5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Tsumkwe District in eastern Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia. Known in the apartheid era as “Bushmanland”, Tsumkwe District has a high concentration of San populations, and is one of the few places in Namibia where San are in the majority. Tsumkwe District is generally divided into “Tsumkwe East” and “Tsumkwe West”. Tsumkwe East is made up largely of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy; it also includes the town of Tsumkwe, which is the administrative centre of the district. Much of Tsumkwe West is the Nja Jaqna Conservancy. Parts of Tsumkwe District do not fall within either conservancy – including Tsumkwe town itself.

1 Corresponding to the former designations “Bushmanland East” and “Bushmanland West”.
2 Tsumkwe is technically classified as a “township” (according to the Government Gazette No. 3933, 2007), but since it is generally referred to as a town, we are going to use the term “town” for Tsumkwe. The same applies to the villages which are technically defined as “settlements”: to avoid confusion we will use the term “village”.

Shelter at N’animh in Nyae Nyae Conservancy, Otjozondjupa Region
In this chapter we use “Tsumkwe District” when referring to the overall administrative district; “Tsumkwe East” or “Tsumkwe West” when referring to those geographical divisions; and the names of the conservancies when referring to conservancy-related issues.

A conservancy is a community-based organisation established under the Nature Conservation Amendment Act 5 of 1996. Upon registration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), conservancies acquire use rights over game and tourism within their boundaries, potentially enabling them to derive income and other benefits – such as trophy hunting and other tourism activities. One aim of our research was to establish whether San living in conservancies were better off compared to San in non-conservancy areas. The two conservancies have very different histories, ethnic compositions and geographies, making it difficult to aggregate data and generalise across the two. It is more revealing to consider them separately initially, and then directly, as we do at the end of this chapter. Both the similarities and the differences are informative and important.
5.2 Nyae Nyae Conservancy

5.2.1 General background on Nyae Nyae Conservancy

**Description of the area**

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Nyae Nyae belong to the San group Ju’hoansi. The name in Ju’hoansi for Nyae Nyae is ‘N||oaq’ae, meaning ‘place of broken rocks’. The area is part of the Kalahari geological system, although the Aha Hills on the border with Botswana reduce the westward transportation of wind-blown Kalahari sands into the Nyae Nyae Conservancy area. One of the most important natural features in Nyae Nyae Conservancy is the system of calcrete pans that often fill with rainwater in the wet season, providing seasonal access to water for people, livestock and wildlife. The area has a high diversity and abundance of key plant resources utilised by inhabitants, such as the morama bean and the mangetti nut. The climate is semi-arid, with an average annual rainfall of around 470 mm – although there is a high degree of variability and the area is subject to periodic droughts, making the area marginal for rain-fed crop production. The mean maximum daily temperature is 33°C, although overnight temperatures in winter can reach below freezing point (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 11-13).

The Nyae Nyae Conservancy area of Otjozondjupa Region corresponds largely with the Tsumkwe East Magisterial District. The town of Tsumkwe, established by the South African Government in 1959, has remained the administrative centre of the district and several government offices are located there, along with a handful of shops and churches, a community centre and numerous shebeens. Tsumkwe is located in the middle of the conservancy area, but is not technically part of the conservancy. Nonetheless the town plays a central role in the conservancy’s day-to-day activities, and all of the conservancy’s administrative offices are located there.

The area is relatively remote and isolated. The nearest large town is Grootfontein, 265 km to the east on road C44, and the border with Botswana lies 57 km to the east on the same road. Until 2008 the border post was closed, so there was no through-traffic in that direction, and although the post is open now, few travellers use this route. As a result of the area’s remoteness, and partly due to the conservation ethic of the Ju’hoan residents (described below), wildlife has not been eradicated as it was in communal lands to the north and south of the Nyae Nyae area. The large mammals living in Nyae Nyae Conservancy include, among others, elephant, leopard, hyena, wild dog, roan antelope, kudu, eland, gemsbok, hartebeest and giraffe.

The vast majority of the inhabitants of the Nyae Nyae area are Ju’hoansi, and almost all of the conservancy members are Ju’hoansi. Only conservancy members (numbering 1 375 at the time of the field research) are allowed to live in the conservancy itself. As the town of Tsumkwe is not a part of the conservancy proper, residence there is not restricted by conservancy membership.

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3 The term Ju’hoansi refers to both the people and their the language. The term Ju’hoan is both the singular form of Ju’hoansi (used when referring to one person) and an adjective.

4 Membership includes adults over 18 years who are permanent and lawful residents of the conservancy and those who were born within the boundaries of the conservancy. Those who move in from outside can apply for membership after living in the conservancy for more than 10 years or if they marry a member – if they “have shown sufficient interest in the aims and objectives of the conservancy and are not a member of another conservancy”. (Nyae Nyae Conservancy Constitution: 2010).

5 The town is on state land, and the conservancy is classified as communal land. These classifications entail legislative differences regarding, inter alia, residency, land use, animals and business.
Nonetheless, the Ju|'hoansi are also the majority group in Tsumkwe, although people of other ethnic groups also constitute a large proportion of the town’s residents: there are larger numbers of Owambo, Kavango, Herero and Afrikaner residents, and very small numbers of !Xun and Khwe San.

Most people in Nyae Nyae Conservancy live in the 38 small villages based on the Ju|'hoan n!ore, a territorial system in which land belongs to a family group. In the past, a n!ore was an area of land providing enough game, veldfood and water to support a band of 30-50 people. Rights of residence in a n!ore were inherited from both parents, and individuals also gained rights in other n!oresi (plural of n!ore) through marriage (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 58). The Ju|'hoansi have adapted the n!ore system to modern circumstances, and still use it as the basis for land allocation and resource use. In Nyae Nyae, n!oresi generally include a small village, and each village is referred to by the name of the applicable n!ore.

A further important aspect of the Nyae Nyae Ju|'hoan community is that they had a recognised traditional authority (TA) and a chief, Tsamkxao |Oma, also known widely as “Chief Bobo”, with general legitimacy – this is discussed in the section on political participation on page 127.

**Historical background**

Before 1960 there were about 250 Ju|'hoansi living semi-permanently in what is now Tsumkwe District (including both the Nyae Nyae and N‡a Jaqna Conservancy areas), but by 1993 the overall number of people had increased to around 5 700. The increase was partly due to the settlement of around 4 000 northern !Xun in South African Defence Force (SADF) army camps – mostly in what is now N‡a Jaqna – before Independence in 1990 (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 11-17). Between 1959 and the early 1970s, many Ju|’hoansi moved from their n!oresi to the newly formed administrative centre of Tsumkwe. This move was encouraged by the South West Africa Administration, which aimed to provide people with wage labour, training in agriculture and animal husbandry, and medical care (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 9-10; see also Gordon and Douglas 2000 and Biesele and Hitchcock 2011 for descriptions of the history of the Nyae Nyae area).

About 900 people moved to Tsumkwe at this time, but, despite the fact that jobs and infrastructure were provided, most of the Ju|’hoansi were unable to cope with the extensive social changes that the move brought about. Social disintegration was accompanied by dependency on a few wage earners, alcoholism and crime. The Tsumkwe n!ore could not sustain hunting and gathering by such a large number of people, and food resources near the administrative centre came to be severely depleted (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 10). At this time, Tsumkwe town became known by the Ju|’hoansi as ‘the place of death’ (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 10).

In 1969, “Bushmanland” was created as a homeland under the Odendaal Plan, South Africa’s scheme for creating apartheid-style homelands in Namibia. This designation confined the Ju|’hoansi to less than 10% of their original hunting territory – which had once extended to the north into the area that is now Khaudum National Park, south into G|am and across the border into Botswana – and left them access to only a few permanent water sources (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 17). Much of the Ju|’hoan land was designated as part of “Kavangoland” to the north and “Hereroland” to the south.

In 1981, anthropologist and filmmaker John Marshall set up a ‘cattle fund’ to help Ju|’hoan people move away from Tsumkwe and back to their n!oresi, and to develop a mixed economy of subsistence
cattle farming and dry-land cultivation to supplement hunting and gathering in the *n!oresi*. John Marshall also established an NGO called the Ju’Wa Bushman Development Foundation ( JBDF), which later became, and today remains, the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN). In 1986 the JBDF assisted the Ju’hoansi to establish a local community-based organisation (CBO), the Ju’Wa Farmers’ Union, which later became the Nyae Nyae Farmers’ Cooperative (NNFC), a CBO that transitioned into the Nyae Nyae Conservancy in 1998. Through a management committee supported by the JBDF, the NNFC provided some basic services to its members, acted as a voice for the community to communicate with government and other outsiders, and allocated land according to the *n!ore* system to applicants who wanted to move back to the land, and to Ju’hoansi who wanted to move in from other areas.

Officials of the South West Africa (SWA) Administration, including conservation officers, resisted the move back to the *n!oresi*, largely due to concerns relating to hunting and the use of water points created for wildlife. In addition, the SWA Administration had planned to establish a game reserve to the east of Tsumkwe, which would have meant depriving people of their land. The Ju’hoansi and the JBDF successfully resisted the planned game reserve, and several Ju’hoan families subsequently settled at water points designated for wildlife (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 17-18).

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**Box 5.1: Land policies in post-Independent Namibia**

The Nyae Nyae area played an important role in the development of post-Independence Namibian land policies. By the time of Independence in 1990, the issue of land reform was a matter of pressing concern for the new SWAPO government, which needed to transition from the apartheid homelands – including the former Bushmanland – to a more just land tenure system. In Bushmanland, the SADF’s withdrawal left inhabitants extremely vulnerable economically. Despite concerns among the Ju’hoansi about their relationship with SWAPO after their association with the SADF during the war for independence, the new government was aware of their difficult position, and in early 1991 started a resettlement and development programme, beginning in West Tsumkwe (now N‡a Jaqna Conservancy). Though well-intentioned, the land distribution planning was based on individual ownership of 5 ha plots by male heads of households, rather than on the traditional *n!oresi* patterns of the !Xun and Ju’hoan residents of the area. In eastern Bushmanland (now Nyae Nyae Conservancy), where people were already living in their *n!oresi*, the Ju’hoansi protested and successfully resisted the implementation of such a model.

In 1991 the Namibian Government held the Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question, in which the Nyae Nyae Farmers’ Cooperative (NNFC) played an important role. In the time leading up to the conference, the Nyae Nyae Ju’hoansi prepared to defend their traditional land tenure system against the model that the government seemed prepared to implement in all communal areas (as it was already doing in West Tsumkwe) – a system based on a riverine, not desert, environment. The conference “provided the Ju’hoansi and other minority people an unparalleled chance to have their voices heard on the specific topic of alternative land use models” (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 141), and the Nyae Nyae Ju’hoansi used this opportunity to make an impassioned and effective argument in favour of maintaining their traditional land-use system. It was agreed that the *n!ore* system would be used as the land-allocation model in the area in future. Largely based on the participation of the Ju’hoansi in this conference, the Nyae Nyae area became a pilot for a national project in land-use planning based on community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), and eventually, in 1998, this area became the first registered Namibian conservancy.

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*a* For a detailed description of these processes, see Biesele and Hitchcock 2011, on which much of this description is based.
In 1998 the NNFC was replaced by the Nyae Nyae Conservancy – the first Namibian communal conservancy – which has become the focal point for most donor and NGO support to the Ju’hoansi of the area. The main NGO assisting the conservancy is the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN). The residents of Nyae Nyae Conservancy have many advantages over other San in Namibia – including control over their own land, a support NGO based in Windhoek, and some access to mother-tongue education. However, they remain poor and vulnerable to exploitation by other ethnic groups, especially in the town of Tsumkwe. Those living in the conservancy villages report a higher level of wellbeing than those living in Tsumkwe, but fear the encroachment of neighbouring groups onto their land.

Throughout the past two decades, the Ju’hoansi of Nyae Nyae have successfully defended their land and land-use strategies several times, in the face of both inappropriate government land distribution plans and incoming groups wishing to use the land as grazing for their cattle. Ju’hoan leaders have consistently argued for the need to maintain a careful balance between livestock and wildlife, in order not to deplete the land, as has happened in adjacent areas and elsewhere in the country (Biese and Hitchcock 2011).

In 2013, Nyae Nyae Conservancy also became a gazetted Community Forest under Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) legislation. This status gives the conservancy members rights over the forest products (plants) and grazing resources, and increases the community’s control of forest resources within the community forest boundary, therefore it provides additional legal protection against external exploitation.

**Land-use strategies and vulnerability to neighbouring groups**

The Ju’hoansi traditionally relied on an extremely low-impact hunting and gathering lifestyle. They did alter the landscape, for example by burning grass to promote new growth to attract game, and by their usage patterns of plant products, but the effects of their land-use activities were not immediately visible, and consequently the land could easily appear to be ‘unused’ – especially to cattle herders looking for grass on which to graze their animals. In Nyae Nyae, the Ju’hoansi have therefore long been defending their territory from the invasion of Herero cattle herders, and this struggle continues at the time of writing.

On both sides of the Namibia-Botswana border, the Ju’hoansi live in very close proximity to Herero cattle farmers. After Namibian Independence in 1990, Herero farmers who had fled the German army and settled in Botswana in the early 20th century returned to Namibia, where they were provided with land to the south of Nyae Nyae, around G’am. Several times since, the G’am farmers have tried to move their cattle to the waterholes in the eastern part of Nyae Nyae, but have been evicted by local government authorities and the Ju’hoansi themselves.

The most recent invasion was in 2009 when a group of Herero farmers cut the Veterinary Cordon Fence – commonly referred to as the “Red Line” – that separates Nyae Nyae from G’am and invaded Nyae Nyae with over 1 000 head of cattle. The fence separates certified disease-free cattle in the south from the (potentially) infected areas to the north. Because of this, the cattle could not simply be driven back, and the government confiscated them. However, rather than simply return to G’am, the cattle-less Herero farmers settled in Tsumkwe. At the time of our field research they were reported to be amassing cattle, intimidating Ju’hoan residents, and illegally using conservancy resources such as grass for their cattle and wood for fencing.

This problem was of great concern to the Ju’hoansi at the time of our field research. In particular they were worried about the unsustainable use of resources. The land-use strategy of Nyae Nyae
Conservancy, and the livelihoods of the Ju’hoansi, depend on maintaining a careful balance between conserving wildlife and plant resources for their own use and for tourism, and engaging in small-scale cultivation of plants and limited livestock. The Ju’hoansi are very aware of the vulnerability of their subsistence strategy to large numbers of cattle, and they are also aware that the law does not give the Herero a right to be on their land. Their concern is clearly summarised in a statement made by |Un (‘Kiewiet’), a Ju’hoan elder and former conservancy chairperson, shortly after the invasion:

“I thought … that we had made one law; that we had our n!ore and they had theirs. And we, what has been sustaining us, is our wildlife. We have hunters. And we also have people who make ostrich-eggshell beadwork and sell it. And we have people who collect kamaku [Devil’s Claw] roots and sell them. It’s a business of ours, and as I now see it, that business is going to die soon. If the G!am farmers still stay with us here, it will die. … You know that we are people who walk about on the land. We look for things like ca, chon, ||xaru [veld root foods that grow in the sand] … we live from these things. And if there are a lot of cattle here, we won’t see those things again … their stalks will be pressed down and killed [by the cattle’s hooves] and there will be nothing we can do about it. … We have nothing else we can continue to do. There will be no hunting. And foreigners who came here from other lands to hunt will stop coming ….” (27 June 2009, interviewed by M. Biesele)

Nyae Nyae Conservancy is the only place in southern Africa today where a San group has had the opportunity to define its own land-use strategy and retains the right to hunt traditionally. The conservancy community has chosen to maintain a low-intensity land-use plan that incorporates a diversity of livelihood strategies, traditional and modern. The importance of maintaining this opportunity cannot be overstated.

### 5.2.2 Research sites in Nyae Nyae Conservancy

To represent the different sets of circumstances of conservancy residents, the researchers selected three sites for the study in Nyae Nyae Conservancy: Tsumkwe, ||Xa|hoba and N‡animh. Tsumkwe was selected because it is a relatively large town and an administrative centre with government
offices and services, which makes it considerably different from the surrounding villages. Although Tsumkwe, as a municipality, is not officially part of the conservancy, many conservancy members reside there permanently or temporarily, and it is the administrative centre of the whole area including the conservancy.

||Xa|hoba was selected for the research because several people in Nyae Nyae reported it to be one of the most “successful” villages in the conservancy, and N‡animh was selected as it was reported to be one of the “poorest” villages in the conservancy. In the context of Nyae Nyae, however, it must be borne in mind that there is not a great deal of differentiation among community members wherever they live in the conservancy. In the wealth-ranking exercises, conservancy members consistently ranked almost all Ju|'hoansi within the lowest (poorest) categories (see subsection on perceptions of poverty on page 117). The main characteristics of the three research sites in Nyae Nyae are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Main characteristics of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy research sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Urban/rural status</th>
<th>Land tenure</th>
<th>San language groups</th>
<th>Population status (numerical)</th>
<th>Institutional support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsumkwe</td>
<td>Administrative centre for Tsumkwe District, with government offices and some services</td>
<td>Town land</td>
<td>Primarily Ju</td>
<td>'hoansi, with some !Xun and Khwe San</td>
<td>San majority with Ovamboland, Kavango, Herero and Afrikaner minorities. (Most paid employment positions are occupied by people of the other ethnic groups.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Xa</td>
<td>hoba</td>
<td>A remote rural village</td>
<td>Communal land (a n!ore under the local tenure system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N‡animh</td>
<td>A remote rural village</td>
<td>Communal land (a n!ore under the local tenure system)</td>
<td>Ju</td>
<td>'hoansi</td>
<td>San-only community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tsumkwe

Tsumkwe, located in the middle of Nyae Nyae Conservancy, is the administrative centre for the whole of Tsumkwe District (encompassing Tsumkwe East and Tsumkwe West). Currently Tsumkwe has a population of 2 000-3 000 (Diemand 2010 et al.: 4). The Ju'hoan name for the town is Tjum!|kui, meaning ‘poison arrows’. The Ju’hoan ancestors used this name for Tsumkwe, which was formerly a n!ore, long before Europeans arrived in the area. Like ‘Nyae Nyae’ (i.e. N||oaq!ae, or ‘place of broken rocks’), ‘Tsumkwe’ is a Europeanised version of the original name, and Ju’hoan residents continue to use their own place names when speaking their language.

As noted above, the majority of Tsumkwe’s residents were Ju’hoansi at the time of our field research. There were also small numbers of !Xun and Khwe San residents, and growing numbers of Owambo, Herero, Kavango and Afrikaner residents. The only administrative position of authority occupied by a San person was that of Local Government and Housing Officer.

Tsumkwe’s physical infrastructure included a primary school, a secondary school, a clinic, a magistrate’s court, a community centre, an electricity generator (hybrid diesel/solar), a tourist lodge, government offices, social housing and government housing. People could purchase land from the town council or private owners on which to settle in Tsumkwe, and could build their own houses on the land acquired. In practice there were many informal settlements around Tsumkwe, most of which were occupied by Ju’hoansi. In these settlements people lived in makeshift shelters made of tree branches, plastic sheeting, blankets and other such materials. In recent years the Herero farmers from G!am also began to create their own informal settlements within the Tsumkwe municipal area (for a map, see Diemand et al. 2011: 6).

Services available in Tsumkwe included electricity (for those living in formal settlements and able to afford it), healthcare, education (primary, secondary and some adult education), agricultural extension, veterinary services, a Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) local station broadcasting in Ju’hoansi, and a community centre, named Captain Kxao Kxami Community Learning and Development Centre (CLDC), built by the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) and run by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The CLDC provides a meeting hall, a library, internet access, and services such as printing, although opening hours were irregular at the time of our field research.

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6 The 2011 census did not provide specific data on Tsumkwe. Diemand et al., whose study was essentially an assessment of water supply and sanitation in Tsumkwe, derived this number through interviews with local administrators.
7 The Tsumkwe Country Lodge, owned by Namibia Country Lodges at the time of the research.
Water is available, but not everyone had access to it. There were only three free water taps in all of Tsumkwe; the rest were all metered and located at individual houses. To use these taps, people living in the informal settlements had to get the owners’ permission, and usually had to pay. Sometimes they were able to access free water at the clinic.

In the immediate area around Tsumkwe, wildlife and veldfood have become depleted because of the impact of the large number of people living in the town and surrounding area, and the illegal livestock in the area. Participants in our focus group discussion (FGDs) reported that there had been two community gardens, but these were not very successful because of a shortage of seeds, a lack of tools and conflicts with incomers. They said that one of the gardens might end up producing some grapes, which they could sell in Tsumkwe.

||Xa|hoba

||Xa|hoba village is situated about 24 km north of Tsumkwe on the road to the Khaudum National Park. All of the villagers were Ju’hoansi, and most were members of a single extended family. A few were incomers married to members of the village community. FGD participants said that there were 20 households in the village. One person who had married into the ||Xa|hoba community was from Grashoek, a Ju’hoan village in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy. Grashoek has a Living Museum tourism project (see photo on page 503), and this connection to Grashoek through marriage inspired ||Xa|hoba residents to begin a similar project in their own village.

The ||Xa|hoba community initiated their Living Hunters Museum in 2009, with the Living Culture Foundation providing some support in the form of training, advice, signage and some publicity for the project. With no other funds or support, the village residents were managing the project entirely by themselves at the time of our visit. When tourists arrived in the village, residents would change from their everyday clothes into traditional dress and take the visitors on a bush walk. They would also perform traditional dances and demonstrate other traditional activities in accordance with the tourists’ interests. At least one resident was sufficiently proficient in English to be able to translate for the tourists. Money earned from each visit was divided among the residents who had participated in that particular visit, with a designated percentage going into a community fund that could be used to cover expenses for the benefit of the entire village. The existence of this project provided a measure of community self-sufficiency, and interest in traditional activities and in the tourism business was high in ||Xa|hoba.
As in all Nyae Nyae villages, there is very little infrastructure in ||Xa|hoba; the village has no clinic or government offices, no electricity supply and no communication infrastructure. However, one of the Village Schools (Grades 1-3 – see Box 5.3, page 123) supported by the MoE and NAMAS is located in ||Xa|hoba (described in the subsections on education and outside support, pages 121 and 131 respectively).

Water is pumped by solar power from a borehole which is protected from elephants by a stone wall. This equipment is serviced by the conservancy. The system was operational during our visit, and was reported to be generally working well, although sometimes young people allegedly used the power to charge their cellphones, causing the system to break down. Also, the borehole was about 1 km from the village (see next paragraph), making water transportation laborious. There was one small cultivated field being used by a few of the villagers. There were no cattle, but a few sheep remained from a Dutch Reformed Church project (described in the subsection on livestock farming, page 113).

||Xa|hoba is a traditional nlore, but the village itself has moved a number of times. In the drought years of the early part of the new millennium, the water pump broke and ||Xa|hoba had no other source of water. Most of the residents relocated to Ôm!o!o, a village near Tsumkwe, and the school in ||Xa|hoba was closed. In the years that followed, the borehole was repaired but then broke again, and people moved around depending on water availability, access to school, and other factors. Eventually a new borehole with a solar pump was installed, and in 2010 the school opened. FGD participants reported that the area around the current borehole is not suitable for constructing a village – they said that there were too many stones there – so they moved the village to its current location about 1 km from both the borehole and the school. It is not uncommon for Ju|’hoansi to relocate their villages periodically, for environmental and social reasons.

N‡animh

The village of N‡animh is located 15 km east of Tsumkwe, along the C44, just off the northern side of the road. Residents said that N‡animh was also the name of the nlore, but this name had no particular meaning. There was one small extended family living in the village, which has 14 registered conservancy members. The village had a borehole, with a submersible pump powered by solar panels. Nyae Nyae Conservancy provided this equipment and a mining prospecting company drilled the borehole. However, there was no water tank in which to store water, so the villagers were limited to watering their gardens when the sun was shining, with the result that the gardens failed; there was no functioning garden at the time of our visit. The nearest schools were those in Tsumkwe (one primary and one secondary) and the Village School (Grades 1-3) at Baraka. The nearest clinic was in Tsumkwe.

The people of N‡animh reported that they had been living at this site for the past two years. They had previously lived a little further away but the water level at the previous site had dropped, so they had moved to the present site where the borehole worked well. In N‡animh people were particularly concerned about the cattle of other ethnic groups coming onto their land, and they reported one incident of intimidation by a man who came onto their nlore. They were aware that such ‘encroachment by outsiders’ was not allowed, so they considered this a violation of their rights (see also the subsection on outsiders, page 129).

8 The Village School at Baraka was closed at the time of writing this report.
5.2.3 Research findings in Nyae Nyae Conservancy

In this section we look at the livelihood strategies employed at the three research sites in Nyae Nyae Conservancy. After analysing the different options available to each community, we discuss the food security of the San in general in this conservancy. Finally, we present the results of the poverty and wealth-ranking exercise conducted at each of the three sites.

Livelihoods and poverty

FGD participants at all three sites identified a wide range of livelihood strategies, food sources and income-generating options available to them (see Table 5.2). The most important sources of food were government food aid, Old Age Pensions (used mainly to purchase food) and veldfood. Supplementary livelihood strategies included selling crafts, other tourism activities, small-scale cultivation, livestock farming, Devil’s Claw harvesting, employment or piecework (reported mostly by Tsumkwe residents) and hunting. The conservancy cash benefit was also mentioned everywhere as an important source of additional income, and the meat from trophy hunters’ kills was said to provide an important source of food. Finally, sharing of resources was an important resource-distribution strategy mentioned at all three sites.

It should be noted that in Nyae Nyae, some of these subsistence options – notably those based on the interconnected opportunities provided by wildlife, tourism and the conservancy itself –

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9 It did not become clear during the FGDs whether the food received from the government was channelled through the San Feeding Programme of the Office of the Prime Minister or the Drought Relief Programme.
are available to an extent that is unparalleled in any other area where San are living in Namibia. The presence of wildlife attracts tourists and also enables traditional own-use hunting, and trophy hunting provides some income and makes additional meat available, in that meat from trophy kills is distributed on a rotational basis throughout the conservancy. Some villages are able to derive fairly regular income from tourism (see details in descriptions below). For example, FGD participants in Nǂanimh reported drawing an income from craft sales, and in ||Xa|hoba the Living Hunters Museum provided both employment and a pool of funds to cover village expenses. It was also reported that people at other villages (which were not specifically included in our research) danced for tourists and took them on bush walks on an ad hoc basis. Villages such as Djoxhoe and Makuri received fees from tourists who stayed at rudimentary campsites. In addition, with the income that the conservancy earned – largely from fees paid by holders of concessions for big-game hunting – it was able to provide an annual cash payment to all conservancy members.

Table 5.2: Main livelihood strategies at the Nyae Nyae Conservancy research sites*

| Livelihood strategies                  | Tsumkwe | ||Xa|Xoba | Nǂanimh |
|----------------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Food aid                               |         |       |        |
| Old Age Pension money                  | Many    | Some  | 2      |
| Gathering veldfood                     |         |       |        |
| Hunting – own use                      |         |       |        |
| Meat from trophy hunting               |         |       |        |
| Tourism project                        |         | Living Hunters Museum |        |
| Craft sales                            |         |       |        |
| Traditional dancing                    |         |       |        |
| Cultivation                            |         |       |        |
| Sale of garden produce                 |         |       |        |
| Livestock                              | Sheep and chickens | Sheep |        |
| Full-time jobs                         | Many    |       | 3      |
| Part-time jobs                         | Many    |       | 7      |
| Piecework                              | Many    |       | 1      |
| Devil’s Claw harvesting                |         |       |        |
| Conservancy cash benefit (per member per annum) | N$400 | N$400 | N$400 |
| Sharing                                |         |       |        |

* The order in which the strategies are presented does not necessarily reflect their importance. The cell shading indicates that the strategy is employed at the applicable site.

The following descriptions provide more detail about each of the sources of food and/or income listed in Table 5.2. As the importance of each source varies somewhat according to site and time of year, there is no absolute order of importance. However, it should be emphasised that, as stated above, in all research sites, food aid, Old Age Pensions and wild foods were described as providing the staple foods and basic income upon which people relied.

Food aid

FGD participants at all three sites reported being dependent on food aid as a main dietary staple, but information regarding the delivery of food aid, and what was included, was inconsistent. This was probably because the amount, type and supplier of government food aid changes periodically. Therefore, at most of the San Study research sites across the country, people were unclear about what they were supposed to get on a regular basis, how often, and who was entitled to it.
In Tsumkwe, people said that food was delivered once a month (some said twice, but the scheduled delivery is once a month), and consisted of two 12.5 kg bags of maize-meal per household. People said that in the past, food aid had also included cooking oil, beans and fish in addition to maize-meal, thus there had been no need to buy any additional food. At the time of our field research, however, the food aid consisted only of maize-meal, and some participants claimed that the food aid was going to people in Tsumkwe who were not supposed to get it, including people who had their own businesses.

In ||Xa|hoba, people said that they had received food aid once a month for the past two years. The food aid was most important for them from November to January, being the period when they were most hungry because the veldfood was only just starting to germinate, and the veldfood which they had stored was finished. This is also the low season for tourism, a main source of income for the village. Some people said that they also work in the cultivated field during this period (see below).

In N‡animh, people said that they received food aid every month when the government transported it to all of the villages, and there were no problems with delivery. Although they sometimes bought maize-meal to supplement their supply, the food aid usually sufficed to fulfil their needs.

The Local Government Officer in Tsumkwe said that the food aid was provided only during some months of the year – in 2011, for example, it started in May and stopped in August – but he did not know the reason for such irregularity in the delivery schedule. According to him, the food aid consisted of two 12.5 kg bags of maize-meal, cooking oil and four tins of fish per household per month. He emphasised that the aim was to supplement what the community already had, not to provide all the food that people needed. Food was first delivered to the villages because there were no shops nearby, and then to Tsumkwe. He said that every community had received food during the August 2011 distribution.

The same officer said that food aid was intended for unemployed people who had been registered, and that although these were primarily San, recipients also included some non-San. Regarding the complaints that non-eligible people were receiving food aid, he said that it was possible that some unregistered people received food aid if they demanded it, and/or if the distributors felt sorry for them, but he reiterated that owners of businesses were not supposed to receive food aid. He said that one problem was the Ju‘hoansi not always arriving at the right time when the food was distributed, which meant that they could miss their allocation. To preclude this problem, the government was thinking of changing the distribution system so as to drop off the food at houses or central points in each community, whereupon the local leader would distribute it using a list of registered recipients.

As in other places in Namibia, there were rumours that some people were selling their food aid, which is not allowed, but the Local Government Officer emphasised that this was not a widespread practice in Nyae Nyae, and anyway, in the few cases of which he was aware, maize-meal was sold in order to purchase other kinds of food. Our research found that food aid – especially the maize-meal – is currently a critical food source for many Ju‘hoansi in Nyae Nyae, and it is not being sold for cash on a large scale. Until other food sources are consistently available, food aid should be continued and ideally diversified to give recipients a more balanced diet.

**Veldfood**

At every research site in Nyae Nyae, veldfood – food obtained from the bush – formed an important part of the residents’ diet. Although veldfood can refer both to hunted meat and gathered plant foods, in this section we focus on plant foods, as hunting is discussed below. At each site, FGD
participants provided a detailed list of veldfoods that they consumed on a regular basis – these are listed in Table 5.3 below. This food was very important to every San community of Nyae Nyae, not only because all of them needed it for sustenance, but also because both hunting and gathering are part of the San culture.

Even though veldfood had become scarce around the town of Tsumkwe, all 10 of the women present in the discussion there said that they gathered veldfood, and that they ate five particular veldfoods on a daily basis. Participants in ||Xa|hoba did not specify the veldfoods that they gathered, but they described veldfood as “the kind of food eaten most often”, and they ate two kinds daily. Participants in Nǂanimh said that they ate veldfoods every day, and they listed many foods that are available seasonally.

It must be noted that the lists of veldfoods provided at each site (see Table 5.3) are not exhaustive, as other recent studies found that Nyae Nyae residents consume a wide variety of veldfoods (Leffers 2003; and Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 44). It should also be noted that our research was conducted in November, being the end of the dry season when veldfood is at its lowest availability. Finally, it is important to note that veldfood consumption varies from site to site in Nyae Nyae, according to availability in different parts of the conservancy. For example, Wiessner (2004) found that veldfood availability, and hence consumption, was often very low in the south-eastern part of Nyae Nyae (which was not included in our study).

In Nǂanimh in particular, people relied on veldfood to support their livelihoods. Although they reported that there were not enough animals to hunt because the elephants were chasing them away, they also said that there was enough food and game in the nlore to fulfil their needs. Furthermore, they reported that there had never been a time in the past when there was not enough to hunt or gather, except during the dry season when they had to search for foods which had become scarce. Thus in some villages, people depended greatly on veldfood in the absence of other resources. Some people also noted that hunting and gathering are activities that San much enjoy.

### Table 5.3: Veldfoods consumed at the Nyae Nyae Conservancy research sites

| Frequency/importance | Tsumkwe | ||Xa|hoba | Nǂanimh |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Important veldfoods eaten daily/seasonally | Less veldfood is available in the dry season, but the foods listed below were still said to be eaten “daily”. | Veldfood in general is described as “the food eaten most often”, but specific varieties were not recorded. | Eaten daily: |
| Eaten daily: | • Dja | • Water roots | • Wild onions |
| | • N!ang | | |
| | • G!kiïag | | |
| | • G!qoq | | |
| | • Ca (wild sweet potato) | | |
| Veldfood eaten occasionally | Hunted game meat (kudu and eland) | Hunted game meat (types not specified) | • Wild honey |
| | | | • Hunted game meat (porcupine, springhare, kudu and other antelope) |

Preparing water root in ||Xa|hoba village. At all three sites, water root was identified as a critical source of sustenance.
Hunting

Nyae Nyae Conservancy is the exception among all areas in Namibia where San are living in that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) explicitly accepts hunting in the traditional manner on conservancy land. However, hunters must comply with the ‘traditional hunting’ regulations which the conservancy and the MET have put in place – although some San consider the MET’s definition of ‘traditional’ to be too narrow. The regulations permit the use of tools such as bows, spears and traps only; they forbid the use of guns, horses and dogs; and they restrict hunting of certain species. In Tsumkwe, FGD participants said that although everyone may hunt, the game was becoming scarce, and because there were few animals around Tsumkwe, they hunted only when they went back to their villages. These participants also said that the men were forgetting their hunting skills, and because the young men lacked these skills, hunting was declining. In ||Xa|hoba and Nǂanimh, however, young men reported hunting regularly.

Old Age Pensions

As is the case with other San communities, the Old Age Pension of N$550 per month was an important source of cash, particularly for the poorest families.10 Tsumkwe residents said pension money was important for buying things – but that it did not go very far because goods were becoming more expensive. People in both||Xa|hoba and Nǂanimh also reported that Old Age Pension money was important and used for buying food.

However, there were some problems reported with accessing the pension money. People in Tsumkwe said that collecting the money could be a problem for those who lived in the villages: if they missed collecting it on the day that it was paid out, they lost that payment. Residents said the “paymasters” went only to the villages close to the main road, and people living in more distant villages had to come to Tsumkwe to collect the money. It could cost up to N$400 to get a lift to Tsumkwe from a village to collect a pension worth N$500. This meant that many Nyae Nyae residents who were eligible for an Old Age Pension were not in fact collecting their money.

Another problem commonly reported was that most pensioners were illiterate and did not understand the value of money, thus money was easily taken from them. The most problematic situation was at the shebeens, where pensioners or their family members would make purchases on credit and sometimes end up owing more than they could afford to pay back. It was commonly reported that shebeen owners would stand at pension distribution centres and take the whole pension amount collected by a pensioner to pay off his/her debt. The Local Government Officer emphasised that this was not allowed,11 and that efforts were being made to control this practice. According to him, the problem was directly related to the fact that people from the villages had to come to Tsumkwe to collect their pension money (as well as documents such as birth and death certificates). Being dependent on lifts to get to Tsumkwe, they usually had to stay there for several days, during which they often paid for alcohol or food on credit, thus effectively spending their pension money even before receiving it.

The Local Government Officer said that many problems relating to the collection of pensions could be solved by distributing the money in the villages rather than in Tsumkwe. The conservancy

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10 The Old Age Pension grant was raised in 2013 to N$600 per month.
11 We did not get information on legal regulations specifically addressing this issue, but government officials generally acknowledged that shebeens were not permitted to sell alcohol on credit, or to forcibly collect pension money as repayment.
had formally requested that payments be made in the villages to solve these problems, but at the time of writing, the payments were still made only in Tsumkwe.

Tourism-related income

Craft sales

The sale of crafts was particularly important in Nǂanimh, where no one had a job. Along with Old Age Pensions, the sale of crafts was the main source of income for this village community. Some of the men described selling crafts as being “like a project that sustains our livelihoods”. Every family received income from craft sales, but men and women crafted different items. The men mostly carved tortoises from Commiphora wood, which they sold for N$30-50, depending on the size of the finished product. They said that they could earn up to N$200-300 a week from crafts if they worked hard, although their income also depended on buyers. They sold most items to the conservancy-run craft shop in Tsumkwe, and the professional hunter’s wife also bought items from them, but in some months they could not sell more than one item. A participant explained: “We want to look for a proper place to sell the craft so we can get more income. Sometimes the craft shop doesn’t have money to buy, so then we sell for less money than we get from the craft shop.”

Women in Nǂanimh said they made crafts such as necklaces from ostrich eggshells and tambuti wood. Sometimes, if they were lucky, they found the eggshells in the bush; otherwise they could buy them from the craft shop. They also sold glass-bead jewellery on the street or to the craft shop. Buyers paid different prices for the same items: they might receive N$20 from the craft shop or the professional hunter’s wife, N$10 from members of other ethnic groups in Tsumkwe, or N$50 from tourists whom they encountered on the street in Tsumkwe.

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12 Presumably to re-sell, although we did not get first-hand information about this.
In ||Xa|hoba, both men and women made crafts, and young girls learned from their mothers, but young boys were not involved in craft production. All seven women who participated in the ||Xa|hoba FGD made crafts, which they sold to visiting tourists, not to the conservancy craft shop.

NNDFN data shows that the conservancy-run craft shop in Tsumkwe paid out a total of N$115 000 to craftmakers in Nyae Nyae as a whole in 2010.13 Crafts were produced throughout the year, every year, primarily by women, but the villages further away from Tsumkwe and the craft shop produced fewer items because it was more difficult for them to find buyers.

**Trophy hunting**

Trophy hunting is a major source of income for Nyae Nyae Conservancy. The conservancy has a quota of big game animals that it is allowed to kill each year. The MET determines this quota, taking into careful consideration the sustainable management of wildlife in the area. The MET also decides which animals are for trophy hunting and which are for own-use hunting and meat for the community. Every five years the conservancy can decide whether it wants to call for tenders for the “concession” that gives a selected trophy hunter exclusive rights to bring clients to hunt in Nyae Nyae, who pay high sums to shoot specific animals within the conservancy’s quota. The conservancy can also decide to retain the incumbent trophy hunter.

This arrangement benefits the conservancy members in several ways. Firstly, the trophy hunter employs some Ju|’hoansi as trackers, whose income supports them and their extended families. Secondly, meat from trophy kills is distributed on a rotational basis, with all villages benefiting. (We witnessed meat from a buffalo and an elephant being distributed at various sites.) Finally, as

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13 This does not include income earned for crafts sold elsewhere.
the concession amounts paid by the trophy hunter are substantial, they allow for the redistribution
of funds to conservancy members in the form of a cash benefit.

Tourism projects

Several villages have been able to take advantage of tourism in the conservancy by operating small
tourism projects, which take different forms: the Living Hunters Museum in ||Xa|hoba, described
above, is one example of a fairly successful project run virtually entirely by the community.
||Xa|hoba residents reported receiving a number of benefits from the museum: four people were
employed to manage various aspects of the project; crafts were sold to tourists; and individuals
had the opportunity to participate in activities for the tourists and earn money. For each payment
made by tourists, 10% went to a village fund and 90% was divided among those who were directly
involved in interacting with the tourists and those who managed the project.14 The 2011 accounts
indicate that village income could reach N$20 000 per month during the high season for tourism
(NNDFN).

Other villages have set up campsites and/or traditional villages, with various levels of input from
NGOs, the lodge in Tsumkwe and youth-volunteer organisations. The conservancy has a standard
camping fee of N$20 per night, and most villages will prepare a campsite for tourists passing
through. Most villagers are also willing to perform traditional dances to earn extra money.

Employment for cash

Piecework

The main opportunities for piecework (or casual work) are in Tsumkwe, where Ju|’hoansi carry out
small tasks for people from other ethnic groups – usually fetching water or firewood in exchange for
cash or sometimes alcohol. Sometimes temporary work is available on building-construction sites
and road-maintenance sites. FGD participants generally considered such work to be exploitative,
but said that people felt compelled to seek such work when they needed cash and had no other
options.

Employment

The main sources of employment in Nyae Nyae Conservancy are government jobs, hunting/tourism
jobs, and jobs for the conservancy itself. In Tsumkwe, FGD participants said that some local
Ju|’hoansi were employed by the government as teachers in the Village Schools Project, as cleaners
in the school hostels, as police officers, in various low-ranking positions in the government offices,
and in the traditional authority (TA). A private mining company had employed a few people, and a
few were employed by the conservancy itself. Four of the six men and two of the 10 women present
in the FGD were employed (three by the conservancy, one by the mining company and two by the
TA). In ||Xa|hoba, FGD participants said that three people had full-time jobs (one as a conservancy
ranger and two as employees of the professional hunter) and seven had part-time jobs (one man
provided adult literacy classes from April to November, and six people had occasional employment
in the Living Hunters Museum). The Village School in ||Xa|hoba had two teachers at the time of
our visit, neither of whom were Ju|’hoansi. In Nǂanimh, the only person with a job was a man who
worked part-time as a tracker for the professional hunter.

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14 They also said that they would give 5% to the conservancy in the future, and the conservancy would use this money
for cash payouts to benefit the other villagers.
Overall, few Ju’hoansi in Nyae Nyae had full-time employment. The main barrier was a lack of formal qualifications. Discussion participants reported that the government required a Grade 10 pass at least, even for unskilled labour. But FGD participants in Tsumkwe said that even if they had a Grade 10 pass or higher qualifications, jobs were given to people from other ethnic groups. For example, during our visit to Nyae Nyae, a group of Ju’hoan women sent a letter to the Regional Education Office complaining that non-Ju’hoan women had been given the two advertised positions as cleaners at the primary school hostel. The Ju’hoan matron of the Tsumkwe Primary School hostel – one of the few Ju’hoansi employed by the school, summarised the content of this letter as follows:

“The San people are supposed to be the first ones to get jobs, because it is their place. But when they were hiring cleaners at the primary school, a Kavango and a Herero got the job – even though there were many Ju’hoansi who applied. When the Ju’hoan ladies asked why they were not hired for the positions, the principal said to them, ‘Why can you not find jobs elsewhere, in other parts of the country? Blacks also have to do that – they go out of their area to find work.’ The ladies responded, “How can we get a lift? And how would we survive? We don’t have relatives there. We want the posts in Tsumkwe.”

Farming

Cultivation (gardening)

Only a few residents at each site were cultivating food plants. In Tsumkwe some residents had small gardens at their homes, from which they produced some food for household consumption and occasionally were able to sell a small surplus. Among our research sites in Nyae Nyae, cultivation appeared to be most successful in ||Xa|hoba village, where five households were harvesting beans, groundnuts and maize. These households had received training from the NNDFN and the MAWF, but this training was provided in a central location rather than in their home village, with the result that many households did not participate. (FGD participants said that other households would be interested in this training were it to be provided in the village.)

Nǂanimh had had a small village garden which produced cabbages, onions, tomatoes and carrots in the past, but cultivation ceased in 2009 (two years before our field research). FGD participants provided the following explanation: the community had a solar pump (i.e. one that worked only when the sun was out), but lacked a water tank in which to store the water, and residents were advised to water the plants in the morning or evening, but without a tank this was not possible so their cultivation efforts failed. They had last planted in 2009, but did not reap any produce that year, so they stopped cultivating. Participants said that the conservancy had provided poles and wire for the garden, and had promised to bring a tank to store the water, but had not done so. We later found out that some tanks, including the one intended for Nǂanimh, were with the MAWF Directorate of Rural Water Supply, and the conservancy had not been permitted to install them. This situation provides a good example of a relatively small intervention (the installation of a water tank, which was already available) that could make a big difference in people’s ability to produce food, but which has not happened because of poor coordination between the stakeholders involved.

According to the NNDFN Natural Resource Management (NRM) Officer, there has been a steady, if uneven, increase in agricultural production in Nyae Nyae. In some villages the amount of land used, and the yield, increases every year, but in other villages people struggle to grow crops and
often give up – mainly due to a lack of access to water and partly due to a lack of community ownership, according to the NNDFN NRM Officer. He emphasised the need to approach the shift to gardening as a process that any community starting such an endeavour would have to go through:

“It is a process; it happens in stages. With gardening, it was difficult, but now some guys are doing well, they speak at workshops and explain to others. There is more ownership, they see the benefits, they are in charge. But I think it is the whole thing of experience: you have to go through these stages; there are arguments in the villages over things, but then things stabilize and they feel they have that ownership of projects.”

According to the MAWF, the government subsidises mahangu (pearl millet) cultivation – through the provision of seeds packaged in bulk for distribution to communities – because mahangu is a crop that grows easily, is resistant to drought and is nutritious. However, several stages of preparation must be completed before mahangu can be eaten, and people in Nyae Nyae are unfamiliar with this process. According to the NNDFN NRM Officer, among Nyae Nyae residents the preferred crop is beans, followed by groundnuts and corn, because these are the easiest crops to grow and prepare. Indeed, these three crops have proved to be the most successful in Nyae Nyae, and consequently there is a strong sense of community ownership over these crops.

Livestock farming

In the past, some Ju|’hoansi received different types of livestock through NGOs and the former Nyae Nyae Farmers’ Cooperative, and they managed the livestock with mixed success: some people slaughtered cattle for meat during hard times, or a lack of water forced them to slaughter; others lacked herding skills and their cattle were lost or eaten by predators; and some individuals and communities had managed to build up small herds. The NNDFN is currently supporting a new livestock management programme based on holistic rangeland management techniques.

Although livestock farming had been a focal area of activity for the conservancy, and some villages had farmed livestock very successfully, livestock was not mentioned as an important livelihood strategy at any of the Nyae Nyae research sites. At both Nǂanimh and ||Xa|hoba there were a few sheep, which the Dutch Reformed Church had provided as part of a project. This project entailed: (a) selecting people from each village to attend a training course on rearing sheep; (b) having these trainees teach others in their villages how to take care of sheep; and (c) letting each village decide how to allocate responsibility for the sheep, i.e. whether to own the sheep collectively or rather divide the flock among individuals and/or the families in the village. Different villages made different choices, but on the whole, allocating responsibility for the care of the sheep proved problematic, and many were either eaten by predators or lost (see also the subsection on the impact of external support, page 131).

Devil’s Claw harvesting

Although not all villages in Nyae Nyae are involved in the harvesting Devil’s Claw, this activity is an important source of income for the households that are involved. Harvesters must undergo training to ensure that the harvesting is sustainable, and then they can register with the conservancy
and receive a harvesting permit. According to the NNDFN, the Devil’s Claw is organically certified and the conservancy has negotiated a three-year contract with a single buyer to ensure a consistent and fair price. In exchange for keeping the records, and as a facilitator of the process, the conservancy currently earns a commission of N$4 per kilogram, paid annually.

According to NNDFN data for 2010, a total of N$200,000 was paid directly to the harvesters from about 20 villages. Both men and women engaged in harvesting in that year, and individual harvesters earned N$21 per kilogram (and could receive a bonus of N$3/kg if they harvested good-quality material). The total income earned from harvesting Devil’s Claw was higher than the total earned from craft sales at the conservancy-run craft shop in 2010, which was N$115,000 (see page 110), despite the harvesting being seasonal, taking place for only four to five months of the year.

During our field research in Nyae Nyae, only residents of Nǂanimh reported receiving an income from Devil’s Claw harvesting. They said that they normally harvested in winter. Harvesters must travel some distance from their village to find the plant, and generally spend several nights in the bush, often making a small camp. The Nǂanimh residents said that they sold the harvest to the conservancy buyer for N$700 per bag, and it could take 4-6 weeks to collect one bag – the amount collected by each individual or family was variable. These residents said that generally the buyer purchases three times in a season, but in 2011 only twice.

Sharing

Sharing was identified as an important strategy for poor people and when times were hard. Several FGD participants said that “Juǀ’hoansi are sharing people”, and that they were used to sharing the little they had instead of saving. The case of an assistant clerk at the aforementioned Captain Kxao Kxami Community Learning and Development Centre in Tsumkwe illustrates this characteristic. This man is one of the few salaried Juǀ’hoansi, earning N$2,300 a month at the time of our visit. From this he was supporting:

- himself, his wife and their five children;
- his brother, his brother’s wife and their five children;
- his wife’s father and grandmother; and
- other children in his wife’s family.

Almost all of his income was spent on food and clothing. He said that this did not bother him; it was not difficult for him to share because people also shared with him: “In the old days, there were no salaries, people just shared with each other, [and] it is the same today. If you have a salary you have to share. It is like sharing the meat that you get from hunting.” Many people commented on the need to stay physically close to family because they would share their food with you if you were hungry.

Alcohol, food and livelihood

FGD participants and interviewees in Tsumkwe deemed alcohol to be a major problem in the town – where there were at least 17 shebeens – and this problem was linked to food security in a number of ways. People reported that it was often cheaper and easier to get a glass of tombo (home-brewed beer) than food, and

15 Wendy Viall, personal communication 2013
that the beer made the drinker feel full and forget his/her hunger. People thus spent their meagre resources on alcohol rather than on food. A particular problem was with the pensioners who came to Tsumkwe to collect their pension, only to spend most or all of it at the shebeens, or to find that their relatives had drunk away their pension on credit (see below, and the subsection on pensions above). Individual interviewees also reported that alcohol abuse causes many serious problems. Tsumkwe residents reported that people were weakened and became susceptible to TB if they drank a lot; that people lost their jobs because of absenteeism due to drinking; that drinking often led to violence and domestic abuse; and that young people went to the shebeens to drink and then dropped out of school. The chief and others said that they wanted the shebeens closed down because of the problems associated with drinking.

Drinking and its related issues were much less of a problem in the Nyae Nyae villages – where there are no shebeens and alcohol is not readily available – than in Tsumkwe.16 Nevertheless, people from the villages have to come to Tsumkwe for various reasons – to collect pensions, to purchase food and other items, to go to the clinic and to conduct any other official business – and once there, some find the shebeens difficult to resist:

“Sometimes you have some money and you go to do shopping in Tsumkwe, but you first go to a shebeen and then suddenly you find you have spent all the money you wanted to use for the shopping.” (Resident of ||Xa|hoba village)

Some of the problems relating to shebeens are legal issues that should be addressed by local police. For example, according to the Local Government Officer in Tsumkwe, it is illegal to sell alcohol on credit or to take someone’s pension to pay off his or her debt (or that of dependants). He said that the police have been instructed to take action on these issues, and that the government and other stakeholders were trying to address the problem of alcohol through various measures. One complication is that the existing government regulations cover only beer, wine and spirits; they make no mention of home-brewed alcoholic drinks such as *tombo* (the traditional beer) and *kashipembe* (a hard alcohol), which are primarily what San are consuming at the shebeens. He said that some form of regulation of traditional brews was therefore needed. Although many participants in our research proposed closing down the shebeens, the Local Government Officer said that this would require a collective decision based on the inputs of all relevant parties including shebeen owners, and that such a decision was unlikely. In the meantime they could operate freely, as long as they did so legally. He suggested that stricter hours for shebeens could be one measure taken to curb their negative influence, and another could be a shebeen owners’ coalition for responsible drinking, which might be able to exert some influence over the operations of its members.

Ju|hano FGD participants very frequently mentioned alcohol as a problem related to livelihood and food security because people used up their Old Age Pensions or other money to pay for it. Although the Ju|hano participants did not specifically mention the relationship between alcohol consumption and lack of employment, it was noted in interviews that people frequently lost jobs because of incidents related to alcohol. This also fed into negative stereotyping of the Ju|hano and may have made employers less willing to employ them (Diez, personal communication). In many ways, as for many impoverished peoples in Namibia and elsewhere, alcohol consumption becomes a significant part of the cycle of poverty.

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16 A simple explanation for this is that there are no Ju|hano involved in the business of selling or transporting alcohol. As only conservancy members – most of whom are Ju|hano – are allowed to live in the villages, alcohol is not a problem there. A deeper explanation for this scenario in Nyae Nyae as opposed to other parts of the country goes beyond the scope of this report; what is relevant here is the virtually unanimous opinion that alcohol is not available, and is thus not a problem, in Nyae Nyae villages.
What is striking in Table 5.4 is that at each site, maize-meal and veldfoods were listed as foods ‘eaten on a daily basis’, i.e. the most important foodstuffs. This means that people in all three of these places – and presumably in other parts of Nyae Nyae – were relying on gathered food and food aid for their daily subsistence. Maize-meal was a staple food eaten daily; it was acquired mainly through food aid, but was also bought when cash was available. Few people grew their own maize, or other food, on a large scale.

Table 5.4 also indicates the importance of veldfood, which was eaten on a daily basis at all three sites (see Table 5.3 for a breakdown of veldfoods eaten). People considered veldfood consumption important not only as a source of healthy food, but also as a central aspect of their culture. Although meat was not said to be eaten often, based on the San Study data on the whole, it appears that the Ju|’hoansi eat more meat than most San people living in other communal areas, and this is certainly due both to the presence of game and the fact that they had the rights to that game. People ate meat that they (or their family members) hunted, and also meat distributed from trophy kills. Some people were also cultivating plants or raising animals for food, and FGD participants said that they were able to access other foods such as vegetables, tea, milk and sugar when they had sufficient cash.

Although they had a diet that was more balanced than that of the San in most other parts of the country, FGD participants at all sites in Nyae Nyae said they did not always have enough to eat. In ||Xa|hoba, villagers ate twice per day on average, but sometimes went to bed hungry. They said that they were most hungry from November to January, when the veldfood was just starting to germinate and the veldfood which people had stored was finished. There were also fewer tourists at that time of year. Participants said that during this period they relied on the food aid most, and they also did more hunting. If residents of Nǂanimh did not have enough food in the village, then they would go out to gather food, but they sometimes ate only once per day and went to bed hungry.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Eaten daily</th>
<th>Eaten regularly</th>
<th>Eaten when available</th>
<th>Eaten rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsumkwe</td>
<td>urrets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize-meal</td>
<td>Bread (made or</td>
<td>Game meat from</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>bought)</td>
<td>trophy hunters</td>
<td>Macaroni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking oil</td>
<td>Veldfoods (in</td>
<td>(elephant) and local</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>the dry season</td>
<td>hunters*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soup</td>
<td>this is less</td>
<td>Produce from own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veldfoods</td>
<td>plentiful, so</td>
<td>gardens: carrots,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(in season)*</td>
<td>is eaten less)*</td>
<td>spinach, cabbage,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tomatoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Xa</td>
<td>Xoba</td>
<td>urrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize-meal</td>
<td>Store-bought</td>
<td>Hunted game meat*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veldfoods*</td>
<td>foods: sugar,</td>
<td>Tinned meat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tea, macaroni</td>
<td>Flour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rice, milk</td>
<td>Mahango (millet) –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Produce from</td>
<td>from cultivated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>own gardens:</td>
<td>gardens</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>groundnuts,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beans, mealies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(cobs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nǂanimh</td>
<td>urrets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize-meal</td>
<td>Meat from</td>
<td>Store-bought foods:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veldfoods*</td>
<td>trophy hunters</td>
<td>tea, sugar, soup,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Veldfoods</td>
<td>tinned meat/fish,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(seasonal)*</td>
<td>biscuits, sweets,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chips**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wild honey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hunted game meat*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetables (bought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or cultivated)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Table 5.3 for specific veldfoods eaten.
** Eaten when they have the money to buy them.

Note that the fieldwork was conducted in November, at the beginning of this period of scarcity.
FGD participants also reported that there were Ju’hoansi in Nyae Nyae who did not have enough food, and that people in Tsumkwe who did not have food would beg for food. Sometimes entire villages lacked food, especially during the dry season. The Local Government Officer in Tsumkwe agreed that there were people who did not have enough food, and who might not eat for two days or more.

Thus government food aid and veldfood were both critical to food security in Nyae Nyae. The special circumstances of Nyae Nyae (as a conservancy on traditional land) have allowed the Ju’hoansi there to maintain a fair measure of autonomy and control over their food resources through hunting and gathering. However – as discussed in the next subsection concerning poverty – this cannot be enough. Access to other food is needed, but there are many barriers to achieving this. In view of these circumstances, the maize-meal distributed by the government provides important food stability for a people in transition.

**Perceptions of poverty**

In general the Ju’hoansi of Nyae Nyae are poor in national terms, but better off than some other San groups in Namibia because they have access to land and veldfood. However, the veldfood available does not suffice to sustain the entire population of Nyae Nyae, therefore people must have access to other food sources – all of which require access to cash. Furthermore, although San learners in Nyae Nyae were exempted from paying school fees, without cash they could not purchase the toiletries, clothes and other items needed for school attendance, and other forms of participation in national life also require access to cash. Thus it is a lack of access to money that defines people as ‘poor’, and one of the main causes of poverty is a lack of full-time employment. There are few jobs available in the area, and most positions are held by non-Ju’hoansi.

All registered members of Nyae Nyae Conservancy receive their share of the annual cash payout. Apart from this, however, as Table 5.5 (on the next page) illustrates, people identified as being in the poorest category had no other income apart from that derived from a little piecework or begging, and they had no assets. People who grew some crops, and/or had livestock and/or income from craft sales were considered to be better off. Notably, being a ‘good hunter’ was also included as a skill that enabled one to be better off, and people in this category also gathered food to supplement their diets.

The wealthiest people in Nyae Nyae were described as those with jobs and businesses, enabling them to earn money to buy enough food for their families, to live in a proper house, and to acquire assets such as a car and furniture. Very few Ju’hoansi were categorised as 'rich'.

Ju’hoan FGD participants said that it was harder for the Ju’hoansi than for people from other ethnic groups to move out of poverty, as the latter cultivated big fields, had businesses and sold alcohol. They attributed this lack of upward social mobility partly to the fact that Ju’hoansi shared what they had with others in their community instead of saving. Although this sharing tendency is sometimes considered to be problematic, the Ju’hoansi recognise that these sharing networks – on which all Ju’hoansi rely to some extent – are central, both culturally and economically, to the Nyae Nyae community.

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18 As noted in Chapter 4 (footnote 15, page 73), in January 2013 (i.e. after the field research), the legal obligation that learners contribute to the School Development Fund was abolished in all government primary schools in Namibia, hence “school fees” per se are no longer paid in any of these schools.
Table 5.5: Wealth ranking per site in Nyae Nyae Conservancy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Better off</th>
<th>Rich</th>
<th>Very rich</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tsumkwe       | As for poor, but also disabled, with no family to support them | • No work  
• No income  
• Begging  
• Maybe a little income from craft sales or piecework (collecting firewood or carrying water for others)  
(Majority of Ju’hoansi and some Kavango) | • Have a job but don’t use money wisely (Ju’hoansi and Kavango)  
• No job  
• Good income from crafts (Ju’hoansi and some Kavango selling crafts made by Ju’hoansi) | • Job  
• A few cattle  
• A few household belongings  
• Can support the family (4 Ju’hoansi, and Herero and Kavango) | • Job  
• Car  
• Goats  
• Cattle  
• Own a business  
• Pensioners** (6 Ju’hoansi, and Kavango, Owambo, Herero and white people) |
| ||Xa|hoba | • No job  
• No food  
• No proper house  
• No blankets to sleep in  
• Only veldfood gathering | • Many children and no job  
• Pensioners** | • Income from Living Hunters Museum  
• Selling crafts  
• Good hunters  
• Crop fields | • Permanent government job  
• Income  
• Nice house  
• Plenty of food  
• Livestock  
(No one in the village) | No such category identified at this site. |

* The participants created their own wealth categories, thus these varied from site to site, and the research team has standardised the category names appropriately for reporting. The wealth-ranking exercise was not conducted in N|\animh due to a lack of time.

** In theory, every Namibian over the age of 60 should receive an Old Age Pension regardless of other income, therefore this source of income may be relevant across all categories. However, pensioners were mentioned in only one category at each site, and the two applicable categories are notably different. As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, some elders did not receive a pension because they had no ID, or pensioners spent their pensions on credit, sometimes even before receiving a payout. These factors could explain why pensioners do not feature consistently in this table. Whatever the case, pension money is generally more important to those in the poorer categories than to the rich.

Access to land

The words of N!ani quoted on the left encapsulate the importance that the Ju’hoansi ascribe to having land that they can call their own. N!ani described the periods in which he was in his n|\ore as the best times of his life. (The Ju’hoansi of Nyae Nyae are fortunate in that a number of them have been able to spend much or all of their lives in their n|\oresi.) Currently, however, the extent to which Ju’hoansi can control their land is being challenged by the influx of neighbouring people with livestock, and by the government’s apparent reluctance to resolve this issue. Nevertheless, having access to land as a group has helped to give the Ju’hoansi of Nyae Nyae more time and space to shape their own future as compared with other San groups, or other groups of Ju’hoansi living under different circumstances.

One problem for the Ju’hoansi in their efforts to defend their land rights is that many people, including government officials, view much of Nyae Nyae as ‘empty land’ that is not used by local people

“"I have led a nice life. One can be happy if he stays on his own land.”
– An old man in ||Xa|hoba village
and is therefore available for use by others. But Nyae Nyae land use and allocation are based on the traditional n!ore system, which gives people access to land for hunting and gathering as well as for livestock production. Although livestock numbers were low at the time of our field research, they may increase somewhat in the future. A study is currently underway to determine more clearly the numbers of livestock that are compatible with wildlife maintenance within the conservancy.

The Ju|’hoansi are very conscious of the need to balance livestock with other land uses, as the following words of Chief Bobo indicate:

“[In] every village that you go to, there are a certain amount of animals that you can have, and a certain amount of cattle that you have. You don’t have a lot of cattle in a small area, because there is also wildlife. So if you have a lot of cattle you have to move to another area. We wanted it to be sustainable.”

Identity, culture and heritage

Participants at all three sites in Nyae Nyae identified themselves as Ju|’hoansi, which means ‘true’ or ‘ordinary’ people (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 5). In Tsumkwe, FGD participants emphasised that they wished to be called “Ju|’hoansi” and not “San”, and participants in the Nyae Nyae villages similarly referred to themselves as “Ju|’hoansi”. Identity, culture and heritage were found to be important to the Ju|’hoansi for many reasons.

As indicated above, the gathering of veldfood, and to a lesser extent hunting, are important for the food security of the Ju|’hoansi in Nyae Nyae, and this was especially true in the villages of ||Xa|hoba and Nǂanimh. In addition, the Ju|’hoansi at all of the Nyae Nyae research sites regard both activities as a vital part of the Ju|’hoan culture, heritage and identity; hunting and gathering are a part of what defines them.

FGD participants said that their daughters were learning to collect veldfood, and had sometimes played at gathering when they were younger. People also said that hunting was important as it was the traditional way of making a living. This was especially clear in the discussion in Tsumkwe, where participants likened veldfood (including hunted game) to a dessert after the other food – indicating that although veldfood was not always their main source of sustenance, it was something that they much enjoyed. They explained that they collected veldfood even when they had enough food of any type, because this was part of their tradition, and also because it was healthy (see also the subsection on health, page 124).

Traditional culture is thus important for Nyae Nyae Ju|’hoansi, not only for its direct economic, social and health benefits, but also as a source of income. Tourists who visit Nyae Nyae are very interested in Ju|’hoan culture, and residents portray their heritage to outsiders in different ways. For example, many crafts, which are sold and bring in a significant income for many individuals and family groups, are based on traditional knowledge and skills. Some villages perform traditional activities for visitors (traditional dances, healing ceremonies etc.), and accompany visitors on ‘bush walks’ to demonstrate hunting, gathering, medicinal and other traditional survival skills. ||Xa|hoba’s Living Hunters Museum is an example of a more structured project based on the portrayal of Ju|’hoan culture. The community initiated this project and runs it with very little outside support. Other villages in the conservancy also have tourism projects at various levels of organisation, ranging from contracts with local lodges and tourism ventures for tourists to visit Ju|’hoan communities, to ad hoc dance demonstrations and campsite provision. These culture-based activities are important income-generating opportunities for many communities and individuals.
The Kalahari Peoples Fund is supporting a digital heritage conservation project called the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group with the aim of providing the Ju/'hoansi with printed curriculum and archival materials drawn from their own culture. Recorded texts gathered since 1970 cover aspects of Ju/'hoan culture ranging from folklore, dreams and narratives of trance-healing to political meetings and oral history (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 239-240). This project provides valuable training in translation, transcription and documentation skills; provides employment for several individuals and improves access to employment generally; and increases community ownership of the Ju/'hoan cultural heritage.

**Relationships with other groups**

The Ju/'hoansi in Tsumkwe dwell uneasily alongside other ethnic groups living in the town and the immediate surrounding area. They gain piecework and income from these groups, and buy food and other goods from them, but they also feel threatened by the presence of these groups. FGD participants in Tsumkwe said that their main problems stemmed from outsiders, and they listed several specific issues. Of particular concern were the shebeens which have led to alcohol abuse and other related problems among the Ju/'hoansi (as described throughout this chapter). They said that the shebeens were “brought by outsiders”, and that they were increasing in number. Apparently no Ju/'hoan person owned a shebeen in Tsumkwe or anywhere else.

FGD participants also reported that people were settling in the Tsumkwe area without permission from the authorities, and some were bringing in livestock, which was problematic because the animals consumed plant resources. Ju/'hoansi in Tsumkwe were particularly concerned about the influx of Herero people with cattle, and wished to see this issue resolved – this issue is discussed in more detail further on.
Participants complained that male outsiders made Ju’hoan women pregnant and then left them with babies and no support. They also expressed the view that the schools in Tsumkwe should be primarily for Ju’hoansi and not for people from other places (such as Rundu and Grootfontein – see the subsection on education below).

Although those living in the villages have far less interaction with other ethnic groups than those living in Tsumkwe, the village residents whom we interviewed also expressed frustration and feelings of being oppressed, discriminated against and looked down upon by other ethnic groups. Residents of Nǂaninh reported an incident of physical intimidation by people from another ethnic group, and residents of ||Xa|hoba said that the people in power in Tsumkwe were suppressing the Ju’hoansi by giving more opportunities and benefits to people from other ethnic groups. They complained that government offices hired people from other ethnic groups before they hired Ju’hoansi, even if these other people were not qualified for the job.

**Education**

The Nyae Nyae Ju’hoansi are the only San population in all of southern Africa with an opportunity to have three years of schooling in their mother tongue, thanks to the Village Schools. Initiated by the NNDFN in 1992, the Village Schools Project began establishing schools in Nyae Nyae villages; currently there are six schools (see Box 5.3). These schools are run as government schools, with the support of the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS). They provide education in Ju’hoansi for learners in Grades 1-3, whereafter the learners are expected to transfer to the government primary school in Tsumkwe (see also the subsection on external support, page 131). Despite the existence of this project, education remains a deeply problematic issue for the Nyae Nyae Ju’hoansi, and few have acquired formal education certificates.

**Box 5.2: Komtsa’s story – an educational case study**

The story of Komtsa typifies the numerous interconnected barriers that many Ju’hoan youth face when they try to access schooling – shortage of food, lack of transport, lack of financial support from the family, and generally difficult living conditions. Komtsa did not mention abuse or bullying, but many others whom we interviewed concurrently did complain about these behaviours. Komtsa’s story also provides an example of the perseverance and resilience of the Ju’hoansi.

Komtsa is a young man of 23 from ||Xa|hoba. He completed Grades 1-3 at the Village School and then entered Grade 4 in Tsumkwe. Soon after, however, he left Tsumkwe with his brother Oma (who was out hunting during the interview), and they went to Aasvoëlsnesa with the intention of completing Grades 4 and 5 there. However, there was a shortage of food at the school in Aasvoëlsnes, and since the brothers did not have relatives in that village, there was no one to help them. Every day they were hungry, and they would go to the veld to gather food but it was not enough. The principal sent them away and said that they could return when there was more food, but after returning to Tsumkwe, it proved difficult to get a lift back to Aasvoëlsnes: they would go into the town to try to find a ride, but they got hungry while waiting, so they just went home to ||Xa|hoba. “When you are home, your parents will share with you; other people will not share so it is better to stay with your parents,” said Komtsa.

In 2007, Komtsa and |Ui, another boy from ||Xa|hoba, went back to Tsumkwe to try to enter Grade 5. They stayed with |Ui’s father in one of the (illegal) informal settlements in Tsumkwe, but the latter was not working and did not have money to support them. It was cold in winter and they had no blankets and were not living in a good place. But they struggled on, trying to remain in school. Then it rained, and their papers (school reports, medical cards and other documents) got wet and damaged.

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But Komtsa said that the school reports and papers were not really the main problem; the problem was hunger. They were eating rotten maize-meal in Tsumkwe because they simply had nothing else. “That is when we said ‘No, we can’t live like that,’ and we left and came back to ||Xa|hoba.” In 2011, at the time of the interview, Komtsa was living in ||Xa|hoba and working at the Living Hunters Museum. He had also attended a health training workshop, and he hunts (with a bow and arrow). He would like to do translation work, and to work in tourism – and he also wants to help his parents.

Komtsa’s story – like those of many Ju|’hoan youth – is remarkable not only for the numerous obstacles he had to confront, but also for how hard he and his companions tried to keep going forward in school, despite the difficulties they encountered at every turn. In the end, however, most youth – like Komtsa, his brother ‡Oma and his friend |Ui – decide that the effort is just too much and they return to their villages, where they know they will find food and acceptance. In ||Xa|hoba, the existence of the Living Hunters Museum encourages the youth to focus on local careers, either in their village or in the conservancy.

a A village just outside Nyae Nyae Conservancy, about 45 km from Tsumkwe, which has a primary school attended by many Ju|’hoansi.

Among elderly adults the rates of schooling and literacy were very low; most of these community members grew up living a way of life that was at least partly traditional in nature, and their families moved around from place to place, with few children attending school beyond Grade 2, if at all. Although many of the younger people whom we interviewed had started school, the vast majority dropped out well before completing primary school. The principle reasons cited for dropping out were:
- not having enough food in Tsumkwe;
- being bullied by children from other groups;
- being made fun of and being ashamed because they did not have money for soap or uniforms and their clothes were ragged; and
- teenage pregnancy.
Despite these difficulties, most participants in our FGDs agreed that education was important. People in Tsumkwe said that even though there was discrimination against the Ju’hoansi, with education and training, members of their community could still get a job. In ||Xa|hoba people expressed their desire for skills to help them better manage the Living Hunters Museum, and to take advantage of tourism activities in the area.

**Adult education**

Currently the greatest need for education is found among the youth and those adults who have had a few years of formal schooling but are now too old to go back and participate in that system. Many Ju’hoansi at the Nyae Nyae research sites expressed a desire for adult education – their chief interests being literacy in English and Ju’hoansi, and accounting skills – but only a few villages had adult education projects. One of these was ||Xa|hoba, where a local man was employed as a part-time adult literacy teacher – but he reported that class attendance was very low because people had other things that they needed to do during the day.

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### Box 5.3: The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project, 1992-2013

*By Melissa Heckler*

This box explores some considerations relating to the transition of Ju’hoan children to the formal education system, and describes how the Village Schools aimed to address them.

The initial goal of the Village Schools Project was simple: to introduce Ju’hoan children to literacy, numeracy and the structure of a public school day, so as to better prepare them to succeed in the government school in Tsumkwe. However, this apparently straightforward goal belied a much more complicated cultural process that was taking place.

Ju’hoan decision-making processes epitomise direct democracy: one person, one vote and group consensus in decision making. The values underlying this system are communicated and practised from childhood, and form the basis of their educational approach – which is characterised by *child autonomy*. Individuals – including children – are granted liberty to initiate their own learning processes, and to make their own decisions and learn from the consequences. With this "problem-solving" approach to education, they have maintained their culture and existence in the Kalahari for thousands of years. This approach, however, was quite different – and in many ways contradictory to – the approach in southern African teacher training and schools at the time.

With these considerations at the forefront of the early formation of the Village Schools Project, it was generally agreed that the candidates who would be most successful with Ju’hoan students were Ju’hoan teachers. One challenge of the Village Schools Project became how to structure teacher training in a way that allowed teachers to bridge the gap between their cultural approach, and what would be expected of individuals when they integrated into the government schools [see also the section on Village Schools in the concluding chapter on education (Chapter 16)].

The Village Schools were initially called “preschools”, not in the Western sense of a school for children of pre-kindergarten age, but in the sense of preparing students of any age to participate in school. The original idea was that when the Ju’hoan children and youth began attending local public schools, they would possess a working knowledge of how the formal education system was structured – for example, scheduled into discrete modules of “lessons” – which would make it easier for them to make their way in that system.
A simultaneous goal was to validate Ju’hoan values and knowledge by incorporating them into this preparation for Western education. These values were (and continue to be):
- small multi-aged classes with access to multiple teachers (i.e. Village Elders);
- a curriculum relevant to both living in the bush and dealing with a job-oriented free-market Namibian economy;
- a playful approach to teaching and learning;
- child-initiated curriculum activities;
- individually paced learning;
- cooperative small-group learning;
- a lack of competition;
- an aversion to direct praise;
- problem solving through play and storytelling; and
- mother-tongue education.

At the time of writing, there are six village schools (with buildings) with Ju'hoansi-speaking teachers and a Ju'hoan principal. The Village Schools serve about 10% of Ju'hoan children, but this number is projected to grow as new programmes are introduced to better nourish and accommodate boarding children. Many Ju'hoan children also attend the local public schools in Tsumkwe. Still other school-age children choose to remain in their villages to receive traditional education for living in the bush.

The era from 1992 to 2013 can appropriately be labelled “a beginning” for the Village Schools – especially when this period is compared to thousands of years of a highly successful hunter-gatherer democracy and educational system. The challenges today are much the same as those faced in 1992: how to preserve the values of this ancient, family-based democracy, descended from a hunting and gathering economy, and balance them with the participation in a modern educational system descended from a free-market, capitalist system.

With so few jobs locally available, many Ju’hoansi clearly express that survival for their children (and their culture) is dependent on learning the vast storage of knowledge and highly technical skills of hunting and gathering. In conjunction, children must learn and develop the deeply relational social skills (including dialogue to create consensus) required to live cohesively as a group, while developing individual strengths and talents – an approach that would strengthen any culture. If Ju’hoansi are to participate in the Namibian formal education system, they must be convinced that it will provide not only skills and knowledge to participate in the mainstream systems, but also the substantial democratic education they have always provided for their youth.

Melissa Heckler, M.S.E.C.E., MLS, August 2013 (© Melissa Heckler)

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a Melissa Heckler (M.S.E.C.E., MLS) is an educator who was involved in the original conceptualisation of the Village Schools Project, and has maintained her involvement as an advisor and facilitator ever since.

b The initial discussions – under a thorn tree in |Aotch, Nyae Nyae, in 1990 – included Dr Megan Biesele, an anthropologist; the late linguist Patrick Dickens; the late |I!ae Benjamin, a Ju’hoan teacher; and the author, a teacher.

c Personal communication with Bruce Parcher, San Education Project Director for NAMAS.

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**Health**

Table 5.6 provides a summary of the main health issues reported at each of the Nyae Nyae research sites. TB appears to be the most serious disease among the Ju’hoansi, and its prevalence may increase as more people settle in the urban environment of Tsumkwe. Influenza, colds, diarrhoea and vomiting were other common complaints. Residents of Tsumkwe said that children suffered mostly from stomach problems, and the researchers observed some symptoms of malnutrition. Most adults smoke tobacco whenever it is available. HIV and AIDS were not said to be very prevalent.
People said that they still seek out traditional healers when they are sick, but reportedly there were not many such healers who were still able to perform the healing ceremonies, and few younger people were becoming healers in order to take over from the elders when they died.

Table 5.6: Main health issues reported at the Nyae Nyae research sites

| Health category                                      | Tsumkwe                                      | ||Xa|hoba                                      | N\ø|nimh                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Main diseases (according to FGD participants)        | TB, malaria, STIs                            | TB, flu and colds, diarrhoea and vomiting    | TB, headache, chest and liver pains        |
| Main children’s diseases                             | Diarrhoea and coughing                       | Diarrhoea                                    | No data                                    |
| Access to health services                            | ● Clinic in Tsumkwe (nurse)                  | ● Clinic in Tsumkwe (nurse) (±24 km away)    | ● Clinic in Tsumkwe (nurse) (15 km away)   |
|                                                      | ● Health facility (with a doctor) at Mangetti Dune (±100 km away) | ● Health facility (with a doctor) at Mangetti Dune (±124 km away) | ● Health facility (with a doctor) at Mangetti Dune (±115 km away) |
|                                                      | ● Grootfontein State Hospital (±260 km away) | ● Grootfontein State Hospital (±284 km away) | ● Grootfontein State Hospital (±275 km away) |
| Ambulance/transport                                   | Clinic in Tsumkwe                            | No ambulance; transport costs N$300-N$400, so people walk to Tsumkwe Clinic if necessary | No transport, have to walk |
| Delivery of babies (births)                          | Mostly at home; perhaps at the clinic for a firstborn child | At home, but if problems they try to get a lift to Tsumkwe Clinic; sometimes police help with transport | Usually at home; for firstborns, pregnant mothers are checked at the clinic, and if okay, they return home to give birth |
| Alcohol/violence                                      | Alcohol abuse a major problem; it leads to violence and increases susceptibility to TB | Alcohol not a problem in the village; no shebeens there | Alcohol not a problem in the village; no shebeens there |
| Traditional medicine/healer                          | Traditional healers, but now they require payment | Traditional healers, but getting old and no younger generation | Traditional healer at a nearby village |

“If we take care of the problem of nutrition, other problems can be tackled.”

– Nurse, Tsumkwe Clinic, November 2011

The nurses at Tsumkwe Clinic identified poor nutrition as the fundamental health problem facing the Ju|’hoansi – especially in Tsumkwe itself. This problem was closely intertwined with poverty and alcohol abuse: poverty meant that people did not have enough money to purchase food, and since alcohol was cheaper, and was considered a means to assuage hunger, they were more likely to drink, but drinking on an empty stomach increases the effects of the alcohol and can have other negative consequences. Both poor nutrition and alcohol abuse increases vulnerability to infectious diseases. Furthermore, poverty sometimes led young women to exchange sex for alcohol or money, increasing the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

All of these problems were much worse in Tsumkwe than in Nyae Nyae’s rural areas, and the nurses suggested that people’s health was much better in the villages, for several reasons, including the increased availability of veldfood (better nutrition), decreased availability of alcohol, and separation from members of other ethnic groups who might exploit Ju|’hoansi, either sexually or by paying them for piecwork with alcohol.

The nurses confirmed that TB is a major problem among the Ju|’hoansi, and that its incidence is much higher among the Ju|’hoansi than among other ethnic groups living in Tsumkwe, which they
attributed to the cycle of poverty, poor nutrition and alcohol abuse described above. They said that the rates of death from TB seemed to be decreasing due to people being tested and treated earlier, but it was sometimes a problem to get people to complete the full course of treatment. Another problem was that the multi-drug-resistant TB patients are supposed to be kept in isolation for treatment at Grootfontein State Hospital, but the Ju’hoansi in particular did not want to be away from their families, so would often just leave the hospital and head for Tsumkwe on foot.

In addition to the government clinic, there are two health NGOs working in Tsumkwe, namely Health Unlimited and Advanced Community Health Care Services Namibia (CoHeNa). These organisations coordinate their activities and focus on empowering communities to reduce the transmission of TB and HIV and to encourage treatment.

A major constraint in accessing healthcare services for village residents is transport to Tsumkwe Clinic. There is no transport at the villages apart from some people who have donkeys or horses, and it is expensive to pay someone to get a lift to Tsumkwe in a vehicle. Most women give birth at home – often by choice even when clinic services are available, and despite the risk of infant mortality.

**Gender**

The high level of gender equality among the Ju’hoansi has been noted by many researchers and observers (see for example Draper 1975 and Lee 2002). Women contribute equally (or more) in the traditional economy; they have equal status with men and are free to make their own choices about how they spend their time. This high status, and the empowerment of women to say “No” to unwanted sexual advances, has been associated with the lower rate of HIV infection in the community (Lee and Susser 2002; Susser 2003).

Men usually occupy leadership positions such as that of n!ore kxao or ‘owner of the n!ore’ – a position that implies leadership and responsibility for the land. However, women can also be n!ore owners. According to Chief Bobo, if a woman was a n!ore owner and got married, she could give the ownership to her husband, which is what his mother did. However, this did not always happen; it depended on how the man took care of the area, and the family members of the wife also had to approve, therefore female n!ore kxao still exist. Women are also able to take up other leadership positions, such as conservancy chairperson, a position currently held by a woman.

> “We are not used to being in meetings; this is our first meeting. That is why we are so quiet. We have to learn to attend such meetings. Next time we will say more.”
> 
> – A Ju’hoan woman who participated in the Tsumkwe FGD

According to FGD participants, women representatives attended conservancy meetings, but it was not common for women to attend other official meetings. Participants said that generally in public meetings, the men engaged in discussing the issues at hand while the women tended to sit to the side in a group, sometimes listening and sometimes discussing among themselves and caring for children, but rarely participating. Some women with more confidence and strong opinions will participate, however. In most of our FGDs in Nyae Nyae, women said very little directly, but they did usually discuss the issues among themselves, and often provided important and insightful comments.

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19 CoHeNa was established in January 2007.
In ||Xa|hoba women said that one barrier to their participation in meetings was their lack of knowledge of English and Afrikaans. They said that the men sometimes told them that they (the women) did not understand what was going on and thus should not participate in meetings. They also said that language was a barrier to gaining employment. Three of the seven women present in the FGD in this village said they were attending adult literacy classes, but it was difficult to go regularly because they were too busy fetching water and helping their daughters.

In the family, women shoulder the main responsibilities of caring for children, cooking for the family and gathering veldfood. All of these are generally accepted to be primarily female roles, and women specifically pass on their knowledge of veldfoods to their daughters. However, men and boys do also regularly engage in childcare, cooking and gathering veldfood.

Hunting is almost entirely a male activity (although women do hunt springhares), and men pass on this knowledge to their sons and younger male relatives. Some said that this knowledge transmission was declining, and that the youth were not as interested in learning how to hunt as they used to be. However, many young men present in our FGDs expressed a strong interest in hunting, and some claimed that they regularly went into the bush to hunt.

**Political participation and representation**

Among the San groups in Namibia, the Ju|’hoansi of Nyae Nyae are one of the few which have been able to advocate on their own behalf to some extent. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, they have their own recognised traditional authority, which has the support of the people it serves. Secondly, the conservancy officers often engage directly with government officials and others.
Thirdly, the only San member of parliament (2000-2010) was a Ju’hoan man based in Tsumkwe; the former regional councillor of Tsumkwe District was a well-known Ju’hoan man who had previously served as the conservancy manager; and the current regional councillor also hails from the Ju’hoan community. However, despite these advantages, the Ju’hoansi still find participation in modern political structures to be a struggle. The communication of feedback from Ju’hoan leaders to village residents remains a challenge, given the dispersal of the villages and the lack of experience with representational models of government. (Residents complained that they did not get good feedback from, for example, the then regional councillor and the former MP.) FGD participants also reported a feeling of not being heard in decision-making processes at local level, and of being passed over for employment in government positions in favour of people from other ethnic groups.

FGD participants emphasised that the TA and the conservancy were the primary supporting political institutions, especially when it came to defending Ju’hoan land rights.

**Traditional authority**

In 1998 the Traditional Authority (TA) of the Ju’hoansi of Nyae Nyae became one of the first TAs in Namibia to be recognised by the government. This recognition gives the TA a voice in various regional and national fora. The legitimacy of Chief Tsamkxao Oma (popularly known as “Chief Bobo”) is uncontested; at all three research sites in Nyae Nyae, residents said that they recognised Bobo as their chief and the leader of their TA, and that he was a good chief.

FGD participants in Tsumkwe identified the TA as the organisation that had the most impact on their lives, and the one that was the most important to them, because the TA had the responsibility of protecting their land rights and their culture. However, residents of Tsumkwe and the villages identified several challenges confronting the TA, including the lack of an office. According to Chief Bobo, the TA was given office space at the constituency office (the office of the regional councillor and the constituency officials in Tsumkwe), but the lack of a space dedicated specifically to the TA meant that the representatives did not come together very regularly, and also that people did not know where to find them when they had problems that they wished to raise.

Some village residents (in Nǂanimh, for example) complained that Chief Bobo did not call them for meetings and did not visit them, but they also said that they had never approached him. Chief Bobo said that he did make efforts to visit the villages for which he is responsible in order to communicate with his representatives and others, but he admitted that this was sometimes problematic. The TA office had a vehicle provided by the government, for which the chief was responsible, but at the time of our research, the brakes did not work and the government had not agreed to pay for the necessary repairs. Consequently there was a period during which it was difficult for Chief Bobo to provide feedback to the villages because he could not physically get to them.20

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20 The vehicle was later fixed with financial assistance from NNDFN because the government insisted that there was no money available to carry out repairs of TA vehicles.
FGD participants in Tsumkwe suggested that the TA needed more support from other stakeholders to address the issues currently facing the community in a productive manner – in particular issues involving land rights, development and educational concerns.

**The conservancy**

The conservancy provides a focal point for government, development workers and others in their interactions with the community. Most information seemed to reach people through conservancy meetings, and Ju'hoan government representatives often used this forum to exchange information. The Nyae Nyae Conservancy Annual General Meeting (AGM) is usually attended by government officials and NGO representatives who provide feedback on activities and key issues to conservancy members and listen to their inputs. Each village sends two representatives to the conservancy AGM.

**Rights issues**

The word for 'rights' in Ju’hoansi is *tsosisi*. Chief Bobo defined the concept of *tsosisi* as “… rights to own land, rights to the area that you are staying in … and the rights to hunt animals – but you have to do it in a way that you do not finish all the animals.” He further indicated that the land rights of the Nyae Nyae Ju’hoansi in respect of the conservancy area correspond with the previous n!ore land tenure system:

“In the past, people had to know who owns what land, and people got their own rights to land, by saying this one owns here, that one owns there. It’s the same thing today; there is no conflict between them. Today, someone cannot come without permission to come into the place [the Conservancy]. The rules are the same for the n!oresi.”

FGD participants in Nǂanimh said that they were aware of their rights, and defined them as “the right to conserve the environment and nature”. They clearly stated that when livestock belonging to other ethnic groups grazed in the conservancy, it was a violation of their rights. These participants also expressed a strong desire to know more about their rights under the Namibian Constitution. However, simply knowing that they have the rights to land, or even acting on this knowledge, is not always enough. Nǂanimh residents described finding cattle belonging to other ethnic groups grazing in their n!ore. They knew that this was a violation of their rights, and they had been told that if they found cattle on their land, they should catch the animals and inform the conservancy. Once they had caught some cattle belonging to Kavango people, and (as instructed) they had called the conservancy. A conservancy representative came to the site with the police, and removed the cattle. However, the Nǂanimh residents later found that someone had cut the wires of the solar-powered pump supplying their water, and they believed that this had been done by the people whose cattle they turned in. Consequently they were afraid to report violations of conservancy rules and their traditional n!ore rights as they feared that members of other ethnic groups would take action against them.

**Visions for the future**

**Changes in quality of life over time**

FGD participants at each site were asked to assess the changes in their quality of life over time from the 1980s through to 2011. At all three sites they said that life had been good in the 1980s, i.e. just before independence, but had deteriorated since Independence for various reasons. However, they
also said that things were beginning to improve again by 2011. The FGD participants’ responses at the three sites, summarised below, are remarkably consistent in both chronological detail and assessment of living circumstances.

In Tsumkwe, FGD participants said that the period between 1985 and 1990 was the best for Ju’hoan farmworkers and people in Tsumkwe. There was more work, young people had jobs, and Ju’hoansi were hired based on their experience rather than formal qualifications. People from other ethnic groups also worked in Tsumkwe on a contract basis, but would leave after completing their work. Around 1985, the then Ju’Wa Bushman Development Foundation (JBDF) started a ‘back to the n!ore’ movement, helping people to move out of Tsumkwe and establish their own villages. Virtually all of the Ju’hoansi in the Tsumkwe FGD recalled this as being a very positive development (see also the subsection on external support, on the next page).

At Independence, the Ju’hoansi and other San were given the same rights as all other citizens of the new Namibia, which the Tsumkwe Ju’hoansi unanimously regarded as a good thing. However, life became more expensive after 1990 and there was greater need for cash. The Nyae Nyae Farmers’ Cooperative (NNFC – the former JBDF) assisted people with the maintenance of their villages and provided some support, such as facilitating the selling of crafts. Life was harder from 1997 to 2000 because food aid was reduced, and 2000 is known locally as “the year of hunger” because flooding made it very difficult for vehicles to reach the villages to make deliveries, which meant that people could not get their food aid unless they walked to Tsumkwe. In general, people reported that life improved again thereafter, but was not as good in 2011 as it was before Independence. On a scale of 1-10, life in 2011 was rated at 3, compared to 1 in 2000, 5 in 1990-1997 and 10 in 1985-1990.

In ||Xa|hoba, FGD participants said that the years preceding Independence, up to 1989, were the best years for them because the SADF had provided nearly every household with employment and food rations. On a scale of 1-30, they rated this period at 30, and noted that this was the best time they could remember. The next best period was 1989-1990 (rated at 15) because they had been given cattle, and the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) – which supervised the transition to Independence – provided food, and the new government also provided food. On the negative side, they were afraid of the new government and had experienced trouble finding a place to sell their crafts. Life then deteriorated and was worst for them in 2001-2002 (rated at 0) because there was a drought and people were hungrier. At that time in ||Xa|hoba they did not have access to water, and people sold their cattle because they could no longer provide enough water for them. Some people went to Tsumkwe during this period, and others depended on hunting and gathering to survive. Life improved again in 2011 (rated at 6) because the Living Hunters Museum had been established and some tourists were visiting the village. But, although life was once again improving, the FGD participants still did not find it to be as good as before Independence.

In Nǂanimh, FGD participants said that 1981 was the best year for them because the cattle received from the JBDF provided milk, there was a lot of game, they sold crafts, they had pension money, there was plenty of veldfood, and mangetti trees (a source of food) had not been destroyed by elephants, as was happening at the time of our visit. On a scale of 1-10, they rated 1981 at 10. The time around Independence was almost as good (rated at 9) because they began to receive food aid and the new government promised them jobs. Their situation deteriorated in 1995 when they lost all their livestock to lions – although they still had enough to eat (rated at 5). The period 2000-

21 Discussion participants were asked to use a scale of 1 to 10 in ranking their quality of life at different stages, but participants in ||Xa|hoba wanted to use a scale of 1 to 30 in order to emphasise that the period when the SADF supported the community was by far the best time in terms of quality of life.
2004 was the worst for them (rated 0-1) because the food aid stopped, in one year there was frost in the winter and veldfood was very scarce, they lost sheep to poisoned plants, there was no water in the borehole, and the crop fields dried out. By 2011, food aid had been restored, and at certain times they could earn some income from Devil's Claw harvesting and craft sales. There was more game in 2011 for hunting, and they were more likely to get honey – which they considered a delicacy.

Changes in the future

Most people at the three research sites did not think that their circumstances would change much in the future. FGD participants generally said that they would like the youth to complete their education and get jobs, even if this meant going to work in other places, such as Grootfontein (although they would still expect those youth to see Nyae Nyae as their home). However, none of the participants said that they planned to leave the area and seek work in towns. When asked what kinds of jobs they would like to have, the youth mentioned jobs in their own villages (e.g. in tourism projects or the Village Schools), in the conservancy or in Tsumkwe.

Impact of external support

Nyae Nyae Conservancy has received an enormous amount of external support – probably more than any other San organisation in Namibia. The main role-players in Nyae Nyae are the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN), a Namibian NGO which provides various kinds of support, and the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS), a Norwegian NGO which has supported education in Nyae Nyae in general and the Village Schools Project specifically (the latter since 2004). Both of these organisations have committed long-term support for the processes that the Ju'hoansi are going through as they adapt to new and ever-changing social and political
landscapes. In addition, several government ministries provide services in Tsumkwe, and a number of national and international NGOs include Tsumkwe in various efforts aimed at improving the living conditions of Namibia’s poorest populations. Several churches are also involved in the area, offering donations of various kinds. Some examples of the different kinds of external support are described in this subsection, but the list is not exhaustive; these are simply the ones that emerged in our FGDs conducted over four days in 2011.

**Nyae Nyae Conservancy / Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN)**

As indicated above, the conservancy provides (or allows for) livelihood opportunities that are not available elsewhere in Namibia, and much of what Nyae Nyae Conservancy has achieved would not have been possible without the enormous support received from the NNDFN based in Windhoek. Importantly, the conservancy itself — mainly by providing for tourism based on culture and wildlife — gives residents sources of cash income that are not available in non-conservancy areas. The conservancy generated a total of 23 full-time jobs in 2009, with a wage bill of N$302,200. However, these opportunities do not suffice to lift all local Ju’hoansi out of poverty. Some people will escape being poor while they have a conservancy job, and some are able to use their wages to purchase vehicles and other large items, but, as noted earlier, income is often dispersed very widely among family members, thus those who receive an income are not always noticeably better off than others.

The conservancy makes an annual cash payment — N$400 since 2010 — to all of its 1,375 members (NNDFN data). This cash payment and the wages from the conservancy represent an important injection of money into a cash-starved society. Mosimane et al. (2007) found that conservancy members place considerable value on the cash payments even though these did not actually lift them out of poverty: most people used the income for food, but some members pooled their income and invested in livestock. “Without this support … some community members would not have had an income at all.” (Mosimane et al. 2007: 11)

Conservancy benefits help to alleviate poverty, diversify livelihoods and promote rural development. One main form of conservancy support for members is the provision of boreholes and means to protect the boreholes and water-pump equipment from elephants. This water provision and protection is vital for all gardening activities and for livestock. The conservancy also signs contracts with holders of concessions for big-game hunting and organises the distribution of meat from trophy kills; arranges training for sustainable harvesting of Devil’s Claw and facilitates the relationship with the buyer; and organises training in craftmaking and facilitates sales of crafts. Although some people complained about a lack of consistency on the part of the conservancy in providing services to villages — e.g., delivering water tanks and pipes, or meat from trophy kills or takings from craft sales — overall, conservancy members appreciated the conservancy’s services and recognised the importance of these.

As described earlier in this chapter, many Ju’hoansi depend in large part on hunting and gathering veldfoods for sustenance and nutrition, but also value the significance of these activities as cultural practices. The conservancy’s presence supports the continued existence of the plants and animals, and the conservancy’s Land-use Management Plan outlines practices for ensuring sustainability of these resources, based on both traditional land-use strategies and modern research. Several FGD

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22 From 2004 to 2009 the conservancy paid each member N$300, and in 2010 the amount was increased to N$400. In 2009 the conservancy spent 38% of its income of N$1,620,968 (approximately US$231,500) on direct cash benefits in terms of wages and payments to members. In 2010 the total wage bill for the conservancy was N$246,186.

23 In 2010, Nyae Nyae Conservancy spent N$209,921 on water protection, equipment and drilling.
participants also mentioned that the conservancy is important for defending land rights against incursions into the area by other people.

**Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS)**

NAMAS has worked on education projects in Namibia since 1980, and has initiated and supported a number of education and livelihood projects, including the Ondao Mobile Schools Project serving the Himba people. In 2003, NAMAS offered to support the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the process of taking over the Village Schools. The Village Schools Project – founded by the Kalahari Peoples Fund in 1992 (see below) and previously run as a project of the NNDFN – was taken over by the government in 2004 with the support of NAMAS (see Hays et al. 2010). Although the schools are technically government primary schools, NAMAS provides a great deal of support and coordination for the running of the six remote schools, including teacher training, transportation, technical support, support for acquiring materials, and much more. NAMAS also built the Captain Kxao Kxami Community Learning and Development Centre (CLDC) in Tsumkwe. NAMAS has therefore demonstrated long-term commitment to the Tsumkwe area, and is an important presence in Nyae Nyae Conservancy.

**Kalahari Peoples Fund (KPF)**

The KPF has provided consistent support for various efforts in Tsumkwe over four decades. As noted above, KPF started the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project in 1992, and today cooperates with NAMAS and supports teaching training. The KPF is currently engaged in training in computer skills and library use, and supporting community literacy generally in Nyae Nyae. The KPF also supports the Ju’hoansi Transcription Group (JTG), a group of youth who are literate in Ju’hoansi and English, and are trained to provide transcription and translation services for their community as well as for visiting researchers, filmmakers and others.
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

The WWF’s Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Project began working with the NNDFN in 1993, providing funds for natural resource management (NRM). A central aspect of this support was to assist the Ju’hoansi to rebuild their wildlife populations and simultaneously help to ensure that the Ju’hoansi would benefit from living with wildlife – through trophy hunting, tourism, sustainable game-meat harvesting, and potentially farming of high-value game species such as roan antelope and buffalo. The LIFE Project was jointly funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Namibia’s Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and the WWF (US), and was administered by the WWF-US on behalf of the Namibia National Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme. The LIFE Project played an active role in supporting the early development of the conservancy, and in land-use planning and zoning. It has provided support for game management and reintroduction, as well as community capacity building (Weaver and Skyer 2003: 11-14). Although the LIFE Project has ended, the WWF-US in Namibia continues to provide support to the conservancy in the form of technical assistance for NRM and funding to the NNDFN.

Living Culture Foundation (LCF)

The LCF provided support to the people of ||Xa|hoba (through the conservancy) to establish and run a Living Hunters Museum in their village. The LCF had previously helped people at Grashoek in neighbouring Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy to establish a similar venture. The LCF provides training, signage and advertising for the Living Hunters Museum – it does not provide other financial support.

Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)

The LAC has provided legal support to Nyae Nyae Conservancy since 2005, when a paralegal was based in Tsumkwe to provide support and educate people about their legal rights. This position was discontinued in 2007, but the LAC continues to provide legal support for ongoing issues – in particular land rights cases.

Government food aid

FGD participants at all three research sites welcomed the government food aid. As indicated above, this support helped many Ju’hoansi in the area to maintain food security. However, according to residents of the villages and Tsumkwe, delivery schedules and the type and quality of food provided are inconsistent, and the food aid does not always reach the intended recipients. Ideally, people would like to be able to produce their own food and not rely on government aid, but this process is not straightforward; much technical and social support is needed. Both governmental and non-governmental bodies have provided various types of support for raising livestock and growing food crops, as outlined in the two following subsections.

Support for keeping/farming livestock

At various times, different organisations have provided different types of livestock support to the people of Nyae Nyae. In the 1980s the JBDF helped villages to establish small cattle herds, but subsequently many of the cattle were eaten by lions, or were lost in the bush, or were slaughtered for the people’s consumption. This was due partly to a lack of livestock-management skills, and partly to environmental factors. Nevertheless, over the years some villages have succeeded in building up small herds with assistance from the conservancy and the NNDFN.
Some villages had recently received sheep from the Dutch Reformed Church, as described above. Although well-intentioned, this project appears to have been conceived and carried out in isolation from other agricultural support efforts, including those of the conservancy and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF). Training was provided for the church project, but sheep farming proved difficult and most of the sheep were lost to predators. As noted above, there were also problems with ownership of the sheep and assigning responsibility for their care.

Support for growing crops

To be able to grow crops, people in Nyae Nyae require access to seeds and water, and assistance in learning gardening/cropping techniques – chiefly planting, ploughing and processing, and ways to protect plants from wildlife and pests. Such support is needed not only for the cropping process itself, but also to ensure that the people take ownership of the process, which includes being satisfied with a particular plant as a crop and as a food. Various organisations provide some of these requirements to some villages, but the delivery of tools and services is not always coordinated or consistent. Below are examples of the different types of support discussed in the FGDs.

Water availability in Nyae Nyae is problematic, and villages are dependent on water pumps – which can break down for various reasons – to access this resource.24 A reliable water supply and a storage tank are indispensable for any gardening/cropping activity (beyond a small garden that can be watered by hand). The development wing of the 7th Day Adventist Church25 based in Tsumkwe distributed water tanks to many villages and helped to build walls around those that needed walls to protect them from elephants. The MAWF’s Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination (DWSSC) is responsible for servicing the pumps at some (not all) boreholes in Nyae Nyae. Some of the villages (e.g. N‡animh) have requested water tanks, and NNDFN representatives interviewed for our study said that these were available, but they had not yet been distributed, for reasons which were not clear to these interviewees. The installation of water tanks in a village may be the single most important requirement for increasing food self-sufficiency through gardening/cropping.

The MAWF provides specific support for growing crops (e.g. it has provided donkeys and tools to some villages for ploughing), and also works closely with the conservancy to coordinate approaches. Although the government subsidises the cultivation of *mahangu* (pearl millet) by means of distributing bulk consignments of seeds, this is not what people in the Nyae Nyae area prefer to grow because it is a difficult crop to process. The Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) also supports a gardening project in Tsumkwe, but residents there said that their gardening efforts had failed due to problems with water and a lack of tools.

Despite the involvement of the conservancy, the NNDFN, at least two government ministries, and various other organisations and churches in providing equipment and services, many of the villages in Nyae Nyae still lack consistent access to water and/or the necessary equipment for gardening/cropping, and still others are struggling with the issue of ownership of gardens. Better coordination between all parties involved could help to improve the distribution of the necessary materials and other support, and could also achieve a better balance between addressing urgent problems and dealing with long-term issues threatening food security.

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24 As illustrated by the sudden lack of water in ‡Otcekxai during our field visit.
25 Also called the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) or the Pilgrim Relief Society, they have two people based in Tsumkwe.
Other organisations

In addition to those mentioned above, there are a number of other organisations involved in health and education in Nyae Nyae. Namibia’s Ministry of Health and Social Services, Health Unlimited and CoHeNa (described in the section on health) all support health-related efforts in the area.

Support from other San-focused efforts in Namibia

There are two primary organisations in Namibia that address issues affecting the San: the Office of the Prime Minister’s San Development Programme (SDP), and the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) – both described in Chapter 3. Although many Nyae Nyae FGD participants were aware of the existence of the SDP, they said that representatives hardly ever visited the area and did not consult with them. They also said that they did not receive much support from WIMSA. Although this was sometimes interpreted as a sign of neglect, it should be noted that the Nyae Nyae Conservancy communities have the conservancy management as well as a support organisation in Windhoek, i.e. the NNDFN, focusing specifically on their district (Tsumkwe), so the SDP and WIMSA are prioritising other areas where San communities live.

Conclusions – Impact of external support

“You have all the ministries, churches, various NGOs – and they don’t always coordinate, these stakeholders. This can be very confusing for the conservancy, and for the villages … There should be a lot more consultation, on all sides.”

– NNDFN Finance and Administration Manager
The San communities in the Nyae Nyae area receive a tremendous amount of support and attention in comparison with many other San communities and many other conservancies. Although this has conferred certain advantages on the Nyae Nyae communities, often the support is poorly coordinated, and the communities and longer-term support organisations are often not involved in the consultation process. Some issues that emerged in our research discussions stemmed from confusion about support or frustration due to things being promised but not delivered, or delivered without necessary support, or implemented without real consultation.

Although people are always grateful to receive animals, other donations, training etc., if such support is not part of a wider vision, it can undermine the long-term efforts and specific projects of the key support organisations, and also the communities’ own efforts to attain self-sufficiency. Much better coordination is needed for all of the projects to have positive effects.

**Living in villages compared to living in Tsumkwe**

During our field research in Nyae Nyae, people frequently compared living conditions in Tsumkwe to those in the villages, and virtually everyone favoured living in the villages. Many development and education initiatives focus on providing skills that enable people to get jobs in the more urban areas, but many residents of Nyae Nyae were more interested in continuing to reside in their own villages. This subsection briefly describes that dynamic, as it is relevant to development strategies in the area.

The efforts of John Marshall and the former Ju|'Wa Bushman Development Foundation (JBDF) – now the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) – to move people from Tsumkwe to settle in small villages in their *n!oresi* in the early 1980s was controversial at the time, and brought the people and Marshall into conflict with the government – particularly where Marshall helped people to establish their villages at boreholes provided by the government for wildlife. The main motivation for moving people out of Tsumkwe at the time was to stop the social disintegration that people were experiencing, which was accompanied by alcoholism, disease and crime.

All participants in our FGDs agreed that life in Tsumkwe was not good, primarily because of the availability of alcohol and the problems associated with this. In addition, around the villages there are adequate wildlife resources to allow for some hunting for meat, and in most years there are still adequate veldfood resources to provide additional food. The villages are remote from government services such as clinics and the Tsumkwe schools, but the Village Schools Project, which caters for Grades 1-3, has helped with early primary education. Transport to and from villages to attend school in Tsumkwe beyond Grade 3 remains a problem, however. Although the transport problem applies to healthcare facilities as well, as mentioned previously, nurses in Tsumkwe said that health in the villages was better than in Tsumkwe due to the decreased availability of alcohol there, and due to better nutrition from veldfood and the lower likelihood of HIV transmission.

Providing support to people living in their *n!oresi* thus still appears to be an appropriate development approach. However, more emphasis should be placed on enabling people to acquire skills that they can use to be productive in their own villages, such as horticulture, crop-cultivation and livestock-management skills. Very few Ju’hoansi move away from the Nyae Nyae area in search of work in towns, and in the villages surveyed, there seemed to be little desire to do so. Therefore, while enabling Ju’hoansi to stay in school to acquire knowledge and skills that qualify them for jobs in towns, it is equally important to focus on knowledge and skills that they can apply in their villages.
5.2.4 Conclusions and recommendations on Nyae Nyae Conservancy

Food production

Currently, residents of Nyae Nyae are still highly dependent on both veldfood and food aid for their food security and nutrition. The NNDFN and the government have made various efforts to assist people in cultivating gardens and crop fields, but despite some successes, many people are still not able to grow their own food due to multiple challenges that they face. These include: environmental challenges, such as elephants and other herbivores destroying gardens and crops, and a lack of water; and social challenges, such as a lack of agricultural skills due to agriculture not being a part of the Ju|’hoan culture – thus they need intensive training to acquire knowledge of the relevant techniques. Also, a lack of ownership over gardens and crops can prevent people from taking responsibility for them. Increased efforts are needed to assist people to grow their own food, but these efforts must match those people’s needs. Currently, therefore, the priorities should be to ensure that villages have an adequate water supply, and to work together with villages to ascertain what kind of gardening and cropping (including which plants) will be suitable for them.

The number of livestock owned by Ju|’hoansi in Nyae Nyae has fluctuated considerably since the JBDF began promoting livestock farming. The NNDFN has invested heavily in assisting community efforts to maintain livestock, and is currently supporting some villages with sustainable livestock-management practices. The NNDFN is also currently conducting a feasibility study to ascertain the appropriate numbers of livestock for the Nyae Nyae area as a whole, with a view to balancing these numbers with the conservancy’s wildlife-maintenance plan.
Education

Education is a complex issue. On the one hand, the Ju|’hoansi recognise the value of the skills that education can offer, and would thus like to have access to schooling. On the other hand, they face numerous barriers in accessing the options available to them once they finish Grade 3 at the Village Schools – these barriers are outlined above in the subsection on education, and “Komtsa’s story” (Box 5.2) puts them all too clearly into perspective. Both Ju|’hoan children and parents reported feeling intimidated by the other ethnic groups that control the schools in Tsumkwe. In addition, many non-San learners travel from Rundu, Grootfontein and other places to attend government schools in Tsumkwe. A constant refrain from the Ju|’hoansi is that the schools in Tsumkwe (and especially the primary school) should cater mainly for local learners.

It is critical that education and training opportunities match actual livelihood opportunities in the area, as well as the Nyae Nyae community members’ aspirations. In Tsumkwe there are many economic opportunities that are based on local environmental knowledge and traditional skills, and transmission of this knowledge and skill set should be facilitated for both schoolchildren and youth, as well as for those who have dropped out of the formal education system.

Land rights

Ju|’hoansi land rights have been recognised by government to some extent, but remain precarious. When Herero pastoralists moved into the Nyae Nyae area soon after Namibian Independence, government supported their removal, and the founding President of Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma, acknowledged that the Ju|’hoansi had rights to their land (Biesele and Hitchcock 2011: 15-16). However, the status of Ju|’hoan land remains that of communal land held in trust by the State for the benefit of traditional communities. Like other Namibian communities, the Ju|’hoansi therefore have user rights on what they regard as their own land, rather than collective ownership rights. Again, like other communities in Namibia, the ability of the Ju|’hoansi to control access to their land by outsiders depends on their traditional authority, which can give permission to outsiders to settle on Nyae Nyae land and use grazing there. To date this system appears to be working in favour of the Ju|’hoansi, whereas our findings on the experience of neighbouring Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy indicate that this might not be the case for all communities (see the relevant parts of section 5.3, starting on the next page).

Role of the conservancy

So far Nyae Nyae Conservancy is providing a range of benefits to local people without necessarily lifting large numbers of people out of poverty. Although the conservancy is sometimes criticised by residents for not focusing sufficiently on promoting agriculture (gardening, cultivating crops and livestock farming), most of the people who participated in our field research recognised that the conservancy allows them access to traditional veldfoods, which they greatly appreciate. Not only does this access improve food security, but also it provides for a diversified and much healthier diet than is found in places where people have access only to government food aid and store-bought food. Furthermore, along with the traditional authority, the conservancy plays an important role in providing a platform for the Ju|’hoansi to represent their interests to outsiders, engage with the government and defend their land rights.

This chapter now goes on to discuss Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy, and closes with a brief comparison of the two conservancies.
5.3 Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy

5.3.1 General background on Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy

**Description of the area**

Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy was gazetted in December 2003. “Nǂa” is the local name for the Omatako *omuramba* (dry river bed) and “Jaqna” is the local name for the Nhoma *omuramba*. The conservancy area corresponds to the area administered by the !Xun Traditional Authority, and much of the area known as Tsumkwe West lies within the conservancy boundaries. Nǂa Jaqna is the largest conservancy in Namibia, spanning 9 120 km², neighbouring the oldest conservancy in the country, i.e. Nyae Nyae Conservancy.

The territory is characterised by *Acacia* woodland on low-nutrient soils (Kalahari sands). Surface water is scarce, with an average annual rainfall of 400-450 mm, and the groundwater is deep. Patches of *Dichaetaum cymosum* (‘gifblaar’ in the vernacular – Afrikaans for ‘poison leaf’), which is very poisonous to cattle, are widespread in the area. Typical wildlife species include elephant, eland, giraffe, kudu and blue wildebeest, and some predators such as leopard, cheetah and wild dog. However, the wildlife population is not as rich in numbers and diversity as it is in Nyae Nyae Conservancy. For example, elephants are not found in large herds as they are in Nyae Nyae, but occur only as individual bulls or herds migrating in the wet season from the Khaudum National Park (Humphrey and Wassenaar 2009: 28).

The San population of Nǂa Jaqna is heterogeneous: !Xun are the majority, followed by Khwe and then Juǂhoansi. A number of Hai||om San also settled there having left their jobs as farmworkers on commercial farms in the Grootfontein area (see Chapter 6 on Kunene, Oshana and Oshikoto Regions). An important characteristic of Nǂa Jaqna's residents is that only a small percentage of them were born in the district: in 1995, Botelle and Rohde (1995: 110) reported that only 4% of the inhabitants of Tsumkwe West were born in the conservancy, as compared to 76% of the inhabitants of Tsumkwe East. The percentage has certainly grown since 1995 as the conservancy population is very young, but these comparative figures clearly illustrate one big difference between the two conservancies: Nyae Nyae, with its continuous history of Juǂhoan settlement, has a relatively homogenous population, whereas Nǂa Jaqna hosts a heterogeneous mix of people, the majority of whom settled in the area only in the 1970s. This tangled history of settlement is further complicated by the high influx of people of other ethnic groups into Tsumkwe West since Independence: in 2001, 80% of the area’s population were !Xun, 10% were Juǂhoansi and the remaining 10% comprised Khwe, Hai||om, Herero, Kwangali and Owambo people. Ten years later (i.e. in 2011), reportedly only 50% of the estimated 6 000 inhabitants of Tsumkwe West belonged to a San group (Hitchcock 2012: 94).

Most of Nǂa Jaqna’s inhabitants employ a mix of livelihood activities, combining agriculture and livestock production with cash income from piecework, Old Age Pensions, and sales of Devil's Claw and crafts. According to Hitchcock (2012: 98), 25% of the households in the conservancy own small herds of cattle, goats and donkeys. Livestock production is dependent on outside factors such as water availability, grazing conditions, and the presence of predators as well as poisonous plants. Livestock owners are not permitted to sell live animals or meat products to the Meat Corporation of Namibia (Meatco) because they are located north of the Veterinary Cordon Fence – commonly referred to as the “Red Line” – that cuts across the southern part of Tsumkwe District (East and West) and marks the limit of certified disease-free livestock. The San inhabitants still

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26 This is mainly restricted to the inhabitants of Grashoek, who can sell their products through the Living Museum there.
practise gathering, although their neighbours in Nyae Nyae Conservancy are able to harvest more wild food due to having better access to the bush as well as a wider abundance of veldfood.

**Historical background**

It is generally agreed that the area now comprising N‡a Jaqna Conservancy was almost entirely uninhabited before the 1960s, largely due to the area's low water table. According to Botelle and Rohde (1995), before the 1960s there were a few Ju/'hoan families living along the Omatako omuramba in the eastern part of the conservancy, and Suzman (2001) reported that there was also a small indigenous population of !Xun living along the Omatako in Tsumkwe West. In 1962, the Odendaal Commission developed a plan in which the so-called “native reserves” were consolidated into ethnic homelands organised along tribal lines. In 1970, “Bushmanland” (“Boesmanland”) was officially designated for the San, and the South West Africa Administration planned to resettle all San of Namibia in this homeland. However, the inhabitants of Bushmanland – in contrast to other ethnic groups in other homelands, which were administered through second-tier tribal authorities – did not have the right to oversee their own affairs. At this time, the Ju/'hoansi were living in the eastern part of the homeland, which was part of their traditional territory (known today as Nyae Nyae), and some !Xun lived in western Bushmanland (Hitchcock 2012: 80).

In 1978, the South African Defence Force (SADF) brought around 1 000 !Xun from the area now known as Kavango Region to Mangetti Dune in what is now N‡a Jaqna Conservancy, and settled them at army bases in the area. The headquarters of the 36th Bushman Battalion was established in Mangetti Dune, and SADF personnel worked on both the military training and the economic development of the recruited San in Bushmanland. Roads were built and boreholes were drilled with the aim of settling family groups with their own livestock around the boreholes so that the San would become economically self-sufficient in the long term (Hitchcock 2012: 85). The resettled population in Tsumkwe West grew quickly, and at Independence in 1990 there were nearly 3 000 men, women and children living in what is now N‡a Jaqna Conservancy. The San serving in the SADF received a far higher income than any other San group in the country – but one result of this was that they became highly dependent on this cash income. After Independence the San who had served in the SADF feared retaliation and discrimination, and over 1 000 San in Tsumkwe West accepted the South African Government’s offer of resettlement in Schmidtsdrift in South Africa’s Northern Cape Province (Suzman 2001b: 41-46; see also Chapter 10 on the Bwabwata National Park (West Caprivi) regarding resettlement of San who had served in the SADF).

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**Box 5.4: MLRR-ELCIN Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme, 1990-1995**

The Namibian Government set up a resettlement and development programme in West Caprivi and the former Bushmanland to counteract difficulties met by the inhabitants of those areas who had been economically dependent on the SADF. The then Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR) coordinated the programme, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) was the implementing agency and the Lutheran World Federation provided funding. The programme, implemented from 1990 to 1995, had four objectives: (1) to resettle ex-soldiers and their families; (2) to provide rehabilitation; (3) to provide training in agriculture and livestock production; and (4) to offer capacity-building and leadership training. The most comprehensive component of the programme was the support of agricultural activities; the programme offered information, tools and fertilisers. By the mid-1990s there were about 700 fields in existence, with grain yields of 120-400 kg per year. Hitchcock reports that the inhabitants of Tsumkwe West could meet a third of their food...
The years following Independence were characterised by high insecurity with regard to land tenure in the area. Under the MLRR-ELCIN Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme (Box 5.4), small plots were allocated for farming (5 hectares per household), and the MLRR provided technical assistance in the form of oxen, a tractor, seeds and extension services for ploughing and planting (Suzman 2001b: 44-45). Later, however, local groups and NGOs questioned the allocation practice, and this led to the participation of representatives of Tsumkwe West in the Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question in 1991 (see Box 5.1, page 97) (Hitchcock 2012: 92).

The conservancy’s formation

Starting in the late 1990s, the plan to establish a conservancy in Tsumkwe West took shape, with consultations supported by MET officials and NGOs, notably WIMSA. The consultative process brought to light that the inhabitants were in favour of establishing a conservancy, as they thought it would help to protect wildlife and could offer them more income opportunities through hunting concessions and the creation of new jobs. The MET officially recognised N‡a Jaqna Conservancy in July 2003 – five years after the first application had been submitted.28

The number of official conservancy members could not be ascertained for this report because the conservancy membership list of 2012 does not reflect precise numbers of official members and others.29 This list suggests that there were approximately 2500 members, i.e. people aged 18 and older, and around the same number of people younger than 18, thus some 5000 people were living in the conservancy in 2012, but a great many of them were/are not part of the official conservancy population.30

27 For detailed discussions on the formation of the conservancy, see Hohmann 2003 and Hitchcock 2012.
28 The consultation process for the formation of N‡a Jaqna Conservancy did not include committee members of Nyae Nyae Conservancy (established in 1998). The original N‡a Jaqna Conservancy Plan incorporated part of Nyae Nyae Conservancy, which came to be known as the ‘disputed area’. WIMSA facilitated the negotiations during this consultation process, and finally both groups agreed that Nyae Nyae Conservancy should keep its original boundaries, but that the contested area (reaching 10 km into each conservancy) should be a co-management area (Hitchcock 2012: 107-198).
29 Originally, people who had lived in the conservancy for five consecutive years and were over 21 years of age were eligible for conservancy membership, and anyone moving into the area had to have the traditional leaders’ permission to live there. With the revision of the constitution in 2012, the precondition of five years was increased to 10 years, and the minimum age of 21 was lowered to 18.
30 Information provided in personal communication with Lara Diez, Director of the NNDFN, in July 2013.
For management purposes, N‡a Jaqna Conservancy has been divided into four districts, with zones demarcated for settlement, agriculture and wildlife. In contrast to Nyae Nyae Conservancy, where hunting with traditional weapons such as bows and arrows is allowed, N‡a Jaqna’s constitution prohibits traditional hunting.

**Tsumkwe West Zonation Plan**

As the map above shows, the Mkata Community Forest (gazetted in 2006) is located at the core of N‡a Jaqna Conservancy, although it covers only a small part of the conservancy. The management of this forest is separate from the management of the conservancy. The community forest was meant to bring benefits to the community, but there is no detailed data available on activities or income generated.\(^{31}\) There was no mention of this forest in any of our FGDs in N‡a Jaqna, which indicates that none of the FGD participants perceived it as an entity providing significant benefits.

Access to land and resources has been a difficult issue for a long time in Tsumkwe West, not least because illegal settlers started to move in to the area in the years after Independence. Scholars have noted that the San engaged in the process of forming a conservancy partly because they “… thought it could lead to greater control over their land and resources” (Hitchcock 2012: 101). However, the status of ‘conservancy’ did not help to secure rights over land, as rights of conservancies relate only to game-usage rights. The problematic situation regarding land tenure in this area was further exacerbated by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement’s (MLR’s) announcement in 2005 that the government wanted to establish small-scale farms in the area. Chief John Arnold, the late Chief of the !Xun Traditional Authority, took a highly controversial stance by agreeing to allocate land that was perceived as belonging to conservancy members.\(^{32}\) The San inhabitants of the conservancy felt

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\(^{31}\) Personal communication with NNDFN Director Lara Diez, July 2013.

\(^{32}\) Chief Arnold participated in the group discussions during the field trip in February 2012. He passed away in July 2012 as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident.
highly threatened by these developments, and they were clearly aware of their vulnerable position with regard to securing access to their land and resources. These issues will be discussed in detail in the subsections on access to land (page 157) and traditional authority (page 165).

5.3.2 Research sites in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy

To represent the different sets of circumstances of conservancy residents, the researchers selected three sites for the study in Nǂa Jaqna: Mangetti Dune, Luhebo and Omatako. Mangetti Dune, formerly an SADF base, is now a small administrative centre for Tsumkwe West. The conservancy operates from Mangetti Dune and has its office there. Luhebo is a small village consisting of a single extended family. Omatako village was home to the late Chief John Arnold. Omatako has faced a number of specific issues such as a high influx of outsiders and the erection of allegedly illegal fences in the area. The main characteristics of these sites are summarised in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Main characteristics of the Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy research sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Urban/rural status</th>
<th>Land tenure</th>
<th>San language groups</th>
<th>Population status (numerical)</th>
<th>Institutional support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mangetti Dune   | Rural remote village | Communal land within the conservancy | !Xun and Hai||om | San majority among other groups including Kavango, Damara, Herero and Owambo | • Health facility  
• School  
• Police station  
• Electricity and water supply  
• NAMAS (education);  
• WIMSA/NNDFN (conservancy support);  
• Health Unlimited  
• San Rise Foundation (food, clothing and education);  
• CRIAA SA-DC (Devil’s Claw) |
| Luhebo          | Rural remote village | Communal land within the conservancy | !Xun | San majority (only two villagers are non-San) | No government support other than normal rural services (including ploughing)  
Indirect support through WIMSA/NNDFN support to conservancy |
| Omatako         | Rural remote village | Communal land within the conservancy | !Xun, Hai||om and Ju|h’hoansi | San majority among Herero, Owambo and Kavango | No government support other than normal rural services (including ploughing)  
Indirect support through WIMSA/NNDFN support to conservancy  
• LAC |

*Abbreviations/acronyms:
CRIAA SA-DC = Centre for Research-Information-Action in Africa – Southern Africa Development and Consulting
LAC = Legal Assistance Centre
NAMAS = Namibia Association of Norway
NNDFN = Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia
WIMSA = Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa

Mangetti Dune

Mangetti Dune is located about 10 km south of Luhebo on the D3304, and is 206 km away from the town of Grootfontein. FGD participants in Mangetti Dune said that the village had about 450 residents, most of whom were San (primarily !Xun, and a lower number of Hai||om). There were also residents from other ethnic groups, including Kavango, Damara, Herero and Owambo people – and the FGD participants reported that the number of non-San people was increasing as those who came to the conservancy for work brought their immediate families and relatives to live there too. The San residents were of mixed origin: some were born in Angola and had moved to Omega in the Bwabwata National Park, from where the SADF had relocated them to Mangetti...
Dune; others had come from Mpungu Vlei in Kavango Region; several people were born in other
villages in the conservancy and had moved to Mangetti Dune; and others had come from the
towns of Grootfontein, Otjiwarongo and Okahandja (all in Otjozondjupa Region), and from the
Ekoka area in Ohangwena Region (see Chapter 7 for details on the San of Ekoka). The majority of
the younger residents were born in Mangetti Dune.

As the administrative centre for Tsumkwe West, Mangetti Dune has a health facility, a primary
school (up to Grade 7) with two hostels, a police station, government offices, a cemetery and two
churches. FGD participants said that although water was available there, not everyone had access to
it and the supply was sometimes cut off because the village owed money to NamWater. Electricity
was produced through a generator when diesel was available. Several shebeens had been opened
by non-San inhabitants. The conservancy office is located in Mangetti Dune, and the Conservancy
Chairperson, Sara Zunga, lived in the village with her family at the time of our field research.

**Luhebo**

Luhebo is a small village about 10 km north of Mangetti Dune on the C44, about 196 km away
from Grootfontein. According to the FGD participants, Luhebo had around 100 residents at the
time of our visit, all being members of a single extended family. Only two non-San men lived in
the village, both of whom were married to San women. The San residents identified themselves as
!Xun. They said that Luhebo is a !Xun word meaning ‘to suffer’. FGD participants reported that the
village was established by the SADF in 1977 as a resettlement site for people originally from Angola
who had been living in West Caprivi (see Chapter 11 on Caprivi Region). Many men of the village
had served in the SADF. Some of the people resettled at Luhebo had left for South Africa after
Independence. Most of the young people were born in Luhebo village.
Luhebo had a borehole, but this was not working well at the time of our visit: it was producing polluted water because reportedly parts of the infrastructure had been damaged. There was one shop in the village, which was owned by a non-San person. Seven brick houses were built in 1997 by the then MLRR. The village had a kindergarten at the time of our visit, but no school; children attended primary school in Mangetti Dune and secondary school in Tsumkwe. The nearest health facility was in Mangetti Dune.

**Omatako**

Omatako village is located along the Omatako omuramba, about 20 km south of the C44 and about 162 km away from Grootfontein. FGD participants explained that the name Omatako is a Herero word meaning ‘buttock’, because “you are sitting where you are”. Participants said that the village had around 2000 residents, including children. It had a mixed population of San – mostly !Xun, a few Ju‘hoansi and a few Hai||om – along with Herero, Owambo and Kavango people. FGD participants reported that the village was growing very fast because new people were moving in daily. Most of the San residents had been moved by the SADF from Omega in West Caprivi to Omatako in the 1970s, and others had come from the Grootfontein area where they had worked on commercial farms.

Omatako had a primary school (up to Grade 7) with a hostel, as well as a health facility. Water was available but the supply was erratic because there was not always enough diesel to run the pump. Omatako is the home of the !Xun Traditional Authority which has its office there, and the late Chief John Arnold lived in Omatako with his family.

### 5.3.3 Research findings in N‡a Jaqna Conservancy

**Livelihoods and poverty**

This subsection looks at the various livelihood strategies employed at sites visited in N‡a Jaqna. After analysing each site’s livelihood options, we explore the food-security situation of the San in this conservancy, and then discuss the results of the poverty and wealth-ranking exercise conducted at each site.

In addition to our field research (conducted in 2012), this subsection draws on the findings of an assessment conducted in 2007 by Cameron Welch from McGill University in Canada in collaboration with WIMSA. These findings are conveyed in the *N‡a Jaqna Conservancy Strategic Social Assessment (SSA) Report* (Welch 2007). This survey covered approximately 90% of conservancy residents and addressed a range of thematic areas including social status, education and capacity levels, economic status, access to social services, food security, and natural resources. Welch’s quantitative data complement the qualitative data collected in the course of our own research.

Table 5.8 shows that the participants in our FGDs at the N‡a Jaqna research sites employed a wide range of livelihood strategies, including cultivation and gathering veldfood. Their main sources of income were Old Age Pensions, Devil’s Claw harvesting, odd jobs and piecework, and full-time employment. FGD participants were dependent on government food aid, but seemingly to a lesser extent than the inhabitants of Nyae Nyae Conservancy.

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33 This ICEMA-funded study used individual structured questionnaires to target 420 member and non-member households in the conservancy, and represents information on 2991 out of 3290 people living in the area.
Table 5.8: Main livelihood strategies at the N‡a Jaqna research sites*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livelihood strategy</th>
<th>Mangetti Dune</th>
<th>Luhebo</th>
<th>Omatako</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age Pension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering veldfood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultivation</strong></td>
<td>Most people have crop fields</td>
<td>Small crop fields and gardens</td>
<td>Only a few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of surplus crops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock/animals</td>
<td>About one-third</td>
<td>Only a few</td>
<td>Only a few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time jobs</td>
<td>24 people</td>
<td>Some had jobs in Windhoek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Piecework</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil’s Claw harvesting</td>
<td>8 people</td>
<td>Only a few people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional hunting</td>
<td>Illegal in N‡a Jaqna Conservancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat from trophy hunting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism-related income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservancy cash benefit</strong></td>
<td>No cash benefit distributed by N‡a Jaqna Conservancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The order in which the strategies are presented does not necessarily reflect their importance. The cell shading indicates that the strategy is employed at the applicable site.

**Cultivation**

According to both FGD participants and individual interviewees from support organisations, the San in N‡a Jaqna were doing relatively well with regard to cultivation. FGD participants explained that they had formerly worked in the Caprivi Strip and “Kavangoland” on farms, thereby acquiring agricultural skills. One participant in Mangetti Dune described the strategy of learning from other groups who practise agriculture: “We are following in their footsteps, and we stand up for ourselves. We found out how these people are doing and why they are doing it.” As a consequence of their particular history, the San in N‡a Jaqna were more responsive to the interventions undertaken first by the SADF, then by ELCIN and later by the MLRR in Tsumkwe West with regard to agricultural activities. The residents’ combined history as well as the inputs which they had received over the years presumably explained the relative success of agricultural production in the conservancy.

The crop fields observed during our visit were in good condition, and people were working in these fields (which at times made it difficult to involve the men in the discussions). Family members reportedly worked together in the fields, thus the sizes of fields that they could cultivate depended on the numbers of family members who could jointly work in the fields. Among the plants being harvested at the three sites visited were *mahangu* (pearl millet), maize, beans, sorghum, watermelon, pumpkin, *!nara* (a type of wild melon) and peanuts.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) supported the communities with ploughing services free of charge, and the MLR provided seeds for cultivation. FGD participants at all three sites reported difficulties with the timely ploughing of fields as they were dependent on the scheduling of the ploughing service. For the last three years the service had been irregular or too late, either because the tractor did not work or no diesel was available. At the time of the field research there was no working tractor in Mangetti Dune, and in Luhebo ploughing had started only in February.
(on the first day of our visit). FGD participants in Luhebo reported that harvests had been good in previous years, and any extra food that a family grew was sold in Otavi (a town in Otjozondjupa), the income from which was used to buy clothes and pay school fees. FGD participants in Luhebo also reported that they had stored seeds from previous years. In Omatako, residents cultivated mahangu, groundnuts, maize, watermelon, pumpkin, spanspek (cantaloupe melon) and sorghum, but cultivation in Omatako appeared to be on a smaller scale, with fewer San involved.34

The Report on the Review of Post-Resettlement Support to Group Resettlement Projects/Farms 1991-2009 (GRN 2010) concludes that although the beneficiaries in Tsumkwe West have been responsive to engagement in crop farming, other barriers remain: “The challenges to achieving food security are inadequate farming implements (tractors, animal drawn plough, fences, seeds etc) to cover 25 villages on time.” (GRN 2010: 120)

Food aid35

Delivery of food aid was reported to be inconsistent and infrequent across all sites. As in Nyae Nyae, FGD participants at all three sites reported that the food aid consisted of maize-meal only, and each household received one 12.5 kg bag of maize-meal (rather than two bags as in Nyae Nyae), regardless of the number of household members. In Luhebo it was said that the maize-meal was

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34 According to Welch (2007), community gardens existed in many of the villages in the conservancy, and some individuals cultivated on land allocated by the TA. Local NGOs provided assistance for the establishment of collective gardens (Welch 2007: 11), and both the MLR and the MAWF supported the ploughing of many of the productive fields. However, none of our FGD participants mentioned these community gardens.

35 FGD participants were unsure of the origins of their food aid; it was not clear whether it came from the San Feeding Programme (under the OPM’s San Development Programme) or the national Drought Relief Programme (coordinated by the Emergency Management Unit within the OPM).
sometimes rotten. Reportedly the last delivery of food aid to Luhebo had been in November 2011 (two months before our visit). In Omatako, FGD participants said that they received food aid in the dry season only. In Mangetti Dune, participants said that they received only food aid as drought relief.

**Old Age Pensions**

Old Age Pensions were an important source of income for entire households, not just the pensioners. The Old Age Pension was brought to the area by mobile paymasters, but many elderly people were not able to access this grant because they did not have a national ID card to confirm their eligibility. In Luhebo, for example, only one elder received pension money, although there were a number of others who were eligible. FGD participants at all three sites reported that many people had applied for ID cards but had not received them yet. Meanwhile, some of those who did have ID cards still did not receive their pension money because the dates on the IDs indicated that they were younger than they actually were. Finally, a high number of San living in N\*=a Jaqna originate from Angola, but only Namibians are eligible for the pension, thus those with Angolan citizenship do not receive pension money:

“We moved in 1975 from Angola, but since we have not been recognised as Namibians, we do not receive pension money. We brought it forward to the councillor, he should help with Home Affairs, but nothing happens. Staff members from Home Affairs came three times to look at the birth registration, but Angolans cannot register. We do not know whom to approach for these issues.”

(Participant at Mangetti Dune)

**Veldfood**

Veldfood was important for the FGD participants at all three sites, and was used as a backup when other resources, such as produce from the crop fields or cash income, were unavailable. Participants were able to list a wide range of veldfoods gathered in the surrounding area. In Mangetti Dune, residents gathered veldfood as a strategy to address hunger if there was not sufficient other food available, but sometimes they had to walk far to find this wild food, and consequently had to spend the night in the bush. They said that the best time to collect veldfood was the end of rainy season in March/April, and that both men and women collected veldfood. In Omatako, FGD participants reported that people of other ethnic groups fenced off their land and would not allow San to collect veldfood there, so in these areas they could collect veldfood only in the corridors between the fenced parcels of land. For this reason, they thought that they would no longer have access to veldfood in future.

“Sometimes it is very difficult to go to the bush, because you have to go around the fences, there is just a fence. Sometimes you can only collect veldfood in the corridor between the fences … . Now veldfood is very little.”

– Discussion participant in Omatako village
Livestock

Not many San owned livestock, and those who did had only a few animals. Different organisations and institutions had provided cattle to residents at different times (e.g. through ELCIN, the San Empowerment Programme and the MAWF, MLRR and MLR), and the new owners had been trained in husbandry, but herds did not prosper and grow for a number of reasons. For example, some livestock died from consuming *Dichaeta lum cymoum* (‘gift blaar’ in the vernacular – Afrikaans for ‘poison leaf’), which is widespread in the area. Cattle were also slaughtered if residents were in financial trouble and needed cash (e.g. for school fees). In Mangetti Dune, six of the 19 FGD participants had cattle, but the number per owner varied considerably: one of them owned 36 head, and the other five owned 3-7 head each. In Luhebo only one resident owned a cattle herd; he used have 17 head but this number dwindled due to the animals consuming poisonous plants.

Welch’s data confirm this general picture: he reported that livestock-keeping was confined to less than a third of the households in the conservancy, and that 20 households were said to own 57% of the cattle (Welch 2007: 7).

Piecework

Some FGD participants at each site undertook piecework tasks or odd jobs such as cleaning other people’s yards or working in other people’s crop fields. Most of this work was done for non-San neighbours; at times they were employed by other San, but this was rare. Generally, participants agreed that piecework opportunities were rare.

Employment

Few San had permanent employment. A total of 24 San were reported to be employed in Mangetti Dune, mostly in government jobs – three were nurses at the health facility and four were teachers. In addition two members of the San community of Mangetti Dune were working elsewhere in towns/cities. In Omatako, FGD participants said there were no formal jobs available, and in Luhebo,
a few community members were employed by/through different ministries, such as the MAWF and MoE.

FGD participants reported regular discriminatory practices when it came to filling positions. For example, participants in Omatako related an incident of some San being sent away when they applied for a job as a cleaner at the local primary school:

“They went to the school asking for the forms to apply. Then the answer from the people came, you are a bushman; how can you clean up your place, how can you become a cleaner of the school. You are dirty and you want to clean up the school?”

Devil’s Claw harvesting

In 2012 there were 507 registered Devil’s Claw harvesters in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy. FGD participants revealed that they were paid N$20 per kilogram of dried root, and estimated that they made N$400-500 per month during the harvesting season (July to October). Three NGOs, namely CRIAA SA-DC, the NNDFN and WIMSA (the latter up to mid-2012), supported the Devil’s Claw harvest in Nǂa Jaqna by providing training and capacity building for harvesters (a precondition to be registered with the conservancy as a harvester) as well as supporting the negotiation process with the buyer. The conservancy coordinates negotiations with the buyer, organises training for the harvesters, pays for the organic certification of the Devil’s Claw, and applies for the necessary permits.

Although FGD participants at all three sites harvested Devil’s Claw and gained some income from sales of this product, they did not rate this livelihood strategy as highly important. Three factors might explain this:

● The efforts that have to be undertaken to be able to harvest outweigh the benefits to a certain extent. FGD participants reported that they have to travel long distances for the harvest, and often had to stay overnight in the bush. Participants in Omatako said they had to travel as far as 35 km to be able to harvest Devil’s Claw. They then had to pay other people to bring food and water to the harvesting sites, which considerably reduced their overall net income – reportedly the negotiations with the buyer in 2012 addressed this issue.

● Local shop owners (who are all non-San) took advantage of the harvesters as potential customers, by approaching them and convincing them to buy non-consumables on credit, and then forcing them on pay-day to repay the credit, with the result that the harvesters had hardly any money left.

● Devil’s Claw harvesting is a seasonal activity, thus it only provides income in specific months of the year.

36 This number varies slightly each year (personal communication with NNDFN Director Lara Diez, July 2013).

37 Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy’s net income from Devil’s Claw harvesting in 2012 was N$101 208. Altogether the harvesters earned N$636 560.
Traditional hunting

Traditional hunting is not allowed in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy. The conservancy constitution prohibits this tradition because the MET was afraid that inhabitants would not restrict themselves to ‘traditional practices’, which, it argued, would have been difficult to define in a community composed of various San groups.38 In Mangetti Dune and Omatako, FGD participants said that they did not hunt because it was not allowed, and they associated the rules prohibiting hunting with ensuring the sustainability of their wildlife resources. However, some participants admitted that some individuals were still practising traditional hunting, despite their fear of being caught by the police. One person referred to traditional hunting as the “poaching right”. Therefore, although traditional hunting does not appear to be a widespread practice anymore due to being outlawed, it was clear that the San of Nǂa Jaqna still regarded hunting, and land on which to hunt, as central aspects of who they are.

Tourism-related activities

Income from tourism-related activities plays a minor role in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy, except for inhabitants of the Juǀhoansi Living Museum at Grashoek.39 Nǂa Jaqna is not very attractive to tourists because it does not have a lot of wildlife, nor particularly attractive landscapes, and it does not offer any accommodation besides the Omatako Valley Rest Camp and campsites at the Grashoek Living Museum.40 Very few tourists passed through the research sites during our visit.

- **Crafts:** It appears that craft production in the conservancy stopped some time ago. In Luhebo, FGD participants reported that they used to produce and sell crafts to tourists travelling through the area: “In the past we were selling to people who were coming through. In the past there were many tourists and they were interested to buy our items, but now they are not coming anymore.” The women now only made necklaces for themselves, and likewise, the village men’s production of baskets made of roots had come to a halt due to the lack of buyers.

- **Omatako Valley Rest Camp:** In the mid-1990s, five neighbouring communities (Omatako, Etamako, Kandu, Kanovlei and Grashoek) established the Omatako Valley Rest Camp on the main road (C44) between Tsumkwe and Grootfontein, with some support from WIMSA, the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) and the Integrated Community-Based Ecosystem Management Project (ICEMA). The camp management committee is composed of representatives of the five villages. FGD participants in Omatako said that, theoretically, 5% of the camp income should be given to the conservancy, but they had not received any money so far. When the research team visited the camp in November 2011, we found a dilapidated infrastructure with no water available – clearly the site had not received visitors in a long time. The late Chief John Arnold related the following in an interview: “The rest camp was my idea, and it was bringing money to the community. The conservancy wanted to develop the camp. I get tears in my eyes when I look at the camp because it looked well while under the authority of the TA, but is a mess now, with no fence and a broken water pump.” Studies conducted at the turn of the century found that the camp was attracting tourists (Hohmann 2000: 35; Suzman 2001b: 46),41 whereas a more recent study revealed a sharp decline in visitors and concluded that this appeared to be caused by “… its location and poor sense of place (situated at a road junction), low quality activities and poor standard of facilities” (Humphrey and Wassenaar 2009: 43).

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38 Personal communication with NNDFN Director Lara Diez, July 2013.
39 Grashoek was not included in our study, but it is important to mention the Living Museum as it has been very successful in providing cash-income opportunities for inhabitants of Grashoek.
40 The Grashoek campsite was upgraded through the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia (MCA-N) in 2012.
41 Suzman describes “a relatively brisk trade with 178 tourists camping there between April 1998 and March 1999” (Suzman 2001b: 46). Hohmann reported approximately three guests per week and 144 per year (Hohmann 2000: 35).
• **Trophy hunting:** A trophy-hunting contract was held by Eden, a hunting farm neighbouring the conservancy to the south. The conservancy assisted Eden with drawing up the trophy-hunting contract and its implementation, and on occasion Eden would also donate meat for community meetings. Until 2011 Eden also introduced game into the conservancy. In 2011 the contract was reviewed, and it was agreed that instead of the animals which had yet to be introduced under the contract, Eden would give the conservancy the value of the animals in cash (about N$120 000). However, FGD participants reported that they had not received any meat from trophy hunting in a long time, and that the relationship between Eden and the conservancy was strained due to repeated late payments and a lack of communication.

• **Grashoek Living Museum:** The Living Museum of the Ju|’hoansi in the village of Grashoek brings in considerable income for its inhabitants. Initially supported by the Living Culture Foundation Namibia, the museum has been run by Ju|’hoansi since July 2004. It offers guided tours through a traditional Ju|’hoan village, as well as guided bush walks and a campsite. Crafts produced by the village inhabitants are also sold to visiting tourists.42

• **Other activities:** FGD participants reported that every three months the conservancy sent 10-12 people from different San groups to Farm Omandumba in Erongo Region to perform traditional dances for tourists. The money was distributed as follows: 60% to the dancers, 20% to the owner of the farm and 20% to the conservancy (the latter amounting to N$10 000-15 000 per annum).

**Sharing**

As with the communities of Nyae Nyae Conservancy and many other San communities, the San of Nǂa Jaqna deemed sharing an important strategy to avoid hunger and starvation, and described sharing as a cultural practice. FGD participants said that they could ask neighbours for help when they needed it, because it was the San tradition to share food.

**Alcohol in relation to livelihoods**

FGD participants at all three sites agreed that alcohol consumption was a problem in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy. They stressed the disruptive influence of alcohol on their livelihoods and the functioning of their networks. It became clear during the discussions that the high rates of alcohol consumption were linked to aggressive and violent behaviour between community members and within families. Apparently incidences of such behaviour were routine on the day that the Old Age Pension was paid out: when people got money, many of them spent it immediately at the shebeens, which often led to outbursts of aggression and violence. This misuse of much-needed money, and the alcohol abuse itself, could severely compromise the functioning of the social networks that serve as their safety nets in times of need. Furthermore, and as reported in other regions, the San of Nǂa Jaqna were sometimes paid alcohol in exchange for piecework.

FGD participants in Mangetti Dune revealed at the outset of the discussion that alcohol was a major problem in their community. The village has at least six shebeens, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reportedly they also sold alcohol to children, who consequently missed school:

> "Most people here are not employed so they have nothing else to do and they go to the shebeens. People fight at the shebeens. Everyone goes there including children because of poverty. Even as early as four in the morning you see couples following each other to the shebeen. It also happens that when the man goes to work, the wife picks up her child and goes to the shebeen. The veldfood is seasonal and people go to the shebeen mostly when it is not the season for veldfood." (Participant in Mangetti Dune.)

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42 In 2010, the income generated through the guided tours amounted to N$424 266, and the income from craft sales amounted to N$234 742 (personal communication with NNDFN Director Lara Diez, July 2013).
In Luhebo there was one shebeen, owned by a non-San person from Mangetti Dune. FGD participants stated that alcohol was a serious problem in Luhebo, with both men and women drinking. They said that all the available money went to alcohol, and people forgot about food for the children. They stressed that they do not want any alcohol to be sold in their village. They had already urged the shebeen owner not to have any alcohol in stock, but the owner refused to remove the alcohol from of his range of goods, arguing that transients wanted to buy alcohol.

In Omatako, FGD participants mentioned that alcohol kept people from being productive, earning an income, and engaging in long-term planning. It also increased the risk of fights and stabbings. As at the other Nǂa Jaqna research sites, none of the shebeens in this village were owned by San. It was alleged that most (if not all) of the owners did not have a leasehold:

“The shebeen owners have no leaseholds for the shebeens. The traditional leaders have to give permission for them to have shebeens, which they granted, but shebeen owners did not have the permission of the land board to be here. The land board would have to give permission. The traditional leaders have to consult the communities before giving permission to businesses on communal land, but this not happening.” (Discussion participant in Omatako)

Food security

Table 5.9: Frequency of consumption of foodstuffs at two research sites in Nǂa Jaqna*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Eaten daily</th>
<th>Eaten regularly but seasonally</th>
<th>Eaten when available</th>
<th>Eaten rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mangetti Dune</td>
<td>Mealie-pap, Mangetti nuts</td>
<td>Sau (!Owbu)</td>
<td>Chicken, !Nara (wild melon)</td>
<td>Tea and sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beans, bean leaves</td>
<td>!Guri</td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>!Owe</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>Da</td>
<td>Monkey orange</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melon</td>
<td>Gemsbok beans</td>
<td>Ziga</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahangu</td>
<td>Gum</td>
<td>Nanga</td>
<td>Tinned fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tinned meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhebo</td>
<td>Mahangu</td>
<td>Store-bought foods:</td>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green leaves</td>
<td>sugar, tea, mealie-pap</td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
<td>Game (distributed by the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katalo (mutate)</td>
<td>vegetables (onion, cabbage)</td>
<td>Melon</td>
<td>conservancy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nanga (veldfood)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>Rice, macaroni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monkey orange</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Veldfood (!gui, tshixa, dhau, tsau)</td>
<td>Tinned fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This food-ranking exercise was not undertaken in Omatako due to time constraints.

Generally, food security is better for the San living in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy than for most other San groups living in Namibia. Two factors contribute to higher food security in the conservancy area: veldfood availability or access to veldfood, and produce from crop fields.

“There are two ways to get food: gathering veldkos [wild food] and harvesting the crop fields.”

“If there is not enough food, we go to gather veldkos. We sometimes travel long distances for the veldkos and sleep away from home.”

(Discussion participants in Mangetti Dune)

The importance of veldfood is striking, as is clearly shown in Table 5.9: different kinds of veldfood rank very high in both Mangetti Dune and Luhebo. Although the researchers did not undertake this food-ranking exercise in Omatako, participants in various other discussions there highlighted the importance of veldfood, as illustrated by the following quote:
“I do not earn money and often have to depend on veldfood to feed my family.” (Discussion participant in Omatako)

The discussions also made clear that veldfood gathering is a coping strategy to avoid starvation; in times of hunger the San go out more often to gather. However, the declining availability of veldfood will endanger this coping strategy.

Produce from the crop fields further helps to improve food security to a large extent. A participant in Mangetti Dune said, “The crop fields help to have food throughout the year.” Welch reported that 77% of the people interviewed in his survey relied on produce from the crop fields or veldfood, but he also reported that hunger and malnutrition were a reality for many people (Welch 2007: 10). The unreliability of the ploughing service delivered by the MAWF resulted in uncertainty regarding crop yields, which in turn affected conservancy inhabitants’ food security negatively. Food security in Tsumkwe West could be boosted considerably if the technical equipment could be increased, and delivered more reliably: “With more than one tractor it would be possible for the community [Mangetti Dune] to sustain themselves in food production, as it has been shown that one beneficiary alone can harvest up to 203 bags of 50 kg maize in 28 hectares.” (GRN 2010: 118-119)
There are variations in food security throughout the year. The rainy season was said to be the most difficult time of the year:

“There are different foods available at different times of the year. In the dry season there is veldkos fruits. People suffer more from hunger in the rainy season.” (Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune)

Interestingly, the FGD participants in Mangetti Dune and Luhebo did not include in their rankings maize-meal received as food aid. This might be attributed to the inconsistent delivery of food aid and the fact that food aid had not been delivered for some months prior to our visit.

**Perceptions of poverty**

**Table 5.10: Wealth ranking per site in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Very very poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Much better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mangetti Dune</td>
<td>• Being alone</td>
<td>• Small families</td>
<td>• Bigger families</td>
<td>• Own shop or shebeen</td>
<td>• Own shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No livestock</td>
<td>• No livestock</td>
<td>• Livestock (cattle, chickens, goats, donkeys);</td>
<td>• More cattle</td>
<td>• Own shebeens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No pension</td>
<td>• No jobs</td>
<td>• Donkey-cart</td>
<td>• Someone in family working</td>
<td>• More cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Physically weak</td>
<td>• Crop fields</td>
<td>• Small odd jobs (by only one family member)</td>
<td>• Car</td>
<td>• Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot build traditional hut</td>
<td>• Traditional house (Only San)</td>
<td>• Little income earned (San and other people)</td>
<td>• Tractor (San and other people – but few San in this category)</td>
<td>• Family members also have jobs (No San in this category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot collect firewood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mental health issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No crop field or only a small field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dependent on help from neighbours (Only San, and most San in the village)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhebo</td>
<td>• Sick or disabled</td>
<td>• Crop fields</td>
<td>• Bigger families</td>
<td>• Own shop or shebeen</td>
<td>• Own shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No family</td>
<td>• More family members able to work</td>
<td>• Livestock (cattle, chickens, goats, donkeys);</td>
<td>• More cattle</td>
<td>• Own shebeens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No crop field or only a small field (Only two San in this category)</td>
<td>• Old Age Pension</td>
<td>• Donkey-cart</td>
<td>• Someone in family working</td>
<td>• More cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cattle</td>
<td>• Small odd jobs (by only one family member)</td>
<td>• Car</td>
<td>• Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tractor (San and other people – but few San in this category)</td>
<td>• Family members also have jobs (No San in this category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The participants created their own wealth categories, thus these varied from site to site, and the research team has standardised the category names appropriately for reporting. The wealth-ranking exercise was not conducted in Omatako due to a lack of time.*

As Table 5.10 indicates, the Nǂa Jaqna residents surveyed generally placed themselves in the three poorest categories, and did not identify any San person as being rich or much better off; only a few were deemed to be a little better off. Interestingly, in Mangetti Dune the participants came up with three different categories for the poor and two for the better off, but they were reluctant to use the term ‘rich’ to describe members of the San community – despite the fact that some of them were doing relatively well, having been able to accumulate assets such as cattle, a car and a tractor. (This might be an indication that these individuals did not want to be distinguished from the rest of the group in terms of relative wealth.)

Table 5.10 indicates that those categorised as ‘very poor’ were primarily people who were physically unable to sustain themselves by producing yields from their fields, collecting veldfood or firewood, or building a shelter for themselves (being disabled or too weak), thus people in this group were heavily dependent on support from others. In contrast to sites in other regions, where a higher number of dependants meant that the chance of falling into a ‘poor’ category was higher, in Nǂa Jaqna a bigger family meant a higher number of people who could work in the fields, thus a larger crop area could be farmed and higher yields could be achieved.
Factors that could lift people out of the ‘poor’ category into the ‘better’ category were primarily based on assets such as livestock (cattle, chickens, goats, donkeys) or a donkey-cart, a job, or a higher number of family members who could work in the fields. The ‘better’/‘much better’ people were in turn able to accumulate more assets such as shops, shebeens and vehicles, had more livestock (especially cattle), and had a job themselves as well as other employed family members.

**Access to land**

In Nǂa Jaqna the issues of access to land, intrusion of outsiders, and the role that the late Chief John Arnold played in allocating land to outsiders, were constantly mentioned at all three sites as highly problematic issues. In Mangetti Dune, FGD participants were concerned about the influx of outsiders who moved in for work or other purposes. Another major concern was the construction of illegal fences which barred San residents’ access to resources such as wood, thatching grass and veldfood. San residents of Nǂa Jaqna said that Chief Arnold had given these people permission to put up these fences. In addition, the cattle of the non-San inhabitants destroyed the fields of the San, and one young man said that when San people complained, they were physically attacked:

“[When we go] to gather veldfoods and enter the allocated plots that are illegally fenced off, we are beaten almost to death.” (Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune)

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**Box 5.6: Small-scale commercial farms in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy**

One component of Namibia’s land reform programme focuses on communal land, with the following key objectives, inter alia: developing under-utilised land or virgin land for agricultural purposes; and improving tenure security and granting long-term leaseholds in communal areas.

In 1997, Cabinet approved the Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCF) Development Programme, the long-term aim being to broaden access to land and make communal land more productive, based on the identification of so-called ‘virgin land’ in various regions (including in Tsumkwe West). It was therefore proposed to develop SSCFs of approximately 2 500 ha each. Leaseholds for these farms would be granted, and livestock production would be the primary focus. The development of the SSCFs started in 2003, and the first maps designating proposed plots were gazetted in 2007 in Caprivi, Kavango and Ohangwena Regions (MLR 2012b: 5). The German Government (through the KfW b) provided funding to the MLR in the form of a basket fund.

**SSC farms in Nǂa Jaqna**

The MLR had planned to establish about 100 SSCFs in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy. These would have been located between the C44 main road and the border with Kavango Region. But these planned SSCFs in Nǂa Jaqna were highly contested: “Nowhere else in Namibia has there been such a fierce debate between proponents of individual ownership and use of large exclusive, free farms and the rights of local residents to local commonage resources.” (MLR and KfW 2012: 8). This division mainly concerned the late Chief John Arnold and his TA on the one side, and conservancy members and other community members on the other. Chief Arnold had taken an ambiguous role in the discussions on the establishment of SSCFs in Tsumkwe West. Usually he supported the MLR plans to create SSCFs in the area, but at times he expressed his opposition to the farms (MLR and KfW 2012: 9).

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a In 2000, consultants appointed by the MLR estimated there to be a total of 5 million ha of under- or un-utilised land in the following regions: Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango, Caprivi, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke (Ministry of Lands and Resettlement 2012b: 5).

b Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank).
The group opposing the SSCFs was supported by the LAC, the NNDFN and other NGOs. The main reasons given for the opposition to the farms were as follows:

- No thorough consultation process with the affected San communities had taken place.
- It was not clear whether the San would be the primary beneficiaries, and the San themselves feared that they would merely become cheap farmworkers for outsiders who settled in the community.
- The project was in conflict with the management plans of the conservancy and the community forest.
- The proposed fencing would interfere with game migration routes, and would further hinder access to veldfood and other natural resources used by the conservancy members.

We discussed the SSCFs with residents at the three research sites in N‡a Jaqa. The following words of an FGD participant in Luhebo sums up the general perception of the San in the conservancy:

“We do not agree with the small-scale farms and we will not accept them because it is in the area where we collect our veldfood. This project will limit our access to our food. It is also the area where we get thatch to build our houses. This is our own area but we were never consulted.”

In 2012, the MLR decided not to go ahead with the original plan of establishing 2,500 ha SSCFs in Tsumkwe West. The decision was based on the following identified constraints (MLR and KfW 2012: 9):

- There is a scarcity of water in the region.
- The poisonous *gifblaar* (*Dichapelatum cymosum*) occurs widely.
- There are considerable numbers of predator animals in the area.
- There are potentially high political costs, as the planned SSCFs had already created significant public interest in the issue, with several high-profile NGOs opposing the farms, and additionally, privatisation of the commonage would be in conflict with the land-use concepts and institutions established through the conservancy and community forest.

The MLR has decided to undertake a local-level participatory planning process (LLPP) with the communities and other stakeholders in the area, in order to determine which measures would be supported through the Basket Fund, starting in the second half of 2013. The LLPP will also help to ascertain whether the communities would favour the implementation of collectively managed entities in the area. Accompanying measures – such as mapping of existing land uses, customary land rights, services, infrastructure and resources – will be funded through the Basket Fund (MLR 2012a: 4).
FGD participants revealed that there were problems with the process of the registration of customary rights being implemented by the MLR. As one participant explained:

“I disagree with this practice of plots or registration of land, because it allows one person to enclose or fence off bushfood, and therefore the community cannot have access to these resources.”

All told, the FGD participants rejected this registration system, for two reasons: (a) they believed that the allocation of plots would limit them in the future to certain areas only; and (b) they feared that the remaining land would be allocated to outsiders.

Box 5.7: Removal of illegal fences in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy (By John Hazama)

In September 2011, due to the longstanding problem of illegal fences in the area, Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy decided to report such illegal fences to the Otjozondjupa Communal Land Board (CLB). This institution has the authority to determine whether a fence has been properly authorised, and then to order the removal of a fence that hasn't been authorised or to put in place measures to have it removed if it is not taken down voluntarily.

In the hopes of speeding up the process of investigation by the CLB, and in order to avoid direct conflict between conservancy members and owners of illegal fences, the conservancy asked the MET to assist in mapping the GPS coordinates of alleged illegal fences. The MET, the Namibian Police (Nampol), representatives of the !Xun Traditional Authority and the conservancy mapped eight fences in February/March 2012, but then, and up to September 2012, Nampol detected a total of 103 illegal fences. In July 2012 the conservancy sent a letter to the CLB indicating the coordinates of the fences detected thus far. In October 2012 the conservancy sent another letter to the CLB indicating the areas (but without coordinates) where more new fences had been erected.

In February 2013, CLB representatives visited the conservancy and conducted onsite investigations, informing the conservancy verbally that they had found those fences investigated so far to be illegal. By April 2013, however, no fences had been removed and more fences were still being erected, so the conservancy asked the MET to help again with mapping the new allegedly illegal fences. In June, a letter was sent to the CLB requesting it to report to the conservancy what steps had been taken in respect of the eight fences reported initially. At the time of writing on 1 August 2013, there has been no reply, but the CLB has been actively involved under the coordination of Nampol (see below). The conservancy has meanwhile decided to pursue another approach: to apply for eviction orders under common law. To this end, the conservancy has supplied the names of persons suspected to be occupying the area unlawfully to the Otjozondjupa CLB.

On 4 June 2013, The Namibian (daily newspaper) published an interview with the conservancy chairperson, whose description of the problem of illegal fences and the recent importation of truckloads of livestock into the area seemed to get the immediate attention of a number of authorities: “The majority of the local community who legally use large areas of the conservancy to forage and harvest Devil’s Claw are finding that they can no longer access vast areas which have been illegally fenced off by outsiders.”

The Nampol Inspector-General and representatives of other authorities began flying over the area and visiting certain sites to see the problems for themselves. A stakeholder group (Nampol, MLR, CLB, MET and MAWF Directorate of Veterinary Services) met to coordinate their law enforcement operations in Tsumkwe West. The Inspector-General issued a media briefing and warned illegal occupiers to leave by 6 July 2013. Subsequently the LAC contacted the Inspector-General and met with his representatives to discuss the LAC’s approach to an eviction process. The motion court decided on 9 August 2013 that Nampol may serve the eviction orders.

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a John Hazam is an independent consultant working with the LAC’s Land, Environment and Development (LEAD) Project.

b Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy Chairperson Sara Zunga, interviewed by Theresia Tjihenuna (The Namibian, “Illegal fencing disrupts San conservancy”, 4 June 2013).
**Identity, culture and heritage**

As noted at the start of the section on Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy (page 140), unlike the Juǀʼhoansi in Tsumkwe East who can look back on a long history of settlement on ancestral land, and who share a common identity, the San in Tsumkwe West are not a homogenous ethnic group, and most of them settled in Tsumkwe West very recent, i.e. in the 1970s when they were brought in by the SADF mainly from Kavango and West Caprivi, some having fled to the latter places from Angola. The intrusion of outsiders into Tsumkwe West poses a new threat to the community’s integrity (see the next subsection, on relationships with other groups). The obvious tensions within the TA, and the changeable stance of the late Chief John Arnold, were indications of the difficulty of community building in Nǂa Jaqna, due in part to the conservancy residents’ diverse backgrounds and histories.

FGD participants said that their different origins did not pose a problem for them; they still felt as if they belonged to a single community. However, differences between the various groups surfaced in discussing specific topics, and it was clear that people placed importance on their origins. In Omatako, for example, FGD participants discussed the composition of the TA, and complained that none of the San language groups apart from the !Xun were represented. Tensions in Nǂa Jaqna were also attributed to the people’s different origins. A participant in Mangetti Dune, for example, stated that, “He [Chief John Arnold] does not like people from Angola and the Punguvlei. He only wants to be in Omatako with other !Xun people.”

Interestingly, in Omatako, whose residents hail from (at least) six ethnic groups (three San and three other), FGD participants described themselves as “San” – a word not used for self-identification at any other research site in the San Study overall. In Mangetti Dune, however, participants said that they did not like to be called “San”; they preferred to be called “Bushman”, because this term is self-explanatory as opposed to the term “San” which had no meaning for them.

Elderly participants still recalled how traditional knowledge was passed on from one generation to the next:

> “Tradition means that the traditional healer is making a fire, is then dancing for an ill person while the ill person walked up and down in front of the fire while others sing and dance. The oldest men had fathers who were traditional healers, but the younger generation is not participating. Most people go to church and do not practise traditional culture anymore.” (Elderly participant in Omatako)

> “When you are young your father will make you a bow and arrow. He will also give you an axe and a knife. He will then teach you when and how to use these tools. The parents also teach the young people how to make fire. When you grow older your father will teach you how to identify or trace footprints of different animals. This he will have to show you physically. All this was possible in the past when people where free to hunt, but now because of the conservancy we are forced to depend on crop fields.” (Elderly participant in Omatako)

The same elders acknowledged that traditions are not passed down anymore as they used to be. This illustrates the transition that the traditional lifestyle of the different San groups has been undergoing – which presumably began even before they came to Tsumkwe West, but accelerated with their arrival in the area in the 1970s. Veldfood gathering was said to be getting more and more difficult due to the erection of illegal fences, and furthermore, overgrazing in the area was destroying the plants, with the result that a number of species used and eaten traditionally are on the decline. Finally, as mentioned previously, traditional hunting is prohibited in this conservancy.
In Omatako, the older FGD participants lamented that they could no longer teach their children how to gather wild food because they could not access the bush as they used to:

“So it is very difficult to teach the children, maybe the few things that are around [sic]. In 10 years it will just have disappeared because of the fences. Because people just come and grab our land where our food is.”

(Discussion participant in Omatako)

Relationships with other groups

“These people just squeeze themselves in just like that. These non-San people are stronger than our people. Our people can just be bought with a cup or bottle.”

– Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune

This quotation illustrates the helplessness that the residents of Mangetti Dune felt in the face of the intrusion of outsiders, whom they perceive as stronger than themselves. They also felt discriminated against by other ethnic groups. The research brought to light various incidents of San not managing to get employment because the positions were filled by people of other ethnic backgrounds.

“If you are a San you have to remain that. You are supposed to be behind . . . . People like to discriminate against the San; they do not like them to grow.”

(Discussion participant in Omatako)

The notion that other groups did not want the San to develop further was expressed at all three sites. It was even mentioned that the other groups enriched themselves by using the resources of the San (e.g. grazing), and that the San felt that they were constantly losing control over their land and resources as a consequence.

“Living together with other people is very difficult, because the San people are just getting poorer. These people come poor in our area, but later they become rich at our expense. They get rich here because they know how to use our resources to their own advantage.”

Education

“Education in our community was not valued and that’s why we are backward. Education is very important and it could help our children if they are serious.”

– Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune

Generally FGD participants at all sites agreed that education was crucial if the San communities wanted to develop. The sentiments expressed in the quotation above, and the expression, “Education is our future,” were common refrains among FGD participants in Mangetti Dune and Omatako, where it was said that most elderly people had not gone to school or had dropped out early.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>Distance to school</th>
<th>School fees**</th>
<th>Reasons for dropping out</th>
<th>Aspirations/ importance of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mangetti Dune | Grades 1-7 in Mangetti Dune; thereafter school in Tsumkwe (±100 km away) | Not applicable at Mangetti school, but have to pay in Tsumkwe schools | • No money to buy clothes, toiletries and stationery, nor to pay school fees  
• Physical violence experienced*  
• No accommodation in the hostel in Tsumkwe  
• Girls cannot afford to buy toiletries  
• Girls get a boyfriend and drop out | Important |
| Luhebo | Kindergarten; Grades 1-7 in Mangetti Dune; thereafter school in Tsumkwe (also ±100 km away) | Not applicable at Mangetti school, but have to pay in Tsumkwe schools | • Children are made fun of for having old, tattered clothes  
• Lack of support  
• Children pass exams in the first two terms but fail at the end of the year (reportedly only San children fail) | Important for jobs and to communicate with others |
| Omatako | Grades 1-7 in Omatako; thereafter school in Tsumkwe (±150 km away) | Payment of school fees required in Omatako and Tsumkwe | • Children going to school with dirty, ragged clothes  
• Parents not paying school fees  
• Children insulting one another  
• Some parents are drunkards and cannot raise disciplined children  
• Lack of transport  
• Discrimination against San children | “Education is the future.” |

*The daughter of one of the participants was allegedly beaten by the principal so forcefully for being late that she is not able to use her fingers fully anymore. She therefore dropped out of school. A national newspaper reported on this case.

** As noted earlier, school fees are no longer paid in government primary schools as of January 2013.

Mangetti Dune had a primary school catering for Grades 1-7, and two school hostels which together accommodated about 150 learners. Luhebo had a kindergarten but no primary school, therefore children of this village attended school in Mangetti Dune. FGD participants in Luhebo said that some children walked to Mangetti Dune every day (about a 30-minute walk), others lived with relatives in Mangetti Dune, and others resided in one of the hostels there. Omatako had a primary school catering for Grades 1-7, and a school hostel, but FGD participants were very unhappy about the condition of the hostel, which they described as “a chicken house” – reportedly it was dirty and dilapidated.

The majority (about 80%) of the learners at the primary school in Mangetti Dune were San, but there were no San teachers at the school and English was the medium of instruction. FGD participants at all three sites made it clear that they wanted San languages to be taught at the school. The Forum for African Women Educationalists in Namibia (FAWENA), an NGO based in Windhoek, had provided assistance to the Mangetti Dune school which was used to support 20 San girls and 5 San boys with funding of N$800 per term to cover various costs (hostel fees, teaching materials, food etc.). FGD participants said that this programme had kept the learners in school and they had performed well.

To attend secondary school, children of all three villages had to go to the town of Tsumkwe in Tsumkwe East (Nyae Nyae Conservancy) – a distance of 100 km from Mangetti Dune and Luhebo, and 150 km from Omatako. However, both a lack of transport and discrimination against San at the Tsumkwe schools were serious problems which had resulted in many San dropping out of school before long. Welch reported that educational levels within the conservancy remained much below the national average; he found that 62% of San household heads had not received any formal education, and noted that many learners who completed Grade 7 then dropped out rather than travel outside the conservancy to further their education (Welch 2007: 4).
**Health**

Table 5.12: Main health issues reported at the Nǁa Jaqna research sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health category</th>
<th>Mangetti Dune</th>
<th>Luhebo</th>
<th>Omatako</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main diseases (according to FGD participants)</td>
<td>TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria</td>
<td>TB, diarrhoea, vomiting, malaria, flu, coughing</td>
<td>High blood pressure, TB, HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main children’s diseases</td>
<td>Malnutrition, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, anaemia</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to health services</td>
<td>Local health facility</td>
<td>Local health facility</td>
<td>Local health facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospital at Grootfontein (±200 km away)</td>
<td>Hospital at Grootfontein (±190 km away)</td>
<td>Hospital at Grootfontein (±150 km away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance/transport</td>
<td>Ambulance at Mangetti Dune</td>
<td>Ambulance at Mangetti Dune</td>
<td>Ambulance at Mangetti Dune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of babies (births)</td>
<td>At home, unless there were complications</td>
<td>At home, unless there were complications</td>
<td>At home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/violence</td>
<td>Alcohol and drugs a problem</td>
<td>Alcohol a problem – leads to violence</td>
<td>Alcohol a serious problem (nurse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional medicine/healer</td>
<td>Three traditional healers, but not used by everyone</td>
<td>Used for minor ailments</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main health problems faced by residents of Nǁa Jaqna Conservancy were reported to be TB, HIV/AIDS, and in some years of high rainfall, malaria. Children also experienced malnutrition, diarrhoea, respiratory infections and anaemia. The nurse at the Mangetti Dune health facility said that some babies had died from malnutrition in the past, hence the facility set up a feeding programme for the purpose of preventing malnutrition among babies.

The data on HIV/AIDS provided to the research team at the Mangetti Dune health facility indicates that the rates of HIV infection and AIDS-related death have dropped over the last five years:43
- In 2008, 90 tested HIV-positive, and 22 died of AIDS-related complications.
- In 2009, 61 tested HIV-positive, and 5 died.
- In 2010, 47 tested HIV-positive, and 5 died.
- In 2011, 27 tested HIV-positive, and 7 died.44

FGD participants in Mangetti Dune explained that the misuse of alcohol leads to unprotected sex with multiple partners, which raises the risk of HIV infection. In addition, a young man in Mangetti Dune said that hunger caused women to sell their bodies for money, thereby raising the risk of HIV infection. Counselling and testing facilities were available locally, but the social stigma associated with HIV infection resulted in some people not using these facilities.

Unlike the HIV infection rate, the TB infection rate did not appear to be dropping – at least not in Mangetti Dune: in 2010, 142 people in this village tested positive for TB, and although only three had the multi-drug-resistant form, 148 tested positive in 2011 (no data provided on the number of multi-drug-resistant patients in 2011). The nurse said that although almost all of the TB patients were on treatment, “They decide they are not taking the medicine and run away or you have to fight with them to take the medication.”

43 Welch reported that while the HIV/AIDS infection rate in the conservancy remained below the national average, HIV/AIDS and other STIs remained a major national public health problem and rates were rising (Welch 2007: 9).
44 The figures presented by the nurse at the Mangetti Dune health facility covered Tsumkwe West and East as well as Gjam, but the numbers of people on ARV treatment were not known.
Reportedly the health facilities in the conservancy were often unable to deal with major health problems, thus many patients were transferred by ambulance to the nearest hospital, being the Grootfontein State Hospital. NGOs have established several health-related services and institutions in the conservancy, including a TB treatment and isolation ward at the Mangetti Dune health facility; TB and malaria infection control programmes; and mobile health facilities to serve villages which are remote from any established health facility (Welch 2007: 9).

FGD participants in Mangetti Dune reported some problems with accessing good healthcare:

- They felt that non-San nurses at the local health facility did not treat them well.
- They felt that patients’ relatives should be allowed to stay overnight at the facility to help the patients because the nurses did not look after patients well, but the facility did not allow relatives to stay there.
- Communication problems often arose if a nurse did not speak a San language, thus San patients and their relatives were often obliged to use translators.
- Transport to the health facility was a problem for remote villages.

**Gender**

The involvement of females in the Mangetti Dune FGDs is noteworthy: in contrast to the other two research sites, the female participants there expressed their opinions often – even if these differed considerably from the opinions of their male counterparts. In addition, the Conservancy Chairperson, Sara Zunga (elected in 2011), who is also a member of the Namibian San Council (see Chapter 3), was present in the discussions and articulated her views strongly – which might partly explain the active participation of the younger females, in that they perceived her as a role model who set a good example of female participation in such discussions. Another possible explanation for the levels of self-confidence and outspokenness among the female participants is the fact that San comprised the majority of learners in the primary school in Mangetti – where reportedly they had not suffered discrimination by fellow learners: being in a strong majority in the formative years of their personal development (i.e. up to Grade 7) might have contributed to the building of strong self-esteem among the female learners.

The following subsections summarise the outcomes of the discussion of various gender issues at Mangetti Dune. (As this was a discussion with only !Xun people, these summaries do not necessarily apply to conservancy inhabitants of other ethnic backgrounds, whether San or non-San.)

**Marriage**

Traditionally, a man took a woman away from her family once they married. However, despite moving to her husband's premises, the woman stayed in contact with her family and sometimes visited members of her family together with her husband. According to !Xun traditional law, a man can marry more than one woman, but a woman can marry only one man.

In the past, it was said, a woman was expected to obey her husband, but in this discussion younger women emphasised their rights and claimed that they would not accept men telling them what to do. The younger men seemed to struggle with this changing attitude, but their female counterparts insisted that, for example, “there has to be a gender balance” in a marriage, and “you have to have communication” in the marriage.

Separation of couples did not seem to be unusual among Mangetti Dune's inhabitants (!Xun and other). According to the FGD participants, the main cause of separation was domestic violence.
Domestic violence

The general consensus among the FGD participants was that most men beat their wives, especially if the men had been drinking. However, the participants could not reach agreement on whether or not it was acceptable for a husband to beat his wife: seemingly most of the men thought that it was acceptable, while most of the women thought the contrary. One young man said, “It is legal to beat your wife here,” and other men said that it was acceptable to beat women if they were not fulfilling their duties (e.g. neglecting household chores). Nonetheless, both male and female participants said that physical violence was an acceptable reason for divorce – considering, as women reported, that some women left their husbands because they had been beaten almost to death.

Control over cash

Decisions about the use of money seemed to be handled differently in every household. Some FGD participants said that the women decided how the money ought to be used, whereas others said that decisions about who controlled the use of money varied from family to family. A young woman stated that “Those men that want to keep the money just want to waste it on alcohol,” and a young man replied that “If you give that money to the lady, it will be wasted somewhere else.”

Inheritance

In the past, when a woman’s husband died, the husband’s brother could marry her, but if she was deemed to be a bad wife, the husband’s family would send her back to her own family. Nowadays, it seems, the practice of a widow marrying a brother-in-law is not common, and there does not seem to be any general practice with regard to a widow’s position. However, it was said that in the past, elders from both families came together to decide who would get what belongings when the husband died, whereas nowadays the husband’s family can destroy or just take things, leaving the widow (and her children) with nothing.

Political representation and participation

Political representation: the !Xun Traditional Authority in Tsumkwe West

“We the community have given wings to the chief so that he can fly high on top of us. But now it seems that he thinks, ‘I am flying, I am on top of them and there is no one who can take me off from this position.’ Even now, the communities have the rights to take off those wings so that he can come down to the ground and lose his position. It seems like if you are giving someone the position to lead you, he is mis-leading; he feels like he is the boss, he can do whatever he wants, no one will remove him. We are discussing these things. We have to come together and be united to take actions against it.”

– Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune

The general consensus among FGD participants was that Chief John Arnold (who was still alive at the time of our field research) did not act in the best interests of the community he represented (see Box 5.8, next page). His role and position in the community was often the focus of heated debates in which participants accused him of various alleged transgressions and general misconduct. FGD participants cited the following examples of the allegations: he gave land to outsiders who did not respect the conservancy zoning; he supported the establishment of the SSCFs (see Box 5.6), which most conservancy members opposed; he did not consult properly or give any feedback on key issues; and he was corrupt and often supported the interests of members of other ethnic groups.
In Omatako, in particular, the majority of the San were extremely unhappy about the situation, and had requested a change in leadership. The Conservancy Chairperson, who simultaneously served as a senior councillor in the TA, complained in the FGD that the TA had not met as a whole group since 1992 to discuss problems and issues.

**Box 5.8: The !Xun Traditional Authority**

In November 1995, WIMSA, ELCIN and CASS undertook a survey in Tsumkwe West to examine existing customary laws and leadership structures with the aim of establishing a TA. John Arnold (who was subsequently elected as Chief of the !Xun) was a member of the survey team, and visited three communities together with the other team members. The survey outlined the heterogeneity and diverging concepts of leadership structures and positions present in Tsumkwe West. At that time, John Arnold was already receiving criticism for having let Herero people into the area: “… other community members declared that John Arnold had given permission to Herero families to reside in Grashoek” (Thoma and Piek 1997: 21). The discussions about customary law raised the communities’ awareness of the necessity of establishing a leadership structure in order to develop control over the invasion of pastoralists into their environment, and to develop mechanisms to unite relatively fast-growing communities (Thoma and Piek 1997: 60).

In March 1996, the parties involved in the survey organised a workshop to provide an opportunity to share concepts about a traditional authority and customary law. Different options for the leadership structure were discussed during the workshop, in which 63 representatives of the 17 villages and three representatives of Nyae Nyae Conservancy participated. The conclusion was to appoint one main leader for Tsumkwe West, in accordance with the stipulations of the Traditional Authorities Act 17 of 1995 (Thoma and Piek 1997: 66). The workshop concluded with an election, and John Arnold was elected by ‘majority vote’ (Thoma and Piek 1997: 70).

In July 2012, Chief John Arnold passed away from injuries sustained in a car accident. The TA then split into two opposing factions, and there was insufficient cohesion to organise elections for a successor. (The Traditional Authorities Act does not stipulate what a traditional community should do if its TA is split and/or dysfunctional). After unsuccessful attempts by different factions to gain control, TA councillors asked the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development and the Governor of Otjozondjupa Region to help with overseeing fair elections. At the time of writing this report on the San Study, it is not yet clear whether the succession to the chieftainship will be implemented by way of a democratic election.

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The survey findings were presented in the report by Thoma and Piek titled *Customary Law and Traditional Authority of the San*, published by WIMSA and CASS in 1997.

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**Political participation**

The !Xun TA was conceptualised as an instrument to facilitate interaction between the San and the government, and ideally to act as a liaison between the government and the San communities. For example, FGD participants said that when the government development plans for the area, it consulted with both the TA and the community to gauge whether people were interested in the plans. However, they also said that the government often seemed to ignore the community’s concerns, and cited the example of government seemingly moving forward with the plans for SSCFs despite most San not wanting these farms. FGD participants stressed that they did not know who to approach or what procedures to follow if they faced problems, and if they raised concerns with the Chief or the Regional Governor, nothing happened by their account:
“Communities give project proposals to the governor, like having a bakery or producing mahangu, but nothing is coming back. So there is silence and the community does not know where to raise their points.” (Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune)

In general it would seem that the San did not know who to approach, and felt that their concerns were ignored.

FGD participants at all sites complained that the late Regional Councillor, Kxao Moses ‡Oma, also did not take any interest in the affairs of the communities he represented, even though he was a San person. They said that he seemed to visit the conservancy only prior to elections, in order to secure votes:

“He always brought something nice in words. But after the elections he disappeared and was never coming back.” (Discussion participant in Omatako)

“The main problem is after we elect the regional councillor, we do not see him anymore. He does not come back to familiarise himself with problems.” (Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune)

The FGD participants nevertheless voted for him as a SWAPO representative in the past as he was the only San representative in any of the political parties.

Asked in the FGD whether a village development committee (VDC) existed in Omatako village, participants replied that there was such a body, but none of its members were San representatives; it was composed of “only black people”, who made decisions that did not necessarily reflect the interests of the San communities:

“If there would be San people in this [VDC], there would be maybe a better chance.” (Discussion participant in Omatako)
In Mangetti Dune, FGD participants described a VDC composed of TA members, other San persons and business representatives. The discussion did not reveal any further details about the Mangetti Dune VDC, but it did make clear that the San are represented in the body that oversees the development of this village.

Box 5.9: Communication issues in Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy

Communication with – and among – the conservancy inhabitants is extremely difficult due to the lack of the relevant infrastructure in the area. Tsumkwe West does not have cellphone reception, and land-line connections are either very poor or do not function at all, making it difficult even to send and receive faxes, let alone communicate by phone. Tsumkwe West also does not have a radio station nor radio reception – unlike in Nyae Nyae where important messages for the conservancy are transmitted by radio and all villages have solar radios provided through the conservancy so that they are able to receive information. For receiving information in Nǂa Jaqna, the villagers depend on either face-to-face contact or letters, but both of these means of communication are extremely difficult due to the vastness of the conservancy area and the difficulty of accessing transportation. The consequence of all this is that Nǂa Jaqna’s villagers have exceptionally poor access to information. FGD participants at all three sites cited poor communication in the conservancy as a major problem.

Changes in quality of life over time and vision for the future

The findings regarding changes in the quality of life over time were similar at all three sites: FGD participants stressed that the years in which the SADF and ELCIN supported them were the best for them in terms of quality of life, as they had employment and thus enough to eat: In Luhebo, ELCIN had helped with ploughing services, livestock and brick houses; in Omatako the villagers’ welfare reportedly began to decline after ELCIN stopped supporting them; and for the residents of Mangetti Dune, 1990-1997 were the best years because ELCIN provided a lot of support, in the form of food, ploughing services and storerooms. An elderly man in Mangetti Dune said that 1992 was an important year because that was when the new Government of Namibia “approved” the rights of the San people, which meant that thenceforth they had a right to express their thoughts and feelings, go to school and work in any sector.

The year 2012 (though still ‘young’ at the time of our visit in January/February) was generally rated as a ‘low’ year as people felt that they were not faring well. FGD participants in Mangetti Dune and Luhebo were decidedly pessimistic about the rest of 2012 and the future in general:

“We will become just poorer and poorer and our life will become more and more difficult. This is the year of hunger. Our life is getting weaker.” (Discussion participant in Luhebo)

In Mangetti Dune it was said that the period 2007-2012 had been the most difficult because they had started to face difficulties with the ploughing services and they had not received food aid.

Only in Omatako were FGD participants more positive, chiefly because they expected changes in the coming year with regard to their political representation. The participants were divided between supporters and critics of the then Chief John Arnold.45 The critics in the Omatako FGD explained

45 Although Chief Arnold attended a few FGDs, he was not present in most of them, therefore participants could be openly critical of him. He was strongly criticised at all three sites, but the division between people supporting him and those opposing him was strongest in the discussions in Omatako.
that they wanted to expel the current TA and elect new members. The atmosphere was very tense during this discussion, and our interpreter explained:

“People are getting very aggressive as you can see. They are saying they want to have a quick feedback on this [San Study] because they want to have change now, this year.”

(Interpreter in Omatako)

In the discussions about visions for the future, the emphasis was on the importance of education for the development of the three village communities: “San communities must get empowerment with education; there must be development in the San communities,” said one participant. Adults who had not received any form of education placed especially strong emphasis on education for their offspring, so that the children could improve their lives in the future and have a better existence than their parents. It was repeated several times that the children themselves would have to take education seriously in order to change the status quo.

FGD participants further stressed the need to be educated about their rights:

“People don't know their rights. I do not see things improving because people do not know their rights, or how to get on the national soccer team, or how to start projects and NGOs.”

(Discussion participant in Mangetti Dune)

The participant quoted above expressed the need for education and training in many areas to enable people to take control of their own lives and participate in the national dialogue. This person also said that in the past, when the LAC had a paralegal working in the area, people would approach him for support, but since this post was discontinued, they have felt helpless.

Impact of N‡a Jaqna Conservancy

The conservancy’s main activities revolved around managing trophy hunting, managing the Devil's Claw harvest, creating water points to pump water for wildlife, employing game guards and holding management committee meetings. These activities provided several benefits for the community:

- The conservancy employed seven game guards.
- The conservancy provided harvesting equipment for Devil’s Claw, and had managed to get the Devil’s Claw organically certified so that a higher price could be obtained.
- The conservancy helped with the distribution of diesel for pumping water, providing 25 litres per month per village.
- The conservancy defended its residents in opposing the plans for the SSCFs.
- The conservancy applied to the High Court to evict illegal occupiers (i.e. to remove them and all of their property), and the conservancy applied to the Otjozondjupa Communal Land Board to remove the illegal fences within the conservancy area.

The conservancy does not currently earn a large amount of income (around N$300 000 per annum at the time of the field research), and in the past there were cases of mismanagement of conservancy funds. For these reasons, the conservancy had thus far been unable to pay out a cash benefit to its members (as Nyae Nyae did), and this situation resulted in negative attitudes from some residents. In Omatako, for example, the consensus among FGD participants was that the conservancy was not giving residents any benefits, although they reported having once received some meat as a result of the trophy hunting contract. Participants at the other two villages, however, did seem to see value in

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46 These discussions were overshadowed by the events following Chief Arnold’s death in July 2012.

47 Sara Zunga is widely acknowledged to have stopped the mismanagement of funds after her election as Conservancy Chairperson in 2011 (personal communication with NNDFN Director Lara Diez, July 2013).
the conservancy: in Mangetti Dune participants said that since the conservancy had been gazetted, people had refrained from hunting in the area and they viewed this as a positive thing because it ensured sustainability of the wildlife and therefore benefited the conservancy.

External support provided to the conservancy

WIMSA had supported the conservancy in the past in various ways; for example, it was involved in the process of negotiating the formation of the conservancy, was instrumental in establishing the TA, and it supported one Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) volunteer. WIMSA’s support ceased in 2012, however, because in 2011 the NNDFN expanded its area of operation to support Na Jaqna Conservancy. The NNDFN has helped to organise the conservancy meetings, carried out a revision of the constitution, set up a new membership list, and improved financial management. CRIAA SA-DC got involved in Na Jaqna through the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia (MCA-N) fund that is supported by the MCA-N Indigenous Natural Products Project. CRIAA supports negotiations between Devil’s Claw harvesters and buyers, and helps to organise the harvest and its recording.

5.3.4 Conclusions and recommendations on Nja Jaqna Conservancy

The San inhabitants of Nja Jaqna Conservancy look back on a difficult history in respect of the formation of their community. Different cultural and historical backgrounds, and the ambivalent position held by the late Chief John Arnold in discussions over land, have created fractures within conservancy and these divisions have rendered the whole community vulnerable to infringements from the outside, such as the intrusion of illegal settlers and the proposed plans of the government to use part of their communal lands for commercial production. It will be crucial to agree on a democratic process as soon as possible to elect the next chief, who, it is hoped, will be able to represent the entire San community and defend them against external threats.
Food security for the San of Nǂa Jaqna is better than it is for many other San groups in Namibia, because they have access to land and can therefore rely on both the produce of their crop fields and harvesting veldfood. Nevertheless, these two main food-procurement strategies are difficult to exploit fully in the Nǂa Jaqna environment and are increasingly under threat.

Ever since San were brought to Tsumkwe West in 1978, the villagers in the conservancy have been dependent on outside assistance for agricultural production. This was provided by the SADF, ELCIN, MLRR and MLR over the years. ELCIN’s failure was partly attributed to the fact that there was no focus on developing strategies for self-sufficiency, with the result that beneficiaries became dependent on outside technical support – a problem that still affects their situation today. Dependence on the unreliable ploughing service provided by the MAWF has further reduced their food security to a large extent over the past few years. Either the MAWF support has to be revisited, with means found to deliver the ploughing service reliably and at the right times, and/or power has to be given to the communities to control this technical equipment themselves through the conservancy, the TA or another local representative community structure.

The central position that veldfood takes in enhancing food security must be protected, largely by supporting the continuation of customary land use so that communities have unhindered access to this valuable resource. This requirement naturally links to questions regarding access to land and, ultimately, resources: the land of the San in Nǂa Jaqna has been faced with encroachment from outsiders since Independence, but authorities and administrative bodies have shown themselves to be unable – and possibly unwilling – to deal with these land invasions. The !Xun TA has felt powerless to deal with the situation because formal complaints and requests for support addressed to the authorities have largely been ignored.

In mid-2013, the Inspector-General of the Namibian Police publicly condemned the illegal fencing and ordered its removal, giving government attention and support to the issue. In addition, the MLR’s decision to stop pursuing the establishment of small-scale farms in the conservancy is an encouraging sign that the government is listening to the community’s voice. These developments are recent, however, and it remains to be seen whether the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002 is powerful enough to safeguard the threatened customary land rights of the San by providing for the removal of the illegal fences and settlers.

Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy has not yet brought large economic benefits to its members. However, despite the difficulties experienced in the past, there is potential for economic development – provided that the conservancy receives continuous strong support for the next few years to enable it to implement its development plans.

In evaluating the role of the conservancy, it is essential to consider the political and ideological benefits as well as the more tangible economic benefits. It was a long struggle to get the conservancy gazetted, and today Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy is creating and strengthening conservancy members’ sense of a collective identity, and is providing the San with the common purpose they need to counteract threats from the outside more successfully. For example, the conservancy has played a vital and active role in ensuring that illegal settling will be discontinued and illegal settlers sued. Through the Nǂa Jaqna Conservancy Committee (the managing body), the San have been able to secure support from various organisations (including the LAC, MCA-N, NNDFN and CRIAA SA-DC) over the years. The Conservancy Committee (with the support of the LAC) has requested the High Court to issue an eviction order against farmers accused of illegally occupying communal land in the conservancy – something that would have been difficult, if not impossible, for residents to do without conservancy status and the support that this status entails.
5.4 Nyae Nyae and Nǂa Jaqna Conservancies compared

Of the two conservancies, Nyae Nyae is by far the stronger institution for a number of reasons, which can be summarised as follows:

- Nyae Nyae was founded on ancestral land where the forebears of current residents already shared a common identity, and was supported by organisations that started developing in the 1980s, thus it has ‘deeper roots’ than Nǂa Jaqna in many ways.
- Nyae Nyae has a wider variety of natural resources (particularly wildlife) and habitats, including the seasonal wetlands of the Nyae Nyae pans, and these resources and habitats make the area attractive for trophy hunting and other tourism activities. As a result, Nyae Nyae earns more income (around N$2 million annually) than Nǂa Jaqna (around N$300 000 annually), and this in turn enables Nyae Nyae to provide a wider range of benefits to its members, including more employment opportunities and an annual cash payment. Nyae Nyae also has more potential to increase its income due its tourist attractions, which are not yet fully developed.

In terms of livelihoods, there are some clear differences between the two conservancies: cultivation seems to provide greater food security for Nǂa Jaqna residents, who did not appear to be as reliant on government food aid as the Nyae Nyae residents. This is an important point because although villages in Nyae Nyae have also received a great deal of support for agricultural production, fewer people are cultivating crop fields. This can be attributed partly (or largely) to the differences in community history: Nǂa Jaqna residents lived among agriculturalists before moving to Tsumkwe West, and it seems that this sensitised them to agricultural production and made them more receptive to training and support in that sector, with the result that they are doing relatively well with regard to agricultural activities.

It is clear that in both conservancies, when people have the opportunity to gather veldfood, they do so eagerly, as veldfoods constitute a significant part of their diet, and gathering is considered to be an important cultural activity. Wherever possible, sustainable access to this vital food source should be encouraged and protected. At the same time, given the density of the populations in both areas and the variability of veldfood resources, support should be provided to communities who wish to grow their own food or expand their existing food production capabilities and capacity. Most importantly, such support should be consistent and timely – providing tractors to prepare the soil long after the seeds should have been planted (as reported in Nǂa Jaqna) is not only ineffectual but also undermines the people's planning and know-how. Support for food security in Tsumkwe West must take into account the difficult environment, the need for a wide diversity of livelihood strategies, the cultural background and preferences of the community, and the fact that residents of both conservancies are still in a major transition process.