a problem for women who might otherwise wish to deliver in a healthcare facility. Reportedly, between January and October 2011 only two women had given birth at the clinic while 10 had had home births at Skoonheid. Similarly participants in Goreseb village indicated that women gave birth at the clinic in Otjinene (35-40 km away) only if they expected complications.

¹⁹ The clinic will be moved to Farm Du Plessis in the future to avoid the rental costs paid by the government to the Catholic mission. As a result, the distance from Skoonheid to the clinic will increase.

Box 4.7: Dr De Kok's clinic in Skoonheid Resettlement Project

Dr De Kok, a private doctor, initiated a clinic for the benefit of the Ju|'hoansi and Damara residents of Skoonheid Resettlement Project in 2003. Initially the patients complained of hunger and begged for food, whereupon a craft project called San Alive was started to afford the Ju|'hoansi a measure of food security. Other aims of this project were to foster a work ethic and provide means to cover the nominal fee charged for healthcare services at the clinic. Patients were – and still are – encouraged to participate in the craft project or other income-generating activities.

The clinic is run by Dr De Kok every fortnight, on the same day as the orders for the craft project are administered. Many male and female participants in the craft project then seek medical treatment from Dr De Kok. (Treatment at her clinic does not depend on participation in the craft project.) Anyone who is able and willing to pay the nominal fee of N\$2 for children and N\$5 for adults is welcome at the clinic. According to Dr De Kok, people who cannot afford the fee are not turned away, but she prefers patients to contribute for the services rendered, since the motive for having the fees is to nurture a culture of ownership and acceptance of responsibility for one's own wellbeing. The fee negotiated with the community 10 years ago has remained the same ever since. It does not cover the cost of medications or travel expenses; these are sponsored by Dr De Kok. Medicines for common ailments are usually available, and exceptional requests are met as soon as possible – they cannot always be met immediately. Initially only 5% of the patients paid their fees, and nowadays 95% of the patients are paying. All of the above also applies to communal farmers in the area who need medical attention, although they were not originally targeted by the clinic.

In 2007 the craft project joined up with the Omba Arts Trust and LISUP I to generate more income for the craft project beneficiaries at Skoonheid. As the craft income has increased considerably over the years, the craft producers also use the income to buy some extra food for their families every month. The project thus contributes to food security in the resettlement project.

Like many other people in remote rural areas in Omaheke and Namibia at large, the San living at Blouberg mostly relied on the mobile clinic for their healthcare needs. They sought treatment in Buitepos or Gobabis when they needed urgent medical attention. The mobile clinic is meant to visit Blouberg once a month, but community members stated that they cannot rely on the service being rendered on a regular basis. Although the clinic in Buitepos is only 20 km away, seeking medical attention there is difficult for San of Blouberg because there are few cars in their community and trips to Buitepos can be expensive for them. The cost for a one-way trip from Blouberg to Buitepos by car could be N\$50, and up to N\$30 by donkey-cart. Additional costs (another N\$50 one way) would be incurred if the patient had to get treatment in Gobabis rather than Buitepos. Similar amounts are usually requested for rides in other parts of rural Omaheke.

San residents of Corridor 13 and Kanaan hardly encountered any problems with accessing health-care services as the presence of health facilities in their own communities eliminates the barrier of distance. In the Corridor area the fees normally charged did not pose a barrier to treatment either: participants explained that they did not have to pay for medical care at the clinic at Corridor 13 as 'no payment' was written on their health passports – a fee exemption seemingly negotiated by the traditional authority. However, this did not mean that San at other research sites could count on being exempted from the fees at clinics and hospitals, and since many San have limited means, this may imply that they sometimes have to forfeit treatment. The San at Blouberg also complained about having to pay the same fee (N\$4) for the mobile clinic as for a visit to a regular clinic, even though

the mobile clinic only undertook the immunisation of children and the provision of painkillers, medication for high blood pressure and means of birth control. If a patient had any other ailment or a more serious disease, he or she would have to be referred to a clinic in Buitepos or Gobabis. TB and HIV/AIDS patients, for example, had to obtain medical attention and medication in Gobabis. Referring to some cases which had allegedly resulted in death, San at Blouberg complained that an ambulance was unlikely to arrive swiftly if someone needed medical attention urgently (but whether this was due only to long distances or also to other factors was not ascertained).

Perceptions of the quality of healthcare services

Given their history of marginalisation and experiences of discrimination, some San are sensitive to the manner in which they are treated by officials who work in public institutions. Consequently some can be critical of the services rendered to them at local clinics. At some research sites it was said that medical staff sometimes gave non-San patients preferential treatment and occasionally San patients might be turned away, which forces them to return at another time.

Some San participants doubted the capacities of medical staff in rural clinics. At Skoonheid, for example, residents complained of the quality of medical care provided at the Epukiro RC clinic and wondered why they had to visit the clinic several times before the nurses were capable of diagnosing their ailment: “If they don’t know what’s wrong with you, you simply go back and forth until you are skin over bone.” (Ultimately the likely finding in such a case is that the person has contracted TB). Whereas it seems logical that patients may need to undergo various tests to identify certain illnesses, the statement quoted above merely underscores that a lack of explanation – and other communication problems – may frustrate the relationship between medical staff and San as they do not always understand each other’s language and San cannot always make themselves understood in English. When San sense that the communication challenges are compounded by indifference towards the patient, they might feel either that they are not getting the treatment that they deserve, or are being discriminated against. At Corridor 13 the quality of care rendered and the perception of support received by patients seemed to play a role in terms of an individual deciding whether or not to use local healthcare services. Participants related that pregnant women, as well as young and older people alike, were “afraid” to go to the clinic as they were not always properly assisted or looked after. At home, however, there would always be someone to care for the patient.

In Kanaan (Epako), San complained that communication between healthcare staff and relatives of patients often left a great deal to be desired, with the result that family members often did not know what was happening to a family member who had been admitted to the hospital. This was especially pertinent when someone passed away; there was little to no communication with the relatives of the deceased. Participants said that the language barrier was often a problem in that doctors and nurses in the hospital generally do not speak a San language and not all San speak English. Even if San persons did manage to speak some English, they might be assisted by a foreign doctor (e.g. from Cuba) whose English they found difficult to understand.

On a more positive note, it seems that the San appreciate the government’s efforts to improve the provision of medication for chronic diseases such as TB and HIV/AIDS in rural areas. Participants at Skoonheid, for example, stated that the hospital in Gobabis dispatched the medication for TB and HIV/AIDS patients to the clinic in Epukiro RC regularly – on a monthly basis. Even though patients still had to travel to that clinic, this system had improved the treatment of patients with chronic diseases and was much appreciated.

Traditional medicines and traditional healing

Traditional medicines and healing practices are still used by some San in Omaheke, but the extent to which this happens at the various research sites proved difficult to ascertain. San were sometimes reluctant to tell outsiders about traditional healing practices – a discussion participant at Skoonheid who had attended an LAC workshop on bio-cultural protocols and indigenous rights in August 2011 even joked about this: “If we were practising any form of traditional healing we would not tell you about it, as white people might come and steal our secrets.” Yet, it appeared to be fairly common practice to use *kamakul* (Devil’s Claw) for the treatment of certain ailments and diseases, and discussion participants at Corridor 13 stated that they combined the regular healthcare services provided by the local clinic with traditional medicinal plants from the bush, especially when the medication from the clinic was found to be of little help. Participants at various research sites stated that they collected veldfood at certain times of the year (see section 4.4.2 on food security), thus it may be surmised that a number of San in the Corridor area and other parts of Omaheke do know which veld plants have medicinal value.

The picture is not clear-cut, however, as participants at Skoonheid also related that persons using traditional medicines risked being stigmatised or criticised for practising witchcraft. Thus San were (allegedly) reluctant to practise traditional healing, including the use of medicinal plants, or they might do so outside their own community without other people getting involved. Observations at Skoonheid underscored that the Ju|’hoansi there were using traditional medicine.

4.4.10 Gender

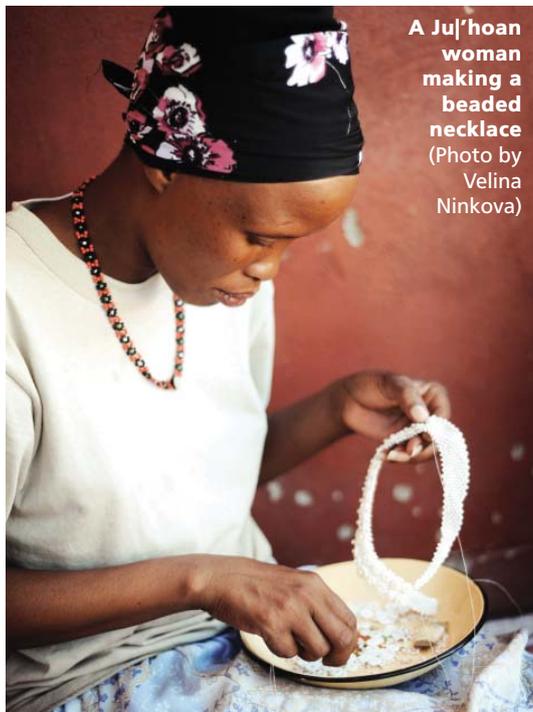
Gender roles

Gender roles were discussed with San at Skoonheid, at Corridor 13 and in Goreseb village. The general picture that emerged had the following elements:

- Elderly San were responsible for giving advice to family members and teaching them about life and matters such as how to look after gardens and livestock. They might also help with looking after the children and other small household chores.
- Middle-aged parents would carry out the bulk of the work in the garden and on the farm. They would also teach children about basic chores and supervise their work in and around the house.
- Women, and wives in particular, were responsible for cleaning the house, washing clothes, cooking, looking after the children and watering plants around the house. They might also be involved with needlework or crafts. Other duties that women undertook included fetching water and firewood. Women also kept other family members on the ‘right path’ (away from trouble and death), according to some participants.
- Men were generally responsible for looking after the livestock, watering the livestock, milking the cows and fixing things around the house. Men were also responsible for preparing the fields for crop cultivation at sites where crops were grown, and also tended to look for piecework and to collect wood from the forest or bush. Men considered themselves to have overall responsibility for the whole family.



A Ju|’hoan grandmother with her grandchild at Skoonheid



A Ju|'hoan woman making a beaded necklace (Photo by Velina Ninkova)

Participants at Skoonheid stated that some changes in gender roles had taken place: some responsibilities were no longer confined to men or women alone. For example, women were not necessarily tasked with looking after the cattle or goats, and women could be the actual owners of livestock nowadays. Men and women alike worked in irrigated and rain-fed gardens, and increasingly shared basic tasks around the house, such as cooking, cleaning, babysitting and repairing broken items. Both men and women were involved in the upbringing of children, and both men and women were observed to be diligent in caring for children. A single mother at Corridor 13, however, was of the opinion that women generally felt more responsible for the upbringing and wellbeing of their children. Partially informed by personal experience, she stated that, “San men take too little responsibility for raising their children and for supporting their spouses and families.”

In addition to the above, it is noteworthy that both men and women participated in the meetings convened for the study in nearly all of the communities visited in Omaheke. Although researchers observed that men may be given the first right of speech, and although men and women still sat in separate areas in public meetings, women tended to share their views as well. Notwithstanding these findings, on certain occasions – when more sensitive matters had to be discussed – the researchers deemed it worthwhile to organise discussions in smaller groups or gender-specific groups, to give women a better opportunity to express themselves. In the Corridor area, women appeared to have grown accustomed to expressing themselves in public, and sometimes were more assertive than the men in sharing their concerns about community matters – possibly because Chief Sofia has set an empowering example in this regard. The same goes for communities in which NGOs are active – or were active in the past – such as Skoonheid and Blouberg.

4.4.11 Engagement of the youth in agricultural and communal activities

Elderly San at Skoonheid complained that many younger people (mainly those between 18 and 25 or 30 years of age) were reluctant to assist their parents and grandparents with agricultural activities in resettlement projects, even though the majority of them were unemployed. They expected to be paid for work carried out for elderly people, and did not necessarily see it as their duty to help the family with growing food or maintaining livestock. Some elderly San therefore claimed that young people lived off the pensions of the elderly and did little to assist. In cases where these youth were lucky enough to find temporary jobs on other farms, the little money earned would be spent on items at the farmer’s shop, so that when they came home they could not always contribute much to their respective households. The caretaker of the borehole in Drimiopsis stated that, “The youth share in the food that comes from the garden.” He admitted that he had found it difficult to convince his own children to assist him with agricultural activities, and said that he did not have the heart to refuse them food when they asked for it – but also he provided food to motivate them to help with the cultivation of the gardens or fields.²⁰

²⁰ The youth themselves did not respond regarding the issue of how much they contributed to the work carried out by their parents and grandparents.

Moreover, the elderly carried out most of the communal duties, such as pumping and distributing water, mending fences, plastering a dam, fixing an engine and driving a tractor. Few young people tended to get involved with such activities. Middle-aged and elderly people generally were also the ones who assisted other community members – for example, if someone had died, older community members would try to assist the bereaved family with food and sugar for the funeral.

4.4.12 Changes over time

The ‘time’ referred to in this section means the following periods: the last few decades of colonial rule; the first few years of Independence (1990-1995); the first five years of the new millennium (2000-2005); and ‘nowadays’ (2011/2012). The changes that occurred in each of these periods were evaluated to identify factors that had/have a positive or negative impact on the life of the San in Omaheke Region.

Box 4.8: San nomadic life and support received from Catholic missionaries (1940s to mid-1990s)

Some San now living in the Corridor area still survived on hunting and gathering in the recent past (1940s to 1980s). This was mentioned at Corridor 17-b, where hardly any San had settled prior to 1990; many now living at Corridor 17-b had previously lived with their parents or grandparents in the Kalahari Desert or in the vicinity of settlements/villages such as Aranos and Aminuis. Discussion participants said that at that time, in all these places, game and veldfood were still available, water could be found in streams and riverbeds, and the San could practise traditional healing. In the last couple of decades of colonial rule, and in the immediate post-Independence period, these semi-nomadic San increasingly received support from mission posts (e.g. from the Catholic Church at Corridor 13, and seemingly from missionaries based at Aminuis and Aranos), where food aid and other in-kind support (soap, roofing sheets, clothes etc.) were provided with a view to converting the San to Christianity and introducing them to farming.

Quality of life before Independence

San at different research sites evaluated their quality of life before Independence as being better than at various times after Independence, and a combination of reasons was usually given. Generally the cost of living was much lower than it is today, the selling of alcohol was better regulated, the police were more strict and patrolled more frequently, and farmers did not allow their workers to drink on the farms. San at Blouberg mentioned that before 1990, many San were employed as farmworkers on commercial farms, and were properly paid for their work. They also received food rations, and some farmers allowed their workers to have small gardens on the premises. However, not everyone shared the positive sentiments about life as a farmworker before Independence. Participants at Skoonheid categorically stated that life was not good before Independence, chiefly because they were not



free and independent: they worked for other people (they had not yet been resettled); and they lived under apartheid rule which gave them no say – it was a case of, to quote one participant, “Yes boss, no boss, yes misses, no misses.”

Box 4.9: Changes in San living conditions following settlement of people of other ethnic groups – the example of Blouberg resettlement farm

San at Blouberg felt that their living conditions had deteriorated a few years after the farm had been purchased by the Damara Traditional Authority in 1982. Initially, after the change of ownership of the farm, life was fine. The San who had worked on the commercial farm had been allowed to stay in some of the former farmworkers' houses and could use water freely. But life became more difficult a few years later when the original Damara farmers took their livestock back to Khorixas and they were replaced by new Damara people who settled at Blouberg with more permanent intentions. The quality of life of the San then deteriorated because the San were requested to vacate the former farmworkers' houses. The new Damara settlers also had less work for the San than the original Damara farmers, who had simply come to Blouberg to avoid a drought in Khorixas. The new settlers wanted to develop their own farms themselves, and as one consequence, the San had to start paying for water at Blouberg.

Quality of life after Independence

Only a few discussion participants felt that the first few years of Independence (1990-1995) were better than before Independence. Like many other Namibians, San felt free and happy about having a government of their own, and just like others, they enjoyed the human rights protections afforded by the new Constitution of Namibia. But, apart from the new political context, Independence did not necessarily bring much change for San communities. Discussion participants at Blouberg and Corridor 13 claimed that they had received little assistance from the government. They were free, but had reportedly simply continued to struggle for themselves while the cost of living had increased considerably. Many San had also been retrenched due to the introduction of minimum wages for farmworkers, and had ended up in the informal settlement of Kanaan (Epako), where their standard of living had generally deteriorated due to the loss of a regular income. Apart from drought relief – which the San had received regularly in the years 1992-1995 – many San felt that the equal rights that were supposed to benefit all after Independence had not meant much for most San.

The only exception to this view of life in the first years after Independence was found in places where beneficiaries received a fair amount of support from the government, churches or other service providers. At Skoonheid and Corridor 17-b, for example, drought relief was donated on a regular basis, and comprised a larger variety of foodstuffs than people receive nowadays. Government had also provided more than enough diesel for pumping water to these communities in the immediate post-Independence period, and initially only a few people were resettled in resettlement projects (e.g. only 12 families at Skoonheid). The garden projects organised at that time by the MLR at Skoonheid and by the church at Corridor 17-b therefore provided enough food for the relatively small number of beneficiaries.

Quality of life around the turn of the millennium

The quality of life in the late 1990s and up to 2010 was again considered to be worse than in the years 1990-1995, because the cost of living had continued to rise in the second decade after Independence, and food aid was no longer provided as consistently as before. Employment opportunities for San did not improve until more recently (e.g. around 2010), when the government started to employ San

in entry-level government positions. Positive exceptions to these perceptions were again related to the introduction of support projects by donors, NGOs and the government. Developments at Skoonheid and in the Corridor area highlight the big difference that support projects can make for San communities.

Skoonheid

In the first five years of the new millennium, the growth in the number of households and livestock at Skoonheid Resettlement Project had caused problems linked with the supply of water, because the MLR did not supply the same quantities of diesel as it had done in the years 1990-1995. There had not always been a caretaker from the MLR present, and the gardens had been less successful. The quality of life in 2000-2005 as compared to 1990-1995 had therefore deteriorated (see Table 4.8).

The implementation of LISUP I and II since 2007 by the DRFN/Habitafrica (with funding from the Government of Spain and the MLR, and with NGSIP support) was evaluated as a positive development in the Skoonheid community. Due to the introduction of drip-irrigation facilities and new solar infrastructure, the gardens were in a good condition at the time of the research team's visit (October 2011), and community members were more food secure than they used to be. Thanks to the NGSIP, nearly all households in the community had received some livestock. Although the MLR and the DRFN had some reservations about the resulting stocking rate and its implications for the quality of the rangeland, the San considered this to be a very positive development.

Table 4.8: Perception of changes in quality of life and social exclusion, Skoonheid Resettlement Project*

Subject of change	1980-1985	1993	2000-2005	2007-2011
Quality of life	1	5	3	10
Social exclusion/discrimination	10	10	10	10

* The numbers in the cells reflect the number of stones (out of a maximum of 10) placed by San participants, where 1 means 'low' and 10 means 'high'.

Corridor 17-b and the Corridor area

At Corridor 17-b the quality of life in the years 2000-2012 was relatively strongly influenced by specific events, such as the introduction of certain income-generating projects and the formal recognition of Chief Sofia Jakob in 2009 (regarding the latter, see "Representation by San TAs" on page 72). The establishment of the Sa-Ta-Koo campsite by WIMSA (circa 2000) yielded some income-generating opportunities for youth at Corridor 17-b, but in subsequent years the campsite project encountered many management problems and the infrastructure became dilapidated. Nevertheless, the campsite still exists, and it yields small amounts of income for the community, therefore it was evaluated positively. In the years 2003-2006, the MAWF introduced a revolving goat project with support from the NPC's RPRP. After the recognition of Chief Sofia, a shop and a sewing project were started in the same community, and a solar water pump replaced a diesel engine, thereby reducing recurrent costs for the San. The Kalahari Garden Project introduced irrigated gardens in the Corridor area in the years 2006-2008, which improved food security to some extent in various communities. Although some of these projects were no longer fully operational at the time of our field research in 2012, the beneficiaries had much appreciated them; they deemed these projects to be positive contributions to their livelihoods. The problems that a number of these projects at Corridor 17-b encountered were: the TA exerting an influence over activities; a certain bias in the distribution of benefits; and a lack of local leadership/management capacity to continue projects without the assistance of an NGO.

In evaluating changes in the quality of life at Corridor 13, the discussion participants included the establishment of some government services among the other developments: a food-for-work initiative implemented by the Omaheke Regional Council in 2007; the MTC tower established in 2009 to improve cellphone communication in the area; a new clinic opened by the MoHSS in 2010; and a new office of the MAWF opened in 2012. The introduction of the Build Together programme had also had some benefits for the small number of San (e.g. some TA councillors) who qualified for a house – by virtue of their government jobs which would enable them to repay the loan.

4.4.13 Culture and identity

As in many other regions, the San of Omaheke do not identify with names like ‘San’ or ‘Bushmen’. Individual San and San families in Omaheke generally associate their identity and traditions with their language. Chief Langman underscored this in the following statement: “If you can’t talk in your language, if you only speak other languages, you cannot know your tradition.” There are thus four San identities or San cultures in Omaheke, which, for geographical, administrative and linguistic reasons, are associated with the area of jurisdiction of the TAs of the Ju|’hoansi and the !Xoon. The boundary between the two TAs more or less follows the road from Gobabis to Buitepos in the area east of Gobabis. West of Gobabis it follows the B1 main road to Windhoek. Nearly all of the San living in northern Omaheke – comprising the vast area from Otjinene to Epukiro, Eiseb and the Rietfontein block – speak the Ju|’hoan language and consider themselves to be Ju|’hoansi, while a few San in the Rietfontein area are Naro. Nowadays the Ju|’hoansi are also referred to as #Kao//’aesi (‘People from the North’), which is a reference to the fact that the San falling under the TA of Chief Frederik Langman live north of the San falling under the !Xoon TA of Chief Sofia Jakob in southern Omaheke. The term #Kao//’aesi is also the name of the TA of Chief Langman, and furthermore this term indicates the relatively close association of the cultures of the Ju|’hoansi of Omaheke and the Ju|’hoansi of the Tsumkwe area in Otjozondjupa Region (see Chapter 5).

Within the !Xoon TA in southern Omaheke – roughly comprising the area from Blouberg (close to Buitepos) to Gobabis, and south to Omukara, Tsjaka, Aminuis and the Corridor area (Posts 1 to 21) – one finds three San groups: the !Xoon, the ’N|oha and the Naro. The languages and identities of the three cultures are relatively closely associated, but still distinct. Most individuals of all three cultures understand the language of the !Xoon. !Xoon and ’N|oha are dialects of the same language family (Tuu), whereas Naro belongs to another language family (Khoe). Therefore !Xoon and ’N|oha can communicate easily. However, many San in the Corridor area are multilingual.

The identities and traditions of the various San cultures in Omaheke are closely linked with their heritage or traditions as nomadic hunter-gatherers. Chief Langman explained that the Ju|’hoansi of northern Omaheke still lived until recently in small family clans in the bush, making a living by hunting and gathering. Each clan had its own leader/chief, called //’aiha – Chief Langman’s father was an //’aiha – and each clan had its own territory, for which the //’aiha had primary responsibility. If a clan did not have enough food in its own territory, its //’aiha could seek permission from the //’aiha of another clan to hunt on that clan’s land. The traditional lifestyles and leadership structures of these San family clans gradually disappeared when white and black farmers occupied vast areas of land in the area now known as Omaheke Region.

Similarly, San individuals in southern Omaheke spoke of their semi-nomadic lifestyles as children before Independence, when they moved around with their parents or grandparents in search of jobs, covering parts of western Botswana, the southern Omaheke areas of Aminuis and the Corridor, and the Aranos area in the northern part of what is now Namibia’s Hardap Region. The narration

of these life stories underscored that Catholic missionaries and Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) representatives in these areas at that time played a relatively important role in supporting the !Xoon, Naro and 'N|oha as they moved through these areas. Apart from spreading the gospel, the Catholic Church provided work opportunities for some San individuals, as well as education and health facilities. In addition, the church had some projects aimed at teaching the San how to cultivate crops and (presumably) how to farm with livestock. Some of these initiatives were cancelled after Independence, either because they had achieved little success or impact, or because the government started providing drought relief to San communities on a relatively large scale.

Discussions at all research sites in Omaheke underlined that traditional practices such as veldfood gathering were still relatively common in all four San cultures in this region. Some San across the region also used tubers, roots and other veld products to prepare traditional medicines for the treatment of specific ailments.²¹ Discussions on food security at the research sites underscored that hunting, especially of small game, is sometimes still practised in rural areas, but it was impossible to gauge the scale of this practice at any site, because hunting is illegal today, hence all discussion of hunting was 'taboo' to some degree.

4.4.14 Social exclusion and relations with other groups

The general perception among the San at all six research sites was that they face continued social exclusion, especially from service providers and staff in public institutions, but also in places such as shops. Several regional stakeholders (e.g. the Councillor of the Kalahari Constituency and the CEO of the Gobabis Municipality) reiterated the perception that the San were often 'the last in line' and confirmed that this had not changed much since Independence. In this regard, the San at Corridor 13 stated that they felt oppressed by the police, as San individuals had been kept in custody for alleged offences for up to four days without being formally charged in a court within 24 hours of their arrest as prescribed by law. Others claimed that serious cases in which they were the victims, such as violence over labour disputes and rape, were sometimes not addressed but rather covered up. Similarly, at Skoonheid a community member alleged that discrimination continued unabated at clinics and other government institutions, saying that, whereas before Independence service provision at these places had been good, nowadays no one cares about clients or patients in general, let alone those who happen to be San.

The Councillor of the Kalahari Constituency, the CEO of the Gobabis Municipality and some San community leaders shared Chief Sofia Jakob's view that in order to reduce exclusion and discrimination, San need first of all to start seeing themselves as human beings equal to any other Namibian, then take responsibility for their own plight and stand up for their rights. Otherwise the degree of social exclusion is unlikely to change much.

However, until San people claim their rights, people of other ethnic groups are likely to continue to prescribe what is best for the San in their own communities and beyond, especially when it comes to the development of San livelihoods and San farms. This merely underlines that the relationship between the San and people of other ethnic groups with whom they share a settlement/project/farm is still not equal, and is often characterised by differences in power and control over resources such as water and land. In this regard, however, there are some differences between group resettlement farms and communal areas.

²¹ Evidence of this was provided in individual discussions with Velina Ninkova and by poster material developed in the Corridor area that explores and elaborates on the use of different types of veld products for food and medicinal purposes.

In group resettlement farms, many San live together with Damara farmers, and sometimes also Herero or Tswana farmers. Most of the time, collaboration between San people and people of these other ethnic groups is hard to find; instead leaders of different factions in the community will try to control access to valuable project resources, equipment and income-generating projects. The San are often pushed aside, or they shy away from power struggles and thus lose out, even when they are members of the same management committees. In addition, the San in group resettlement farms have to deal with people's claims – often non-San outsiders' claims – to the grazing and water resources on their farms. In some instances this even includes claims of government officials employed by institutions that render services at resettlement projects.

On farms in the communal area where San share land with non-San farmers, two scenarios may be found:

- **Scenario 1:** San may not have the assets and means to farm with livestock themselves, or they may have so few livestock that they cannot sustain their families. In such cases they are often compelled to make a living as farmworkers for non-San farmers. Some San farmworkers receive cash payments for their work, but many live with their employers and are paid for their services in kind – a situation that some discussion participants did not regard as exploitative because the farmer and the worker were “helping each other”, whereas others preferred to avoid such a situation and live more autonomous lives on a farm such as Corridor 17-b.
- **Scenario 2:** San who do manage to farm with their own livestock on a communal farm shared with non-San farmers (e.g. Corridor 18), face considerable challenges in their relations with other farmers, as theft of cattle or goats is not uncommon when the San are absent from the farms for any length of time. They also have to struggle to raise the necessary funds in time to pay their monthly contributions for water supply services, so as to ensure that their livestock are not cut off from water for several days.

Finally, Ju|'hoansi in Goreseb village reported that some non-San individuals in the area had ‘masqueraded’ as San to source funds to support projects in their own (non-San) community. Allegedly this ‘fraud’ had gone on to the extent that the actual names of Ju|'hoan individuals had been used without these individuals ever being consulted about such initiatives. In relation to this allegation, Ju|'hoansi raised concerns about a lack of presence and visibility of the San TAs in resolving disputes with non-San individuals. According to Ju|'hoansi in Goreseb, this resulted in other TAs addressing the disputes, which was not always to the advantage of the San individuals involved, as other TAs did not necessarily pay adequate attention to the interests of San people in such cases.

4.4.15 Visions for the future

In Omaheke Region, San visions for the future mainly concerned better access to services in remote rural communities and improving access to land.

At Corridor 17-b, Kanaan (Epako) and Blouberg, participants' expectations centred on improving access to, and the quality of, education for San children. The San of Corridor 17-b specifically wanted to establish a kindergarten and a primary school in the community, and to acquire a vehicle for transporting their children to secondary school. In Kanaan, San parents wished to see more San teachers and principals in schools, and San nurses and doctors in health facilities, who could serve as role models for their children. At Blouberg, community members hoped that the school could be extended from Grade 7 to Grade 10, so that their children no longer had to leave their home environment to continue their schooling, as this was associated with a risk of dropping out. They also wished for a clinic to be opened in their community.

A Jul'hoan boy at Skoonheid Resettlement Farm
(Photo by Velina Ninkova)



At Corridor 13, participants simply expected the government to continue helping the San community to address their problems in the future. In particular they requested the regional authorities to close down cuca shops in the settlement.

At Blouberg, opinions regarding San economic needs in the future were divided. Some participants were of the opinion that gardening and craft projects would go a long way to help the San to improve their standard of living. Other community members doubted the existence of a sufficiently large market for arts and crafts. They were also worried that there was insufficient water for gardening and that the San could not, in any case, afford to irrigate their gardens at the current rates charged for water. The San were judged to have little control over land and water issues in the community, therefore a number of the San at Blouberg would rather be resettled at a new resettlement project where they could farm the land themselves and thereby sustain their families.

At Skoonheid, women wanted literacy classes in order to be able to read, write and communicate better with other people. They also wished for a needlework business to be established, and for the craft project to be expanded so that they could make more money. Some men at Skoonheid wanted to become independent farmers, on a farm of their own – or even, they said, at a cattle post within one of the more remote posts of Skoonheid, were they to be given such land. They regarded the group resettlement project as a learning trajectory in this regard. Other men simply wanted to continue farming at the group resettlement farm, as they did not have the energy to be relocated again. Some extra support for the farmers in the group resettlement project would be welcomed – in the form of donations of goats, expansion of the craft and leather projects, and a vehicle for the community to use to transport children to school and sick people to the clinic, and to market agricultural produce. Finally, the participants wished that all community members would take responsibility for the development of the project, and that the youth and elderly would actively participate in meetings and project activities to that end.

4.5 Conclusions and recommendations

The San (mainly Ju|'hoansi, !Xoon and Naro, and a few 'N|oha) are among the poorest people in Omaheke Region; there are also many poor people hailing from other ethnic groups. The *Omaheke Regional Poverty Profile* based on village-level participatory poverty assessments (NPC 2006a) underlined that many people of various ethnic groups in Omaheke faced very similar livelihood constraints to those faced by the San. However, the San are more marginalised than most other poor people in the region due to a number of specific factors, among which landlessness and the loss of employment and income are prominent.

In the second half of the 20th century, when the Namibian economy was increasingly becoming characterised by commercial and communal livestock farming, many San in Omaheke found themselves employed as farmworkers. When minimum wage levels were raised after Independence, many Omaheke San were retrenched, and these former farmworkers became a proletariat underclass in the informal settlements of Gobabis and in the group resettlement projects established within a few years of Independence. San in these projects have always had access to land, but have always had to share it with many other San and often non-San people too, which, as might be expected, has created common property-management problems. Another group of San, i.e. those who were retrenched in the 1980s from commercial farms which the Damara Legislative Authority had acquired with the consent of the South African authorities, suffered a similar fate: although they were allowed to stay on the farms after losing their jobs and their income, they generally had no livestock or other assets to fall back on. Some San who lost their jobs found refuge on communal land, but they had very limited control over this land which they shared with other farmers, and also they did not necessarily have livestock or other assets. In some instances these San found shelter and food by working for other farmers in the communal area where sometimes they received payment in kind.

The loss of income was compounded by a shortage of marketable knowledge and skills among the San, since the majority of San in the productive age groups had hardly received any education at a younger age. While the majority of the elderly San remain illiterate, young San face considerable financial, social and cultural challenges in the current education system, and consequently they tend to drop out before completing primary or junior secondary school. The number of San youth who successfully complete senior secondary school is even lower.

The San were also vulnerable because many of them did not have the livestock or other assets which are needed to make a living as subsistence farmers in communal areas or on resettlement farms. Nor did they have the means to start small-scale businesses in either urban informal settings or rural settings. So, on the whole, the San have had limited opportunities to improve their living standards independently, i.e. without external support. Moreover, when hit by droughts or other shocks, they did not have the means or the social networks to cope with such adverse conditions. Although there is a culture of sharing and togetherness in some San communities in Omaheke, usually in times of crisis, individuals could not rely on remittances from wealthier family members, or on other types of support, because all of them, without exception, were poor. Instead, therefore, there was a strong reliance on pensions and other social grants to survive times of crisis, but these funds hardly ever sufficed to create a buffer against adversity as they hardly lasted a month.

Drought relief and food/cash-for-work projects also remain important sources of food for many San in Omaheke, but these are not a long-term solution to the development problems faced by the San in this region. Apart from problems with the distribution, quantity and variety of such food, these

projects pose the risk of creating higher degrees of dependency. Given this vulnerability, in many situations there was a relatively strong reliance on neighbouring (non-San) farmers with whom water, pasture or labour were exchanged so that favours or support might be asked in return in more desperate times. Although the San's safety net was thus broadened to a certain extent, the terms of trade in these reciprocal relations were often determined by differences in power and wealth, and so were not very equal. In virtually all spheres of development (education, employment, land, political representation, etc.), the San continued to experience discrimination by other groups, and consequently did not feel themselves to be integrated into the broader society. They did not believe that they had a say with regard to their own development or the control over, and distribution of, resources such as land. Outsiders did not recognise their traditional land-use practices and their current land ownership rights, and the San felt squeezed out by the influx of newcomers who also wanted a piece of the San people's pie (e.g. in resettlement projects).

In view of all the above, it is important to note that some San indicated in the research discussions that they wished to live away from other ethnic groups, and to be resettled on land of their own. These notions raised concerns among some representatives of the communities with whom the San currently share land, who hoped that the San would integrate more in order to enhance cohesion and peace. Other motives for the call for integration possibly related to securing the availability of farmhands in rural areas. Although strategies to support the San should not be promoting a new form of apartheid, it is important to recognise why some San now feel the need to be on their own. This is mainly due to the unequal power relations that they continue to experience on the land, but also in the delivery of services in the education and health sectors.

Against this background of observed vulnerabilities and inequalities, it is fortunate that the recognition of the two San chiefs, and the establishment of formal TA structures which include councillors, has strengthened the political power of the San to a certain degree in both northern and southern Omaheke. At least when the chiefs requested government support for their communities, they no longer returned empty-handed. However, there is always a downside to progress, which in this case refers to the allegations of favouritism in the distribution of project benefits and jobs; accusations of a lack of attention in respect of remote communities; and signs of infighting in some TA structures. The two chiefs were also not always able to resolve disputes between their subjects and the representatives of other ethnic groups. So, although it is positive that the San now have formally acknowledged representation, the observed obstacles raise the question of whether or not it is appropriate for the government to channel so much of its support to the Omaheke San communities via the TA structures. The government should consider broadening its support to San communities by focusing on strengthening community-based organisations among the San, engaging civil society more intensively in the support of these communities, and establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

In view of their vulnerability, San communities often requested 'projects' in order to diversify their incomes. Apart from expecting donations of cattle (or goats as a secondary option), the San themselves did not always have a clear vision of what these projects should be about. (Other things requested by the San TAs, for example, included improved accommodation, water infrastructure and entry-level jobs in the civil service.) As many of these projects had been set up in remote areas, far from any market or suppliers, they were relatively costly to sustain and difficult to develop into productive income-generating projects. San community members and their leaders therefore often expected these activities to be fully subsidised, and they lacked a clear understanding of how these projects could be turned into productive or sustainable small-scale enterprises. Apart from jobs and shelter, many of these projects also had a communal focal point, such as a kindergarten, community gardening initiative, or revolving livestock scheme. This may seem to make sense

from an administrative (line ministry or NGO) perspective, or in terms of benefit-sharing among a larger group of people, but it often created management problems – especially when money for the operations or maintenance of the project had to be managed by a committee or a few elected local managers or leaders at a later stage. Many such projects initiated in San communities (e.g. campsites, shops and kindergartens) have failed or are falling into disrepair. Barriers to the success of these projects have included: remoteness and the high costs of obtaining supplies or parts; a lack of local management capacity and vision; and the absence of long-term support by service providers. In many instances there was simply no assessment of economic and environmental feasibility before the project was initiated – often the project appraisal merely involved a social needs assessment.

Projects usually start revealing signs of progress, for example in terms of food security, only when intensive and long-term relations – comprising capacity strengthening and an element of service provision (e.g. supplies and parts) – are created with San communities, as was done through LISUP I and II. Even then, some of the challenges mentioned here (e.g. access to markets and suppliers) can remain partially unresolved, or are simply catered for by the service providers for as long as the government or donors request them to do so. Thus the question of project sustainability will not have been resolved in reality, necessitating strategising on the part of the government, civil society and development partners regarding how project support to San communities can be organised in such a manner that it does not lead to continuous support and dependence, but rather to productive farming and productive income-generating projects.

In view of the wish of some San to live on their own, as well as the challenges faced in implementing development projects in remote areas, questions need to be posed to the government as to the direction it wants to take with resettling San. Lately, the OPM's SDP, with donor funds channelled through the NPCCS, has started to move in the direction of settling San in relatively large groups (up to 300 individuals) in very remote areas. The government's idea is to give San a place to stay on their own where they could start farming for themselves after initial donations of water infrastructure and livestock have been made. It is also hoped that locating San far away from informal settlements will ensure that they are no longer affected by the negative influences associated with these neighbourhoods, such as alcoholism and drug abuse. Thus the concept of the group resettlement project, which has posed many challenges and questions for the MLR since the first such project was established in the mid-1990s, has been revisited.

While it is laudable that the government has increased its efforts to support San communities, and although some of the applicable projects may have potential – provided that sufficient efforts are put into post-settlement support (strengthening capacity, improving market access, and creating coherent and well-organised communities) – the question of why the San communities have to be resettled so remotely, in many cases on marginal lands, has yet to be answered. One foreseeable problem is that distances to existing facilities such as schools, hostels and clinics will become even more of a challenge for many resettled San, and thus will increase San dependency on neighbouring communities, in that San might need assistance with transport – which generally comes at a relatively high cost when long distances are involved. Also, infringements by others on San people's land and water rights in their new but remote environments will be difficult to regulate as the government, which would ordinarily be in a position to effect some measure of control, is at a greater distance. It will be very difficult to counterbalance the prevailing unequal relations with people of other ethnic groups under such circumstances. Moreover, the people to be resettled do not necessarily constitute a homogeneous community, which creates challenges for the type of collaboration that is required to operate and manage farm livelihoods productively and successfully.