

Chapter 7

Ohangwena Region

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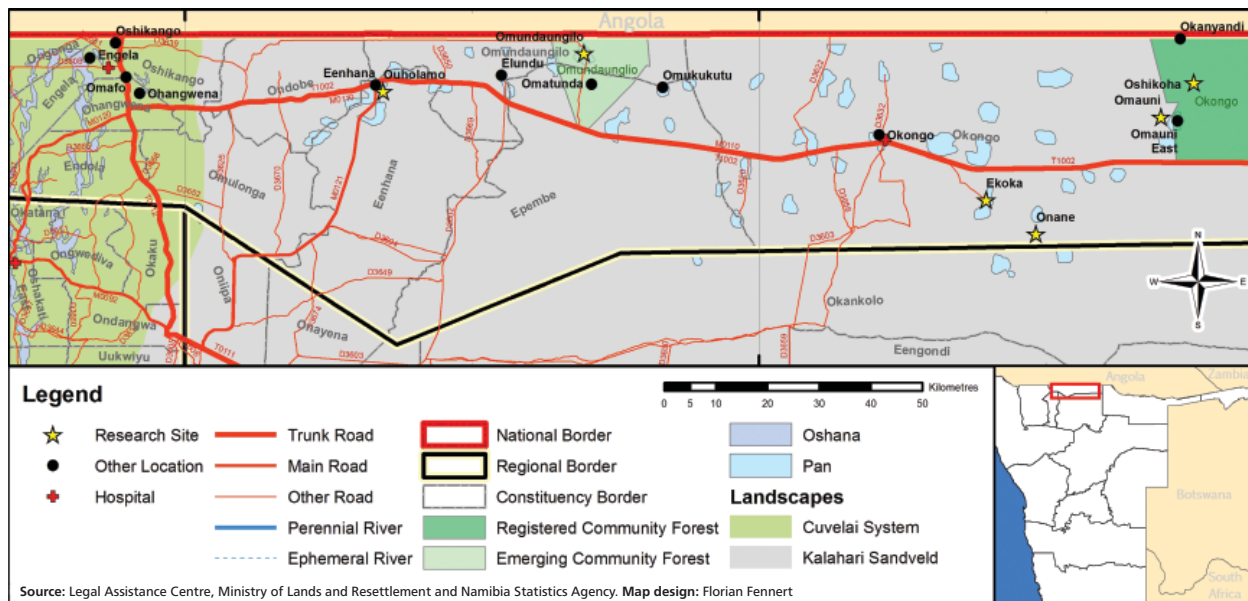
The house of a San family in Onane village, Ohangwena Region

7.1 General background

Ohangwena Region is situated in the northern part of Namibia, bordered by Angola to the north, Oshana Region to the west, Kavango Region to the east and Oshikoto Region to the south. It is located on flat plains 1 100 m above sea level, spanning approximately 10 703 km² (1.3% of the country's total land area) (National Planning Commission (NPC) 2003b: 4). The climate is similar across the four north-central regions of Namibia, of which Ohangwena is one, with very hot summers and cool-to-warm winters. The climate is suitable for dry-land cropping and livestock grazing.

Ohangwena Region comprises 11 constituencies: Ongenga, Engela, Endola, Ohangwena, Oshikango, Omulonga, Ondobe, Eenhana, Omundaungilo, Epembe and Okongo. The region's administrative and political capital is Eenhana, which was proclaimed as a town in the early 2000s.

Ohangwena Region and the six research sites



Ohangwena Region had a population of 245 446 in 2011 (Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) 2013: 16). Almost the whole region (99%) consists of communal areas, and Eenhana and Helao Nafidi are the only towns. In addition there are three proclaimed settlements: Omungwelume and Ongenga in the western part of the region, and Okongo in the eastern part. The Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy is the only conservation area in this region.¹ There are also four San resettlement projects in the vicinity of Okongo: Onamatadiva, Eendobe, Oshanashiwa and Ekoka.² Ohangwena's population density of 23 persons per km² is very high compared to the national density of 2.6 persons per km². The average household size in 2011 was 5.6 persons, which is also much higher than the national average of 4.4 persons. In 2011, 67% of the region's households were headed by females (compared to 56% in 1991 and 60% in 2001) (NSA 2013: 16).

Ohangwena's residents engage mainly in communal agricultural production for subsistence purposes. Communal land is divided into small plots of a few hectares, where rural households mostly cultivate *omahangu* (pearl millet) and keep small numbers of goats, cattle, donkeys, chickens and pigs. The number of households for which farming was a main source of income decreased from 52% in 2001 to 26% in 2011. The other main sources were public pension payments (29%, up from 20% in 2001), wages and salaries (22%, up from 13% in 2001), non-farming businesses (12%, up from 8% in 2001) and cash remittances (6%, up from 5% in 2001) (NSA 2013: 16). Formal employment opportunities are limited to Eenhana and, to a lesser extent, Helao Nafidi. Informal employment opportunities are available in rural areas for, inter alia, cultivating fields, herding livestock, cleaning houses, washing clothes, and collecting water, firewood, fencing materials and thatching grass.

¹ This entity started out as the Okongo Community Forest Project, initiated in 1998. It was gazetted as the Okongo Community Forest in 2002, and as the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy in 2009.

² In general in this chapter, the authors have referred to resettlement farms in Ohangwena Region as "resettlement projects", firstly because this is the terminology used by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, and secondly because we want to avoid giving the impression that the government purchased commercial farms and handed them over to beneficiaries of the National Resettlement Policy, as this is not the case with the resettlement initiatives in Ohangwena. All of the resettlement projects referred to in this chapter are situated on communal land, and all were projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) until the government took them over in 1996, i.e. including the San beneficiaries. All of these projects consist of agricultural land that is used for crop farming (with varying degrees of success), and nowadays one also usually finds houses, office space, storage facilities and water infrastructure within such projects.

Ohangwena is one of the poorest regions in Namibia. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), of Namibia's 13 regions,³ Ohangwena had the fifth worst life expectancy at birth, the ninth worst literacy rate, and the lowest annual average per capita income – but the third highest gross school enrolment ratio. As a result, Ohangwena had the nation's lowest HDI (0.403) (Levine 2007: 8). In addition, according to the UNDP Human Poverty Index (HPI), of the 13 regions, people in Ohangwena had the highest probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, the seventh highest illiteracy rate, and the eighth highest share of the population in households that spent more than 60% of their total income on food. As a result, Ohangwena had the third highest HPI rating (45) of the 13 regions (Levine 2007: 10).

7.2 The San in Ohangwena Region

The National Planning Commission specifically refers to the San as the first inhabitants of Ohangwena Region (NPC 2003b: 17). The Land, Environment and Development (LEAD) Project of the Legal Assistance Centre reported in 2006 that the displacement of the San commenced before the 16th century with the southward movement of Bantu cattle herders to the southern regions of Africa (LEAD 2006: 1). As far as more recent displacement is concerned, Ayisa et al. (2002) quote an elderly San person from Ekoka who explained that the “Mandume War” (presumably meaning the German-Kwanyama war, dated by the authors to around 1915) was one of the key events that disturbed the social fabric of the San who used to live on the Epembe-Okankolo axis:

“Their parents fled to Angola or dispersed into the remotest forest in disorder, because they were told that a group of evil men, all albinos, were killing whoever they found on their way. The news spread quickly. People panicked and fled in all directions, leaving weaker family members behind. The parents eventually came back to the Namibian side of the border, because their children – some of the currently elderly generation at Ekoka – remembered growing up on the Onakalunga Okongo axis, or between Epembe and Okankolo.” (Ayisa et al. 2002: 7)

More recently, the arrival of the Finnish missionaries in the 1960s changed the lifestyle of the San in (eastern) Ohangwena to an even greater extent, because the missionaries imposed their way of life in pursuit of ways to ‘improve’ the lives of the perceived ‘poor’ and ‘uncivilised’ San. So, from the early 1960s onwards, a Finnish missionary, Erkki Hynonen, started placing the San in small reserves north and east of Okongo (Raiskio (no date): 3). Besides wanting to christen the San, the missionaries wanted to form a Christian San homeland around Okongo, where the San could be baptised and integrated into the lifestyle of the then Kavango-Ovambo Lutheran Church (Ayisa et al. 2002: 8).⁴ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) was of the opinion that farming would be the only means by which the San could survive in the future. This viewpoint was informed, to a degree, by Western and Christian perceptions of the nomadic San. Possibly it was also informed by the knowledge that the eastward movement of Kwanyama farmers (from the relatively densely populated western part of Ohangwena to areas which, until then, had mostly been used as cattle posts) might hamper the nomadic lifestyle that many San in the eastern part of Ohangwena had enjoyed up to the 1960s. According to oral histories related by local headmen in the Okongo area, the Finnish missionaries were the first to place the San in a specific geographic area, and the first to organise support in the form of food rations, clothing, blankets, tobacco, basic healthcare and some degree of education, as well as evangelism. Church leaders also organised farming activities, but in this regard, Ayisa, Berger and Hailundu reported as follows:

³ Fourteen as of August 2013 when Kavango Region was split into two: Kavango East and Kavango West.

⁴ Affiliated to the ELCIN church.

“Unfortunately the granaries and the resettlement fields were properties of the church. The work was done under specific orders from the evangelist in charge and the harvest placed under the church leadership. A fixed ration was handed out regularly to each family. Even if the intentions were good at the time, the resettlement was not voluntary and the San did not learn to manage their new livelihoods. They did not learn to work independently or manage their own reserves and, consequently, the switch from nomadic hunter/gatherer life to sedentary subsistence life did not effectively take place. And worst, said Hon. B. Mwaningange (then Governor of the Ohangwena Region), the war disrupted and halted the efforts of the missionaries to provide the San with proper education and a better life.” (Ayisa et al. 2002: 8)

The support of the Finnish Church was not very consistent, especially when the struggle for Namibian independence intensified during the 1980s. At that time, for security reasons, the missionaries withdrew from the area around Okongo, and the San who had been resettled in the missionary projects at Onamatadiva, Eendobe and Ekoka relied heavily on the support of neighbouring farmers subsequently. The missionaries returned briefly after Independence to resume their church activities in the region and to support the San in the projects which they had established earlier. However, a few years after Independence the missionaries left the Okongo area completely, and the projects that they had established for the San “became the responsibility of the Government of Namibia, national and international development partners, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)” (Mouton 2011: 2). Furthermore, it is important to note that the South African Defence Force (SADF) used the San as trackers and soldiers during the war for independence, one consequence being that other Namibians perceived the San as traitors.

Determining the size of the San population in Ohangwena Region is difficult because, firstly, some San are semi-nomadic, and secondly, during the last census some San indicated that they speak an Oshiwambo dialect rather than a San language. Various sources give different accounts of the size of the San population: the *2001 Population and Housing Census* found a total of 289 households including 1 535 individuals (own calculations based on census data (NPC, 2003a)) speaking a San language at home (0.8% of the regional population). In 2003, the *Ohangwena Regional Poverty Profile* reported 518 households across four constituencies, totalling 1 841 people reportedly speaking a San language (see Table 7.1 below), but also indicated that other, smaller groups of San could be found in other constituencies (NPC 2003b: 17). The latest census finding was that 0.2% of all Ohangwena households spoke a San language (NSA 2013: 171). It has to be borne in mind that the census captured data only for San who speak a San language at home; it can be assumed that there are many more San living in the region. One recent study provided an estimate of around 3 000 San in Ohangwena Region (Pakleppa 2005: 35), which is consistent with the 2001 finding of 0.8% of the total regional population, and another recent study reported that most of the San in Ohangwena are !Xun and Hai||om (Takada 2007: 76-77).

Table 7.1: San population of Ohangwena Region

Constituency	Number of San families	Total San population
Okongo	287	1 052
Omundaungilo	96	320
Epembe	74	302
Eenhana	61	167
Total	518	1 841

Source: NPC 2003b: 17

7.3 Research sites in Ohangwena Region

This section introduces the six research sites in Ohangwena Region: Ouholamo (a neighbourhood in Eenhana), Ekoka Resettlement Project, Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy), Onane village, Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo village) and Omukukutu village. The sites were selected using the criteria detailed in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Main characteristics of the Ohangwena research sites

Research site	Rural/urban status	Land tenure	San language groups	Population status (numerical)	Institutional support**	
					GRN	NGOs
Ouholamo (Eenhana)	Urban	Suburb / neighbourhood on town land	!Xun	Minority in Eenhana; majority in Ouholamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food aid Water Clothes ODPM and Regional Council: ECD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECD housing*** MDG-F (FAO and UNESCO): gardening
Ekoka Resettlement Project	Rural (remote)	Resettlement project on communal land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> !Xun ǀAkhoe and Hai om* 	Equal numbers of San and Kwanyama people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food aid ODPM and Regional Council: ECD Primary school Clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRFN: livelihood support Omba Arts Trust: crafts UNESCO: ECD
Oshikoha (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Rural	Village in Community Forest and Conservancy on communal land	!Xun	Minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food aid MAWF and MET: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IGAs Community Forest and Conservancy Mobile clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FMC NRCS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IGAs capacity building health
Onane	Rural (remote)	Village on communal land	!Xun	Minority	Food aid	None
Omiishi (Omundaungilo)	Rural	Neighbourhood in a settlement which is not proclaimed – hence on communal land	!Xun	Minority	Food aid	None
Omukukutu	Rural (somewhat remote)	Village on communal land	!Xun	Minority	Food aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRCS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Livestock (cattle and goats)

* According to Widlok, “ǀAkhwe is a way in which some Hai||om speak their language” (cited in Vossen 2013: 10) – see Table 3.2 (page 23) and Chapter 6, section 6.3.3 (page 210).

**** Abbreviations/acronyms:**

DRFN	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia	MDG-F	Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund
ECD	early childhood development	MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)	NRCS	Namibia Red Cross Society
FMC	Forest Management Committee	ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
IGA	income-generating activity	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MAWF	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry		

*** UNESCO and Help Educate At-Risk Orphans and Vulnerable Children (HERO) supported the construction of houses for the San in Ouholamo, through Acacia Grassroots Development Network, an NGO that no longer exists.

7.3.1 Ouholamo, Eenhana

Ouholamo is a neighbourhood of the town of Eenhana. Located on the eastern outskirts of the town, Ouholamo is reached via a small sandy track through the bush. It is said that the San were the original inhabitants of the town area and the surrounding area. San participants in our discussions said that they did not refer to this place as a village because the government located them here after their land was “taken away” from them. One participant said, “We used to live in the bush, in the *omapundo*, but these were destroyed during war”.⁵

The San in Ouholamo, constituting approximately 20 households, moved there around 2007/08, once the construction of about 20 brick houses had been completed with the support of the Acacia Grassroots Development Network (AGDN), UNESCO and Help Educate At-Risk Orphans and Vulnerable Children (HERO – an initiative of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), funded by USAID). The actual numbers of people living in these structures varies as people continuously move in and out of Ouholamo. Our rough calculations, based on the perceived size of households, the average number of residents per house at the time of our visit and our discussions with San at this site, rendered an estimated total of 80 San living in Ouholamo.

The Eenhana Town Council provided water for human consumption via water pipes and community taps. In addition, each house had a 5 000 litre water tank for harvesting rainwater from the rooftop, and the water in the tanks was used for human consumption and other purposes. How long the water in the tanks lasted depended on household size and the way that an individual household utilised the water. The houses did not have internal toilets; instead there were seven external pit latrines, but, due to the unhygienic condition of these facilities, most residents preferred to use the bush. There were also three boreholes near the centre of the neighbourhood. At the time of our visit, one of the boreholes provided water to the community garden and the other two were out of order.



Brick houses in Ouholamo

⁵ An *omapundo* (see photo on page 241) is the Oshikwanyama term for a small dwelling made of sticks and other materials (cloths, plastic, nets etc.). Most San in Ohangwena live in *omapundos*.

The community garden, consisting of separate plots for each San resident who was interested in gardening, had been established with funding from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) and technical support from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) was supposed to render extension services to ensure successful cultivation, but the garden, though well designed, had failed due to insufficient engagement with the San. The kindergarten, consisting of a brick building with an outside kitchen, a playground enclosed by a high wire fence and a garden catering for the learners' needs (to the extent that it could do so), had been established by the AGDN in 2004/05 with financial support from UNESCO. Primary and secondary schools in Eenhana were within walking distance, as were the Eenhana Clinic and Eenhana Hospital. Ouholamo's residents had cellphone reception, but no access to electricity.

7.3.2 Ekoka

Ekoka Resettlement Project is located 30 km south-east of the village of Okongo (± 120 km east of Eenhana). The San live on the project site proper, and are surrounded by homesteads of Kwanyama farmers. The project and the homesteads together are known as Ekoka village. The San discussion participants indicated that 500-600 ha of land surrounding two major crop fields and a street with brick houses originally belonged to the resettlement project beneficiaries. The original settlers at Ekoka were said to be !Xun and Hai||om (i.e. they occupied the land before the Kwanyama came to the area). Before 1964 the Ekoka San lived in Okongo with the Finnish missionaries, and prior to moving to Okongo and Ekoka, this San community lived in the Eenhana area.

In 2012 there were approximately 54 San households at Ekoka, 12 headed by females and 42 by males, with a total population of 213 San.⁶ The project houses, built by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR), are brick structures with corrugated-iron roofs, and each house has a small front porch and a small yard. There is no fencing around the houses.

The first set of houses for the San were built next to each (as in an urban neighbourhood), but the San were not happy with this setup because it precluded the rural Ohangwena convention of crop fields surrounding homes/homesteads. The second phase of house construction – financed by the government through the MLR Directorate of Resettlement – took care of this problem to some extent, in that the houses were built within the boundary of a large fenced-off field, portions of which were available to each household for cultivation.⁷ However, the San who occupied these houses were still not happy because the land in question was not regarded as belonging specifically to them; rather it belonged to the whole community, and was not split up into areas for individual families. Moreover, all of these houses were built one side of the field, which made the singular use of the land by the San difficult, as it enabled other farmers to use the field, especially the portion that was more distant from the established houses.

Each house at Ekoka Resettlement Project had been connected to the power grid and had a prepaid meter. A diesel-driven borehole supplied water to the houses, the school, the clinic and the church. Two houses had been set aside to serve as project offices, and the 'office compound' also included a small shop, storage rooms, a cooking area, two water tanks with taps, and a large thatched roof covering an area of approximately 160 m² serving as a community centre. The project also had a

⁶ Takada reported in 1998 that the Ekoka San population was 281 (including the people who relocated to other places for a short while during the dry season), of whom 143 (51%) were !Xun, 87 (31%) were Hai||om, 40 (14%) were of mixed !Xun and Hai||om descent, and 11 (4%) were from other San groups (Takada 2007: 81).

⁷ There are two crop fields in Ekoka Resettlement Project: a large field of 89 ha and a small field of 69 ha.

combined school catering for Grades 1-10, a school hostel, a health centre with two nurses, several shebeens, a church and kraal for cattle owned by the San community. (The San did not own cattle on an individual basis, and women were not involved in cattle farming as this was regarded a man's responsibility.) The Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) had constructed a few ventilated pit latrines on the project site, but the beneficiaries still use the bush instead.

The Livelihood Support Programme for the Ohangwena San Resettlement Projects (LIPROSAN) implemented by the DRFN with funding from the MLR provided several services, such as capacity building for livelihood activities, agricultural equipment supplies, facilitation of income-generating activities (IGAs) and strengthening of local institutional structures.

7.3.3 Oshikoha, Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy

The Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy (known locally as the "Omauni Community Forest" because the Omauni village boundary encompasses the main forestry office, hall and campsite) is located about 70 km east of Okongo village in Okongo Constituency.⁸ Oshikoha village is located about 10 km north of Omauni village within the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy.

San people lived in this area "a long time ago", but they moved around a lot in pursuit of food and water. They moved to Mpungu in Kavango Region at Independence, and back to Omauni village after 1998. Many of these San did not remain in the area when the Okongo Community Forest was gazetted in 2002, but most participants in our discussions indicated that they moved back to this area once the project had been up and running for a while.

In 2002 there were 20 villages in the Okongo Community Forest, with a total population of 1 300 and a San population of approximately 150. The San, mostly !Xun, lived primarily in five villages, i.e. Omauni East, Omandi, Okanyandi 1, Oshikoha and Ohiki, and most of them lived in *omapundos* which they constructed themselves (SIAPAC 2008: 77).

A mobile clinic served the residents of Oshikoha village and the surrounding villages, but it visited only once a month, and the nearest alternative was the clinic in Okongo village. There was a shop where people could buy some food and other items, such as soap. The pension payout point that operated on a monthly basis also served as a trading place where people from Oshikoha and the surrounding area could sell their second-hand clothes, food, sweets, arts and crafts, pots, etc. to those who had just received their pensions.

There was no church, school or kindergarten in Oshikoha. The closest primary school was in Omauni village, but none of the San children in Oshikoha went to school there because their parents did not have trusted friends in Omauni with whom their children could reside while attending school. The closest secondary school was in Okongo and this had hostel facilities.

Water was supplied to the community in Oshikoha via an engine-driven pump belonging to the government and serviced by the MAWF Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination (DWSSC), but the community was responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the pump. The Kwanyama there paid for their water, whereas the San were exempted from paying. It took approximately an hour to get to the water point and back, which the participants did not

⁸ The main motivation for selecting Oshikoha as a study site was that it was located within the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy and was thus assumed to represent a different living standard compared with resettlement projects or villages on communal land which were not receiving any specific institutional support.

regard as a long distance. Sometimes they used their Kwanyama neighbours' donkeys to collect water. No village in the Community Forest and Conservancy had an electricity supply.

7.3.4 Onane

Onane, a village in Okongo Constituency, is located about 12 km from the main tar road from Okongo to the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy and on to Rundu. Onane is reached via a two-track gravel/sand road (primarily gravel, with relatively thick sand in parts). The distance along the tar road from Okongo to the turnoff to Onane village is approximately 30 km.

Reportedly there were 18 !Xun living in Onane village – excluding the children who were living with Kwanyamas.⁹ The Onane !Xun were actually one big family as all of them were related to each other in one way or another.

According to discussion participants, the San were the first inhabitants of this area. Most of the San in Onane village had lived there all their lives; only a few had moved recently to Onane from other villages. There were also some who moved seasonally to another village, mostly when there were food shortages in the area.

For water, the Onane village community had only a diesel-driven borehole, and the water was used for both human and livestock consumption. The only other infrastructure and services were a room used by the mobile clinic, a church and a cemetery; there was no kindergarten, primary or secondary school in the village, nor any community projects (e.g. gardens), and the San lived in *omapundos* which they constructed themselves.



⁹ The 14 San participants in our discussion were not able to confirm the exact number of San residents of Onane, but four !Xun were said to be out looking for food, thus they reasoned that they numbered 18 in total.

7.3.5 Omiishi, Omundaungilo

Omundaungilo is a settlement area, not officially proclaimed, but regarded as the de facto capital of Omundaungilo Constituency. Omundaungilo is located about 15 km north of the main tar road from Eenhana to Okongo; the turnoff is about 40 km east of Eenhana. The San community lived on the outskirts of the settlement in an area called Omiishi in Oshikwanyama and N!u¹⁰ in the local !Xun dialect.

Only San live in Omiishi; most of the Kwanyama people in the area live in Omundaungilo proper. At the time of our visit there were 26 San households in Omiishi, with an estimated total population of 192. Most of the San in Omiishi were from two San communities who had moved there due to the availability of water and food aid, and proximity to the clinic in Omundaungilo. Of the 26 San households, 18 belonged to the Omatunda San group and eight belonged to the Etunda San group. The Omatunda San had moved there about a year prior to our visit from Omatunda village about 5 km south of Omundaungilo. The Etunda group had come from Etunda village, located close to Omundaungilo on the north-western side, before Independence. It seems that Kwanyama farmers had fenced off the land on which the San lived in Etunda, which forced them to move away.

All San in Omiishi lived in *omapundos*. Infrastructure in Omundaungilo included a primary school, a clinic, open wells, a borehole with a hand pump, a borehole with a diesel engine, an earth dam (resulting from a sand pit used for road construction), a police station, the councillor's office, an agricultural extension office, a church, a cemetery, the main gravel feeder road, shops and shebeens. Neither Omiishi or Omundaungilo had electricity, nor sanitation facilities, hence all community members used the bush.

7.3.6 Omukukutu

Omukukutu is a village in Epembe Constituency, located some 12 km from the main tar road from Eenhana to Okongo along a two-track gravel road with relatively thick sand. The distance from Eenhana to the turnoff from the main tar road is just under 40 km.

Most of the village residents were Kwanyama, and the San community consisted of approximately 16 households with a total of about 118 individuals. According to older San participants in our discussion, the !Xun were the first inhabitants of this area, and Kwanyama people moved into the area shortly before Namibia's war for independence commenced.

The houses of the San looked like those of the Kwanyama structurally. A borehole with a diesel-powered pump and three 10 m³ water tanks were available to all village residents, but the San opted not to use the water point, mainly due to the access cost of N\$30 per month per household. Instead, the San used a cost-free borehole with a hand pump, and open wells. The village primary school catered for Grades 1-7. The closest health facility was in Oshikunde, and the closest hospital was in Eenhana. Omukukutu had no access to electricity. The church was attended mainly by Kwanyama. Community gardens for both ethnic groups were available, but it seemed that the Kwanyama had taken over ownership of the gardens, as the San were not allowed to actively participate in decision making about the gardens (see later in this chapter). The community was involved in an NRCS project providing agricultural implements and livestock, but the Kwanyama were said to have taken over this project too, with the result that the San had little involvement in decision making.

¹⁰ This spelling may be incorrect as neither the participants nor the researchers could spell in this San language.

7.4 Research findings

7.4.1 Livelihood and poverty

Livelihood strategies

Most San households in Ohangwena Region depend for their livelihoods on food aid, piecework, veldfood gathering, pensions, subsistence agriculture, some limited IGAs, child labour and begging or asking Kwanyama neighbours for food.

Subsistence agriculture

Subsistence agriculture was the main livelihood strategy of the Kwanyama people in Ohangwena. None of the San in Ouholamo, Omiishi (Omundaungilo), Oshikoha (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy) and Onane cultivated crop fields.¹¹ Only four of the ±16 San households in Omukukutu village and several San households at Ekoka Resettlement Project had productive crop fields. It should be noted that the Ekoka, Onamatadiva, Oshanashiwa and Eendobe Resettlement Projects in Okongo Constituency differed from all the other sites where San people resided in Ohangwena in that they received extensive agricultural, food, educational and infrastructural support from the MLR, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), UNESCO, the Ohangwena Regional Council (ORC) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), via technical support from the DRFN, AGDN and NRCS. San at these projects were better off than San at other sites in this region, primarily due to this external support. San participants in our



The Onane village headman – a Kwanyama man whose wife is San, with their 2012 *omahangu* (pearl millet) harvest

¹¹ One Onane household did cultivate a large crop field, but we must exclude this household on the grounds that it was headed by a Kwanyama headman whose wife was San: although in theory they had a mixed household, in practice it was considered to be a Kwanyama household due to the household head being Kwanyama.

discussions at the other research sites claimed that they did have access to land for agricultural purposes, but that this meant very little without agricultural implements. Land available to them was also said to be infertile, as all fertile land had already been allocated to others, mostly Kwanyama households.¹² In addition, some San households that did have access to land and agricultural equipment preferred to do piecework instead of cultivating their own fields, because piecework provided an immediate return on labour investment, whether in the form of money, food, clothes or *otombo* (home-brewed beer). Therefore, at most research sites in Ohangwena, San did not depend on subsistence agriculture as a primary food source, but rather they relied on:

- food aid (mostly maize-meal);
- food in return for piecework;
- food bought with money earned by means of piecework;
- food bought with money earned by selling arts and crafts;
- food bought with pension money (Old Age Pension, War Veteran Pension, OVC grants);
- begging, or asking Kwanyama neighbours for food when in dire need;¹³ and
- veldfood.

Food aid

Food aid – food from the OPM’s San Development Programme (SDP), drought relief food and food for work – was provided by the OPM via the Ohangwena Regional Council and distributed by the respective constituency offices. Food aid normally targeted vulnerable and/or marginalised communities such as the San and the Ovaherero, and usually consisted of maize-meal (one 12.5 kg sack), tinned fish and cooking oil. Food aid was distributed differently depending on whether or not a community received livelihood support from the MLR and the DRFN. Generally at our research sites in Ohangwena, food aid was distributed to San households only, on an irregular basis, via local village-level distribution committees that determined the amount of food to be given to a household based on the household’s size. The San in Oshikoto said that they received food aid on a monthly or bi-monthly basis,¹⁴ whereas the San in the other villages claimed to have received food aid only once during 2012. Thus for most San in Ohangwena, the food aid distribution tended to be irregular and unpredictable, and appeared to depend on availability as opposed to need.

The MLR and the DRFN (as an implementing partner of the MLR) provided food aid at the Onamatadiva, Oshanaana, Eendobe and Ekoka Resettlement Projects in the years 2007-2010, at the onset of the rainy season, as an incentive for San to work in their crop fields. Sometimes it was also provided during the dry season as an incentive for other casual work in these projects (e.g. fencing). However, due to a concern that this food aid was fostering dependency and a perceived reluctance on the part of the San to work for themselves, the MLR and DRFN stopped it. Another concern was that the San exchanged some of their food aid provisions for *otombo* and tobacco – rather than for other types of food (e.g. meat and *omahangu*), the latter being a relatively common practice among San and other recipients of food aid. However, since then, food aid from the SDP has been distributed via the constituency office on a monthly basis.

The OPM also provided drought relief food via the Ohangwena Regional Council which in turn distributed it via the constituency offices. Drought relief food was distributed to all people in need

¹² The eastern part of Ohangwena Region consists of tree savannah with sandy soils, and was originally used as an area for cattle posts (which would be located in the vicinity of shallow pans). The few areas with more fertile soils were occupied by crop farmers a long time ago.

¹³ San households would normally ask Kwanyama households for food only when in dire need. Borrowing or begging food from other San was not feasible as all San in these villages were in the same situation.

¹⁴ Frequency of distribution depends on availability.

(not only San) during the dry season. Food-for-work opportunities are provided by particular line ministries (depending on the type of work) when capital projects (e.g. road construction) are implemented close by, but this had not happened often in Ohangwena Region in recent years.

Piecework¹⁵

Most food (*omahangu*) and other commodities received by the San were reportedly obtained by carrying out piecework jobs in the crop fields belonging to Kwanyama farmers and by herding cattle belonging to the Kwanyama. Informal piecework seemed to be the main source of income for most San households. Piecework was not always paid for in cash; sometimes it was paid for in kind, in the form of food, second-hand clothes, and/or a jug of *otomobo* or *oshikundu*.¹⁶ The practice of working for the Kwanyama in exchange for food was called *okunyanga* in Oshikwanyama. The types of work commonly carried out in exchange for food included assisting with crop cultivation, herding livestock, collecting firewood, fetching water, cutting poles and thatching grass, and doing domestic chores. Piecework was more readily available during the cultivation period, meaning that the San had less access to food during the dry season.

San discussion participants raised their common concern that many San were paid with *otomobo*; they said that some San would spend entire days carrying water to *cuca* shops simply to get paid in *otomobo* only. Such labour did not bring in any money, food, soap, clothes or other necessities, and increased alcohol abuse among the San, with detrimental effects.

The types of piecework usually undertaken by females included ploughing, domestic chores, fetching water and collecting firewood. Men were more likely to herd livestock, but also worked in the fields, fetched water and collected firewood. Small bundles of firewood, usually collected and sold by women, could fetch N\$10, and men would collect a load of firewood which they could sell for N\$150 to N\$300. It usually took a full day to collect and transport such a load, and discussion participants indicated that men usually collected a load only once a year due to a belief that this task made men old. Assisting in the cultivation of the Kwanyama crop fields could bring in N\$20 to N\$50 per day. The income for piecework done by women tended to be lower than the income that men earned for their piecework.

Pensions

The Old Age Pension was regarded as an important source of income for some households – the government paid pensioners N\$550 per month at the time of the field research.¹⁷ Most of this money was spent on household food, but reportedly the money was usually all accounted for before it had even been received. Paying off debts at *cuca* shops (for food and *otomobo*), and the large numbers of household members who often depended on the Old Age Pension as the only source of household income, meant that the money was often too limited for a family's needs. Nevertheless, households that received a pension were normally regarded as better off than other San households, unless such a household had many members. Discussion participants raised the concern that many elderly San were not registered for their pension, despite being entitled to it by virtue of their age. The main reason for not receiving this pension was a lack of vital documents such as an ID or birth certificate, or incorrect information on existing documents. The same was true for many orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) who did not receive an OVC grant despite being entitled to it.

¹⁵ The authors of this chapter did not distinguish between 'piecework' and 'casual work' (see Chapter 14, pages 468-469).

¹⁶ A traditional Owambo non-alcoholic drink made from *omahangu* and water.

¹⁷ In April 2013 it was increased to N\$600 per month.

A total of three people in Omukukutu and Ouholamo received a War Veteran Pension, consisting of a N\$50 000 once-off payout and N\$2 500 per month thereafter. This was extremely important for them as it enabled their households to improve their standard of living. According to other participants, the families concerned had progressed from being poor or very poor to being better off or even rich.

Veldfood



Veldfood in Omukukutu village

"In the rainy season we have a lot of food. We even have the leaves of *omambibo*."

– Male discussion participant in Oshikoha village

Another male participant in the discussion in Oshikoha indicated that he survived mostly on veldfood, and agreed that there was plenty of veldfood during the rainy season, but not during the dry season.

San in Ohangwena depend extensively on the daily consumption of veldfood, especially when food from crop fields, or food aid provisions or purchased food, runs out (see the subsection on food security and main food items further on). However, discussion participants noted that they would gather less veldfood if other foods such as *omahangu* and maize-meal were more readily available and could be obtained by working in the crop fields of the Kwanyama farmers. Most veldfoods could be easily gathered in and around the villages, and were eaten on a daily basis when in season. Places such as Oshikoha village in the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy were said to have more veldfood available nowadays than was previously the case as a result of the forest management rules and regulations, however it was also said that other San residents of the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy had complained that the regulations were inhibiting them from accessing veldfood and other natural resources.

Arts and crafts

Some !Xun and Hai||om women in Ohangwena generated income by making baskets, necklaces, bracelets and clothes, and San men usually made traditional knives, bows, arrows and wooden cups – whether for generating income or for own use. However, not many !Xun and Hai||om across the region engaged in craftmaking. The DRFN, with technical support from the Omba Arts Trust, provided support to communities in the Oshanashiwa and Ekoka Resettlement Projects with regard to the design, production and marketing of arts and craft products, and some of the products were sold at the Ongwediva and Eenhana trade fairs. Discussion participants indicated that these experiences had increased the confidence of those who participated, and contributed to increasing their income to some extent, albeit irregularly. Eleven artists at Ekoka Resettlement Project, for example, collectively earned N\$8 750 in 2012. Similarly, six craft producers at Oshanashiwa and Ekoka Resettlement Projects collectively accumulated N\$14 265 from sales of their crafts in the period August 2012 to July 2013, of which some N\$5 100 was distributed among them as income (see Box 14.1 on page 476). There is potential for further growth of this craftmaking initiative if the support can be continued for the next few years.



Formal employment

Few San across the six Ohangwena research sites were formally employed at the time of our field research. One person was a teacher at Ekoka Resettlement Project, and another was a police officer, originally from Omukukutu village but stationed elsewhere. Another four San worked for the DRFN in the San resettlement projects around Okongo, but only one of them originated in Ohangwena (i.e. the one working at Oshanashiwa Resettlement Project). Three other San in formal employment came from the Tsumkwe area, but only one of them was employed at one of the six research sites. In addition, one San man in Ouholamo had worked for the AGDN for a couple of years in a formal capacity, but was retrenched when funding came to an end. Four more San at the same site were employed as domestic workers in Eenhana. (More San might be formally employed in other parts of the region, but this is unlikely.) Apart from the fact that formal employment opportunities were generally rare in this region, additional factors that impacted on the ability of the !Xun and Hai||om to obtain such employment included limited education, a lack of formal work experience, unequal power relations, discrimination and low self-esteem.

A few San men earned an income from herding livestock on a full-time basis, but their employment was based on informal arrangements. They were paid approximately N\$300 per month, and were also allowed to use the cows or oxen belonging to their employer for ploughing small fields in their own area.

Remittances

None of the San householders who participated in the field research reported receiving remittances. Some older San children worked as domestic workers elsewhere in the country, but none sent remittances back home. This is usually because payments for domestic work are too low for sharing.

Livestock

Very few San households owned cattle, donkeys or goats, but many owned small numbers of chickens, and one man in Ouholamo owned pigs. The !Xun in Omukukutu village were part of an NRCS initiative that donated cattle and goats to the whole village community, and the cattle were meant to be used as draught animals for cultivating crops. However, due to the power dynamics between the !Xun and the Kwanyama, most of the cattle and goats were under the supervision of the Kwanyama at the time of our field research, constraining !Xun people's access to project livestock for cultivation purposes.

Hunting

All discussion participants across the six sites indicated that the !Xun and Hai||om did not hunt because hunting was no longer allowed. The researchers saw some San carrying bows and arrows, but reportedly these were made for sale, not for hunting. During an informal meeting in one of the villages, a participant noted that hunting was still taking place in and around the village. Discussion participants across Ohangwena Region noted that !Xun and Hai||om people were unhappy with the regulations that prevented them from hunting and living as they had in the past.

Child labour

!Xun and Hai||om participants across all six sites considered child labour to be an acceptable source of income. Kwanyama households used San children to look after cattle or do other types of piecework, and either paid the children directly or paid their parents. None of the San parents who participated in the research discussions expressed any concern about their children doing such work; in fact all of them welcomed the option of child labour as it contributed to their families' wellbeing.

Food security and main food items

Omahangu was the staple food across four of the six research sites. In Ouholamo and Omiishi neighbourhoods, the San ate maize-meal primarily, either obtained as food aid or purchased instead of *omahangu*. Ouholamo is close to the urban centre of Eenhana, and Omiishi is close to the non-proclaimed settlement of Omundaungilo, and both the town and the settlement provided the San with more opportunities for piecework with cash payment than were available in the rural areas, hence they were able to purchase maize-meal. The other four sites were far from urban centres and main settlements, thus the San at these sites depended largely on doing piecework in the crop fields of the Kwanyama farmers, or otherwise begging for *omahangu* – although some of the !Xun and Hai||om at Ekoka Resettlement Project and in Omukukutu village cultivated their own fields. *Omahangu* and maize-meal porridge were usually mixed with beans or veldfood such as *makatan* (traditional cabbage) and *ombidi* (spinach).

Table 7.3 shows the different types of food eaten by the San at the six sites, and the frequency of eating each type. This table clearly reflects the importance of veldfood for the San in Ohangwena – especially *oshe* (berries), *omheke* (berries), *embibo* (roots), *etanga* (melon), *makatan* (traditional cabbage), *enghete* (nuts) and *ombidi* (spinach). Table 7.4 details the types of veldfoods available across the region by season. (The person who assisted with translating the Oshikwanyama names of the veldfoods into English was unable to identify a few of them, thus translations are missing for these few.)

Table 7.3: Types and frequency of food eaten by San at the Ohangwena research sites

Frequency	Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	Ekoka Resettlement Project	Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Onane village	Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)	Omukukutu village
Most frequent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maize Oshe (berries) Omheke (berries) Embibo (roots) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omahangu (millet) Etanga (melon) Makatan (cabbage) Oshikundu (non-alcoholic drink made from fermented millet) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omahangu Embibo Enghete (nuts) Honey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omahangu Maize-meal Beans Enghete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maize-meal Veldfood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omahangu Beans Ombidi (spinach) Oshe Groundnuts
	Beans	Cooking oil	Cooking oil	Otombo (home-brewed beer)	Fish	Oshikundu
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Oshikundu 	Maize		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pumpkin Euni (fruit) Omapaka (fruit) Ekokofi (berries) Eshonywa (melon) Sugar cane Mopane worms 	Cooking oil	
		Beans	Meat		Beans	Maize-meal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macaroni Rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enghete Oshe Embibo Enyowa* Wild berries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omapaka Oshe Okawakole (Mopane worms) Ewila* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oshe Efimbo* 	Meat	
	Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat Sweets 	Maize-meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat Tea 	Omahangu	
Least frequent	Dried meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice Macaroni Tea/coffee 	Tea/coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice Macaroni Ombu* Embibo Oshe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread Rice Macaroni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Cooking oil Meat Rice Macaroni

* The assistant who checked the Oshiwambo terms for the veldfoods could not identify those which are not specified in brackets.

Table 7.4: Veldfoods in Ohangwena Region by season¹⁸

Rainy season	Dry season	Throughout the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omapaka (fruit) Ekokofi (berries) Okadongodongo* Makatan (traditional cabbage) Ombidi (spinach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oshe (berries) Omauni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owishu (honey) Elonga (honey) Omaadi eniiki (honey) Ewila* Oshipuo* Embibo (root) Evanda (spinach relish) Enghete (nuts) Enyowa*

* Note as above.

¹⁸ The following veldfoods were also discussed, but without any elaboration on seasonal availability: *enyanga* (tubers), *omunthimba* (not identified), *okawakole* (Mopane worms), *efimbo* (not identified) and *eshonywa* (melon).

The community garden in Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana), though well designed, had failed, seemingly due to MAWF agricultural extension services not engaging sufficiently with the San gardeners.



Meat was regarded as a highly desirable food but was rarely eaten; usually it was eaten less than once a month, and generally only when a cow had died in the area and San were given small pieces of the meat. At times the !Xun and Hai||om could exchange some of their maize-meal (food aid) for meat, and occasionally they purchased meat with earnings from piecework or when the Old Age Pensions were paid out. In our discussion in Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo settlement), in response to our question as to when they had last eaten meat, one man said a year ago, another man said two months ago and a woman said last week. Meat included beef, donkey meat and dog meat (the latter was mentioned only in Omukukutu village). Discussion participants at all six sites insisted that game meat was no longer eaten as hunting was no longer permitted.

Most San households did not have sufficient food – neither in quantity nor quality. The number of meals eaten per day varied within and across the sites. Most San households reported that they ate two meals a day: one in the morning and one in the evening, mostly consisting of the same types of food (mainly *omahangu* or maize-meal porridge). A few households ate three meals a day – for example households in Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy), mainly because they received food aid on a monthly/bi-monthly basis and had an abundance of veldfood. Other households – such as very poor households with older people who could not do any piecework and did not receive a pension – reportedly ate only one meal a day. In Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo settlement), most San households reportedly ate only breakfast. Most San households across the six sites would get up in the morning, cook and eat, and then leave home to spend the rest of the day at local *cuca* shops, although sometimes they would engage in other activities such as piecework and making arts and crafts (mainly baskets and traditional tools).

Children ate three meals a day when they attended a school with a school feeding programme. Those who did not go to school and accompanied their parents to *cuca* shops during the day were given *otombo* when they were hungry, as food was unavailable at *cuca* shops.

When meals were eaten, children were usually given larger helpings than adults. In Omiishi, boys tended to get larger helpings than girls, whereas at the other sites girls and boys reportedly received equal helpings. In the discussion at Ekoka Resettlement Project, female participants said that men usually ate more than women because they have bigger hands and could therefore take more food per handful. Some participants at Ekoka said that pregnant women would get more food than other women if they required it, but one woman there said that pregnant women did not get sufficient food, and consequently delivered their babies prematurely.

Drinking *otombo* was regarded as a substitute for eating, as the following quotes from participants at different sites indicate:

- “It is our coffee; we need to have it in the morning and throughout the day.”
- “It is like engine oil; the body cannot operate without its oil.”
- “It gives us energy to work in the fields. We take it with us to have during the day for more energy.”

In Omiishi, a woman said, “Sometimes when we do not have food to eat, we drink *otombo* so that we do not feel hungry any longer,” and this statement triggered a discussion with men disagreeing with women that *otombo* could be regarded as a food. The men argued that *otombo* was similar to water in that it could not alleviate hunger pangs, and they insisted that they did not drink *otombo* when they felt hungry. Conversely, the women argued that they could indeed be satiated by drinking *otombo*, because, although it could not be regarded as food per se, it fills the stomach sufficiently to preclude feeling hungry.

San discussion participants at all six sites – and at other Ohangwena sites studied previously, such as Onamatadiva, Oshanashiwa and Eendobe Resettlement Projects – indicated that everybody, including children (except those breastfeeding), drank *otombo*. All participants admitted that it was not right for children to drink *otombo*, but a woman in Omiishi explained that children usually had nothing to eat during the day when they joined their parents at the *cuca* shops, because the parents did not cook any lunch when they were there, so their children would usually go hungry. Hence they ended up drinking *otombo* with their parents instead of having a meal prepared for them at lunch time at home. Some village headmen imposed by-laws to restrict the opening hours of *cuca* shops to the afternoons, in the hope that this would deter people (both San and non-San) from spending most of their time at *cuca* shops. Although increasing numbers of Kwanyama people also frequent the local *cuca* shops, the vicious circle of poverty and *otombo* consumption seems to be worse among San people than among other ethnic groups in Ohangwena.

This practice of alcohol consumption could be interpreted as one of the San’s strategies for coping with food shortages. Another coping strategy was to ask village headmen for food. The headmen would then usually ask constituency councillors for support, but the support available from the councillors depended largely on resources and supplies, which were said to be lacking in most cases. It was noted that government officials often perceived the San as people who ‘do not want to take care of themselves’, and therefore, in some instances, their requests for food were not taken seriously enough.

Begging or asking Kwanyama households for food was a strategy sometimes employed as a last resort – usually when all food supplies had run out and veldfood was scarce. It was difficult to determine how often San households resorted to this strategy because the food security situation differed from household to household, but all San participants in our discussions regarded this as purely a survival strategy; none said that they preferred it a ‘lifestyle option’.

Perceptions of poverty and vulnerability

San people's perceptions of wealth and poverty were evaluated by ranking San families at each research site according to their perceived standard of living. The results of this exercise at each site are summarised in Table 7.5. Participants at each site in Ohangwena identified up to five socio-economic classes, ranging from 'very poor' to 'very rich'. The rankings were quite strongly informed by participants' perceptions of the more tangible evidence people's standard of living, such as access to employment or piecework; engagement in crop cultivation and other income-generating activities such as craftmaking; access to pensions and other social grants; and finally, ownership of livestock, clothes, blankets, pots and other household items. Housing conditions and food security also featured as criteria, but less tangible aspects – such as the strength of social support networks – were not evaluated and not even discussed.

Table 7.5: Wealth attributes of San households in Ohangwena Region

Criteria	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich
Employment	No formal employment	No formal employment	No formal employment	Domestic work	Formal employment
Piecework / casual work	Do piecework / cannot do piecework	Do piecework	Work full time for Kwanyama		
Crop fields	No crop fields	No crop fields	Crop fields	Crop fields	Large crop fields
Old Age Pension	No pension	Old Age Pension	Old Age Pension	Old Age Pension and War Veteran Pension	
Savings				Can save money	Can save money
Arts and crafts (excluding basketry)	Produce arts and crafts and sell them	No arts and crafts			
Basketry	Do not weave baskets	Do not weave baskets	Weave baskets and sell them		
Livestock ownership	No livestock	No livestock	No livestock (some may have)	Livestock	Lots of livestock
Chicken ownership	No chickens	No chickens	Chickens	Chickens	Many chickens
Clothing	No good clothes	Not enough clothes	More clothes	Much better clothes	Best clothes
Blankets	No blankets	Blankets	Blankets	Good blankets	Best blankets
Pots	No pots	Pots	Pots	Enough pots	Enough pots
Housing	No huts	Huts	Huts	Well-structured houses	Well-structured houses
Footwear	No shoes	Shoes	Shoes	Good shoes	Best shoes
Food security	No food	Not enough food	More food	Enough food	Enough food
Shop ownership	No shops	No shops	No shops	Own cuca shops	Own cuca shops

Table 7.6 presents the distribution of San households by socio-economic category. It underlines that one-tenth of the households across the six sites regarded themselves as 'very poor'. Attributes of 'very poor' households included not having many employment opportunities, nor access to the Old Age Pension, as well as limited or no access to resources such as land, food, livestock, shelter, clothing, blankets and other household commodities. Most of the households (62%) regarded themselves as 'poor', mainly because they did not have any land or agricultural tools to cultivate crop fields, no livestock, nor any employment and consequently not enough food. The common

denominator among all households from ‘very poor’ to ‘rich’ was the lack of formal employment opportunities – only the ‘very rich’ had access to these. A common denominator between the ‘rich’ and ‘very rich’ categories was the ability to save money. The San regarded less than one-tenth (7%) of their households as ‘rich’, and one quarter as ‘middle’ (neither ‘rich’ nor ‘poor’). The San regarded most of the Kwanyama households as ‘very rich’, many as ‘rich’ and a few as ‘poor’.

Table 7.6: Numbers of San households per wealth category in Ohangwena Region*

Research site	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Rich	Very rich
Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	5	1	10	4 (working)	0
Ekoka Resettlement Project	0	16	10	0	0
Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	0	3	3	0	0
Onane village	0	8	0	1 (Kwanyama headman)	0
Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)	0	26	0	0	0
Omukukutu village	5	8	1	2 (war veterans)	0
Total	10	62	24	7	0

* Total = 103 households

No San household at any site was regarded as ‘very rich’. On the other hand, at four sites no San household was regarded as ‘very poor’. At four of the six sites, most San were categorised as ‘poor’, the exceptions being Ouholamo where most were placed in the ‘middle’ category, and Oshikoha where the numbers of ‘middle’ and ‘poor’ households were the same.

The wealth-ranking exercises alone made evident the fact that the !Xun and Hai||om were the most marginalised groups at these sites in Ohangwena – a finding reinforced by other literature (e.g. NPC 2003b: 17).

Most of these San communities could mention other San communities who were either better off or worse off than themselves – although their perceptions were not necessarily valid as to some extent they were influenced by assumptions. Following are examples:

- The !Xun and Hai||om at Ekoka Resettlement Project classified themselves as ‘poor’ relative to those at the four resettlement projects around Okongo, because the latter were provided with houses, crop fields, agricultural equipment (e.g. tractors), water points, diesel, community centres, kindergartens and training in various income-generating activities. The San at the other four sites also regarded the Okongo San as better off than themselves for the same reason.
- The !Xun in Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo) regarded themselves as worse off than the San at the other five sites – and San in other communities in their vicinity – because they had very little, and they lived in *omapundos* and none of their children went to school.
- Little was known of the !Xun in Onane village, but it was generally assumed that they were worse off than San at the other five sites because their children did not go to school and Onane was situated deep in the bush.



As far as social mobility is concerned, very few San in Ohangwena had managed to improve their standard of living – meaning very few had managed to climb the social ladder from being ‘poor’ to ‘middle’, let alone ‘rich’ or ‘very rich’. Those who had managed to improve their standard of living to some degree had done so primarily because they had reached the age of eligibility for the Old Age Pension, or were eligible for the War Veteran Pension. The San in Ouholamo, Ekoka, Onane, Omiishi and Omukukutu believed that many of the !Xun and Hai||om in Oshikoha and the other resettlement projects around Okongo had improved their standard of living – moved from being ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ to being ‘middle class’ – because of the external support that they had received. In Onane village, participants stated that San women could achieve upward social mobility if they married a Kwanyama man, but many !Xun, including those in Onane, could not envisage moving up the social ladder at all without external support. Some San in Omukukutu village could imagine some improvement in their living standards if their children could complete secondary school or even tertiary education and then find employment.

7.4.2 Access to land

The San at all six sites claimed that they were the first inhabitants of the land on which they currently live, although now this land ‘belongs to the Kwanyama people’, and the !Xun and Hai||om merely live on it – i.e. at the four resettlement projects around Okongo, or on a piece of communal land where they had put up informal housing structures and could access veldfood when needed. Land tenure for San in Ohangwena Region therefore takes different forms:

- 1) A **settlement or neighbourhood** specifically established to provide housing or shelter for the !Xun. Ouholamo is an example of such a settlement/neighbourhood; this is where the !Xun from Eenhana were provided with shelter with assistance from the AGDN and the regional and municipal authorities, and with financial support from donors such as UNESCO and HERO.

- 2) **Group resettlement projects**, in which a group of !Xun and/or Hai||om were originally resettled by ELCIN in the 1960s, were taken over by the Namibian Government in 1996. One additional resettlement project was established between 2000 and 2004, i.e. Oshanashiwa, located 7 km from Okongo, for resettling marginalised !Xun who spent their time in shebeens in Okongo, to give them an opportunity to engage in productive farming activities. The !Xun and Hai||om at these projects jointly share access to a piece of fenced-off land which was communal land before ELCIN's arrival in the area. The project land areas currently vary from 26 ha (Eendobe) to 36 ha (Onamatadiva) and 55 ha (Oshanashiwa). The area allocated to Ekoka Resettlement Project is much larger at 500-600 ha, but at the time of our research it was not fenced off or otherwise demarcated, and encroachment by other farmers was underway.¹⁹ !Xun and Hai||om farmers at these projects received agricultural support from the DRFN (with financial support from the MLR) for cultivating crop fields. The MLR had also constructed houses for the project beneficiaries at Ekoka, Oshanashiwa and Eendobe. At the time of our visit only six houses had been built at Onamatadiva, but there were plans for building more houses there in the 2013/14 financial year.²⁰
- 3) Land comprising a **community forest or a conservancy** (or both), which is subject to relevant regulations. Oshikoha village has this form of land tenure.
- 4) **Communal land** allocated to San by village headmen to either build homesteads as a group of families or construct individual homesteads. Examples are Onane and Omukukutu villages, and Omiishi neighbourhood near Omundaungilo settlement.

At all six sites in Ohangwena, the San were neighbours of Kwanyama families. The San provided labour for the cultivation of Kwanyama farmers' crop fields, built or thatched Kwanyama houses, and carried out domestic chores for Kwanyama households in return for some money – but more often *omahangu* and occasionally some meat. In recent years, payment for work undertaken by the San for the neighbouring farmers has increasingly taken the form of in-kind payments, e.g. the payment is made at the local *cuca* shop in the form of jugs of *otombo*. Under such circumstances it might be said that we found the San living in servitude to their neighbours.

The San at Ekoka Resettlement Project, and the San at the resettlement projects around Okongo, were confident that the land on which they now lived was theirs, and that they had full ownership. However, none of them could provide any written documentation to such effect, thus they did not appear to have the title deeds required for claiming authority over the land and for prohibiting others from moving onto the land – which had happened in some of the larger projects such as Ekoka, and to a lesser extent Oshanashiwa. Concerns about encroachment by neighbouring farmers were specifically raised at Ekoka, and !Xun and Hai||om at the Eendobe and Onamatadiva projects also claimed that their land rights were not respected by some neighbouring farmers, as they walked through the San's fields without asking, and allowed their cattle to roam on the San land, and took water from the solar pumps established within the boundaries of the projects without contributing anything in return. The MLR mapped the Ekoka Resettlement Project in 2004, and demarcated

¹⁹ According to MLR staff, beacons were placed at the four corner posts in 2004, but they disappeared over time. Some time after our visit to this project, the MLR placed new beacons to mark the corners of the project area, but there is still no boundary fence; only the crop fields have been fenced off. In the absence of a boundary fence, and with the small number of beacons (on the ground in the forest), it is difficult to gauge where the project area begins or ends.

²⁰ In addition, the !Xun and Hai||om at these resettlement projects received training in craft production; support for agricultural activities (equipment and other inputs); training in community organisation and local leadership; support for water infrastructure development; and food aid from the OPM's SDP.

the corner posts of the project area with four beacons. Nevertheless, the local headman continued to allocate fields within the project area to local (Kwanyama) farmers. Over the years the local !Xun and Hai||om have raised concerns about Kwanyama people gradually encroaching onto the land designated for the resettlement project, with little effect so far. (During our discussions at Ekoka, an example was cited of a Kwanyama family who did not want to vacate the land until the then Minister of Lands and Resettlement, Hifikepunye Pohamba, visited the area and instructed the family to move.)²¹ As the encroachment of non-San farmers onto San resettlement projects such as Ekoka has not been halted, this poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of these projects (Mouton 2011: 57).

San living in the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy – such as those in Oshikoha, Omauni, Okanyandi 1, Okanyandi 2 and Omandi villages – had occupation rights as they were registered members of the Community Forest and Conservancy and thus had identical rights to those held by other ethnic groups in the area. Due to the prevailing lack of agricultural equipment, San had not requested farmland for crop-farming purposes, but they did have access to other resources, such as firewood and veldfood, by virtue of the project by-laws.

All headmen noted (and San participants agreed) that San people could get access to farmland if they requested it. Most San had not requested such land from any village headmen because either they did not have the agricultural tools and cattle necessary to cultivate the land, or they lacked the motivation to cultivate. In addition, concerns were raised by the San that the “leftover” land in many villages was infertile, as all fertile land had already been allocated to Kwanyama farmers.

The chief or traditional authority (TA) of a traditional community has the primary power to allocate up to 20 ha of land under customary land rights, and this power can be delegated to village headmen in terms of customary law – although the local land board has to ratify such allocations. New occupants are often asked for a once-off payment for customary land rights, as well as a small amount every year, but requests for such payments are actually illegal under the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002 (LEAD (LAC) Advocacy Unit and Namibian National Farmers Union (NNFU) 2009: 20-23; 52-53).

Many San acknowledged and accepted that much of the land on which they had lived autonomously in the distant past is occupied by Kwanyama people today, thus this land appears to belong to the latter. For this reason, the San had lost all hope that the land would ever be theirs again.

7.4.3 Identity, culture and heritage

The majority of people in Ohangwena Region speak Oshikwanyama (followed by Oshindonga), and the San have adapted, with many speaking fluent Oshikwanyama today. Different authors refer to the different San languages spoken in Ohangwena in different ways:

- The National Planning Commission (NPC 2003b: 15) noted that the San languages in use there are !Xulu (also known as Oongongolo) and !Xun (commonly known as Kwagga).
- According to Ayisa et al. (2002: 9), the San around Okongo belong to !Xun-speaking San groups, namely the !Xulu (or Oongongolo in Oshikwanyama) and the Kum’ (read Kunm) (or Kwagga in Oshikwanyama), the !Xulu being the larger of these two sub-groups. However, whether the Kum’ (Kwagga) are speakers of !Xun rather than Hai||om is debatable.

²¹ The site to which this family was moved, though not close to the centre of the resettlement project where the family wanted to establish a new homestead and crop field, is still within the designated boundaries of the project.

- Gordon and Douglas (2000: 7) refer to the Hai||om in the north-central part of Ohangwena as Xwaga (which is probably the same as Kwagga). This categorisation was confirmed in small group discussions at Onamatadiva and Oshanashiwa, with participants referring to residents of the four resettlement projects as Hai||om (commonly referred to as Kwagga) and !Xun (commonly referred to as Oshingongolo) (Mouton 2011: 3).
- Pakleppa (2005: 8) noted that most San in the area are either !Xun or Hai||om speakers, the majority being !Xun.
- Nakale (2007: 7) backed up the latter findings. According to her, the Kwanyama around Okongo refer to San and to other people who speak 'a click language' as Ovakwanghala generally, and they refer to the Hai||om specifically as Ovaxwaga (Xwaga) and to the !Xun as Ovangongolo.

Except for the !Xun in Ouholamo, all discussion participants at the Ohangwena research sites spoke !Xun, and also referred to themselves as !Xun, which means 'human being'. The !Xun in Ouholamo confirmed that they were !Xun, but said that they spoke Nh!u Ntali.²² At Ekoka Resettlement Project, participants reported that some San residents spoke ǀAkhoe Hai||om. Apart from those in Ouholamo, most participants considered it important to teach their children !Xun for the sake of preserving the language. Older !Xun-speaking participants in the discussions mentioned that they sometimes found it difficult to follow the Kwanyama language.

Asked how they would like to be referred to as a people, participants at all six sites mentioned '!Xun', 'Kwangara' and 'Oongongolo' as appropriate terms. However, it was noted that although the term 'Kwangara' can mean 'people who speak a click language' (this was said in Ouholamo), it is normally interpreted as 'people who cannot save anything' (this was said at all six sites). Due to this derogatory interpretation, most participants at all six sites did not like the term 'Kwangara'.²³ However, Nakale (2007: 13) explains that originally this term did not necessarily have negative connotations.²⁴

Summary of the discussion on San identity at Ekoka Resettlement Project

The participants were divided with regard to what they would like to be called as a people. Some wanted to be called !Xun, and others did not mind being called 'Kwangara' – a term with possibly negative connotations – firstly because they knew that they were 'Kwangara', and secondly because the terms 'Kwanyama' and 'Oshilumbu' are used when referring to an Owambo and white person respectively, so referring to a San person as a 'Kwangara' should not be a problem. Those who did not like being called 'Kwangara' explained that this word can be interpreted as meaning 'those who cannot work or save' or 'lazy people'.

Most participants at the six sites did not like the term 'Bushman' either, because they no longer lived in the bush. They also did not use the word 'San' in referring to themselves, but the discussions did not clarify whether the latter term was liked, disliked or 'acceptable'.

²² Spelling possibly incorrect.

²³ Other translations of this term (mentioned in Chapter 8 on Omusati Region) include 'feckless', 'adrift', 'those who do not think of tomorrow', 'those who neither have nor own anything' and 'people who live in the bush'.

²⁴ Nakale (2007: 13) explains that the term 'Kwangara' (or 'Kwankala') stemmed from the word *Ovakwangala*, which in turn stemmed from the name of an animal that the San used to hunt: because the animal's name included a 'click', the Owambo people could not pronounce it correctly and thus changed it to 'Nghala', with the result that Owambo people initially referred to the San as 'Ovakwa-nghala' or 'Kwankala', which simply means 'those of Nghala' or 'those who hunt Nghala'. Further, Nakale explains that in other people's opinion, 'onghala' was a colour, i.e. light brown, thus to some people the term 'Ovakwangala' meant 'the light brown ones'.

Many of the cultural practices that are commonly regarded as part of San tradition were no longer practised in Ohangwena due to the San there becoming more and more accustomed to Kwanyama culture. A group of Ju|'hoansi from Tsumkwe had visited some resettlement projects in Okongo Constituency in 2011, where they performed traditional dances and other cultural practices which were totally unfamiliar to the Ohangwena San.²⁵ One cultural tradition that the Ohangwena San still practised and taught to their children was the gathering of veldfood. They no longer hunted because hunting is now illegal, but they did still teach the younger generations how to make hunting weapons (e.g. bows, arrows and knives).

All of the !Xun and Hai||om have Oshikwanyama names and surnames, or what is commonly referred to as 'baptised names'. These are the names written on their identification documents, and they do not use !Xun or Hai||om names and surnames any longer. We found a similar situation in Omusati Region where the San have been integrated into the Owambo culture to a large extent.

Table 7.7 shows that the main cultural characteristics of the San were similar across the six sites. The exception in this regard was housing: the San houses in Omukukutu village resembled those of the Kwanyama – including cultural seating places (e.g. *olupale*²⁶) within homesteads; and the San in Ouholamo neighbourhood and at Ekoka Resettlement Project had brick houses.

Table 7.7: Cultural characteristics of the San at the Ohangwena research sites

Cultural characteristic	Knowledge	Practised	Taught to children
Main language (except Ouholamo)	!Xun and Hai om	Yes	Yes
Hunting	Yes	Only some San in one village	No
Gathering veldfood	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dancing	No	No	No
Traditional house construction	Yes	Yes	Yes

7.4.4 Relations with other groups

The types of relationships between the Kwanyama (Ohangwena's majority population) and the San (!Xun and Hai||om) are wide-ranging: employer-employee, sexual and 'romantic' partners, spouses, fellow villagers, fellow *otombo* drinkers, fellow committee members, etc.

In the region's socio-political setup, relationships with Kwanyama people were essential for !Xun and Hai||om people; a matter of survival. This is because Kwanyama people provided piecework, food, transportation, communication, leadership, support for funerals and weddings, and assistance in times of crises. However, the !Xun and Hai||om were undoubtedly in a subordinate position at all levels. Many Kwanyama people treated !Xun and Hai||om people as one would treat children; as people who did not know much and/or could not take care of themselves. According to the !Xun and Hai||om themselves, they were looked upon as drunks, in constant need and dependent on the Kwanyama for their survival: they were usually talked *to*, not *with*. Discussion participants even indicated that they were sometimes treated like dogs: San participants in an informal discussion mentioned that Kwanyama people sometimes said to San people, "Voetsek you Kwangara!" (*voetsek* being an Afrikaans term meaning 'go away', or more crudely, 'get lost' – usually yelled at dogs).

²⁵ Personal communication from Mr Aromo and Ms Estella Levi, interviewed in their capacities as Oshanashiwa community mobilisers in October 2011.

²⁶ A traditional seating arrangement when visitors enter an Owambo homestead.

Unequal power relations were exacerbated by the fact that !Xun and Hai||om were living under the Kwanyama Traditional Authority (TA), with no TA of their own. They did not have political and traditional structures which they might have utilised to facilitate their development, thus they had to adhere to the structures of the Kwanyama communities in which they found themselves living. Even in cases where the San had a leader, a representative of the Kwanyama TA was normally selected to oversee the decisions made by the San leader. A situation that arose in Omiishi neighbourhood illustrates this: the !Xun headman and !Xun people were hesitant to meet with the research team until a representative of the Kwanyama TA gave them the go-ahead.

As mentioned in the section on livelihoods in this chapter, !Xun and Hai||om participants raised their concern that they were discriminated against in relation to job applications. Their chances of being employed when competing for a job against a Kwanyama person with the same skills were said to be zero, because in this region the Kwanyama tended to be the ones in charge of employing others. It was said that !Xun and Hai||om people had lost hope of finding full-time jobs. Some discussion participants indicated that the only way to escape this situation was for their children to complete secondary school successfully and to then study further.

'Romantic' and sexual relations between San and Kwanyama people were complicated. It was said that Kwanyama women would not have 'romantic' or sexual relations with !Xun and Hai||om men because the latter did not have "much to offer". Kwanyama men, on the other hand, seemed to engage in sexual relations with !Xun and Hai||om women, but tended not to marry them or form 'romantic' partnerships with them, mainly because in their view the women were "not equal to" the Kwanyama. Generally, Kwanyama men who impregnated a San woman would not accept the same paternal responsibilities as they did when they impregnated a Kwanyama woman: traditionally, a Kwanyama man who impregnated a Kwanyama woman out of wedlock had to make a financial contribution and take care of the child, but this did not happen when the pregnant woman was San, and in most cases continued financial support was out of the question. In nearly all cases of sexual encounters between Kwanyama men and !Xun or Hai||om women resulting in pregnancy, the child was left with the mother and her family, and the Kwanyama father would seldom contribute, if at all, to raising the child. Children born from such inter-ethnic sexual relationships were referred to as "San children" or "mixed children", but not as "Kwanyama children".

It was rare to hear of a marriage between a Kwanyama man and a San woman – the research team heard of only one, being the marriage of the Kwanyama headman of Onane village to a San woman – and a marriage between a Kwanyama woman and a San man was said to be 'unheard of'. Another San woman in Ohangwena was married to a Caprivian man, and this was the only other example of such a marriage cited in this region.

Another example of the unequal power relations and the level of poverty of the San in Ohangwena was the practice of fostering children: reportedly it was common practice across this region for !Xun and Hai||om children (with both parents being !Xun or Hai||om) to be taken away by Kwanyama families to be educated or to work for these families. Some !Xun families had given away one child, and others had given away as many as four children. The San parents hoped that the foster families would be able to provide better care for the children than they could provide. Examples were cited of children living with Kwanyama families who were well cared for and doing well in school, and who regularly visited their biological parents. However, many children who were given away had never been seen again. Parents who had not seen their children in a long time were uncertain of what procedures they could follow to find their children. None of these parents had reported their case to the police, because they had consented to their children being taken away in the first place, and/or they did not have resources to search for the children subsequently, and/or some of the

children had already reached adulthood. In connection with this fostering practice, Dirkx and Ayisa (2007: 22) noted that some of the affected !Xun and Hai||om parents suspected that families who took a !Xun or Hai||om child into foster care would purposefully register the child as an orphan or as a person whose father/mother was unknown so that the foster family could receive the state foster care or maintenance grant. (MLR officials whom we interviewed in Ohangwena also suspected this.)²⁷

7.4.5 Education

Of all the San adults who attended the discussions in five of the six sites, and their children, 43% had never attended school and 57% had attended school at some stage. This reflects a much worse situation than the regional statistics reflect, i.e 11% of all adults in Ohangwena had never attended any school but 70% had completed some form of education. What is also worrying is that the !Xun and Hai||om who attended school had dropped out prematurely. Of the discussion participants who had attended school, the majority (81%) had dropped out before completing primary school, and the remaining 19% had dropped out in Grade 8. It appears that most members of the younger generation of !Xun and Hai||om (those aged 28 years or younger) completed primary school and commenced with secondary school, but dropped out in Grade 8, whereas the older people had dropped out before reaching Grade 7. Table 7.8 summarises the school-attendance situation at each of the six research sites.

Table 7.8: School attendance by site

Level/ institution	Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	Ekoka Resettlement Project	Omukukutu village	Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Onane village	Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)
ECD centre	Most children	Most children	Not available	Not available	Not available	Some children
Primary or combined school	Most children attend but completion is rare	Most children attend but completion is rare	Most children attend but completion of primary school is rare	None	None except the children living with Kwanyama families	None
Secondary school	Very few children	Very few	Very few	None	None except the children living with Kwanyama families	None
Tertiary education	None	None	None	None	None	None

There are Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres at the Onamatadiva, Ekoka and Eendobe Resettlement Projects, and in the settlement of Omundaungilo and other main villages. Most ECD centres are community-driven, but those at the three San resettlement projects around Okongo and in Ouholamo were overseen by the AGDN with support from UNESCO – the latter initiated this support in 2004/05, with the Ohangwena Regional Council coordinating the support and the AGDN overseeing the day-to-day running of the centres. In 2007, AECID provided a grant through the DRFN for the installation of solar equipment, television sets and computers at the three ECD centres in villages around Okongo, and in 2009 and 2010 a temporary partnership was formed between UNESCO, the Ohangwena Regional Council, the OPM and the DRFN's LIPROSAN

²⁷ There is an urgent need for a study on the prevalence and consequences of this practice of fostering San children.



project to jointly render support to these centres and the centre in Ouholamo. This support covered allowances for caretakers, the costs of cleaning and basic maintenance, and a feeding scheme. In recent years, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) and the OPM (through an OPM staff member attached to the regional council) have formally taken over from UNESCO in supporting the ECD centres. These institutions pay the salaries of support staff, but there is an infrastructure-maintenance backlog at the centres in Ouholamo and the three San resettlement projects around Okongo, and the feeding scheme relies on food aid from the OPM's SDP. To address the maintenance backlog, in June 2013 UNESCO asked the DRFN to subcontract a builder to renovate the three ECD centres in the San resettlement projects.

As Table 7.8 indicates, apart from a few San children from Onane who were living with Kwanyama families, none of the San children at three of the research sites enrolled in primary school, whereas most children at the other three sites did enrol in primary school. Two of the sites where most !Xun and Hai||om children enrolled in primary school had an ECD centre, but on the other hand, many children had enrolled in primary school in Omukukutu which did not have an ECD centre, and no children had enrolled in primary school at Omiishi which did have an ECD centre. Very few San children at these sites completed their primary schooling, and even fewer proceeded to secondary school. Of the six sites, only Ouholamo (Eenhana) had a secondary school nearby, and even this school was a few kilometres away from the village. All San children attending secondary school (including those in Ouholamo) lived in hostels or with Kwanyama families – and reportedly none of them were required to pay school fees for secondary schooling, nor hostel fees. However, most of those who progressed to secondary school dropped out in the first or second year, and no San child had completed secondary school in the past few years.

Apart from a !Xun man who became a teacher at Ekoka, a female student at UNAM and a young man from Oshanashiwa Resettlement Project who obtained an administrative qualification at Valombola Vocational Training Centre in Ondangwa, none of the !Xun or Hai||om at the Ohangwena research sites had attended any tertiary education/training institution – the main reason being that none of them had successfully completed secondary school.

It appears that serious challenges will have to be addressed to keep San children in school, three of these being distances to schools, accommodation for learners and the costs of schooling. Most children of Ouholamo, Ekoka and Omukukutu went to primary school, and most of those who

progressed to secondary school lived with non-San families or in hostels rather than with their San parents. Several key respondents in our study deemed this a good ‘catch-all’ strategy for keeping children in secondary school, for three main reasons: (a) many San parents do not play an active role in their children’s education; (2) long distances to secondary schools would otherwise preclude San children’s attendance; and (3) since payment for secondary school was unaffordable for San parents, it was opportune that Kwanyama families with whom the San children resided paid the school fees for them. Those residing in hostels were either not required to pay hostel fees, or their fees were covered by the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Namibia (FAWENA) or the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Table 7.9 summarises key factors that influenced the education of San children at the six sites at the time of the field research.

Table 7.9: Factors influencing the education of San children at the Ohangwena research sites

Research site	Distance to primary school	School fees (de facto)	Reasons for dropping out	Importance of education to parents
Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	Less than 3 km	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late school entry • Teenage pregnancy and/or early marriage • Parents’ drinking habits • Bullying by some learners and teachers • Children or parents do not see the importance of education • Livestock herding and other work • Do not know 	Not important
Ekoka Resettlement Project	Less than 400 m	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying by some learners and teachers • Medium of instruction • Parents’ drinking habits • Lack of school materials 	Partially important
Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Around 7 km	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falling ill and not returning to school • Needing to support family with food collection, herding etc. • Teenage pregnancy • Distance to school • Children or parents do not see the importance of education • Do not know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not important because none of the children attended school. • Important because it enables one to get a job (e.g. as a nurse or teacher)
Onane village	Around 7 km	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance • Not knowing people close to the school who can care for the child 	Only important because Kwanyama said so
Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)	Within 200 m	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the children have started school 	Not important
Omukukutu village	Within 200 m	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage pregnancy and/or getting married at young age • Herding cattle • Late entry into Grade 1; age difference (older than classmates) • No money for school fees • Do not want to attend any longer • Lack a school uniform and/or shoes 	Important to some, but others disagreed

“It is important to know how to read and write so that when one sees a stop sign on the road, one would know to stop.”

– Discussion participant in Omukukutu village

Other operational challenges included the medium of instruction, a lack of study materials and/or a school uniform and/or shoes, and limited security at school hostels – the latter was cited at Ekoka Resettlement Project. For learners in primary schools, school fees were usually not requested from San learners/parents (also before January 2013 when the obligation to contribute to the School Development Fund was abolished in all public primary schools). However, other education-related costs, such as the costs of a uniform, shoes and books, still posed a financial challenge, if a lesser one than secondary schooling posed. Distance to school was considered to be a lesser challenge than those of teenage pregnancy, bullying by fellow learners and negative attitudes from teachers.

At Ekoka Resettlement Project, serious concerns were raised about the lack of security at the school hostel and the absence of a hostel matron. !Xun and Hai||om parents explained that certain males who frequented local shebeens would try to go to the hostel to have sex with the schoolgirls – mostly boys who no longer attended school, but allegedly some schoolboys residing in the hostel also visited shebeens. These males tended to disturb the hostel children even if they did not sexually harass girls there. Although teachers took care of the hostel during the day, there was no supervision at night. Given these complaints, the !Xun and Hai||om parents were of the opinion that there was an urgent need for improving security at the local hostel.

A lack of parental involvement also contributed to low levels of enrolment as well as learners' failure to progress in both primary and secondary school. In relation to the observed lack of progress of !Xun and Hai||om children in the education system, the following two questions are key:

- What is the role of San parents in the education of their children?
- To what extent is the current type of mainstream education relevant to the lives of !Xun and Hai||om children?

Since education was considered important, and was free of charge, and there were amenities close to some of the places where the !Xun and Hai||om lived, one might assume that the children at these places, at least, would attend school, but most did not attend even if these basic conditions were met. Participants in Onane village found it difficult to articulate the importance of formal education; they only said that, "Education is important because the Kwanyama said it is." Although !Xun parents in Omiishi did not send their children to school, discussion participants there did deem education important. Asked to articulate *why* they regarded education as important, participants only said that it was important for their children to go to school because they would get an education there. Thus, our discussions with !Xun and Hai||om parents generally proved that it was very difficult for them to explain why education was important for their children. Our discussions brought to the fore the following factors concerning parents' role in their children's education:

- Parents leave it to their children to decide whether or not to enrol and attend school.
- Most parents do not reprimand children when they fail to attend school.
- Most parents do not encourage children to stay in school.
- Most parents do not attend teacher-parent meetings.
- Many parents spend most of their time at *cuca* shops drinking *otombo*.
- Many parents take their school-age children to local *cuca* shops to drink *otombo*.
- Sometimes, parents would rather have their children do household chores than attend school.
- Parents do not encourage their children to do homework.
- Parents cannot afford to buy study materials for their children.
- There are very few role models of educated San for the !Xun and Hai||om youth.
- Most parents did not go to school, hence many do not make the connection between better education and good jobs, especially since few !Xun and Hai||om children in Ohangwena progress sufficiently far in the education system to obtain jobs after completing school – and if they do so, they might face prejudice or discrimination when applying for jobs.

Some of the factors listed above are related to traditional San socialisation practices. First of all, San in general strongly emphasise the importance of personal autonomy and free will, thus they would not apply disciplinary measures if children are reluctant to go to school (see Chapter 16 on education). Secondly, in the past, learning happened through practical experience and not in a formal classroom setting. Bothas and Longden shed more light on this issue:

“San children have only been able to access formal education during the last two decades and attending educational institutions is in general an enormous culture shock for many of them. San children are not used to formal classroom methods of schooling, rather, they are used to being fully integrated within all aspects of community life and are used to being regarded as equals to the adults.” (Bothas and Longden (no date): 1)

Furthermore, many discussion participants had not seen a San person formally employed, thus for them there was no clear link between education levels and employment opportunities. However, some parents at Ekoka Resettlement Project and in Omukukutu village – two of the three places where !Xun and Hai||om children were attending primary school – did link higher education levels with job opportunities. Table 7.10 shows that participants at the three sites where children were not enrolled in primary school could not make a connection between higher educational levels and jobs.

Table 7.10: Jobs that require a secondary school diploma – responses from San in Ohangwena
(The cell shading indicates that a secondary school diploma would be needed for the job.)

Jobs	Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	Ekoka Resettlement Project	Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Onane village	Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)	Omukukutu village
Government jobs						
Nurse						
Teacher						
Pilot						
Astronaut						
Soldier (NDF)						
Builder						
Farmer						
Office cleaner						
Shop/bar (cuca shop)						
Doctor						
Police officer						

It might also be assumed that the level of alcohol abuse in Ohangwena Region (see below) might have an impact on the involvement of parents in the school attendance of their children.

7.4.6 Health

Table 7.11 summarises the main health issues at each of the six Ohangwena research sites in respect of the main illnesses experienced by adults and children, access to health services, use of traditional medicine, delivery of babies, alcohol abuse, violence, and external support for healthcare.

Table 7.11: Summary of health issues at the Ohangwena research sites

Category	Ouholamo	Ekoka	Oshikoha	Onane	Omiishi	Omukukutu
Main diseases (according to participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • HIV/AIDS • STIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • HIV/AIDS • Malaria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • HIV/AIDS • Malaria • Polio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • HIV/AIDS • STIs • Malaria • Polio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • HIV/AIDS • STIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB • Leg pain • Swollen body
Main illnesses for children	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute respiratory infection • Diarrhoea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhoea • Malaria • <i>Oshido</i> (fever – see table next page) • Flu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhoea • Vomiting • Anaemia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coughing • Diarrhoea • Lack of immunisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye illness • Chicken pox • Pimples on body
Access to health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 2 km • Must pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 500m • No payment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 km • No payment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 km • No payment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 km • Must pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 km • Must pay
Ambulance/transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic nearby, but does not deal with emergencies. • No access to ambulance; lack means of transport to nearest district hospital 	Ambulance available, but lack opportunities for transport by ambulance to nearest district hospital when needed	No ambulance; lack means of transport to nearest health facility	No ambulance; lack means of transport to nearest health facility	Sometimes ambulance from Eenhana District Hospital	No ambulance; lack means of transport to nearest health facility
Traditional medicine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delivery of babies (births)	Mostly at clinic nearby	At home	At home	At home	At home	At home
Alcohol and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all drink <i>otombo</i> • Domestic and gender-based violence occur
Alcohol and children	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>	Children over breastfeeding age drink <i>otombo</i>
External health support	NRCS	NRCS	NRCS	None	NRCS	NRCS

Main illnesses

Most discussion participants at the Ohangwena sites, apart from Omiishi, could easily name and describe illnesses that commonly occurred in their communities. The situation in Omiishi differed in that the !Xun there received treatment at the Omundaungilo clinic, but were rarely told what they were suffering from; they were told only if the nurse considered the problem to be serious (e.g. if TB, malaria or high blood pressure was suspected/diagnosed, or if backache or leg ache was thought/found to be a symptom of a serious illness). At all six sites, the most common illnesses that participants regarded as serious and life-threatening were TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria and STIs.

Most participants could speak informatively about the causes, prevention and treatment of TB. One male !Xun participant mentioned that one of the main challenges in adhering to TB treatment was the drinking habit of !Xun patients: most of them would continue drinking despite being aware of the dangers of doing so while suffering from TB.

"I was treated for TB before and felt better within six months, and could start drinking *otombo* again."

– Discussion participant in Ouholamo (Eenhana)

HIV and AIDS were regarded as serious diseases because reportedly they had caused the deaths of many San in Ohangwena. Discussion participants at all six sites, as well as other stakeholders in our study, raised their concern that Kwanyama men were targeting San women for sexual relationships because of their belief that San women were not infected with HIV. Another concern raised at all six sites was that of San women being impregnated by Kwanyama men – which was evidence that unprotected sex had taken place. The discussion participants said that the current HIV-prevalence rate among the !Xun and Hai||om was low, but the prevalence rate among adult pregnant women at the Eenhana District Hospital was at a high of 18.6% in 2010 (Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) 2010a: 26). All told, it seems that the risk of Kwanyama men infecting San women, and San women in turn infecting San men, remains high. Furthermore, stigma and discrimination, inter-relationship violence and the isolation of certain San communities allegedly prevented many !Xun and Hai||om adults from going for HIV testing.

At four sites – Omiishi and Onane being the exceptions – most discussion participants knew how malaria is transmitted and how to prevent it. The !Xun in Omiishi said that malaria is caused by “having too much air in the stomach” or “[eating] bad food”; none of these participants connected malaria to mosquitoes. Female participants in Omiishi did not mention any symptoms, whereas male participants said that a person with malaria gets tired quickly, feels cold and has no energy. The participants in Onane also did not know how malaria is transmitted, but they did mention that the government had given one San woman a mosquito net to protect herself from infection.

STIs were mentioned by both male and female participants in Ouholamo, Onane and Omiishi, but not at the other three sites. Male participants in Ouholamo felt that STIs were more of a problem among women, and female participants felt that they were more of a problem among men. Women were concerned that men were reluctant to go for STI testing, and men were concerned that women slept around for money and got infected as a result.

Other illnesses that participants regarded as serious but not life-threatening, and illnesses that they did not regard as serious, are listed in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12: Status of illnesses based on participants’ opinions at the Ohangwena research sites

Illnesses that are serious but not life-threatening	Illnesses that are not serious but occur frequently
Coughing	<i>Oshidu</i> *
Chicken pox	Swollen feet, leg pain and other body aches
Eye sickness	Flu
Back and neck pain	
Below	

* This was described as 24-hour fever that occurred during winter, but it could also occur if a person ate undercooked food.

Main illnesses among children

According to discussion participants, the main illnesses experienced by children were coughing and diarrhoea. Coughing was said to be caused mainly by the constant inhalation of smoke when sitting around the fire, and also to some extent by inhaling smoke when parents smoked tobacco.

A nurse confirmed that Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) was common among !Xun and Hai||om children due to their constant exposure to smoke. Several mothers reported that some children fell ill during the period of breastfeeding, and some had even died of unknown causes during this period. Mothers also indicated that some children did not grow properly even if breastfed for six months. Some pregnant women reportedly got sores on their arms, but participants did not seem to know what this illness was and what caused it. Malnutrition was not mentioned as a concern, but we saw children with bloated stomachs in villages such as Onane, thus malnutrition among children might be quite common. Children tended to be taken to health facilities when they needed to be vaccinated, and almost all San children were said to have been vaccinated.

Pregnancy

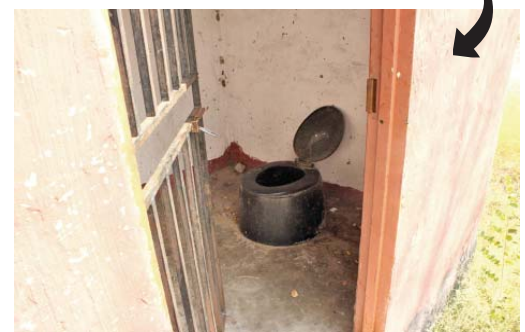
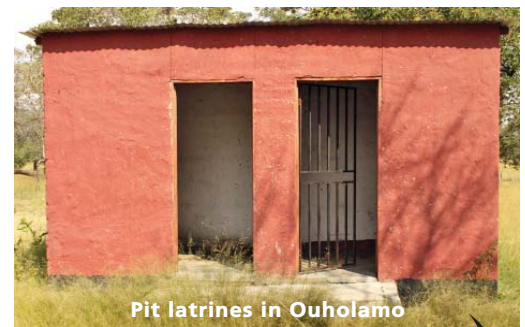
Pregnant San women usually gave birth at home. At remote research sites concerns were raised about the health of pregnant women as there were no healthcare specialists nearby to administer ante-natal checkups and post-natal and maternal care. At a couple of the more remote sites, there was a sense of hopelessness among !Xun and Hai||om women because they received attention only after giving birth, when the mobile clinic visited (once a month) or when the new mother was sufficiently strong to make the journey to the nearest health facility (and could afford to do so).

Sanitation facilities

The lack of sanitation facilities was a concern at all six sites, i.e. including Ouholamo and Ekoka Resettlement Project where there were pit latrines. Using the bush was regarded as unhygienic due to flies and limited options for handwashing. Some participants complained of a shortage of money to buy soap for personal use and washing clothes, and this was said to be a factor that contributed to poor hygiene and health.

Alcohol abuse and violence

As described in the section on food security, there was an exceptionally high rate of *otombo* consumption among adults as well as children at the Ohangwena research sites, and this had serious health and social consequences. Acts of physical violence between men and men and between men and women were regarded as a serious problem at all six sites, and at other sites visited in 2010 as part of the evaluation of a support programme targeting the San resettlement projects of Ekoka, Onamatadiva, Oshanashiwa and Eendobe.²⁸ Verbal and physical fights were associated mainly with alcohol abuse. The most common acts of violence included stabbing, axing, and shooting people with arrows. These types of fights were usually solved among community members themselves, as officials did not seem to be interested in addressing them. Allegedly the headman would tell those involved in quarrels to go home and sleep, and the police would tell the injured to go to hospital for treatment. Elderly villagers did not get involved in solving violent physical conflicts as they could be hurt in the process.



²⁸ The resettlement projects in Ohangwena were visited as part of an external evaluation of the DRFN's LIPROSAN project (Mouton 2011). Some of the evaluation findings were relevant to this San Study.

Discussion participants at various research sites considered domestic and gender-based violence to be a problem in their communities. In an all-female discussion in Ouholamo, gender-based violence was mentioned as a serious concern, but details were not forthcoming as the older women asked the younger women not to talk about the issue, and there seemed to be some fear about discussing it. In Omukukutu the research team had to stop the discussion about domestic violence as it provoked a heated exchange between a husband and wife. It was clear that violence is a common phenomenon in the !Xun and Hai||om communities in Ohangwena, and excessive alcohol consumption was one major contributing factor, but the degree of violence must be seen in a broader context, because in all likelihood, poverty, inequality, power dynamics and marginalisation also contribute to violent behaviour in these communities: where hopelessness and frustration are generated by these four factors and coincide with regular drinking, misunderstandings between people are common and anger and violence are the likely results.

Access to health facilities

As Table 7.11 shows, the distance of the research sites to health facilities varied considerably. Three sites, namely Ouholamo, Ekoka Resettlement Project and Omiishi, were within 2 km of the closest facility, whereas the other three were very far from the closest facility: Onane is 45 km from Okongo; Oshikoha is 55 km from Okongo; and Omukukutu is 60 km from Eenhana. These remote villages were supposed to be visited by mobile clinics on a monthly basis, but sometimes the visits were less frequent.²⁹

San at the latter sites would visit the mobile clinic but it was said that such clinics could only treat ailments such as headaches, backaches and infected wounds. Patients with more serious conditions were advised to visit (or were specifically referred to) the Okongo or Eenhana District Hospitals.

Due to the distances, transporting sick people was considered a major problem. Private or public transportation was often unavailable or was too costly for the San. Discussion participants in Ouholamo mentioned that they had had to carry a seriously sick person to the hospital 2 km away, and they alleged that three San residents of Ouholamo had died as a direct result of the lack of means of transport to clinics and hospitals. In addition, the walk from Ouholamo to Eenhana was said to be unsafe, especially at night.

"In some cases we get help from the people who live here and have cars. But sometimes when they do not help us, then we just use a donkey, and if we cannot get a donkey, we just watch the person die."

– Discussion participant in Omukukutu village

In Omiishi it was reported that the Eenhana District Hospital would sometimes send an ambulance to transport San people who were considered critically ill, but this was not the case at the other five sites. When San people in Onane got ill and needed medical attention, the patient was normally transported by donkey to the tar road in order to find a lift to the Okongo District Hospital. If the person was too weak to sit on a donkey, he/she was put on a makeshift bed and carried to the tar road this way. In other villages, such as Oshikoha (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy), the village headman was usually approached for support, and he often borrowed a vehicle to take a very sick person to Okongo.

²⁹ The discussion on public participation could not be held in Omiishi due to a recent death in the village.

Government policy is that public health services have to be accessible to all Namibians. At the time of our field research, the public health facilities in Ohangwena required payment, i.e. a fee of N\$4 fee at clinics and a fee of N\$9 at hospitals, but vulnerable people (e.g. OVC, pensioners and marginalised groups such as the San) were exempted from paying these fees. However, this policy was not uniformly implemented across all health facilities: at three of the six sites it was reported that health facilities exempted San people from paying, whereas at the other three sites it was said that San were required to pay, which was a problem for many of them. San people would normally borrow money from Kwanyama people when they desperately needed to visit the clinic and did not have the funds required.

Traditional medicine

Traditional medicine was used at all six sites. !Xun participants in Omiishi said that they would try to heal their ailments with traditional medicine before visiting the clinic – mainly because they did not have the N\$4 to pay for treatment. Traditional healers were not used because they also expected to be paid. Traditional medicines used by !Xun households are listed in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13: Traditional medicines used by !Xun households in Ohangwena Region

Ailment	Medicine	Preparation
Coughing	Tree bark (various trees)	The bark is boiled and the fluid is consumed.
Diarrhoea	<i>Eefila</i> roots	The tree roots are boiled and the fluid is consumed.
Stomach/digestive problems	<i>Eeshe</i> leaves	The leaves are boiled and the fluid is consumed.
Open wounds	<i>Omapupakeke</i> leaves	The leaves are pounded and applied to the wound.

External support for health

The only external support for San health in Ohangwena Region – apart from the public health services – was provided by the Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS), although it seems that many of the San were ignorant of the aims of the NRCS interventions. San discussion participants in Omiishi, for example, reported that the NRCS had asked many questions about TB, but never returned to the neighbourhood for follow-up purposes. In Ouholamo it was said that the NRCS stopped providing support to the !Xun because of !Xun people's reluctance to attend health meetings. At Ekoka Resettlement Project the NRCS had discontinued its TB Directly Observed Treatment Support (DOTS) due to funding shortages. The NRCS provided support to Omukukutu village and Omundaungilo settlement for treating water for domestic purposes, but San residents of Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo) preferred to drink untreated water because they were used to it.



Caring for the sick

As Table 7.14 on the next page reflects, at three of the six sites it was said that both men and women were responsible for caring for sick people, whereas at the other three sites this was said to be the responsibility of women mainly.

Table 7.14: Responsibility for the care of sick San at the Ohangwena research sites, by gender

Research site	Mostly women	Mostly men	Both women and men
Ouholamo (Eenhana)			
Ekoka Resettlement Project			
Oshikoha (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)			
Onane			
Omiishi (Omundaungilo)			
Omukukutu			

7.4.7 Gender

Most tasks at the Ohangwena research sites were gender-specific tasks, and some were carried out by both men and women – i.e. tasks usually carried out by women could be carried out by men, and vice versa, in the case of illness for example). Table 7.15 provides an overview of tasks by gender.

Table 7.15: Responsibility for household tasks at the Ohangwena research sites, by gender

Tasks of women	Tasks of men	Tasks of women and men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetching water • Cooking • Looking after children • Cleaning house • Washing clothes • Collecting firewood for cooking • Planting seeds and protecting crops • Piecework: domestic work; collecting thatching grass for house construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting firewood for the <i>olupale</i> (traditional seating place) • Herding livestock • Piecework: herding livestock; collecting poles for house construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting veldfood • Taking care of the sick (adults and children) • Harvesting • Piecework in crop fields

At all six sites, relative to the men, the women appeared to be somewhat reluctant to contribute to the research discussions. In the discussions at some sites, the women always sat on one side and the men on the other, and at some sites (e.g. Ouholamo) the group was always mixed. Remarkably, one female participant indicated that females preferred not to speak because they were “poor” – perhaps this should be interpreted as meaning that women ‘did not feel confident enough’ to speak due to being poor. Nevertheless, in some discussions at various sites, women participated more than their male counterparts.

Due to the limited degree of women’s participation in the discussions, a separate discussion about gender roles was convened with only women at one site (Ouholamo), but even then the women did not participate actively.

At five of the six sites, the !Xun and Hai||om inheritance practices prescribed an equal distribution of assets, thus the widow or widower inherited the household belongings needed to maintain the family lifestyle and livelihood activities after the spouse’s death. In some cases the deceased person’s relatives would also get some belongings; most would still be left with the spouse. The exception in this regard was Ouholamo, where participants said that most of the family belongings would go to the deceased husband’s relatives, and his widow would receive only a small portion – enough “just to get by”. The female participants in Ouholamo noted that they were unhappy with this inheritance practice, as they were normally left with very little to fend for themselves and their children. Several male participants at this site also disagreed with this practice. As one man put it, “The wife gets killed [not physically] by the family of the husband.”

Table 7.16: Inheritance at the Ohangwena research sites when a San spouse passes away*

Research site	Inheritance when husband passes away			Inheritance when wife passes away		
	Wife and children inherit	Husband's relatives claim inheritance	Wife and children and husbands' relatives share inheritance	Husband and children inherit	Wife's relatives benefit	Husband and children and wife's relatives benefit
Ouholamo (Eenhana)						
Ekoka Resettlement Project						
Oshikoha (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)						
Onane						
Omiishi (Omundaungilo)						
Omukukutu						

* The cell shading indicates that the inheritance practice applies at the applicable site.

7.4.8 Political participation and representation

Traditional authority structure

The San (!Xun and Hai||om) of Ohangwena Region did not have a traditional leadership structure of their own, thus land tenure and other customary affairs were governed by Kwanyama headmen. Three of the six research sites (Oshikoha, Onane and Omukukutu) did not have any San leaders, and the other three (Omiishi, Ekoka and Ouholamo) had San leaders who reported to Kwanyama headmen. The San in Omiishi and Ekoka had democratically elected the !Xun leaders, whereas the !Xun leader at Ouholamo was nominated by the Kwanyama village headman. San leaders in Ohangwena did not have the title of 'village headman', but served as leaders for the San of their respective communities under the jurisdiction of Kwanyama headmen. Their powers were limited as they were not involved in major decision making at village level; land provision, for example, remained the prerogative of the Kwanyama headmen. The !Xun and Hai||om of Ekoka Resettlement Project used to have their own headman, but he had limited power and some of the San did not respect him. In Omukukutu, one discussion participant claimed to be the San headman who had been elected by his people, but other participants indicated that they did not recognise him as their leader. Thus there seemed to be uncertainty about the !Xun leadership in this village, whereas all participants there were very certain about who the Kwanyama headman was. They also held that there cannot be a 'village within a village', meaning there could not be a !Xun leader when there was already a Kwanyama headman.

At most sites the Kwanyama traditional leadership structure allowed for community consultation and participation in decision making, however the !Xun usually felt excluded because even when they expressed their views, generally these were not taken into consideration. !Xun participants stated that they were given a platform to speak (i.e. community meetings), and the men tended to make their voices heard in these meetings, but their contributions were ignored, simply because they were !Xun.

Most of the !Xun and Hai||om would prefer to have their own headmen, but others felt comfortable being under the leadership of Kwanyama headmen because these leaders were perceived as having more resources with which to govern (e.g. means of transport, access to information and access to regional authorities), and most of them could read and write.

Most participants at all six sites were of the view that it would be difficult for a !Xun or Hai||om woman to become a leader of the applicable San communities – and interestingly, more women than men shared this sentiment. Only if a San headman had no son to succeed him might a !Xun or Hai||om woman serve as community leader.

Public participation and representation

According to discussion participants, public participation of San in decision making was weak at both local and regional level, and it was said that the !Xun and Hai||om of Ohangwena were not represented in any decision-making body at national level. Few !Xun and Hai||om were members of local committees such as village development committees (VDCs) and water point committees (WPCs), and although there were platforms for the !Xun and Hai||om to participate in decision making at local level, the !Xun and Hai||om at five of the six research sites stated that their inputs were rarely regarded as relevant or worthy. Public participation at each site is explored in more detail in the following subsections.

Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)

The !Xun at this site were sometimes invited to meetings of the Ohangwena Regional Council, where issues concerning the development of the San in Eenhana Constituency were discussed. !Xun representatives had also attended regional meetings called by NGOs such as the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA). Representatives who attended such meetings were usually nominated by officials of the regional council or regional offices of line ministries or NGOs, based on the active involvement of the !Xun in certain development activities – thus usually the !Xun had not elected their own representatives. Our research findings suggested that the !Xun tended to feel that they were merely informed about planned and upcoming developments, rather than being consulted about the desired approach to such developments. For example, discussion participants in Ouholamo claimed that the AGDN did not consult the community about the houses to be built there, but merely informed the community that houses would be built there. Ouholamo had no VDC, WPC, church committee, youth committee or any other committee.

Ekoka Resettlement Project

The government had consulted the San of Ekoka regularly, especially since the resettlement project's inception. Via the MLR Project Coordinator and NGOs which supported the community (e.g. the NRCS, AGDN and DRFN), the government had convened numerous consultations with the !Xun and Hai||om at Ekoka on a wide range of topics (e.g. food security, health, education, self-reliance, water, agriculture, income generation and public participation). These discussions were conducted in a participatory fashion, with the aim of facilitating community involvement in local development initiatives. The government usually consulted the !Xun and Hai||om at Ekoka via a separate project office within the MLR office in Okongo, which project beneficiaries, their representative at Ekoka and the general public in Okongo Constituency referred to as the "San Resettlement Office".³⁰

³⁰ The "San Resettlement Office" is a project office established by the MLR in Okongo, currently managed by the DRFN as part of the LIPROSAN project on behalf of the MLR.

The “San Resettlement Office” and its representative at Ekoka represented a unique avenue through which the !Xun and Hai||om could be actively involved in their own development, and outsiders also used this avenue to contact the San when necessary. This office gave the !Xun and Hai||om a ‘body’ that could help them to solve problems, and, to a lesser extent, a ‘platform’ where they could make their voices heard. The San at Ekoka also felt comfortable approaching the Okongo Constituency Councillor’s office for support; they said that the councillor’s door was always open for them.

However, the !Xun and Hai||om were not involved in making decisions about the allocation of land. Discussion participants complained about Kwanyama people settling within the San people’s designated resettlement farm area with the permission of the local headman, but not with the consent of the San. They said that the Kwanyama did not respect the boundaries of the resettlement farm, and just allowed new farmers to settle on San land – so by implication they felt that they were not respected by the Kwanyama farmers concerned.

The following committees were active in the village of Ekoka:

- Ekoka Farm Management and Development Committee (FMDC) – serving the resettlement project;
- Ekoka Water Point Committee (WPC) – serving the resettlement project;
- Ekoka Village Development Committee (VDC) – serving the whole village; and
- a church committee – serving the whole village.

The aim of the FMDC – in the past also called the “Resettlement Development Committee”, was to plan activities on behalf of the !Xun and Hai||om residents of the resettlement project, and mobilise community members for agricultural activities, income-generating projects, and maintenance of equipment and infrastructure. The FMDC consisted of three San women and one San man, all of whom had been elected by the !Xun and Hai||om residents. This committee was organised somewhat differently to those in the other three San resettlement projects, as the DRFN had decided to test a new approach in Ekoka Resettlement Project, whereby FMDC members would undertake specific roles and tasks allocated to them in return for a monthly stipend. The Ekoka FMDC met at least once a month for planning purposes, and also convened community meetings, but the community members’ attendance of these was not always good. Nevertheless, the results of this approach were somewhat more positive compared to those obtained by electing FMDC members who had to fulfil their roles and tasks on a voluntary basis. For example, the new approach resulted in a broader leadership base in the !Xun and Hai||om segment of the Ekoka village community. In comparison with the FMDCs in the other three resettlement projects, this approach also precipitated faster progress in the planning of community development initiatives, and more sharing of concerns between the !Xun and Hai||om community and the service providers (e.g. the DRFN and indirectly the MLR, as well as the Ekoka Constituency Office and the Ohangwena Regional Council).

Members of the Ekoka FMDC also represented the !Xun and Hai||om community in meetings at regional level, for example special meetings convened by the Ohangwena Regional Council and meetings of the LIPROSAN project, where representatives of the four San resettlement projects were expected to represent their respective communities. Participants in our research discussions at Ekoka said that their representatives’ opinions were regarded as essential in these meetings. This perception has been affirmed by the appointment of a !Xun representative of the Ekoka community to the LIPROSAN steering committee, and more recently by the invitation for two representatives of the Ekoka project community to represent all of the !Xun and Hai||om of Ohangwena Region on the Namibian San Council (see Chapter 3).

Only one !Xun person was part of the VDC. He felt that he had an equal opportunity to speak in meetings and that his opinion was taken into consideration. One San man served as a volunteer

borehole caretaker but was not a member of the WPC itself. The Kwanyama had a church committee but the !Xun and Hai||om were not part of this committee as they did not attend church.

"We would like to go to church, but we cannot read and we do not know how to sing Kwanyama songs."

– !Xun participant at Ekoka Resettlement Project

Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)

Regular consultations between the government and the !Xun used to occur at this site, but had stopped recently. (Actually, discussion participants said that they did not always know for certain who was consulting with them, but they indicated that there always seemed to be a link with the government.) Consultation usually focused on the needs of the !Xun residents, and many of their needs were provided for in past as a result of such discussions, but in the past few years, support had diminished considerably. There were three village committees, namely the VDC, the Okongo Community Forest Management Committee (CFMC) and the WPC, but the !Xun were represented only on the CFMC. !Xun people were invited to community meetings, and they attended these and participated in elections of committee members, but were not elected themselves. It was said that the Kwanyama discriminated against them. For example, the Forest Management Plan (FMP) specifically made provision for !Xun representation on all community fora, but a report published by the Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation (SIAPAC) in 2008 states the following:

"The integration of the San community in the forest management concentrated on the recognition of their traditional lifestyle, and to use their huge knowledge [sic] on natural resource management. However, after handover of the Community Forest project to the FMC, the only San representative resigned from the committee in early 2007 and was been [sic] replaced by another San representative. The San community felt that there was no need to sit on the committee, because their needs were not met." (SIAPAC 2008: 36)

At the time of our field research, there seemed to be another San member on the committee, but he did not want to be interviewed.

Onane village

Asked whether they were ever consulted by the government, the immediate response of the !Xun discussion participants in Onane was, "No, you [i.e. the research team] are the first ones we see here." Government representatives had apparently not visited the !Xun in Onane (a remote village) in a long time, with the exception of representatives of the councillor's office who delivered drought relief food. The participants indicated that they would really appreciate a visit from the government to give them an opportunity to voice their concerns and make requests for help. Recently some "other people" (whom the !Xun could not identify) had passed through the village "to register" the San, but the discussion participants did not know the purpose of this registration. (It is likely that these visitors were enumerators for the Namibia Population and Housing Census of 2011.) The !Xun of Onane also did not know who had drilled the borehole in their village. Likewise, none of them could identify their constituency councillor, and most of them could not identify the regional governor, nor his responsibilities or what they could expect of him. These participants also could not identify the OPM San Development Coordinator for Ohangwena – unlike most of the San at the other research sites, who were familiar with her. The !Xun in Onane were not represented on

the local VDC nor the WPC, and they were not active participants in the traditional court. Some !Xun attended community meetings, but very few participated actively in such meetings, thus the extent of !Xun inclusion in decision making was extremely limited. Kwanyama villagers (whom we interviewed separately) indicated that they were unsure why the !Xun did not participate actively, as they were afforded ample opportunity to do so.

Omukukutu village

According to the discussion participants at this site, the government had never consulted the !Xun residents of Omukukutu, but the NRCS had consulted them about its livelihoods development project (for details about this project, see section 7.4.10 on the impact of external support).

This NRCS project committee was composed of 15 men and women – seven Kwanyama and eight San (four men and four women) – and the chairperson was Kwanyama. According to the discussion participants, the Kwanyama had gradually taken over the project, with the result that the !Xun had very little involvement. Participants indicated that they had very little say in decision making, and that the project was currently benefiting the Kwanyama primarily, rather than the !Xun.

The village did not have a VDC and there were no !Xun members of the WPC.

Decision-making processes in the village were led by the Kwanyama headman, his deputy and his advisors. There were no !Xun people advising the headman, thus no !Xun participated in decision making; they only voiced their opinions in community meetings. Male and female !Xun felt that they were free to speak in community meetings, and their ideas were sometimes implemented and sometimes not.

Omiishi neighbourhood (Omundaungilo)

An in-depth discussion on political participation and representation could not be held at this site due to the death of a community member.

7.4.9 Changes over time and visions for the future

Changes over time

Changes in quality of life over time were perceived to be similar at three of the five sites and slightly different at the other two – it was not possible to discuss this issue at Omiishi due to the death of a community member. Most discussion participants at the five sites said that their overall quality of life before Independence was worse than after Independence, chiefly because of the various restrictions placed on people during the war between the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the South African Defence Force (SADF).

The !Xun in Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy) disagreed with the above, because the SADF provided them with food, clothing and “many other things” during the war. At Ekoka Resettlement Project, life before Independence was also regarded as good, because of the support from the Finnish missionaries, who provided food, clothing, blankets and education. The time before the Finnish missionaries' arrival was “not so good” because of the nomadic lifestyle of the San at that time, and the fact that !Xun and Hai||om lived in *omapundo* houses at that time, which they did not like very much. Participants indicated that life improved with the arrival of the Finnish missionaries, but that eventually the war had negatively affected their quality of life.

"In the past we spent the entire day in the veld looking for food, the sun burned us, the lions chased and ate us, and we were bitten by snakes. It is now better, since we no longer need to move around for food so much."

– Discussion participant at Ekoka Resettlement Project

Participants at the other sites generally felt that life was much better after Independence, although it was noted that veldfood was no longer abundant because many people had moved into these areas since Independence, and this had contributed to an ongoing depletion of both flora and fauna. Those who felt that life improved after Independence said that this was due to more opportunities arising after the war, which in turn were due to there being more schools, improved access to schools and other institutions, more agricultural support services, and support for food security in the form of food aid and drought relief – all of which made life somewhat easier for the San.

Interestingly, participants at three of the five sites (Ekoka, Onane and Oshikoha) noted that their quality of life in 2012 was equal to, or even better than, their quality of life just after Independence. According to them, external support was the essential element that changed their quality of life over time. Participants directly associated the livelihood support provided to their communities (e.g. by the DRFN's LIPROSAN project) with improvements in their quality of life. Such support had not in fact been provided in Onane and Oshikoha, but still participants at these sites regarded life in 2012 as "good". The !Xun in Oshikoha noted that the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy had improved the availability and condition of many natural resources, although restrictive by-laws prohibited the !Xun from benefiting from the increased availability of some of these resources (e.g. they were no longer allowed to hunt). In Ouholamo and Omukukutu, on the other hand, the quality of life in 2012 was said to be "bad", because all external support had come to an end – and allegedly the NRCS project had not benefited the !Xun in Omukukutu.



A closed water well in Omundaungilo. San living in Omiishi use this well only for washing clothes.

Across the board, discussion participants stated that *otombo* drinking is much more common now than in the past. One participant said, “After the war we started to see *otombo* in Okongo. We now drink more *otombo* than in the past, because it is readily available everywhere.” (The consequences of increased alcohol abuse among the San in Ohangwena have been discussed in the sections on food security and health.)

Visions for the future

As was the case in other regions covered in this study, envisioning the future appeared to be a relatively difficult exercise for the San in Ohangwena. As one !Xun participant put it, “How can we talk about the future if we have not been there?” The participants at three of the five sites (Ouholamo, Onane and Omukukutu) did not have any hope that their quality of life would change for the better in the future, whereas those in Oshikoha had little hope of change for the better, and those at Ekoka Resettlement Project seemed to be very optimistic about the future. It is noteworthy that in two villages where there was either little or no hope of change for the better, namely Oshikoha and Onane, the children were not attending school. Most participants at all five sites felt that without external support from the government or appropriate NGOs, their situation would remain the same. The external support sought was agricultural equipment mainly, followed by improved access to services such as schools and clinics. Asked what contribution might be expected from the !Xun and Hai||om, all claimed that they would work hard to improve their lives. Many participants stated that they wanted their children to become nurses, teachers or councillors.

Table 7.17: Summary of San people’s visions for the future, by research site in Ohangwena

Research site	Extent of hope	Expectation of change	External support needed	Internal contribution	Children’s future jobs
Ouholamo neighbourhood (Eenhana)	No hope	Will remain the same without external support	Agricultural equipment	Will work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse • Teacher • Councillor
Ekoka Resettlement Project	Very optimistic	Will be better	Advice and technical support	Will work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse • Teacher • Councillor “and more”
Oshikoha village (Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy)	Little hope	Will remain the same without external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Clinic 	Did not say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse • Teacher
Onane village	No hope	Will remain the same without external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural equipment • Primary school 	Will work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse • Teacher
Omukukutu village	No hope	Will remain the same without external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural equipment • Better soil • Advice on how to save 	Will work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything they want

The participants in Onane felt that their lives would remain the same unless external support for cultivating crop fields was provided. Those in Ouholamo and Omukukutu were similarly pessimistic – one comment being, “I would give the future in Ouholamo 0, 0, 0 sticks.” In Omukukutu only three participants felt that life might get better, but only if their children completed secondary school. In Oshikoha participants set great store in their children, hoping that they would complete secondary school, find good jobs and then provide support for their parents. Female participants in Oshikoha were more concerned about their children’s education, whereas males seemed to be

more concerned about the availability of food for the family. Ultimately in Oshikoha, participants reached agreement that a primary school and a clinic were the most-needed forms of support.

Ekoka Resettlement Project was the exception with regard to the future.³¹ The participants there were very optimistic, for three reasons:

- More San were now expected to learn how to read and write.
- More San had learned how to save some money and how to look after their belongings and resources.
- They would work hard in order to change their lives for the better.

Interestingly, most participants at this site did not ask for more external support to improve their lives, but rather focused on what they could do for themselves. External support was already being rendered in the form of community mobilisation and some technical support for income-generating activities (e.g. craftmaking) and agricultural development. This included advice on how to save money and how to improve the community's quality of life. Participants stated that they aimed to become self-sustainable rather than continue depending on external support. Most participants also confirmed that they would prefer to stay at Ekoka for the foreseeable future. They wanted to work the land, but were also seeking employment opportunities for their young people. This attitude differed greatly to those at the other sites, where most participants felt that nothing would change for the better unless additional external support was forthcoming. At Ekoka, participants focused more on what they could do themselves to improve their standard of living, although admittedly the !Xun and Hai||om at Ekoka had already received a fair amount of livelihood support over the preceding six years. It is worth considering whether this is the very reason for the more positive attitude at Ekoka. Indeed the community-mobilisation efforts there seemed to have paid off to a considerable degree.



Pipe smoking is one of the few 'pleasures' of life for some San. The pipe is normally shared with others.

³¹ Many San at the site decided not to attend the research meeting, and they may have had different views.

7.4.10 Impact of external support

Different stakeholders provided different forms of support to the San in Ohangwena Region, with the main aim of alleviating poverty and enhancing the social, economic, health, environmental and participation status of the San. Table 7.18 details some of the main support mechanisms in place for the San of this region. This section on the impact of external support focuses on three of the main projects, with the aim of drawing conclusions about successes and failures, and with the goal of establishing what makes a project for San effective and what fails to do so.

Table 7.18: External support for the San in Ohangwena Region – some of the main projects

Sites	External support	Partners	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onamatadiva Resettlement Project Oshanashiwa Resettlement Project Eendobe Resettlement Project Ekoka Resettlement Project 	Livelihood Support Programme for the Ohangwena San Resettlement Projects (LIPROSAN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Custodian:</i> Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) <i>Donors:</i> Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and MLR <i>Implementer:</i> Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MLR/AECID: April 2007 – March 2009 DRFN: April 2009 – June 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omukukutu Epembe Ohakafiya Oonduda 	Livelihoods development project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Donor:</i> AECID <i>Implementers:</i> Spanish and Namibia Red Cross Societies (SRCS/NRCS) 	2006-2011
Ouholamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Rural water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Donor:</i> UNESCO <i>Implementer:</i> Acacia Grassroots Development Network (AGDN) 	2006-2007
Omundaungilo	Water decontamination tablets	<i>Implementer:</i> NRCS	Continuous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oshikoha Omauni Okanyandi 1 Omandi 	Okongo Community Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Donor:</i> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) <i>Implementer:</i> Directorate of Forestry (Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry) 	1998-2006
Onane	None	None	None
Wherever San in Ohangwena Region live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home-based care (TB, malaria, HIV/AIDS) Food aid Drought relief food School uniforms Blankets, clothes, cutlery Rural water supply Sanitation ECD centres Hostels Healthcare 	Ohangwena Regional Council with support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Continuous. Apart from drought relief, most of this support commenced in or after 2009.

LIPROSAN at four resettlement projects

The Livelihood Support Programme for the Ohangwena San Resettlement Projects (LIPROSAN), co-funded by AECID and the MLR, has had three implementation phases: in 2007-08 the project was implemented directly by a project manager who reported to the MLR; in the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years it was implemented by the DRFN; and in the period April 2011 to June 2013 the MLR continued as sole sponsor with the DRFN as implementing agency. Compared with other support programmes in San communities in Ohangwena, LIPROSAN has made relatively large strides throughout the implementation period.

“The overall objective of the programme was therefore to sustainably enhance the livelihoods in the four resettlement projects. The specific programme purpose was to empower the community members to more effectively mitigate influences that bring them into poverty. LIPROSAN is based on the philosophy of the Resettlement Policy that, ‘resettlement does not only mean providing people with land, housing, infrastructure, knowledge and skills to maintain and develop their new environment and entitlements, but it also means establishing an innovative attitude, in which the spirit of self-reliance is the underlying principle on which development is to be built by the government or the peoples themselves.’” (MLR 2001a: 2)

To achieve the objective cited above, the project aimed for two main outcomes (Mouton 2011: 4):

- 1) **Improved food security**, to be achieved by:
 - a) enhancing crop production in the San’s own fields and gardens;
 - b) improving water infrastructure and water management;
 - c) animal husbandry (including poultry); and
 - d) craft production and marketing.
- 2) **Improved standard of living**, to be achieved by:
 - a) improving life skills and social organisation;
 - b) improving the interface with service providers; and
 - c) improving the health and standard of living of beneficiaries.

Based on an evaluation of LIPROSAN in 2011, participants in the evaluation felt that their food security and standard of living had improved because:

- they now ate two meals a day on average;
- their young children attended pre-primary school, and some of their children attended primary and secondary school, with some residing in school hostels;
- most TB patients were on treatment;
- they owned their own land, including grazing, agricultural fields and gardens;
- they owned their own houses;
- they owned livestock; and
- they knew how to cultivate their crop fields and gardens.

Some of the main factors that contributed to LIPROSAN achieving some of its aims were:

- the ongoing commitment of the project custodian, donors and implementer to continuing their technical and financial support;
- these partners’ presence on the ground to mobilise community members for project activities;
- the partners’ shared understanding that development of marginalised communities takes a long time, and that such communities require long-term support to attain self-reliance;
- the flexibility to provide support in accordance with beneficiaries’ needs and at the pace of the beneficiaries – rather than in accordance with what outsiders believe is appropriate for San people in terms of the forms of support and pace of development;
- moving away from communal management of gardens and fields to individual or household management of gardens and fields;
- the project’s ability to concentrate on what beneficiaries considered important, and its flexibility to shift some activities to a time when the community was ready to implement them; and
- the involvement of the community in the design, planning and implementation of the project.

Some of the main factors that contributed to LIPROSAN failing to achieve all of its aims were:

- the entrenched marginalisation of community members and extremely low levels of self-esteem – the reversal of which requires more time and special initiatives;
- the entrenched dependency of many San in the beneficiary communities on external support – as opposed to taking responsibility for their own development more actively;

- San people's constant need to engage in *otombo* drinking instead of productive activities;
- a lack of coordination between different stakeholders promoting the aim of San self-reliance (as opposed to dependency);
- a lack of knowledge of proper community development strategies on the part of some project coordinators employed by the MLR;
- a lack of in-depth understanding on the part of many stakeholders of how to organise development-oriented support for and with the San;
- the unwillingness of some San people to participate and learn;
- San people's constant need to work for non-San neighbours for immediate returns instead of working in their own fields;
- the (initial) allocation of communal plots for gardening and crop farming; and
- limited protection of the boundaries of San resettlement projects, enabling people of other ethnic groups to encroach on the project land.

In sum, LIPROSAN was well designed and well planned, but its implementation was challenged primarily by a limited degree of coordination with other major stakeholders. Not all of the major stakeholders supported the San in a manner that promoted their empowerment and self-reliance. LIPROSAN's progress was also affected by the allocation of valuable staff time to support services that were expected to be carried out through the "San Resettlement Office" (i.e. the project office set up within the MLR office in Okongo) by both the San beneficiaries and stakeholders in the constituency – including arranging funerals, bringing sick and dead people to the hospital, and tasks for which other government agencies are responsible, such helping San individuals to obtain relevant documentation). Such activities also tended to demoralise the project staff, contributing to a high staff turnover. In addition, LIPROSAN primarily sought to change the livelihood attitudes, behaviours and actions of the San, but such an endeavour cannot be achieved in only six years.

Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy

The Okongo Community Forest – commonly referred to as the "Omauni Community Forest" – resorts under the Directorate of Forestry (DoF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF). Initially, in 2002, it was gazetted as a Community Forest only, and in 2009 it was gazetted as the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy.³² Technical and financial support was provided by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) for the implementation of forest development activities over a period of eight years, i.e. 1998-2006. This entity was established with the overall goal of improving the living standards of the participating communities while sustainably managing natural forest resources with the beneficiaries' full participation. Kwanyama and San living in the area constituted the target population. The main aims were:

- 1) to secure tenure and user rights for the beneficiaries of the Okongo Community Forest;
- 2) to develop a Forest Management Plan for the Okongo Community Forest in cooperation with the Okongo community;
- 3) to enhance the community's capacity to implement and evaluate the Forest Management Plan;
- 4) to improve and institutionalise the participation and resource management capacities of marginalised groups in the Okongo Community Forest;
- 5) to establish efficient management systems for this community forest; and
- 6) to document experiences and disseminate this documentation to support sustainable management of other indigenous forests.

³² The transition to conservancy status was achieved through support from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Support Organisations (NACSO).

San participation proved to be a challenge from the start to the end of the project implementation. However, the final evaluation of this project found that the San beneficiaries had been “excluded from the Community Forest Project’s decision making, implementation and monitoring and evaluation” (SIAPAC 2008: 47). The evaluation also found that the San’s participation in project activities was largely restricted to piecework: cleaning the central yard of the forest, collecting firewood and watering trees. They were paid for their services, but the payment was provided in a piecemeal fashion. The Forest Management Committee comprised mainly Kwanyama people, and its members did not have the skills and experience required to engage the San in a more meaningful way, while the San seemed happy to merely make some money by providing labour only. The San did engage – to a limited extent – in some of the income-generating activities such as arts and crafts, rearing guinea fowl, beekeeping, collecting thatching grass and wood, operating the hammer mill, harvesting veldfood, and working in the carpentry section and the campsite. The project constructed two brick houses for the San living in Omauni at the time. However, the San used these houses for purposes other than accommodation, and hence opted to sleep outside the houses.

For the San, the major benefit of the forestry project was increased access to veldfood and other natural resources. However, the research team found that the San community was not happy with the project on the whole because various laws and by-laws inhibited their livelihood strategies. For example, hunting was not allowed, and the by-laws prohibiting the cutting of trees restricted the San’s ability to access food such as honey, and limited their opportunities to build new houses or to renovate existing ones. Discussion participants said that they could not even kill a snake, or cut down a tree in which a snake lived, to protect themselves. Nevertheless, the !Xun said that they were happy that there was now more veldfood available, and they acknowledged that this was a direct result of the forestry by-laws.

The project evaluation report also stated the following: “No support has been provided to the San, since the completion of the pilot measure in 2006. Contributing factors lie within the management style of the FMC, a lack of willingness among the San community to participate, and the general cultural settings in which the San live.” (SIAPAC 2008: 42)



One of the two brick houses built by the Okongo Community Forest for the San in Omauni (Source: SIAPAC 2008)

Projects that do not cater specifically for San (i.e. those designed to benefit all residents of an area regardless of ethnic group) should strive for a better understanding of San culture so as to improve their participation, but also to mitigate the potentially negative impacts of such projects on the San, and to ensure that the positive impacts are shared by the San and the non-San alike. Concerted and strategic efforts are required to ensure effective participation of the San, with local, regional and national institutional mechanisms strengthened to ensure continued effective involvement of the San together with other residents.

Namibia Red Cross Society livelihood support project

The goal of the NRCS livelihood support project was to promote poverty alleviation and economic self-sufficiency within the populations affected by HIV/AIDS and other health and social problems in Caprivi and Ohangwena Regions. The participating communities in Ohangwena were those of Omukukutu, Epembe, Ohakafiya and Oonduda. Although the project faced several challenges, it did reap successes. Following is an overview of the shortcomings described in the final evaluation report (Mouton 2009: 57, 72):

- The design of the IGAs did not allow for sufficient production of food or income to be made from livestock or crop farming.
- The project timeframe did not initially fit well with the agricultural season.
- Goat-farming activities were time consuming, with very little in the way of returns or benefits in the short term.
- Social issues such as relations between members of the various project associations³³ were not always conducive to the communal maintenance of livestock (in this case goats). An example was given of a chairperson who dismissed association members and replaced them with family members.
- There was a lack of ownership of the process due to a lack of community participation at the start of the project.
- Some association members did not understand the concept of a revolving fund.
- Unexpected events (e.g. the theft of goats, and natural disasters such as floods or excessive rains) influenced community members' willingness to continue undertaking project-related activities.
- There was a lack of proper monitoring by project implementers, and there were misunderstandings between implementers and beneficiaries.
- All association members had their own fields, and these were very likely to take precedence over the association's communal field in terms of labour allocation.
- Some of the San lacked commitment to participating actively in agricultural activities.
- Ownership of the project was lacking in the San community as a whole.
- Kwanyama members of the project associations lacked willingness to allow San members to take ownership of the project.
- There was a lack of proper mechanisms for food distribution to association members, especially San members.
- Inappropriate types of seeds were distributed, and there were irregularities in distribution.
- There were misunderstandings between the San and the Kwanyama.
- The Epembe village headman did not allocate land in time, and he expected payment for the allocation of land.

As was the case with the Okongo Community Forest and Conservancy, the lack of an in-depth understanding of the San, and of any acknowledgement of how this lack might contribute to the

³³ Community members interested in participating in the project formed associations that were responsible for making decisions about the project design and implementation.

San's unwillingness to participate, were overarching factors that compromised the project's success. The project design was such that Kwanyama beneficiaries transferred skills to San beneficiaries, but the project environment was such that the San were not necessarily regarded as equal partners in development; in effect the San were instructed, not capacitated. This resulted in the Kwanyama "taking over" the project, and San slowly pulling out. The report on an intermediate evaluation of this project in Caprivi and Ohangwena states the following (Mouton 2009: 87): "Taking the above-mentioned issues with regards to the San into consideration, generally, the project could potentially be regarded as an appropriate response to their identified needs, however at an extremely small scale resulting in very little positive impacts on food security."

7.5 Regional conclusions and recommendations

7.5.1 Conclusions

Livelihood strategies

Ohangwena Region is the second poorest region in Namibia after Kavango Region, and the !Xun and Hai||om people in Ohangwena are considered to be the poorest of all of this region's ethnic groups. It should be acknowledged that there are poor and very poor Kwanyama too, but the !Xun and Hai||om as a group are the very poorest and the most vulnerable to social and economic shocks. They find themselves in this position because their traditional way of life is no longer feasible, and has not been replaced by other viable livelihood strategies. Due to weak leadership and weak institutions, the !Xun and Hai||om have lost both control over and access to productive land. The loss of control over land is compounded by their limited degree of formal education. Consequently the !Xun and Hai||om lack formal and informal employment opportunities as well as diversified livelihood strategies. This lack is exacerbated by very limited degrees of political representation at local, regional and national levels. This combination of factors has had repercussions in the form of discrimination against the !Xun and Hai||om by the main ethnic group in the region, and the consequent subordinate position of San in society.

Food security

Food insecurity is brought about by numerous challenges to certain livelihood strategies. Most San households in Ohangwena were food insecure (and possibly nutritionally deprived) because of limited food and limited access to different types of food on a daily basis. *Otombo* drinking – whether or not this alcoholic beverage is regarded as a substitute for food or a food in itself – affects whole communities with detrimental results. Participants reported that almost all people (men, women and children) drank *otombo* on a daily basis. This alcohol consumption had serious negative psychological, physiological, social and economic consequences at all six research sites. Without doubt, if this issue is not dealt with in a comprehensive manner, it will perpetuate the poverty of the San in Ohangwena.

Land issues

The land currently inhabited by Kwanyama people in Ohangwena was originally inhabited by the San, but currently none of the San have formal land rights in this region. In theory, all San people had access to land for crop production, livestock farming and the construction of homesteads in Ohangwena, but very few San households had applied for, or had claimed, customary land rights,

because of a shortage of agricultural inputs and assets, but also because they were not aware of their land rights in the first place.

Many of the San in Ohangwena live in resettlement projects or centres which are part of the MLR's National Resettlement Programme (NRP). However, San were often resettled without taking into consideration their views and opinions (Burford et al. 2009: xii). The San on resettlement farms did have a sense of ownership over the land on which they now lived, with all saying that the land comprising the resettlement farms belonged to them because it was given to them by the Namibian Government. Nevertheless, none of the households on these resettlement farms had any documentation confirming that the land belonged to them as a community. Land belonging to San in resettlement projects therefore needs to be officially registered to the San, as concerns were raised about Kwanyama moving onto the farms, in some cases with permission from local headmen, but not with the San's consent.

Wellbeing of the !Xun and Hai||om

Most of the !Xun and Hai||om households who participated in the study regarded themselves as poor or very poor, mainly because they did not have land or agricultural equipment to cultivate crop fields; owned hardly any livestock; had limited or no formal education; had hardly any formal employment opportunities; could access only small pensions; and/or owned nothing more than a few household items. Consequently the !Xun and Hai||om generally perceived themselves as being worse off than their Kwanyama neighbours, which in turn resulted in a low level of self-confidence. Any improvement in the standard of living – specifically from being poor to better off – was possible only when an elderly person turned 60 and started receiving the Old Age Pension, or when a San person married a Kwanyama person, or when San children had an opportunity to obtain a better education and hence access to better jobs.

Education

Uniquely in terms of this study on the San in Namibia, the majority of !Xun and Hai||om children in Ohangwena did not attend primary school; only a small number enrolled in primary school – and generally this was at sites where ECD centres had been established. Very few !Xun or Hai||om progressed to secondary school, and if they did, many dropped out before or in Grade 8. Similarly, very few San youth managed to enrol in, and complete, any form of tertiary education.

Health

The most serious illnesses experienced at the six research sites were TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS, and the main illnesses among children were diarrhoea and coughing. Malnutrition among children was not mentioned as a concern, although the researchers' observation of children with bloated stomachs at some of the sites is an indication that children at those sites were in all likelihood malnourished. Almost all San children at all six sites had been vaccinated. The regular or daily consumption of *otombo* by adults is a serious issue, and the fact that *otombo* was also commonly drunk by children is a matter of grave concern because it could well influence their overall social and physical development.

At three of the six sites, the long distance to health facilities was a significant problem for the San. There was no ambulance service available to people at these sites at any time, and they lacked means of transport to get seriously ill people to a health facility. Only two of the three sites which were close to a health facility had access to an ambulance service – but not always.

Language and Identity

Most San in Ohangwena spoke !Xun. Most participants (except for some at Ouholamo) regarded their mother tongue as important even though they spoke Oshikwanyama as well. All children could speak their respective San languages. Most of the !Xun and Hai||om perceive the terms 'Bushman' and 'Kwangara' as having negative connotations. The integration of the !Xun and Hai||om into Owambo (in this case Kwanyama) society as an underclass continues to diminish the cultural practices of these San groups, and consequently a lack of sharing of traditional San knowledge with the younger generation. In certain communities this integration also means that San languages are used with decreasing frequency by the youth as they tend more and more to speak Oshikwanyama.

Relationships with other groups

The relationships between the Kwanyama and the !Xun and Hai||om is based on an unequal distribution of power; the San basically constitute an underclass in Ohangwena. The !Xun and Hai||om are regarded as inferior (as in the past), and are viewed as people to be used as labourers or as people who cannot work for themselves and who cannot take care of themselves. They are generally regarded as a people with little knowledge who are always in need of external support, and they are not regarded as equal partners in the development of their communities. These are all issues of long standing.

Sexual relations between !Xun and Hai||om women and Kwanyama men did take place, but the Kwanyama frowned upon a formal marriage or consensual union between the two ethnic groups. Kwanyama men who impregnated San women normally did not provide any form of support to the mother and child – in contrast to the Kwanyama tradition between two people of that ethnic group. Children born from inter-ethnic relationships were generally referred to as San and were not considered to be Kwanyama at all.

Political participation and representation

Traditional authority

All !Xun and Hai||om in Ohangwena fall under the jurisdiction of the Kwanyama TA. None of the !Xun and Hai||om communities at any of the six sites had their own TA. Some !Xun had been appointed as leaders of their !Xun community, but still they reported to a Kwanyama headman. The few who had been appointed as San headmen found it difficult to 'rule' as the Kwanyama had little respect for them, and sometimes even their fellow San did not respect them. As such, these San leaders had little influence within the overall TA system.

Public participation is extremely weak as the !Xun and Hai||om are rarely represented in institutions that constitute local, regional and national platforms. Management bodies established in the San resettlement projects around Okongo had received extensive support and training from the DRFN, but remained relatively weak – partially, it appears, due to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining suitably qualified technical advisors with the necessary expertise in Ohangwena. Somewhat more positive results were obtained by electing three or four representatives from the !Xun and Hai||om community at Ekoka Resettlement Project, who were given specific tasks and roles to perform in return for a monthly stipend. This resulted in a broader leadership base in the !Xun and Hai||om segment of the Ekoka community, and in improvements in the planning of communal development initiatives and the sharing of concerns by the !Xun and Hai||om.

However, aside from these positive developments at Ekoka, a limited degree of collective social standing and a lack of self-esteem on the part of San individuals had resulted in a limited degree of representation of the !Xun and Hai||om, and a lack of active !Xun and Hai||om participation in decision-making processes. Not only did underpin the prevailing unequal power dynamics between the !Xun and Hai||om and the Kwanyama, but also it reinforced the processes that spawned the social marginalisation of the !Xun and Hai||om in this region. The regional authorities and the Kwanyama TA appointed a !Xun representative from the Ekoka community to the LIPROSAN project steering committee so that the perspectives of the !Xun and Hai||om could be represented, and this positive initiative might provide some countervailing force in societal processes that have hitherto alienated the San. More recently, the Namibian San Council invited two members of the Ekoka community to join this body as representatives of all of the !Xun and Hai||om of Ohangwena Region. The next step is to increase the ability of these San representatives to raise the most pressing concerns of the !Xun and Hai||om in the region in this council or other such forums.

7.5.2 Recommendations

The following general recommendations are based on the research team's assessment of the main findings in Ohangwena Region, including findings of previous studies as well as this study regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the three main livelihood support projects in this region.

Firstly, development in a piecemeal fashion has proven unsustainable. **Long-term interventions** are needed to build the self-confidence of the !Xun and Hai||om as a people; they need interventions that serve to make them proud of being !Xun and Hai||om.

A **long-term educational project** – with a timeframe of 20 years or more – should be designed and implemented. Education is the key to improving the poor conditions in which the San in Ohangwena currently find themselves. The recommended project would entail, in the first place, taking young children through ECD to primary school, secondary school and tertiary education. However, the cultural and traditional practices of the !Xun and Hai||om would have to be taken into consideration in the design of such a project, thus the !Xun and Hai||om should be actively involved in designing it. Mainstream education has failed – and continues to fail – the !Xun and Hai||om in Ohangwena, therefore in any new project it would be wise to incorporate certain aspects that do not characterise mainstream education. One aim of such new educational practices should be an appreciation of the traditional San processes of knowledge transfer: formal education practices characterised by classroom study and learning from books may not necessarily be useful to !Xun and Hai||om children, thus new initiatives are needed to build a bridge between the current mainstream education system and traditional !Xun and Hai||om ways of learning. The !Xun and Hai||om should be involved in helping to bridge that gap (Le Roux (no date)). Such bridge-building initiatives could include features that will help to meet the following needs identified in this study and previous studies:

- !Xun and Hai||om children should be educated by !Xun and Hai||om teachers in the first years of school, and !Xun and Hai||om languages should be used as the medium of instruction for the initial years of kindergarten and primary schooling.
- Primary and junior secondary schools should be situated close to San communities so that the children are not separated from their parents at a very young age.
- Further investigation is needed into the practice of Kwanyama families fostering !Xun and Hai||om children, with the main aim of finding workable solutions for the !Xun and Hai||om children and parents concerned.
- Support mechanisms and creative monitoring systems are needed within the !Xun and Hai||om communities to support school-going children and their parents, with a view to encouraging the children to stay in school.

- Use all of the above to create a sense of ownership of the education of !Xun and Hai||om children among parents and the wider community.
- Affirmative action is needed to engage !Xun and Hai||om youth in certain job categories after finishing secondary school, so that !Xun and Hai||om parents see the benefit of completing an education. The same holds true for teaching jobs.

Regarding to access to land, given that the San in Ohangwena do not have their own TA, and that they do not necessarily occupy or use the land in the same manner as Kwanyama farmers do, San are seen as subordinates, despite the fact that they are the original inhabitants of the land on which they and the Kwanyama are now living. Concerted efforts should be made to **formalise and protect land ownership** for and by the !Xun and Hai||om.

Resettlement farms may not be the best form of land tenure for the !Xun and Hai||om, therefore an assessment of alternatives is needed. For a start, the relevant provisions of the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002 and the National Resettlement Policy should be implemented more proactively and consistently to ensure that the !Xun and Hai||om have access to land, and control over the land allocated to them.³⁴ Furthermore, the proper implementation of national laws and policies pertaining to land should be augmented by applying international protocols that elaborate the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to land, so that the voices of the !Xun and Hai||om with regard to the management of land and other resources in Ohangwena Region can be heard. A widespread awareness-raising campaign should be initiated to inform the !Xun and Hai||om of their general human rights, specifically as indigenous and/or marginalised peoples.

It is important to review the approach to development within !Xun and Hai||om communities in Ohangwena, as many things have been tried but few things seem to have worked in the long term. In this regard it would be highly relevant to undertake an **in-depth anthropological study** on the needs and aspirations of the San in this region, because their situation and aspirations differ to those of other San in Namibia. Such in-depth research should then form the foundation of the design of strategies for the development of the !Xun and Hai||om in Ohangwena.

As far as **livelihood support programmes** are concerned, one lesson learned in recent years is that communal approaches to agricultural development – whether animal husbandry or crop cultivation – within !Xun and Hai||om communities have proven ineffective, and family- or household-based initiatives should be encouraged instead. Such approaches would then have to be supported by local management structures that are sensitive to the needs and interests of the !Xun and Hai||om. This does not necessarily mean that VDCs must be established in the !Xun and Hai||om communities in the same manner as they are in other villages; in some cases, smaller and more flexible leadership structures may be required. Furthermore, it is important to actively engage the !Xun and Hai||om in decision making on developments in their own communities and in the region at large. This means that they must have representation on bodies such as constituency development committees (CDCs), the Ohangwena Regional Development Committee (RDC) and the regional land board. Given the prevailing levels of poverty among the San in Ohangwena, local and regional authorities may be compelled to evaluate the need for monetary allowances that would enable San leaders to represent their respective communities properly, without necessarily creating more dependency of these leaders on external support.

³⁴ The group-rights initiative mentioned in Chapter 14 on access to land might also have some relevance for the San in Ohangwena.