



*Thuto Isago Trust*

*San children – in or out of school*

# **BASELINE STUDY ON WHY CHILDREN DROP OUT AND HOW TO KEEP THEM IN SCHOOL IN THE GANTSI DISTRICT**

*Prepared by*

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and

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Queen Maud University College, Norway

**MARCH 2011**





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**AUGUST 2011**

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# Acronyms

**BIDPA – Botswana Institute of Development and Policy Analysis**

**BoD – Board of Directors**

**CBOs - Community Based Organisations**

**CBNECESEA- Competence Building Network for Early Childhood Education for Southern and East Africa**

**CKGR- Central Kalahari Game Reserve**

**CSO – Central Statistical Office**

**ECD - Early Childhood Development**

**EFA- Education for all**

**FBOs - Faith Based Organisations**

**GoB-Government of Botswana**

**GD - Ghanzi District**

**KI - Key Informants**

**MoE- Ministry of Education**

**NSA-CBP-Non- State Actors Capacity Building Programme**

**NGOs - None Governmental Organisation**

**OVC- Orphans and Vulnerable Children**

**RAD –Remote Area Dweller**

**RADP- Remote Area Development Programme**

**RNPE- Revised National Policy On Education**

**S & CD – Social and Community Development**

**CSO- Civil Society Organizations**

**TIT- Thuto Isago Trust**

**UNCIEF -United Nations’ Children Emergency Fund**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thuto Isago has been an independent organization operating as a trust since March 2008 working mostly with the communities in Ghanzi District in the Western part of Botswana. Its primary focus has been targeting minority rural marginalized groups in the Gantsi District such as the San by supporting their children to access and successfully complete 10 years of basic education. Thuto Isago Trust exists to support Botswana's Vision 2016 of an educated and informed nation in which all people will be able to have access to quality education and in which no student will be disadvantaged by ethnic origin, gender, language or remoteness of settlement. It perceptibly advocates the Jomtein [1990] Education for all [EFA]. The current partnership with Non- State Actors Capacity Building Programme [NSA-CBP], which started at the beginning of 2010, has been instrumental in Thuto Isago accomplishing its objectives to address the educational problems of children in Ghanzi District, raising the awareness about the importance of education and the dangers of child labour. To date many school dropouts have been identified and registered or enrolled in formal and non-formal education.

In order to pursue their objectives Thuto Isago included in its activities an initiative that would allow a better appreciation of the situation at hand. A baseline survey on the school dropout situation in the Gantsi District was envisaged as relevant for all further action. The overall objective of the Study was to undertake an ample survey of the school drop-out situation in the district, establish clarity on the matter to inform the interventions. This report documents the results of a baseline Study on why children dropout of school in the Ghanzi District, and what can be done to keep these children in school.

The baseline survey is a part fulfilment of the agreement between Thuto Isago and NSA-CBP, responding to the overall objective of the NSA- CBP (2008-2011), to make the formulation and implementation of Government of Botswana (GoB) policies, strategies and Programmes more responsive to the needs of the population, including the marginalized and disadvantaged sections such as remote area dwellers, female headed households and ethnic minorities. The main objectives of this agreement are: to support Botswana's Vision 2016 of an educated and informed nation in which all people will be able to have access to quality culturally sensitive education and in which no student will be disadvantaged by ethnic origin, gender, language or remoteness of settlement<sup>1</sup> by supporting children from the most marginalized groups in the Gantsi District such as the San to access and successfully complete 10 years of basic education and specifically to (re-)enrol children in any form of education and to retain 90 % of (re-)enrolled children in school throughout the project's lifespan and reduce the dropout rate in targeted primary schools. The study is also Thuto Isago's quest to uplift its position in perception of its work dominion.

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<sup>1</sup> Botswana Vision 2016 short document as published on website.

Bokamoso Trust, a local Non-Government organization in Ghanzi focused on Early Education was engaged to undertake the study. Bokamoso in turn involved consultants from its Network, **Competence Building Network for Early Childhood Education in Southern and East Africa** (CBNECESEA), in conducting the study. The first draft of the report was supposed to be submitted to Thuto Isago, mid-July. But due to constraints posed by the prolonged civil-servant strikes that included teachers, schools remained closed during the field work period of the study delaying the process of conducting the survey.

This report is a presentation based on the data collected from Ghanzi District using various methodologies of data collection that included; Key Informant interviews (KI); Group Interviews (GI) ; Semi-structured or Individual Interviews, as well as other interactive data collection methods; book reviews and observations aided by other complementary checklists.

The sampling of specified settlements and locations in Ghanzi for survey was based on the recommendations of Thuto Isago. The report is an original work on the findings for Thuto Isago (TIT) by Bokamoso Trust (BT) and Competence Building Network for Early Childhood Education for Southern and East Africa with the exception of acknowledged authors and publications contained therein. These have however been acknowledged by the references in this document.

The Evaluators/consultants got some very valuable assistance from the Key Informants (KI) including students, parents, teachers and their managements who in one way or the other contributed to the preparation and the finalization of this survey report particularly in the field and in collating information using the designed and approved tools mentioned above. The Key Informants (KI) were identified and interviewed by the Consultant/surveyors. It should be noted however that prior to running this survey the tools were initially securitized and subsequently approved by the surveying team.

The report discusses a number of recommendations that if put in practice, could contribute significantly to school attendance for children in Ghanzi district. The recommendations cover a number of broad areas in relation to children's situation in schools, families and society. It touches on areas related to psycho-social support for children, curriculum development and administrative matters. We hope that the relevant ministries as well as NGOs working in this field will make use of our research findings in improving the education for marginalized children.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction and Problem Statement

1.1 The last population count held in 2001 determined that Botswana held a population of 1.7 million inhabitants, with an annual growth of 2.38%. The census also disclosed that 737,241 of the populace, which translated to 43.37%, comprised children. Of this number:

15% were below the age of 5

13% between 5 and 9

55% were under the age of 10

11% between 10 and 14

17% fell between 15 and 17 and

12% between 15 and 19

44% was below 18 years

That almost half (nearly 800,000) of the population is made up of an age group fewer than 19 clearly indicates that Botswana has an unusually youthful population (UNICEF/CSO2002). The population projections also demonstrate this position (CSO 2001-2031). In Gantsi District, the total population during the last Population Census in 2001 was 32481 of which 38% was between the ages of 5 and 14 years, were 8401: 4120 boys and 4281 girls. Interventions have been fostered by both Government agencies and Civil Society Organizations [CSO] for critical roles in the development in of children. Thuto Isago is one such CSO that has evolved from a district task force addressing issues of out of school youth to a Non-Governmental Organization [NGO] addressing many educational problems of dropouts from Primary and Junior Secondary school.

The Vision 2016 for Botswana confirms the importance of partnership of the Government with civil society and the private sector as a key factor to achieve development targets of becoming a prosperous, just, open, democratic accountable and informed nation. Thuto Isago Trust's aim is to support Botswana's Vision 2016 of an educated and informed nation in which all people will be able to have access to quality culturally sensitive education and in which no student will be disadvantaged by ethnic origin, gender, language or remoteness of settlement<sup>2</sup> by supporting children from the most marginalized groups in the Gantsi District such as the San to access and successfully complete 10 years of basic education. Thuto Isago Trust primarily works to Identify dropouts from Primary and Junior Secondary school in the Gantsi District, re-register and re-enrol

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<sup>2</sup> Botswana Vision 2016 short document as published on website.

Children in formal and non-formal education raise awareness in the communities on the dangers of child labour and the importance of education and provide children with life planning skills and encourage them to stay in school.

Thuto Isago Trust in the years 2005 to 2010 re-enrolled over 800 children in formal school; 285 children from the private farms and the cattle posts in communal grazing areas in Primary schools.<sup>3</sup> Thuto Isago's observations and experience in working with these educational issues has indicated that the enrolment rate of San children in Primary Education is the lowest and of the children enrolled many drop out again in standard 1. The dropout rates among the San children in the Gantsi District are in some Primary schools 30 %. In some Primary School for example has every year 2 standard 1 classes with a total of at least 55 students, while every year the total of Standard 7 pupils who write their PSLE exam is around 20.<sup>4</sup>

In Gantsi District, the total population during the last Population Census in 2001 was 32481 of which around 14000 San, speaking 5 different languages 9000 Bakgalagadi, 3000 Baherero, 3000 Setswana and 1000 Afrikaans speaking people<sup>5</sup>.

The San are thought to have inhabited the Kalahari for several thousand years. Until recently they practised nomadic hunting and gathering. However, their traditional economy has been eroded for many decades by loss of land and access to important natural resources. The rights of the San to land are, in general, rather tenuous. Some keep a few livestock, a few cultivate crops, they hunt and gather; they work for drought relief; but few, or any approach economic self-sufficiency. Employment apathy and alcoholism are prevalent.<sup>6</sup>

Thuto Isago has construed from experiences during its project work and based on other's reports that the San children's education is constrained by three major facts: 1) the first two to three years of school, adapting to routine and separation from parents; 2) the years around puberty when stigmatisation and emotional abuse takes its toll; and 3) during late adolescence when career choices and lack of money become crucial issues.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the poor education of many San Parents deters them from understanding the value of education. The San families traditionally live in the most remote areas on farms and cattle posts throughout the Gantsi District preventing their easy access to education.

The purpose of this baseline study was for Thuto Isago to find why children drop out in Gantsi, informed by the school children, their parents and the teachers in the District. The aim was to undertake applied research on the reasons children drop out of school to provide the relevant stake

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3 Culturally Sensitive Education for All: [2009] Non-State Actors Capacity Building Programme :9 ACP BT 007 (9th EDF): Thuto Isago

4 Culturally Sensitive Education for All: Non-State Actors Capacity Building Programme :9 ACP BT 007 (9th EDF): Thuto Isago

5 S. Hasselbring. Sociolinguistic survey of the languages of Botswana, Volume I. Basarwa Languages Project, 2000

6 Ghanzi District Development, Plan 6: 2003-2009

7 Ghanzi District Development, Plan 6: 2003-2009

holders with the basic information and recommendations needed for planning of schools and improving the access of the vulnerable communities in the district.

## 1.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

As a background for the, study information was collected, literature, and other recourses about the situation of primary education and access in the district. Bokamoso worked with two consultants: professor Gunnestad and Mrs. Gunnestad from Queen Maude's' University College and Thomas Skollen in Norway whose experience in research studies is wide. Bokamoso Trust has been working with San issues on Early Childhood Education for over sixteen years.

The overall objective of the Study was to conduct a baseline study on why children dropout of school in the Gantsi District. The Terms of Reference [TORs] were:

- Review existing reports from Thuto Isago Trust
- Identify missing areas of focus in methodology
- Review literature material available concerning education from past studies
- Review and analyze the questionnaires provided by Thuto Isago Trust
- Conduct a mini survey sampling on the following on the following locations: Settlements namely New Xade and Grootlaagte, villages namely Kuke and D'kar, farms namely Eaton and John Kempf-and two wards in in Gantsi Township being Bosele and Morama and the educational sector
- Draw conclusions and make recommendations
- Compile a report

In addition to the above listed TORs the consultant was expected to consider the following areas and make recommendations when making the final report:

- Whether children value education
- Relationship between a teacher and a child in school environment
- How involved are the community leaders on education issues
- Teachers attitudes regarding working in Gantsi District
- Children left alone to take care of themselves during school days while parents works in the farms
- Parents lack of involvement in their children's educations
- Government policies

## 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET GROUP

Thuto Isago Trust addresses educational problems of all children within the Gantsi District but recognizes that the San children are the most disadvantaged and marginalised group in this area.

Botswana like many other countries in the African region displays a wealth of diversity in ethnic groups. Out of all the ethnic groups in Botswana, the oldest and most striking are the San people or Basarwa, an indigenous minority group that are believed to have existed for more than 30,000 years. Botswana has the largest number of San people in the region, presenting numbers of up to 50,000. For most of this minority group, their present locations are result of massive loss of their traditional means of resourcefulness, in transitions and policies.

Although they share backgrounds and common experiences, the San ethnic groups are distinctly known by their languages; for example Naro, Khwe and Ju|'hoansi to name a few, with few similarities at times. From observed common behaviours and practices of these indigenous people, non-San people have come up with different names for them such as 'Bushman' from their preferred natural habitation or 'Basarwa' as they are commonly called in Botswana. However, having met in cross-border conferences in a recent development, this indigenous group agreed to call themselves 'San' (WIMSA, 1997.) This self chosen name, originating from Hottentots, means 'those who gather wild food'.

San people in the region have been the subject of much anthropological study as an indigenous minority group, but little attention has been accorded to writing or studying their languages. However, in Botswana, although recently there has been National effort<sup>8</sup> to address the diversity of languages in the country and advocate for mother- tongue approach learning, especially in early years; nothing has been implemented yet. The latest efforts towards the uplifting and encouragement of the use of minority languages in learning, reflected in the nationally acclaimed vision 2016; a national strategy for national development that in education advocates for *National Prosperity for All*. It states that, *No Motswana will be disadvantaged in the education system as a result of a mother tongue that differs from the country's two official languages*, (Botswana.1997.) The national focus is on Setswana and English. Setswana, which is a lingua franca is used by about 70%<sup>9</sup> of the population and therefore generally understandable by the majority of the population of Botswana considerably, depicts the everyday life of individuals living in urban and some rural areas.

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<sup>8</sup> RNPE[1994] Revised National Policy on Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana

<sup>9</sup> Report: Barkered, Hanemann , Maruatona[2003]Consultancy on the Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme; Botswana;

The world renowned fame of the San people emanates largely from their hunter and gatherer lifestyle. For many centuries, San People have existed by hunting and gathering, living on the bounty and excess of the land for survival while displaying their own very skilful use and management of their natural resources. However, their traditional economy has been worn for many decades by loss of land and access to their important natural resources. Though different in their lifestyle, views and practices, in relevance to 'development'; their needs are diluted in the blend of cultures in assimilative approaches most post colonial governments have adopted towards development. Most San people today have no modern skills, nor enabling environment to practice their traditional ones to earn a living in a modern and highly economically competitive society. Some keep a few livestock, a few cultivate crops, they hunt and gather; they work temporal casual jobs when available; but few, or any approach economic self-sufficiency. Employment apathy and alcoholism are prevalent.<sup>10</sup> For most San people support to their children's education comes through the government's Remote Area Dwellers Program [RADP].

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<sup>10</sup> Ghanzi District Development, Plan 6: 2003-2009

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 Operational Context of Thuto Isago

#### 2.1 ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

In 1999 a Task Force on Out of School Youth was established as a substructure of the Gantsi District Youth Council, consisting of representatives from Government Departments (S&CD, RADP, Primary Education, Non-Formal Education) and NGOs (Permaculture Trust, Komku, Bokamoso Trust, Ghanzi Brigade).

The Task Force from May 2004 till December 2005 with funding partnership of Bernard van Leer Foundation in the Netherlands through Komku Development Trust in D'kar purchased and operated a preschool for San children and a Non-Formal Education group who are squatting on the outskirts of Gantsi. Other activities were to identify dropout children in Gantsi Township and registering them for re-enrolment in school.

In 2005 the Task Force on Out of School Youth by request from BNYC became the implementing partner of the RECLISA (Reducing Exploitative Child Labour in Southern Africa) Project of the U.S. Department of Labour (DoL) in the Gantsi District as the attendance rate in school was the lowest in the country and children staying on farms were perceived as in danger of being used for child labour.

March 2008 saw the official registration of Thuto Isago Trust as a Trust in Botswana, after the closure of the RECLISA project in August 2008 Thuto Isago Trust with a new funding partner, UNICEF until December 2009. There after funding partnership has been with the NSA- CBP. Thuto Isago is housed in the Youth Centre of the Botswana National Youth Council in Gantsi.

Thuto Isago Trust primarily works to:

- Identify dropouts from Primary and Junior Secondary school in the Gantsi District.
- Re-register and re-enrol children in formal and non-formal education.
- Raise awareness in the communities on the dangers of child labour and the importance of education.
- Provide children with life planning skills and information on HIV/AIDS and encourage them to stay in school.

## 2.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THUTO ISAGO'S WORK

Gantsi District is a unique area with a population comprised of various ethnic groups: The total population of Gantsi District during the last Population Census in 2001 was 32481 of which around 14000 San, speaking 5 different languages, 9000 Bakgalagadi, 3000 Baherero, 6000 Setswana and 500 Afrikaans speaking people.<sup>11</sup> The San languages and cultures differ the most from mainstream Tswana culture and from Setswana, resulting in a communication gap between teachers and children in the lower classes of Primary School. There is a language gap between teachers and parents as well: San parents feel their Setswana is not sufficient to discuss the problems their children have in school and react in withdrawing their children from the education system that according to them alienates their children from themselves and their own culture.

The San community is the most disadvantaged and marginalised group within Botswana. They have the highest rate of poverty (over 80 % lives below the poverty line) and of illiteracy in the Gantsi District (of the Naro adults interviewed in 1995 65 % never attended school, Tcg'aux'ae 88%,Dxana 75%,Dcui 86% and Qgoo 77% compared to 37 % of population age 20 years and up countrywide during Census 2001)<sup>12</sup>.

Due in large part to the constant mobility of the families, children are often left on surrounding farms, settlements or hostel schools while parents move to the squatters' camps in Gantsi Township, drawn there in hopes of finding work. It is also perceived that children left in hostel schools are usually unhappy with their situation: bullying and abuse are very common due to lack of supervision in the hostels. Children living on farms are also said to face the additional challenge of child labour; they and their parents often feel it is more important to become part of the workforce in order to earn money at the earliest possible age, which could lead to education often not viewed as relevant. These reasons could be responsible for large numbers of school dropouts among San Children.

Under this cloud this cloud it should also be assumed that children who have dropped out from school also do not receive HIV/AIDS education, life skills and behaviours change lessons.

Thuto Isago has seen the urgent need to re-enrol and re-register many of these children back into formal schooling. In the past four years TIT has re-enrolled over 700 children in school. Still there are many more children who are not attending school. According to the Botswana Population Census of 2001 children aged between 5 and 14 years, were 8401: 4120 boys and 4281 girls.

Firstly of the total population *5,377 people lived on the so called non-affiliated localities, the private farms*. An unpublished study by the Farm workers Project in cooperation with the Applied Research

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<sup>11</sup> (based on findings in S. Hasselbring. *A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Languages of Botswana, Volume I. Basarwa Languages Project, 2000*) P.75 .

<sup>12</sup> (S. Hasselbring. *A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Languages of Botswana, Volume I. Basarwa Languages Project, 2000*) P.77 .

<sup>12</sup> Ghanzi District Development, Plan 6: 2003-2009

<sup>13</sup> Ghanzi District Development, Plan 6: 2003-2009

Unit of the Ministry of Local Government where all people residing on the 218 farms in the Gantsi Farm block were interviewed, found that during the third school term in 1999, found that 64 % of children aged 6-10 (193 boys and 156 girls) and 54% of children aged 11-15 (116 boys and 87 girls) were not schooling, a total of 552 children! (To compare: according to the Census in 2001 65 % of all children in Botswana aged 5-9 was in school and 93% of children aged 10-14.)

Secondly according to the Population Census of 2001, there were around 5000 people staying in so called associated localities, which are cattle posts in the communal grazing areas: studies about the attendance rate of children in these areas have never been conducted. Thuto Isago Trust however visited cattle posts in the Hanahai valley in October 2007 and found 25 dropouts and children who had never been to school. From previous experiences, Thuto Isago Trust can assume that the situation on the other so called associated localities is the same as on the cattle posts near West Hanahai, meaning that there could be over 200 children not in school in these areas.

Thuto Isago Trust in the years 2005-2009 (re-) enrolled 285 children from the private farms and the cattle posts in communal grazing areas in Primary schools. Furthermore RADP opened in January 2005 a fifth hostel in New Xade with a capacity of 216 beds. However, this hostel accommodates not only children from the farms but also many San children who are dropouts from schools in the RAD settlements or from Gantsi Township and replaced beds in the congested hostel of D'kar. Therefore, the total amount of children from the private farms and cattle posts not in school could very well still be over 400. Adding the dropouts in Gantsi Township, the settlements and villages leads to the conclusion that *in the whole district the total amount of children aged 6 to 15 not in school could be well over 600.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 Earlier Research and Studies in Area with Thuto Isago

#### 3.1 THUTO ISAGO SURVEY OF CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 5 AND 16 NOT IN SCHOOL IN GANTSI DISTRICT

In 2009 Thuto Isago Trust conducted a study survey of children aged between 5 and 16 not in school in Gantsi District based on a an indication from their registration exercise that children from remote areas tend to drop out repeatedly and that others never went to school even when they had been registered for enrolment. Gantsi District has the highest percentage of people who never attended school according to Thuto Isago report of 2009.

The percentage of the population that never attended school in towns and cities is much lower than in rural districts. In the towns and cities the percentage of populations two years and over that never attended ranges from 7.4% in Orapa to 15.7% in Lobatse, with an overall rate of 11.9%. In rural districts, the percentage ranges from 21% to 40% with Ghanzi having an overall of 33.9 percent (Thongwana in Thuto Isago, 2009). Against this backdrop, the 2009 survey (Thuto Isago, 2009) recorded total number of 496 out of school children. Between 2005 and 2009, 700 children have been re-enrolled in formal school by Thuto Isago. The rate for out of school children has been very high. This survey strongly recommended a follow-up study to establish why so many children drop out or stay away from school in Ghanzi District.

The survey was conducted in collaboration with RADP and registered children aged between 6 and 15 not in school on the farms of Gantsi, Kanagas and Noncjane farm blocks and cattle posts in the communal grazing areas as well as in some Remote Area Development Settlements in the District [Kacgae, Bere, Chobokwane and New Xade].The children registered either had dropped out or had never attended school. Throughout the year, Thuto Isago had also continuously registered children in the areas of Gantsi Townships, D'kar, Kuke and West Hanahai.

In total 202 children between the age of 5 and 16 had been registered in 2009.

All data collected were entered in the student Track System of Thuto Isago Trust (an access database). Combined with the children registered by the organisation during the years 2005 to 2008 who never went to school, the total number of out of school children was 496 of which 225 were female and 271 male divided over grade and sex as follows;<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Thuto Isago[2009]: Report on Survey of Children aged between 5 and 16 not in school in Gantsi District.

**CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN DECEMBER 2009 PER GRADE AND SEX**

GRADE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
1	151	156	307
2	30	36	66
3	14	29	43
4	9	17	26
5	13	10	23
6	3	8	11
7	1	4	5
8	0	5	5
9	2	1	3
10	2	4	6
TOTAL	225	271	496

The highest number of children registered as not in school could be found in the squatting areas of Gantsi Township [with an approximate population of 10,000]: The table below shows the distribution over areas:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Thuto Isago Report [2009]: Report on Survey of Children aged between 5 and 16 not in school in Gantsi District.

## CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL PER AREA

AREA	NUMBER
Gantsi Township	66
Farm Area 50	59
Farm Area 92	51
D'kar	40
Farm Area 70	37
Farm Area 80	34
Farm Area 102	26
Farm Area 120	25
Okwa Valley	20
Farm Area 112	16
Chobokwane	16
Hanahai Valley	13
Ncojane/Metsimantsho Farms	12
New Xade	11
Kacgae	11
Bere	11
Grootlaagte	10
Kalkfontein Farms	8
CKGR	7
Farm Area 60	6
Farm Area 111	5
Makunda Farms	5
Kanagas Farms	4
Qabo	2
Charles Hill Farms	1
TOTAL	496

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 Other Earlier Studies in the Area

#### 4.1 BACKGROUND

The research included an extensive literature review of educational problems of children in the District especially San children who are from the most disadvantaged and marginalised group in this area. Some of these are *Torn Apart and San children as change in a process of acculturation*, [1999] W. Le Roux; *A comparative study of the culture of two minority groups: the San people of Botswana and the Travellers in Norway* by Larsen and Nguluka (2007); *Resilience in minorities. Journal of Intercultural Communication*, ([www.immi.se/intercultural](http://www.immi.se/intercultural)) Gunnestad, Larsen and Nguluka (2010)., The purpose was to review books and study reports to compare what has been concluded by other researchers on the education of the San and related issues. This was done in order to generate useful insights that would provide an in-depth understanding and sound basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations. Literature reviews focused on, amongst others, identifying some reasons why children especially the San dropout of school, mitigations, strategies and actions taken before to address the problems. Review of these documents was critical in demonstrating the extent of the problem of education for the San children and to suggest what is crucial to address the problem.

#### 4.2 SAN SITUATION

The situation with San access to education has been a matter of interest for quite some time. Although San people over the whole of Southern Africa have started to enter formal education in their countries several decades ago, only few of them register high tertiary qualifications. Problems of high dropout rate school of San children have registered with much concern for a long time in school. Literature reviews reflected on related studies already undertaken by other researchers, academics, or stakeholders in San education and development issues; for example, Kuru Family of Organizations which has been a lead organization in addressing the developmental needs of San people in Botswana, RADP, Thuto Isago, Botswana government policies and International conventions such as; *Early Education For All*<sup>15</sup>; *The Child – Vulnerable and Resourceful*<sup>16</sup>; *African Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Development Among Pastoralist and Hunter*

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<sup>15</sup> Network for Preschool Teacher Training and Preschool Development in Southern Africa [2005], Report for A regional Conference, Zanzibar, Tanzania

<sup>16</sup> Network for Preschool Teacher Training and Preschool Development in Southern Africa [2005], Report for A regional Conference, Zanzibar, Tanzania

*Communities in Africa*<sup>17</sup> *Multilingualism in Education and Communities in Southern Africa*<sup>18</sup>; etc However, these were cautiously considered in order to avoid being misled by their findings and the contexts in which they were made. The idea was to borrow ideas and insights that could add value to this study in view of the fact that most of the studies were focusing on similar concerns.

#### 4.3 SAN CHILDREN AS CHANGE AGENTS IN A PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION

There has been a strong advocacy in researches before for culturally sensitive education for the San people. Le Roux (1999) found that San parents and communities preferred an education system that reflected San culture and knowledge systems for identity and as a basis for their children's educational success. It was noted that the San learner experiences three distinct crisis periods: 1) The first two [even three] years of the San child in formal school to be mostly traumatic and culturally alienating; 2) Around puberty-10-14 years-the age for San boys and girls when the difference between their cultural background and school environment manifests itself clearly; and 3) The period between Junior secondary and senior secondary when faced with prospects of tertiary and career and financial assistance became crucial. These crisis periods were compounded by extenuating factors found among the San such as helplessness and dependency, poverty, language and cultural barriers, conflict of traditional skills and knowledge with modern, abuse and discrimination. The recommendations proposed comprehensive reviews of San learner's situation by the government, leading to critical strategic programs to address the education of San children holistically. There were strong implications for government to involve parents, Non-governmental organizations working with San, researchers, communities and other stakeholders for support policies and actions to improve the situation. These findings by Le Roux were also to assist Kuru Development Trust in programs and projects as part of a holistic approach adopted by the organization to the socio- economic needs of the San.

Courtnage [2010] categorizes similar findings as Le Roux [1999], enumerating the factors as inequalities: 1) in socioeconomic status; 2) in distance travelled to attend school and 3) due to teaching in dominant Tswana culture versus marginalized cultures. The San child is usually a victim of all three. There is a strong recommendation by Courtnage for government to tap on the Non-governmental organizations successful pilot programs for informed decisions and policies on how support to the San child's educational problems have been mitigated. A further suggestion for decentralized and localized decisions and activities on education by government would prevent the detrimental effects of the assimilative 'one size fits all'; programs that do not support unique groups such as the San people.

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<sup>17</sup> Bernard Van Leer 2003, *African Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Development Among Pastoralist and Hunter Communities in Africa*; Regional Conference, Kenya

<sup>18</sup> UBTRMOSO (2009): *Multilingualism in Education and Communities in Southern Africa*, Regional Conference, Gaborone, Botswana

Komku Trust [2010] made akin findings, on a San child's barriers to education and emphasized poverty and lack of parental support for diverse reasons, in their children's education as one of the major contributing factors to children not enrolling in school or dropping out never to return. As much as blame can be laid on government for different situations that bar conducive learning environment for a San, it is every parent's role to see that their child has access to available education.

#### 4.4 WHERE THE JOURNEYS MEET

In a study by Larsen and Nguluka (Larsen and Nguluka 2007), a comparison was made of the situation of the San of Southern Africa and the Travellers who have a nomadic background, of Norway. The intention was to explore how their ways of life, culture, travelling, family life and language affect children's education. The results revealed the critical challenges being faced by these two minority groups with integration and social inclusion have strongly impacted their children's education. There was a clear inference that strategies for innovative programmes were necessary in fostering inclusion of minority groups into education programmes.

The study results showed the importance of cultural identity, but also portrayed such difficulties as fear, marginalization, and transition into modern society. For the San who have been hunters and gatherers until recently, moving away from their traditional lifestyles has proved very difficult. For a people who have thrived on travel, in pursuit of a livelihood; settling down according to modern structures of earning money to buy material things, legal systems rules and authorities has been distressing.

It showed how some of the cultural practices and traditions such as travelling and others that have made them unique have become barriers to their children's access to modern education. Their children have found the new culture, practices and languages in schools and mainstream society strange, far-flung and alienating. For a group of people who vested a lot of attention into family ties and communal relationships, letting their children stay away from them and attending school was difficult and the individualistic modern ways of living in main stream society are problematic. The study showed that San children have often ran away from modern schools, never to return contributing to the total low attainment of high levels of education among San people. Being unique in so many aspects has made them objects of mockery and awe.

Traditionally, the San people have had no need for formal education, as conceptualized in modern terms. Children acquired their indigenous knowledge through their constant interaction with both the adult world and the world around them. They learnt what they needed to know from their parents, older siblings and from the rest of the community. Education took place in everyday activities of adults, sometimes in small groups and sometimes in one to one interaction. Education as it is formally designed in modern ways is a relatively new concept among the San. But were friendlier approaches such as culturally sensitive curricular, structures and strategies have been tried; there has been better access to education by the San

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Overview of Educational Policies and Theories Perspectives

#### 5.1 UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Since 1989 a child's right to education has been acknowledged internationally United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>19</sup>. Botswana is one of the many countries that have ratified the convention, showing its support in protecting the rights of a child. This convention is ratified by close to all countries in the world. It underlines that all children (human beings under the age of 18) are born with fundamental freedoms and inherent rights.

Some of the most relevant articles in the relation to our study are:

- Article 2 stating that "State Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within its jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status..."
- Article 3 stating that "the best interest of the child" should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.
- Article 28 stating the right of the child to education and equal opportunities
- Article 30 stating that children from minority or indigenous groups should not be denied to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.
- Article 32 recognize the right of the child to be protected from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

In response to these and other articles many governments have enacted legislation, created mechanisms and put into place a range of measures to ensure the protection and realization of the rights of those under 18.

#### 5.2 EDUCATION FOR ALL

The World Declaration on Education for All, in Jomtein, Thailand,[ 1990], expressed an International community's collective commitment to pursue a broad based strategy for ensuring that the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult are met within a generation and sustained thereafter. Ten years later, after this declaration was made, an assessment of the progress so far made was done in Dakar, Senegal. Though the vision for universal education was seen to have remained strong,

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<sup>19</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the child in Child friendly language as published by UNICEF

its attainment thus far, fell short of desired levels; “Millions of people still do not have adequate access to basic education and its desired intentions.” (Dakar, Framework of Action, UNESCO, 2000).

Strong in the Dakar Framework of action is the recommendation that advocates that;

“Starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, the learners of twenty-first century will require access to high quality educational opportunities that are responsive to their needs, equitable and gender-sensitive. These opportunities must neither exclude nor discriminate. Since the pace, style, language and circumstance of learning will never be uniform for all, there should be room for diverse formal or less formal approaches, as long as they ensure sound learning and confer equivalent status,” (Dakar Framework of Action.2000)”

The circumstances of the San child may well be covered under this description.

### 5.3 BOTSWANA’S VISION 2016

Botswana has one of the most successful formal education systems in Africa, claiming almost universal basic education of up to ten years. However, as part of the government’s *Vision 2016*, Botswana has set the following ambitious goal for itself; the national Vision states:

*By the year 2016, Botswana will be an educated and informed nation. All people will be able to have good-quality education that is adapted to the needs of the country. Schooling will be universal and compulsory to the secondary level. Good quality vocational and technical training will be available at secondary level and beyond as an alternative to academic study.’*

*‘Botswana’s wealth of different languages and cultural traditions will be recognised, supported and strengthened within the education system. No Motswana will be disadvantaged in the education system as a result of a mother tongue that differs from the country’s two official languages.’<sup>20</sup>*

This drive towards becoming ‘an educated and informed nation’ has been impeded by the lack of attainment in the mainstream education system of a number of vulnerable communities with special educational needs. Some of them it is because of cultural diverseness such as the indigenous San who are the most conspicuous. These groups, being former hunter-gatherers, have been negatively affected by the developments in the country due to different in play. The pastoralist-favoured land division in the country and the Tswana-based leadership hierarchy has also marginalised them to the extent that it is generally agreed that the San are the poorest and most vulnerable group in the country. It is now also clear that the lack of achievement of the majority of San learners in the mainstream formal education system militates against their effective integration into and participation in the mainstream Botswana national community.

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<sup>20</sup> Vision 2016 a long term Vision for Botswana printed 1997. Page 5

## 5.4 NATIONAL REVISED POLICY ON EDUCATION

Botswana like many developing countries is a country in transition with stakes entrenched in its educational system with demands from its economy for higher levels of education and skills. The goals of the revised national policy on education are to prepare Botswana for the transition from a traditional agro-based economy to the industrial economy that the country aspires to be.<sup>21</sup> The common strategy for most African countries that experienced apartheid systems before is to offer social services, which includes education, in egalitarian, non discriminative ways. Botswana is surrounded by such and has followed suit. It is necessary that the homogeneous process intended to solve problems of discrimination in Botswana should not adversely create a new problem of alienation for others and impede educational access. Children with special cultural and socioeconomic needs should have their situation recognized and have them addressed uncompromisingly.

## 5.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

The last population count held in 2001 determined that Botswana held a population of 1.7 million inhabitants, with an annual growth of 2.38%. The census also disclosed that 737,241 of the populace, which translated to 43.37%, comprised children. There is a lot of attention and investment needed for such a high number of children.

There are many achievements made by Botswana in development since its independence from foreign rule. It has a one of the highest per capita GDP in the Sub-Saharan nations<sup>22</sup>; however this income is not necessarily available to all households. Although there has been some gradual decrease in there was a record of 30% [2001] of households falling lower to 36% [2004]. This suggests that there is still a large number of Botswana that fail to provide adequately for their families food, housing shelter and basic services. This group therefore maybe looking to government for financial and services support.

Botswana has a high priority for education; with mostly free education for its citizens. The efforts of the government have attained a 95% school according to the 2001 census. Although the educational statistics are good, there is a strong variation between different situations. Children who live in rural areas and those in households near or in poverty are not necessarily prepared for schooling and may not be fully utilizing the educational opportunities before them. In the towns and cities the percentage of population 2 years and over that never attended school ranges from 7.4% in Orapa to 15.7% in Lobatse. In the rural districts, the percentage ranges from 21% in the South East to 40% in

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<sup>21</sup> The Revised National Policy on education-April 1994

<sup>22</sup> CIA World Fact book

Gantsi.<sup>23</sup> Children who come from social and culturally marginalized communities may also not be have adequate access to the provided educational services.

In collaborative effort with RADP to register and re-enrol children in Gantsi the data collected enough information to show that, 'children from remote areas tend to drop out repeatedly and others never went back to school.'

Children should enjoy their basic human rights as articulated in the UN conventions of the rights of a child. However upholding these rights in the face of cultural constraints, poverty and unemployment, child neglect, different forms of child abuse, alcohol problems and HIV prevalence places many children at the risk of not having access to education.

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<sup>23</sup> ThongwanaForcheh,p4

## CHAPTER SIX.

### 6.0 Methods used in the study

#### 6.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the purpose of establishing why many San children drop out of school and what can be done to make them stay in school. The decision to take on this survey was a result of an earlier survey conducted by Thuto Isago about children aged 5 to 16 not in school, in November 2009. From Thuto Isago's experience in working to address the educational problems of San children in Gantsi District, there was some information about the situation.

#### 6.2 RESEARCH METHODS

From earlier studies we already knew that dropping out of school was a problem among San children. In this study we wanted to go closer and deeper into the problem. We decided to do a *qualitative study* involving those who had direct experience with the problem: children who had dropped out of school, parents of such children and teachers in schools with many San children.

#### 6.3 INTERVIEWS INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

We decided to use semi-structured interviews with a premade interview guide to make sure we got necessary and important information; as much as possible got answers on the same question from all informants, but with opening for the interviewee to bring in other elements that he or she saw important. We developed separate interview guides for the three groups so that they could share their experience of the situation (see attachment 2). We mostly used focus group interviews of 2-5 in each group. For the children this seemed positive as they were all school drop outs and felt support from each other in front of the interview team. It also helped them to explain more as they could comment on each other's views and as well come with different experiences and explanations. The same seemed to apply to parents and teachers.

We interviewed children and parents in four settlements and two farms and children also in Gantsi Township. We interviewed teachers in four settlements and in Gantsi Township.

People were interviewed in different situations; in the informal context, out in the open, people's homes, in some one's compound, under a tree, or in a more formal situation sitting in a room with a formal arrangement. Most of the interviews took place in a group setting. All the informants consented to participate and they were guaranteed anonymity.

The research team consisted of 4 people, two from Bokamoso and two from the Competence Building Network. One of the Bokamoso staff led the interviewing while others took notes.

## 6.4 PREPARATION

Preparations were made before hand on the methodology. We had got at set of questions from Thuto Isago that the group adjusted and refined them in relation to the three groups to be interviewed. The leader of the team ensured that ample guidance was given on questioning techniques, identifying interviewees, methods of recording data, recaps etc

## 6.5 SAMPLING AND LOCATIONS OF STUDY

Sampling procedures for which locations to take were advised by Thuto Isago based on their experience with the communities in the area. Eight locations had been identified for the study. Four settlements were chosen, namely New Xade, Grootlaagte, Kuke and D'kar were chosen; Gantsi Township in two locations Morama and Bosele as well as two farm communities.

In some cases children run away when they saw strangers coming. It was a great help to have a San person with us who in some cases worked as a door opener both to children and parents. All together we interviewed 28 children, 15 parents, 20 teachers and 1 teacher aid.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## 7.0 Findings

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was aimed at finding out why children especially the San drop out of school and what would make them to stay in school. The study has been a follow-up on the recommendation made by Thuto Isago after the Survey of children aged between 5 and 16 years of age not in school in Gantsi District. Thuto Isago was already aware of some of the reasons why children drop-out of school but wanted a more in-depth study to be conducted with pupils, parents and teachers to establish the reasons and thereafter come up with recommendations to increase retention of pupils in the rural areas of Botswana.

### 7.2 ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION

Although there could be many strong causes for children dropping out of school or their poor access to education, the team wanted first to establish what role the attitude towards education may play in this situation.

#### 7.2.1 CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION

Children indicated their interest in school. There was a clear articulation by almost all the children that they thought school was important. When asked why, we got statements like:

*“ You learn, you can get a job, you can read, use your hands, you can become a nurse, I can build my house. I can get education.” (Boy from a settlement)*

*“You can be a nurse or a teacher or a police”*

*“You go to class and you learn to write. (Girl from a farm)*

It seems the children have got the understanding that school is important for their future life. If they should be able to get somewhere in life, they need education.

In one of the settlements 3 girls answered, “Yes, school is important”, but upon asked why, they say:

*“School is not important. We are always beaten by teachers,”*

*“It is not okay. We are also beaten by other children,”*

*“It is not okay, we are bullied”*

Some boys in the settlement and Gantsi Township came out with similar contentions. It seems they know education is important, but they do not want to accept it as important because of the difficulties they experience in school in trying to get it; such as being harassed by teachers or other children. We will come back to this when we discuss why children leave school. Therefore, there

children. We will come back to this when we discuss why children leave school. Therefore, there were no doubts about the importance of school. It was the contextual factors that constitute the hardships they experience in try to get educated that maybe making it undesirable.

### 7.2.2 PARENTS' ATTITUDES

All parents viewed education as important and a prerequisite to personal and resource-skills development. Here are some of the statements of parents:

*"It is important to attend school... I am not educated, but I want him to be educated so that he can have a job." (Father from a settlement, Grootlaagte)*

*"It is very important to learn and be educated. She can have a life, a job and do important things." (Mother, Eaton farm)*

*"Very important... If you do not go to school, you are just like a dog, no life." (Mother, New Xade)*

Parents seem to have a similar view as the children; they know it is important for their children to get an education to have opportunities for jobs in the future. However, it is one thing to know this in theory; it is another thing when only few of the parents have finished school, and many of them have no jobs to relate the issue practically. They cannot be role models for their children, and they cannot speak from their own experience on how to go about it.

Frustration and disappointment were evident when they talked about their children's non-attendance of school but viewed the situation as if the situation was controlled by forces beyond their control.

There was a sense of helplessness when enumerating the barriers preventing their children from attending school. School appeared to be a strong force that presented many problems they had no ready solutions to. Perhaps again many, of them not having acquired reasonable education or no educational at all have no experience with how school should work and when it fails how it can be supported to work. As a result many parents presented the government as the ready solution to all their children's educational needs and did not clearly perceive their own role in it as parents.

Many parents testified that they did not go back to the school to find out why their children had come back home from school, showing that the child's word on the matter and the teacher's decision were taken without further interrogation.

### 7.2.3 TEACHER'S VIEW ON PARENT'S ATTITUDES

We interviewed teachers from two settlement schools and from two village schools. We asked about the attitude of parents in relation to their children's school work. Most teachers felt that the parents did not give ample care and support to their children to overcome the hardships they experience during their school lives.

One teacher said:

*“San parents never visit the school, very few come when invited to sort out problems concerning their children. They never collect school reports. Even when they come, there is very little communication with them because of the language.”*

Many teachers mentioned that the parents did not attend PTA meetings. The teachers thought it would be very helpful for the children if they did. They also often do not show up to collect school reports; one parent could go to collect reports for 5 children from different families. The language problem is one of the main reasons for lack of involvement and cooperation.

Another teacher also pointed out on lack of ability among parents to assist:

*“They do not contribute to the education. When you tell them about the results, they don’t understand what you say. When you give homework, parents cannot help. They do not know, and they cannot read. And they are drunk.”*

Here again it seems the language seems to be a main contributing factor: the parents do not understand what the teacher says, and they cannot read. This is a serious problem. There should be an interpreter present in all PTA meetings where San parents are expected to participate. The lack of education among San parents is a great challenge to teachers and the school system at large.

The problem of drunkenness among parents was also mentioned as a contributing factor to lack of support from parents. This we could even observe as we went around visiting parents. Some of them were drunk early in the morning or early afternoon time. Problems with alcohol strongly affect the parents’ ability to assist and support their children.

A san lady commented on the situation in this way:

*“These people are Basarwa like me. But they just go out and drink beer the whole day, when they come back they start fighting. They shout and fight the whole night and then in the morning they leave to go and drink more beer. Look at the place they live in, it is so dirty, they don’t care! They take the food which they are given by council for being destitute and for the orphan children among them but they go and sell it to have money for beer. They never take care of the children to see that they are clean and take them to school.” (From Bosele, Ghanzi)*

One teacher from a village says parents react differently, some pay visits to school, some not.

Most teachers felt that San children have many factors that affect their attendance of school and as a result tend to drop out. All teachers felt that the parents do not give ample care and support to their children to overcome the hardships they experience during their school lives. Parents are new to the system of modern education and do not seem to understand how it should work. A parent can play a paramount role in easing the difficulties the child experiences by meeting the needs of their children and removing their predicaments. Some teachers were also clear on the opinion that it was only the parents who could understand what their children wanted and support them in their education.

Many teachers' reports felt that though genuine their pursuit for employment, San parents move a lot up and down neglecting to provide stable homes for their children. Many San parents here have a 'farm dependency syndrome'. Children tended to follow their parents around leaving school. For those children who attended school poorly and often stayed away, there was no deliberate effort from parents to bring their children back school. The parents seemed to rely on the Social Community Development Department and Remote Area Development Programme to do the chasing up. Some teachers felt that although many parents have come to realize that there is a good life in education, they do not think they can get it for their children. Many teachers thought the parents are indifferent.

*"Parents are drunk. They don't care; they will even hide the children. Sometimes they find excuses. They don't have shoes. Some might have taken their shoes." Teacher*

The teachers suggested that the schools and stakeholders should help the parents with adequate information and sensitization about education, and how parents can help the child who is in school. The parents should see the ones who have been successful from this tribe and should stand up to claim the same for their children. San people who have been successful with education should stand up and be role models and tell others how they managed to do it.

### 7.3 REASONS WHY CHILDREN DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

At this point, we will present the different reasons given for children dropping out of school. We will report how children, parents and teachers look at these reasons.

#### 7.3.1 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOL- [BEATING]

The most common reason children gave for dropping out of school was being beaten by teachers. A number of children interviewed explained how they had been beaten by a teacher for not coming to school on time; or for not sweeping the classroom; or for not being clean in school.

A boy from one of the settlements said:

*'I don't like to be beaten by teachers, or to be pinched by teachers; to be slapped, and beaten with a duster or being beaten with a ruler. They beat you when you come late or you do not clean...The headmaster says we should not be beaten, but the teacher beat us anyway.*

A child sitting next to him commented:

*The government says they should not beat with sticks, but the teachers continue to abuse us.*

A boy that we interviewed in the street said:

Mr. X was beating me. If I hadn't done well in my work, he beat me, and the prefect would also beat me.

A 12 years old boy from another village said:

I did not understand the teacher because of language so I was being beaten.

It looks like beating is common in these schools. There was a clear common reference to the use of beatings by teachers for corporal punishment by almost all the children talked to that dropped out of school. It is mentioned by many of the children and it is one of the first things they mention as a reason for leaving school. To be beaten by a stick or a ruler can be frightening for young children. Corporal punishment is not a part of traditional San methods of upbringing, and this could add to the feeling of fear and humiliation. It is very serious if children are punished for not understanding the language or not being able to do the work well. Beating is not a teaching method!

The Education Act has prescribed how corporal punishment should be administered by the School Head and in moderate terms. There is no recommendation for using corporal punishment for punishing slow learners. Some of the children are aware of how and who should administer the corporal punishment, and they indicated that some of the teachers were abusing them.

Many parents were aware of the corporal punishment situation in the schools. Some of the *parents* also pointed at teachers' beating of children as a reason for them leaving school. A father said:

*"My child left school because he was beaten by the teacher. The teacher is now on transfer, so I talked to my child to go back to school."*

Other parents also complained that their child was not treated well by teachers. The reactions of parents to their children receiving corporal punishment as a form of discipline in school were varied. Where one parent showed concern that his child had been beaten by a teacher which led him to leave school; there after the parent did nothing about it. Another parent admitted that the child left school after being beaten by a teacher, then the father beat the child for leaving school and sent him back to school. There was only one instance of a parent going to follow-up with the school why their child had been beaten.

Only few teachers did refer to beating children for corporal punishment as a cause for their dropping out of school. In one school a teacher mentioned it and in another an assistant teacher testified that children were beaten by teachers because of slow understanding of teacher's explanations in lessons and poor performance in given assignments and tests. According to the assistant teacher sometimes they are beaten because they are not paying attention and there was always the possibility of poor communication between the teacher and the child.

There was a strong testimony by many of the drop-outs of being beaten by teachers. Even if teachers denied any misuse of corporal punishment such as beating a child in the schools, it was confirmed by some parents and teachers. It is not very surprising that the teachers did not so often mention teachers' beating of children as a cause for children dropping out of school. They know that what they do is not according to the Education Act, which states that any corporal punishment should be given by the headmaster and should be recorded. We could not go any further to find out to what extent beating of pupils is happening, but from the responses we have it seems to be a problem that needs to be addressed.

### 7.3.2 BEATING AND BULLYING BY OTHER CHILDREN

Bullying is when a person repeatedly and over time is exposed to aggressive or negative acts from one or more persons. Bullying was given as one of the main reasons for leaving school especially by children in boarding school.

Bullying can be in different forms. One boy reported of how he left school and has never returned after being beaten the big boys put him in a big pot and left him there, tied up. When someone found him finally and freed him, he left the school.

This boy said:

*"I was beaten by older children. Sometimes they put me in a big pot and put on a lid, when they took me out they beat me." (Boy from a settlement)*

Ridicule can be a painful experience for a child:

*"Other children were laughing at me and making fun of me. I was absent for many days because I was ill, and I was taken out of school. Now I am not even interested," (School child in Gantsi)*

The children reported being beaten in school by other children usually older or bigger than themselves. The beating and bullying would be combined with derision for being new, younger or smaller and whatever other reasons in the school. The bullies would often tell their victims to do something for them, when they refused or did not perform satisfactorily would get a beating. A girl of 8 from a farm said this:

*"Other children were troubling me, beating me and eating my food."*

This type of bullying would range from asking the victim to make the bed or cleaning shoes for the offender, surrendering one's food or precious belonging, to even having sex. Bullying was reported in all the schools. Some *parents* acknowledged the existence of mockery and bullying in the school. One parent whose son received a heavy hand at bullying went back to the school authorities and had the matter sorted out. He had to go several times before the matter was under control. The boy stayed on in school and started to perform well. In many cases parents did not follow up and the child dropped out of school.

Teachers agreed that there were different forms of bullying happening in the school. Some teachers acknowledged that bullying did take place; they did not take it seriously. Some said they had gone through some bullying in their school days and it had not made them run away from school.

A few said although bullying was going on in school, these cases were not reported.

A teacher said:

*"There is also a form of bullying going on. They don't report it to the teachers. They are bullied by their mates. When you ask them after they have bully has left school, they will then tell".*

This is very typical for bullying: The victim does not report it to the teachers in fear of being bullied even more. Many children are in this way being bullied for years. In some cases when these incidents were disclosed and reported, the culprits were punished, and the bullying could stop. The bullying certainly did cause more of the children to leave school. There were no other indications of school action plans putting strategies to stop this big problem as reported by the children.

### 7.3.3 SEXUAL ABUSE

Some girls reported that they left their school because of sexual harassment by older boys in that primary school. Two girls were forced to have sex by some older boys in school. When they refused the boys beat them and continued to molest and harass them. They decided to leave school and came and reported to their grandfather who took care of them at the time. The grandfather travelled to go and enquire about the matter from the school but was told that the girls were lying.

A grandfather of two girls told this:

*“They started in D’kar, and they run away from school and came here. After that they took them to Kuke, and they were not treated well by teachers or students. Boys came in the hostel and troubled them. The boys wanted to sleep with them. The father went to report to the teachers, but they said the children were lying.”*

It is very difficult when children reporting abused of this kind instead of being helped the matters are handled lightly. A parent whose daughter had been bullied and forced into sexual activities had gone to the school to discuss the matter with the teachers. After the matter was dealt with, the daughter refused to stay in the school hostels after such experiences. A female teacher offered to keep her home and let her continue with school. The child did not stay, but went back home and has refused to go back to school. We wondered what kind of trauma the child had experienced that made her refuse to go back to school in spite of the encouragement of a concerned mother and teacher. When we tried to talk to the girl, she was quiet and refused to answer a single of our questions.

Other girls verified that they had received similar sexually abusive treatment from the older boys in the school. When they refused to have sex with them they would beat them.

This kind of treatment was commonly reported for the hostels which would be the child’s home for the whole of the school term. It was indicated that there was usually very little supervision going from the school authorities and so many bad things would happen, like sexual molestations, bullying and beating without school authorities ever knowing.

### 7.3.4. FRATERNIZING

There were many fraternity relationships started in the school between girls and boys which soon turned into sexual relationships and disturbed the child’s focus on school:

*'Some of the children start school late; they are already teenagers; they are old enough to start love affairs so that stops them from concentrating on school, and they soon leave school. 'Teacher*

Some children made mention of many boys and girls falling in love leading into relationships that would make them leave school to go and continue with that life because the school would not condone their adult sexual relationships.

The teachers did indicate that because of the relaxed age for entry into school for the San children, they often come to primary school when they are already too old to be in formal primary school. They start practicing adult social behaviours that are not compatible with school expectations. Some of the children dropped out of school for early marriages according to the teachers. This weighed a lot on what kind of coordinated guidance and support children were receiving with regard to fraternizing across sexes from the school and home situation.

### 7.3.5 POVERTY, WORK AND FARMS

Poverty affects everything to do with the San Child's education. The hope that San people would have fared better had they not lost their lands and pursued their own lucrative livelihoods is mostly a dream now. Most of the San people live in very poor circumstances. The practices from their hunter and gatherer lifestyle, as a group of people who are thriving on the generosity and bounty of Mother Nature, and moving freely, with the forest providing all that they needed, seems hard to combine with modern ways of living. Cultivating land and grazing animals are new occupations to the San let alone the industry of technologies turned into wealth. There are very few San people with natural family wealth in modern terms. To survive, they need to work. Most San people find themselves with very few job offerings in the settlements. Many are caught up in job hunts as labourers on farms. Their children are hurled into these socio-economic difficulties with them with majority living in poverty.

There are very few Job offers or business opportunities in the new villages where San people have now settled. Parents go out to work on the farms where there are usually jobs available for them as labourers. Children are caught up between being with their parents on the farms where there will probably be some food and paternal fellowship and living in a place near the school hungry.

Life on the farms we visited seemed well organized. The San were in many places living in villages with a water tap in each homestead. There were parents we found on the farms who did not work but lived with relatives who worked to survive. Some said they were there hoping, when a job became available they would be in time to get it.

We also found on the farms some children who had left their parents in the village but had come to live on the farm hoping to get some food from the relatives who worked or lived on the farm. It looked like many San we found on the farms were more comfortable on a farm setting than in the settlement. It seems the farms provided more for them; possibility of a piece- job and some cash; food shared with relatives who worked on the food, home and refuge for some. One man said:

*“Where can I go, the farm is the only home I have known since I started working here as a young man.” Man on a farm*

One other man living with his wife and children had left the village to come and live with his father in law who did not work.

He said: *“We left the village settlement to come and live here on the farm with my father-in-law.”*

They lived on the support the father-in-law received from the owner of the farm. The children did not attend school.

There were reports of children living alone in the village to attend school while the parents had gone to work on the farms. A *mother* told from one of the settlements said:

*“I went to the farm to check on my goats at the farm. I left many people at home, but no one bothered to help my son go to school. I was at the farm for one month. My husband’s relative left the boy alone in the house.”*

Some children are left alone or with relatives who did not care whether the child went to school or not or they stay alone with no one to supervise them and provide for their essential needs. They tried to go to school alone but eventually stopped. Most teachers called this pure negligence on the part of the parents but did not offer much evidence of investigations in such cases.

The following were different comments from the teachers on the farms situations:

*“Parents are always on the farms and do not come to meetings and school activities,”*

*“Parents in the farms do not come to the school when you call them”*

*“Moving between the settlements and the farm; it is the nature of their lives; they like moving around; it fits the nature of their lives,”*

*“Parents have complaints about lack of food and work so they could be moving around to find food on the farms,”*

*“The children and parents here have a farm dependency syndrome,”*

The concern by teachers to meet with parents was raised severally; and some suggested workshops to discuss how they find ways to get parents more involved in their children’s education. Perhaps this would help teachers and parents to understand each other’s situation and the challenges they face in getting children to school and giving them a good education.

Some Teachers said:

*‘There should be a way to reach those parents on the farms especially,’*

Another teacher suggested that children ran away from school because they wanted to be with their parents at home:

*‘It’s not that those who are at home have more to keep them warm; they just sleep outside but they have fires to keep them warm and near their parents.’* Teacher in a boarding school

Teacher also felt that farmers should be informed and sensitized to that they too can come up with ways to support the children’s education.

### 7.3.6 POVERTY AND PARENTAL SUPPORT

Earlier, we have reported that parents seemed to see school as important for the future of their children. Still, lack of parental support for children's education is reported by children, parents and teachers. This lack of support is mostly related to poverty.

Many children interviewed reported how they had to leave school because they had no basic school necessities or decent clothes to wear. But none of the teachers interviewed indicated they sent children for having no school uniform, especially that for most the uniform was part of government support to the child in these circumstances. But children left because the situation of having no proper uniform exposed their poverty and awkward circumstances.

*'Children leave because of lack of clothing. Our children are given clothing, but it takes too long for them to get it. A child cannot come to school putting on those rags. They feel ashamed.'*

Teacher

Contrary to the common response we received that San parents do not care about their children's school, we met many parents who wanted to support their children with school supplies and other personal essentials.

One parent said she wanted to let her son attend school but her brother preferred to send the boy to look after their cattle in the cattle post. If not for poverty, she would have insisted her son goes to school as she would have bought him a school uniform, soap and shoes. His school uniform would have always been clean and not so dirty. She had no money to buy these things. Her attempt to acquire a temporary job through the 'Ipelegeng' scheme failed. Now the boy had no interest in school.

Stories of parents who had tried to help their children and then failed because they had no means were many. The parent of a seven year old who left school after first term said the following:

*"I tried to get a job when my child did not receive help from the school. I was very angry. The social workers favour certain children. I have no proper job. I got a small job and bought him clothes afterwards. Then I left for the farm to go and check on my goats; I told the people who were left here to help the boy to go to school but they did not care. I am so annoyed; no one tried to take my child to school when I was away."*

Although the teachers could clearly see the evidence of the San child's poverty condition and its effects on his or her schooling, it was unlikely that they appreciated its causes and its depth. Much of the blame was placed on the parent as the primary provider for the child. The movement of parents up and down in search of jobs and livelihood was relegated to the San nature's love for travel and not settling; but it was also argued that this makes it difficult for them to adequately provide for their children. Leaving the villages where there were school facilities to look for work on the farms was seen by teachers as lack of concern for their children's educational livelihoods. The fact that today parents went into and out of the farms seeking jobs was not really appreciated by most teachers; they felt that parents should settle in one place and learn to provide proper shelter and care for their children.

*“If parents are informed, and know the importance of education, they will know that the child must stay in a place where he is able to go to school. If they do not know about education, they will not care. Teacher*

In Peri-urban areas like Gantsi Township, many non San parents tended to give money to their children to buy food at the tuck-shop in school it was reported by the teachers. The school provided food at break time, but most children would have extra money to buy extra foods they liked. Those from backgrounds of poverty who did not get any money from parents to spend like that, felt out of place. There was peer pressure tag and a feeling that one needed that the money in order to enjoy school; this social exclusion, more common for the San children brought out some misery and the urge to drop out of school in children who lacked the means.

There was a concern about the heavy drinking of alcohol and smoking by San parents which habits their children quickly picked and were viewed as a major disturbance in sustained interest in school and learning. Smoking and taking alcohol was a common problem for many San children according to the teachers; as the children preferred to be out indulging in those activities without any deterrence from the school. The school struggled to stop negatives habits in children which were introduced and condoned by the parents.

The peri-urban situation of places like Gantsi Township offers many squatters for parents who came to find piece-jobs. These areas are full of children who do not attend school well and the parents do not seem to care. Most of the parents spend time in the illegal beer-holes, and do not care about their children attending school. Education for their children among them seems to be a remote idea. Teachers indicated that although there are other ethnic groups squatting in Gantsi who had some social problems, it did not seem as widely spread as that of the San children.

One teacher in Gantsi Township said:

*“Other ethnic groups squatting in Ghanzi have some social problems but it does not seem as bad as that of Basarwa children and school. Basarwa parents do not just care.”*

Teachers found that even children with a lot of potential for gaining a lot from school were found exposed to social adversities such as alcohol; soon they were more interested in alcohol than school. Another teacher from Gantsi Township said:

*“There are too many squatters in Ghanzi, which are full of children who do not attend school well and the parents don’t seem to care. Most of the parents spend time in the illegal beer halls, and do not care about their children attending school.”*

Another said:

*“You find that children who are very clever are exposed to alcohol, soon they are more interested in alcohol and not school.”*

Most children in school among the San might receive one of these forms of support: Remote Area Dweller Programme [RADP] Support or Orphan care or Destitute Care Support by Social and Community Development [S&CD]. These are government programmes to mitigate the poverty and economic hardships of specified citizens.

The Remote Area Dwellers are defined as rural dwellers living in government specified circumstances; although originally never particularly meant for the San people only, they have the major respondents to the programme.

Under this programme there has been an attempt to ease the economic constraints of the learner with the supply of basic school and personal necessities. Among other things, children receive sets of uniform, toiletries, personal effects and transportation to and from boarding schools.

According to the children, parents and teachers the supply of effects and services is never consistent. Firstly, transportation is usually not well coordinated. Parents complained of children waiting for a long-time for the vehicles to arrive and take them to and from school. Sometimes those children in not easily accessible areas would be dropped off by a road side, far away from their homes, making them susceptible to all forms of danger when making their way back home.

Secondly, supply of uniform and other school related supplies for many children was never on time. Children reported of having left school because they had no school uniform or good clothes.

One boy from Gantsi Township said:

*"I didn't have shoes and uniform, and it was very cold when I left, and I have no shoes. I did like school."*

Another from A Grootlaagte settlement said:

*"I had no shoes and uniform, no soap to wash the uniform so I left school."*

This was the case even with those who received government support as well as those who did not. With those who did, the problem was supply of the school uniform was not always consistent from the local government. The children faced more difficulties especially in winter when they needed to be warm and smartly dressed in school uniform. Some of the children indicated how other children mocked and ridiculed them because of poor attire. One can also imagine the embarrassment that goes with having to maintain certain high standards of behaviour such as proper school attire yet depending on something on somebody you had no control over. The uniform would finally arrive when it did, yet the child would have had to answer for its inadequate availability many times before. There was yet an added burden that though the government support finally did arrive to their children it was not adequate.

The teachers felt that if the council could become consistent in school supplies which apparently included food, uniform and other necessities circumstances would improve for the children in school.

One guidance and counselling teacher reported that:

*“Most of them are living in poverty; they have nothing to give their children. They need to get everything for government. Sometimes the supplies don’t come in time. The council should be consistent in supplying equipment. They fail to bring in time. In winter time the kids stay at home.”*

*’ Another Teacher stated:*

*‘The government is doing much by providing these services. But the officesr providing these services are slow. Things come late. The programs are there given by government, but they are not implemented properly. They fail to provide even food on time.*

*Another teacher explained that:*

*‘If the service and supplies are provided on time the children will come to school. In a year a child might get the uniform term 2 instead of term 1. If there is a delay, the child goes back home. The implementers of government services are not doing what they are supposed to do in the right time. Social services are not doing enough. They don’t explain anything. When they give out the uniforms, they should explain how these things are supplied and how they are to be used. They come and give out things. The people do not know what is going on. They only see clothes coming. The parents must also know what the government is doing. The children must know how to take care of the uniform and shoes.’*

The children had other needs that parents were expected to address. They needed good clothes and shoes to be socially acceptable and expected their parents to supply these; when not forthcoming, their children left school. The children came home during the holidays and would not want to go back until their parents gave them what they wanted. Meeting such needs was not often possible. One grandfather reported how his three granddaughters he was taking care of refused to go school until they were provided with casual shoes and clothes.

### 7.3.8 HOSTEL SITUATION

Although there has been much debate and question about the need or usefulness of hostels for remote area dweller school children, they were flagged as essential by children, parents and teachers. The problem with the hostels was not that they were there, but that they were not properly utilised and well supervised.

Instead of San children trailing after their parents in search of jobs, the hostels could provide a more stable learning environment and temporary ‘home’ for the child. Currently hostels were considered hostile environments for the children; bullying was rampant, and there was a general atmosphere of lack of care. Most schools had enrolments of over 200 hundred children residing in hostels to one or two hostel matron or caregiver. In some schools, there would be one or two basic caregivers bathing the much younger children but otherwise most of the time children would be left to perform these

activities themselves. It was considered that only a superhuman matron would individually attend to all those children in a week let alone any day.

Much of what we have reported above about bullying, sexual abuse, fraternizing and general lack of care is related to the situation in the hostels.

Almost all the boarding children who left school, if not for lack of supplies, mentioned the bullying from other children especially in the hostels when teachers were not there. This also posed a safety and security question. There were so many risks in living in the hostels, beating, molestations, sexual abuse, hostility and neglect to mention some of the ills occurring in there. There were some children who left in standard 1 after receiving the harsh treatment in the hostels and have never dreamed of going back to school.

However, all the children when asked whether they would like to go back to school if the problems they had encountered were solved, they agreed to go back but indicated that they would like go back and live in the hostel.

A boy from a settlement said this:

*'I want to go back to school with better friends. I want to stay in the school. I left to look after cattle for the uncle. I can give the cattle to my grandmother to look after, and then I can come back to school.'* (Male-school dropout)

Another young person from a farm expressed:

*'Children should be well looked after by the matron so that they are not beaten by the boys or older children. The toiletries should be stored by the matron so that it is not stolen by other children.'* female school-dropout

A boy from another settlement stated:

*'In the hostels, the younger students should be separated from older ones all the time so they play alone and they never mix.'*

It was also articulated by some *children* that the older children instead of taking care of the younger children in the hostels they misused their superior position and abused the younger ones.

Two parents told of the atrocities their children had suffered in the hostels and that they have had to go to the school to try and solve the problem. It was however noted that going there once had not adequately solved the problem because these problems seem to be rampant. It was the parent who had to go to the school many times who reported success.

Teachers agreed that something ought to be done about the hostels to make them conducive habitations for children.

A teacher described the situation in hostels in this way:

*"The school set up should be conducive for the children. We must love the children, be role models in caring. Think of how we can make the environment conducive. We should give them the parental Love they lack when they are in school. The hostels must be made in such a way that children feel at home.*

*The hostel workers knock off at half past four, and then no one is there; then the children become homesick. But if we could turn the hostel into a home it would be better for the children; we should provide enough blankets and more warm clothes and good entertainment the hostels; Child friendly schools so that children look forward to being in school.” Teacher*

A deputy school head teacher proposed this:

*“Children are always home-sick especially the much younger ones. The Save Our Souls [SOS] system which employs many caregivers per hostel should be used in hostels here. Having one matron to take care of so many children does not work. A few children to a hostel mother can help take better care of the children.”*

It is well known from international research that bullying is going on and can be very tough when more children are left alone over some time without supervision. The situation in the hostels with very little staff and lots of children, some also with a minority background, is critical. It became clear that steps need to be taken to make the hostels a safe place for children.

## 7.4 WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THEM TO STAY IN SCHOOL?

Children, parents and teachers had clear perception of what measures that could make San children to stay in school. There was a reflection received on what kind of learning environment would make education for the San and any other children in similar circumstances successful.

### 7.4.1 CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVE

Upon the question of what could help children to stay in school, the first and most frequent answer was related to beating and bullying. Being beaten by teachers in class and bullied by other children during school hours, afternoon or evening seemed to be the main reason for the children to have dropped out of school and not want to come back. Some statements given on this were:

*“Teachers should stop students from beating and bullying others.” Boy from Kuke*

*“Beating in school should be stopped completely – no teacher should beat, no student should beat others.” Boy from New Xade*

Some relate this to *the situation in the hostels*:

*“The children should be well looked after by the matron so that they are not troubled by the boys or older children. The toiletries should be kept by the matron so that it is not stolen by other children,” (girl from a farm)*

*“The hostels were not good, it was dirty, and children stole from each other. Only the matron looked after them, even during night,” father, from a farm*

*“The SOS system which employs many caregivers per hostel should be used in hostels here. Having one matron to take care of so many children does not work. A few children to a hostel mother can help take better care of the children,” teacher in a settlement*

It is worth noting that the view on the hostel seems to be shared by children, parents and teachers.

Another boy stated clearly:

*“I would like to go back to the hostels if no one was beating me.”*

We have many statements from children that they want to stay in hostels, but not the hostels they had experienced so far. They liked hostels because of food and other things that sometimes were provided. And they liked to avoid going long distances to school. But they run away from bullying, beatings and harassments.

The children wanted more support for necessities such as uniform, ordinary clothes, and other personal effects either from their parents or the government. The absence of these was immediately visible and a cause for embarrassment. None of the children said they left because they were chased away for not having clothes; they left because they fell out of the social nomenclature and became objects of ridicule. The government usually provided uniforms for these children; the problem is that local authorities are not sharing them out to schools in time. So when children are embarrassed of not having proper clothing or they freeze because the clothing comes in the second term, they stop coming to school.

The children also desired that they would be picked from their homes to school and brought back to their homes at the end of term, not dropped off by roadsides as sometimes was the case.

As much as many children indicated that they had liked reading and writing, even learning English and Setswana when they had been in school; there was a call for more practical school activities. Many indicated that they had liked dancing and sports when they had been in school.

A girl in one of the farms said: *“I liked eating, netball and dance. I got a trophy in dance”.*

They would like to do those activities again when they went back to school. San children are often good in traditional dances and ball games it was indicated. When such activities are included in the school activities, it improves their self image and status among other children.

A group of 3 boys from one of the settlements sum up their answer like this:

*“We agree that if the bullying stops, teacher stop beating and we have school uniform and warm clothes we would stay in school.”*Boys from Grootlaagte

According to children they would like to come back to school if:

- Teachers stop using beating for corporal punishment
- If hostels were better supervised to stop other children from bullying them

- If supplies of warm clothes and other necessities were provided on time to avoid embarrassment or freezing.
- Activities like traditional dances and sports and other practical activities should be included in the curriculum

#### 7.4.2 PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON KEEPING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

The Act on education in Botswana has very explicit expectations for parents in supporting their children's education. These range from providing school uniform, paying the expected school fees etc [which are minimal payments because education is free.]

In 'Torn Apart' the difficult role of San parents to support their children is very well explained. 'Most parents feel powerless and their poverty a suffocating trap as they have found themselves dependent on the systems without control over their own lives, but also had no power to influence the political, economic and social structures around them to make them economically able'[Le Roux 1999].

There was an element of the helplessness seen in most of the parents about their children's lack of school attendance circumstances.

Most parents would say:

*"I do not know what can make my child go back to school."*

Here are some statements from other parents:

*"Maybe we the government can help. The problem with these children is even if they are transferred they still dropout. I have failed to convince them to go back to school"* Parent in Gantsi Township

*"The government should help; for us hostel is a solution. We have no work; we can give nothing to them."* (From a parent in Grootlaagte with no hostel facilities)

*"A child who is too close to the parents is very demanding to the parents. If they are taken away they can then concentrate at school. I do not have anything because of poverty. I want my child out of here and go to another school; I want them to go far away,"* parent from New Xade a settlement

*"There is a difference between here and other places. If you can help us maybe we can manage our kids. The children want to go far away from their parents, and then they can learn better on their own. They can focus better when they are far away,"* Parent of child who left but was not in boarding.

It is surprising to see the two latter quotes stating that children should stay far away from their parents. It could be because they think that they themselves cannot play any role due to lack of resources. We also saw that it was not the question of not knowing that education is important but a

question of being vulnerable and not having strength and the clout to face school authorities on matters that were important to their children's well being. Most of the parents did not have much education themselves, and it could be difficult for them to help their children and also to face the school authorities on different issues. Many of them would not be sure what to expect from school and what they could say.

Programmes had been made for them which they had no say on how they could be implemented. It was a situation where the government was taken to do everything that should be done about their situations. There were very little evidences of parents standing up for their children to make decisions that would leverage their children's difficult circumstances. One parent whose child had been sexually assaulted by other children could have demanded action from the school to ensure that the child felt secure in the school; Just like the one unique parent who persistently visited the school until the child was now comfortable to learn.

We found that the parents expected the government to have all the solutions that was needed for their children's school problems. When asked whether they visited their children in school when they heard of the problems, very few did. Otherwise parents expected the Social and Community Development Department to have done something about it.

Apart from the powerlessness and dependency syndromes, there was a very apparent 'woe is me' syndrome: 'What can I do? There is nothing I can do, I am just a poor man/woman!' This legacy could easily be passed on the children to think they were victims of modern school systems and not beneficiaries and there was nothing they could do about it.

Parents seem to think that the most important measure for making their children stay in school is that there are proper hostels where all necessities are provided for them and the government.

#### 7.4.3 TEACHERS' VIEW POINTS

When the teachers were asked what strategies could be used to keep children in schools and what effort they make to bring children back to school, many reflected on these issues, and gave many interesting view points.

One thing that was mentioned by most teachers from most of the schools was that the council needed to improve the service of food and other supplies to school. Supplies were never on time. In winter lack of good clothing would make the child stay away from school.

Another issue that seemed crucial for the teacher was the relation between the school, teachers, the school children and the families. Teachers held that parents did not know the importance of school and their need to support school problems in the interest of the child. Some parents were never interested in knowing about the progress of their children in school.

One example is the way the PTA meetings were ignored. The PTA meetings and seminars could help parents to understand what is going on in their children's lives and how schools ran. Although PTA meetings are scheduled, the problem was said to be that many parents did not show up when

called for them; especially those parents said to be in the farms. Parents could also help the teachers understand the needs of their children and how they could be met by parents and teachers.

Many teachers also commented severally on *the situations with hostels*. Teachers recommended that all the children, including those from around the school should have the opportunity to stay in a hostel because of the difficult situations in many of the families. Here are some of their statements:

*“Children who come from Ghanzi should have hostels build for them so that they are comfortable and they do not keep following their parents to the farms where they work.”*  
Teacher from Grootlaagte

*“All San children should have hostels built for them so that they can be comfortable and attend school nicely.”*Teacher from Kuke

*“There are too many squatters in Ghanzi, which are full of children who do not attend school well and the parents don’t seem to care. Most of the parents spend time in the “Shebeens”, and do not care about their children attending school. Education for their children seems to be a strange idea. Children of such parents should stay in the hostels as support to attend school well.”* Teacher from Gantsi Township

The teachers described the difficult situation many San children experience at home, and recommended the hostel as a solution for them to attend school regularly. But the teachers were also aware of the situation in hostels where children were faced with bullying, abuse and loneliness, and how this caused them to drop out of school. They proposed some constructive changes. One teacher stated:

*“We must start with the reasons why children drop out. Think of how we can make the environment conducive. They lack parental love. Let us make a hostel a place where the children feel at home. The hostel workers knock off at half past four; there is no one there after that! Then they get homesick. But if we could turn the hostel into a home it would be better for the children,”* a teacher in New Xade

Teachers from another school also proposed that there should be many caregivers per hostel:

*“Having one matron to take care of so many children does not work. A few children to a hostel mother can help take better care of the children. It is important to make the school a friendlier place for San children and parents.”*

Another interesting point mentioned by teachers from some of the schools was to enlist some San people who had finished their education and now are in good jobs as role models to speak to the young San children in school regularly. They could come to the schools and share with parents and children about education and how it could also work for all other San people.

On the lack of good role models in relation to education in the San community, one teacher explained:

*“The parents should see the ones who have been successful from this tribe. They should stand up. Intelligent San should stand up and be role models. They should talk to the parents. We can just supplement.”*

The use of *teacher aids* was encouraged by many of the schools. This is a San person who is like an assistant in the classes who can translate and explain when ever needed. One of the teachers expressed it in this way:

*“Government should employ teacher aids especially for standard 1 and 2. With the teacher aides who understand their language they would feel freer to talk and discuss things.”*

The teacher aids assist in the communication both ways between teacher and child, and can contribute to making school more meaningful to children. Three schools in the district have them and they were highly recommended by teachers in all schools we talked to teachers.

The situation for San children when they start school is quite difficult. A teacher explained:

*“Children are taught in Setswana in standard1. Then immediately in standard 2 they must start learning in English. Within a short time they are moving from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> language. There is need for preschool foundations that should help with language. The children in this school who come from preschool start very well because of the good foundation in English and Setswana.”*

The challenge of language is very big for San children. Many teachers from some of the schools mentioned preschools as an effective way of preparing San children for primary school. This could apply to language learning and also getting used to different types of formal settings, and general school systems. They indicated that children who came from preschool backgrounds were also better socially adjusted.

In order to keep San children in school, the teachers recommended:

*“The Council must improve their services and deliver clothes and necessities in time.”*

*“There should be seminars where teachers and parents could meet and share ideas on how to support the education of children.”*

*“Well educated and employed San persons should be hired as role models to speak with children and parents about the advantage of education.”*

*“San children should be given to stay in hostels that are well supervised.”*

*“Enough teacher aids should be hired in schools with San children to help the challenges of language.”*

*“Preschool is a good measure to prepare children for primary school.”*

## 7.4.4 TEACHERS ON CURRICULUM

Teachers seemed to hold some different views on how suitable the primary school curriculum was for San children.

### 7.4.4.1 IN FAVOUR OF CURRENT CURRICULUM

Some of the teachers said the school curriculum was fine, it only has some limitations:

*“The curriculum is okay. The same curriculum is used in all the areas of the country.”*

*“The curriculum is okay. The problem is their culture which stops them from gaining from the curriculum.”*

*“The curriculum is broad. You get everything there; even sports in which they excel. If they should have their own curriculum, they will be isolated.”*

These teachers pointed out that it is important that different people learn the similar things. The approaches they indicated could differ but knowledge and skills should be made available to every Motswana. If there was special curriculum for San children, they may easily be isolated. They need to know something about the society around them.

*“But they can also bring San things in the curriculum instead of making their special one for them.”* Teacher from Kuke

### 7.4.4.2 AMBIVALENCE

*Others were more ambivalent to the curriculum:*

*“The curriculum is ok, but they don’t want to learn it. They don’t know the benefit of the academics. They excel only in sport activities.”*

*“Curriculum is ok, but it doesn’t suit their lifestyle.”*

These teachers said curriculum was okay, but it did not work for these children. It seemed they doubted that this curriculum could be relevant as it did not suit their lifestyle and they did not want to learn it.

### 7.4.4.3 CURRICULUM IS NOT FAVOURABLE

Other teachers had the view that the curriculum did not fit the San children. These teachers said:

*“The curriculum is difficult for these children here. The topics are too far from what they have experienced or can imagine. It is talks about things outside their experience.”*

*“The curriculum is not addressing the needs of the San people. They live a life different from other people. The text books we use give examples from city life or other villages. I cannot remember an example relevant to the life they lead.”*

Others said the curriculum was “very abstract”, “too advanced and too strange”, it talked about things that were “far- fetched”. It seemed the curriculum was far from their culture and experience. There were a few if any references to San culture or life style.

#### 7.4.4. 4 CURRICULUM IN GENERAL

It seems that it is a challenge to develop a curriculum that can accommodate all different groups of people. It is a well known pedagogical principle to go from the near to the distant in learning. The curriculum should reflect the culture and life of different groups in Botswana. Then later even outside Botswana. Different groups need to know about each other in order to respect and live well together. When children learn to read, they should read about life in the desert and in the city, work on the farm and work in the factories. Physical Education should also include dances and games from different groups. Music should cover different traditions represented in the area, or nation etc. In this way no one should feel alienated from the school and people learn to respect each other’s traditions and lifestyles.

The recommended languages for instruction are also not favorable to the San who have their own mother tongues, it was indicated. If they were to learn things in their mother tongue they would be very good in that knowledge. The teachers indicated that the transition from first language to second and then third was too swift for the child to have enough time to conceptualize things and develop an adequate vocabulary:

*“The child comes with the San language in standard one and then starts to learn Setswana and by standard 2 the child has to change to English. It is too much for the children. If the learning had to happen in their mother tongue, these children would do well; I would too; look at the Chinese they learn everything in their own language and they do well.’ Teacher*

Many teachers mentioned that the curriculum should include *pre-primary* which would give them a better foundation to formal learning. The orientation the child received in pre-primary would assist the child in having a smoother transition, to adapt socially, cognitively and emotionally to the formal school situation. There would be some foundational skills developed to handle the new school life.

#### 7.5 WORKING IN GANTSI

The approach adopted by the Government of Botswana right from 1966, through its 1977 Education for Kagisano and 1994 RNPE is that of inclusive education and mainstreaming all emerging issues. The underlying intention has been to make education accessible to all citizens including the San,

hence the number of primary schools and boarding facilities built by government across the country. This intention is also reflected in the provision of teachers trained by government to serve in any given location where Batswana are found.

In this study teachers were deliberately asked about how they found the situation of working in Ghanzi District, to see whether and perhaps how teacher morale also had an effect work output and children's access and school retention.

Many teachers who came from outside the West and North West of Botswana were not specifically concerned about working far away from their homes of origin; but found working in a situation of different language orientation difficult to cope with. They said they felt alienated because of language. They expected people they found in the area to speak to them in Setswana and not the local languages. Some teacher said

*"People here expect you to speak their language; they want you to learn their language before they make you feel welcome. They get offended when you use Setswana to them."  
Teacher in a settlement school*

*"People are unfriendly, are not cooperative, they do not give support to teachers, I feel like I am a foreigner here," teacher in a Gantsi Township school*

*"Working in Gantsi okay; but I lack cooperation and no support from parents so I have little motivation to work," teacher in a settlement school*

Some teachers also attributed this to the problem of poor cooperation between teachers and parents making the creation of a forum for addressing children's educational issues unattainable.

Other teachers indicated that the rampant poor results they get in the district generate low morale as they feel their contribution is inadequate and unprofitable.

Some teachers commented thus;

*'This is a very difficult environment to work in. We do not have good results so there are no good results to look forward to, so there is nothing to look forward to. As a teacher, you are always very discouraged because of lack of good end results from the children, teacher in a settlement school'*

*"I do not feel like I am making any change or contribution or making any positive impact; as a result I have very little motivation," teacher in Gantsi Township school*

*"Working here is challenging- the children I have taught here; I have never had any good results unlike where I taught before. It is very demoralizing, nothing to look forward to in working here. Work is not fruitful; am not happy because of that," teacher in a Gantsi Township school.*

*"It is challenging working here. There is nothing to look forward to in teaching. I'm beginning to lose interest in my profession," teacher in a settlement school*

*"I do not want to be here. There is no delivery; I want to deliver. The last 'D' is very important," teacher in a settlement school*

With this widespread outcry against working in Gantsi, the readily offered solution for most teachers interviewed was to want to transfer to other places, where they felt they would happier to work, outside the district. There were fewer suggestions about taking the leading role in helping to solve the problems of the child's education that they had encountered and described in our interviews with them; to translate into making working in Gantsi worthwhile. The only suggestion to that effect was for improved remuneration for teachers working in Gantsi as an incentive for working in such a difficult area.

## 7.6 REVISED NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

Botswana like many developing countries is a country in transition with stakes entrenched in its educational system with demands from its economy for higher levels of education and skills for national development. In 1994 Botswana took a drive to revise its policies on education focusing on relevance of the education to the needs of the country and structure of the systems to guarantee universal access. Among the accepted recommendations on strategy for education and training into the 21<sup>st</sup> century that Revised National Policy (RNPE) made, equity in access was among the primary concerns. The policy recommended that, *'Equity continues to be an explicit goal of education and that the Ministries responsible for education and training should introduce appropriate measures to achieve greater equity; government considers access to basic education a fundamental human right.'*<sup>24</sup> This desire by government for equitable access has been unattainable in the district, by challenging factors presented in these report findings. It is clear that many children have hindrances in access to education which cannot casually be explained with: 'They are not just interested in school' as some of the teachers and parents we interviewed indicated. The horrific experiences of mockery, harassment, beatings, lack of essential supplies are reality and should not be blamed on the children.

The RNPE also recognized the language barriers that children experience when they enter school and recommended a mother tongue approach, before English is to be used as a medium of instruction. Teachers reported that the use of Setswana in standard one then shift to English in standard two is very difficult for children whose mother tongue or first language is not Setswana. The mother tongue approach it was observed is not adhered to, mainly because almost all the teachers in the schools we visited do not know the child's mother tongue which could be any of the San languages or other ethnic groups. In the one school where there was a teacher aid who translates for the children, the learning atmosphere was described as more pleasant for the children by the teachers and the aid. Practice on the RNPE recommendation of *increasing access and achieve equity, through teachers who are more sensitized to cultural differences,*<sup>25</sup> for a plural society as well as smoothing language barriers for the child by taught in a language they understand first before they switch to English was not visible in the schools that were visited. Schools have not rigorously started to address this very important issue from the concerns this research study observed.

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<sup>24</sup> RNPE(1994): Revised National Policy on Education, pp1,5; Government Paper No. 1 of 1994

<sup>25</sup> RNPE(1994): Revised National Policy on Education, pp16, pp60; Government Paper No. 1 of 1994

## CHAPTER EIGHT.

### 8.0 Discussions on Finding

When we research on children and why they drop out of school, it is important to hear from the children themselves. What do they say about why they drop out? This has been given some space in our report, and we have deliberately given many quotations from them. In this report we wanted to give the children themselves a voice. Then parents and teachers are also important stakeholders in relation to the problem of school drop-out, since they are close to children in home and school. They are also responsible for children's upbringing and learning. Their experiences and views will also give valuable insight. We think that children, parents and teachers are the core group to give insight into these questions, and we were very happy that they were willing to share their views with us so freely.

It is natural that different groups like children, parents and teachers when they look at children behaviour, may have some different views and emphasis as they are viewing and experiencing the situations from different perspectives. It is still interesting to see what the three groups agree on when it comes to what they think are reasons for dropping out and what could make them stay in school. In addition to that there can also be important ideas that can come from just one of these groups.

**Corporal punishment** by teachers, and sometimes beating or abuse by other children, was the most common cause for dropping out mentioned by children, and it was also acknowledged as a cause for dropping out by parents and teachers. Corporal punishment in schools seems to have been both frightening and humiliating for the children, as it is not part of San upbringing traditions. There has to be adherence to the Education Act and policies on this matter and legal consequences when adherence is flaunted.

**Children being bullied** by other children seem to be another cause for dropping out of school. Children are being bullied, beaten and humiliated day in and day out until they just cannot stand it and run away. Bullying should be covered as a theme on issues to be addressed in schools and children should be encouraged to report any instances done to themselves or to classmates. Schools must establish a zero tolerance towards bullying. However, this needs to go with an upgraded staffing of hostels. If one wants to stop bullying one needs to have enough staff supervising children during afternoon, evening and night. Children need to know that they are seen and cared for to feel safe in the hostels. The bullies need to know that there is no tolerance for bullying both in school and hostels.

**Lack of appropriate and warm clothing** and some other necessities like soap and toiletries are also mentioned by children, parents and teachers. Children are embarrassed to have to come to school in rags or freezing because of lack of proper clothing. Local councils need here to be followed closely so that these things are provided in due time.

ragged or freezing because of lack of proper clothing. Local councils need here to be followed closely so that these things are provided in due time.

In relation to the point on provision of clothing and necessities comes also the availability of **hostel facilities**. As many of the children come from very poor families or families that sometimes move to farms or other cities for work, hostel has been mentioned as a requirement by children as well as parents and teachers. Hostels would make schooling much easier and stable for these children. This requires that schools are well organized and that children are properly supervised. The hostel should feel like a second home.

Teachers proposed **seminars for teachers and parents** to share ideas on how to support the children in their education. This could even be more interesting if a San person who has done well in education and got a good work could have a presentation and then function as a role model for the San parents. This role model should also visit children in their classes. Good role models have been lacking for these children, and could have contributed to many children thinking education does not work for them.

**The use of teacher aids** should be increased. A teacher aid is a person who knows a San language and culture as well as Setswana, and who can explain and mediate between the cultures. A teacher aid should be in all classes with San children at least up to grade 4. It will make it easier for San children to understand what is going on and take more active part in the learning.

Interesting experiences that were brought up by teachers is that San children who have attended **preschool before starting primary school** are doing well in school. It seems from these experiences that preschool or pre-primary can be a very effective preventive measure for children dropping out of school. It is not surprising that preschools are not mentioned by children or parents, because we interviewed children who dropped out of school and parents with such children, and those with preschool experience do not so often drop out of school. Bokamoso Educational Trust has many years of experience on training San people as preschool teachers and to help start preschools for San children. More information can be obtained from them.

The teachers were also asked how they looked at **the curriculum in relation to San children**. As much as it was pointed out that San children need to know about the society at large in order not to be isolated, teachers also underlined that there should be something from the San culture in the different subjects along with other information from the main culture. This will make school more relevant for them and make them not to be alienated from school. It will also contribute to mutual appreciation and understanding between children from different ethnic backgrounds in the school and the society. Upon the question about what they liked in school, more of them said they liked learning to read and write, and they also mentioned traditional dances, sports and games.

Some of the recommendations in this report for example; more staff in the hostels, more use of teacher aids and preschool before primary school - will require some grants from the government. If these measures help San children to get education and later jobs in the society, it will greatly pay back. It will save the society for having a lot of people on social security throughout life. To solve this

situation of San children dropping out of school is a great challenge and an obligation built on the UN Convention of the rights of the child and human rights in general.

## CHAPTER NINE

### 9.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

There is need for cooperation between government departments and NGOs to find solutions to San children's educational problems. For education to be relevant to any group of people it must reflect their strength; then it gives ample reason for being seen as tool a people to move forward. For the educational system to facilitate their development it must embrace the richness of their cultural systems of knowledge and traditions. The strength of the San people is in their cultural knowledge and skills which have clearly been demonstrated. Their cultural knowledge and traditions should be left to stand, compare favorably with other cultural systems to regenerate and exhibit themselves uniquely, with the San people themselves deciding what aspect to reformulate based on their interpretation of their values, beliefs, needs and circumstances. Then only can the parents find strength to mold and build the future of their children. As some of the San people have already indicated only they can determine how they need to use their culture and involve their children in perpetuating it for their development. They must be engaged in discussions to hear from them what they really think can work in giving their children more access to education as this study has tried to do.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a network in Gantsi district of different stakeholders for more collaborations to address the issues of San children's access to education
- Workshops and training for teachers and parents to review issues and build community strategies established through the network
- A campaign among teachers on the use of corporal punishment; enforcement of the National Policy on corporal punishment and presentation of more educational ways of guiding students.
- Seminars for teachers on bullying and teaching about it in classes with the aim to establish zero-tolerance for bullying in school and hostels.
- Recruitment of more staff to the hostels in order to make them more children friendly. In areas with more San children, staff should as much as possible also be San.
- To work with the local councils to make them deliver clothes and other necessities to schools before time.

- Engage government to actively engage farmers in Gantsi to be partners in solving the San children's education.
- Formalize San cultural activities to be included in the curriculum in Gantsi to positively visualize San Cultural systems
- San languages and San crafts introduced as subjects specific to San areas to advance San cultural participation in livelihoods of people
- To hire teacher aids for all classes with San children up to grade 4.
- Establish School orientation programmes where many parents are invited to be with their children in school for several days at the beginning of the child's school life in that school
- San children network with others in areas through student network programmes to learn from each other and build each other's strengths
- Village committees established for hostels which give support to children in hostels
- Only willing teachers deployed to work in remote area, and incentives given to strengthen motivation
- Orientation programmes be in place for teachers from other areas who are to work in San communities; orientations facilitated by San people themselves also making use of NGO programmes already working with the San.
- Government stake holders should start a campaign to enforce the Education Act and National Policy on corporal punishment, and also educate teachers about more relevant and fruitful ways to guide and teach children.

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## APPENDIX ONE

### LOCATIONS FOR THE STUDY AND SCHEDULE

<b>SETTLEMENTS, VILLAGES AND FARMS</b>	<b>DATE</b>
1. NEW XADE	13/06/11
2. BOSELE	13/06/11
3. KUKE	14/06/11
4. JOHN KEMPF	14/06/11
5. GROOTLAAGTE	15/06/11
6. D'KAR	15/06/11
7. MORAMA	16/06/11
8. EATON	16/06/11

## APPENDIX TWO

### QUESTIONS USED FOR STUDY

#### To children

1. Do you think school is important?
  - a. Why/why not?
2. What do you like about school?
  - a. Is it break- time?
  - b. Are there any special things that you like to do in school?
  - c. Do you have any special subjects you like in school?
3. What don't you like about school?
4. Why do children drop out of school?
5. Why did you drop out of school?
6. What should be done to make children stay in school?
7. What can be done to help you stay in school?

#### To Parents

1. Do you think it is important for your children to go to school?
  - a. Why/Why not?
2. What are the reasons for your children dropping out of school?
3. What effort did you put in for your child/children to be in school?
4. What obstructs you from contributing towards your child's education?
5. Do you ever visit school and check your children's work?
6. What could help your children to be in school?
7. What could you do to help your children to be in school?

#### Teachers

1. Why do you think children drop out of school?
2. What strategies can we use to keep children in school?
3. What do think of the curriculum in terms of favouring the children in this district?
4. What effort do you make to bring back the students to school?
5. How is the attitude of parents in relation to their children's school work?
6. Do you get any assistance from community leaders on the problem of school dropouts?
7. How do you find working in Ghanzi?
8. If you were the government of Botswana what would you do to ensure that students have interest in their education?

## APPENDIX 3

### COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CAPTURED DURING OPEN DISCUSSION AT REPORT DISSEMINATION MEETING

**Participants for Dissemination Meeting were from government departments and NGOs**

**Question- participant:**

Why is the child/matron ratio so poor in the hostels, is it because of funds or is because people are not interested in the job and do not want to work?

**Response- District Administration Office Authority:**

The situation of having one matron is according to existing government system and structures. At the time of designing the structure, one matron was thought suitable. The issue is being readdressed and considering that there should be a matron and a boarding master in every boarding school situation. The issue of care givers still needs to be sorted out.

**Comment -participant:**

It is human nature to lay the blame on the other person and not take responsibility; that is the teachers do not want to take responsibility for what went wrong, neither do the parents. The recommendations do not show that either teachers or parents took any responsibility for any actions that would bring about change.

**Comment to the above-researcher:**

One of the purposes of the study was to allow a better appreciation of the situation with the school drop outs as it is and establish clarity on the matter to inform the interventions. You begin to see how each party holds a stake in the matter. It is the discussions that follow that begin to clarify the roles and responsibilities and then actions can be decided. If these stakeholders can begin to meet they could perhaps discuss these issues that have been revealed and the blaming may perhaps turn into each party seeing their role in the matter and taking action and making strategies together.

**Comment-participant:**

It is very difficult for us teachers to go the settlements where the children come from and follow up on issues. There seems not to be enough resources to bring parents and the children together. It is very important to bring these three sects together: parents, children and teachers.

**Comments –Education Department Authority:**

- Numbers clarified according to monthly returns- 461 drop outs recorded in primary school; 35 in junior secondary school and 25 in senior secondary school

- The study is highly commended for the areas of concern it has covered. It has shed a lot of light on the issues regarding school drop outs in the district. It has provided an insight that there are many other issues that affect children in their attendance of school. The current report revealed that there are many reasons why children drop out of school. Other than the commonly known 'pregnancy', 'illness'; the term 'deserted school' now has an attribute. There is need for other stakeholders such as decision makers to be informed of these findings in order to make informed decisions for interventions.
- Curriculum: The view that the curriculum was fine and broad, including different cultural perspectives is sustained. The problem could be arising in methodologies and approaches used by different practitioners to deliver the syllabus. The syllabi are adaptable to different situations to address cultural diversity. Perhaps this is the area that needs to be improved upon through in-service workshops.
- Currently in the area, there are schools that are still served by temporary teachers, who may not have the adequate training needed. This too can be a contributing factor to the problems the school faces that adds to schools having many dropouts.
- Teacher motivation and school morale are issues that also need to be addressed.
- DOSET is coming up with a new program that will assist out of school children with a new approach.
- Circles of support for disadvantaged out of school children should be strengthened
- Clearly the report shows that many schools are not child friendly. There is need for a consultative meeting soon to appreciate the findings of this report and start addressing these issues. Stakeholders need to come together to start addressing these issues. Let us also form networks that can create and build circles of support to address these issues. There is definitely something that can be done to alleviate these problems the report has divulged.

**Comment - participant:**

The report shows the deep interest the children have in sporting activities. It reflects what happens in the school. In the first term when there is athletics many children participate and there is a lot of interest from them. School attendance for a good number of students goes down in second term, when the sports season ends. There needs to be more spread-out sports activities over the year to maintain the interest in school.

**Comment- participant:**

There is definitely a high interest in co-curricular activities such as games and sports as one can observe from the high attendance of children at the youth rallies.

**Question-participant:**

What initiatives did you find the schools using to bring parents into the schools and get them involved in their children's education activities in the study?

**Response-researcher:**

Most of the activities we found are those in the program by expected protocols for running the schools: such as Parents Teachers Association meetings, prize giving days, report days. There was an

indication that these activities were poorly attended by parents. A few teachers had indicated that on their initiative they had made attempts to follow the children to their homes to talk to parents.

**Comment - participant:**

- Student exchange programs where San children visit other areas and are exposed to other cultures has a way of opening doors to possibilities. I was one of the 15 San children who were sent to a school in Tutume to continue with my education there. At first it was hard, but we began to learn to cope with school like other children were. We persevered until we finished school.
- The attitude of teachers sent to work in this region is very disturbing. It is shocking to hear that even in this day, there are still some teachers who have a very negative mindset in working with the children here. Most decline the deployment and when they take it they do so reluctantly. It is difficult for such teachers with such mindsets to assist children who have problems.
- Teachers sent to this region should be those who are willing to come. When they come they should be taken through an orientation process for them to better appreciate the situation with the San children.

**Comment participant:**

Researches done before and the current one have given cultural alienation and language as some of the strongest barriers to good school attendance. Majority of the San children at the time of starting school and living in boarding school are very young and cannot speak Setswana; they are too timid to want to communicate with the Matron. Although there are orientations for matrons and in turn for the children about the new life in the boarding; there has also been a suggestion before those matrons could possibly be hired from the child's ethnic orientation.

**Response- District Administration Office Authority:**

- The policies in place do not allow for engaging Batswana in employment on ethnic grounds. If by chance, along the process of employment someone who fits the situation here described is found, in house arrangements might be made, but not over the existing national policies.
- The poor performance of the matron in the school may arise with the thinking that their supervision directly comes from the District council because of the dual administration structures in the primary schools. This is an anomaly which should be addressed.

**Response - Department of Education Authority:**

Primary school has dual management; the local government looks at infrastructure and school supplies. Matron comes with the local government. Ministry of Education and Skills Development looks at teacher resource and curriculum. But if there are cracks in the system, these should be addressed to bring about the desired outcomes.

**Comment -participant:**

- Our school makes settlement visits some teachers visit the settlements to talk to the children and their parents on different matters pertaining to school. Once the children see our vehicle in the locality they disperse and disappear. It takes a lot of persuasion to convince them to come to us. In most cases they never do and we may end up talking to the parents alone.
- Hostel Situation: children complained about thefts in the hostels among other things. Children do not have proper storage for their things especially those who receive bulky supplies from the council for social support. Soon much is stolen and the children are bereft
- Corporal punishment of beating children is not allowed and today can be a criminal offence.

**Response to comment on hostel thefts- researcher:**

In the study, children suggested that it would help if their hoard of supplies were kept by the school authorities locked away in a store room. On agreed upon intervals, they would be provided the necessities off their hoard of supplies.

**Comment-participant:**

The issues of teachers aids raised are important. Teacher aids can be recruited from the locality of the school to have assistance from those who are well versed with the school situations in the community and are settled so as not to demand too many resources.

**Comment-participant:** Issues of education are integrated; focus should also extend to health, safety and hygiene and the health department can give insight and support on such matters. Some of the issues concerning unfriendly school environment could be arising from hygiene and safety concerns. Health department should be included in networking issues.

**Comment- participant:**

Supplies are issued to children. In most cases parents have no idea what the child has received. But parents often get to learn about what was given to the child when the item is lost and it affects the child's attendance of school. The issue of support should be readdressed in such a way that parents know and have a stake in what their child has received so that there is collective commitment to taking care of such property.

**Comment participant:**

There is much said by children, parents and teacher about late or non arrival of supplies for those getting support from government who are many; it is a pity that the relevant authorities have not attended this meeting.

**Comment participant:** Alcohol issues are a very big concern in the communities; parents abuse alcohol, children too abuse alcohol. This affects child's attendance to school and parents support to the child in school.

**Department of Education Authority:**

### **Department of Education Authority:**

- We have discussed many issues from the report. We know that there are problems with our children's attendance of school. Now that we know that these problems are there, each one of us here needs to ask themselves, what have I done in my work specification? Have I fulfilled my role?
- We need to have a consultative meeting and come up with strategies. What can we do to curb these problems we have now learned about? For instance as a senior education officer, I know that I have a role to play. What has the research told me and how do I address this situation?

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TAKEN**

1. Formation of a Network on education issues is critical in Ghanzi District; with structures and strategies for planning, implementation and monitoring.
2. Transport is needed by all schools to enable easy access visitations and follow-ups on school children and their parents on emerging school issues.
3. Farmers in the District should have a stake in addressing education issues in the district; they should be part of the Network; they should become aware and sensitive to the needs of the community.
4. The Network should form circles of support for the vulnerable children with poor access to education.
5. The Network should include in its activities meetings and workshops for communities leaders and parents on how the school systems operate and how they can give support to their children and strengthen PTAs.
6. The PTAs capacity should be strengthened to bring children closer to their teachers and to get children involved in consultations and decision making
7. Teachers' orientations must be strengthened to include Issues of San culture and their situation today, San languages, emotional intelligence and how to meet the needs of children with special cultural needs.
8. Through District planning, money for youth could be explored to enable the equipping of schools with more co-curricular and entertainment amenities to make school environments more attractive to children.
9. More support and capacity should be given to Guidance and Counselling teachers, their role is crucial in addressing these issues raised.
10. Research as this one has proven is very important as it shades light on a given situation and gives capacity for making informed decisions and appropriate interventions.







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