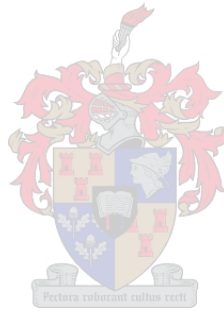


THE FEASIBILITY AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAPRIVI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of
Philosophy (Community and Development) at the University of Stellenbosch**

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March 2009

STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

There is a great need for development, especially in impoverished rural areas. One such area is the Caprivi in Namibia. This study analyses the viability of the Caprivi Development Project and how it is perceived by the communities in terms of improving their livelihoods. The first part of this study sets out the theoretical framework on rural development over the past half century. Theories such as the modernist, small-farm orthodoxy, neo-liberalist, integrated rural development, participation models and the sustainable livelihood framework are reviewed. The usefulness of participation and the sustainable livelihood framework for the purpose of this study is emphasised. Thereafter the lessons learned from mechanised dry-land crop farming initiatives are explored. The extent to which the natural environment such as rainfall and soil fertility and organizational structures which include the project design, technology and infrastructure, the formation of cooperatives and finance, government policies, training and development and the project objectives that affect the permanence of agriculture are assessed. The importance of community commitment to a project for its sustainability is emphasised. Hereafter, the case of the unique Caprivi and the need for development in this impoverished and isolated region is presented. The history, environment and politics are discussed. The economic activities in the region, the people and their lifestyles along with the livelihood strategies they pursue are outlined. Against this background, the aims of the Caprivi Development Project, the project design, its structure, the stakeholders and the challenges faced in making this project a success are presented. The study then reports on how this project is perceived by the farmers involved in this rural development project, with special reference to its perceived benefits this project holds in terms of improving their livelihoods, and what could contribute to its possible failure. In the final chapter, theory, lessons learned and research findings are brought together, before reaching some final conclusions relating to the two research questions posed, namely whether this project has the elements of a successful development project and whether the community supports and see this project as an opportunity to relieve poverty and improve their livelihoods.

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God: My Hope and Strength who has blessed me with these.

This paper is dedicated to all the farming communities in the Caprivi Region. Thank you for giving me a glimpse of your hearts and homes. I hope this paper can be of value in your struggle and be a true reflection of your purpose and aspirations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

An estimated 70% of Africa's poor live in rural areas (Cleaver 1997:1). Poverty is not only widespread in rural areas, in fact most poverty is rural (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:1). But what is poverty? Some define absolute poverty in terms of basic needs, which include access to clean air and water, food, shelter, clothing and physical and emotional security. Absolute poverty is thus the inability of an individual, community or nation to satisfactorily meet basic needs. The causes of poverty are widespread and often unique to each situation. The lack of money alone does not lead to poverty. Physical factors (poor soil and unreliable rainfall), social factors (lack of skills and knowledge), political factors (lack of government commitment, corruption and nepotism) and economic factors (lack of capital, credit and equipment) all contribute to poverty in various ways (Burkey 1993:3,17-20). For rural communities who depend on agriculture, the presence of these factors can undermine attempts at development.

Most of Africa's rural population are engaged in agriculture and earn their livelihood from this activity. However, in many African countries the predominant form of subsistence agriculture not only fails to meet the basis needs of individuals, leading to continuing and ongoing poverty, but to environmental degradation as livelihood strategies are supplemented by using natural resources such as wood, fishing and wildlife (Cleaver 1997:2). The transformation of agriculture is seen as central to rural development in Africa and a means to address ongoing poverty.

According to Jayne, Minde & Argwings-Kodek (2002:1-3) agricultural transformation is the process by which individual farms shift from being diversified, subsistence-orientated producers towards more specialised producers with a market focus. Central to this is the need to cultivate bigger areas of land by using new technology. By increasing agricultural

productivity and thus yields per hectare, the potential exists to lift a large number of individuals out of poverty (Jayne, Minde, et al. 2002:1-3). Consequently, many rural development projects have attempted to increase agricultural productivity, but to little avail. In fact, the prevalence of rural poverty is testimony to the failures of these rural development projects.

There are many debates as to why these rural development initiatives have failed. Some claim that the lack of community consultation and participation in these projects are the cause. Others again refer to the lack of knowledge of the developers of the diverse ways in which the poor secure their livelihoods. Some blame the lack of government commitment for their failures (Akroyd 2003:3). Just as there are many reasons why these rural development projects fail, so there are numerous theories to explain, or try to conceptualize the reasons for such failures.

Looking back over the past decades, we see a wave of different theories which can roughly be coupled to different time frames. The 1950s was characterised by those advocating modernisation. Namely that development and economic growth could only be reached when traditional societies progressed to higher, modern levels of society. This theory built on the works of classical theorists such as Comte, Durkheim and Marx who focused on the transition from traditional to modern. Parsons (1958) in particular was influential in the formation of criteria for modernisation. However, despite attempts to modernise rural agriculture, the number of poor continued to increase, which reflected poorly on the notion of modernity.

From the 1960s onwards, we saw theorists such as Mellor and Schultz (1964) shifting their focus proclaiming that the emphasis should not be on industrialisation (as advocated by modernisation theory), but on increasing the efficiency of small farms and their contributions to local economies. A report from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 2002 summarised the success of land productivity of small farms as being at least twice that of larger farms in Brazil, due to the higher employment intensity, greater crop variety and more intercropping (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:407).

The small farm model has seen some success and is today still being advocated. However, it only benefited some as it failed to consider that rural poor earn their livelihoods in diverse ways, and not only from agriculture.

The 1970s saw the emergence of more integrated rural development initiatives, which advocated the incorporation of multiple sectors such as health, housing, education and agriculture into development programmes. Integrated rural development was not derived from a theory, but was rather based on assessments of performance of development interventions. Most of the development initiatives based on integration showed great potential for success. The Lilongwe project in Malawi showed, for example, that through this integrated rural development approach there was an increase in physical infrastructure, agricultural support services and basic social services. However, the greatest problem with this approach to rural development was project sustainability, as services and physical infrastructure soon declined once funding was terminated (Kumar 1988:58-59). A mismatch between management, government and community objectives contributed to the failure of these projects, as they were often not directed towards the needs of the community (Birgegard 1988:8-9).

The 1980s saw the emergence of a more free market approach to rural agriculture based on neo-liberal economic policies. It was proclaimed that the best way to achieve rural development and lift communities out of poverty was to open up markets to international trade. This was built on the theory of market liberalization of the economist Adam Smith (1976). However, rural farmers with their limited access to funding and subsistence farming methods could not compete in the marketplace, especially where tariff protections on agricultural produce were removed. In fact, neo-liberal economic structural adjustment programmes in many cases deepened poverty.

The 1990s saw an increased awareness of community participation. Theorists such as Freire (1982) advocated a change in development approaches from the community being the passive object, to active subjects of development, with an increased awareness and ability to transform their environment (Roodt 1996:315). Here the emphasis shifted to

community participation for rural community development, with the emphasis on the need to empower communities to take control of development initiatives. The philosophy behind this was that community participation is fundamental to the success of development efforts. Thus, community involvement in development initiatives is crucial.

Consistent with the switch from top-down to bottom-up thinking about rural development initiatives, is the sustainable livelihoods approach which advocates that rural development has to take into account the various strategies rural people pursue to secure their livelihoods. Scholars such as Chambers, Carney and Scoones (1989) claimed that multiple strategies across sectors are used in the pursuit of secured livelihoods. This poses a possible challenge to the small farm orthodoxy, which advocates agriculture to be the centre of development. The reason for the challenge is that agriculture forms only 40-60% of the 'livelihood package' of those living in rural areas (Ellis & Biggs 2001:445). In terms of the Caprivi Development Project, this approach was particularly useful in order to see how it contributes to the livelihood strategies of the rural Caprivi farming communities.

Besides the theories, which provide a conceptual framework against which to interpret development projects, some studies also examined the factors that lead to project success or failure. In terms of mechanised rain-fed crop production initiatives, which is the type of agricultural development project proposed for the Caprivi region, three key areas for 'project success' are identified. According to the lessons learnt from various similar case studies, the first important factor is the ability of the natural environment to sustain the development project in terms of rainfall patterns and soil fertility. Especially regarding mechanised rain-fed crop production this is of critical importance where development projects are based on this form of agriculture.

A second factor affecting the sustainability of mechanised rain fed crop production is organisational performance. The extent to which technology is available, introduced and adopted, as well as the available infrastructure, all affect organizational performance. In terms of the lessons learnt from these development projects, it was also found that the

formation of cooperatives not only empowers local communities, but gives them increased bargaining power and a greater chance to access finance. However, the ability to manage cooperatives effectively and efficiently is crucial to project success. Thus, training is just as important as finance to ensure that communities are able to manage the development initiative.

A third factor for success in relation to mechanised rain-fed agriculture is whether the local community supports and are motivated to ensure project success. From past studies it appears as if the sustainability of development initiatives is greatly influenced by the degree of community participation and support. Participation means more than just consultation, but entails the active involvement of the community in the planning, implementation and management of the project. Here it is important that certain groups, crucial to the success of the project do not feel marginalised. Hence, ideally decision-making should be decentralised and communities should have access to certain skills and information to make informed decisions.

When one relates the above to the rural development initiative planned for the Caprivi, which is the focus of this study, we can see this happening in practice. Namibia's National Development Plan Vision 2030 strives to reduce poverty, create jobs and develop the rural areas, with a special focus on agriculture to achieve these objectives (Odendaal 2006:38). To reiterate this commitment, President Hifikipunye Pohamba of Namibia, during his address to the nation in 2006 emphasised that 'increased local food production should form an integral part of the development strategies of Namibia' (Namibian Daily News Digest 2006:1).

In Namibia, the agricultural income of the estimated 150 000 households living on communal land is very low, below a dollar a day. Most of these farmers are not in a position to make use of improved farming techniques such as using improved seed varieties, purchase or hire equipment such as tractors. Nor do they have access to formal credit facilities. Consequently, communal rural farmers who are dependent on rain-fed crops and livestock for their survival are locked into a life of subsistence farming, where

most of their production is consumed by their immediate households. Odendaal (2006:88) notes that even though Namibia has a large agricultural sector, it is only self sufficient in mutton, beef and dairy production. However, he has specifically pointed out that both the Kavango and Caprivi have enormous potential for rain-fed crop production. (Odendaal 2006:51). The Caprivians are aware of this and have recently initiated the Caprivi Development Project to develop the agricultural potential of the region.

1.2 THE CAPRIVI CASE STUDY

This study explores how the Caprivi Development Project came about and how it proposes to relieve poverty among rural Caprivians. Building on the lessons learnt from other similar mechanised rain-fed agricultural development projects, this study sets out to determine whether the Caprivi Development Project is just another development project, doomed for failure, or whether it has the potential to succeed and improve the livelihoods of rural Caprivians. The second objective, according to the participation theory and sustainable livelihoods approach, was to see whether there is community buy-in for this project, and how they envisage this project will improve their livelihoods.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Accordingly, my research question sets out to determine two key objectives. Firstly, to determine how feasible the Caprivi Development Project is and secondly, whether rural Caprivian farmers support this project and believe that it will improve their livelihoods?

1.3.1 Research Methodology

For the empirical research phase of this project, qualitative research methods were considered the most appropriate research method to collect the necessary data. The use of interviews and focus groups were used as this allowed for greater interaction with the community and the ability for me to ‘probe beyond the obvious’ and to respond to the responses by community members. It also afforded me the freedom to steer the

conversation in different directions, as issues relevant to the topic emerged. Furthermore, not all the Caprivians are fluent in English, especially the older generation, which would have limited the validity of the information collected using quantitative methods, such as a survey, for example.

Focus group interviews were conducted with members at four villages who formed part of the Caprivi Development Project. This method allowed for maximum participation by community members involved in this project. The communities spontaneously organised themselves into these groups, which included the Chief, elders, men and women involved in this development project. Upon my arrival at each village, respect for tradition was shown, by first going on my knees and clapping my hands as a sign of respect. Hereafter, I was summoned by the chief, who then gave me permission to enter 'the circle'.

The additional value of conducting focus group interviews is that participants can hear the responses of others and can add on their own comments, or comments made by others. The size the focus groups was typically between twelve to fifteen people. We met under the trees to have our conversations. In some instances these numbers grew as other curious community members, who were not necessarily part of the Caprivi Development Project, joined the group. Sometimes they also responded to the questions posed.

The Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union arranged a translator from each of the villages to accompany me at the respective villages. The translator relayed my questions to the community and he translated their responses. The focus group discussions were conducted in *Lozi* as many of the elders are not fluent in English. The interactive nature of the focus groups and the interviews allowed me to cross-question their responses in order to establish a mutual understanding of what was being discussed and to verify responses.

During field visits, focus groups and interviews were conducted and notes were taken by my assistants in terms of the physical setting, activities and interactions with the local participants. This allowed me to focus all my attention on the responses of the

participants. After field visits, additional information was added to the notes from my observations.

On how the Caprivi Development Project can improve their livelihood, a set of questions based on the literature on sustainable livelihoods framework were asked and centred around themes such as (1) available resources, (2) lack of resources, (3) institutional context such as government and (4) potential threats were identified and explored. Looking at the new wave of agricultural development, I also wanted to establish whether there is community support and commitment for the project.

Unstructured interviews were also conducted with English speaking community members in an informal manner as they showed me around their villages and farms. During the time spent at the different villages, I recorded information on the physical setting, the attitude of participants, my interaction with the community (namely, how I was received), certain clues from the non-verbal communications and activities of the participants. The communities were generally welcoming, although at one community, the Chinchimane village, they at first thought I was a government official and were hostile towards me. However, once my role as researcher was clarified their attitude towards me changed.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the key role-players. These included Mr Jankowitz of Sternlink Financial Services and Ps Semi Matthias of Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union. The previous mayor of Katima Mulilo and a member involved in the project, Ms Agnes Limbo was also interviewed. She provided me with valuable information on how women are perceived and the relationship of Caprivians with government. Mr Henk Mudge, leader of the opposition, Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), was also interviewed to gain insight on the politics and why there has been a lack of development in the Caprivi region.

From the literature review, certain themes with regards to the viability of a development project emerged. With specific reference to mechanised rain-fed crop farming, the following themes regarding permanence of agriculture were identified: (1) the ability of

the natural environment to sustain the development project, (2) organizational performance and (3) the degree of community participation in the project. Documentation such as letters, minutes of meetings, study reports and archival records such as maps and the housing census of Namibia were used to help me answer some of these questions and to triangulate the research findings to increase the research validity.

1.3.2 Field Trips

Two field trips were undertaken during April 2007 and July 2007. The purpose of the first visit in April 2007 was to gain insight and a better understanding of the context in which the Caprivi Development Project would be implemented. During this trip I had meetings with Mr. Jankowitz, Ps. Semi Matthias and Ms. Agnes Limbo. This trip was six days. The purpose of the second field trip during July 2007 was to interview the rural Caprivi farming communities involved in the Caprivi Development Project. Focus groups were conducted with these communities. This second field trip was seven days, with one full day spend at each of the villages.

1.3.3 Sample

The rural Caprivi farming communities participating in the Caprivi Development Project were chosen as the subject of analysis. These are the people who will be directly affected by the project and are the most information rich in terms of their perceptions of and attitudes towards the project.

In total sixty-five community members (apart from members not involved in the project), took part in the focus groups. Of these, 30 participants were women and the remaining 35 were men. At one meeting in the village of Chinchimane almost 110 community members attended my focus group meeting. Although not planned, this was extremely interesting as their views and attitude towards the project was very similar to those who have actually 'bought into' the project by registering their land as farming companies.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

Although the communities were consulted in the planning phase of this project, how this project will be implemented and managed, were worked out by their representatives. In hindsight, it would have been interesting to establish just how much the communities know of the project details. This would have revealed the degree of understanding of the intricacies of the project, and whether this was effectively communicated to the community.

This study is not a social impact assessment since the Caprivi Development Project has not yet been implemented. As a follow up study it will be useful to assess the impact of this project on the community, as this could contribute to our understanding of potential problem areas that needs to be addressed in similar development projects.

We also know that women play a crucially important role in agriculture. Although both men and women were always present during focus groups, it was clear that they are subservient to men. Time did not allow me to unpack the gender dimension in great detail. I also discovered that religion may play a role in development projects. This also needs further investigation.

In terms of my position as researcher, the time available to conduct the field research, finances, culture and language differences can be considered as limitations. Due to the fact the Caprivi is 1300 km from Windhoek, it was not possible to conduct multiple field trips. Thus, the time spend with the communities was limited. Not all the community members involved in the Caprivi Development Project were present, either due to the lack of transport, or the fact that they were employed elsewhere. Thus, the opinion of all could not be obtained. Nonetheless, the responses of those present at the focus groups were consistent across all the villages, which is an indication of mutual feelings.

Since not all the community members involved in the project were fluent in English, translators had to be used. One never really knows how much information may have been lost in the translation and interpretation of information.

1.5 VALUE

The Caprivi Development Project is still in its planning phase and has not yet been implemented. The outcomes of this study can be used by the project managers to determine whether (1) according to existing studies this project is feasible and (2) whether the communities are committed to make this project a success. Furthermore the key findings of this study can be used to motivate why, or why not, this project should be funded and implemented. Lastly certain potential areas that might cause conflict and ultimately failure were identified. Taking cognisance of these threats in advance can enhance the prospects of success of this rural development project.

1.6 CHAPTER PROFILE

In the first introductory chapter, the study is contextualised and its significance is explained. The need for development, especially in the rural areas is emphasised. In this chapter, an outline of a number of key theories which explain why rural poverty exists and the strategies that are needed to reduce this, are discussed. Literature regarding lessons in terms of agricultural projects based on mechanised dry-land projects is outlined. A definition of the research problem is given and the aims of the study are set out. In addition, the limitations and value of this study are alluded to.

Chapter Two sets out the theoretical framework on rural development for this study as it has evolved over the past half century. Theories such as the modernist, small-farm orthodoxy, neo-liberalist, integrated rural development, participation models and the sustainable livelihood framework are reviewed. The usefulness of participation and the sustainable livelihood framework for the purpose of this study is emphasised.

In Chapter Three, the lessons learned from mechanised rain-fed crop farming initiatives are explored. The extent to which the natural environment such as rainfall and soil fertility and organizational structures which include the project design, technology and infrastructure, the formation of cooperatives and finance, government policies, training and development and the project objectives that affect the permanence of agriculture are assessed. The importance of community commitment to a project for its sustainability is emphasised.

Chapter Four presents the case of the unique Caprivi and the dire need for development in this impoverished, isolated region. The history, environment and politics are discussed. The economic activities in the region, the people and their lifestyles along with the livelihood strategies they pursue are discussed.

Against this background Chapter Five presents the aims of the Caprivi Development Project, the project design, its structure, the stakeholders and the challenges faced in making this project a success. The main purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings on how this project is perceived by the farmers involved in this rural development project.

The final chapter of this study, Chapter Six, tries to link theory to practice drawing together the theories, lessons learned and research finding, before reaching some final conclusions relating to the two research questions posed, namely whether this project has the elements of a successful development project and whether the community sees the tangible benefits of this project in terms of their livelihoods.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the field of development studies there are many theories, counter-theories, approaches, paradigms and programmes that try to make sense of the successes and failures of development projects. Since the 1950s, which marks the beginning of the development decades, thousands of scholarly articles, journals and books have been published in which attention is directed towards possible causes and cures for underdevelopment. Some of these theories such as modernisation and the dependency theory emphasise the role of the economy, while others like the alternative development theory focus on social aspects and the role of the community (Burkey 1993:26-28). All of these theories attempt to provide various perspectives on how to alleviate poverty.

The alleviation of poverty has long been considered an essential goal of development. However, during the 1990s, after fifty years of international development efforts, it became increasingly evident that the number of the poor, namely people living on less than \$1 per day, was increasing (Gilling, Jones, et al. 2001:1-2). Some reports conducted by the World Bank (1999) showed an increase from 1.2 billion to almost 1.5 billion people living in poverty. The billions of dollars of development funding was in many cases having very little, or no impact on poverty reduction. This led to a major refocusing of donor and government development efforts, concerning poverty alleviation (Gilling, Jones, et al. 2001:1-2).

Given that the focus of this study is on agricultural rural development, this chapter outlines the key approaches to rural development, specifically as they have evolved over the last half-century. The focus is on the dominant theories, approaches and turning points between them, and how they have impacted on the discourse of rural development over the past half-century.

The following is a timeline in the evolution of rural development thinking based on the classification of Ellis & Biggs (2000:444). This is useful as it serves the purpose of this particular study by focusing on the production side of rural development, rather than on education, health and social services (Ellis & Biggs 2001:437). Subsequently, the timeline presents rural development thinking as it has evolved over the past 50 years:

- a) Modernisation (1950s) to the emphasis on small-farm growth (1960s)
 - b) Small-farm growth within integrated rural development (1970s)
 - c) State-led rural development (1970s) to market liberalisation (1980s)
 - d) Process, participation, empowerment and actor approaches (1980s and 1990s)
 - e) Sustainable livelihoods as an integrating framework (2000s)
 - f) Mainstreaming rural development in poverty reduction strategy papers (2000s)
- (Ellis & Biggs 2001:444).

Although this classification may be over simplistic as there are overlaps between themes and over time periods, it is useful because it highlights mainstream rural development narratives. This classification identifies key approaches to rural development over the past half-century starting with the 1950s, the beginning of an era marked by the modernisation theory (Ellis & Biggs 2001:437-438).

2.2 1950s: MODERNISATION THEORY

Theories and models derived from the experiences of the Western economy have until recently dominated development theory. The rise of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution gave a distinctive form to Western development thinking (Burkey 1993:27). Development and economic growth became synonymous with progress and higher levels of civilization (Burkey 1993:27). In other words, if a country wants to develop, there is the need to modernise.

According to Coetzee (2001:27) modernisation refers to the transformation that takes place when a 'traditional' society changes to such an extent that new forms of technology, organizational or social characteristics of an 'advanced' society appear. The two assumptions that this theory makes are, firstly, that there is a set of characteristics for traditional societies and another set for modernity, and secondly that progress or transition from the one to the other is possible (Coetzee 1996:48).

The transition from a 'traditional' to 'modern' society is enhanced by introducing variables such as industrialization, democratization and secularization (Coetzee 2001:27). This notion emphasises that societies develop over time and progress through many stages (Preston 1996:3). According to the modernisation theory, a traditional society, which is seen as the simplest level, progresses to the more complex level of a modern society by firstly, establishing a modern economy. Secondly, modern values have to become diffused throughout the society and since there is no business or entrepreneurial class, the state has to initiate this transition from traditional to modern. (Coetzee 2001:29; Preston 1996:3). Thus the state has to instigate this transition by means of, for example, structural differentiation, specialization, bureaucratization, industrialization and commercialization through various projects, until progress has been made to a more modern level (Martinussen 1999:50). This is because traditional societies lack the capacity to make this transition from an agrarian to a modern society on their own.

Relating this to rural development, it is held that traditional societies lack the capacity for competitiveness, not only because their economy is based on subsistence farming, cash crops and bartering, but also because they lack modern agricultural techniques. These traditional methods also produce little surplus which can be sold for profits. In addition, not only do farmers lack modern equipment, improved seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, but also the necessary knowledge to use these techniques. Thus, modernists believe that by introducing modern technologies, together with the required training and extension programmes, the poor can be lifted out of poverty by increasing crop yield that can be sold at the market for profits (Burkey 1993:27).

However, Burkey (1993:28) claims that despite what modernists claim, the development of modern cash-crop agriculture did not lead to a generalised improvement in incomes and living standards of rural poor. In fact, the rural poor became increasingly marginalised, and modernisation resulted in the increase of unemployment and starvation. Mechanisation created a pool of under-employed landless people who lost their means of subsistence and increased the debts of small farmers, as modern equipment had to be purchased. In addition, export crops replaced food crops. So although in some cases incomes rose, crops for food consumption decreased, thus increasing food insecurity. The profits made were often concentrated in the hands of merchants, middlemen and government bureaucrats, which did not benefit the poor 'small farmer' who received a minimum price for their efforts. Thus, modernity did not help the farmers (Burkey 1993:27).

2.3 1960s: SMALL FARM MODEL

The early 1960s saw the 'first paradigm shift' in rural development thinking, meaning a shift in focus from large commercial farms, to the development of mass productive small farms. Hence, small-farm agriculture was no longer seen as a hindrance to development, but instead, was considered an engine for development (Ellis & Biggs 2001:440). The small-farm model proposed that agriculture plays a fundamental role in overall economic growth by providing labour, capital, food, foreign exchange and wage goods for the emerging industrial sector in low-income countries. Thus, small-farm agriculture in particular should form the focus of an agricultural development strategy (Ellis & Biggs 2001:441).

The small scale farm model has been influential in development thinking well into the 2000s, based on the recognition that small farmers are rational economic agents and able to make informed decisions about land utilisation (Ellis & Biggs 2001:441). While large farms may 'yield' more crops per hectare, small farmers have crop mixtures and thus produce a greater variety of products from a piece of land (Rosset 2008:2). For example, they can use more of the available niche space between rows, than large farms with single

crops. Also, family labour is used more intensively on small farms (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:11). The constraint of managing a large, hired labour force is thus avoided. Hence, work in traditional societies remains embedded in social relations within the family, where the benefits are redistributed.

A further argument in favour of the small farm model is the inverse relationship that exists between farm size and economic efficiency (Rosset 2008:2). According to Rosset (2008:2) small farmers tend to invest more labour in their land, which is of better quality since the family's future depends on it, driving them to take care of it. In addition Rosset (2008:2) maintains that land productivity of small farms cause less environmental damage than large ones.

The counter arguments against this model of uplifting the rural poor is for example, that part-time farmers may not see the need to maximise their return from farming (Ellis & Biggs 2001:441). In other words, they may remain subsistence farmers and continue to grow staple crops for own consumption. This implies that they either do not have the desire, or the surplus cash to purchase the means to mechanise to increase crop yield. Furthermore, they may lack the skills to use modern equipment or technology (Ellis 1993:15). Although Ashley & Maxwell (2001:407) note that some of these propositions are inconclusive, it does appear as if the efficiency of small farms is breaking down. The reasons are not linked purely to subsistence farming, but to the pressures of globalisation where non-traditional crops are promoted and mechanisation replaces labour (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:407).

Others maintained that the focus on agriculture was too narrow. Many rural poor depend on various other non-farm sources of income to sustain their livelihoods, such as wages, pension or profits from selling hand-made goods (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:407; Ellis & Biggs 2001:408).

2.4 1970s: INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Returning to the timeline, the beginning of the 1970s saw integrated rural development models being advocated where agriculture took its place alongside the development of other sectors. This led to the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) approach to poverty reduction around the 1970s and 1980s. This made headlines and became one of the most important development intervention strategies employed by Third World governments and international aid agencies (Cohen 1987:2; Kumar 2005:2).

The Integrated Rural Development (IRD) approach provided development practitioners with a project format. This approach proposed that single-sector infrastructural developments, such as just focusing on agriculture, had turned out to be irrelevant to the poor, as they earn their living in diverse ways and do not solely depend on agriculture (Birgegard 1988:4). Building on this realisation the IRD approach focused on increasing the agricultural productivity along with the quality of life of rural people through effective government support for agricultural development, infrastructure development, health and social services (Kumar 2005:2). Thus, the improvement of the standard of living of the rural population was expressed in social, economic and environmental terms (Cohen 1987:5). The term ‘integrated’ indicates the inclusion of multiple sectors such as agriculture, health, education and other social services in development strategies. Initially, these strategies directed at the upliftment of the rural poor showed great success, but collapsed as soon as funding was lost.

Another limitation of this approach was that planning was executed by officials sitting in offices away from the daily situation of the rural poor (Burkey 1993:49). The planning and research done through feasibility studies were often inconclusive and inaccurate as these ‘outside’ officials had little knowledge of the environment and socio-cultural variables in the specific areas (Norton & Foster 2001:44; Kumar 2005:5). The lack of, or limited input from the rural poor contributed to the failure of these projects as in many cases they did not meet the needs of the specific area and were not environmentally or socially feasible or sustainable (Norton & Foster 2001:44).

As mentioned, IRD projects had some success, even if they were short-lived. It provided investment needed for development in a specific region within a country. Typical areas of investment included seed production and distribution, agricultural research, land use planning, rural crafts, livestock extension and veterinary medicine, rural roads, water supply, health centres and schools in rural areas which all addressed the needs of rural communities. However, the role of the private sector was often suppressed by the government in these initiatives. Private agricultural trade was highly regulated and government-owned parastatals marketed locally produced cash crops. Government agencies fixed the prices paid by parastatals to farmers (Burkey 1993:49).

Rural development was thus defined as the integration of agriculture into a larger development strategy where the development of other sectors, along with agriculture, could be followed. However, the lack of understanding and consultation with rural communities and market regulation, which limited the private sector, led to failures of many of these initiatives. This gave way to the call for a more free market approach to rural development.

2.5 1980s: MARKET LIBERALISATION

In the 1980s, neo-liberalism or market liberalism emerged which involved less state regulation in the economy (Martinez & Garcia 1996:1). Neo-liberalism is based on the principle that the market should be opened up to international trade and foreign investment, that price controls should be abolished and that freedom should be given to the movement of capital goods and services. In other words, the market should drive development, not the state. Neo-liberalists argue that the chance of development is best when left in the hands of the market. They rationalise this by saying that an unregulated market is the best way to increase economic growth, which will ultimately benefit all (Martinez & Garcia 1996:2).

Neo-liberalists hoped that capital accumulation and investment guided profit-seeking entrepreneurs would produce self-sustaining economic growth. This economic growth

would draw the abundance of labour from rural areas into higher-productive industrial jobs, thus creating full employment (Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:2). This in turn would lead to the modernisation and mechanisation of the agriculture sector. However, this was not the case as governments did not stipulate rural development as a priority in their policies and saw rural poverty as a problem that would be eradicated by continued industrial growth (Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:2).

Further critique of market liberalization was that the reduction in the provision of social services and government protection in terms of tariff controls had a marked impact on the poor and little development was seen in rural areas. People in rural areas do not benefit from neo-liberal economic policies, as they do not have the capacity to compete with larger organizations in the marketplace. Farmers in rural areas have restricted access to credit and little sector investment in input supply which contributes to low productivity agriculture. They are not protected from economic shocks since price controls, minimum prices and import taxes are abolished by the state, which also decreases the bargaining power of rural agriculturalists when they sell their crops on the market. The prices they get for their goods are thus now regulated by the demand and supply of the market.

Even though many governments still follow this approach today, it is clear that only some benefit from this policy. The benefits have failed to trickle down deepening income inequalities (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:408). In the light of this, and the limited success of integrated rural development, rural development agents called for development projects that address the impact of neo-liberalism on the rural poor. Here the focus shifted to community development where the community themselves take responsibility for their development.

2.6 1980s-1990s: PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a switch from the 'blue-print' or top-down approach in rural development, marked by external technologies and nation-level policies, to a bottom-up grassroots approach (Ellis & Biggs 2001:443). People-centred

development, which involves participation of the majority of the people, especially minority groups and women, was now viewed as the most important factor for successful development projects (Roodt 1996:317). Roodt (1996:312) defines participation as, 'people involving themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, in organisations indirectly or directly concerned with decision-making about, and implementation of, development'.

The skills of people living in poverty were now valued and efforts were made to involve communities in development programmes (Warburton 1998:20). Human consciousness and experience of the rural poor were now embraced by acknowledging local knowledge. For example, local people have knowledge of weather patterns and best crops for cultivation in an area. Thus, by allowing community participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of rural development projects, local experiences and knowledge could be incorporated in rural development projects enhancing not only the success of these projects, but commitment to them (Burkey 1993:33).

This saw a growing acknowledgement of the value of indigenous technical knowledge, and the ability of the poor themselves to contribute to solutions to the problems they face. There was the recognition that community members have intimate knowledge of their problems and have creative and practical solutions to addressing these needs (Moore & Hill 1998:2). Therefore, the rural poor themselves should be consulted as they, more than anyone, know the extent of their situation. Consequently, decision-making should be decentralised allowing the community to decide what the best strategy for local development is (Narayan, Patel, et al. 2000:5; Wetmore & Theron 1998:5-7).

Some have criticised this approach as concerns have been raised about the ability of people to deal with economic and social inequality problems at local level (Roodt 1996:319). Power relations are questioned, such as who are the significant decision makers, whose interests they serve, how those excluded from the decision-making process can influence the decision makers and to what extent do structures for production such as land ownership affect participation. Traditional structures often exclude women, youth and landless from decision-making processes (Roodt 1996:322). Thus,

marginalisation of minority groups is a weakness of this approach. Further criticism is the free-rider problem. Those with smaller interests in the development initiative often free-ride on the efforts of those with greater interests (Mansuri & Rao 2004:4).

Others again claimed that participation is said to empower individuals as it strengthens their self-confidence, pride, creativity, responsibility and commitment to development initiatives (Burkey 1993:56). This implies that if communities are appropriately empowered, they can often manage their own local development efforts. Hereby it is assumed that such participation and empowerment initiatives will ensure that projects bring lasting change, and thus, sustainability (Warburton 1998:21).

This lead to sustainable development being advocated which was defined as a process where the current needs of communities are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to draw on the environment to meet their own needs (Wetmore & Theron 1998:3). Decisions that effect the environment are best secured by decentralizing the management of resources upon which local communities depend (Warburton 1998:21). An example of such an initiative is the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), which is an approach where the community is responsible for managing the sustainable use of natural resources.

However, increasing the amount and effectiveness of community participation alone will not solve the problem of poverty, as it implies that poverty is only a problem that poor people can solve. Projects can help individuals to develop their capacities and even move out of poverty, but the belief that such small-scale developments could have any impact on social and economic structures has long been exposed as mistaken. Thus, all people, and not just the poor, have a role to play in poverty reduction (Warburton 1998:20-21).

The role of the community in development efforts became increasingly important especially in the light of the failures of integrated rural development and neo-liberalism in meeting the needs of the poor. These types of development efforts have seen more success than others. During this period of participation, it became increasingly noticed

that the face of agriculture in rural areas is changing as it is acknowledged that the rural poor earn their livings in diverse ways.

2.7 2000s: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

This led to the emergence of the sustainable livelihoods approach to rural development (Ellis & Biggs 2001:444). The sustainable livelihood approach emphasises that the rural poor do not only rely on agriculture for their livelihoods as evidence shows that only 40-60% of their existence depends on agricultural. They draw on a range of other non-farming economic activities in order to secure their livelihoods (George 1997:1). These include earnings from farming, pensions, migratory work and sale of produce and crafts (Chambers & Conway 1992:3; Ellis & Biggs 2001:445).

Central to the Sustainable Livelihood (SL) approach is the asset/vulnerability framework used to analyse the livelihoods of poor people (Atkinson 2007:715). Poor people are vulnerable to shocks, seasonality and economic trends and within this vulnerability and institutional context, they secure their livelihoods by combining and diversifying their use of assets (Freeman & Ellis 2005:4). Assets, or capital, are often categorised into five types of assets: financial assets (savings, loans), natural assets (land, water), infrastructural assets (equipment, roads, buildings), social assets (community organisation), and personal assets (health, education, experience) (Atkinson 2007:715; Freeman & Ellis 2005:4). In other words, individuals and households have different types of capital, opportunities and services from which they draw to secure their livelihoods (Chambers & Conway 1992:6; Freeman & Ellis 2005:5). Thus, the SL framework emphasises the need to understand the organisational and institutional environment and vulnerability context within which the poor operate to sustain their livelihoods (Atkinson 2007:715; Norton & Foster 2001:9).

The SL approach is guided by the following principles:

- It is people centred and starts with analysing the people's livelihoods and how these have changed over time.

- It is holistic and acknowledges that people adopt multiple strategies to secure their livelihoods and that many other actors are involved, such as private-sector, ministries and international organizations.
- It is dynamic in that it seeks to understand the dynamic nature of livelihoods and what influences them.
- It builds on the people's perceived strengths and opportunities, rather than focusing on their problems and needs and it supports existing livelihoods
- A link is made between the influence of policies and institutions on livelihood options and highlights the need for policies to take insights from locals into account.
- It encourages broad partnerships and draws on both the public and private sectors for broad partnerships.
- Lastly it links environmental and social sustainability which is important for lasting poverty reduction.

(George 1997:2-5).

The strength of this approach is that it recognises the multiple and diverse character of livelihoods, possible institutional blockages that need to be addressed and the social and economic character of livelihood strategies. It also identifies the factors that diminish vulnerability and the micro-macro links that connect livelihoods to policies (Chambers & Conway 1992:5), (Freeman & Ellis 2005:5). Thus, rural development is the recognition of the livelihoods of communities which provides developers with a framework on which they can build. Developers should build on the strengths (assets) which communities have while removing factors which add to their vulnerability, for example, the lack of equipment or access to finance. However, some argue that this approach is more easily applied on the ground at micro level than at macro policy level. Also, the issues of power and authority are not strongly represented in the framework (Norton & Foster 2001:10). One way for linking livelihoods and policies is through poverty reduction strategy papers.

2.8 2000: POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS

In 2000, the World Bank and IMF initiated the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers approach which is a comprehensive country-based strategy for poverty reduction. It describes the macroeconomic, structural and social programmes and policies that countries are to follow to promote poverty reduction and broad-based growth (IMF 2008:1).

The World Bank is now requesting a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper from all countries wanting access to IMF resources, or who wish to receive assistance from the International Development Association (IDA) (Norton & Foster 2001:6). This has to include an overarching national policy strategy within which specific sectoral initiatives fit and provide a framework within which national budgets and donor support operate. Applications for funding by governments should demonstrate high levels of government commitment and ownership to rural development by focusing on empowerment (to strengthen the focus of state institutions on poverty reduction), security (poor to manage risks more effectively) and opportunity (strengthening economic options) (Gilling, Jones, et al. 2001:301,304-305). However, the extent to which these initiatives are implemented are yet to be seen.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The question that now arises, after five or six decades of rural development, is what strategy should be followed to improve rural people's lives. Looking back at the timeline on development theories, projects based on the modernisation theory saw little success as the number of poor, landless and indebted rural people increased. The 1960s saw an emphasis on small farms and their contributions to local economies as the focus of development strategies. However technological complexity, connectedness to markets and the globalisation of commodity chains limited the success of this approach. Integrated rural development initiatives also saw little success, as they were planned by outsiders and therefore the real needs of communities were not identified or addressed. Since it also included high government regulation which limited the private sector and its

profits, neo-liberalism was called for in the 1980s. This led to even greater marginalisation of the rural poor as profits made were concentrated in the hands of foreigners and rural farmers could not compete in the market place.

More recently, the participation and empowerment approaches to rural development have seen some success, as they focus more on the needs of communities. They also allow for greater sustainability of projects by empowering local communities to take control of their own development. The sustainable livelihoods approach recognizes the strengths and limitations of the strategies communities pursue in order to secure their livelihoods. This can be a useful framework on which developers can build rural development projects.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There are numerous development theories of rural development that have evolved over time based on the lessons learnt from various rural development projects. Rural development projects range from conservation projects such as community based natural resource management (CBNRM) projects, to crop farming, livestock production and marketing, improvement of infrastructure and social services, to name but a few. Closer scrutiny of case studies of rural development provides insight into the challenges, as well as reasons for the success and failures of various development projects.

The aim of this chapter is to specifically reflect on some of the ‘lessons learned’ from mechanised rain-fed agricultural development projects that are similar to the Caprivi Development Project, which is the focus of this study. By focusing on these projects, one is able to identify those factors which influence the success and failure of these type of development projects, which might differ from other development projects. For example, development projects focusing on developing social services such as health and education are less dependent on environmental factors whereas rain-fed projects are directly dependent on soil fertility.

The main concern is whether development projects and more specifically mechanised rain-fed agricultural projects such as the Caprivi Development Project can be sustained in the long-term. In other words, can there be permanence of agriculture. Thimm (1978:2) identified three critical success factors, namely, (a) *does the environment allow for continuous cropping*; (b) *does the administrative performance guarantee the final success of the project* and (c) *are the local people motivated to continue the efforts started?* Thus, the durability and success of agricultural development projects depend on

the environment, administrative structures and infrastructure, as well as the local community (Republic of Kenya 2006:3; Kumar 2005:3-4).

In this chapter, I discuss these three inter-related variables in terms of the lessons learned from various mechanised rain-fed agricultural projects. At a later stage, these will be related to the Caprivi Development Project, which as mentioned is still in the developmental phase.

3.2 LESSONS FROM RAIN-FED AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

As previously mentioned there are three key variables that affect the success of mechanised rain-fed or dry-land crop farming, namely the ability of the natural environment to sustain the project, administrative performances and community participation in the project. All of these affect a project's permanence.

3.2.1 The Environment and Continuous Cropping

Mechanised rain-fed agriculture is influenced by factors such as the soil, rainfall and wind and is thus directly dependent on the natural environment for success (Gillet, Mercoiret, et al. 2003:205). Consequently these types of projects often have high fluctuations in the rates of yields, due to the irregularity of rainfall which leads to irregular harvests (Thimm 1978:2; Burkey 1993:17). Adding to this is that rainfall patterns in many areas have changed over the last few decades with droughts and floods occurring in areas which have never experienced this before (Republic of Kenya 2006:14). Projects thus need to be sensitive to rainfall patterns and not overestimate yields resulting in profit expectations not being met (Burkey 1993:17; (Republic of Kenya 2006:14). Projects should thus include research based on reliable long term rainfall data. Of equal importance are soil fertility studies (Thimm 1978:2).

Soil fertility is another factor affecting the ability of the environment to sustain crop production (Burkey 1993:17). Many mechanised projects have had an adverse effect on

soil fertility (Thimm 1978:2). Soil degradation can be due to traditional farming methods not being environmentally sustainable or to new technologically improved methods, which impact on the environment negatively. For example, the removal of stumps to facilitate mechanisation can contribute to soil erosion. Traditional crop varieties are often replaced with new improved varieties and exotic crops that can also have a negative influence on the environment (MET 2008:9). Hence, the introduction of new technology and crop varieties may result in a decrease in yields after a few years as the soil becomes depleted (Gillet, Mercoiret, et al. 2003:207-208; Thimm 1978:2). Such evidence has contributed to the formulation of the sustainable development theory which advocates environmental friendly development by preserving and effectively managing natural resources.

One way to achieve this is through crop rotation and soil conservation (Gillet, Mercoiret, et al. 2003:209). Another is to plant crops which have the least possible negative influence on the environment. Another is the introduction of mixed cropping as it can limit the effects of erosion as it optimises the use of land, for example, use some plant types as hedges or intercrops (Hiremath, Raju, et al. 1997:103; Thimm 1978:2). Along with the above mentioned, appropriate fertilisation technologies should be adopted and practiced in an effective manner (MET 2008a:10).

Although natural forces such as droughts or floods cannot be controlled, they can be effectively managed through sustainable development efforts (Thimm 1978:1; Burkey 1993:17). Sustainable development recognises the importance of economic conservation by protecting and managing natural resources, bio-diversity and ecosystems (Jones 2001:2). This is consistent with the sustainable development theory which advocates the sustainable use of natural resources. This is because natural resources are a key element in the livelihoods of communities and should therefore be conserved for future generations. However, without effective organizational structures, development and the environment cannot be effectively managed (Thimm 1978:3). Thus, there are lessons to be learned in terms of organizational structures which can contribute to the permanence of a project.

3.2.2 Organizational Performance

Numerous case studies suggest that successful projects are those linked with good organizational performance. This implies that project structures and administrative procedures should be effectively designed, accessed and managed, and should be sensitive to changing climatic and economic conditions. Organizational performance is influenced by the design, available infrastructure, finances and government support, but also by community participation.

Community-based development is the umbrella term used for projects that include the active involvement of beneficiaries (Mansuri & Rao 2004:1). Evidence suggests that projects where communities are actively involved in the design and management of such projects, have been more successful. The benefit of this approach, is that it reverses power relations and creates agency and a voice for the people as it allows them to have more control over development assistance (Mansuri & Rao 2004:2).

3.2.2.1 Project Design and Implementation

Participation theory advocates that the local community must be involved in the designing phase and should have realistic expectations of the outcome of development projects (Mercoiret & Mercoiret 2003:13). Such projects need to make optimal use of the social capital, namely the skills and social networks these communities possess, as this forms part of their livelihood strategies (Mansuri & Rao 2004:7). The sustainable livelihood approach emphasises the need to understand these livelihood strategies.

It is important to note that clarification of roles and assignment of tasks to the different stakeholders are crucial. Clear written agreements on roles and responsibilities help to clarify the roles of the individual stakeholders (Lubulwa, Wafula, et al. 1995:8). This contributes to organizational effectiveness but also to member commitment to the project as everyone knows what is expected of them and where they fit in.

Often developers formulate projects and business plans only to later realise that the local community does not have access to the rights of the land (Maredia & Minde 2002:85). The community might have a right to stay on the land and use it for subsistence farming, but do not have a transferable lease which they can use as a security. This might be due to the land being part of communal land or a conservation area. Land rights have to be allocated to the farmers by traditional authority and land boards or the Ministry of the specific country (Whiteside 1998:10). Developers should thus make sure that the community has long-term access to the land in a way that allows for the intervention, i.e. the community needs land tenure (Van der Walt 2006:3). Land rights thus have to be settled before a project starts, or many efforts will be in vain (Thimm 1978:3).

3.2.2.2 Technology and Infrastructure

With respect to mechanised rain-fed agricultural development projects in rural areas, there is a need for ‘agricultural extension’, namely the need to bring technical and scientific knowledge within the reach of non-experts (Mercoiret & Mercoiret 2003:184). Rural communities often lie in remote parts of a country and have not been exposed to certain technological innovations that can increase yields and reduce production costs (Thimm 1978:3; Maredia & Minde 2002:94). Hence, planners of rural development projects need to consider this in relation to the environment, the type of crops and human resource potential to ensure optimal return on investment (Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:112; Whiteside 1998:3). Evidence from the ACIAR Development Project in Kenya suggests that the benefits from technology depend on the level of adoption of the new technology by the smallholders (Lubulwa, Wafula, et al. 1995:5). Innovations that require little direct cash outlays are the most widely adopted as these often place high demands on available labour and not necessarily require cash for implementation (Lubulwa, Wafula, et al. 1995:5). However, no matter how technologically advanced a community becomes, it is affected by the available infrastructure and institutional support within the area (IFAD 2004:5).

Institutions such as local governments have the responsibility to provide public goods and services such as telecommunications, electricity and water. The lack thereof, either prohibits or slows technological progress in agriculture (FAO 2000:4). As many Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers indicate, government needs to create the infrastructure to provide these services if development projects are to succeed (Whiteside 1998:6; Coetzee 2007:1). Government commitment is necessary not only in terms of creating the necessary infrastructure or services, but should support the project objectives. Where projects comply with government policies, they are often more successful as they share the development goals of the country and operate within the given frameworks (Whiteside 1998:6; Coetzee 2007:1).

Success of agricultural development projects are not only dependent on basic services, but the actual infrastructure available in rural areas. The question often arises whether the community has access to markets and whether it is able to accommodate the products brought to it (Wiggins 2000:636). For example, are there buyers and is it economically feasible to start the project in a remote rural area (FAO 2000:7). Does the market allow for inputs needed such as seeds, fertilizers and agricultural equipment? In other words, does the necessary road, railway or sea port exist to supply and transport products needed for the production or sale/export of goods (Deshayes, Mercoiret, et al. 2003:225-227). Thus, the conditions of available infrastructures for transportation should be considered when planning an intervention.

The increase in farm-level specialization implies greater commercialization and reliance on markets, both for selling products and for acquiring food and other consumption needs (Jayne, Minde, et al. 2002:3). In other words, households become more dependent on markets with all their attendant risks brought about by neo-liberalist economic theories. These risks are often shared by the formation of cooperatives in rural areas.

3.2.2.3 Cooperatives and finances

Evidence suggests that a cooperative formed by a group of people with the same needs is an ideal form of business practice as it gets community members involved. Hence, many development projects encourage communities to join a cooperative (Van der Walt 2006:2). A cooperative in its ideal form is a democratic, self-reliant organization owned and managed by members who contribute to share capital and may freely enter or exit the organization. Cooperatives act as a coping mechanism which communities can use in an economic environment which sometimes ignores the priorities of individuals in communities in their quest for survival (Braverman, Guasch, et al. 1991:4; Van der Walt 2006:4).

Especially where these small farmers have to compete on the global market, joining a cooperative can not only enable members to obtain supplies at low costs and get the best prices for their products, but improve their bargaining power through economies of scale with suppliers and markets (Braverman, Guasch, et al. 1991:4; Van der Walt 2006:11). Cooperatives are also in a better position to obtain loans and financing (Braverman, Guasch, et al. 1991:4). Credit is often made available to small farmers and again, if credit is obtained via a cooperative, the risk is shared (Chambers & Conway 1992:31). Funding is often obtained through donor assistance, grants, subsidies or credit banks. Continued access to finances is vital, as without finances the operational procedures such as the day-to-day running of a project will fail. (Van der Walt 2006:10). However, cooperatives often fail not due to a lack of finances, but due to ineffective management, the lack of member commitment and poor business practices (Van der Walt 2006:11).

Since members often lack the know-how of operational and managerial procedures, it is clear that if agricultural development projects are to succeed members need to be equipped with such skills (Thimm 1978:3). Where there was a lack of qualified staff, projects often failed to meet the set targets. Hence, an important lesson is that the skills and knowledge of cooperative operations should be transferred to the local people managing the cooperatives if such initiatives are to succeed (Kumar 2005:3). Thus,

education and training are important aspects of capacity building (IFAD 2004:4; Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:123).

3.2.2.4 Training and development

Development operators have found that there is a huge demand for training in general in the rural areas (Mercoiret & Mercoiret 2003:117). Local people have expressed the need for training with regards to new technologies, project management, finances, literacy and basic business skills such as book-keeping (Van der Walt 2006:10; Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:124). As mentioned, new technologies are often introduced and local people need to be trained not only in how to use this technology, but also how to repair machines should there be breakages. Thus a technological transfer is needed (IFAD 2004:5).

Training the local population in the skills necessary to ensure the success of development projects has a further advantage. Given that most of these projects are in remote areas, equipping the local people with the necessary skills means that certain administrative tasks can be decentralised and be more responsive to local conditions and communities (Whiteside 1998:1; Kumar 2005:3). Decentralisation is consistent with what participation and empowerment theorists advocate. This is even more important where there are cultural and language barriers that may cause misunderstandings between the trainers and local people (Burkey 1993:129).

For knowledge transfer to take place successfully, one of the lessons learnt is that that trainers must recognise and respect indigenous practices related to the use of natural resources and land management. This requires a more interactive training approach to see whether the information conveyed is understood. Equally important is opportunity for feedback where, through constructive criticism, both parties can say what is working and what not (Burkey 1993:129).

3.2.2.5 Project objectives

Often project objectives and outcomes do not correlate or serve the mission and vision of the project. In other words, projects do not achieve that which they set out to achieve as the project design is not compatible with the expected outcomes. One way of addressing this is by continuous monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is currently a common phenomenon in both the public and private sector. Evaluation research is defined as, ‘the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation, design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programs’ (UCER 2002:10). M&E is an effective system employed by many successful rural development programmes that give feedback to managers and participants on progress, performance and problems (Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:137). Within this process, M&E assists in clarifying the objectives, expected outcomes, associated activities and indicators for success of projects (Republic of Swaziland 2002:8; Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:137).

One can conclude that for a successful durable project, the objectives and anticipated outcomes should be realistically set in relation to the operational context which includes project activities, the resources available, especially finances and the time allocated (IFAD 2004:7). Organizational problems emerge in all types of projects and there is no organizational model that is perfect for every project due to the unique environment and circumstances of each project (Thimm 1978:3). For this reason, it is crucial that the indigenous knowledge of a specific environment is incorporated in development thinking. This can be achieved by the participation of local people in such projects (Kumar 2005:4).

3.2.3 Community participation in rural development projects

As participation and empowerment theories in the previous section indicate, involvement of the communities in development projects is extremely important. Development should be ‘for the people, by the people’ (FAO 2000:2). The cornerstone of effective

community-based development is the active involvement of members from the community in the project design and implementation, with the key objective being the incorporation of local knowledge into the decision making processes of the project (Mansuri & Rao 2004:6). This contributes to social acceptance of a development project.

3.2.3.1 Marginalisation

What is participation? Participation is a term that is notoriously broadly interpreted, sometimes even by the different stakeholders themselves (Twyman 2000:1). There are different levels of community participation in agricultural development projects. In some cases participation has been limited to elites only, in others, people's opinions were asked, but they were not included in the planning or management of the project (FAO 2000:2,7). One of the lessons learnt is that developers should make a conscious effort to solicit the opinions of all the parties involved in making the project a success irrespective of class, gender, ethnicity, race or religion.

Women have often been key role players in rural agriculture. However, often their views are marginalised and their participation in projects have been limited, as in most cases the decision-making power lies with men (FAO 2000:4). Women contribute a great deal to the labour in households and agricultural production, therefore, they should be allowed to participate in decisions that affect their participation in agriculture and food production (Republic of Kenya 2006:4). However, many projects that were designed to benefit women have failed due to it not recognizing women's roles and responsibilities. In other words, they failed to anticipate the impacts of the intervention (Doss 2001:2087; FAO 2000:2). Thus, they fail to recognize the household responsibilities of women which contribute to conflict in interests if women are expected to work hours which restricts them from performing their household roles. New economic opportunities that arise from the introduction of new technology can contribute to a change in gender roles and responsibilities such as gender divisions of labour becoming less rigid (Doss 2001:2087). Doss (2001:2087) argues that claiming that gender is important does not tell one what to do prior to the project nor be able to fully understand the impact of the intervention. Yet,

ideally improved technologies should increase the agricultural productivity of both men and women farmers, increase the availability of food for consumers and promote economic activities that expands business opportunities for women (Doss 2001:2087).

3.2.3.2 Participation

Participation is a key in terms of information collection and planning processes (Mansuri & Rao 2004:6). Often a community will be included in either the planning or implementation phase, but not in the other phases of the project (Mansuri & Rao 2004:7). The value of community participation in rural agricultural development projects is that it not only enhances commitment and accountability, but enables project leaders to respond to the true, perceived needs of the people at the local level (Mansuri & Rao 2004:4). In this regard, it has been found that rural farmers are more committed to make projects work where they respond to local priorities (FAO 2000:4). Hence, bringing the local community on board should be one of the first steps in designing a project. As Mansuri & Rao (2004:7) write, 'it builds ownership for ideas, ignites a passion locally and greatly increases the project's chance of success'.

Community participation also ensures that key role players understand the local environment. For example, local people often have intimate knowledge about food and fodder, the natural environment and social networks (Hiremath, Raju, et al. 1997:95; Uphoff, Esman, et al. 1998:65). Researchers report that projects have often failed due to indigenous knowledge not being recognised (Hiremath, Raju, et al. 1997:96). This is congruent with the sustainable development approach which emphasises the need to understand the strategies that local people employ in order to secure livelihoods. By recognizing these livelihood strategies, a project intervention can create an enabling environment to secure these livelihoods. An example is "The Farmer First" approach which has been advocated by Chambers since 1989, where farmers can contribute to the identification of technologies that best suit their needs (Chambers & Conway 1992). However, participation can only be meaningful if it goes with empowerment as advocated by participation and empowerment theorists (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:29).

3.2.3.3 Empowerment

Evidence suggests that if appropriately empowered, rural communities can often manage their own development efforts. Empowerment comes from a system of participation and decentralization where the decision-making power lies with the community. However, in order for the community to make good decisions, they need the necessary knowledge, information and skills to enable them to make informed decisions (Swanepoel & De Beer 2006:27-30). Hence, development projects need to include capacity building elements that encourage, reinforce and build social capital (Warburton 1998:25). Projects where the community takes ownership for their own development have seen greater success and have been longer lasting.

One of the problems with participatory development is that conflicts often arise, especially where the groups participating come from diverse ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds. Thus, project planners need to be sensitive to tribal clashes and issues in an area, such as land or resource conflicts, and should be careful to treat every tribe or ethnic group equally (Thimm 1978:3). Where groups of people feel left out, this may result in conflicts which could destroy or reduce the speed with which projects move ahead (Thimm 1978:3). Once more, this reinforces the need for local participation as this enables projects managers to obtain a better understanding of the local socio-economic dynamics.

Another reason for understanding the local socio-economic dynamics is to limit clashes between livelihood and project objectives. For example, the locals will have herding interests, but at the same time a project might expect of them to work on the fields (Thimm 1978:3). Such clashes can cause conflicts between local people and project managers. Being consistent with the sustainable livelihood approach, it is thus important for a project to understand the livelihood strategies of the people and in order to design a project in such a way that it contributes to these strategies.

3.2.3.4 HIV/ AIDS

A social, but also developmental issue which should not be ignored is the impact of HIV/AIDS as it has a negative effect on agricultural development (Republic of Kenya 2006:14). Besides the impact this disease has in terms of medical costs and basic household needs, it also has a negative impact on labour productivity and crop planting. This is due to farm work, family life and domestic work being interlinked for subsistence farmers. A diversion of productive labour occurs to care for the sick which causes a direct loss of labour on the farms. This in turn allows for less intensive crop planting which decreases the yields (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:233).

Thus, the disease imposes indirect costs on projects as it affects labour productivity in various ways. Absenteeism increases, workers suffer from fatigue and morbidity and where it affects skilled workers it causes a severe drain (Ashley & Maxwell 2001:23). Collectively the decline in labour power (where this is in short supply, or requires skilled workers) can cause a decline in crop yields (Haslwimmer 1996:2). This may cause setbacks for development projects as targets are not reached. Case studies show that traditional agricultural knowledge and management skills are lost since parents infected with HIV/AIDS are either seriously ill or die and can thus not transfer this knowledge and skills to their children (Haslwimmer 1996:3). In this way it contributes to the drain of skilled workers which may be critical to some projects.

The rising mortality and morbidity affects project performance since health is a precondition for development (Haslwimmer 1996:4). Developers along with other stakeholders should keep this in mind and introduce measures to address the growing effects of HIV/AIDS.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Based on the experience of rain-fed rural agricultural development projects one can conclude that a successful project is one that can be sustained. Sustainability is influenced

by the environment, administrative functions and infrastructure, and by the degree of participation, empowerment and health of the local community. For anyone wanting to initiate such projects, these factors are all important considerations. Environmental conditions impact hugely on the success of a project. Similarly, projects cannot succeed where they lack the human potential to administer the projects. Hence skill transfer is crucial to operational success. And lastly, participation by the local community is crucial. Not only does it afford projects legitimacy and community commitment, but it ensures that developers make maximum use of the social capital that exist and are aware of the cultural dynamics that could enhance or undermine the success of such projects in the rural areas.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNIQUE CAPRIVI

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Caprivi is unique in many respects. The aim of this chapter is to provide a background as to the Caprivi region and why there is need for development in this area. The history, environment, politics, economic activities and social structures are discussed as well as the factors that could influence the viability and sustainability of the Caprivi Development Project, which will be discussed in the next chapter. An indication of the economic potential of the area, available resources and the infrastructure needed for the development of dry-land crop farming is provided. This relates to the first part of the research question, namely whether the area is feasible for development and is there a need if one takes a look at the livelihoods of rural Caprivians.

4.2 THE HISTORY

In terms of its history, the Caprivi Strip is an interesting example of colonial politics (Bleks 2006:78). Until the 19th century it was known as Itenge and was under rule of the Lozi Kings before it became part of the British Bechuanaland Protectorate, falling under British rule in Botswana (MET 2008:1). Then, in 1890, Germany laid claim to a British administered island of Zanzibar, but Britain objected to this claim (Jenny 1976:100). Otto von Bismarck then arranged the Berlin conference which was attended by 13 nations and the UN. The land dispute between Germany and Britain was settled at this conference when Britain acquired Zanzibar and Germany got the territory today known as *The Caprivi Strip* (Brogan 2008:4). This territory was named after the German Chancellor General Count Leo von Caprivi di Caprara di Montecuccoli (Jenny 1976:100).

The reason for the acquisition of this piece of land was that Germany wanted to link German South West Africa with the Zambezi River, Lake Tanganyika and the Indian Oceans via another German colony Tanzania (Brogan 2008:4). However, they were unaware of the fact that the Victoria Falls were downstream and thus their plans to use the Zambezi to access the Indian Ocean were naturally out of the question (Spall & Spall 2006:4).

After World War 1 this area was again placed under British rule (Spall & Spall 2006:4). From 1940 to 1981 it was administered by South Africa from Pretoria before it was placed under the Administration for Caprivians as part of the South West Africa Administration in 1981. During the period 1981 to 1990, this area was a hub of military activity as the infamous 32 Battalion 'Buffalo soldiers' of the South African Defence Force were stationed in this area. From here the Border War was fought. This area was also home to the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a rebel group from Angola (Kock 2008:6-7). This affected the area, although the military did leave some development such as a school, town hall and houses in the Western Caprivi, but not in the Eastern Caprivi. Nonetheless, even during this volatile period the lands of the Caprivians were often ploughed by the South African soldiers as they had the necessary equipment, and in this way they helped with cultivation (Semi & Limbo 2007:2). In 1990 Namibia became independent and in 1992, the Caprivi became one of the 13 political regions in Namibia (Kock 2008:7).

4.3 THE ENVIRONMENT

The Caprivi Strip is situated in the North-eastern part of Namibia. It is a narrow tract of land, 450km long and up to 100km wide, stretching like an elongated finger between bordering countries Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the north, and Botswana in the South (LTN 2008:1). The Chobe, Kwando, mighty Zambezi and Linyanti Rivers tangle through this area contributing to wetlands and floodplains making this more arable than other parts of the country (Booyens 2005:1). These rivers often flood their banks during the rainy season, which provides fertile soil for crop production. The soil fertility in the

Caprivi has been said to be superior to that of South Africa, and the area surrounding Lake Liambezi is regarded as 'nature's own compost heap' (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1994:45). The cost of similar land in South Africa is more than N\$ 3,000.00 per hectare, while all the land in the Caprivi region is communal and farming operations are approved under customary Land tenure. This gives the Caprivian farmer a competitive edge with the availability of 40 000 hectares of fertile farming land (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:6-7). Not only does the Caprivi have fertile soil, but good rainfall too.

The Caprivi region is more tropical than the rest of Namibia with an average rainfall of 700 mm per annum (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1994:42). However, the rainfall is variable and droughts are common. Most rain falls in the summer, especially in January and February with the hottest months being October and November (Spall & Spall 2006:5). It is during these months that fields are cultivated. Currently crops such as white maize, sunflower, ground nuts and watermelons are cultivated for subsistence and cash cropping. According to studies, white and yellow maize, sunflower, sweet sorghum, soya beans and ground nuts are the most suitable crops for commercial farming in the Caprivi (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:7).

The crops are not only suitable for food consumption but for fuel. Yellow maize and sweet sorghum can be used for ethanol production, as well as for fodder for cattle feedlots to improve the cattle's slaughtering weight. The current maize production per hectare is 407kg, but with better farming methods this can increase to 4 tonnes and more per hectare (LFCU 2006:6). Potentially, this surplus of white maize can serve as import substitution, be exported to Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and contribute to job creation through milling of increased amounts of maize at the three mills in the Caprivi. It might also lead to the expansion of mills in the region (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:8).

The pricing for maize in Namibia is controlled and calculated by a formula providing an average price over five years, which in turn provides an average floor price for maize for the given period. Maize importation is controlled and borders are closed for imports and

only opened once all the rain-fed maize in the country is consumed or milled by local mills. This provides protection for the Caprivian communities from international competition wanting to sell their surplus to the market (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:33).



Figure 4.1: Pastor Semi in his rain-fed sunflower field in the vicinity of Nambwa on 14 April 2006. No fertilizers were applied and the sunflower was hand sown after the land was ploughed with oxen (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:19).

Namibia imports all its cooking oil. The Caprivi region is ideally suitable for the cultivation of sunflower, which when pressed can be an import substitution for cooking oil [Fig 4.1]. Similarly, *Jatropha*, an oil producing shrub which can produce large amounts of oil suitable for bio-diesel production, can be planted as hedges. This is a lucrative business option, especially with the world wide decline in fossil fuels (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:7).

Another benefit of dry land crop production is its potential to stimulate secondary business activities. Such activities include cattle feedlots, dairy farming, chicken broilers and piggery as the crops produced supply fodder needed for these activities (Stern Link

Financial Services 2006:7). Thus there is a secondary spin-off of developing dry-crop farming in terms of other agricultural activities, which in turn will also generate employment.

The only draw-back of the Caprivi region is in terms of its location - it is approximately 1300km from Windhoek, Namibia's main market and the same distance from Johannesburg. However, the Caprivi is situated right in the centre of the SADC Region as it borders Angola, Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The Caprivi is thus strategically located for exports to neighbouring countries, which provides potential markets for the sale of produce (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:7-8).

4.4 THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

In terms of infrastructure, the Trans-Kalahari highway is the main road through the Caprivi. This road is tarred and forms a major route between Namibia and other Southern African countries (Booyens 2005:1). The other roads in the Caprivi are gravel of acceptable standard, but the smaller roads are very sandy and can deteriorate quickly after heavy rains. Areas in the floodplains easily get cut off in the flood season. There is no public transport such as municipal busses or trains, which means that people rely on taxis which are expensive since almost 95% of Caprivians do not own a vehicle. The settlement pattern in the Caprivi is determined by its road network and water points (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:6).

As for access to water, government subsidised the erecting of water pumps at different communal villages (Blackie & Tarr 1999:13). However, this is not sufficient and many people often have to walk long distances to get water (Mudge 2007:1). The shortage of electricity is an obstacle in developing manufacturing plants (LFCU & SFS 2006:4). This has resulted in people stripping the natural environment for energy requirements. However, power lines have recently been connected to Katima Mulilo and nine diesel operated electricity plants are planned for the region, which would be sufficient to supply the demands of the proposed Caprivi Development Project (Stern Link Financial Services

2007:2). The government has also recently erected silos. These have the capacity to store up to four and a half tons of grain such as maize (Jankowitz, 2009:1).

The microcosm of the Caprivi is Katima Mulilo, a place where seven different languages are spoken and where local villages are adjacent to the town (Mauney 2006:24). Katima Mulilo is a maze of tarred and dirt roads with a mixture of old and new shops, banks and small businesses and is the main centre, except for small shops in places like Kongola and Bukalo, where shopping can be done (Mudge 2007:2).

As for employment, the Caprivi is seen as the poorest region in the country with high levels of unemployment. It is estimated at 45,9% compared to the national average of 28,6% (National Planning Commission 2003:5). Several attempts have been made to establish development projects in the Caprivi, of which only a few have been implemented on a small scale and with little success. According to Mudge (2007:2) projects were not supported by government, as they were reluctant to use donations made by foreign countries for the development of the Caprivi. Except for employment at government institutions and lodges, no formal sector employment exists through which an income can be generated (Mudge 2007:1). According to Mrs. Rookien-Smith, a lodge owner in the Caprivi, the Namibian Tourism Committee has made little attempt to promote tourism in the Caprivi (Smit 2008:5).

One successful development project in the Caprivi is the world renowned Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) project. Since the Caprivi communities are highly dependent on natural resources and wildlife to sustain their livelihoods, some activities such as hunting and fishing resources have declined (Mendelsohn & Roberts 1994:42). This realisation led to the formation of conservancies in many communal rural areas (Skyer & Saruchera 2004:2). The aim of conservancies is to conserve natural resources, but also to stimulate sustainable utilisation of these resources through co-operation and improved management (Kanzler 2006:9). In turn the community receives benefits as an incentive for conservation (Flintan 2001; Jones 2001:11).

The Caprivi has nine registered conservancies. CBNRM programmes have contributed to changes in the livelihood strategies of rural Caprivians. For example, women make and sell palm baskets and employment opportunities come from community campsites and conservancy related jobs such as field rangers. An increase in game count is noted, especially elephants and carnivores. However, this causes increased damage to crops and cattle which affects the livelihoods of some negatively. An insurance fund for wildlife damage was developed as a form of mitigation (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:1). CBNRM, in general, contributes to the alleviation of poverty and to local socio-economic empowerment of Caprivians (Murphy 2008:9).

4.5 THE POLITICS

With independence in 1990, the Caprivi became one of the thirteen regions in the country, with its own regional governor and six councillors who represent each of the six constituencies. The six constituencies are Kabe, Katima Mulilo Rural, Katima Mulilo Urban, Linyanti and Sibinda which form the East Caprivi and only Kongola forms part of the West Caprivi (National Planning Commission 2003:3).

4.5.1. Central Government

In terms of central government, it seems that the Caprivians have an antagonistic relationship with government. Caprivians often feel that they are not part of Namibia and question government's commitment to their development and well-being (Semi & Limbo 2007:3). This is a possible explanation for the uprising of a Caprivian secessionist group which attempted to split from Namibia in 1999, but this uprising was short-lived and suppressed by government (Mudge 2007:1). Some lives were lost and many were arrested and charged with treason (LTN 2008:2). The trial went on for years without resolution and this incident reflected poorly on the Namibian government's commitment to effective justice and rule of law in this area (LTN 2008:2).

The Caprivi is located 1 300km from the capital city, Windhoek and this is a possible explanation for the slow development, if compared with other regions. Another reason, from the viewpoint of Caprivians, is that they are a small group in terms of numbers and are therefore not seen as having political significance to any party (Mudge 2007:1). Thus, little is done in terms of development in this area.

In terms of local government, land boards play an important role. Since the Caprivi is a communal farming area, the traditional authority in an area has the primary power to allocate customary land rights, but this does not give the applicant the right to use the land (In the Caprivi, the applicant may be both males and females) (Odendaal 2006:13). The traditional authority first has to inform the Land Board of the customary land allocation who then has to decide whether the traditional authority did this in accordance with the Regional Councils Act and only then can leaseholds be approved (Odendaal 2006:13). However, this also implies that outsiders can apply for the resources of the Caprivians. The Caprivians fear the infiltration of the Oshiwambo ethnic group in this area, as they represent the current ruling party, SWAPO. Employment opportunities, especially in government institutions in the Caprivi have often been given to Oshiwambo's, leaving the Caprivians resentful (Mudge 2007:1). This too has contributed to their hostile attitude towards government and Oshiwambo's.

In terms of politics at tribal level, there has been some hostility among the four sub-tribes in the Caprivi. These four tribes are the Mafwe, Masubia, Mayeyi and Mashu tribes. These tribal rivalries are mainly due to land ownership, resource use and boundary issues. Each of the tribal headmen wants control over an area and want development projects to fall under their respective jurisdictions (Poolman 2008:3). These rivalries between tribes and headmen have had a negative impact on rural development initiatives in this area in the past and have discouraged foreign investment. In the light of this, the headmen have agreed to try and resolve their issues with the help of regular headmen forums and the Council of Traditional Leaders (Poolman 2008:3).

4.5.2 The Political Organisation of Caprivians

Villages (*munzi*) are occupied by consanguine and affined kin (Malan 1995:61). Each village is headed by the oldest male who would have assumed the position by descent, and is therefore not elected (Semi & Limbo 2007:1). As the oldest in the village, he enjoys the highest social status and is responsible for land allocation, taking decisions and settling disputes (with or without the help of his Traditional Council). As head, he makes arrangement for production and consumption, and is the representative of the village at wards (Malan 1995:61).

Tribal areas are divided into groups of villages, called *wards* which are the territorial, administrative, judicial and political units of the tribe, headed by a senior Headman who is elected. He acts as the local representative at tribal councils known as *khuta* which is presided by a Chief Councillor (Malan 1995:60; Semi & Limbo 2007:1).

In terms of gender divisions, women are only allowed to participate at village level. However, they have the right to ancestral land and can own their own farm. Hence, land in the Caprivi may belong to both men and women. The division of labour is gendered. Women mainly collect wood, smear huts, mend thatching and work the fields, while men carve, make utensils and yokes for oxen and plough the fields (Semi & Limbo 2007:1-2). According to Semi & Limbo (2007:3), 'some women suffer from an inferiority complex as they feel inferior to the superior males'.

4.6 THE CAPRIVIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR LIFESTYLE

The population census carried out in 2001 by the Central Bureau of Statistics recorded the total population of the Caprivi as 80 000 (National Planning Commission 2003:4). Silozi is the *lingua franca* and the only written indigenous language in the area (Murphy 2008:8). More than half of the population is fluent in English, except for the older generation who only speak their mother tongue. The literacy rate for people over 15 years is 78% (National Planning Commission 2003:4). Most of the children go to school, but

have to stay in hostels or huts constructed by their parents since not all the schools are close to villages. The number of schools in the Caprivi is far from adequate, and there is a need that government, address this (Mudge 2007:2).

The fertility rate is fairly high at an average of 3,8 children per women. Life expectancy has dropped to 43 years for women and 41 years for males due to the impact of HIV/AIDS (National Planning Commission 2003:4). In 2002, an alarming 43% of the region's population was HIV positive (Kuzee 2004:1). Recent research conducted by the government indicated an increase in the number of new infections, despite national HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. High risk elements driving the pandemic are all present in the Caprivi – poverty, instability and a transport corridor used by truckers as well as a culture which keeps women subservient. The open discussion of sex is a taboo. According to IRIN (2004:1) many of the awareness campaigns in the Caprivi fail because they do not take the local culture into consideration. The people perceive these campaigns as coming from Windhoek and many believe that HIV is not a problem in the Caprivi (IRIN 2004:1-2). HIV/AIDS is a serious threat to development as it affects the most productive component of the labour force, and especially the women (Malumo 2008:6).

In terms of gender relations, the Caprivian tribes are mainly patrilineal at tribal level and matrilineal at household level where women have a say, while other surrounding tribes in the rest of the country are in general more matrilineal (Malan 1995:61). However, the division of labour is still gendered and characteristic of their agrarian lifestyle. Young men herd cattle, fish and hunt birds, (since wildlife may not be hunted due to conservancies) and women gather food from the veld (Mauney 2006:20). As the vast majority of Caprivi households live in rural areas, agriculture is the most important livelihood activity (Spall & Spall 2006:5). Since only a few households can meet all their needs through agriculture alone, a number of livelihood strategies are pursued (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:20).

4.7 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

In terms of livelihood strategies, there are two groups of basic needs - physical needs which are basic to survival, and livelihood needs, essential for meeting family needs. The physical needs are typically staple food, water, energy needs and shelter. Livelihood needs are factors such as cash, goods for barter and reciprocal exchange, inputs to production, buffers against drought and other natural disasters (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:14-15). Other livelihood needs according to Ashley & LaFranchi (1997:14) include savings, the effective functioning of local government and cultural and community assets that enable one to participate in community activities.

4.7.1 Agriculture

In the Caprivi, the livelihood strategies revolve around agriculture, livestock, fishing, plant and river resources, wage employment and cash remittances and wildlife and tourism. Land for cultivating maize, sorghum and mahangu is the most important resource for people's livelihood as these crops, with the addition of vegetables and legumes, make up their main food source (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:8). Different crops are planted maize in wetland areas and mahangu and sorghum in more drought resistant areas. Farmers plant both to spread the risk (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:21).

Some households cannot produce enough for their own consumption and have to rely on other means of additional income, while others have surplus to sell at the Open Air Market in Katima Mulilo. Families who have the resources, including labour and draught power for ploughing, are able grow crops and sell the surplus to the mills in Katima Mulilo (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:8).

Access to the means of ploughing determines how much land people can use for cropping. At present the use of fertilizer and tractors are low, because of a 'low-risk' approach of farmers who fear losing their investment if the rainfall is inadequate or markets cannot be accessed (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:23). In 89% of cases surveyed by

the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD), oxen are used for land preparation, only a few tractors are available for hiring (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:8). Fertilizers are not commonly used and people use their own local seeds and not improved seed types which are obtained from the Likwama Farmers Cooperative in Katima Mulilo at subsidised prices (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:8).

The other resource that influences cultivation is labour, especially women's labour. Labour demands vary seasonally and communities that have good rainfall invest more time in their fields over the season and plant larger areas. If oxen, land, labour and favourable conditions are available, many farmers can earn an income from selling the surplus grain. The benefits of crop production thus are limited cash incomes, subsistence food products and goods used for bartering, savings and the people's presence on the land give them the 'right to avail' (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:22-23). However, crop farmers also face certain constraints.

Since cropping is rain-fed the people are very vulnerable in drought years (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:8). Factors influencing low yields are nutrient-poor sandy soil in some areas, low water retention and damages from pests and wildlife. Wildlife, especially elephants, causes a lot of damage to crops and results in tension between the farmers and wildlife conservation. According to statistics available, in 2001 889 human/wildlife incidents were reported. In the light of this, Namushasha Lodge has launched a project where chillies are grown and distributed to elephant-affected communities as they serve as an elephant deterrent (Brain 2006:29).

Nevertheless, the Caprivi still has better potential than other parts of Namibia for improved crop production by introducing new crops, irrigation and additional inputs such as mechanical technology (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:26). As crop production remains the basic activity of most rural households, by increasing the productivity and limiting some of the constraints on current subsistence crop farms, many households could potentially benefit from agricultural development projects.

4.7.2 Livestock

An important component of many people's livelihood is keeping cattle (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:4). They are seldom used for home consumption, except for milk products, but have great value for ploughing, transport and as cultural assets due to their social value (Spall & Spall 2006:5). Cattle are used as gifts in bartering, as investments, a cash income when sold to local bush markets, or are transported to quarantine camps and are then sold to MeatCo, to pay *lobola* or to pull sledges which is a form of transport (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:9). Cattle dung is also used as fertilizer in crop production although this is not common in the Caprivi. People without livestock have lower crop production, higher dependence on off-farm cash income and in general have less economic security.

The main inputs are grazing and water which are free as long as one has the right to communal natural resources. Cattle also require labour as they need to be herded, and in the dry season the cattle are often moved and herded by boys. As with crop planting, droughts have a negative effect on cattle, decreasing grazing and water availability and increasing the possibility of fires in the dry season. The Caprivi is also a foot-and-mouth disease contaminated area which causes the loss of cattle and limits the exporting of cattle. Another factor contributing to vulnerability is predation by lions and hyena (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:9). Although cattle do not add to the staple food or regular cash flows of Caprivian farmers, they are critical to crop production, building up reserves and are important for community exchanges and cultural traditions (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:31-32).

4.7.3 Fishing

Another important resource for people living in the Caprivi is fishing (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:42). The floodplains are characterised by many small-scale fisherman, usually women, children and older men, using traditional fishing gear for their daily catch. However, fishing has decreased since the 1960's, and is now considered a

vulnerable resource. Inappropriate fishing techniques such as the use of mosquito nets contribute to the depletion of fish reserves. For this reason, community management of fisheries in conservancies has been introduced, and an interest in fish farming has been expressed (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:2). Thus fishing as it is now administered is not a sustainable livelihood strategy (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:44).

4.7.4 Plant and River Resources

Plant and river resources are used for home consumption, bartering or to earn cash through sale, especially by those without regular cash income. The plant products harvested include wood for fuel and building poles and reeds and grasses for thatching, which are used for private consumption or sold for cash (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:36). Non-wood products include leaves, fruits, nuts and barks. These forest products are used for medicine, household equipment and craft materials, which are sold at markets. Another important source of cash is weaving and selling of baskets. Seasonally, wild fruits and vegetables are collected for consumption and are often sold next to the road by children (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:10).

The main constraints of these activities are that they are time consuming. For example, it takes 20-25 hours to weave a basket sold for N\$ 25. Not everyone has access to raw materials or to markets and the demand for goods is seasonal (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:40-41).

4.7.5 Wage Employment and Cash Remittances

An average of 40% of farming households rely on cash as the main source of income: 17% on wages, 16% on pensions, 5% on non-farming activities and 2% cash remittances. The majority of people who have access to salaried employment work for the Government, either as teachers, nurses, extension officers, cooks or cleaners. Employment opportunities in the private sector are limited, but may increase with the development of transport, marketing campaigns, tourism and an increase in NGO's in the

area (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:5). The withdrawal of the military left many in the West Caprivi unemployed (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:32-33).

Many households receive pensions from government or cash remittances from friends or family. The majority of households have access to some form of cash income which provide people with cash to buy food and agricultural inputs. However, job opportunities to earn regular wages are limited and where wages are earned they are not always enough to meet household needs. Many partake in the informal sector selling home-produced products such as beer, firewood, baskets and fish which are often sold at the Open Air Market (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:34-35).

4.7.6 Wildlife and Tourism

The tourism industry based on the wildlife, National Parks, riverine attractions and its location on the route to Victoria Falls is growing (Spall & Spall 2006:3). Trophy hunting is popular in the Caprivi and may expand as wildlife numbers recover (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:44). These provide different types of income to the Caprivians. This includes regular wages for those working at a lodge, collective income for communities from fees, levies and profits for conservancies and other community institutions and additional income opportunities from selling crafts or game-tracking, etc (Murphy & Mulonga 2002:6). However, there are tangible and intangible costs involved in the expansion of this industry. Damage to crops caused by wildlife, loss of privacy as tourists intrude, damage to the environment caused by tourists and an increase in conflict with neighbours over profitable resources are seen as threats by local communities (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:48).

4.8 CONCLUSION

In the Caprivi, each household combines the above mentioned strategies in a way that best suites their needs, but key factors determine which strategies they employ. These factors are the household's socio-economic status which depends on whether it has

livestock or regular off-farm income such as wages or pensions. It also depends on whether they have access to fertile soil, woodlands, or water which varies across the Caprivi (Ashley & LaFranchi 1997:7).

The Caprivi is an area with great agricultural potential, especially with regards to rain-fed crop farming. Given its history, the wars in the region and relationship with government, this potential has never been developed. Consequently most Caprivians still live a subsistence lifestyle and with their livelihood strategies continue to depend on subsistence cash crops, livestock farming, fishing, water and natural resources and minimal wage employment. For many Caprivians, the prospect of development in the region is seen as a way to improve their livelihoods and lift them out of the poverty trap they find themselves in. It is against this background the Caprivi Development Project was initiated.

CHAPTER FIVE

CAPRIVI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: CASE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the agricultural potential of the Caprivi Strip, community leaders and other role-players in the region came together to consider how this region could be developed to benefit the local communities and to lift them out of poverty. The aim of this chapter is to describe how the Caprivi Development Project (hereafter the Caprivi Project) was initiated. A brief description of the project is provided by looking at the project structure, the various role players and the problems the developers have faced in getting this project off the ground. With this as background, I move onto the second objective of this research, namely, how the community perceives this project and whether they think it will improve their livelihoods.

5.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In February 2004, a workshop initiative was launched by the Caprivi Interim Show Committee to determine the feasibility of annual shows and to establish a show society for the Caprivi Region that could stimulate business activities in the area (Jankowitz & Harmse 2004:1). The workshop was facilitated by the Managing Director of the Windhoek Show Society, Mr J.D.C. Jankowitz where he was introduced to members of the Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union (LFCU) attending the workshop (Jankowitz & Harmse 2004:1). The LFCU is a farming cooperative union in the Caprivi and represents the rural farming communities from the different constituencies in the Caprivi.

In 2005, Ps Matias Semi, the then CEO of LFCU, on behalf of the rural Caprivi farming communities, approached Mr Jankowitz, himself a farmer and successful businessman, to develop a project to alleviate poverty in the rural Caprivi farming communities (LFCU

2006:1). The project is known as *The Caprivi Development Project*, here after referred to as “the Caprivi Project”.

A number of potential development options were identified and considered (LFCU 2006:1). Current economic activities of the Caprivians which could be developed, commercialised or where value could be added, were looked at. One viable economic activity in the Caprivi is the current subsistence livestock farming. However, exports of cattle are difficult since the Caprivi falls within the red-line area, which is a foot-and-mouth disease contaminated area. Dry-land (or rain-fed) crop farming was another possibility. Also the development of tourism in non-farming areas, as well as bird and fish farming (LFCU 2006:1).

Whatever the choice, the economic activity to be used as a development vehicle had to meet a number of criteria. The criteria decided upon were that it should draw on knowledge and skills within the Caprivi and Namibia; ensure maximum participation by rural farming communities in the Caprivi; make optimal use of local infrastructure and services; and be based on local available natural resources and production inputs. Furthermore, the project must be sustainable over a long-term and be able to alleviate poverty over a broad base (LFCU 2006:1).

The best suitable development vehicle was found to be dry land crop farming as local farmers possess farming knowledge and expertise (LFCU 2006:1; Stern Link Financial Services 2006:4). When combined with new technology, this farming activity was seen to be the most viable and profitable as the region has sufficient fertile soil and an adequate rainfall. All the rural Caprivian farmers were invited to participate in this project to allow for maximum participation. The idea is that produce can be sold to local mills in the Caprivi and be exported to the nearest markets in Namibia, but also to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Botswana (LFCU & SFS 2006:3).

Namibia is heavily dependent on the importation of fuels and foodstuff from South Africa. The annual imports of maize amounts to 70%, while 100% of cooking oil, petrol

and diesel consumed in Namibia, are imported (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:8). Taking this into consideration, the Caprivi Project sought to contribute to a balance between food security, import substitution and bio-energy production. In addition it aims to integrate rural people into international markets, create employment opportunities, transfer knowledge and skills, empower the rural farmers and create a sense of ownership, and to provide access to finance (LFCU & SFS 2006:20).

5.2.1 Project Structure

By taking the economic potential of crop production in the Caprivi region into consideration, Stern Link Financial Services (Pty) Ltd and Likwama Famers Cooperative Union developed the Caprivi Development Project concept. As a start, all the rural farming communities in the Caprivi region wanting to partake in the project had to structure and register themselves into farming companies with the government department called Corporate Secretarial Services. The reasons were as follows: Firstly, since all the land in the Caprivi falls under the Customary Land Tenure Act No.5 of 2002, the rural farmers had to obtain land tenure from the traditional authorities who control land use and allocation issues (LFCU 2006:25). Land tenure refers to the right of a piece of land smaller than 20hectares, such as a grazing right, obtained from the chief (Werner, 2000:2). If the piece of land applied for is more than 20hectares, it is referred to the Caprivi Regional Land Board (CRLB) who will then measure out the perimeters of the piece allocated. This piece of land may then be fenced off within the communal land area.

Secondly, the Ministry of Land and Resettlement, after the land has been approved by the traditional authorities and Caprivi Regional Land Board, has to sign leasehold agreements of 99 years with these farming companies. Then, the leaseholds were to be registered at the Deeds Office, allowing them to implement commercial farming methods (LFCU 2006:1). This was of cardinal importance as without land rights the Caprivi Project is not possible.

In order to ease negotiations with strategic partners and to give these farming companies a platform from which to operate, they united under a company named Caprivi Farming Holdings (Pty) Ltd (LFCU 2006:1). Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd is a start-up business initiated by Stern Link Financial Services and LFCU, with the objective of producing suitable, sustainable and viable crops for becoming a major grain producer in the Caprivi region (LFCU & SFS 2006:3).

Over a period of three years, ten farming communities in the Caprivi structured themselves into farming companies, each with their own registered name such as Nambwa Farming (Pty) Ltd and Likoki Farming (Pty) Ltd (Jankowitz 2007:1). Since 49% of the households in the Caprivi are headed by females, both men and women are allowed to obtain land, and attend all the village meetings, be part of registered farming companies, receive training and get shares in Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd.

Each company had a representative on the interim committee and in June 2008, the interim committee was translated into the Board of Directors of Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd, with Ps. Semi Matthias from Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union as the Managing Director (CFH 2008:2). In contrast to the long lasting hostilities between the different communities in the Caprivi, the decision to translate the interim committee into the Board was 'without any quarrels or dissatisfaction' (CFH 2008:2).

The Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd and the ten subsidiary companies represent 430 households, approximately 1 600 people and the land they provide under leasehold currently exceeds 6 000 hectares with the possible expansion to 40 000 hectares (Semi 2008:1). These people would be able to benefit from this project through increased crop production which can add to private consumption, private sale or be sold through the Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd. An estimated 40% of the people involved will get a salary, while the others get dividend returns on their shares (Semi 2008:1; Jankowitz 2008:3). The shares of the Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd are divided as follows: Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union gets 10%, the farming companies 80% of which a portion is reserved for future investors and Sternlink Financial services (Pty) Ltd 10%

(CFH 2008 125:2). How exactly these shares will be divided between the farming companies has not yet been decided. This gives other rural Caprivian farmers not yet part of the project, the chance to organise themselves into farming companies, and once they have met the requirements, they can partake in the share holder ship (Jankowitz 2008:3). All representatives present at the meeting in June 2008 agreed on the latter.

Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd is responsible for the establishment of major dry-land maize cultivation and farming operations in the Caprivi Region. As previously mentioned, these processes should contribute to reaching the project objectives, namely the integration of rural people into international markets; employment creation and poverty reduction; transferring of knowledge and skills; empowerment of and ownership to the rural communities. It should ensure access to finance, self-sustainability and building profitable, sustainable businesses (Stern Link Financial Services 2007:9).

These objectives are reached by implementing the project in three phases over a period of several years. Phase one focuses on the implementation of large scale cultivation of white and yellow maize, sweet sorghum with smaller inclusion of sunflower, ground nuts and jatropha, the latter being planted as hedges. The second phase focuses on the establishment of secondary business activities such as a beef marketing chain, which includes feedlots and quarantine stations, broiler and dairy farming and cooking oil processing. During these two phases the intension is that subsistence farming methods will be replaced by commercial farming methods. Oxen and hand draught ploughs will be phased out and new equipment such as tractors and ploughs, fertilizers and good seeds introduced. The skills to farm with grain, oil seeds and livestock commercially will be transferred to the rural farmers through hands-on training programmes, thus contributing to the capacity building of the Caprivian farmers involved in the project. The transition from subsistence to more diversified commercial farming is hoped to improve the livelihoods of the Caprivians by contributing to food security, the generation of increased income through exports, and the growth in employment through the stimulation of other secondary industries (Stern Link Financial Services 2007:2,8).

In addition, rural farmers will receive training in the use of new technology and be taught business skills to enable them to manage the farming companies on their own. These trained farmers will be employed by Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd, and be responsible for the production, management and marketing of the produce. In return, they will receive dividend returns since they have exchanged their land for shares in Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd. Essentially they will be employed by the latter company in production, service delivery and other non-managerial jobs (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:25). The actual harvesting of the crops and the more labour-intensive tasks will be done by communities involved.

In the last phase, ethanol and bio-diesel plants will be established. This can contribute to an “economic boom” in the Caprivi region (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:18,26).

5.2.2 The Role Players

There are various groups of people in this project who all have a role to play in order to make the Caprivi Project successful. The following are the main role players involved in the Caprivi Project:

The **Caprivi Farming Communities** includes all Traditional Farming Communities of the Caprivi Region that fall under the customary Land Tenure and who wish to participate and belong to Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:10). There are three key community centres which are spread out across the Eastern Caprivi. These centres are 1) the Chinchimane Communities, 2) Muyako Communities and 3) Nambwa Communities which include all communities in a radius of 20 km from each centre, who have rightfully registered to occupy and cultivate certain lands and who have entered into a shareholders agreement with Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd. Employees for the project come from the Caprivi Farming Communities and they receive dividends on their shares (LFCU 2006:10). An estimated 90% of these employees will be involved in the cultivation and production processes (Stern Link Financial Services 2006 :23).

The **Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union**, together with Stern Link Financial Services (Pty) Ltd, initiated the project as founding members. They are responsible for the recruitment and coordination of land required by Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd, the marketing, and also to act as a mediator between the Caprivi Farming Communities, Traditional Authorities and the Government of Namibia. This project management unit does not execute social development programmes. Instead, specialized NGOs working in the environment have been recruited to address issues such as HIV, alcohol and drug abuse, basic health care, etc (LFCU 2006:6-10). With regards to HIV/AIDS the NGO will focus on educating farmers on the prevention of and how to cope with HIV/AIDS.

Stern Link Financial Services (Pty) Ltd is the other founding member of the Caprivi Development Initiative Concept and coordinates the management functions, borrowings and investments. Insurance, employee benefits and related consulting services are the task of this company. Stern Link Financial Services (Pty) Ltd is also the representative of Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd in the capital city, Windhoek and is responsible for the negotiations with government (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:11). Another function of this company is to train and equip the farming communities with the necessary business skills for them to effectively participate and eventually manage the development project (LFCU 2006:10,25).

Capri Farming consists of a group of commercial farmers that produce large amounts of maize, sorghum, soya beans and sunflower in the vicinity of Secunda in South Africa (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:11). Under the leadership of Chris Ackermann, the task of this company is to equip the local farmers with the necessary skills to become commercial farmers (LFCU 2006:11). Capri Farming will also oversee, direct and manage the agricultural operations of Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd (LFCU 2006:11).

According to the project development plan, a milestone reached is that The Caprivi Project is supported by the Traditional Authorities of the Caprivi, the Caprivi Regional Council, Office of the prime Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and

Ministry of Land and Resettlement (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:15). While on paper this is the case, I found government commitment to this project somewhat uncertain as they have been reluctant to approve the leasehold agreements (this will be discussed in detail later). I made several attempts to obtain government's view on the Caprivi Project, but neither the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Land and Resettlement, its employees or members of the Land Board who were approached, were willing to comment on the Caprivi Project or the reason for the delay in approval of the leasehold agreements.

5.2.3 The Challenges

A major obstacle to this development project has been the delays in obtaining leasehold agreements from the Ministry of Land and Resettlement. The farming companies submitted their applications for the 99year leaseholds in 2005, expecting to receive them in June 2006 (Stern Link Financial Services 2006:13). However, only in June 2008 was approval finally obtained. This has caused delays in the project since crop production is seasonal and funding needed for large scale planting could only be secured once the leasehold agreements were obtained (Jankowitz 2007:1).

A further problem was clause 5 of the 99year Leasehold Agreement of the Communal Land Reform Act (Malan 2006:14). It reads, 'The holder may not sub-lease his or her right of the leasehold or transfer, cede or assign any of his or her right or obligation in terms of this lease without the written consent of the Minister' (Malan 2006:14). This clause is in direct contradiction with the laws of the Deeds Office which implies that 'the Right' to the land cannot be obtained as these leaseholds cannot be registered at the Deeds office. Mr Jankowitz, on behalf of the Caprivi farming companies, urged the Minister to give consent to alter this clause since it obstructed any form of commercial borrowing. Financers are only prepared to provide funding if they have security in the form of cedes (Jankowitz 2007:2). In other words, the leaseholds, if ceded to financers, can act as a form of security to the financers who then have the right to the land for their

use only if a project fails. Up to date the request was denied, and so funding was lost and thus, the leaseholds are of little worth.

Another option explored by the Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd, is that of a joint venture with Nordic Southern African Development (NORSAD), who is willing to supply funding on the condition that the money is handled through a local bank, which in this case is Standard Bank (Jankowitz, 2008). The loan amount against which Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd can draw funding is to the maximum of N\$ 40 million. The loan will then have to be repaid to NORSAD via Standard Bank (Jankowitz, 2008). This funding is intended for the purchase of equipment such as tractors, ploughs, fertilizers, seeds, erecting of storage facilities and other infrastructural needs, which roughly amounts to N\$ 40 million. However, these negotiations with NORSAD have not yet been finalised.

5.3 FINDINGS: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

The question now is how do the local Caprivian communities view this project? Hence the next part of this chapter presents my findings on firstly, how the rural Caprivi farming communities perceive the Caprivi Project in terms of improving their livelihoods and whether there is community support for the Caprivi Project and secondly what they consider the potential threats are that could limit the success of the Caprivi Project.

As indicated in the research methodology, focus groups and interviews were conducted with sixty-five of the rural Caprivian farmers involved in this project. These were conducted at villages of each of the three core centres which form part of the Caprivi Project, namely Muyako, Chinchimane and Linyanti Communities during July 2007. The information gained by participant observation is also incorporated in the findings.

5.3.1 Section One: Perceived Value

5.3.1.1 Community assets

The sustainable livelihoods framework emphasises the need to have knowledge of the assets, or capital that rural communities have access to. These assets include financial-, social-, infrastructural-, natural- and personal assets (Atkinson 2007:715). Numerous case studies indicate that participation by the community is important as this contributes to the understanding of these assets, and builds on the perceived strengths of the community (George 1997:2-5).

Looking at the natural assets of the Caprivian project members, it is clear that their access (and love) for their ‘fertile’ land was their strongest perceived asset. A community member remarked, *‘We don’t have much, but we have our land and that makes us proud’*. The communities feel that their land is their greatest asset and see this as their prime livelihood strategy. They emphasised that the land is fertile and has potential for dry-land crop farming. Comments like, *‘We are so proud of our farms. You must take a look for yourself how fertile the soil is’*, were made and they were very enthusiastic to share how fertile the soil is even taking me to have a look at the lands to verify their statements.

The communities felt that the development of their farms, would not only contribute to the well-being of Caprivians, but to the well-being of Namibia as a whole. They believe that their increased produce can supply themselves and Namibia with maize and mahangu, and decrease imports from South Africa, thus bringing the cost of maize and mahangu products down. This did not only pertain to maize. The communities indicated that they are keen to plant sunflower to produce cooking oil which is ‘expensive’ and they can also supply ‘others’ at a cheaper cost.



Figure 5.1 Members of the Muyako community with whom focus groups and interviews were conducted. Men and women were present.

Another asset, referred to as a social asset is community organisation. In none of the focus groups with the communities did I pick up any mention of hostility or conflict between the various communities. [See Figure 5.1] However, during a few informal, individual interviews it was mentioned that the Caprivi Project initially only involved a few communities from two of the sub-tribes, which left some of the communities not involved unhappy. This was quickly resolved by extending the Caprivi Project area to the other communities. Thus all four sub-cultures are now included in the project and for now, they seem united in their support for the Caprivi Project.

Another asset the communities have to offer, is labour. From the interviews the whole farming community appear eager to participate in this project. As a community member said, *'We are prepared to work so hard'*, to make this project work. The women were particularly excited about the project. One of the women added, *'Us women will work just as hard as the men do'*, although they acknowledged that Caprivians may not be the most productive. One of the community members joked, *'How do you know when someone is a*

Caprivian? He walks slow, talks slow, eats slow and works slow...’ Another added that, *‘Us Caprivians, we do everything slow. We are not in a hurry. In this heat, we do everything slow. We have a slow culture.’* I observed that the communities interviewed were very placid and unconcerned about time.

Another interesting observation was that the more prosperous communities also tended to be more religious. At the villages of Muyako and Nambwa (2007) they prayed before I started with the meeting and asked *‘God to show them how to use their talents and the resources they have for development by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.’* I immediately thought in Weberian terms – are we witnessing here the results of Protestant work ethic? Unfortunately, time did not allow me to pursue this angle further as it took me somewhat by surprise, but it would be an interesting cultural dimension to explore in future.

Another asset of the Caprivian farmers is their intimate knowledge of their environment, their farming experience and what they need to improve their productivity. In terms of equipment, for example, they know that they want John Deere tractors, as they are perceived as the best. They are also aware of the fact that the tractor parts, should something break, can be obtained from a John Deere distributor in Otjiwarongo, a town a few hundred kilometres from the Caprivi.

A possible factor that can aid development is that Caprivians have a literacy rate of approximately 78% (National Planning Commission 2003:4). In fact, some of the communities directed me to a website of the IUCN. This they used to do on-line research about the success and failures of other similar projects and especially on the crop varieties they want to plant.

5.3.1.2 Lack of finance

For the Caprivians, their greatest drawback is the lack of funding to develop the infrastructure and to buy the necessary equipment to enable them to cultivate larger areas of land. They view the Caprivi Project as a means to secure funding to purchase the

necessary equipment (especially tractors) to cultivate larger areas of land to increase their yields. This they believe will relieve food deficits and poverty, and earn them cash. One community member said that, *'A pocket full of money gets empty quickly when not filled'*. In other words they need the means to make their own money on a sustainable basis. Another community member commented that, *'you can still put your purse in your pocket without money, yet you can still move with your purse'*. By this he meant that money is not the alpha and omega and that one has to work with the resources which you have. However, he added that access to finance will take you so much further as you can add to the assets which you already have.

Obtaining funding from MAN, a Spanish truck manufacturing firm was a possibility. However, it is interesting to note that the communities interviewed feel that MAN is only interested in bio-diesel, and not in food. Therefore the interest of MAN in this project was questioned by the communities, since the Caprivians are more interested in food security than bio-diesel. The Caprivians want development that is sustainable providing firstly, food security, and then only wealth. Access to food for all Caprivians is their priority and they see the production of maize for bio-fuel to pose a threat to the food security of the Caprivians.

5.3.1.3 Training and Development

The next question I asked is whether they felt the need for more training in terms of commercial farming practices. Participation theorists argue that training can contribute to the empowerment of the communities and decentralize decision-making power. Numerous case studies show that development workers have found that communities express the need for training and development. It was no different with the rural Caprivian farmers who were interviewed. All the communities interviewed voiced the need for training in effective financial management, at business but also personal levels. For example, one community member said, *'Just like when we build houses, the older people show the younger people how to build. In the same way, the people with the knowledge should show us how to work with our money.'* Another community member

added, *“Training is important to help us maintain a balance between work and money.”* The communities are aware of the fact that some money has to be saved in order to buy equipment in the future. They emphasised that financial training should thus include lessons on how to save what amounts for what purposes.

The need for training with regards to the use of new, modern equipment was also raised. The communities feel that they have intimate knowledge of their environment and cultivation skills. However, they are not ignorant of the fact that they might need training in how to operate and especially fix the new equipment.

5.3.1.4 Poverty Alleviation

The Caprivians have adopted various livelihood strategies to escape poverty (George 1997:2). As mentioned, the Caprivi is the poorest region in Namibia and poverty and the lack of job opportunities is a big concern. Thus, it is not surprising that they see the Caprivi Project as a way to alleviate poverty through job creation and increasing incomes. I asked how they would use this income to improve their livelihood. They expressed this in modest terms and revealed spontaneously that they will use this increased income to improve their housing, purchase equipment for crop farming, washing powder and food, to name but a few. The money they see as enabling them to meet household needs, but also to give them independence as reflected in the comment of one community member, *‘...we can then have beds in our houses and do not have to be so dependent on our brothers for help...’*

Caprivians are quite aware of their need for better education to improve their future well-being. Many expressed that the increased income will be used to pay for school and especially tertiary education fees of their children. One of the community members said, *‘Education takes you further in life, but it is not happening in the Caprivi.’* Some of the Caprivians interviewed have children studying at the University of Namibia and abroad. However, many had to drop out due to a lack of financial assistance or had to first find jobs in the city to be able to secure funding before they could study further. According to

the communities few bursaries are made available for Caprivians for tertiary education by government and private institutions. This fuels the burning desire among them to be more independent and self-sufficient. Hence, they see this project as a means to empower them as individuals and as a community.

5.3.1.5 Employment opportunities

As previously mentioned, the Caprivi is located far away from the economic hub of Namibia. The communities are of the opinion that this has both positive and negative impacts. The negative is that it takes longer for new technologies to be introduced in the Caprivi. However, the communities are of the opinion that this creates the opportunity for them to take responsibility for their own development in a way that will benefit them. As one of the community members said, *'...if we don't do it ourselves, no one else will!'* Another community member emphasised that, *'This project gives us the chance to do something ourselves. It will empower us'*. They see the Caprivi Project as an opportunity to help them develop and reach their full potential, but also to develop the region, hereby creating more job opportunities.

The Caprivi has a high unemployment of around 45,9% compared to the national average of 28,6% (National Planning Commission 2003:5). There are only a few employment opportunities at government institutions, lodges and smaller shops such as Chinese shops. The communities interviewed clearly did not like working at the Chinese shops. They thought they were exploitative as they are paid poorly and made to work long hours. For them one of the benefits of the Caprivi Project, as identified by the communities interviewed, is that it will stimulate self-employment opportunities. The communities see this project as a project *'For the Caprivians by the Caprivians'*. It gives them the opportunity to work for themselves while reaping the benefits of their own hard work.

The women were especially excited about the opportunities that can arise from the secondary sector, as spin-off effects of the project. For example, they mentioned that increased yields can make more maize available for chicken broilers or fodder for pig

farming. Many women said that they could now have the option of selling preserved products and some hope to even open their own farm stalls, while others want to be trained to do the books of the farming companies they are involved in.

According to the communities, Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd is responsible for the transport, sale and marketing of their produce. The company also has to ensure that they receive dividends on their shares. They seem to trust Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd since each of the smaller farming companies have a representative on the interim board of directors (which has recently been translated into the board of directors) of Caprivi farming Holding (Pty) Ltd.

5.3.1.6 Social Concerns

The communities also thought that the Caprivi Project could preserve their community and address certain social ills that they see as a threat to the social feasibility of their society. Many felt that unemployment is driving the young working people to the urban centres to search for employment opportunities. Although they acknowledge that this has contributed to their livelihood strategies, as money is sent home, they hope that once the Caprivi Project has been implemented they will come back to make a living in the Caprivi. However, there was some ambivalence among those interviewed on this. Some community members felt that this would bring new knowledge back into the communities, while others were weary that it may create problems as these persons have not been involved in the conception of the Caprivi Project which they see as ‘theirs’.

Unemployment is a major concern to them and they blame this for the high level of alcohol abuse, crime and prostitution in the region. Alcohol abuse among the youth was a particular concern. Comments such as ...” *The people, especially the young men, do not have jobs. Now they will sit the whole day at shebeens*” ... “*The people who don’t have jobs will sit and drink tombo, some will be drunk at 12 in the morning*” (Tombo is locally brewed beer) ... “*We need this Project to keep the young away from the shebeens. They have to be kept busy and have to work*”, all confirm this concern. Crime is another social

concern of the communities. The communities said that the young men who are unemployed often sit at the shebeens where crime schemes are plotted. Crimes such as house break-ins, cattle theft and mugging the vulnerable elderly on pension day when they get paid, are common.

They also blamed unemployment as the underlying reason for prostitution and the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Caprivi has a very high HIV infection rate with 43% of the Caprivians HIV positive (Kuzee 2004:1). Community members said that this disease is a great burden and they are very concerned about the high infection rates among the youth in particular. The communities interviewed hope that this project can help, by creating employment opportunities which will lead to a decrease in alcohol abuse, crime and prostitution.

Overall the Caprivians believe that the Caprivi Project will give the youth a sense of direction, which will keep them away from the shebeens. The parents were desperate for it to start, stating that it would give them *'peace of mind'* and *'enable to better look after their children'*. Securing jobs for their children was one of the main reasons why they supported the Caprivi Project. As one woman said, *'We want this project. We need this project. It will create jobs for our children.'*

Another perceived social benefit is that it will benefit the widows. Some of these widows said they struggle more than married women since they do not have husbands who can help to contribute to the household needs. Thus, the livelihood strategies they employed are more limited than those with husbands. The communities view the Caprivi Project as having the potential to provide widows with the opportunity to secure their livelihoods since larger parts of land can be cultivated for subsistence use, cash crops and by the returns on their shares.

5.3.1.7 Intangible benefits

According to Burkey (1993:56), participation of communities in development projects contributes to their self-confidence and pride. As indicated, the Caprivians are extremely proud of their farming land and they feel that the Caprivi Project is their project. One community member said, *'When we hear that the project is going to start we will be so happy. We are going to dance all night'*. They stated that they will *'celebrate the planting of the seeds, when the crops reach certain heights, when they harvest and the first maize is eaten'*. One community member commented that, *'We would have started tomorrow if we had the equipment'*.

I then asked the community members whether they thought the development associated with the project would affect their lifestyle, culture or traditions. Their response was *'we have ways to keep this in tact'*. They stated for example, that no one will come to the 'khuta' (meeting) without wearing their traditional clothes. [See Figure 5.2]. Those who disregard this arrangement are fined and have to pay it to the chiefs. In fact, the communities interviewed feel that the Caprivi Project will strengthen their identities as crop farmers since it acknowledges their skills and love for their land. Incidentally, I observed that many of the community members came to my focus group meeting prepared with a notebook and pen, making notes throughout our conversations. All the attendants were listed and minutes were taken of our meeting by some of the leaders. This also demonstrates their interest and seriousness in which they judge the Caprivi Project.



Figure 5.2: A *khuta* or village meeting with some of the members from Chinchimane involved in The Project.

The Caprivians have a strong sense of pride and emphasised the need that they must have confidence in themselves. They pointed out that if they do not have confidence in themselves, it would open up ‘the doors for top-down approaches’. They argued that if they have confidence in themselves from the bottom-up, they are in a better position to tell other people what they need. They clearly want to make ‘their project (the Caprivi Project) a success. One community member stated, *‘We will be full of shame when the project does not work’*.

5.3.2 Section Two: Threats to Project Success

After determining whether the communities were indeed committed and felt they could benefit from the Caprivi Project, I asked what they thought could cause it to fail. Here a number of concerns were raised including their relationship with government, lack of appropriate information and competing interests.

5.3.2.1 Fears

The communities are very worried about why the Caprivi Project has not been implemented since it was already initiated in 2004. They are suspicious about the delay and the community members asked me, *'Why do they keep the Project from us? The land is ours and floods are not even a problem anymore?'* Their concerns around the delays stem from the fact that the preparation of the land for planting takes a lot of time. They stated that *'time for planting is running out and we have to now wait for the next year's planting season before we can start'*. Some of the community members are worried that they are getting older and might never be able to participate in the project. *'We feel cheated. We have paid our money to apply for leaseholds but we see nothing. Nothing is happening'*. Another community member said, *'The problem is that people come here to identify the problem, but then they only sit and do nothing. We just want to start.'* Another added, *'We have been promised a lot, but have seen nothing. Our farms are becoming forests.'*

The communities were cautious to comment on tensions that exist between them and government, but it was clear to me that they exist and have deep historic roots. The Caprivians are suspicious of the Ovambo's and fear that they will *'come and steal'* the jobs of the Caprivians. The Ovambo's represent the ruling party whom the Caprivians partly blame for their underdevelopment. However, they realise that they represent a potential market for their produce, and made comments like, *'we can farm with chickens and sell it to the Ovambo's. They like chicken, so we can make money from them.'*

There were also some xenophobic tendencies – they also did not like the Zambians. They commented that they do not allow Zambians to work for them as, *'the Zambians only come here to spy. Tomorrow they will come back and steal your things.'* Zambia is just across the river from the Caprivi and often they often cross the river at night causing problems, especially livestock theft. Thus they are concerned that when the Caprivi Project starts, that the Zambians will steal their crops. This came up on numerous occasions.

5.3.2.2 Government

To the question why they thought projects like these sometimes fail, the communities felt that the lack of information (from government) is a contributing factor. Statements were made such as, *'Projects fail, because no one knows why they failed'* (namely government did not give them the full story). As previously indicated, the Caprivians feel 'done in' by government. Evidence from various case studies suggests that government plays an important role in creating an enabling environment for development projects (Whiteside 1998:6). All the communities identified government commitment as a limiting factor to the success of this project. They also view government as the reason why farmers in the Caprivi suffer, since government makes no effort to help manage their underdevelopment. Statements were made such as, *'Once the South African government withdrew, nothing was done since then to manage the land in the Caprivi'*. Another community member added, *'Caprivians are farmers. Since Namibia has other larger crop farmers they (Government) have not respected our love for crop farming. We are too small in their eyes.'* By this he also referred to the 'Sugar Cane Project', a development project supported by government, but not by the communities.

They see the Sugar Cane Project as not being environmentally friendly. As a community member commented, *'The (Caprivi) project is environmentally friendly... not like the sugar cane project government wants to implement here. Therefore, we support the project.'* The sugar cane project is also still in its planning phases and is seen as a threat. Some commented that, *'we are not sugar cane farmers, we are crop farmers'*. Although the Caprivian farmers plant sugar cane, it is only on very small scale. Another added that, *'The sugar cane project will use too much of our water'*. Thus, the sugar cane project causes environmental concerns to the communities.

Their scepticism of government has been reinforced by delays in their leasehold applications. One of the community members said, *'Someone up there (referring to government) has something against us... they don't seem free to help us.'* As previously mentioned, agriculture is seasonally bound and thus the delay in approving the leaseholds

worries the communities. The longer government takes to approve the leaseholds, the less time they have to secure funding before the next planting season. This, they feel will only prolong the food deficit and supports the notion of the lack of government commitment. Community members stated, *'How can we plant without those certificates?'* (Referring to leasehold certificates)... *'We are so tired of waiting'...* *'Our axes are already sharpened to start working. We are just waiting and waiting for government to give us our certificates.'*

In general the communities feel that government policies should not be limiting or become a burden to the poor. It should rather create an enabling environment for business activities, especially in the Caprivi, with respect to crop farming. Community members commented that, *'The Leasehold Agreement Act is not implementable, it is a farce'* *'People are only pushing papers through parliament that are worth nothing'...* *'Black empowerment is not necessarily good for development due to exploitation by a chain of liars.'*

They felt strongly that government will only support them if 'they' can benefit from it, like with the government proposed sugar cane project. I asked the community why they don't involve government in their (the Caprivi) project? Would they allow government to participate in the project? They agreed that it might be a possibility. However they were scared that government 'might take over' and that they do not want to happen. Community members commented that, *'Government will only get involved when they are the beneficiaries. When we want to do, they want to talk...'* Another member added, *'We are scared that government will take our ground.'* As community, *'We are excited that the project has been initiated by the community and not by government.'*

I observed a definitive antagonistic attitude towards government. At two of the villages, my role as researcher was questioned as some thought I was a government spy. Great unhappiness was expressed towards me about government and I was bombarded with questions such as *'why do you government officials come here and do nothing for us',* *'you by this time should know what our farms look like, you do not have to come here*

again. We first want to see action'. Some communities at first thought that I was there to sign the leasehold agreements and they informed me that they are tired of signing things without anything happening.

Once my role as researcher and not a government official was understood attitudes towards me changed and the communities pleaded with me to present their case to government and voice their concerns. I was given fruits as a symbol of their gratitude.

5.3.2.3 Commitment and Communication

A lesson learned from various case studies is that community participation encourages community commitment to a project, especially during the planning and design phases. The communities see community development projects to be very sensitive, since it deals with different people. They are aware of the fact that some projects fail due to the lack of community commitment to work hard. They say some are prepared to work hard and others want to work less, but everyone wants to get their cut – the problem of free-riders. In foresight, the rural Caprivian farming communities held meetings with the people where it was decided that people whose performance is not acceptable, will simply not receive dividends on their shares. This they hope will act as an incentive and encouragement to work hard. How this will be managed in practice, is of course another issue.

Another threat, identified by the communities interviewed was that they feel the LFCU is not giving them all the information, and is keeping them in the dark. Others again felt that LFCU is doing everything they can and that their hands are tied - the problem lies with government. Everyone seems to know who Mr Jankowitz, CEO of Sternlink Financial Services (Pty) Ltd, is. Some feel that he maybe needs to approach other investors as they feel that maybe their requests for funding was made with the wrong people. The communities expressed their need for management to inform them on why things are not happening.

5.3.2.4 Competing Interests

They also identified other concerns. The communities interviewed said that lodges in the area want the whole Caprivi to become part of conservancies, but this will decrease the available land for communal farming. Tourism benefits the farmers little, as they do not necessarily share in the profit made from tourism. The communities thus want to establish their farming interests before the whole area becomes a conservancy, since they think they might not be allowed to farm in a conservancy.

Another interesting tension identified by women is that they were worried that their husbands might get angry when they work on fields, and do not get time to do all their housework and chores. As indicated, the women are particularly excited about the Caprivi Project and want to be in a position to protect their own interests. One woman said, *'If women are not present in the project they will be robbed by men'*.

5.3.2.5 Environmental Threats

Evidence from other case studies show that the natural environment affects the success of a development project (Thimm 1978:2). The sustainable livelihood framework emphasises the need to know the environmental context in which communities operate. One environmental threat identified by the communities interviewed, is fires which are very frequent in the Caprivi. Some are due to the slash-and-burn technique used on fields to contribute to soil fertility. The Caprivi communities suggested that in order to limit the threat of fires to their crop farms, pre-cautions should be taken by the project such as ensuring access to fire-fighting equipment, since there is no fire brigade in Caprivi.

Another threat is elephants which have contributed to many human/wildlife clashes. The elephants destroy large parts of crop plantations and this could be a threat to the project as the new, larger plantations could be ruined. Some of the communities have heard of the chillies project conducted by Namushasha Lodge and they feel the development project should explore this endeavour as it can help to reduce the threat of elephants.

5.3.2.6 Conflict over Shares

I then asked whether they thought they could all work together in harmony. A lesson learned from other case studies is that developers should be sensitive to clashes within a community and should ensure that everyone is treated equally (Thimm 1978:2). Linyanti (2007) was the only village that showed open unhappiness with regards to how shares are divided. People, especially the women, do not understand why some will get more shares than others. This led to heavy debates and here it was very interesting to witness how the men quietened the ladies and said *'they will explain to them later about the shares as it is not my role as a researcher to sort out the conflict over shares'*. After a while of debating between the men and women, the chief called for order. It was also clear through observation that this specific village was poorer than other villages visited, and the gender divide seemed more apparent than at other villages.

However, at all the villages visited, men and women were not allowed to sit together and men sat on chairs while the women sat on mats. Unfortunately time did not allow me to explore this dimension further.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The Caprivi Project was initiated by Caprivians to develop the rural Caprivi farming communities. The communities hope that through this project poverty can be alleviated and they will have access to employment opportunities. Increased employment is also hoped to decrease alcohol abuse, prostitution and crime and secure jobs for women, the youth, and also for widows. The Caprivians also have their concerns, but these are less about the project and more to do with outside threats such as the lack of government commitment, insufficient information, competing interests and natural threats such as fires and elephants. What emerges strongly, however, is that the Caprivians seem united in their support for the Caprivi Project, not only due the promise it holds in terms of material benefits, but also the social benefits that may improve their livelihoods.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The majority of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods (Cleaver 1997:2). For this reason, projects which focus on agricultural development can make an enormous difference in the living standards of the rural poor, especially where such projects are perceived positively by the community. In this chapter, an attempt is made to bring together theory and practice by firstly, looking at the various theories and lessons learnt from rural development case studies and secondly, to reflect on what this means in terms of the success and perceptions of the community in relation to the Caprivi Development Project.

6.2 RECENT THINKING ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The various theories of rural development emphasize different criteria for success for rural development. Early theories of rural development emphasised the need for third world countries to modernise their agricultural methods and even community structures - namely to progress from subsistence to consumption. However, this theory with its focus on industrialisation proved to be failing as the number of poor continued to grow resulting in a shift during the 1960s among theorists, where the value of small farms and small scale farmers were recognised. Many felt that the latter focus was too narrow, with the result that in the 1970s it was proposed that development strategies should not only include agricultural development, but the development of multiple sectors such as health and education, along with agriculture. This was known as 'integrated rural development', which extended the approach beyond just agriculture but included welfare benefits. The development of a single-sector, such as agriculture, was not benefiting all the poor as it was recognized that they earn their living in diverse ways.

Around the 1980s, this essentially Keynesian approach to rural development was replaced by a more neo-liberal economic approach to rural development, which called for market liberalism and the retreat of the state. Hence, development was left in the hands of the market. However, wealth was concentrated in the hands of merchants with little benefit to the poor who do not have access to means in order to be more competitive in the market.

Another paradigm shift occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, which suggested a switch from a top-down (centralised) to a bottom-up (decentralised) approach to rural development. The central argument of rural development theorists was the need for greater participation of rural communities in decision-making, problem identification and in the design and implementation of rural development projects. Here, the unique contributions of communities were seen as the prime criteria for success. This they believed would lead to not only the commitment of communities to development projects, but the empowerment of and ownership by the communities of such initiatives.

Building on this philosophy, the 2000s saw the emergence of the sustainable livelihoods approach to rural development. This approach recognised that the rural poor earn their livings in diverse ways, and that the strategies they employ to secure their livelihoods are based on the various assets they possess. Successful rural development projects should thus take note and utilise these endemic livelihood strategies in their development and poverty alleviation projects. In fact, the World Bank and IMF requested that poverty reduction strategies take this into consideration. This approach underlies current thought on rural development. If one is to relate this to the Caprivi Development project, one can see that the strategy followed is very much in line with current thinking on rural development.

Essentially the sustainable livelihood approach to rural development advocates a bottom-up process of grass-root level participation and decision-making in development projects. Looking at the Caprivi Project, we see that it was the community representatives who themselves approached the developers and formulated their vision for development with these stakeholders. The community leaders along with Sternlink Financial Services (Pty)

Ltd, worked on the development plan together, setting out the core objectives of this development project.

The sustainable livelihood approach to rural development also emphasises that developers should build on the strengths of community in terms of the assets they have. In terms of the environment, the Caprivi has good rainfall, fertile soil and is ideally suited for commercial crop farming. This is precisely how Caprivian farmers make their living – they are crop farmers. Furthermore, they have access to land, labour and have intimate knowledge of the environment and how this relates to crop farming in their area. In terms of infrastructure, there are three mills where produce can be sold and processed. The greatest drawback is finance. One of the central aims of the Caprivi Project is to ensure access to finance, equipment and skills needed to farm commercially with crops and to facilitate access to markets for the produce. So according to this, what is the possible success of the Caprivi Development Project?

6.3 THE SUCCESS OF THE CAPRIVI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In terms of theory, it is clear that the Caprivi Project is in line with current thinking on rural development. On a more practical level, what are the lessons learnt from similar rural development projects? One of the core objectives of this research was to determine whether the Caprivi Development Project is viable. The best way to determine this is to examine other similar rural development projects and what are considered as critical success factors. The most appropriate examples to look at in terms of the Caprivi Development Project are those which also rely on rain-fed agriculture which are heavily dependent on environmental factors such as rainfall, soil fertility and wind.

According to other studies the factors for success revolve around three key issues, namely whether the environment allows for continuous cropping; the administrative management of these projects; and whether the project has the support of the local people who are meant to be the beneficiaries. In terms of the natural environment, many projects have failed due to not taking the rainfall patterns and soil fertility into consideration in the

planning. As for the Caprivi Strip, this area has a relatively high rainfall and the soil is both fertile and ideally suited for dry-land crop farming.

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration, is whether the project will harm the environment, namely is it environmentally friendly and sustainable. One of the commitments made, was that the Caprivi Project use farming techniques which avoid causing soil degradation and that appropriate fertilizers are to be used. One suggestion is to plant jatropha as hedges which can limit the effect of wind on the crops, but at the same time also be used to produce oil for bio-fuel. Even though environmental factors such as rainfall cannot be controlled, they can be managed by planting mixed crops – some which are less sensitive to droughts. This has been considered and has long been a survival strategy of Caprivians.

This reinforces the importance of making use of local knowledge in rural development projects. According to the participation theory and the lessons learnt from various case studies, community participation in the development and implementation of such projects increases the chances of success. This is important as it not only acknowledges local intimate knowledge of the environment, but directs the project towards the specific needs of the community. What we see in the Caprivi Project, is that the community approached Sternlink Financial Services (Pty) Ltd on behalf of the rural Caprivi farming community to initiate a development project. Thus, it is a bottom-up and not a top-down approach to development.

The Caprivi Project has been an inclusive process. All the various farming communities were invited to form part of this development initiative and to be part of the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of the project. Of interest, is that this was not only encompassing of all the communities in the Caprivi, but involved both men and women despite the patriarchal culture of Caprivians. Although women sometimes felt left out and were restricted in voicing their opinion, they are allowed to participate and be part of the Caprivi Project at least at village level.

Development projects should make optimal use of the land, labour and resources available. This is consistent with the sustainable livelihood approach which advocates the need to build on the strengths, namely, the assets, of a community. With reference to the Caprivi Project, the land to be utilised for this project belongs to the rural Caprivi farmers. However, it is communal land and leaseholds have to be obtained from the Land Board for commercial farming. One of the lessons learned from other projects is that land rights have to be settled before a project can be implemented. The approval of the leasehold applications for the Caprivi farmers has been a long process and has delayed implementation. Here Caprivians have been somewhat critical of government for delaying the approval of leasehold agreements. Various attempts have been made by Sternlink Financial Services (Pty) Ltd, who represents the Caprivi farmers in Windhoek, to approach government on this issue. Only recently has approval been granted after an almost 4 year delay, only also to learn that the right of land cannot be obtained from the Deeds Office.

With agricultural development there is a need for what is termed agricultural extension. Due to its remoteness, the Caprivi has experienced a technological lag in terms of development. One of the aims of the Caprivi Project is to fill this void by not only obtaining new farming technology and implementing new farming methods, but by developing the knowledge and skills of the locals in terms of commercial crop farming. The intention is that farmers from South Africa, will be brought in as trainers, and help to build this knowledge of commercial farming. One thing the developers should be sensitive to is that the Caprivians are rather sceptical about outsiders. Their attitude towards these trainers will greatly influence the degree by which the new knowledge and skills are adopted and assimilated.

The level of infrastructural development is another crucial variable in development projects. For development to take place there needs to be adequate infrastructure such as roads and electricity. In terms of the Caprivi, the main road is tarred. However, the gravel roads often become unroadworthy in the rainy season and villages become inaccessible. At present there are three mills in the area where produce can be sold and processed.

Silos where grain can be stored are also available. Government is currently developing an electricity plant in the area which will provide constant electricity to the region. Thus, in terms of the feasibility of the Caprivi Development Project, it appears that the necessary infrastructure will be in place to facilitate development, at least in terms of electricity.

Access to markets is equally important for the success of agricultural development projects. Although the Caprivi is located far from the hub of Namibia, namely Windhoek, it is strategically located in terms of the region as it borders on Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. These are potential markets as maize is a staple diet of these countries and all currently import agricultural produce. The Trans-Kalahari highway connects the Caprivi with these countries, so road infrastructure exists. Other produce will be sold locally or value be added to before it is marketed locally and nationally. For example, the intention is to produce sunflower for cooking oil.

In terms of the marketing, management and administration of development projects, it has been found that the formation of cooperatives increases not only community support, but the chances of success as they give farmers bargaining power. The farmers in the Caprivi united under a company named Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd (which is similar to a cooperative). This company/cooperative plans to implement training programmes on financial management and basic business skills that will enable members to effectively manage their farming companies. As for the improvement in farming techniques and the repair of farming equipment, as mentioned, farmers from South Africa will be responsible for training the Caprivi farmers in commercial farming skills.

Another factor which is listed as crucial to the success of development projects is the optimal utilization of local knowledge and expertise. Right from the outset, the local farming community in the Caprivi have both wanted and supported this development initiative. Community representatives serve on the board of Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd. They appear extremely positive about this project and were more critical of outside, than internal threats to the project. For example, they feared that 'others' – not Caprivians would take over this project. Particularly that government would come in and

plant sugar cane and that the expansion of tourism would cause them to lose land they want for cultivation. In terms of natural disasters, they were not concerned about droughts, but rather about fires and elephants. These are valid concerns and clearly developers need to take this into consideration as it can threaten the success of the project. Incorporating the local knowledge can increase community commitment which is crucial to the success of the project.

Community participation not only enhances commitment, but ensures that development projects meet the specific needs of the community. Here the Caprivi Development Project is an interesting case study, as the initiative came from the community. Ps Semi Matthias, on behalf of the farming communities in the Caprivi approached Mr Jankowitz (a businessman from Windhoek) to help formulate a business plan for the development of the Caprivi. The key motivation was poverty alleviation of the rural farmers, with the emphasis on dry-land crop farming, given the agricultural potential of the region. However, as other community development initiatives have shown, it is critical that the local community has the ability to manage their own development and have the decision-making power to do so. For this they need knowledge, information and skills.

As mentioned the Caprivi Project intends to have a skills training programme which can empower the communities. Whether this will indeed equip the local community efficiently to implement, manage and administer the project once it starts, is yet to be seen. However, the community has a relatively high literacy rate and the people are committed to make this project work.

Often in development projects of this nature, tribal or ethnic clashes arise which can harm the success of such initiatives. To ensure that nobody was excluded, the Caprivi Project opened up participation to everyone that wants to be a part of the project on condition that they register as a farming company. At this stage it does not appear as if there are any specific ethnic/tribal rivalries. This is contrary to long lasting rivalries between the sub-cultures within the Caprivi. For now they are united around the idea of this development project because it is to their mutual benefit. The critical issue is to ensure

that these tensions remain subdued and that the benefits of the project are equally distributed between the communities to prevent hostilities. Also, that they are equally represented on the different decision-making forums.

One aspect often overlooked, is the role of women in terms of agricultural development. In the Caprivi, there is a clear division of labour along gender lines. Men do the ploughing and planting and women do the harvesting. The culture is patriarchal, but interesting in the Caprivi women have equal access to land, which is empowering. As such they are fully fledged participants in the Caprivi Project, but still feel subordinate to men and are only allowed to participate in decision-making forums at village level. For example, the women interviewed said that they were worried that the men will be unhappy when they spend too much time working the fields and neglect their household duties. For example, if women have to work long hours on the fields they may not have time to perform household duties, which could fuel domestic conflict. Thus, the role of men and women in the community has to be understood, especially as women are often critical to the success of agricultural projects.

The project management should keep in mind that Caprivians are primarily interested in food security, not the cultivation of crops for bio-fuel. Conflict between competing interests of developers and local communities can result in tension and cause projects to fail. Once more this reinforces the need for communities to not only participate, but to be empowered to make the decisions about agricultural development in terms of their livelihood requirements.

An unfortunate drawback in recent times is the impact of HIV/AIDS on development initiatives. HIV/AIDS is a real threat to development as it affects the most productive part of the labour force. The Caprivi is the region in Namibia with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS which is fuelled by poverty, previous political instability, prostitution and because it is the transport corridor to the SADC countries. This is of great concern and many of the people interviewed hoped that increased employment would curb the infection rate – which is not necessarily the case. Clearly this is also an issue which needs

to feature in the planning of the Caprivi Project. Possible skills loss will mean that training will have to be an ongoing process and not a once off.

The Caprivi Project is still in the development phase and implementation will possibly only commence in 2009, given that formal approval by government has only recently been granted and the financing for the project needs to be secured. An aspect lacking in the current planning is that there is no monitoring and evaluation component. Such a component can make a valuable contribution in monitoring the extent to which the project objectives and outcomes are being met. These reports are often used to motivate and represent the success of a project to possible financiers and government.

6.4 COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

The second research objective of this study was to determine how the Caprivian communities perceive this project in terms of the impact on their livelihoods. Do they want this project and are they committed to making this project work? What are their concerns? Based on the interviews with local communities in the focus groups, it is clear that this is a project 'for the people, by the people'. The rural Caprivi farming communities interviewed wanted this project and indicated that they were prepared to 'work hard' to make this a success once implemented. At present their only concern is why there have been such long delays. This worries them as they feel left in the dark.

A lesson learnt, is that a project's success depends on community support for the intervention. Support and project success is enhanced where projects draw on indigenous knowledge and strengths. The communities interviewed emphasised that they have local farming knowledge. They know their land – that it is fertile and how to manage crop rotations in terms of climatic change, such as droughts. However, they acknowledged that the greatest drawback in terms of their development is not the lack of knowledge or shortage of labour, but the need for finance. They need finance to purchase equipment which can increase land cultivated and crop yields. Increased yields to them means more secured livelihood strategies, increased food security and higher incomes.

Besides increasing their food and financial security they also felt that the project could improve their lives and the broader community in various other ways. Firstly, the Caprivians seem to have a need for recognition – to be recognised as farmers, this is their identity. This project builds on their strengths as farmers, which also has intangible benefits for them such as pride and affirmation of their skills. There are other social benefits. The farmers expressed the need for this development initiative as a means to reduce the very high level of unemployment. The parents hoped that these employment opportunities will benefit their children and give them a sense of direction. They were concerned about alcohol abuse, which they blame on unemployment. They also see this project as enabling them to educate their children – to send them to school and university.

The women were particularly excited about the Caprivi Project. Not only did they see this as a means to improve the lives of their children, but an opportunity for self-fulfilment by starting their own businesses. They spoke about the possibility of farming with chickens and jokingly remarked that they would sell these to the Ovambo's as they liked chickens, instinctively linking their produce to a prospective market. They also wanted to establish farm stalls to sell their produce, in this way adding to their income.

The farming communities were also not ignorant of potential threats or causes of tension. A critique on the participation theory is the so-called free-rider problem, where not everyone pulls their weight evenly. This was acknowledged and in the planning of the project, a strategy of introducing incentives was included in the project design. Those who work hard and whose performance meet the expectations set out, will receive dividends on their shares. This they hope will limit the chances of free-riders. However already in some communities interviewed, conflicts about shares were detected. How these shares will be divided is not fully understood. In my view, this needs to be resolved before the project starts as a perceived unfair or unequal division of collective wealth could become a serious issue of contention.

If one reflects on these findings it is clear that there seems to be community commitment towards the Caprivi Project. They believe the project holds value for them in terms of creating employment opportunities and improving their livelihood in general.

6.5 CONCLUSION

According to rural development theories, two criteria for the success of development projects are participation by the community and insight into the livelihood strategies they pursue. These theories can be used as a base on which development projects can build. If one looks at the Caprivi Development Project based on the preceding discussion it is possible to reach the following conclusions. In the first instance, the project seems to be viable as the natural environment allows for crop production. Methods to promote environmentally sustainable development have been taken into consideration.

It seems that decisions on project design and implementation were taken by the elites in the community, but in consultation with the broader farming community. However, the final details of how the project is to be managed and the logistics have not filtered down to the communities via their representatives. Hence, there is some degree of marginalisation. At this stage, it appears that they don't quite know where the project stands. In interviews, some of the communities complained that there is a lack of communication between them, Likwama Farmers Cooperative Union and Sternlink Financial Services (Pty) Ltd. Whether this is perception or fact, it is important as a lack of information has an impact on commitment and the ability to make informed decisions. This may even fuel existing tensions. One way to overcome this is for the developers and community leaders to make use of the weekend khutas to convey information on a regular basis.

The Project builds on the assets of the rural Caprivi farming communities. It is not a development project using foreign or different strategies unknown to the Caprivians. Rather, it builds on their strengths. The fact that the Caprivians are crop farmers is recognised and it draws on their local knowledge and skills. This is a great strength of the

Caprivi Project as it builds on, while adding value to the livelihood strategies these farmers pursue.

Their land is their most valuable asset and it is important that this is not lost. Had the leaseholds been transferable, the Caprivi farming communities may have lost access to their land. I am of the opinion that the rejection of the request to change clause five of the Leasehold Agreement Act by Government, which would allow for the land to act as security for financial loans, is perhaps a good thing as otherwise Caprivians may lose their land if the Caprivi Project fails. On the other hand, this might be a reflection of the level of faith that government has in the ability of its citizens to make a success of a project if the right to the land is placed in their hands. However, whether the delay by government in approving the leaseholds had to do with the request of changing clause five of the Leasehold Agreement Act, or just in general with poor administrative functions, or their lack of commitment towards the development of the Caprivi, could not be established.

A strength of this project is that it acknowledges the skills and knowledge of the rural Caprivi farmers, while combining it with new skills which can make them more effective as commercial crop farmers. Similarly, the formation of Caprivi Farming Holding (Pty) Ltd is another positive aspect of this project as it encourages community participation and involvement. Since the farmers now have a common interest in the cooperative, community support and buy-in is more likely, which adds to the feasibility of the project. The cooperative strengthens their ability to obtain financing, develop the necessary skills and most importantly, negotiate access to markets for their produce.

The need to be culturally sensitive and aware is just as important to the success of this project as securing finance. To take an example, Caprivians have a slow way of doing things. This work ethic needs to be fashioned into the project as it will impact on the ability to meet productivity targets. Hence, not only the skills of the local farmers, but also their cultural and social practices must be noted, not least the gendered divisions that exist.

The role of women in agriculture is very important as they contribute to its productivity to a large extent. Although women have the right to own land, they are not involved in decision-making except for at the local village level. Even though women are allowed at all the meetings of the Caprivi Project, the degree to which women participate in planning and implementation is debatable since most decisions are taken by men. Women find this disempowering and they feel threatened that their interests are not accommodated. This calls for greater gender sensitivity in this development project.

Reflecting on the long-term sustainability of this project and the need for skills transfer, the fact that there is a skills development component is a positive aspect. If administered with the necessary sensitivities, it can empower the communities. At this stage, the main problem seems to be with communication. Without adequate information, effective decisions cannot be taken and thus, the community is not empowered to manage their own development. There appears to be a communication gap between the farmers and the Project management which is a potential source of conflict and can undermine commitment to the project objectives. Nonetheless, all the communities perceived this project to have the potential to improve their livelihoods.

Congruent with the sustainable livelihood framework, this project builds on what the community has and contributes to the strategies they pursue to secure their livelihoods. The rural Caprivi farming communities interviewed believe that this project is to their benefit. They also believed that this project will help them as a community to address other social ills endemic in their societies, such as alcohol abuse, prostitution, crime and HIV/AIDS. Clearly these are also concerns that project developers should take note of as all these influences have a direct or indirect impact on project success.

Although rivalries between the different Caprivian communities are not an issue at present in the Caprivi Project, they should be cautious of this. Where people feel unfairly treated conflicts between community members, different villages and different farming companies can arise and hamper the success of the Caprivi Project. How the shares will

be divided has not been resolved and could be a contentious issue and should be handled with care and sensitivity.

It is difficult to reach absolute conclusion at this stage on whether the Caprivi Project will be successful, since it has not yet been implemented. As a unique case study, once the project unfolds, it will be interesting to see how the various initiatives are managed, and whether the sustainable livelihoods approach adopted by the Caprivi Development Project planners, is successful in lifting rural Caprivians out of their poverty. In essence what this study has done, is to provide the background against which this project can be monitored and evaluated in future.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Focus group questions

Do you want the Caprivi Development Project here? Why?
Why is this project important for you?
How do you think this project will benefit you?
How do you currently earn your incomes?
How would you use increased incomes?
What do feel you have to offer this project?
Why do you think development projects fail?
What are threats to the success of this project? Environmental threats? Other threats?
Will you allow government to participate?
Do you have the means to modernise your farms?
What does a typical day look like in the community?
What do the men do, and what do the women do?
Do you think the development would affect your lifestyle, culture or tradition?
Who will be allowed to participate in the project?
Will all of you in the community work together in harmony?
How do you feel about HIV?

Semi-structured interviews

What are the reasons for the underdevelopment of the Caprivi?
What does the politics of the region look like?
Is there reason for the Caprivians to be suspicious of government?
What is your opinion of the Caprivi Development Project? / What does the project entail?
What are the roles of the men and women in the project?
What are the possible strengths and weaknesses of this project?