

Jørgen Klein and Calvin Martin

Evaluation of the
Traditional Life Skills Project,
Karas Region, Namibia

Høgskolen i Hedmark
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Summary: This report is based on an evaluation of the Traditional Life Skills Project (TLSP) in the Karas Region, Namibia. In the TLSP parents and grandparents are teaching children some of the traditional life skills and knowledge of the Nama people in the schools during the afternoons. It is the aim that communities through the project will find pride in their own background and thereby keep the culture alive. In addition to this the project seeks to promote a creative and an entrepreneurial attitude among the learners and equip them with practical knowledge and skills, as well as serving as a bridge between the formal school system and the community. Running the activities is a joint responsibility of The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) and the Ministry of Education, Karas Region. The main objective of the evaluation is the role of NAMAS in supporting the local partner in developing and running the project. The methods applied were document studies, qualitative key informant interviews, and group interviews. Through the study we interviewed actors at the regional Ministry of Education, employees at NAMAS and parent teachers and principals in seven selected rural communities in the Karas Region. We found that since its start in 2004 the TLSP has developed into a viable project that has strong support at regional level. At the local level the project is running well in some communities, whilst suffering problems in others. This seems to be related to variations in individual commitment, human resources and institutional capacity at each place. NAMAS as an organisation is very well regarded among the local partners. In the report we make several recommendations of how to develop the project further, in order to strengthen the potential for sustainability and local ownership.			



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Emneord: Nama, tradisjonelle kunnskapsfag, utdanning, urfolk, Namibia			
Sammendrag: Denne rapporten er basert på en evaluering av prosjektet 'Traditional Life Skills' i Karas Region, Namibia. Prosjektet er drevet som et samarbeid mellom Namibiaforeningen og Ministeriet for Utdanning, Karas Region. Prosjektet går ut på at foreldre og besteforeldre lærer bort tradisjonelle Nama kunnskaper og ferdigheter til barn etter skoletid. Målet er å holde den tradisjonelle kulturen levende samtidig som det kan utvikle entreprenørskaps tenkning og bidra med inntekter i lokalsamfunnene. I tillegg søker prosjektet å bygge bro mellom hjem og skole.			
Hovedproblemstillingen for evalueringen var å se på Namibiaforeningen rolle som støttespiller for de lokale partnerne i utvikling og drift av prosjektet. For å undersøke dette brukte vi kvalitative metoder som litteraturstudier, semi-strukturerte intervjuer med nøkkelinformer og gruppeintervjuer. Vi intervjuet aktører i det regionale utdanningsministeriet, ansatte i Namibiaforeningen og foreldrelærere og rektorer i sju utvalgte lokalsamfunn i Karas Region. Vi fant at dette er et levedyktig prosjekt som har oppnådd mye siden oppstarten i 2004. Prosjektet har sterkt støtte og er godt forankret på regionalt nivå. På lokalt nivå er det store forskjeller mellom de forskjellige lokalsamfunnene i hvor godt drevet og forankret prosjektet er. Dette er relatert til personlig engasjement, menneskelige ressurser og institusjonsell kapasitet. Namibiaforeningens arbeid er generelt meget positivt ansett blant prosjektdeltagerne. I rapporten gir vi flere anbefalinger for hvordan prosjektet kan utvikles videre med spesielt fokus på lokalt eierskap og bærekraftighet.			

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Preface

This report is based on an evaluation of the Traditional Life Skills Project (TLSP) in the Karas Region, Namibia. The assignment was given to Hedmark University College (HUC) on behalf of the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS). The study was carried out by Dr. Jørgen Klein and Mr. Calvin Martin.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those people who helped us in carrying out the study. At NAMAS' headquarter in Norway Svein Ørsnes and Vidar Østlie were very accommodating and provided necessary assistance and feed-back. We would like to thank the staff at the Ministry of Education, Karas Region, for their friendly reception and professional help. We would particularly like to thank Mr. P.T. Titus for all his efforts, and especially for making the logistics of the study feasible. Special thanks go to all the parent teachers in the local communities in Karas Region. We were met in a very hospitable way; their willingness to answer our questions was genuine and provided valuable information for the evaluation. We would also like to thank the principals of the schools in the region who gave up their spare time in the evenings after hectic conference days in Keetmanshoop to answer our questions. Final thanks to Ian Watering for proofreading the manuscript.

The opinions expressed in the report are solely those of the authors.

September 2008

Jørgen Klein

Calvin Martin

Abbreviations

HUC – Hedmark University College

IECD – Institute for Educational Career Development

MoE – Ministry of Education

NAMAS – Namibia Association of Norway

NORAD – The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

PT – Parent Teachers

SAMEQ – Southern and Eastern Africa consortium for monitoring educational quality

ToR – Terms of Reference

Executive summary

About the TLSP

In the Traditional Life Skills Project (TLSP) parents and grandparents are teaching children some of the traditional life skills and knowledge of the Nama people in the schools during the afternoons. Building on local resources the project aims at creating opportunities for rural people facing the challenges of limited employment opportunities, pressure from urbanization and a growing gap between generations. It is the aim that communities through the project will find pride in their own background and thereby keep the culture alive. In addition to this the project seeks to promote a creative and an entrepreneurial attitude among the learners and equip them with practical knowledge and skills as well as serving as a bridge between the formal school system and the community.

The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) was requested to assist the Karas Region with the project in 2004. Since then the project has been introduced to more than 20 schools all over Karas Region. Running the activities is the joint responsibility of NAMAS and the Ministry of Education, Karas Region.

The project is a part of the Entrepreneurship and Handicraft Programme of NAMAS, which is 90 % financed by NORAD. The project has a yearly budget of around 700 000 NOK. This means that it is a fairly small project, and in economic terms the smallest of NAMAS' four engagements in Namibia.

Objectives of the evaluation

The main objective of the evaluation is the role of NAMAS in supporting the local partner in developing and running the project. More concretely we will assess how the project was introduced and developed with the local partner and the local communities, how the day-to-day running of the project contributes to reaching the aims of the project, the obstacles that can be identified, the level of local ownership of the project at community as well as regional level, and how sustainable the project is in relation to skills, content and economic resources.

Methodological approach

The methods applied in this study were document studies, qualitative key informant interviews, and group interviews. The sample consists of 21 parent teachers, 7 principals, 2 officials from the regional Ministry of Education, and the former and present coordinators of the project. Through the study altogether seven rural communities in the Karas Region were visited.

Findings and conclusions

The traditional Life Skills Project (TLSP) has been running since 2004, and despite some set-backs in the last year and a half, it has developed into a viable project that has strong support at regional level. At local level the project is running well in some communities, whilst suffering problems in others. This seems to be related to variations in individual commitment, human resources and institutional capacity at each place.

The project has the potential of being sustainable in the future due to the strong support from the regional Ministry of Education and the human resources that have been released at the local level by the introduction of the project. However, at the local level the potential for sustainability must be thoroughly considered at each particular place. The biggest obstacles at the local level seem to be recruitment of dedicated parent teachers, lack of information and communication problems, lack of transparency in decision making and economic transactions related to a lack of a firm and robust local organisational structure.

We have the clear impression that NAMAS as an organisation is very well regarded among the local partners. They express that the support of NAMAS allows them to develop the project in the direction they themselves find most suitable, which contributes to a strong sense of local ownership. This positive perception of NAMAS is also shared among the members of the working group, and generally among the principals and parent teachers.

Recommendations

We recommend that the principals at each school become more involved in the project. The involvement of principals is a strong motivating factor, it

improves communication, and is a guarantee for local support of the project. The involvement of principals gives access to necessary communication services such as fax machines and telephones.

It is recommended that a firm organisational structure at the local level should be developed and implemented in each community. This is important for building trust and good working relations at the ground level. Transparency in relation to decision-making and how money is spent and generated must be a core element in this model. Simple bookkeeping and accounting skills must be taught at the local level, as many communities are lacking these skills.

We recommend that successful communities share their experiences with the less successful ones. In order to facilitate this we recommend that a system of peer-coaching is developed to enhance the concept of model learning. For instance in relation to accounting and bookkeeping and for developing a local organisational structure, knowledgeable PTs can conduct workshops on these issues. By drawing on local expertise and knowledge this can empower and give credit to successful projects.

To get more parents involved we recommend that the whole community is approached and involved. This includes traditional leaders, successful business people, church leaders, traditional healers and other stakeholders in the local community. Other practical measures to involve more parent teachers might be: certification of committed PTs, social evenings to share information and to showcase what learners and PTs are doing, and using use the cultural festivals arranged at each school to promote and inform about the project. In order to involve more men in the project we recommend that one workshop is held annually for men only, so they can meet and discuss both traditional male life skills, their marginal role as men in the project, and how to recruit more men.

Since the coordinator will stay only till 2010, we recommend that focus is put on sustainability and the phasing out of the support of the coordinator. It must be made explicit for the PTs that the support of the coordinator will be withdrawn and the consequences this will have. As pointed out earlier mechanisms in the local communities must be in place in order for the pro-

ject to continue. We recommend that the coordinator in agreement with the steering group start to identify communities that will not be able to continue and that these are withdrawn from the project. It is advisable to use the limited financial and human resources available on the communities that show dedication and progress. A high number of communities involved in the project should not be a measure of success, rather a concentration on fewer but high quality projects is recommended to ensure the sustainability of the project.

In order to keep the focus on the original idea of the project we recommend that the concept of *traditional* (life skills) should be emphasised. The concept and meaning of ‘traditional life skills’ in this setting should be elaborated and distinguished from other income earning activities in rural areas. In order to keep this focus we recommend that some documentation on the content of the project and the traditional Nama culture is provided. The planned documentation of traditional Nama medicine in a booklet is thus strongly recommended for extended financial support along with other written documentations of a similar kind.

The link between traditional life skills and entrepreneurial skills is a key for the sustainability of the project. This means that developing a fine balance between commercial interests and traditional values needs to be emphasised. The sustainability of the project depends on a successful merging of these two factors. In this respect an integration of the new entrepreneurship subject in the curriculum, which NAMAS has been supporting, is strongly recommended.

Some of these recommendations have already been mentioned in earlier reports but have not yet been implemented. We therefore highly recommend that a stronger commitment to following up on identified problems and solutions is put in place in the future.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to evaluate the ‘Traditional Life Skills Project’ (TLSP) in the Karas Region, Namibia. In this project parents and grandparents are teaching children some of the traditional life skills and knowledge of the Nama people after the ordinary school hours in the classrooms. The main aim of the project is to create a focus on traditional skills, their practice and customs, and to pass these on to the younger generation. In addition to this, the project seeks to nurture a creative and entrepreneurial attitude among the learners and equip them with practical knowledge as tools for their future, individual development. The project also aims to serve as a bridge between the formal school system and the local community.

Since 2004 the project has been introduced to more than 20 schools all over the Karas Region. It is a joint responsibility between the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) and the Ministry of Education (MoE), Karas Region, to run the activities. NAMAS was requested to assist the Ministry of Education with the project in 2004. The Traditional Life Skills Project is a part of the Entrepreneurship and Handicraft Programme of NAMAS, which is 90 % financed by NORAD.

In the project community members become parent teachers (PT) and they work on a voluntary basis. They decide what is to be taught, when and to whom. The traditional life skills sessions take place on average one to two afternoons per week. The most popular activities are needlework, beadwork,

leatherwork, agricultural activities and collecting of herbs and plants to be used for traditional medicine and cosmetics. In order to share skills held in the various communities, and for the parent teachers to learn from each other's experiences, several parent teacher workshops have been held.

1.1 Aims and scope of the evaluation

To evaluate means to determine the significance, worth, or condition of something, usually by careful appraisal and study (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008). To evaluate development projects provides a means to measure the progress and impact of a development intervention. Further, it can contribute to informed decision-making and better practice. The test of an evaluation is its application in real life, and hopefully some if the insights from this study will contribute to strengthen the TLSP in the future.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation (see annex 2), the focal point will be on the role of NAMAS in supporting the local partner in developing and running the project. More specifically, areas that will be focused are:

- How the project was introduced and developed with the local partner (MoE, Karas Region) and the local communities.
- How the day-to-day running of the project contributes to reaching the aims of the project, and the obstacles that can be identified as standing in the way of the project reaching its goals.
- The level of local ownership of the project, at community as well as regional level.
- How sustainable the project is in relation to future operation, both in relation to skills, content and economic resources. As the project is run on a voluntary basis, we will look into the challenge of keeping the parent teachers motivated as well as how the male involvement can be strengthened, so that traditional male activities will also be passed on to the children in the project.

In this evaluation there are basically two levels of information we intend to gain insight in. The overall question is how NAMAS as an organisation

is supporting the local partners (both the MoE and the local communities). The other question is related to the actual success of the project in reaching its aims. This includes insight in the day-to-day running of the project, the level of local ownership and the prospects of sustainability for the project. The first question, however, can not be separated from the second. In order to reach an understanding of the role of NAMAS in support of the project, one needs to understand the basic challenges, problems and successes the project is facing today.

1.2 Time frame

In April 2008 Hedmark University College was encouraged to submit a project proposal for the evaluation of the TLSP by NAMAS managing director Svein Ørsnes. J. Klein drafted a project proposal which was submitted in the beginning of June. The signing of the contract took place at the end of June. Document studies, literature reviews and finalisation of research design was conducted during June, July and the beginning of August. The main body of the fieldwork in Namibia took place between the 13th and 22nd August. Analysis and preparation of the report was done in August and September. NAMAS received an outline of the main findings and recommendations of the study by mid September and a preliminary version of the full report 1. October 2008.

1.3 The methodology and field study

To gain insight in the relatively complex matters the evaluation embraces we decided to base the study mainly in the qualitative realm of methodology. We chose to focus on document studies and qualitative interviews, while using statistical material as secondary sources. The objective of the document study was to consider the status of the project, how it has evolved since its start-up, and whether the focus and goals of the project have changed during the process.

The documents consulted were:

- Agreements between NORAD and NAMAS
- Annual reports (2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007/2008)
- Minutes from working group meetings
- The questionnaire summary of October 2006

Considering the vast distances in the Karas Region and the time available we chose to focus on a selection of key informants for the interviews. Our aim was to interview key actors at different levels such as administrative personnel at the Ministry of Education, the management of NAMAS, the former and present coordinator, principals at the schools and, most importantly, the parent teachers. Two sets of interview guides were developed, one for the administrative actors, mainly concerned with implementing and overseeing the project, and one for actors at the local community level, mainly parent teachers and principals (see annex 3 and 4).

The interviews were conducted in Windhoek, in the Karas Region, and in Hamar. The interviews in Namibia took place between the 13th and 22nd August 2008. Due to the distances and the wide spread of the rural communities in the Karas Region we had to make a selection of communities to visit. This was done in cooperation with the MoE in Karas Region, who selected schools to visit and made arrangements for people to meet us in the villages. We also made some ‘surprise’ visits in some communities without having made appointments through the MoE in advance. In these places we got hold of parent teachers by asking around. These visits were important as we met people not selected by the MoE, which is a stakeholder in the project. Although we have no reason to believe that the MoE was trying to influence the evaluation, these visits strengthened the credibility of the study, which otherwise might have been compromised by the fact that we only met ‘approved’ participants for interview. Altogether seven communities were visited. These were Koichas, Vaalgras, Betanien, Warmbad, Gabes, Grunau and Tses.

By the use of open ended semi-structured interviews our aim was to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the issues and also uncover some of the underlying challenges of the project. In the school communities we did group

interviews and individual interviews depending on the range of informants present. In some places only one parent teacher was available for interviews; in other places there were several. In the latter case we found it most suitable to do group interviews and these also turned out quite informative as discussions on the different aspects of the project erupted. It also led the parent teachers to speak more freely as they were less intimidated by the situation. Altogether a total of 21 parent teachers were interviewed. This includes three group interviews (4–6 in each group) and 6 individual interviews. Of these 21 parent teachers there were three males and 18 females. This female bias reflects the strong involvement of women in the project, as male parent teachers were very rare and hard to get in touch with. Nevertheless they provided insightful comments on the project in general and on the situation of the men in the project in particular.

At the Ministry of Education, Karas Region, the Inspector of Education and the Deputy Director/Regional Educational Officer were interviewed. The former and the present coordinators of the project were also interviewed. In addition to this we interviewed 7 principals of schools involved in the project. Three of them were interviewed individually and four in a group interview (they were all attending a workshop in Keetmanshoop while we were there and were interviewed in the evenings). The sample includes all the members of the Working Group of the project.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION: PEOPLE AND PLACE

In this section some background information about the contextual setting of the project will be provided, with special reference to the Karas Region, the Nama people and education in Namibia.

2.1 The Karas Region

The Karas Region is the southernmost of Namibia's 13 regions and covers about 161 235 km². There are about 70 000 people in the Karas Region, which is less than 5 % of the total Namibian population. With an average of 0.4 persons pr. km², Karas is one of the most sparsely populated regions in the country. The largest concentrations of people are found in major urban/mining centres such as Lüderitz (ca. 14 000); Oranjemund (ca. 11 000) and Keetmanshoop (ca. 12 000), with the remaining population spread across the region in smaller settlements such as Berseba, Aroab, Bethanie and Tses. The official school enrolment rate in the region is about 94 % and it has an 18+ year's literacy rate of 87 % (Karas Regional Council).

Figure 1 Basic statistics for education in the Karas Region 2005/2006

School Type	Nr. of Schools	Learners	Teachers	
			Government	Private
Primary	35	11539	313	77
Junior Secondary	3	652	26	1
Combined	5	2805	83	18
Secondary	4	3079	93	1
Totals	47	18075	515	97

Source: Ministry of Education (2008)

The region is a predominantly a small stock farming area, and land use is mostly devoted to sheep or goats. Karakul sheep farming was once a highly lucrative business but has in the past decade or so been reduced by a worldwide fall in demand for the pelt. Commercial ostrich farming has been a fast-growing enterprise with a ready local and foreign market for meat, leathers and other products. Game farming and irrigation farming of crops such as table grapes, dates, fruit and vegetables along the Naute Dam and the Orange River have gained importance in recent years. This has also lead to migration of people from northern parts of Namibia to the area, something that has created challenges and opportunities in the schools and also in the TLSP.

The economic development of the region has historically been closely tied to its rich mineral deposits. These include diamonds, zinc, copper, tin, lead, silver, marble and gemstones. The minerals provide about 27 % of employment opportunities and some 12 % of GDP in the region. Until recently, much industry was centred on the extraction of raw materials such as ores, or marine catches, and exported directly. However, in the past decade, industries such as zinc refining and fish and seafood canning have been growing, strongly supported by the government for the development and employment opportunities they can bring to the region. Due to commercial farming and the mining industry the average household income in the region is about N\$26 000 pa, which exceeds the national average of about N\$ 17 000 pa (Karas Regional Council). However, this average conceals significant intra-regional disparities. In the Karas Region, with its many poor landless agricultural laborers the Gini coefficient for distribution of income is relatively high. The inequality is caused by the disparity between the large share of income going to commercial farming and mining industry households and the small share going to landless labourers (McKinley, 1998). According

to the latest figures one in three families lives below the poverty line in the Karas Region, while 18 per cent of the region's 15 570 households are classified as poor (Cloete, 2008).

2.2 The Nama People

The Nama people number about 100 000 in Namibia (Saugestad, 2004). According to Barnard (1992) they probably originated as a distinct people in the Northern Cape, and later split into two large sub-divisions, the Great Nama and the Little Nama. The Great Nama settled in the Great Namaqualand area of Namibia prior to European contact, while the Little Nama migrated to Namibia in tribal groups during the nineteenth century. Those who remained south of the Orange river have largely been absorbed into the 'coloured' population of South Africa, although there are still some Nama customs practised in the Northeastern Cape. The question of Nama identity in South Africa was boosted in the Northern Cape, closely linked to the establishment of the Ritcherfelt National Park in Namaqualand in 1991 (Sharp & Boonzaier, 1994). According to Harring (2004), the Nama, along with the San and the Damara are probably the original occupants of Namibia, and thus have a claim to status as indigenous people. However, the only legally-binding statement about indigenous peoples is found in ILO convention No. 169, which is not ratified by the Namibian government. (Saugestad, 2004). The Nama speak a Khoisan language¹ notable for its great number of click sounds. They were earlier called «Hottentots», by the white settlers (Afrikaner), but this name is no longer used and it is considered offensive.

Traditionally the Nama lead a nomadic way of life. Their main protective worry was not over land but over cattle and women. Little is now known about traditional Nama social structure, due to the almost total destruction of Nama tribal organisation by the German colonization of South West Africa from the 1890s, culminating in the 'Nama revolt' of 1904–07 where the famous Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi was killed. In addition to this, severe drought in the late 19th century and the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 contributed to break down the existing structure (Barnard, 1992). Traditional Nama

1 Often referred to as Khoekhoeogowab (Saugestad, 2004).

camps comprised between five and thirty huts. The huts were beehive-shaped and arranged in a circle. Each hut was constructed of reed mats made by the women, and these were placed on a frame made of wooden spars and cross-bars bound together. Traditional huts are rare today but similar huts made of canvas are not uncommon (Barnard, 1992). Traditional Nama handicraft includes various kinds of needlework (e.g. the Nama dresses), beadwork, leatherwork (belts, hides and Nama shoes), traditional agriculture and the use of local herbs and plants for traditional medicine and cosmetics. The Nama are also known for their musical and literary abilities. Traditional music, folk tales and praise poetry have been handed down orally through generations and are an important basis of their culture.

2.3 Education in Namibia

Namibia inherited its educational system from the South African apartheid regime. In this system Namibians were driven into ethnically-defined homelands and education was administered separately for each ethnic group. The whites were given the best education while the worst conditions were found in the black schools. After independence a whole new educational system had to be developed to redress the enormous disparities left by the apartheid regime. In the new Namibian constitution it is stated that all persons shall have the right to education and that primary education shall be free and compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16 (Tjipueja, 2001).

Today more than 80 % of the population is literate, and the enrolment rate in Namibian schools is stated to be as high as 98 percent (Makuwa, 2004). Even though it is compulsory to complete grades 1–7 this aim is not reached as dropouts are a problem at all levels. Namibia shares high dropout levels with most of the countries in Africa south of the Sahara. The reasons behind high dropout levels are generally related to low quality of the education combined with low household income. Poverty makes direct costs such as school uniforms, textbooks and documents together with opportunity costs (children's labor) too high for poor households. In combination with poor learning outcome in the schools it produces high drop-out numbers (Tjipueja, 2001, Colclough et al., 2003). The locations of the schools and scattered settlement patterns are other factors which explain the low learning results. Learners

who attend isolated rural schools had a significant lower learning score than learners from urban schools (Makuwa, 2004).

The official language policy in Namibia states that schools should teach the pupils in grade 1 to 3 in their mother tongue (one of the thirteen languages). From grade 4 the schools should start to switch from mother tongue to English as a medium of instruction. Ideally, this means that from grade 4 the mother tongue becomes a subject and learners will be taught all schools subjects in English. There is however a large gap between policy intentions and reality in the Namibian schools. The mother tongue is seldom taught as medium of instruction from grade 1 to 3, and many schools do not offer Namibian indigenous languages as subjects from Grade 4 until Grade 12 (Mbenzi, 1997; Mvula, 2007).

Dropout rates are often higher and success rates lower among indigenous groups than for the rest of the population. This can be linked to the fact that education is often understood too narrowly, meaning only formal education. Formal education systems often fail to meet the specific needs and knowledge constructions of indigenous peoples² both in relation curricula and teaching methodologies. Academic knowledge is generally privileged and traditional wisdom and skills devaluated. Indigenous peoples have long recognised that formal education serves to undermine their own skill base and value systems without replacing them with viable alternatives. A study of San pupils shows that high dropout rates could be attributed to factors such as lack of mother tongue education, cultural differences between home and school, cultural practices that keep learners away from school and the alienating experience of boarding schools (Hays, 2004). According to Nekhwevha (1999) high dropout rates are partly caused by irrelevant Western-based curricula. To our knowledge there have not been made similar studies on the Nama people, but bearing in mind the economic exclusion the Nama people are facing we have strong reasons to believe that their experiences are similar to those of other indigenous groups in relation to education.

2 According to UNESCO (1999) the term *indigenous knowledge* refers to a large body of knowledge and skills that has been developed outside the formal education system, and that enables communities to survive. Indigenous knowledge is closely related to survival and subsistence and is therefore especially important in relation to food-security, health, education and natural resource management.

3. PREVIOUS REPORTS AND STUDIES RELATED TO THE TLSP

This chapter will briefly go through some of the main findings from the desk study of the written material specifically related to the TLSP. We mainly focus on things that are of interest to the aims and scope of the evaluation such as the development of the project, the problems it is facing and how they are dealt with, and the relations between the different actors in the project.

3.1 Year end report 2004³

The report describes the first year and the start up of the project in 2004. At this stage there were 14 schools involved and the number of parent teachers involved in each community varied between 2 and 15. The initial 14 schools involved in the project were selected by the MoE, Karas Region. The group of learners varied from 5 to 30. The most common skills taught were patch-work, bead-work, embroidery, knitting, crochet and leather-work, which involves making Nama shoes and bridles. In most schools the sessions are held twice a week and last 1.5 to 2 hours. NAMAS has donated material and tools up to a maximum amount of N\$1000 to each school community, based on individual requests.

³ Written by Project Coordinator Marianne van der Lippe

According to the report the project has been very positively received, and there are more learners interested in getting into the project than can be accommodated for. It is suggested that every school community opens a savings account for the project to strengthen the local financial management. Problems described in the report mainly relate to material shortages and reluctance of community members to be involved as parent teaches. It is also reported that communication and flow of information between partners is unsatisfactory.

3.2 Report from first round of school visits in 2005⁴

The main focus for these school visits was to strengthen the local financial management and to give feed-back from the school communities to the steering group. In order to strengthen the local financial management each school community was encouraged to open a savings account at NamPost, in which NAMAS would deposit N\$ 500,-. The school communities were to record all expenses and income on accounting sheets and keep all receipts. After a period of 4–6 months NAMAS would deposit another N\$500,- if the accounting system was satisfactory.

As in the 2004 report this report also notes that some of the school communities faced material shortages and in most communities limited involvement from community members was a problem. Marketing possibilities and outlet for items produced were also on the agenda. The organisation of a parent teacher workshop financed by NAMAS (venue, transport, accommodation, catering, materials etc.) in Keetmanshoop in May 2005 was discussed.

⁴ Written by Project Coordinator Marianne van der Lippe.

3.3 Annual report from 2006⁵

According to the report the main achievements during 2006 have been:

- 21 school communities are active in the project
- About 440 children are taking part in the TLS sessions
- 110 parent teachers are involved
- 4 parent teacher workshops have been held (it is not known if this applies only for 2006 or the whole period the project has been running).
- The program participated in the Keetmanshoop Agricultural Show in 2006 and received first prize for best stall in their session, and also first prize as overall winners in the show
- The use of traditional dresses has become more prominent since the beginning of the project
- It is claimed that respect for elders and better performance in schools have increased in participating communities
- Growing interest from principals in skills and abilities held by local people.

The N\$ 1000 per annum is split into two deposits each of N\$500. The second deposit is followed only after a report of spending is submitted. Two (secondary) schools were not participating satisfactorily, and have asked for permission to be excluded from the project. The main reason for this seems to be the focus on performance for grade 10 learners. The author is very pleased with the commitment to the program from NAMAS, with special reference to the project coordinator (Ms. van der Lippe).

3.4 The Survey of September–October 2006

In order to assess the status quo of the TLSP it was decided to have an internal questionnaire for all the school communities involved. The questionnaire was worked out by the project coordinator, and all but two school communities participated in the survey. We have not had access to the raw data, but have been provided with a short summary of the main findings. The most

⁵ Written by the Ministry of Education, Karas Region (author unknown).

important findings from this survey can be summed up as follows:

- It is hard to engage male parent teachers, with the result that boys often drop out of the project.
- Most learners are in grades 5–7.
- Learners come because they want to and enjoy the activities, not because they are forced to. There are more children interested in the project than can be accommodated for.
- The main obstacle to bringing in more children is the lack of committed parent teachers. Reasons for this:
 - They find other (paid) work and do not have time to participate
 - They expect payment for contributing
 - Only few community members possess the necessary knowledge and experience in traditional skills
- There is an average of 3 to 4 parent teachers at each school.
- On the question as to what could be done to involve more parent teachers it was suggested that incentives such as motivational visits and bonuses from the sale could increase the involvement.
- The parent teachers are interested in expanding their qualifications and learn more skills and techniques. They suggested that the best way to do this was to have an external facilitator to come to the local communities, as few parent teachers can travel and attend to workshops in other places. Shoemaking training was especially mentioned.
- The positive sides of being a parent teacher was listed as follows: sharing skills with children, communication with children, togetherness with other parents, respect for children, keeping traditions alive, enjoy teaching and learning from other parents.
- The negative sides were listed as: Shortage of parent teachers, time and materials.
- The workshops were considered informative, but too short and with too many different activities.
- In general the communities are positive towards the project, but there seems to be a lack of knowledge of the project in many communities. Few spin-offs to the surrounding society are mentioned.
- The cooperation between the schools and the project are mostly considered as good, both with regards to principals and teachers, although it was remarked that the principals do not make any extra effort than the basic

providing of infrastructure ('do not go the extra mile'). Improvement suggestions: Better coordination of project and other activities, more involvement and active participation from teachers.

- All school communities feel that the time is too short, they compete with other (co-curricular) activities in the afternoons, and there is little interest in running these activities parallel with other activities.
- The system of establishing accounts seems to be running well, although some communities report smartcard problems and problems of transport for the signatories when making withdrawals. 2/3 of the communities would prefer NAMAS to purchase material according to list, while 1/3 prefer having their own accounts and arranging their own purchases.
- 3 communities produce more than enough for regular sales, most communities would like to sell more externally (little purchasing power in the local community), to tourists or at the Keetmanshoop show. The lack of transport is a problem.
- Some complaints were made about lack of information from the steering committee meetings.
- The school communities are satisfied with the role/work of the coordinator, although more school visits would be appreciated.
- The Regional Office of Education should be more involved in the project, both in terms of support, interest, assistance, motivation, coordination and ownership.

3.5 Annual report 2007/2008⁶

The annual report for this year is less comprehensive than the previous years' and the main findings highlight that:

- 27 school communities are active in the project
- 650 learners are taking active part in the TLSP sessions.
- 110 Parent Teachers are involved
- 2 school visits took place during the year
- 1 Parent Teacher workshop has been held in Keetmanshoop.
- The report also highlights that more focus will be put on marketing skills as a part of the skills training.

⁶ Written by project coordinator Ernst Jash

3.6 Other sources of information

In February/March 2008 three students from HUC conducted fieldwork in the Karas Region as a part of their bachelor degrees in globalisation and development. The students looked at various aspects of the TLSP and made a close study of the project in the village of Khoichas. This included participant observation and qualitative interviews with teachers and parent teachers in this particular village. The supervisor for the students was Dr. Jørgen Klein. As this work is at the undergraduate level we cannot put too much emphasis on it, but just briefly mention the main findings from the two theses⁷ that have been submitted.

R. Aspirtaki focused on traditional land use among the Nama People and how this is passed on to children in general and especially in this project. She found that agricultural knowledge was mainly passed on through the use of the school garden, and that this activity exclusively involved boys. They grow beetroots, pumpkins, tomatoes, onions, cabbages, figs, pomegranates and grapes. There are major problems related to the dry climate, so that pastoral activities related to cows and sheep dominate in the area. It is a problem to recruit male teachers, as many of them have migrated out of the village to find paid work, and those still there resented the idea of working on a voluntary non-paid basis.

A. Borgebunds main research question was how integrated the entrepreneurial element of selling and marketing is in the project. Her main conclusion in relation to the research problem was that in this particular village it seems as if this is a neglected part of the project and the main focus is on passing on traditional skills to the learners. In addition emphasis was put on developing good relations between the young and the elderly population. The selling and marketing part was not considered as important at this point. It was also noted that there is a problem recruiting parent teachers in general and male parent teachers in particular.

⁷ The theses can be obtained at the library at HUC, at the NAMAS office and at the MoE, Karas Region.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

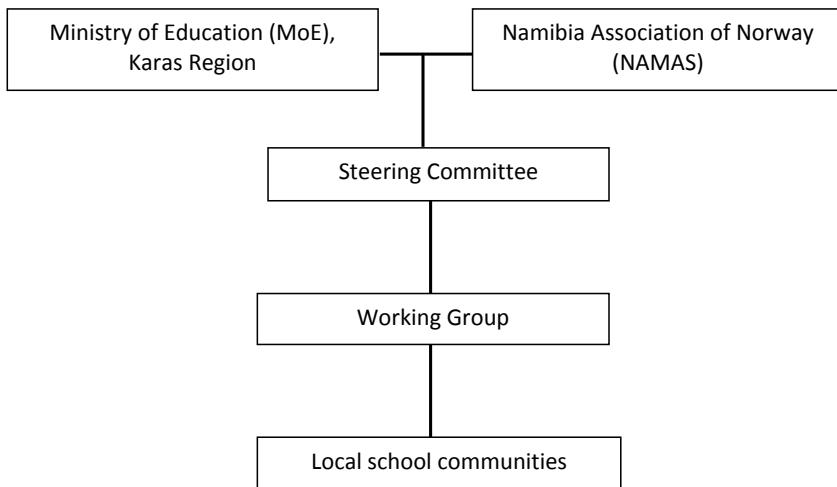
This section will present and discuss the empirical material from the field-study thematically structured by the most important evaluation questions. Central aspects that will be discussed in this part are the organisational model, monitoring and transparency, the role of the coordinator, local ownership, sustainability, and the overall role of NAMAS in supporting the local partner.

4.1 Background for the project, economy and organisational model

The idea behind the traditional life skills project was inspired by a similar project in the Caprivi Region. It was formulated in 2003 by The Institute for Education and Career Development (IECD) and developed further with representatives from the local communities along with The Ministry of Education, Karas Region and the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS). In the start-up phase Mr. Lloid Ulrich from IECD was hired by NAMAS to investigate the foundations for the project and single out local communities in the Karas Region that were suitable to participate in such a project. By 2004 the TLSP evolved into its present structure as a partnership between the Ministry of Education, Karas Region, and the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS).

The project is a part of the Entrepreneurship and Handicraft Programme of NAMAS, which is 90 % financed by NORAD. The project has for the past three years had a yearly budget ranging from 680 400 NOK in 2006, 631 800 NOK in 2007 and 826 200 NOK in 2008. This means that it is a fairly small project, and in economic terms the smallest of NAMAS' four engagements in Namibia. The single largest expenditure for the project is the salary of the project coordinator. Other expenditures are travel costs (car + petrol), arranging meetings, workshops and seminars, accommodation and money support for the local communities (1000 N\$ pr. School pr. year).

The Traditional Life Skills Project is organised with a Steering Committee that meets annually and which is the highest authority of the TLSP. The Steering Committee is responsible for the planning of the project activities and budgeting. The Committee consists of one parent teacher and one principal from each school community, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Karas Region, and NAMAS. The chair of the committee is the regional inspector of education. In addition to the Steering Committee there is a Working Group which is responsible for the continuous progress towards the goals set by the Steering Committee. The Working Group meet on average 4–5 times a year. The Working Group consists of the Inspector of Education, Karas region, two parent teachers, one principal, the managing director of NAMAS and the project coordinator.

Figure 2 Organisational structure of the TLSP

We have the overall impression that the organisational model is well suited for this project and contributes in a positive way to reaching the main aims of the project. The model is transparent and the steering group acts as a forum where all participants can speak freely. According to our findings everyone can raise their concerns and opinions on the matters being discussed, and most of the interviewees were satisfied with the structure and involvement at the meetings. From the PTs it was highlighted as very positive that they could speak in their mother tongue if they wanted, and have it translated.

«The meetings are well organised and structured. Everyone can have a say, and in their own language, in the meetings.»
 (Female parent teacher)

It was however noted that the principals often played a bigger role in these meetings than their positions in the project would justify. Other critical remarks were directed towards the lack of sharing and spreading of information of what is discussed and agreed upon at the meetings. This problem is related to those PTs who do not participate in the steering group meetings and the lack of communication to these. It seems to be very much up to the personal relations between the delegates at the community level and

the rest of the community whether information trickles down to the ground level. Where these relations were weak, the information from the Steering Committee meetings also seemed to be lagging behind. As one of the interviewees said:

«We receive very little information of what is happening at the meetings and what is decided. It makes us very frustrated.»
(Female parent teacher)

It seems important to develop and implement an organisational structure at the local level where information from the steering groups is shared on a regular and formal basis, so that it is not up to personal relations at the ground level whether information is shared or not. Lack of communication and a proper system to spread information was also recognised as a problem by the MoE.

A local organisational structure must be transparent in relation to economic transactions, especially regarding expenditures, stocktaking (of both raw materials and finished products) and how a potential profit from the sales should be spent. It should be possible to track financial transactions and report on financial status. It is also important that the PTs in a community are able to influence the decisions made in relation to these issues. Thus a local committee with regular meetings where accounts are presented and budget is discussed seems pivotal. This would not only contribute to greater independence on outside support, but also create a stronger sense of ownership at the local level. Ideally, this could empower the local communities to be able to plan and make decisions on their own, and develop the project further on local terms.

At this point some communities have such a structure up and running, and are functioning well in these terms. Others have quite good routines of book-keeping and accounting, but are unsure of how they can spend the surplus, and how much autonomy they have in relation to this. For instance, some are uncertain if they are allowed to spend some of the income on coffee, tea and biscuits for the PTs at the traditional life skills sessions, something that would be much appreciated. Others do this as a matter of course and do not even consider asking for permission. That such uncertainty exists in the

local communities regarding these simple matters underlines the need for better communication and stronger institutions at the local level.

One of the gravest examples of the lack of transparency and institutional capacity at the local level was reported by one group of parent teachers who felt they had no control over the project in relation to finances and budgeting. They had made quite a lot of products which were sold at the Keetmanshoop show, but did not know where the money went afterwards.

«Everything we made last year was sold on the agricultural show, but we did not receive anything back. Now we don't want to send away anything because we do not know where the money will go.» (Female parent teacher)

This is a serious example of lack of local control that might undermine the whole project, and sadly it was confirmed from other places as well that there were much uncertainty regarding the ownership of what was being produced and where the money from the sales went. Some suggested that the schools through their principals had the money and could use them as they deemed fit, while others suggested that it was the project coordinator that had collected the money from the sales. Such problems were found in the less-well-run projects, and it is an example of the critical consequences that might occur if the development of institutional capacity is lagging behind at the local level.

4.2 The role of NAMAS

One of the main aims of this evaluation is to consider the role of NAMAS in supporting the local partner in developing and running the project. NAMAS provides the economic basis of the project, both in terms of economic and material inputs, such as the 1000N\$ (500 N\$ pr. term) each school community receives every year to buy materials, as well as transport costs and the salary of the coordinator. The local partner, MoE, Karas Region, contributes with some provision of transport, meeting facilities as well as time and human resources.

We have the strong impression that NAMAS as an organisation is highly regarded among the local partners. The local partners express strongly that they have ownership of the project and that NAMAS allows them to develop it in the direction they themselves find most suitable.

NAMAS has been very professional and good, they have created an open atmosphere which allows the project to develop by itself. (Official, MoE)

According to our informants at the MoE this has been the case since the beginning of the project, when they approached NAMAS and asked for support in developing the idea further. NAMAS probably contributed to moving the project towards a stronger focus on *traditional* skills than originally thought, but this is also highlighted as a positive input and an interesting suggestion, not as a directive. This positive perception of NAMAS is also shared among the members of the working group, and generally among the principals and PTs. According to NAMAS manager Mr. Svein Ørsnes the strategy of NAMAS has been to give the local partner full responsibility for the project without interfering in the day-to-day running. The rationale behind such a strategy is to enhance the local ownership, to contribute to building human and institutional capacity, and to strengthen the aspect of voluntary communal work⁸, which is a major fundament of the project. This is also in accordance with how their role has been perceived locally. In addition to this, they are considered as a reliable and professional partner.

We did not receive any negative attitudes towards the way NAMAS has been involved in the project during our fieldwork. It seems that the somewhat backstage position NAMAS is taking is good with regards to local ownership and capacity building. However, it is important to strike a balance between the need for control of how inputs are used and the need for the local partner to develop the project on their own terms. Possibly NAMAS could have a stronger influence on processes concerning employment of local personnel. It is also advisable to follow up and have a ready procedure to handle things that do not run according to plan. Problems concerning local employees can be difficult to handle for the local partner as they often have multiple bonds

8 «Dugnad» in Norwegian

to local people, so that someone from outside can better detect problems and act accordingly without having to consider a person's position in other spheres of life. A stronger involvement in procedures concerning employment of local staff and routines for detecting and handling possible misuse of positions at an as early stage as possible is therefore important.

4.3 The role of the coordinator

There is no doubt that the coordinator plays a key role in the TLSP. The coordinator is responsible for overseeing the project, acting as a link between the Ministry of Education and the communities, and has role as motivator, trainer and problem-solver in the day-to-day running of the project. The project has had three coordinators, including the present one who started this May. The two former coordinators have filled the role quite differently while the third still has to grow into the role.

The parent teachers differed to some extent in their views of how the coordinator should fill his/her role. Most of them want the coordinator to motivate and to some extent be able to develop the skills and products further. They strongly want someone with a background in arts, not only in project management. The PTs were without exception very satisfied with the first coordinator and the way she fulfilled the role. Having a background in arts and handcrafts she not only acted as an administrator but also contributed to developing some of the skills further in co-operation with the PTs. She also introduced the PTs to basic skills in bookkeeping and accounting. This is vital both for local ownership and the sustainability of the project. This was not followed up by her successor, and was very much in demand by the local communities due to new people entering the projects and new schools becoming participants.

The PTs stressed that it is important that the coordinator follows up on agreements and appointments and shows genuine interest in the project. It is clearly important for the project that the local communities trust the coordinator, and that the coordinator carries out the tasks in a professional manner. Seen through the eyes of the PTs, the carrying out of the coordinator role was impeccable in the first period of the project, but we received indications that

this has not been working particularly well during the past year and a half. This has been an interim period firstly related to the first coordinator having a maternity leave, and then prolonged due to her tragic death. After this the coordinator position has been publicly announced as vacant, and a new coordinator was employed in May 2008.

In relation to the development of skills and traditional products the coordinator has a challenging task. As it is the traditional skills of the Nama people that are in focus it is important that outsiders not come in and overrun the PTs on how this should be done. However, from many of the PTs it was emphasised that they wanted someone who could take the activities further and who could contribute to developing them in a more commercial direction. They also wanted someone to consult in connection with ideas and proposals of things they could make that could have a commercial potential. This particularly aims at the entrepreneurial aspect of the project.

«The coordinator should be able to give guidance and advice and to help take the products further.» (Female parent teacher)

Many of the communities also wanted the coordinator to act as some kind of authority and head person for the project, as indicated in this quotation:

«The coordinator is like a ‘principal’. We make extra effort when we know the coordinator is coming. That is good.» (Female parent teacher)

In our view the role of the coordinator can range from a more passive administration-oriented one that comes in to check on the project and organises workshops to a more active role as a motivator, leader of workshops and skilful handcrafter. However, in relation to the aim of sustainability of the project it is important that the communities do not become dependent on the coordinator as a provider of transport, materials, motivation and other support. Thus the most important task of the coordinator at this point in the project is to contribute to the building of a strong organisation at the local level which can function sustainably when the coordinator position is phased out. In addition to this, some focus on pedagogical principles related to the traditional life-skills sessions and development of commercially viable products should be emphasised.

4.4 Monitoring and transparency

For the donors and other stakeholders it is important to have reliable data on how the financial and human inputs in a project are being used and the impacts the project are having in the local communities. Therefore some basic and reliable monitoring facilities should be provided. There seems to be limited emphasis and resources spent on monitoring in this project. This can partly be explained by the fact that this is a voluntary community project which tries to nurture the initiative of parent teachers, so that monitoring as such is not needed, as explained by the Regional Educational Inspector. Still, at this point the project receives funding and other donor support, and therefore reliable documentation of the project is needed.

For instance, there is contradicting information on how many school communities, parent teachers and learners are involved in the project. In the annual report of 2007/2008 it is stated that 27 school communities are active in the project, that 650 learners are taking part in the TLSP sessions (an increase of 210 on the previous year), and that 110 parent teachers are involved. By triangulating our different sources of information from parent teachers, principals, and also information obtained from the Ministry of Education there is no doubt that these figures are vastly exaggerated, especially in relation to numbers of learners and parent teachers involved. It is worrying that such unreliable figures exist in the annual report of the project, as this can give a wrong impression of the impact and scope of the project.

It must also be noted that there seems to be uncertainty in some of the communities as to whether they are actually a part of the project or not. Some had received neither visits nor monetary deposits during the past year, and were uncertain if they still could regard themselves as partners in the project. As far as we could establish, this was a problem that had arisen during the past year, and was not considered a problem earlier. We also find the earlier reports of -94, -95, -96 to be more in accordance with our findings.

4.5 Local ownership

Local ownership often refers to relations among stakeholders in development projects and their capacity and power to take responsibility for a development project, and to assemble and sustain support for that. According to Saxby (2003) local ownership is high when:

- intended beneficiaries substantially influence the conception, design, implementation, and review of development strategies
- implementing agencies are rooted in the recipient country and represent the interests of ordinary citizens
- there is transparency and accountability among the various stakeholders

Based on these criteria we can make some observations on the level of local ownership in this project. We have to make a distinction between ownership at the local level (the school communities) and at the regional level (The Ministry of Education, Karas Region). At the regional level there seems to be high level of ownership of the project. The interviewees at this level expressed strongly that the project was something they considered as their own, and that they had full control over the design and implementation of the project. This had been the case from the very start of the project when they approached NAMAS and asked for assistance in developing such a project. Hence this can be regarded as a bottom-up initiative, and such projects often tend to have a high level of local ownership. The impression we received was that this project was solidly anchored at the Regional Ministry of Education, and they were significantly involved with the project and also proud of it.

«We feel that we have full ownership of this project, NAMAS are only helping us in developing our ideas.» (Official, MoE)

At the local level the pictures is a bit more blurred and there were significant local variations among the different communities regarding this issue. Some of the communities have a strong sense of ownership and a substantial influence on the project in their communities. Not surprisingly, these are the communities where the project is running well, where they have a local organisation that is functioning, and were there is trust and accountability

among the different stakeholders. Generally, where the PTs are in charge of the finances and are also the ones that identify the needs and conduct the purchasing of material, the feeling of local ownership was strong.

The communities where they did not express strong local ownership, were mostly the communities where they also complained about lack of information and lack of transparency as to how the generated income was spent. For instance, in one case the principal was organising the project with little involvement of the parent teachers, other than as (unpaid) teachers at the TLSP sessions. They did not have a say in the purchasing and selling and were not involved in the decision-making process. In other cases there was one very strong PT who had total control of the project and did not include the others in the daily running of things. As one group of parent teachers stated:

«We feel that a lot of information is being keeps away from us, therefore we do not have ownership of the project.»

Interestingly enough, we also encountered the opinion that local ownership was not especially wanted. Some communities did not want ownership; they wanted support from the donors. It was completely acceptable if the donors were running the project as long as the local communities received material and financial support. In these communities the motivation for being in the project mostly concerned how they can make a profit from it, and they were less pre-occupied with the aspect of the transfer of traditional skills to the younger generation. In view of the critical economic situation of some of the communities this is a totally understandable position, but whether these communities should be part of such a project, and whether they have the potential for developing its sustainability in the future is more doubtful.

4.6 Sustainability

In order to answer the question of the sustainability of the project we must define sustainability both in terms of temporality and content. The most important criterion for sustainability, both in the eyes of the beneficiaries and the donors, seems to be that the project is viable in the future without

outside support. We further define outside support as support from the external donor, in this case NAMAS. The Ministry of Education, Karas Region, is thus regarded as an internal actor, and support from the Ministry will be accounted for as a prerequisite for sustainability. We further measure sustainability in relation to a focus on the core values of the project – the traditional life-skills. It is also important that there is a core of parent teachers and learners conducting the main activities in the project. On a temporal scale we focus on the short and middle term as it is hard to tell the long-term sustainability of the project. This is related to the ambiguity of external conditions such as markets and policies that influence local conditions and affect the context and framework the project operates within. We define short and middle term up to 5–6 years ahead.

Most of the parent teachers think that the project can be sustainable, depending on some critical factors. The most important one is that the school principals must be more actively involved in the project and show more support of it. The principals must act as a monitoring capacity, and as facilitators at school level. PTs see the strong involvement of principals as a motivation, a link to the MoE, and as guarantee for local support for the project. Further, the involvement of principals gives access to necessary communication services such as fax machines and telephones which are vital for the running of the project.

In our interviews with the principals they expressed a very positive attitude to the project and saw it as an asset to the school. Still, in many schools they are not very involved in the TLSP. Thus, in our opinion they need to be made more accountable for the development of the project. The only way to achieve such an involvement is through strong encouragement and back-up from the MoE. As one interviewee put it:

«The sustainability of the project is totally dependent on the regional office [MoE]. If they keep on being engaged it will be ok.» (Male principal)

At this point in time the MoE are actively engaged in the project, but lack resources to follow up as much as they would like to. Thus by encouraging and facilitating stronger involvement from the principals at each school,

some of these tasks will be delegated to the local level, and a strong link from the MoE to the TLSP will be made through the principals. This will contribute to a stronger formalisation of the project, and will strengthen the possibilities for sustainability. It will also improve the communication flow from the MoE to the communities.

In addition to the involvement of the principals, it is vital for the sustainability of the project to develop the necessary individual and institutional capacity at the local level. This means that individuals must acquire the necessary bookkeeping and accounting skills, and that a transparent and democratic local model of decision-making must be developed. This has to go hand-in-hand with a strengthening of the entrepreneurial side of the project. A stronger focus on commercial activities will not be sustainable if there is no robust and transparent model at the ground level that can cater for expenditures, income and distribution of a possible profit. On the contrary, it can actually be dangerous and counter-productive if these two improvements do not go hand-in-hand.

It must also be noted that not all participants think that the project can be sustainable without outside support. Some of them think that the donation of 1000N\$ each year is essential for purchasing material to work with, and they see little potential in selling and earning enough income to continue the project. This view was communicated from a minority of the interviews, and related to projects that did not perform particularly well. Given the critical economic situation and lack of resources in some of these communities this seems to be a sober view.

Officials at the Ministry of Education were optimistic regarding the sustainability of the project, but would wish for another five-year period with the support of NAMAS. They wanted to hire someone whose post involved overseeing the project when the coordinator is phased out. There is no doubt that this would be good for the daily running of the project in the short term, but it is not obvious if this would contribute to sustainability in the long term, or if it would cement dependence on outside support.

With regards to institutional attachment it might also be worth considering if the responsibility of this project could be divided between the Ministry

of Education and the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport & Culture. As this is an extra-curricular activity which takes place after formal school hours it is also within the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport & Culture. By sharing the responsibility, more human and financial resources from the regional level could be allocated to the project, and it would relieve the burden on the MoE. On the downside, it could lead to pulverization of responsibility if the roles are not well defined.

At the local level a general concern related to the sustainability of the project was the recruitment of parent teachers in general and male parent teachers in particular. In some communities the driving forces among the parent teachers were the grandparents, and they were starting to get quite old. There were few candidates that wanted to take over the responsibility of keeping the project alive when these persons withdrew. In poor communities unpaid work might be seen as an extra burden, for those whose main concern was providing basic needs for the family, and this situation made many parents reluctant to take part in the project. This was in many cases enforced by a non-transparent local organisation, regarding for instance how a possible surplus from the project could be spent. Some of the PTs said that transferring knowledge to the younger generation was not motivation enough. They needed some extra incentives if they were to continue. This could range from small monetary inducements from the surplus of the sale, to having coffee, tea and cakes for the PTs at the sessions.

«Many parent teachers felt that they got nothing back for being in the project, so they lost interest.» (Male parent teacher)

It was also stated from the MoE that the PTs could keep 10 % of the surplus for themselves. However, the PTs had no knowledge about this possibility. This of course points towards the need for better communication, stronger local institutions and stronger local ownership.

The point about receiving incentives was especially strong among the men we interviewed. They pointed to the fact that they had to earn money and could not spend time on projects that did not give anything in return. This seems to be the strongest objection to the project from the men, but some other factors were also mentioned, one of which was that the men were inti-

midated by the strong female presence in the project. They felt alienated and considered the project to be a female-dominated project, something designed and aimed particularly at the female part of the population.

«Some men do not take part in the project because they think it is mainly for women. Women are the leaders and take the decisions. Men are on the outside.» (Male parent teacher)

However, they were not negative to the project in itself and thought it had many good points. Especially teaching the skills of traditional leather work were important. One suggestion was that they should have the possibility to teach the whole process of leatherwork, starting with how to raise sheep and goats, how to slaughter them and finally how to work the hides and pelts into leather products. Some also mentioned that it was good to be in the project because it kept them busy doing something positive in periods when there was no other work to be found. As one male parent teacher expressed:

«The project keeps the men off the streets and from drinking.»
(Male parent teacher)

One of the men we interviewed suggested that it would be good to have one workshop in the project for men only. At such a workshop they could meet and discuss both traditional male life-skills, and also their marginal role as men in the project, and how to recruit more men. In such a workshop they could be free from the female bias the project is facing and probably be able to suggest strategies aimed directly at improving male participation in the project.

4.7 Other effects of the TLSP

Other effects of the TLSP than the ones mentioned above include better communication between the generations and fewer discipline problems in the schools and in the spare time. Several informants also pointed out that keeping the children and youths busy with learning and producing handicrafts reduced the risk that they would indulge in more destructive activities.

«We hear from the schools that there is seldom discipline problems when doing TLSP.» (Official, MoE)

«It is important to keep the children off the streets, so that they don't stay idle.» (Female parent teacher)

It is widely known that the educational system, not only in Namibia, but also in the rest of the world, has a strong bias towards textual and academic skills, and pupils with practical talents and abilities are less appreciated. A positive outcome of this project is that it creates an arena for children who do not perform particularly well in the formal school system. They can learn skills and handicrafts that might give them useful practical knowledge along with self-confidence that can be transferred to other aspects of the curriculum or life in general.

«It is good with some practical work for those who are not academically good.» (Female parent teacher)

We also heard from both the MoE and the principals that they recognised a reduced drop-out level in the schools involved in the project. This positive outcome of the project was attributed to the positive relations that occur between the parents and the schools when the parents are brought into the schools as parent teachers. As mentioned earlier high dropout rates are partly caused by the alienation many indigenous peoples feel in the face of the educational system. At its best this project, by drawing on traditional skills and knowledge can help to counter the alienation local peoples feel in the face of the Western-based educational system. We have not managed to establish statistically if there is a significant fall in drop-out levels in schools attached to the TLSP compared to other schools, because such statistical material could not be provided on school level. It would nevertheless be very interesting to do such an exercise in a quantitative study to see if dropout levels are statistically lower in TLSP schools compared to others. If such a statistical causality could be established it could have implications for educational policies in general, since high drop-out levels for marginalised children is a constant dilemma for educational authorities, and there are few success stories in this field.

Another positive outcome that was pointed out to us was that in quite a few communities the tradition of wearing traditional Nama dresses was on the increase as a direct result of increased traditional pride, and indeed, increased supply through the TLSP. Some places even reported that they could not keep up with the demand, and had running orders for traditional dresses half a year ahead.

Increased traditional pride and focus on traditional skills might also be recognised as a possible long-term impact of the project. Many parent teachers explained that they feared that the Nama culture was slowly dying out in the face of modernisation, and that this project was the only one that really did something to keep their culture alive. This is also one of the main aims of the project, and if the project can contribute to this it will be a substantial impact. Other long-term impacts might be that it can provide a trade for some of the people involved and thus an income-earning possibility in the communities. As many of the rural communities are poor with few income-earning opportunities, this could contribute to local development in the longer term, and also to some extent prevent rural-urban migration. Local empowerment, increased respect between the generations, and better communication between the home and schools might also have positive long term impacts in the communities.

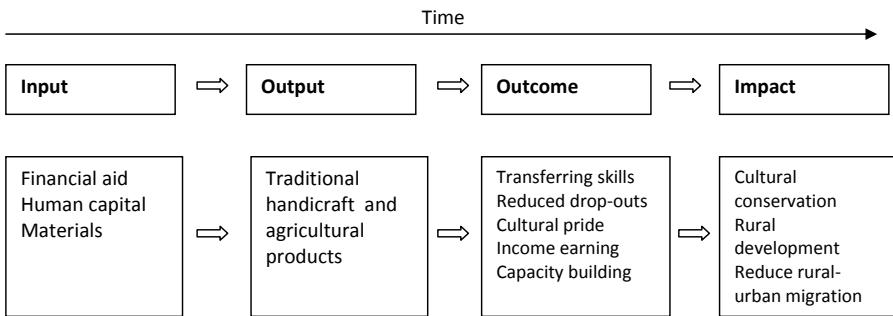
There is a wide range of intended and unintended, positive and negative effects in the local society that such a program can have. In an attempt to clarify this OECD-DAC (2000) defines;

- *inputs* as the financial, human and material resources provided
- *outputs* as the products, capital goods and services resulting from the project
- *outcomes* as the likely or achieved short- and medium-term effects of the outputs
- *impacts* as the directly or indirectly, intended and unintended long-term effects

The effects of this project as broken down to inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts can be summarised as in the model below. The model does not however say anything about the level of the impacts, or about negative outcomes

and impacts such as for instance mistrust that might arise between people in badly run projects.

Figure 3 Effects of the TLSP



5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The TLSP has come a long way since its start in 2004, and many of the initial goals have to some extent been reached. There is no doubt that NAMAS as an organisation, along with the commitment and initiative of the MoE, Karas Region, should have credit for this. At this point it seems as if the future of the TLSP will depend on the development of strong local institutions and a successful merging of traditional life skills with entrepreneurial skills. In order to reach this goal, clearly assigned responsibilities and transparent decision-making processes are important. These points are elaborated further in the conclusions and recommendations under.

5.1 Conclusions

1. The traditional Life Skills Project (TLSP) has been running since 2004, and despite some set-backs in the last year and a half, it has developed into a viable project that has strong support at the regional level. At the local level the project is running well in some communities, while suffering problems in others. This seems to be related to the degree of individual commitment and human resources at each place.
2. The project has the potential of being sustainable in the future due to the strong support from the regional Ministry of Education, and the human

resources that have been released at the local level by the introduction of the project. However, at the local level the potential for sustainability must be thoroughly considered at each particular location. The largest obstacle seems to be the recruitment of dedicated parent teachers. In poor communities unpaid work might be seen as an extra burden, to the main concern of providing basic needs for the family. The recruitment of male parent teachers is also a major problem.

3. We have the strong impression that NAMAS as an organisation is highly regarded by the local partner (Ministry of Education, Karas Region). They express that the support of NAMAS allows them to develop the project in the direction they themselves finds most suitable. NAMAS has contributed to moving the project towards a stronger focus on traditional skills than originally thought, but this is also seen as a positive input, not as a directive. This positive perception of NAMAS is also shared among the members of the working group, and generally among the principals and parent teachers.
4. We have the overall impression that the organisational model is fit for this project and contributes in a positive way to reaching the main aims of the project. The model is transparent and the steering committee acts as a forum where all participants can speak freely and have a say. The biggest challenge is the lack of information and communication from the steering committee and down to the local communities.
5. At the local level a lack of a firm and robust organisational structure is a problem in some communities. It is important that the PTs in a community are able to influence the decisions made in relation to purchase of materials, which products to make, and how to spend a potential surplus. This is not the case in some of the communities today.
6. The coordinator is probably the most important single actor in the project. It is vital for the project that the local communities have confidence in the coordinator, and that the coordinator carries out the tasks in a professional manner. The fulfilment of the coordinator role was unproblematic throughout the first period of the project, but has been object for criticism from the beneficiaries at the local level during the last period.

7. When assessing the level of local ownership we have to make a distinction between ownership at the local level (the school communities) and at the regional level (The Ministry of Education, Karas Region). At the regional level there seems to be high level of ownership of the project. This has been the case ever since the start of the project and can probably be related to the fact that they approached NAMAS and asked for assistances in developing the project. At the local level the pictures is a bit more nuanced and there was significant local variations among the different communities regarding this issue. Some of the communities feel strongly that they have local ownership and a substantial influence on the project in their communities, whilst others expressed little or no feeling of ownership. We also encountered the opinion that local ownership was not especially wanted; some communities wanted material and economic support from the donors much rather than ownership and responsibility.

5.2 Recommendations

1. It is very important for the sustainability of the project that the principals at each school are strongly involved in the project. However, they should not take responsibility of organising, purchasing etc, but rather leave that to the PTs. The principals must act as a monitoring capacity, and as facilitators at school level. PTs see the strong involvement of principals as a motivation, a link to the MoE, and as a guarantee for local support of the project. The involvement of principals gives access to necessary communication services such as the fax machine and telephone.
2. Communication at all levels is paramount and a key factor for the sustainability of the project. At this point it seems as the bottleneck of communications is from the Steering Committee and to the PTs. It is pointed out from some communities that they do not know how the system operates and what decisions that are taken at the meetings.
3. It is highly important that a firm organisational structure at the local level should be developed and implemented in each community. This is essential for building trust and good working relations at the ground level.

Transparency in relation to decision-making and how money is spent and generated at the local level must be a core element in this model.

4. Simple bookkeeping and accounting skills must be taught at the local level; many communities are lacking these skills. This was successfully done in the first years of the project, but now many new communities and parent teachers have joined and they are lacking these skills.
5. It is important that the successful communities share their experiences with the less successful ones. In order to facilitate this we recommend that a system of peer-coaching is developed to enhance the concept of model learning. For instance in relation to accounting and bookkeeping and for developing a local organisational structure, experienced PTs can conduct workshops on these issues. By drawing on the local expertise and knowledge already in the project, this can also empower and give credit to successful projects.
6. It is essential for sustainability that more PTs are recruited to the project. To get more parents involved the whole community needs to be involved and approached. This includes traditional leaders, successful business people, church leaders, traditional healers and other stakeholders in the local community. Practical measures to involve more parent teachers could be certification of committed PTs, social evenings to share information and showcase what learners and PTs are doing⁹, and using cultural festivals arranged at each school to promote and inform about the project.
7. It is important to involve more male PTs in the project. This has been a difficult task right from the start of the project and it has since become worse. It seems as if the men in the project are intimidated by the strong female participation and that they do not feel that they have sufficient ownership of the project. We recommend that one workshop is held annually for men only so they can meet and discuss both traditional male life-skills, and also their marginal role as men in the project and how to recruit more men.

⁹ For instance in //Gabes the PTs collected some small funds from the learners and PTs involved and invited the whole community to a ‘braai’ where they exhibited the products they had made and informed about the project.

8. Since the coordinator will stay only till 2010, we recommend that focus is put on sustainability and the phasing out of the support of the coordinator. It must be made explicit for the PTs that the support of the coordinator will be withdrawn and the consequences this will have. As pointed out earlier, mechanisms in the local communities must be in place in order for the project to continue.
9. At this stage of the project we recommend that the coordinator in agreement with the Steering Group, should start to identify communities that will not be able to continue and that these are withdrawn from the project. It is the aim that all the communities are successful, but it is clear that some communities do not have the sufficient commitment to sustain the project. It is advisable to target the limited financial and human resources available to the communities that show dedication and progress. A high number of communities involved in the project should not be a measure of success; rather a commitment to fewer but high quality projects is recommended to ensure the sustainability of the project.
10. In order to maintain the focus on the original idea of the project – the concept of *traditional* (life skills) – should be emphasised. This is not a rural development program *per se*, but one that aims particularly at keeping the tradition of the Nama people (or other cultural groups) alive. The concept and meaning of ‘traditional life skills’ in this setting should be elaborated and distinguished from other income-earning activities in rural areas. In order to keep this focus we recommend that some documentation on the content of the traditional Nama culture is provided. The planned documentation of traditional Nama medicine in a booklet is thus strongly recommended for extended financial support along with other written documentations of a similar kind.
11. Some of these recommendations have already been mentioned in earlier reports but have not yet been implemented (for instance the providing of certificates to dedicated parent teachers). We therefore highly recommend that a stronger commitment to following up identified problems and solutions is put in place in the future.

12. The link between traditional life skills and entrepreneurial skills is a key for the sustainability of the project. This means that developing a fine balance between commercial interests and traditional values needs to be emphasised. The sustainability of the project depends on a successful merging of these two factors. In this respect an integration of the new entrepreneurship subject in the curriculum, which NAMAS supports, is strongly recommended.

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Annex 1. School communities presently involved in TLSP

Community	School	Old (from 2004) New (joined later)
Tses	St. Therese JSS	Old
Vaalgras	Vaalgras PS	Old
Koichas	Ecumenical Community School	Old
Koës	Adam Steve PS	New
Aroab	Oosterheim JSS	New
Grünau	Gedult PS	Old
Gabis	St. Joseph PS	New
Ariamsvlei	Ariamsvlei PS	New
Warmbad	Michelle Durocher PS	Old
Noordoewer	EHW Baard PS	New
Berseba	Kaisti !Gubeb PS	Old
Berseba	ECS JSC	Old
Kutendoas	Kutendoas PS	Old
Gainachas	JA Kahuika PS	Old
Snyfontain	SC Vries PS	New
Blouwes	Blouwes PS	New
Kosis	JS Herero PS	Old
Aus	Marmer PS	New
Bethanie	Bethanie PS	Old
Bethanie	DC Fredrics PS	Old
Bethanie	Schmelenville JJS	Old

Source: P.T. Titus (Regional Inspector of Education Karas, Region, Chairperson TLSP)

Annex 2: Terms of Reference (ToR) for Traditional Life Skills in Karas Region, Namibia

Introduction

The Namibian Association, Norway was requested to assist the region with the project in 2004. Since then the project has been introduced to more than 20 schools all over Karas Region. It is a joint responsibility between Namas and MoE, in Karas to run the activities.

In this project the parents and grandparents are teaching children traditional life skills and knowledge in the schools during the afternoons. Building on local resources the project creates opportunities for fighting challenges of limited employment opportunities, pressure from urbanization and a growing gap between generations. Through this communities are finding pride in their own background and are keeping the culture alive.

The main aim of the project is to create a focus on the traditional life skills, their practice and customs, and to pass these on to the younger generation.

Furthermore the project seeks to nurture a creative and an entrepreneurial attitude among the learners and equip them with practical knowledge as tools for their future, individual development.

Additionally this project aims to serve as a bridge between the formal school system and the community.

Purpose of this Evaluation

The evaluation will be done on the role of Namibia Association, Norway (NAMAS) in supporting our partner in developing and running the project.

Scope and areas of evaluation:

1. How the project was introduced and developed with the local partner (MoE Erongo Region) and the local communities
2. How the day-to-day running of the project contributed to reaching the main aim
3. The local ownership, at community as well as regional level
4. See how the sustainability of the project is
5. Present suggestions on how to develop the project further, with a special focus on local ownership and sustainability.

Role players to be considered for interview:

- Members of the working group
- Parents teachers
- Representatives of MoE, in Karas

Documents to be consulted:

- Agreement between NAMAS and Ministry of Education
- Materials developed;
- Annual reports
- Minutes from working group meetings
- The questionnaire summary of October 2006

Other:

- Copyright violations and permission to use information in other context is subject to a written agreement and the developers of such information. NAMAS does not accept any responsible for the violation of any copy rights and the use of information and material without approval from the relevant institutions or bodies;
- The final evaluation report should be loaded to appear on the Homepage of Norad;
- The evaluation report should be presented as a draft by 12th of September and a final report by 30th of September

The economical framework for the evaluation is 250.000 NOK.

Annex 3: Interview guide for parent teachers and principals

Personal information:

1. Name:
2. Position:
3. Affiliation with the project:

TLSP:

4. How was the project initiated in this village?
 - Who had the idea
 - How was it developed further etc.
5. Approx how many Parent Teachers involved regularly?
6. Approx how many learners involved regularly?
7. Most conducted activities in ranged order
8. In your view, what is the main aim of the project?
9. In your view, what are the main benefits of the project for the local communities
 - Short term effects?
 - Long term effects?
10. Are there any traditional Nama life skills that are not being taught in the project that should be included?
 - Are there any traditional activities/skills/knowledge that are in the process of dying and that should be emphasised more in the project?
11. What are the main obstacles the project is facing in this place (material, logistical, involvement)
 - How can these be solved?

12. Is the organisational model fit to in order to reach the main aims of the project?
 - How can it be improved?
13. Could the project be sustainable in the future without outside material or financial aid?
 - What can be done to make the project more sustainable?
14. Do you feel you have ownership of the project?
 - What can be done to strengthen local ownership at community level?
15. What is your view on the steering committee meetings?
 - Level of participation and interaction
 - All voices heard?
 - Other?
16. What is your view on the Working group meetings
 - How many annually?
 - Level of participation and interaction
 - All voices heard?
17. Other comments

Annex 4: Interview guide for Administrative staff at MoE, Karas Region

Personal information:

1. Name:
2. Position:
3. Affiliation with the project:

TLSP:

4. How was the project initiated?
 - Who had the idea
 - How was it developed further etc.
5. How many school communities p.d.:
6. Approx how many Parent Teachers involved:
7. Approx how many learner involved:
8. Most conducted activities in ranged order
9. What are the main aims of the project?
10. What are the main benefits of the project for the local communities?
 - Short and medium term effects?
 - Long term effects?
11. What are the main obstacles the project is facing (material, logistical, involvement)?
 - How can these be solved?
12. Is the organisational model fit to in order to reach the main aims of the project?
 - How can it be improved?

13. How would you describe the potential for the project to be sustainable in the future without external material or financial aid?
 - What can be done to make the project more sustainable?
14. How would you describe the level of local ownership in the project?
 - What can be done to strengthen local ownership at community and regional level?
15. What is your view on the steering committee meetings?
 - Level of participation and interaction
 - All voices heard?
 - Other?
16. What is your view on the Working group and the working group meetings
 - How many annually?
 - Level of participation and interaction?
 - All voices heard?
17. Other comments?

Annex 5: The authors

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Mr. Calvin Martin is principal at the Karibib Private School, Namibia. From 2000–2007 he was a curriculum developer on Arts and Culture at the Namibian National Institute of Educational Development (NIED). Mr. Martin is a trained teacher educated and has a diploma in Education Management. He has 11 years of teaching experience in various positions in the Namibian education system.