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Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

“Saying You Will Help Is Not Enough”

Exploring Capacity-building Efforts Among San Community-Based Organizations in Botswana

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Abstract

The Indigenous San in Botswana, frequently encounter development projects aiming to alleviate socio-economic disparities, often through a conservation-focused framework called Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). However, this framework imposes Western notions of conservation and governance, thereby neglecting the Indigenous knowledge system of the San and their traditional conservation strategies. This thesis focuses on capacity-building within this context and seeks to identify challenges faced by San community-based organizations (CBOs) operating within the CBNRM framework. Through qualitative research methods and the use of semi-structured interviews, the thesis examines the existing support structure for two San CBOs in the Ngamiland district of northern Botswana and evaluates the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions. Findings reveal capacity deficits in crucial areas that hinder the San CBOs' operational effectiveness, such as governance, drafting proposals, receiving project funding, and signing joint-venture agreements. The findings suggest the need for more frequent interventions using conventional capacity-building approaches that address these areas by focusing on technical skills and training. The need for strengthening the capacity of the other stakeholders, especially the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), is also identified to better fulfill their responsibilities in the support structure. However, the existing support structure, utilizing conventional approaches to capacity-building, are shown to lack consideration for San cultural norms and customs, and fail to address building the societal capacity of the San. The study underscores the importance of aligning capacity-building with cultural context and fostering societal capacity for empowering Indigenous communities. This thesis advocates for a shift towards more culturally sensitive and inclusive practices and consideration for San Indigenous knowledge in capacity-building policy and methods. Such a shift would help make capacity-building programs in Botswana more effective for the San, thereby promoting genuine community empowerment and more meaningful participation in their development affairs.

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List of Abbreviations

CBNRM – Community-based natural resource management

CBO – Community-based organization

CIRCLE – Community Involvement to Renew Commitment, Leadership, and Effectiveness

GEF – Global Environmental Facility

IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

JICA – Japanese International Cooperation Agency

JVA – Joint Venture Agreement

NCONGO – Ngamiland Council of Non-governmental Organization

NGO – Non-governmental organization

SGP – Small Grants Program

SRC – San Research Center

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

TEK – Traditional Ecological Knowledge

TOCaDI – Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives

UB – University of Botswana

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UiT – University of Tromsø

List of Key Stakeholders

Shaikarawe Community Trust – A community-based organization representing the village of Shaikarawe in the Ngamiland District of Botswana. Recently established, their focus is on conservation and have implemented an agroforestry project, community garden, and beekeeping.

Tchecku Community Trust – A community-based organization representing the villages of Tobere, Kyceia, and Kaputura. Alloted a hunting concession along the Botswana/Namibia border, their focus is on hunting and future wildlife safaris.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – A committee of government employees tasked with providing advice for community-based organizations and their community-based natural resource management projects. Divided into regional sub-committees, the TAC is the main stakeholder responsible for the community-based organizations and the first in line to offer support.

Ngamiland Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NCONGO) – A regional NGO which serves as a support organization for community-based organizations in the Ngamiland district of Botswana. Their support extends beyond community-based natural resource management to include healthcare programs, child welfare programs, and capacity-building programs for community-based organizations with different focuses.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – The UN subsidiary body responsible for achieving the UN sustainable development goals and implementing the Small Grants Program. Within Botswana, the UNDP helps community-based organizations join and participate in the Small Grants Program. This includes providing capacity-building workshops, supporting in the drafting of project proposals, and allocating and dispersing funds for approved projects.

Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – The Japanese development agency responsible for a community-based natural resource management project with the Shaikarawe Community Trust. Their support helped get the Shaikarawe Trust up and running and provided the funds for their first major projects.

1 Introduction and Background

In August of 2023, I made a trip out into the remote, dusty *veld* [1] of northwestern Botswana in search of a topic for my master's thesis. Thanks to an invitation from the University of Botswana's San Research Center, I was encouraged to go visit the village of Shaikarawe to see if there would be interest and support from the community to help and participate in a study. I had left my home university in Norway with a potential topic already in mind: a case study on the implementation of a specific UN led sustainable development initiative, which, per some initial research on the program and its policy, I believed to be of relevance to the Shaikarawe community. I thought the community could help me assess this program to see how effective it was for them. I arrived in the village with a translator that the San Research Center referred and who knew the area and the people well. We sat down together with the board members of the village trust and after a short round of introductions, I was given the floor to present myself and my research ideas. That short visit would provide an important early lesson of my academic foray into the subject of international development. I learned that what the policy states should happen on paper, does not necessarily reflect what can happen on the ground. What seemed like a well-designed and helpful development program targeting in part the village of Shaikarawe, I realized after my meeting with the village trust, was simply non-existent in their community. Certainly not in practice and not even in name. I had to ask myself why.

1.1 Overview

Approximately 40 years ago a paradigm shift in the field of international development took place. Community owned and driven socio-economic development programs become the new and preferred method guiding both the development policy and practice of the Global North (Kaiser, 2020). The assumption that a 'bottom-up' approach led by the community would be more effective since they are invested in the program's success, and its long-term sustainability (Craig, 2007; Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). This approach has influenced conservation interventions as well, whose methods subscribe to the notion that local communities and Indigenous peoples are better informed and positioned to protect their

[1] Veld: A term used to describe the dry expansive grassland of southern Africa

natural environment than governmental policy makers in their distant offices and ministries (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Around the same time, the notions of achieving both community socio-economic growth and environmental conservation would merge to form a new paradigm called 'sustainable development' which today forms the foundation of most development initiatives (Brandon & Wells, 1992; Brightman & Lewis, 2017; Mensah, 2019).

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is a particular development framework inspired by the sustainable development paradigm, and is implemented across much of sub-Saharan Africa, albeit under differing names or acronyms (Heffernan, 2022; Maguranyanga, 2010; Ngwerume, 2011; Thakadu, 2005). CBNRM is built on the notion that if communities have a financial incentive to conserve and properly manage their local natural resources, not only will their economic circumstances improve, but the natural resources will be more effectively protected (Thakadu, 2005). For the rural parts of sub-Saharan Africa, this development framework is well suited since it leverages the region's abundant natural resources into economic generating opportunities. For example, animal photography or hunting safaris promote tourism in the region thereby encouraging conservation strategies that protect the wildlife (Mbaiwa, 2015; O'Connell et al., 2019; Tsing et al., 1999).

The implementation of a CBNRM program requires a particular management structure and legal entity called a 'community trust' or 'community-based organization' (CBO). A CBO needs to be in place for access and use of the surrounding natural resources to be evenly distributed. A CBO is also needed to form a 'joint venture' with external businesses such as safari tour operators. A CBO can be comprised of one village or several depending on how the benefits and access to the natural resources are allocated. While all individuals from the village or villages are considered members of a CBO and are entitled to the financial benefits, executive decisions and administrative functions, such as distribution of funds or project applications fall under the responsibility of the organization's board of trustees. The board members are democratically elected individuals from the community and are mandated to execute decisions on behalf of their constituency (Thakadu, 2005). CBNRM as a framework, and the CBO as an institution reflect the 'bottom-up' and community-led approach that has become the favored method for development interventions but with a focus on nature conservation.

It was quickly realized that the success of community-led development ultimately rests on the community's capacity to create and implement their projects and initiatives (Venner, 2015). This correlation was recognized as being so crucial that nearly every development intervention nowadays makes a point to include a capacity-building aspect to their projects (Lempert, 2015). In doing so, capacity-building has, much like the concept of sustainable development, become a buzzword within the field and its discourse (Eade, 2007). Capacity-building, capacity development, or community capacity-building, which some argue entail semantical differences (Whittle et al., 2012), are often used interchangeably (UNDP, 2008; Venner, 2015). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) acknowledge the importance capacity development regarding it the "engine of human development" and the "ways to the means" (UNDP, 2009, p. 5). Their frequently cited definition of the concept considers capacity development "as the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time" (UNDP, 2009, p. 5). Capacity in this context can have various meanings. It can refer to technical skills or practical knowledge which are usually addressed through educational seminars or training workshops targeting individuals. It can refer to the administrative or operational ability of organizations and institutions to execute their mandates and responsibilities. Capacity at the more abstract societal level is also heavily emphasized, which the UNDP calls an 'enabling environment'. This refers to:

> The broader system within which individuals and organizations function and one that facilitates or hampers their existence and performance…Capacities at the level of the enabling environment include policies, legislation, power relations and social norms, all of which govern the mandates, priorities, modes of operation and civic engagement across different parts of society. (UNDP, 2008, pp. 5-6)

Building capacity in this respect would include, for example, helping to draft legislation to address societal inequalities or lobbying those in charge to devise more inclusive governmental policies with respects to minorities or marginalized communities. It should be noted that within the CBNRM framework, capacity-building interventions are usually focused on the CBO and their board members since it is these individuals who are intended to design, implement, and sustainably run their projects.

1.2 Problem Statement, Research Objectives and Questions

Capacity-building is now widely recognized as a critical factor in the success of development programs. Its practice and its underlying theoretical principles are now drawing a lot of attention and scrutiny from both academics and from development practitioners. For all its good intentions, capacity-building can be a challenge for the communities it targets. Often the practice is simply ineffective, and at worst, it can not only fail to build capacity, but it can undermine the existing capacity of communities as well (Eade, 2007; Hunt, 2005). For Indigenous peoples, capacity-building is a pertinent issue. While the prevailing bottom-up development strategy ostensibly falls in line with the growing Indigenous rights movement promoting self-determination (OECD, 2019), the accompanying capacity-building projects can still carry culturally assimilative tendencies (Hunt, 2005; Tedmanson, 2012). The conventional approaches and methods utilized by these projects have not relinquished the 'Western' notion of what capacity-building entails. This means that a development project might be 'led' by an Indigenous community, but it will not necessarily be implemented in accordance with their traditional practices. Instead, they must reconcile with foreign notions of what governance or management means. The Indigenous San of Botswana are also expected to make this reconciliation. For decades, the conditions of their socio-economic status have made them the target of development interventions, initiated on behalf of their own government, from foreign governments, or from local and international NGOs (Saugestad, 2001, 2006). Nowadays, CBNRM is the go-to framework for sustainable development projects in rural Botswana, especially around the Okavango Delta World Heritage Site (Center for Applied Research, 2016; MENT, 2021). It is, therefore, the development intervention that San communities are most likely to contend with. Their communities are often in the remote rural regions of the country where this development strategy is well suited to utilize the local natural resources and wildlife for economic purposes while also addressing conservation or environmental issues.

It is well accepted in development discourse that practice does not always reflect policy, and there could be many factors as to why that particular UN sustainable development initiative, that I described at the beginning of this thesis, never made it to Shaikarawe. However, when I left the village later that afternoon in August 2023, I surmised one likely factor rests in capacity of their trust. The aim of this thesis is to explore capacity-building projects for San CBOs in greater detail. To that end, the objectives for this study are as follows:

1. To identify which institutions are currently in place that provide relevant support for San CBOs in Botswana.
2. To pinpoint the specific barriers that hinder San CBOs in their ability to operate and implement CBNRM projects.
3. To examine the methods of capacity-building programs targeting San CBOs and determine the factors that lead to success, partial, or unsuccessful outcomes.
4. To obtain first-hand accounts from the different stakeholders regarding their experience with capacity-building projects and compare their perceptions of successful or unsuccessful implementation and outcomes.

The ability for San CBOs to successfully implement CBNRM projects can have positive results on their socio-economic circumstances and the surrounding environment. Their ability, in turn, rests on the successful implementation of capacity-building projects. Recent assessments have recognized the limited participation of CBOs in CBNRM activities in Botswana. This was attributed to "a lack of deliberate strategies to ensure citizen empowerment and capacity building" (Center for Applied Research, 2016; MENT, 2021, p. 78). In light of these CBNRM assessments, and the complex and contested nature of capacity building in Indigenous communities, the overarching aim of this thesis is to offer new data and insights on the situation of San capacity-building initiatives in Botswana and hopefully improve future capacity-building projects that target the San communities of Botswana. To achieve the above-stated objectives this project has set out to answer the following research questions:

1. Which challenges do San community-based organizations (CBOs) face?
2. What form does the current support structure for San CBOs take, and how accessible are they to the organizations staff?
3. How effective are the current capacity-building support programs for San CBOs and what are the key factors influencing the effectiveness and overall success of their implementation?
4. How do San CBOs perceive and prioritize their capacity-building needs and how is the currently available support structure utilized by the organizations staff?
5. How do the different stakeholders perceive the effectiveness and success of these programs?

Throughout this thesis, the terms of ‘capacity-building’, ‘community capacity-building’ and ‘capacity development’ may be used interchangeably depending on their appearance in cited literature or in the collected data. While it is recognized that capacity development has become the preferred term in discourse and policy, capacity-building will be used primarily throughout the writing and will refer to all three iterations of the concept.

1.3 Background on the San

Given my role as a student at the Center for Sami Studies at UiT, and my exchange with the San Research Center at the University of Botswana, my research topic is centered on the Indigenous San of southern Africa. The following section provides some background historical and ethnographic overview of the San. The San, although a collective term, is used to describe a linguistically and culturally heterogenous Indigenous group that have called vast stretches of southern Africa their home since time immemorial (Barnard, 2007; Lee & DeVore, 1976). Contemporary estimates place the total population of the San, in their ethnographic and linguistic variety, at approximately 100,000 individuals. Over the course of history, the San mostly practiced a mobile hunter-gatherer lifestyle which allowed many groups to settle in and around the Kalahari Desert in modern day Namibia and Botswana, as well as in other parts of Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Suzman, 2001). Hunter-gatherer subsistence strategies are inherently flexible and therefore well suited for some of the harshest southern African environments. Various groups occupied different environmental niches, but the majority of the San foraged for wild tubers, fruits and nuts and hunted for bushmeat. An intimate understanding of the environment which they developed over the millennia, allowed the San to roam large parts of the semi-desert southern African region in seasonal patterns, ensuring they were able to access readily available food and water sources (Hitchcock et al., 2006; Lee, 2012). Other groups settled by the Okavango Delta wetlands in Northeastern Botswana. They developed localized subsistence strategies focusing on fishing around what is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. They also conducted trade and exchange with other ethnic groups and in more recent times, some San groups have adapted to these groups’ livelihoods strategies that are pastoral and centered around livestock (Bolaane, 2004; Hitchcock, 1999).

While the San, still retain elements of their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, their cultures, societies, and ways of life have been impacted by the dispossession of their land due to Bantu and

European settlers' encroachment who refused to accept that hunter-gathering livelihood strategies were valid claims to landownership. These settlers stood to benefit from the dispossession and exploitation of the San for their pastoral livelihood strategies. The impact of labor exploitation, political and economic marginalization, and more recently, the impact of government or NGO development initiatives have all had drastic effects on the San and their way of life. (Bolaane, 2004; Hitchcock et al., 2006; Saugestad, 2006). Today, the San are "thoroughly modern" (Barnard, 2007, p. 4) and they are woven into the societal fabric of their respective nations, each group and individual to varying degrees (Hitchcock et al., 2006). Presently, along with their traditional livelihoods, the San raise livestock, plant crops, and fish. The San participate in commercial ventures, such as running small village shops or guiding safari tours. Some are politically active, some have earned university degrees, and live in cities, while others remain out in the bush relying on their traditional livelihoods (Bolaane & Saugestad, 2011; Kuehl, 2009) The San are by no means a static group of people, whose culture and society are locked in the past, a stereotype which was propagated by early European explorers and ethnographers (Barnard, 2007). Whether by choice or out of necessity, over the course of their history, the San have continuously found ways to adapt to new and foreign influences. Nevertheless, today the San still honor their traditions, practice many of their cultural customs, and wish to maintain a relationship to their ancestral homelands. The sociopolitical status of the San in Botswana will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.4 Thesis Outline

This remainder of thesis is structured into the following chapters. Chapter two describes the research design and methodological framework which structured this project. It then provides details on the methods utilized throughout and discusses some ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Chapter three outlines the conceptual framework guiding the data analysis and discussion and provides contextual information by reviewing research publications relevant to the study. Chapter four and five have been designated data chapters. These chapters both present and discuss the collected data. Chapter four focusing the descriptive research questions of this study that aim to provide contextual information. These questions asked which challenges do San community-based organizations (CBOs) face, what form does the current support structure for San CBOs take, and how accessible are they to the organizations staff. Chapter five focuses on the evaluative and exploratory research questions

of this thesis. These questions asked how effective the current capacity-building support programs for San CBOs are and what are the key factors influencing the effectiveness and overall success of their implementation. How do San CBOs perceive and prioritize their capacity-building needs, how is the currently available support structure utilized by the organizations staff, and how do the different stakeholders perceive the effectiveness and success of these programs. Chapter six concludes my thesis and makes several recommendations in light of the findings.

2 Methodology

The following chapter describes the methods and study design utilized in this thesis, along with some ethical considerations and limiting factors to the research.

2.1 Study Area and Formation of the Project

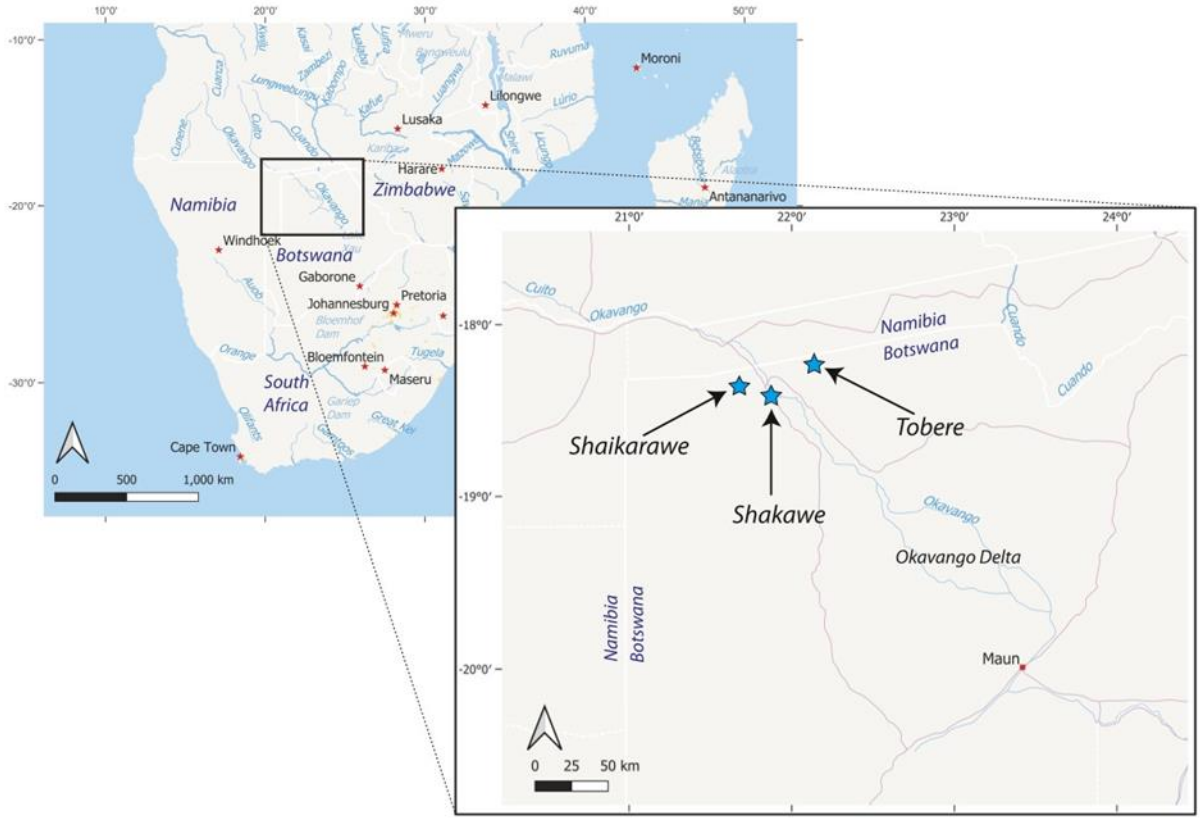

Figure 1. Map of study area with location of villages. (Created using QGIS program version 3.36.2)

In the fall of 2022, I was awarded an Erasmus Global Mobility scholarship through the Center for Sami Studies at UiT. This scholarship provided a stipend of approximately €1300 and the opportunity to conduct a research project in Botswana on a San related topic with the support of the University of Botswana's San Research Center (SRC). Through the SRC's network and with help from the Okavango Research Institute, it was recommended I inquire with the villages of Tobere and Shaikarawe in the Ngamiland district, in the northwest of Botswana, to see if they would host a foreign researcher and help conduct a study.

Figure 2: Main road through Shaikarawe Village

Shaikarawe is a small village of several hundred inhabitants located 20km away from the larger town of Shakawe which serves as the administrative and economic hub of the region. Shaikarawe as a settlement has grown over the recent years to include a primary school and a village development office. Tobere is approximately 50 km distance from Shakawe, is located across the Okavango River and near the border to Namibia. While more remote, Tobere has a somewhat larger population along with the basic amenities of power, water, and a soon to be completed cellular network tower. The villages were recommended on the basis that SRC had a good standing relationship with their CBOs and their location was relatively easy to access by vehicle.

A letter of introduction, stating who I was and what my research interests were, was sent to their village *Kgosi* (Chief) and their CBO board of trustees in the spring of 2023. This was followed by a scoping trip in the summer of 2023, to introduce myself and my project ideas in

Figure 3. Road leading into Tobere Village

person. The purpose of that trip was also to receive formal consent from the village chief to conduct research in their village, and to identify potential research participants. A field assistant provided by the SRC was present during the visit to facilitate introductions and translate when needed.

2.2 Research Design and Methodological Framework

This thesis applied a qualitative research design as described by Maxwell (2012). This interactive design model instructs that the goals, research question, methods, conceptual framework, and validity, continuously interact and influence each other throughout the study's duration. This design allows for the use of flexible and practical methods to gather and analyze qualitative data while still providing enough of a structured framework needed for a masters thesis. Considering my research questions were both descriptive and qualitative in nature, the flexibility of Maxwell's design model was best suited to go about answering these questions. The flexible aspect of such a design gave me the ability to revise my research

objectives and questions on several occasions between my two trips to the study area to collect data, and even at the later stage of data analysis. During my interactions with members from the community and observations I made, I was able to rephrase my research questions in order to address more pertinent issues that I witnessed, and that were expressed to me by my participants. This also meant adjusting aspects of my data collection tools and following new leads to reflect the changing research aims and objectives.

As a student of Indigenous Studies at the University of Tromsø (UiT), my research project was inspired by certain elements of an Indigenous research design (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012). An Indigenous research design includes the principles of the "four R's" as described by Chilisa (2012, pp. 220-221): (1) Relationship accountability which acknowledges that the researcher is personally responsible for every aspect of the research process. (2) Respectful representation which refers to the researcher's duty to show regard for Indigenous knowledge systems. (3) Reciprocal appropriation which posits that the communities stand to gain as much from the research outcomes as those conducting the research. (4) Rights and regulations that demand the research be done ethically and with Indigenous communities retaining control over the procedures and outcome. A vital and fundamental aspect of an Indigenous research design demands that the research, its aims, and objectives, empower Indigenous communities. It calls for Indigenous communities to be active participants in all phases of the research process, have control and influence in the methods, outcomes, and ownership of the findings (Smith, 2012). The practicalities of conducting research at a masters level unfortunately prevented me from being able to whole-heartedly incorporate these aspects into my design. However, my research aims and objectives, throughout their different iterations, always remained dedicated to the goal of empowering the San communities I worked with.

My position as a European and a postgraduate researcher requires careful consideration. My upbringing, education, and cultural background are rooted in a 'Western' worldview that inherently influenced how I have conducted my research. As a non-Indigenous scholar conducting research within Indigenous communities, I must recognize that my epistemological and ontological stance may lie in direct conflict with that of my research participants (Smith, 2012). Therefore, in the spirit of relational accountability and a respectful representation of Indigenous knowledge systems, I continually assessed, sometimes with the help of my supervisor, how and to what extent my own biases, values, and assumptions

impacted my methodology. A particular emphasis was added during the data analysis and interpretation stage to help ensure the validity of my findings. For example, from collected data and from my own observations, I made assumptions about my participants behavior and motivations. Upon some reflection and discussion with my supervisor, what I had perceived as a lack of interest or initiative on the part of my participants, was in fact neither when certain cultural traits of theirs were considered. In the spirit of reciprocity and rights towards Indigenous communities, I have guaranteed my return to those who participated in my research to disseminate my findings, thereby ensuring the knowledge my thesis produced returns to those who helped produce it. Throughout my fieldwork, I made a point to ask in what format would my research participants prefer I disseminate my findings. The preferred method was either in the form of a pamphlet or a file saved on a small storage drive. Considering my goal throughout this thesis was to conduct research with beneficial outcomes for the communities that participated in the study, I am compelled to disseminate my findings in such a way that it can reach people and have a lasting impact.

2.3 Research Participants and Data Collection

In total, 12 participants were involved in the study. Seven stakeholders at the community level and five stakeholders at the governmental, NGO, and UN level. The methods employed to recruit participants involved a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling as described by Chilisa (2012) and Maxwell (2012). First, research participants at the community level were identified and recruited due to their active roles in the administration and/or executive functions of Tobere and Shaikarawe CBOs. These participants then helped identify other relevant stakeholders as potential participants which included: A member of the local Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in Shakawe, a staff member of the Ngamiland Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (NCONGO), a staff member from the UN Development Program (UNDP) the founder of the Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives (TOCaDI), and a University of Botswana (UB) professor affiliated with the UNDP. These stakeholders were considered relevant to the study, given their current or past involvement in the CBO support structure and capacity-building.

Figure 4: Tobere Village Development Committee office with Tchecku Community Trust office in the back (White)

Figure 5: New office building of Shaikarawe Community Trust

Primary data was collected from 12 interviews between November 2023 and February 2024. Table 1 in the appendix contains details regarding the specific date, location, relevant occupation of each participant, and what interviews required a translator. Eleven interviews took place in the span of a three-week trip to Botswana and one interview was done via a recorded video conference call from Norway. Each in-person interview lasted approximately one hour, was done in a location of the research participant's choosing and was recorded using an audio recording device. Interviews with employees and board members of the CBOs took place in their CBO office or just outside under some shade. Interviews with the other stakeholders was conducted at their respective offices as well in Shakawe, Maun, and Gaborone. Three interviews required the need for a translator, for which one of the research participants themselves assisted. All personal information of the participants, such as name, age or gender has been withheld for privacy.

Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were chosen as the main form of data collection. For qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are a practical method that can provide extensive contextual data on the topics being studied (Galletta, 2013). Galleta describes the value of this data collection method, stating that "[i]t is sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus" (2013, p. 24). As opposed to other methods of data collection, such as formalized interviews with set questions or surveys, semi-structured interviews enable a reciprocal type of engagement between researcher and participant (Galletta, 2013). Such an engagement allows both parties the possibility to clarify meaning, ask follow-up questions, or reflect on what was said before continuing the interview.

The interviews with the founder of TOCaDI and the University of Botswana professor are designated for the purpose of my analysis as expert interviews. Meuser and Nagel define experts as individuals who have achieved a level of influence or status within their respective fields and therefore hold certain knowledge that "is not accessible to anybody in the field of action under study" (2009, p. 18). Given the UB professor decades long professional experience working with CBNRM programs in Botswana, and their experience working alongside the UNDP, they possess a good understanding not just what sort of capacity-building needs the San CBOs have, but what needs the entire CBNRM framework needs within Botswana. The founder of TOCaDI, having been involved in what this thesis argues,

was one of the most effective capacity-building institution for San CBOs, possesses a good understanding of their specific needs and challenges. It is in consideration of the qualifications listed above that I designated these two individuals as experts and analyze and discuss their data within this context.

Additional data was collected through informal interviews conducted sporadically throughout the course of my fieldwork. This included impromptu, off-the-record interviews with other members of the community, local business owners in the Shakawe area, and professors at the University of Botswana. My own observations conclude the list of data collected for this thesis. The additional data, while not always explicitly presented, did help in providing supplemental and contextual information for the discussion of my findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

Once the data analysis phase formally began, I employed a thematic approach as described by Braun and Clarke who state: "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (2006, p. 6). Consistent with the interactive nature of my research design, some observational data was analyzed as early as my first scoping trip to Botswana. As described in section 2.2 this 'light' form of analysis led me to revise aspects of my research objectives and questions. Considering the flexibility of this study's research design, thematic analysis was a well-suited method considering its application is not contingent on the use of any specific theoretical framework. The interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word during which some of my ideas and reflections were recorded. During this stage I applied an initial inductive assessment of my data to identify any emerging themes I did not recognize during my fieldwork. It was at this point that I revised my research questions one final time to better reflect what my data said. I did not apply any specific method for the transcription process. However, since my translator did not have the best command of English, at times during the transcription process, I edited or rephrased certain sentences from the translated interviews. This was done to improve the grammar and coherency of the text, while still retaining the underlying meaning, intent, or massage of what was said.

Coding the data was carried out in three stages at which point my analysis switched to a deductive approach. The first stage involved assigning predetermined color codes to each of

my five research questions, which established four primary categories. Upon reading each transcript in Microsoft Word, excerpts were designated one of the five colors if their content was deemed relevant to each research question. Relevance was broadly determined. It could overlap multiple categories, could be implicit within an entire paragraph, or could be based on specific, verbatim text within a single sentence. The second stage involved printing the selected excerpts onto corresponding color paper, examining the transcript excerpts in greater detail before taping them together based on similar trends, content, and patterns across blank wall space in my living room. This tangible and tactile element of the coding process allowed me to visually recognize emerging themes based on the number of excerpts grouped together and their corresponding color. The final stage involved a detailed examination of each induvial groups to identify and name what specific theme was represented.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical guidelines of my project were as follows: As a student from UiT in Norway, I was required to seek clearance from Norway's Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research to ensure the data and information of my research participants was properly collected and stored to guarantee it remained private and anonymous throughout the duration of the project. Obtaining this clearance involved sending my project proposal along with specific information regarding data storage to the agency for review. To conduct research in Botswana, I was required to obtain a government permit issued by the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism. Due to the research objectives involving several San communities, the University of Botswana's Ethical Review Committee examined the project proposal closely to ensure its aims and methods were in accordance with the standards and practices required for conducting research within marginalized communities in Botswana. Part of the permit application process included contacting and seeking consent from the village *Kgosi*, as described in section 2.1. Consent forms were presented and discussed prior to conducting all recorded interviews for data collection. These forms were printed both in English and Setswana, and adequate time was provided for the participants to read the document and ask any clarifying questions.

2.6 Limitations

The factors that most severely impacted my fieldwork and data collection included the delay in receiving a research permit from the government of Botswana as well as my translator and

field assistant becoming unavailable shortly before my fieldwork was scheduled to begin. Due to administrative hold-ups, the government research permit was issued approximately three months behind schedule. What was intended to be a six-to-eight-week data collection trip to Botswana during July and August of 2023, was shortened down to a three-week period in November of that year. This shortened time span limited my ability to find and recruit additional research participants, reflect on my data during the fieldwork to better test, and modify my data collection tools, employ different collection methods, or return for follow-up questions. Perhaps most importantly, the limited time I had to conduct fieldwork meant I was unable to adequately build and develop relationships with the communities assisting my research. These relationships are fundamental for conducting research with Indigenous communities (Chilisa, 2012), and while my scoping trip and the process of getting a research permit helped establish a bit of a rapport between myself and my research participants, I still was very much an 'outsider' when I arrived to collect data. Section 4.2.3 describes how the lack of a relationship between me and the inhabitants of Tobere, led some in the village to misunderstand the reason for my visit.

My initial plan to collect data was heavily dependent on my translator and field assistant who accompanied me during the August 2023 scoping trip. They were familiar with the study area, the CBOs, the board members, and had a well-established network with relevant stakeholders. Their cultural background, command of both English and Khwedam, as well as their education, and professional experience working with San CBOs, gave them the language skills needed to translate and the technical vocabulary useful when dealing with questions regarding community development, capacity-building, stakeholder relations, etc. Being unavailable, I was therefore limited in my ability to contact any further potential research participants within their network and was dependent on a translator whose English was at a less than ideal proficiency level and whose knowledge and understanding of the issues and concepts discussed was in comparison much less extensive. The delay in obtaining my research permit did shorten the duration of my fieldwork, but it also gave me the opportunity to make a second trip to visit Shaikarawe and Tobere. This second trip proved valuable for demonstrating to the community my commitment to the research, their support with the project, and objectives I hoped to achieve. When I returned to collect data during the second visit, I was still an outsider, but not a stranger who appeared once to collect data and then disappeared, never to be seen from again.

3 Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The following chapter provides a description of several conceptual frameworks that guide my thesis. In addition, a variety of literature is presented to situate my research within the larger context of capacity-building and capacity-building within Indigenous communities. The literature discussed below also offers insight into some documented challenges that San communities in Botswana face as they participate in CBNRM activities. Finally, a specific capacity-building framework will be presented as a reference with which to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts within the San CBOs that were included in this study.

3.1 Being Indigenous

After the rise of the decolonial and civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic groups looked inward for a sense of identity vis-a-vis the dismantled colonial powers or the new nation states that took their place (Coates, 2004; Dahl, 2012). At the same time, the world was becoming ever more connected and globalized. Certain ethnic groups were therefore able to look beyond their national borders and found unity and kinship with other ethnic groups through their shared experiences of, but not limited to, violence, oppression, marginalization, and being the original inhabitants of their often-stolen lands. A global human rights movement was taking shape for different ethnic groups unified under particular identity, defining themselves as Indigenous peoples (Dahl, 2012). However, the term Indigenous is a complicated concept. In its political, legal, and anthropological sense it remains as a contested term today, as it did nearly a half century ago, when it entered the discourse of international politics and human rights (Dahl, 2012).

After the creation of a UN subsidiary organization, called the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples, that was mandated to advocate on their behalf, contention quickly arose among the various Indigenous peoples on how to clearly define the term and what people would fall under its category (Minde, 1996). In 1977, when members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North America first appealed to the United Nations, attempting to seek legal and political recourse for the violation of treaties their tribes signed with the United States, who was Indigenous to the North American continent was to a certain degree clear (Minde, 1996). However, in the proceeding decade, other ethnic groups arrived at the UN, seeking legal,

political, and cultural empowerment on behalf of their Indigenous status. Among the first to form an Indigenous Caucus at the UN included the Sami of the Fennoscandian peninsula, Native American/First Nations representatives from North American, and Aboriginal peoples from Australia (Dahl, 2012). With the arrival of groups from Africa, Asia and Russia, Dahl explains the Caucus would have to "revise their concept of being Indigenous" (2012, p. 30) to reflect the diversity of these different groups who still shared similar experiences. It would be realized that the concept should not be strictly defined so it would remain inclusive and flexible in its application (Dahl, 2012).

For practical purposes, a consensus has been reached on a working definition of the term within the realm of international law and politics. This definition is comprised of several characteristics that Indigenous peoples share that helps determine their status as Indigenous. The origin of this working definition can be traced back to a 1987 UN report titled: *The Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*" (Dahl, 2012). Now commonly referred to as the Cobo Report, named so after the study's primary author, their definition, and the characteristics they identified have become widely accepted as the primary criteria that designate who Indigenous peoples are (Coates, 2004). This influential definition reads as follows:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system. (Martínez Cobo, 1987, p. 29)

The objective and subjective elements of this definition were not lost on Cobo, who emphasized that both elements need to be considered equally. They also stressed the importance "that the Indigenous populations themselves be consulted about the criteria they consider valid, since it is their right to determine who belongs to those populations, and who does not" (p. 5.). The Indigenous self-ascription aspect makes the Cobo definition both versatile and contentious in its legal and political application (Dahl, 2012). Self-ascription was deemed necessary for fear of excluding certain Indigenous peoples from seeking

international political and legal aid, while also denying individual nations the power to undermine their Indigenous citizens by controlling who can define who.

3.2 The Indigenous Concept in Africa and Botswana

The concept of Indigenous has been contested in the African context. Many African nations are reluctant to accept that certain segments of their respective populations are Indigenous, deserving of special treatment, privileges, and collective rights (Barume, 2009). 'All Africans are Indigenous' is the common expression when an African nation is confronted with international pressure to recognize the Indigenous peoples within their borders (IWGIA, 2006, p. 12). Moreover, for many African countries seeking to establish their national identity in the post-colonial era, granting special treatment to any minority groups would be counterproductive in their effort to create a strong sense of national unity, where all citizens are equal citizens under the same flag (Barume, 2009). Finally, in countries where ethnic tensions have been problematic or resulted in violence, the fear of stoking these tensions by granting any particular ethnic group special treatment under the law can be understood (Barume, 2009).

Indigenous from an anthropological perspective is arguably, an irrelevant term to apply within the context of Africa (Barnard, 2006; Kuper, 2003). However, from a legal and political perspective the concept has important implications considering the various international legal mechanisms and instruments regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples (IWGIA, 2006). Saugestad therefore suggests that Indigenous, much like ethnicity, should be treated as a relational term. Ethnicity "is constructed by (a) similarity within a group, according to shared values and experiences, and (b) contrast to others" (2001, p. 56). From this perspective, Saugestad suggests that "a group is only Indigenous in relation to another, encompassing group, which controls the state structure" (2001, p. 51) and not based on ethnographic or anthropological determiners. The fundamental nature of this relationship, Saugestad describes, is one of an inherent power imbalance and consists of four criteria that echo the Cobo report. They are first come, non-dominance, cultural difference, and self-ascription. First come implies that an Indigenous people occupied a particular geographic area before immigration into the region by others began. Non-dominance suggests that an Indigenous people experience a state imposed political hegemony completely foreign to their own social customs. Cultural difference refers to the distinct traditions and cultural values Indigenous

people hold either within their community or with their ancestral homeland that lies in stark contrast to the dominant population. Self-ascription, like Cobo, Saugestad acknowledges is an important criteria, since it gives Indigenous peoples the power to define themselves as such (2001, p. 43). For Indigenous peoples not recognized as such by their respective national governments, this final criterion is crucial.

Per Cobo's working definition, or Saugestad's relational term, the San of Botswana are an Indigenous people. They were the first to inhabit the area in and around the Kalahari Desert, they face extreme political and social marginalizing within Botswana by the dominant Tswana ethnic group, they make concerted efforts to retain their cultural traditions and practices and have in several cases defined themselves as Indigenous for the sake of seeking international support (Pelican & Maruyama, 2015). However, for some of the reasons listed in the section above, Botswana does not politically or legally recognize the San as an Indigenous people. Despite Botswana adhering or being party to several international legal instruments granting specific rights to Indigenous peoples such as the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.[2] [3] [4] The country is comprised of several large ethnic groups, yet the Tswana ethnic group have held political control since the 1880s when Botswana was still a protectorate under the British crown called Bechuanaland. For geopolitical reasons, the British simply wanted to control the territory, had little interest in actively governing Bechuanaland, and wished to occupy it with as little administrative effort as possible (Bennett, 2002). To do this they delegated political authority to several established Tswana chiefdoms, whose political and cultural hegemony would remain through Botswana's peaceful transition towards independence in the 1960s (Bennett, 2002; Saugestad, 2001). Since then, and like many other African nations, Botswana has made a concerted effort to build a strong sense of national solidarity. The Tswana dominant political class have led an emphatic push towards creating a unified country with a singular national identity built on their ethnic group's cultural values and customs (Saugestad, 2001). This has provided

[2] https://achpr.au.int/en/states Date Accessed: May 8 2024

[3] https://sdg.humanrights.dk/en/instrument/signees/28 Date Accessed: May 8 2024

[4] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Home.aspx Date Accessed: May 8 2024

Botswana with political and economic stability on a level far above that of its neighbors in the region (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Robinson, 2013). However, the drawback to this Tswana-led nation building effort means that the identity and culture of the other ethnic groups within the country have been dismissed to promote one collective identity for all citizens of Botswana (Saugestad, 2001).

For political and legal purposes, the San in Botswana are typically classified as "Remote Area Dwellers." This classification is based on economic and geographic criteria and avoids any reference to a particular ethnic marker. However, since 70 to 80 percent of San fall under this classification it has come to be understood that Remote Area Dwellers in most cases are simply referring to the San (Saugestad, 2001; Zips-Mairitsch, 2013). Designating the San as Remote Area Dwellers allows the government to shift the focus away from the Indigenous rights that the San are afforded in the legal instruments mentioned earlier. Instead, the government has focused solely on alleviating the extreme poverty the San find themselves in. The result being a myriad of different development programs that the San have experienced since the 1970s. Over the decades, these development programs have undergone numerous changes in name, structure, and funding, but as Saugestad explains, the focus throughout remained one of merely alleviating the symptoms of poverty among the San, instead of their genuine "emancipation and empowerment" (2001, p. 123). Section 1.3 introduced the San as a people rooted in a hunter-gather societal structure. It should be noted that this places them in a sub-category of Indigenous peoples with specific characteristics. Hunter-gather groups are usually small in number, have weak or no political representation, and are often in remote geographic regions. Relative to other Indigenous peoples, hunter-gather groups are particularly vulnerable, not only because of their extreme political marginalization, but their economic and geographic marginalization as well (Hays et al., 2019).

3.3 Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Governance

The San as an Indigenous peoples informs the conceptual frameworks that guide my thesis. The concepts described here will provide the analytical backdrop for the discussion of my data. Traditional knowledge, sometimes also referred to as Indigenous knowledge, is a broad term used to describe the collective knowledge, practices, and customs of specific Indigenous peoples and local communities (Berkes, 2012). "The term Indigenous knowledge makes reference to knowledge and know-how that have been accumulated across generations and

which guide human societies in their innumerable interactions with their surrounding environment" (Nakashima et al., 2018, p. 3). It is this element of traditional knowledge, that sets the rules and dictates how societies interact with the natural world, which is of relevance to this thesis. Indigenous communities applied aspects of their traditional knowledge, sometimes specifically referred to as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), to form societal institutions, developed customs, established laws and methods of governance, for the purpose of managing their resources (Berkes et al., 2000).

Indigenous governance refers to the traditional methods in which Indigenous communities organize their leadership, and administer and regulate their customary laws (Ladner, 2006). Indigenous governance, as a concept is closely related to TEK, but extends beyond the scope of natural resource management or ecological customs and practices. It encompasses governance as it pertains to all aspects of societal life, such as how conflicts are settled, how trade is conducted, or how children are educated (Nikolakis et al., 2019). Like TEK, Indigenous forms of governance are unique to an individual community's context and setting, and therefore come in diverse forms that vary from one Indigenous group to the next.

For the San of southern Africa, certain characteristics of their governance and traditional ecological knowledge can be attributed to what Guenther refers to as a "foraging ethos" (1999, p. 138). Similarly, Barnard (2002) describes this concept as "the foraging mode of thought." This mode of thought Barnard argues, forms the collective ethos that guides hunter-gather societies and stands in stark contrast to non-foraging societies. Regarding political and economic relations, the foraging mode of thought promotes an extreme form of egalitarianism, where the resources are immediately used and shared within a society. If an individual accumulates and stores resources for themselves or to be consumed later, they risk social stigmatization by the community. Political leadership in foraging societies is assigned on an ad hoc basis, when certain needs arise, and it is not meant to be a long-term position. Individuals accepting leadership responsibilities do so hesitantly and strive for achieving group consensus before imposing their own will. Kinship within foraging societies, extend far beyond the family nucleus or genetic relationships. In this sense, kinship can be loosely defined and fluctuates from one individual to another, all dependent on who they choose to associate with. The concept of land ownership differs greatly between foraging and non-foraging societies. Where non-foraging societies view land ownership, control, and access as

something that individuals can be entitled to, foraging societies view this as an inalienable privilege spiritually endowed upon everyone in the community.

The foraging mode of thought forms the conceptual framework guiding the analysis and discussion of the data presented in this thesis. It is recognized that the San of southern Africa are by no means a cultural homogenous people (Hitchcock et al., 2009), and to what extent the San practice their traditional hunter-gather lifestyle has been heavily debated (Barnard, 2006; Guenther, 2006; Kuper, 2003; Lee & Guenther, 1993). However, it is understood by members within the anthropological field that characteristics of the foraging mode of thought are inherent in many hunter-gather societies, and that their cultural, social and behavioral patterns, their forms of governance, and their traditional resource management practices can be attributed to this way of being, regardless of how much of their contemporary means of subsistence reflects their traditional lifestyles (Hays & Ninkova, 2018; Hewlett, 2005; Wiessner, 2002). It should be clarified that in the preceding chapters, the various concepts and characteristics of San culture and society described here will be most often referred to in the more general term of San cultural characteristics or customs.

3.4 Issues With the Concept of Capacity-building

The term capacity-building has become such a buzzword within development discourse that any development project makes a concerted effort to demonstrate a capacity-building aspect (Eade, 2007). This eagerness to promote capacity-building, whenever possible, has given the concept a sense of ambiguity with no clear definition or theoretical framework on which it is built (Kacou et al., 2022). Despite the difficulty of pinning down a definition, Black (2003) identified a certain degree of consensus existing in the literature which emphasizes the concept shifting from focusing only on building an individual's capacity to building organizational and societal capacity between all stakeholders whether that be governments, NGOs or communities. This approach emphasizes the importance of involving the community and as Black mentions, nowadays the discourse relies heavily on "[i]nclusive language such as cooperation, participation, ownership, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and democratic processes…" (2003, p. 117). The change in attitude can be attributed to the growing realization that top-down development projects imposed on the community by outside institutions generally have little success (Craig, 2007; Kuehl, 2009; Lempert, 2015).

Therefore, enabling the community to lead their own development endeavors would prove to be more successful. This in turn, would require efforts to build and strengthen their capacity. However well-intended this shift in rhetoric sounds, the following literature presented in this section will demonstrate that a gap between conceptualization and implementation of capacity-building remains.

Craig criticizes the concept of community capacity-building from several different perspectives. They argue that the primary issue with the concept is that "it is based on the notion of communities being deficient – in skills, knowledge and experience" (2007, p. 352). This notion fosters a paternalistic attitude that not only ignores the already existing capacities that communities certainly have, but it also allows an unequal power-dynamic to form. The capacity-builder can therefore set the agenda and dictate the goals and desired outcome for any capacity-building project, leaving little room for "the community to act on its own behalf, to work on issues that it identified, and at a pace and in a manner that it determined itself" (Craig, 2007, p. 350). Another issue that arises from this unequal power-dynamic is that funding can be leveraged to get communities to fall in line with external political or social interests that the donor promotes. What Criag calls the "carrot of funding" (2007, p. 353) means that capacity-building efforts will prioritize the community's ability to access funds over other more urgent needs or interests. Craig concludes that "community capacity-building is essentially not a neutral technical process: it is about power and ideology and how these are mediated through structures and processes" (2007, p. 354). This poses serious implications for the powerless, poverty-stricken, and marginalized communities who are so often the targets of capacity-building endeavors by NGOs or governments promoting their own agendas. In its most detrimental form, community capacity-building "is used to hide a false consensus about goals and interests…[and] give a false sense of community ownership and control" (Craig, 2007, p. 354).

Eade (2007), reflecting on their decades of experience working within the field of international development, highlights several systemic problems that exists when NGOs undertake community capacity-building initiatives. One issue they describe involves the tendency for NGOs to "live in a kind of Project World theme park" (2007, p. 633). Within this 'park', NGOs are unable to recognize external factors or variables which could influence the success of the project and its goals. Failing to understand the social, political, or cultural

context in which the project is meant to be implemented can lead to unintended outcomes with potentially disastrous effects. As an example, Eade describes a project aimed to empower women in Bangladesh by providing them with micro loans, the outcome of which was not always beneficial. The male relatives would often take the money for themselves or in the worst cases resort to physical violence, due to their insecurity about having a wife with her own financial freedom. What began as a well-meant effort to empower women ended with sometimes tragic consequences. Outside of the 'theme park', the NGO responsible would have been better positioned to grasp "the non-project realities and underlying gender-power dynamics" at play (Eade, 2007, p. 633). An approach from this position would involve not only providing the more standards or technical forms of capacity-building, like training seminars or workshops, but offering ways in which the community can address issues or problems in their larger societal realm.

Kacou et al. provide a comprehensive literature review, exploring the history as well as the "conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of capacity-building" (2022, p. 215). Kacou et al. support the claims made above by Craig (2007) and Eade (2007) and draw attention to several other issues as well. The frequent failure of capacity-building endeavors to reach their objective is a widely acknowledged problem within the field of international development (Kuehl, 2009; Lempert, 2015). Citing Armstrong (2013), Kacou et al. explain that the poor success rate of capacity-building programs can be attributed to an commonly used methodological approach that follows a "four-step process: access, plan, implement, evaluate" (2022, p. 217). Continuing, they describe the issue by stating:

> This positivist, linear-rational model downplays contextual peculiarities, despite beginning with "assess", though capacity building discourse suggests projects are context-specific. In practice, these steps are usually undertaken by international experts bent on transplanting deemed "best practices" to local contexts. (Kacou et al., 2022, p. 217)

This elaborates on the issue (Craig, 2007) mentioned above. The 'experts' providing the capacity-building not only set the agenda, but dictate the methods and manners used to reach what objectives they wish to reach. Here as well, Kacou et al. (2022) reiterate what (Eade, 2007) discusses regarding the consequence of ignoring local realities and contextual settings. Citing Eyben et al. (2015), and Venner (2015), Kacou, et al. attribute the wide spread use of the four-step model due to its replicability and the 'quantifiable' data it produces. This model

falsely implies that capacity-building "can be defined as a mere technical process with predictable outcomes" (2022, p. 217). Donors favor quantifiable data over more subjective evidence because it can be interpreted to demonstrate a certain degree of measurable success, regardless if the results in reality are "meaningless and dysfunctional" (Kacou et al., 2022, p. 217). To summarize the arguments made here, too often capacity-building projects utilize a blanket, or one-size-fits-all method which the capacity-building 'experts' implement with erroneous assumptions about its efficacy or relevance. Since these projects are ultimately held accountable by the funding institutions, a misguided focus has been placed on demonstrating quantifiable yet often meaningless outcomes instead of building true and effective capacity through more nuanced and subjective approaches. All this despite the rhetoric so prevalent in the discourse today that states community development and community capacity-building should be spearheaded by the community itself.

Kacou et al. conclude their literature review by drawing on the research from several other sources (see Ika & Donnelly, 2017; Ramalingam et al., 2014; Rodrik, 2008) to propose a "new pragmatism" which should guide both theory and practice (2022, p. 227). While this approach acknowledges the role and importance that empirical data and 'hard' evidence have in guiding capacity-building policy and practice, it should not be cemented in a positivist epistemological foundation. The authors explain how utilizing this approach would benefit capacity-building practitioners:

> [These practitioners] accept that what works in Bolivia will not necessarily work in Botswana or Bhutan. Their epistemological roots in critical realism and their sensitivity to the important of local contexts leads them to look for 'best fit' rather than 'best practice or 'first best' solutions…Their commitment to evidence-based policy making, with an emphasis on the importance of adjusting policy, practice and tools to local contexts, issues and actors, paying serious attention to historical, geographical, social, economic, political, structural and epidemiological variables provides a strong theoretical and practical ground for capacity-building. (Kacou et al., 2022, p. 227)

The challenges to implement such an approach are not lost on Kacou et al. who advocate for further research be conducted to better understand how to "conceptualize and operationalize the context and, in particular, where, when, how and why does it matter" (2022, p. 227). Further research in this area would be vital in helping to ensure the 'new pragmatism'

approach can become common practice for national governments or large institutions in the development field such as the UNDP or the World Bank.

3.5 Capacity-building With Indigenous Communities

The following literature provides some insight into capacity-building specifically within the global Indigenous context. Several centuries of violent and oppressive policies left Aboriginal communities across Australia destitute and in a state of severe poverty. By the end of the 20th century, the lasting impact of these policies left Aboriginal communities thoroughly dependent on government welfare (Tedmanson, 2012). The pretense for the government to implement a capacity-building policy in Aboriginal communities was based on the notion that it would alleviate welfare dependence and would simultaneously integrate these communities into modern society. Tedmanson captures the underlying sentiment held by the government at this time which inspired such a policy:

> Both schooling and skilling Aboriginal peoples towards incorporation into the nation state as 'equal' citizens became the privileged wisdom and rationality, 'capacity building' its catchphrase and battle cry. Aboriginal cultural practices were increasingly stigmatized as deficient, problematic, and archaic, as resistance was reframed as corruption. (Tedmanson, 2012, p. 257)

The underlying assimilative element of capacity-building is precisely what Tedmanson (2012) suggests makes the concept so problematic for Indigenous communities. The capacity-builder not only assumes Indigenous communities are deficient in skills, knowledge, and experience, but their inherent cultural traits are themselves a deficiency which must be corrected to alleviate their poverty. Capacity-building geared towards this perceived deficiency is essentially a "euphemism for – 'become like us'" (Tedmanson, 2012, p. 268) which itself is an expression of continued colonial oppression.

Considering a wealthy country like Australia, has been unable to address the Aboriginal communities experiencing extreme poverty within its borders, Makuwira argues that the other stakeholders involved in this system are equally in need of capacity building, including "…the policy makers, the donor community [and] international community development agencies whose misguided policies contribute to poverty and powerlessness" (2007, p. 134) (p. 134). Tedmanson expands on this by stating:

> There is no formal recognition of the urgent need to build the *capacity* of non-Aboriginal bureaucracies and governments with a view to better engage with the depth of Aboriginal knowledge and the capacity of Aboriginal communities to have profound wisdom about their own futures. (2012, p. 268)

What these authors are calling for is a dismantling of the paternalistic attitude that informs much of capacity-building policies and practices targeting Indigenous communities. The attitude that Indigenous communities are culturally backward and deficient is itself a lack of capacity, in the sense that it is an epistemological deficiency. Correcting this deficiency would require the knowledge, skills, and experiences inherent in all Indigenous communities to be the foundation from which capacity is built on. What an Aboriginal leader considered was more akin to "*restoring capacity* and *sharing capacities*, rather than instilling or building capacity" (Tedmanson, 2012, p. 255).

In light of the issues surrounding capacity-building discussed in this chapter, it might be appropriate to utilize the terms proposed by the Aboriginal leader instead. Capacity-sharing would address the inherent power imbalance that Craig (2007) describes by removing the misconception of a community's deficiency. It would allow the community to set the agenda and restore their capacity in the manner they choose. If an element of sharing or knowledge exchange is involved, it would allow capacity-builders to better understand the cultural context in which they operate to avoid situations like Eade (2007) described in Bangladesh. Finally, if capacity sharing was the starting point, it would help all stakeholders involved, each with their own epistemological background, mutually determine what capacity-building method is the 'best fit' for the given situation. A pragmatic approach comparable to the one Kacou et al. (2022) proposed.

Chino and DeBruyn propose a capacity-building framework titled, *Community Involvement to Renew Commitment, Leadership, and Effectiveness* (CIRCLE) which was developed by a group of Indigenous researchers studying healthcare issues in their communities in the United States. This framework was founded on the notion that:

> As personal and professional relationships develop, they lead to the development of individual skills and group skills. These skills in turn lead to effective working partnerships, ultimately promoting a commitment to the issue, the group, and the process This process creates an interest in new relationships, the need for new skills, and new opportunities for collaboration and a long-term commitment to positive change. (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006, pp. 597-598)

Elements of this framework reflect the mainstream approach to capacity-building such as the focus on individual and group skills training and the emphasis on a collaborate process. However, as Chino and DeBruyn explain, the crucial difference is how much this framework dedicates the time and effort on the first step of the process; developing relationships. "Relationship building is an essential process in tribal communities, one that is deeply imbedded in history and context" (2006, p. 598). Dedicating the time and effort needed to first build meaningful 'relationships' demonstrates a commitment to the process by all the stakeholders involved. It allows trust to be built. Meaningful relationships imply a sense of mutual respect, respectful communication and respect for each other's cultural heritage, customs, and values. If meaningful relationships can be established between the stakeholders, then an enabling environment will be established in turn, where the power relations can be leveled, and the differing social norms recognized and respected.

3.6 The Issues With the Concept of Community

The previous section discussed the issues that arise when capacity-building interventions fail to properly account for local contexts and how this failure can hinder any meaningful empowerment for communities in general and Indigenous communities in particular. This section will highlight how such issues can become even more pronounced within the Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) framework in Botswana. The first chapter of this thesis introduced the concept of CBNRM, and the role community-based organizations (CBOs) play within this sustainable development strategy. Capacity-building efforts have focused on the committees running these trusts because the success of any CBNRM project is, for the most part, contingent on the capacity or ability of the board of trustees to implement the project. The issue then becomes, how context-specific can capacity-building for CBOs be, if the board members reflect a wide variety of traditions, customs cultural and norms?

The underlying assumption of the CBNRM framework is that a CBO board will be a democratic representation of the community and will therefore make decisions regarding the management of resource with the consensus of all those living in the vicinity. However, as Thakadu reports, "[m]ost CBNRM projects lumped together communities that differed in ethnic background, historical origin, geographic location, inter-ethnic/tribal allegiance, socio-economic status and literacy level" (2005, p. 208). The consequence of such an approach

means that several different villages, often comprising of different ethnic groups with different livelihood strategies and traditional customs, could be allotted a single land concession. The CBO responsible for any CBNRM projects within that concession would be held accountable by a diverse constituency. The board of trustees would in turn also be comprised of individuals from that constituency, meaning members from various cultural backgrounds and traditional customs would oversee governing the organization together. This "cultural heterogeneity" Thakadu (2005, p. 209) explains can have negative impacts on a CBOs ability to operate if cultural differences become problematic and produce political grievances and infighting. If a CBO happens to represent a single village, ethnic or tribal disputes can still be an issue given that many villages across Botswana are comprised of more than one ethnic group (Mompati & Prinsen, 2000). It is in these cases that the dominant ethnic group can dictate how the village CBO will be involved in any CBNRM activities while the subordinate group(s) become politically marginalized (Rozemeijer & van der Jagt, 2000).

In consideration of this issue, Stone and Nyaupane (2014) argue that the concept of "community" in community-based natural resource management should be re-envisioned to account for the heterogeneity that exists in across the CBOs of Botswana. They base their argument on the research published by various authors who examined the concept of community more closely. Flora et al. (2003) and Wenger (2011) posit that communities form not necessarily because of a specific geographic location, but because of a mutual interest. As Wenger explains:

> In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. (2011, p. 2)

Therefore, communities are understood to be incredibly diverse and can be comprised of a wide range characteristics. If the unifying factor is a common interest, then communities can vary in size, age, cultural backgrounds and, importantly, they can transcend physical boundaries as well.

Despite the many different ways to designate a community, whether on geographic criteria alone or by shared interests, Stone and Nyaupane (2014) argue the CBNRM framework should not be disregarded entirely. Instead, they suggest that "each village should be treated as a complete unit and should not be grouped together to form a larger community" (2014, p.

26). If several villages share the same concession, the authors propose a system where different villages can implement their own CBNRM projects in the allotment depending on their own needs and interests. If two villages have a good relationship, share certain cultural traits, or have a common resource management interest, then they could implement a project together where a third village would be excluded. This approach would have the benefit of fostering better participation within a community because, in effect, the size of its constituency would be smaller and more homogenous. It would also improve the distribution of benefits, whether monetary or otherwise, because a single village CBO is better positioned to equitably disburse what benefits their CBNRM projects have earned. Moreover, it implies that capacity-building endeavors would improve because these projects would only need to consider the specific context of one village and its CBO.

3.7 San Communities in the CBNRM Framework

Fabricius and Madzwamuse (2004) and Madzwamuse (2010) describe how San communities of Botswana experience significantly more challenges with the CBNRM framework than other ethnic groups the country. Chapter one briefly introduced some larger systemic issues the San of Botswana face. Issues such as political and economic marginalization, along with the failure of more dominant ethnic groups to recognize the San traditional livelihood strategies as a legitimate claim to landownership, all factor into the ability of the San to effectively participate in any CBNRM activities. Moreover, certain cultural characteristics regarding how the San traditionally managed natural resources are fundamentally at odds with the policy and implementation of this sustainable development approach. As Madzwamuse explains:

> The [San]'s traditional strategies for managing natural resources included seasonal mobility, detailed ecological knowledge and appropriate skills to capitalize on this knowledge. Flexibility was a key strategy that the [San] used in relation to group size and social organization, leadership structures and resource use in order to respond to changes in their local environment. (2010, p. 245)

This flexibility helped ensure San communities could practice sustainable livelihood strategies in the harsh conditions of the Kalahari Desert. It necessitated a general collective sense of land ownership where resource access and use was constantly renegotiated between individual families, clans and larger communities, whatever the given seasonal circumstances demanded (Barnard, 1992).

What Fabricius and Madzwamuse (2004) and Madzwamuse (2010) underscore is that the policy and structure guiding CBNRM fails to consider how the San traditionally conducted such resource management endeavors, and instead imposes a system of governance that is completely alien. As an example, Madzwamuse describes some administrative policies which the San needed to adapt to:

> The procedures for setting up a [Board of Trustees] is stipulated by the government, donors, and other support organizations. Requirements include developing a written constitution and making use of the *kgotla* system as a forum for public consultation and participation, both of which are foreign concepts imposed on the [San] communities. These draw very little from local norms and practices, particularly with regards to tenure arrangements and rules governing access to land and natural resources. (2010, p. 254)

A legally binding constitution, fixed in written form, which dictates how a trust will be governed, is a far cry from the flexible way San communities governed resource use traditionally. The *kgotla* which is a public forum institution of the dominant Tswana ethnic group, is per the CBNRM framework, the space in which resource management decisions should be debated and decided upon as a community. Citing Peters (1994), Madzwamuse explains that, despite the underlying democratic principles of the kgotla, it "…does not necessarily grant a culture or class free space to engage with and influence decision making…" (2010, p. 249). Considering the already marginalized socioeconomic and political status of the San, the added challenge of navigating foreign concepts of governance, it becomes evident that effectively participating in CBNRM activities is difficult for them to achieve.

However, the two articles discussed here point to an example in which traditional forms of resource management was practiced by a San community although only with limited success. The Khwai village, which is predominantly San, organized a separate committee to ensure gathering of grass used for thatching roofs, a building method traditional to San houses, was done during the appropriate time of year to prevent overharvesting. While it showed initiative on the San to manage their own cultural needs on their own terms, it was met with little success because as Madzwamuse explains, "…with limited legal and policy backing for the use of veld products, the residents of Khwai could not control access by members from outside the community" (2010, p. 251). Ultimately, any management institutions or techniques outside of the CBNRM framework hold little political weight or significance.

3.8 The International Union for the Conservation of Nature

The IUCN (2015) Strategic Framework for Capacity Development in Protected Areas provides a reference to help evaluate the effectiveness of the capacity-building support system examined in this thesis. Published in 2015, by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) after several years of development, it outlined the challenges capacity-building endeavors face within the context of nature conservation and offered suggestions to better guide future policy and practices over the ensuing 10 years. As an institution, the IUCN is one of the most prominent international environmental organizations, who works to promote sustainable development and nature conservation.[5] It is responsible for drafting some of the most influential international legal instruments in regard to nature conservation such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the World Heritage Convention, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.[6] Within the context of this thesis, the strategic framework is relevant since CBNRM activities in Botswana are in effect sustainable development projects with a nature conservation focus. Moreover, the study area of this thesis lies near the Okavango Delta which itself is designated both a World Heritage Site and a Ramsar Site,[7] making conservation there an international concern. Finally, considering the IUCN recognizes the important contribution Indigenous peoples can make regarding nature conservation (Benyei et al., 2020; Müller et al., 2015), the strategic framework places a heavy emphasis on focusing capacity-building efforts specific towards Indigenous peoples (IUCN, 2015).

The strategic framework reiterates many of the same issues that other authors cited in this chapter discuss. Such as a lack of 'local ownership' (IUCN, 2015, p. 4) over capacity-building since the tendency is for these projects to be initiated by foreign NGOs who prioritize addressing the lack of practical skills over the larger systemic issues which the community experience. The focus on building the 'technical' aspects of capacity, such as

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[5] https://www.iucn.org/our-union Date Accessed: April 19 2024

[6] https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/working-regional-seas/partners/international-union Date Accessed: April 19 2024

[7] International treaty convention concerned with protecting wetlands. https://www.ramsar.org/country-profile/botswana Date Accessed: May 9 2024

financial management or governance training takes place in what the strategic framework calls “formal education courses” (IUCN, 2015, p. 4). While training on these aspects is needed, the pedagogical methods “…currently used may not be optimal for the full diversity of people now engaged in protected area management, in terms of accessibility, language, and cultural approaches to teaching and learning” (IUCN, 2015, p. 4). The framework also mentions a lack of long-term or institutionalized efforts which are adequately funded to sustainably build capacity. The consequence of this being “a rapid decay of the benefits of capacity development investments” (IUCN, 2015, p. 4)

The strategic framework emphasizes the importance of building societal capacity which, similar to the UNDP, it defines as “creating an enabling environment that politically, economically, and culturally recognizes the values of protected areas and enables them to thrive” (IUCN, 2015, p. 3). To achieve this, it is recommended that projects should:

> …address the intangible aspects of capacity, such as social acceptance of conservation and protected areas, ‘political will’, institutional cultures, relationship building, and cultural factors that support protection and sustainable management… (IUCN, 2015, p. 5)

It appears these projects would address a component of the epistemological deficiency discussed in a previous section of this chapter, where the enabling environment the framework proposes would be achieved through the reconciliation of different societal values and norms related to nature and the environment.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The first section of this chapter introduced the concept of Indigenous peoples, the theoretical concepts of traditional knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, and Indigenous governance and how these concepts form the cultural context and societal schema of Indigenous communities. The foraging mode of thought was introduced as a conceptual framework regarding a cultural context specific to hunter-gatherer communities, which will help guide the analysis and discussion of the data collected for this thesis. The literature discussed in this chapter provided insight into the challenges and issues that surround the concept of capacity-building. Despite the inclusive language prevalent in the discourse of capacity-building, the concept in practice often still lacks in building societal capacity and creating an enabling environment, thereby failing to achieve genuine community

empowerment. Due to unequal power dynamics, a failure to understand the community's needs and contextual setting, or simply because of ineffective methods, many capacity-building efforts are rendered meaningless or worse become counterproductive. For Indigenous communities particularly, the element of cultural assimilation underlying capacity-building, whether it is deliberately promoted or not, can have harmful implications. The issues surrounding the hard to define concept of community were also discussed and how they factor into the CBNRM framework of Botswana, and how they can affect San communities specifically. Finally, the IUCN's strategic framework for capacity-building was presented as a useful and relevant source to help measure the capacity-building support structure of Botswana.

4 The CBO Support Structure and Challenges San CBOs Encounter

In the previous chapter, I explained the conceptual frameworks that inform my data analysis and discussion. I presented literature on capacity-building and some problematic issues that surround the concept. I also highlighted some issues surrounding the concept of community and community-based organizations before discussion how these problems can affect San CBOs and their work with CBNRM projects. This chapter presents my data collected during my fieldwork trip to the villages of Tobere and Shaikarawe and discusses the findings considering the issues presented in the literature review for this thesis. The chapter is organized into two main sections corresponding with my 1st and 2nd research objectives, respectively. The first section (4.1) examines the capacity-building support structure that was observed to be in place and accessible to San CBOs and discusses what type of support this structure provides. The second section (4.2) explores the most prevalent issues that emerged during data analysis regarding San CBOs and their involvement in CBNRM projects.

4.1 The Existing Support Structure for San CBOs and Their Projects

4.1.1 The Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was described to me by a local TAC member as the "main stakeholder of the CBOs under the CBNRM [framework]," and whose responsibility is to provide "technical advice to the CBOs" (Interview with TAC member, November 2023). They go on to explain that the committee was established at the same time the CBNRM policy was implemented and is divided into district subcommittees across the country. Committee members are government officials who hold positions in various government ministries or departments that are related to CBNRM in one aspect or another. TAC members could include for example: individuals from the national and local level of the Ministry of Museums and National Monuments, Department of Tourism, Department of Forestry and Ranger Resources, Department of Wildlife and National Parks. The TAC subcommittee whose district includes Shaikarawe and Tobere, has an office located in the town of Shakawe, with the district chairperson located in Gumare, which lies approximately 130km to the south of Shakawe. One important characteristic of the TAC is that its members are expected to provide their time and services supporting CBOs in addition to whatever

responsibilities they hold in their respective government positions (Center for Applied Research, 2016).

My interviewee described two general areas of support the TAC provides CBOs, namely capacity-building workshops and advice and assistance submitting project proposals. In terms of capacity-building, the focus was most often on the issue of governance the reason being that:

> The CBOs, they're governed by the CBNRM policy. So, each CBO has a constitution which outlines the governance of the trust. How they should do their things. Normally we offer trainings on those things just to capacitate them on what is expected of them. What is the requirement of the CBNRM program. (Interview with TAC member, November 2023)

They go on to state that these trainings take place approximately once a year and can be held in partnership with an NGO or the UNDP who then also usually provide the funding. Regarding the support for proposals, the TAC's assistance can range from giving advice on certain aspects of the proposal, such as its content or scope, to a more hands on approach which involves helping drafting the proposal. The TAC member clarified this type of support:

> Normally when there is a call for proposals, we let [the CBOs] know. Or that there are call for proposals from a particular donor. So, we collect the proposals templates from the donors and then give them to the CBOs. Some CBOs they have the capacity to write proposals for themselves. Like Tcheku Trust, they have the manager so he's able to write the proposals for the trust. As for Shaikarawe, it is still at a development stage. Sometimes as the TAC, we help them write the proposal. We just get an idea of what they really want to do and then help them to draft the proposal. (Interview with TAC member, November 2023)

From the two interview excerpts provided here, it becomes clear that the role and responsibilities of the TAC can encompass more than just technical advice for CBOs and include some rather important functions such governance training and writing proposals. Two issues which will be discussed in greater detail, in the second half of this chapter.

4.1.2 Ngamiland Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (NCONGO)

The second stakeholder involved in this support structure is the Ngamiland Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NCONGO) who are based in the town of Maun, the economic and administrative center of the Ngamiland district, and approximately 400km away from Shakawe. NCONGO was founded in 2008 as a regional support organization for CBOs and

other NGOs in the area. The representative I interviewed from NCONGO explained that organization's main objectives are to provide "…a unified voice among NGOs and CBOs to advocate and also most importantly build their own capacity building institutions" (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023). NCONGO describes itself as a "volunteer-directed organization,"[8] who, when I asked the representative, receives no financial support from the government and relies solely on funding from "external projects" to cover their operating costs.

On NCONGO's website, several other objectives and responsibilities were mentioned such as working on "monitoring and evaluation, gender, governance, HIV/AIDS policy and reports, organizational development, orphans and vulnerable children, project management, and proposal writing."[9] Therefore, it should be recognized that while a few areas overlap with the mandate of the TAC, NCONGO's support does extends beyond helping CBOs with CBNRM projects. From the information gathered during my interview with the representative, two noteworthy areas of support were mentioned. Support in the form of a practical training placement at NCONGO's office and the ability to take the position as lead applicant on grant proposals. The practical training stands apart from other forms of capacity-building endeavors because it involves NCONGO hosting an individual at their office in Maun for an extended period to get administrative work experience while being supervised by the staff. The representative described the placement using a CBO's financial officer as an example:

> No, it's not a workshop. You are here doing practical things in the office. Learning about QuickBooks or whatever financial system that they are using. Especially if the financial officer is new and doesn't understand the inner workings of the CBO. Sometimes it's different from a private company, so we take them in to learn. (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023)

Despite being a relatively small NGO, during my visit to NCONGO's office in Maun, I witnessed the hustle and bustle of their office during a typical workday. For an employee from a remote CBO, such an environment would stand in stark contrast to a typical day at work for their trust in an office that might consist of nothing more than a room with an old desktop computer with a sporadic internet connection. I was told these placements last for

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[8] https://www.ncongo.org/about Date accessed: March 19 2024

[9] https://www.ncongo.org/about Date accessed: March 19 2024

approximately two weeks, although they are only done through special arrangements and usually involve a referral from the TAC. Another vital element of support NCONGO can provide involves taking the position of lead applicant for a project proposal. When a CBO recognizes they lack the capacity to submit a proposal they can reach out to NCONGO and ask to lead the process. The representative explained that as lead applicant:

> …the technical part of the proposal is done by us. That includes filling in and writing the background, writing the scope, and sometimes we even go to the extent of engaging one of our consultants to further the cause. (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023)

To assume the responsibility for the most challenging aspects of a project proposal is a crucial form of support for a CBO and to arrange for help from outside consultants can significantly improve the chances of a project receiving funds. However, when asked how common such arrangements between NCONGO and a CBO are, I was told that it only has happened a handful of times. It was mentioned that in some proposals NCONGO has been designated "co-applicant" but what difference this status makes was unfortunately not discussed further during the interview.

4.1.3 The United Nations Development Program – Small Grants Program (SGP)

The UNDP's mandate covers an expansive range of initiatives, programs and projects that focus on poverty reduction, inequality issues, and the UN sustainable development agenda.[10] The Small Grants Program (SGP) is a specific program which the UNDP is responsible for implementing that promotes community-led sustainable development projects through targeted small-scale grants provided directly to the community. A multi-billion dollar, internationally sponsored fund called the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) provides the money for these community projects, where each country's local UNDP branch handles how the funds are ultimately dispersed to the individual community projects through their National Steering Committee. This committee is responsible for evaluating and approving SGP grant proposals and is comprised of government officials, NGO representatives and members of academia and scientific institutions, forming a diverse group with experience in various

[10] https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals Date Accessed: March 19 2024

professional fields.[11] The size of an SGP grant can range from 5,000 USD up to 150,000 USD for specific projects with the average amount in the 25,000 USD range.[12] It should also be noted that per the GEF website, the SGP is "designed to mobilize bottom-up actions by empowering local civil society and community-based organizations, including women, Indigenous Peoples, youth and persons with disabilities."[13] Considering the large amount of money available and the UNDP's structured mechanism for dispensing it, SGP grants are one of the most important sources of funding for CBOs in Botswana and for their CBNRM projects. Furthermore, given that the SGP is in part, geared towards Indigenous Peoples and their organizations and projects, makes this source of funding valuable for San CBOs in particular.

When I asked what role the SGP has regarding capacity-building support it was explained that "[i]t is within the best interest of the Small Grants Program to build capacity for the local communities through their organizations" (Interview with UNDP representative, November 2023). Information provided on the SGP website mentions this focus on capacity-building as well stating that "[a]lmost all SGP-supported projects include capacity-building, communications and experience-sharing elements."[14] In light of the governance issues and financial management challenges that San CBOs experience, it would be prudent to focus on capacity-building if a CBO is expected to effectively utilize several thousand dollars and implement their projects. More specific support from the SGP is provided in the form of two different grants, planning and capacity-building grants. Planning grants, the UNDP representative explained are:

> …the grants that the community can apply for when they need to build their capacity. Say for instance there will be in need to register a CBO because they have identified opportunities in their area for conservation and for livelihood. They can apply for that grant to register the CBO. That includes capacity building of the committee that will

[11] National Steering Committee pdf document retrieved from www.UNDP.org Date Accessed: March 19 2024
[12] https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/gef-small-grants-programme Date Accessed: March 19 2024
[13] https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/gef-small-grants-programme Date Accessed: March 19 2024
[14] https://www.sgp.undp.org/our-approach-153/capacity-development.html Date accessed: March 18 2024

> be selected on how to run the CBO and to develop their constitution and benchmarking exercises. (Interview with UNDP official, November 2023)

Planning grants, totaling up to 5,000 USD, are not only available for a newly formed CBO that needs help managing bureaucratic and administrative hurdles, but for CBOs, who like my interviewee explained, were "dormant" and had not been operating for an extended period. An important aspect of the planning grant not discussed in the interview is that it can be applied towards designing and submitting a more detailed, well formulated full-sized SGP grant with the help of outside consultants. Used in such a way, the few thousand dollars spent from a planning grant could help ensure a proposal seeking funding for a much larger and expensive project could be approved (UNDP, 2017).

Funds for the SGP are allocated to a country's UNDP branch by the GEF in what are called operational phases. Each phase involves a large lump sum of money which the UNDP disperses for approved project (UNDP, 2017). To further support capacity-building, up to 10% of each operational phase can be spent on projects specifically related to that theme, providing a second source of funding available to CBOs to strengthen their capacity. However, to complicate matters somewhat, this grant has "a specific call for proposals and criteria for the selection process,"[15] and as the UNDP representative mentioned in our interview the call for proposals are only advertised "when there is a need." Nevertheless, the two types of grants discussed in this section demonstrate that an important stakeholder like the UNDP is committed to develop and build the capacity of CBOs in Botswana, and that the procedures for CBOs to access funding are in place. However, as will be discussed in section 4.2.2 of this chapter, access to funding does not necessarily ensure that funding can be easily accessed.

4.1.4 Japanese International Cooperation and Agency

Over the course of my fieldwork, several different foreign governmental development agencies were mentioned in connection with capacity-building support for San CBOs and their projects. The degree to which these agencies were involved, and exactly in what context seemed to vary widely. However, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will

[15] https://www.sgp.undp.org/our-approach-153/capacity-development.html Date Accessed: March 18 2024

be discussed with greater detail in this thesis, given their presence was clear from the data collected and can presumably serve as an example of the relationship that exists between a foreign governmental development stakeholder and local CBOs. Japan is among the leading nations that provide developmental funding to countries in the Global South (Dzigbede & Jesmin, 2019), and JICA is responsible for the distribution and utilization of those funds. As an organization, JICA's objectives fall in line with other international development agencies, for examples Germany's Development Cooperation or the United States' Agency for International Development. All state their objectives are to promote sustainable development through partnerships with foreign countries to support projects in their local communities.[16] [17] Within Africa, JICA has sponsored projects with an equivalent of 1.2 billion USD in funding,[18] and a small fraction of that money has now made its way to the village Shaikarawe.

I was told JICA's involvement in Shaikarawe began when Botswana's Department of Forestry and Ranger Resources encouraged members of the village to reach out to JICA to see if it would be willing to support them in their efforts to register a new CBO. The Shaikarawe Trust board member I interviewed described how the partnership with JICA came to pass:

> [The Forest Ranger] was saying there are some people who are helping. The Japanese are helping the Chobei Trust. So why don't we talk to those people, and maybe they can help us. So, he gave us the phone numbers for those people and that's how we got into in contact with JICA. We said that we have a trust here without funding and we want to get our trust started. There was a guy who then came here. A Japanese guy but I forgot his name. He came here to meet with us and to see who the people were that he was communicating with and to get some face-to-face contact. We sat down with him to chat. Afterwards he said that he would take our plans, our missions, and our objectives back to Japan. He would go to his agency to look whether they can help us or how they can help us. Then after two years, he sent the coordinator of Forrest and Ranger Resources from Gaborone, the guy we talked with first. He told the [ranger] that JICA will send someone from their office to go to Shaikarawe to help the trust. (Interview with Shaikarawe Trust board member, November 2023).

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[16] https://www.giz.de/en/aboutgiz/40669.html Date Accessed: March 19 2024

[17] https://www.usaid.gov/sdgs Date Accessed: March 19 2024

[18] JICA activities pdf document retrieved from: https://www.jica.go.jp/english/activities/n_files/20230721045801_02.pdf Date Accessed: March 19 2024

What began with a simple suggestion led to a phone call which led to a “chat” with a representative from JICA’s Botswana office in Gaborone. The outcome of such an informal process was quite remarkable. Two years later, the Shaikarawe Trust was registered, was provided funds which paid for a new office building, forest fire prevention training, and an agroforestry project, albeit that project, at of the time of my fieldwork, remained only partially implemented. The informality of such an arrangement and its implication for building capacity for the Shaikarawe Trust will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. However, it is worth noting here the significant amount of support an international stakeholder can provide a CBO with what seemed like relatively little effort.

4.2 San CBOs and Their Challenges

4.2.1 Lack of Capacity

CBOs in Botswana operate within an existing framework of the country’s CBNRM policy. This means a functioning CBO must draft a constitution which outlines their operational policies and protocols, dictating how the board of trustees govern themselves as an organization. The constitution follows a template outlined in the CBNRM policy (Thakadu, 2005). The protocols within a CBO’s constitution cover everything from basic administrative procedures, to how board member elections are conducted. Taking the UNDP’s definition of organizational capacity into account it was evident that the CBO of Shaikarawe and Tobere were lacking considerably in their capacity to operate as an organization, especially in regard to governance, financial managements, and qualified individuals who can serve on the staff. I conducted an expert interview with a University of Botswana (UB) professor, whose professional career has given them an intimate understanding of the governance issues CBOs face. They explained the issue as such:

> We have a lot of expectations from [the board of trustees] but really, they don’t have the requisite capacity to be doing most of the things. The basic things would be simply conducting the meetings properly for a board or a committee. You’ll find that they still lack that basic skill. Much more so when we are talking about writing a grant proposal. Like I said it’s not only developing [UN specific] projects sites. It’s a sickness within all the CBNRM sites as well. Even those CBNRM projects we had at over 30 years [ago]. We still have that problem that the boards together with the communities are not capacitated to be able to undertake the expected roles adequately and excellently. (Interview with UB Professor, November 2023)

While the UB professor addresses other capacity issues here, such as grant proposals and project implementation, they stress the lack of governance results in a CBO board to improperly conduct very basic administrative functions within the organization. Functions that are explicitly outlined in the constitution. The importance of proper governance was mentioned by the former head of TOCaDI as well, who stated that:

> Once you have all these [governance] policies in place, and once you've got these accountability systems, then the government will be more lenient towards funding you and you'll be invited into the bigger world out there and it would be easier to get funding. (Interview with founder of TOCaDI, February 2024)

While governance issues might not always directly affect the work a CBO does or its ability to implement projects, a properly function board of trustees is vital in terms of gaining respect and credibility from other stakeholders, especially when it comes to funding.

As discussed in the literature review, San CBOs struggle to integrate into the expected management and governance structure. It should therefore come as no surprise to discover that the management of finances was a recurring challenge that most of the individuals I spoke with mentioned. It was such a pertinent issue that financial management, along with governance training, were the two most common topics covered in any sort of capacity-building workshops or trainings that I was informed about. A member of Shaikarawe's CBO board alluded to this pervasive challenge while describing the financial support their CBO receives from the technical advisory committee:

> The money that belongs to the trust should be in a holding account with the TAC. If we submit a proposal and we qualify they send the money to our spending account. Like when we want to buy some materials or goods we apply for that money from the TAC. After doing that they will look how we have spent the money to see if it matches what we said in our application. Like if we said we want to buy a car for the trust, they check that we actually purchased the vehicle. When they come, they want to see that we have used the money in the way we applied and not for personal use. Like for example myself taking the money and to buy my own things. That is what the TAC is looking for. The TAC wants us to do it straight. The proper way. (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO board member, November 2023)

Although this respondent is speaking about a hypothetical scenario, the example they give suggests they is aware of how CBOs are held accountable for the way they spend their funds. A personal observation during my fieldwork further exemplifies this challenge. During my stay in Tobere, I learned that the current financial officer of the Tcheku Trust was only

recently appointed to their position. Apparently under the previous financial officer, funds were misappropriated, resulting in the CBO expecting a financial audit in the coming months.

As the name implies, CBOs in Botswana are comprised of members of the community they represent. The CBNRM policy mandates this and, while it promotes the democratic and representative nature of these organizations, this system is not without its problems (Stone & Nyaupane, 2014). The community from which the CBO can elect their board of trustees is often a socioeconomically marginalized pool of candidates who are poorly educated and ill equipped to take on the responsibility the CBO requires of them. The representative for NCONGO summarized this issue succinctly by stating:

> …regarding governance issues. Sometimes you don't have a lot of pools, human resources pools to get skilled and well-educated people to run these organizations. So, we have to deal with what we have. You've been to Tobere, and you know the population of Tobere is less of 500, maybe 600, somewhere there. That includes your elderly, your children, and that's the pool of the people we must actually get board of trustees from to run essentially a million Pula organization. (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023)

Small communities make it challenging to find adequate candidates who can take on the role of a board member. This challenge is exasperated by the fact that the turnover for the board of trustees is persistently high. The CBO constitution contains provisions which allow for the board to be dissolved by a vote of no-confidence which can be triggered when the community at large becomes unsatisfied with the individuals they elected to the run the organization. While this constitutional mechanism safeguards against certain individuals from consolidating power and control over the CBO, it also can lead to a dysfunctional board of trustees whose short appointments render them and their work ineffective.

4.2.2 Lack of Funds

Governance or financial management issues aside, a CBOs ability to implement a CBNRM project rests on its ability to raise funds. A persistent theme among the Tcheku and Shaikarawe Trust was their inability to receive funding for their projects, or not receiving adequate funding to see their projects through to completion. A board member of Shaikarawe Trust expressed their frustration stating that:

> "We are not doing well because we don't have funding. The problem is funding. To do the things we want or need. Or even just the money to get transport into Shakawe

> to do business for the trust like printing documents. These kinds of things we can't even do" (Interview with Shaikarawe Trust board member, November 2023).

Several different funding institutions were mentioned during my interviews for which the CBOs could submit their project proposals to. These included but were not limited to the Conservation Trust Fund of Botswana, the National Environmental Fund of Botswana, and the Small Grants Program discussed in section 4.1.3. Each funding institution then has their own proposal criteria and submission dates. The public relations officer of the Tcheku Trust described their experience attempting to submit a project proposal as such:

> Yea well it was a long process and at some point, very hectic and very challenging. Especially looking at the time I took drafting it. Before it could be finalized it took me about 2 weeks. We were only given a short period time to submit the proposal. It was only for two weeks. One of the challenges here is we usually experience cellular network problems. We ended up failing to submit one of our proposals which meant we could have grabbed the greater share of the lion's share, and we missed that opportunity. It went about 10 million [PULA]. (Interview with Tchecku Trust public relations officer, November 2023)

Navigating the myriad of different submission deadlines and application guidelines can be a challenge for any organization. Even more so if transport to the post office is not available, there is no money to cover the cost of printing out application forms, or the internet service is disrupted. Logistical challenges aside, the main reason a project proposal is denied ultimately lies in the content of the proposal itself. The NCONGO representative explained that "some of [the CBOs] don't have the documentation to back up their proposals…" (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023). They continue stating that this documentation could include information like statistical data about the natural resources within the applying CBO's land concession or documentation on how the proposed project will fall in line with the values of the institution granting the funds. An example being if a CBO submits a project proposal on the topic of hunting with an NGO that is anti-hunting, "… [the CBO] would be immediately disqualified because [funders] are very sensitive towards this issue. Towards hunting or towards other specific issues" (Interview with NCONGO representative, November 2023).

Even if a proposal gets funding, seeing the money last through the project's implementation becomes a challenge as well. While financial mismanagement can be an issue in this regard, the problem I observed during my fieldwork was a result of improper budgeting.

Approximately, four months prior to my arrival in Shaikarawe, the village trust had a greenhouse constructed for an agroforestry project funded by JICA. However, during a village tour, I observed nothing growing inside. I was made aware that a broken piece of equipment had rendered the irrigation system inoperable. The broken piece of equipment in question was a small valve that was apparently not so difficult to replace. I was told the trust had notified the other stakeholders involved in the project but receiving the necessary supplemental funds to purchase a replacement had not been granted. I witnessed a similar situation in Tobere, where a project to build a small community farm had only been partially funded. The allocated funds were used to purchase lumber which, between my two visits to Tobere, had been sitting in a stack next to the trust's office, unused and exposed to the elements. The two observations I describe here speak to the challenge of project implementation if funding is inadequate or not readily available to deal with contingency issues such as damaged equipment.

4.2.3 Poor Investor Relationships and the Issues with Joint Venture Agreements

In 2019, Botswana lifted a five-year moratorium on wildlife hunting which posed a lucrative financial opportunity for CBOs fortunate enough to be allotted a land use concession. Per the CBNRM framework, CBOs are given yearly animal quotas which they are free to sell in a sub-lease type of contract to private investors operating hunting safaris called joint-venture agreements (JVA) (Gujadhur, 2001). These quotas can provide a lucrative financial opportunity for CBOs and depending on the amount and type of animals in question can sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars (Stone, 2015). Given their relatively high value, CBOs potentially lack the proper capacity to fairly negotiate the sale of their quotas to interested private investors when so much money is involved (Gujadhur, 2001). Tcheku Trust was allotted a sizable land concession (NG 13) that sees many elephants, the most prized and valuable animal, roam through its borders while they migrate between the Okavango Delta and the Bwabwata National Park in Namibia.[19] Shortly after the moratorium was lifted, Tcheku Trust received an unsolicited offer from a private investor to buy their quota in the form of a JVA with added incentives, including gifting the trust several vehicles to use and

[19] https://africageographic.com/stories/trophy-hunters-kill-two-of-africas-biggest-elephants-botswana/ Date Accessed: May 8 2024

electronic equipment for their office. While not present during the sale, the trust's current public relations officer described the negotiations as very one-sided, stating:

> Because the people who were there then, they were just told "no, sign here, no, sign here" without proper knowledge or understanding of the content of what was inside the contract. They just signed, signed, signed, signed. (Interview with Tcheku Trust public relations officer, November 2023)

Four years later the ramifications from this poorly negotiated contract were still a problem for the trust. The duration of the contract and the price were never clearly defined, and while I was there the trust was attempting to renegotiate with the private investor without much success. During our interview, the public relations officer explained that the private investor was refusing to negotiate, threatened to sue, and was communicating solely through their attorney.

When so much money is involved, the inability of a CBO to properly navigate the sales process, to understand the content of the contract, and be able to advocate on their behalf and their community becomes a serious challenge with far reaching consequences. The unfortunate circumstances surrounding this JVA were partially responsible for the financial mismanagement allegations mentioned earlier in section 4.2.1. It also triggered a vote of no-confidence against the current board of trustees and resulted in my stay in Tobere causing a bit of 'political' issue for one of my research participants. Since my visit coincided with the ongoing renegotiation efforts, my participant, who sits on the board of the trust, was concerned that members of the community would get the false impression I was a new safari hunting operator attempting to broker a new deal with the trust. My keen interest in meeting the board of trustees, let alone my outward appearance and the new pickup truck I rented would certainly give off such an impression. To reassure the community the trust was not going behind their back to negotiate a new partnership, my participant introduced me to a few key families within the village so I could personally reassure them I was merely a student conducting research and nothing more. These families were strategically chosen because their status within the community would ensure the real reason for my visit would be spread by people with credibility. The new hunting quota negotiations proved to be such a contentious issue within the village that over the two and half days I was there, most of it was spent tracking down these families and making my introductions.

4.2.4 Cultural Differences and Divisions

In the literature review chapter, the particular challenges San CBOs face in regard to their Indigenous cultural characteristics were discussed. Data collected over the course of my fieldwork relates to what previous studies, like Stone and Nyaupane (2014), Tedmanson (2012), and Kacou et al. (2022) presented in two aspects. The first being a one-size-fits all or blanket approach used by other stakeholders when working with San CBOs on capacity-building. The second being the challenges that arise from a CBO that represents several different villages. The founder of TOCaDI mentioned this blanket approach in a more general sense about the government of Botswana's development policy when they said:

> …at this point in Botswana, I think the narrative from the governing parties and from the people that make decisions on district level is everyone that is different from where we are going is just primitive and backwards and they should be raised up and lifted up to another level. There is no real respect for diversity or interest in understanding how communities differ from each other. (Interview with TOCaDI founder, February 2024)

This unwillingness to account for cultural differences was also evident when I interviewed the UNDP representative regarding their experience working with different communities on capacity-building projects, suggesting that ethnic or cultural considerations were not made by international stakeholders either. When asked if the UNDP targeted San communities specifically for any projects, their reply was:

> Yes, but not specifically targeting only the San. Because you will find that in this area, even in the San community areas, there are mixed tribes. So, we target the whole community in the area. The settlement I was talking about its one of those that were included in the capacity building project that was implemented by Birdlife Botswana. We worked with them directly. But as a CBO, not necessarily because they are the San. Although we know it is a San community majority. (Interview with UNDP official, November 2023)

To clarify their answer, they were referring to a project which targeted a CBO that happened to represent a San majority community. It is unclear if individuals identifying as San were involved in the training as CBO board members or employees. However, even if San individuals were involved, the content and training methods used would most likely not have made any special cultural considerations, given that this project by Birdlife Botswana targeted approximately ten different CBOs in total over the course of its implementation. Therefore,

adjusting the content or methods would seem unlikely. The challenges that arise from this attitude of cultural indifference will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Like the UNDP representative mentioned above, communities are often comprised of several different ethnic groups. While this is to be expected, it can be problematic for CBOs if their constituents come not only from different villages but from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well. The UB professor described a situation where the democratic process broke down and a CBO was unable to implement a project after ethnic divisions arose. Sankuyo Trust received funding for eight km of electric fence to protect ploughing fields from hungry elephants. This particular trust represented two ethnic groups, the majority Bayeyi and the minority Basubiya whose respective villages and ploughing fields were further than 8km apart. The trust was unable to reach a consensus and decide where to erect the fence, so it was never built. However, the professor did mention that, if a few vocal Basubiya individuals had not spoken up during the debates, the fence would have likely been constructed around the fields of the majority Bayeyi. Although this anecdote does not refer to the San, it does highlight the ethnic majority-minority power dynamic that can be present in a multi-village or mixed ethnic group CBO. For the San, who are the most marginalized minority group in Botswana, being fairly represented these types of CBOs is presumably no guarantee.

Tcheku Trust happens to be such a CBO since it represents three villages, Tobere, Kyceica and Kaputura. My informatn explained to me that Tobere is a village comprised of several different ethnic groups, predominantly Hambukushu and San, whereas the other two villages is all San. The composition of the board seemed from my perspective to a fair demographic representation of the three villages. Each village elects two board members and of the two board members I met and interviewed, one was from Kyceica, one was from Tobere, and both identified as San. During my visit I did not observe any disputes like the one described in the story above. However, the vote of no-confidence mentioned previously in this chapter was initiated only from the village of Kyceica, which suggest that Tcheku Trust's constituents were experiencing some form of political discordancy that also happened to be split along a village and in part, ethnic divide. It should be reiterated here that, along with individual and institutional capacity, the prevailing discourse and policy encourages building an enabling environment where cultural differences are respected, and the sociopolitical disparity of different stakeholders are considered. This environment would foster a more equitable

engagement between majority and minority ethnic groups and empower marginalized individuals or groups to better represent themselves within the CBOs. From the challenges presented in this section it becomes evident how critical building societal capacity is not just San communities but for other communities as well.

4.3 Summary of Chapter

The data I presented in the first half of this chapter helped contextualize the existing support structure available to San CBOs. The various stakeholders involved were profiled and their support, as it was presented in the collected data, was discussed. From the accessible and immediate support that the TAC offers, to more auxiliary support from the UNDP, systems and policies seem to be in place that can provide capacity-building for CBOs. If a CBO is fortunate enough to partner with an eager international development agency like JICA, then they can experience a tremendous amount support, find themselves in a new office and with a "turnkey" CBRNRM project set up for them in a matter of a few short years.

The data I presented in the second half of this chapter set the stage by describing the most prevalent challenges San CBOs face. As an organization, San CBOs deal with fundamental challenges that hinder their ability to operate at the most basic and existential level, such as governance issues, financial mismanagement, or a dysfunctional board of trustees. If these challenges are overcome, San CBOs can encounter further challenges that hinder their ability to implement CBNRM projects. An inability to access project funding can render the CBOs effectively useless to the community they represent. Moreover, poorly negotiated agreements with private investors can result in detrimental consequences, despite the large amount of money these agreements provide. Finally, if a San CBO wishes to build their capacity to overcome such challenges, they experience a one-size-fits all program delivered from practitioners who fail to address the societal capacity that could help the San mitigate inter-ethnic conflicts and political fights between the board of trustees or within their communities.

In the following chapter, chapter five, I will first present and examine the data collected to explore how effective the existing support structure is and what factors account for constructive or ineffective capacity-building for San CBOs. The second half of the chapter will then present and examine the collected data, to gauge how San CBOs judge and

emphasize their own capacity-building needs, and how these needs align with the view and opinion of the other stakeholders.

5 Effective Capacity-building and the Needs of San CBOs

This chapter continues the presentation and discussion of my collected data. It is organized into two main sections corresponding with my 3rd and 4th research objectives, respectively. The first section (5.1) examines the methods of capacity-building programs and the factors that influenced their effectiveness. The second section (5.2) presents firsthand accounts from capacity-building practitioners as well as from San individuals. I then discuss their experiences with these programs and how the San's capacity-building needs are perceived from all involved stakeholders.

5.1 The Factors That Make Capacity-building Effective for San CBOs

5.1.1 Consideration for San Cultural Differences

Section 4.2.4 described several issues that can emerge when a one-size-fits-all approach is used for capacity-building efforts among CBOs in Botswana, and what challenges San CBOs, in turn, must overcome. The data presented in chapter 4 also revealed the heavy emphasis that governance training has within capacity-building programs and goals. Considering this, it can be argued the failure to account for how San communities prefer to govern themselves, inherent in the blanket approach to capacity-building, is a driving factor in making these programs ineffective. The former head of TOCaDI alluded to this when they described a past training workshop in the Shakawe area:

> …[t]here is an organization called NCONGO, the NGO council for Ngamiland. I know that about two years ago they had funding to do governance training for CBOs in particular. We also sent people there and it was good. It was normal, you taking people to the expected world. Not actually looking at what they have traditionally, or you know in what way does leadership and governance work in their world but more this is what governance is and what you should live up to. (Interview with founder of TOCaDI, February 2024)

While this training seminar was described as "good" and "normal," the workshop's curriculum made no effort to consider what governance meant in the context of the San individuals who were participating. This issue relates to conclusions drawn in previous studies, like those first mentioned in the literature review chapter, where San traditional forms of governance, especially as they related to land and resource use, are disregarded in CBNRM programs (Madzwamuse, 2010). Therefore, the governance methods of a San community

must somehow reconcile with not only the administrative procedures of their CBO, as the CBNRM framework dictates, but also with how their natural resource use is managed and governed.

"Taking people to the expected world" or telling people "what they should live up to" is problematic in other ways which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, in regard to San cultural characteristics, placing this sort of expectation on the San participants of a capacity-building workshop can insinuate that their traditional forms of governance are outdated and backwards. This argument finds support in the Tedmanson (2012) study with Aboriginal communities in Australia, whose members described the capacity-building they experienced as paternalistic and antagonistic towards their own culture. Reflecting on their experience working with TOCaDI, my informant described the value of what culturally considerate capacity-building had on the San who were involved:

> …it was culture friendly training. You know it was consultation. Listening to each other so it was also very much informal. It was sometimes accompanied by an over-night dance and sitting around the fire. Sometimes they went to Tsodillo Hills. Sometimes they joined the Kuru Development Trusts. Larger groups, you know all the Ghanzi CBOs and trusts and their boards came together. So, it became part of a movement of San leadership that want to make their mark on the modern world but also want to retain [their traditions]. (Interview with former head of TOCaDI, February 2024)

It is important to note that the cultural friendly training was described as informal, involved traditional San dances and ceremonies, and included several San CBOs in the region to promote a sense of solidarity and exchange of knowledge. These characteristics prove to be important factors in effective capacity-building and their importance is reflected in the IUCN's strategic framework that states a common problem lies in the fact that:

> Capacity development activities that focus on Indigenous peoples and local communities are often generated and undertaken by 'outside' entities and not developed by and for these peoples and communities (2015, p. 4).

Equally important, this capacity-building was described as a form of "consultation" which suggests it was conducted on a more equal footing for all the stakeholders involved. Such an equal footing is important because it reaffirms the respect for San culture and allows them to navigate between their traditional world and the "expected" or "modern world" on their own terms. Molosi and Dipholo (2016) explain the importance of what meaningful consultation

implies for San communities in relation to other stakeholders. Where consultation in its meaningless form is purely symbolic, genuine consultation would allow the San to actually participate and influence the development programs that target their communities. It can be summarized that TOCaDI was in effect helping build the societal capacity of the San. Not only were the San able to develop their own capacity-building methods but they wielded the power to set their own agenda and objectives, tailored to the needs and desires of their own communities. Moreover, TOCaDI was fostering an environment where the various San communities of Botswana were getting together, finding solidarity as an Indigenous people and navigating their way into the modern world on their own terms.

5.1.2 The Frequency and Duration of Capacity-building Programs

From the data collected, it became apparent that the frequency of capacity-building programs i.e. workshops/seminars and their duration were important factors in gauging their effectiveness. When I posed the question how often capacity-building workshops take place, the TAC member spoke in broad general terms stating that these programs take place "maybe once a year" or in regards to the UNDP:

> …maybe for every call [the UNDP] comes. Every call for proposal they would come and engage the stakeholders. Or they inform the TAC to maybe organize a session. Everybody could come and address the TAC and the CBOs just to let them know which themes they are focusing on. (Interview with TAC member, November 2023)

Their inability to give exact times and their vague language seems to suggest that there is no concrete policy in place when exactly the UNDP offers workshops for writing proposals, and that capacity-building is offered on a more sporadic or ad hoc basis. Other participants I asked could only speak of specific instances when a capacity-building workshop took place. The UNDP representative spoke about their project at the NGO Birdlife Botswana which was implemented at some point prior to 2021, when they joined the UNDP. When asked, the founder of TOCaDI could only recall one capacity-building workshop offered by NCONGO in the Shakawe area, and that was also approximately two years ago in 2022. A noteworthy observation I made regarding the frequency in capacity-building programs was that two community stakeholders who apparently attended the same workshop gave conflicting dates, spaced years apart, to when it took place. While I acknowledge it can be challenging to remember dates years ago, the observation I describe here simply adds to the mounting

evidence that any effort to build capacity for the Shaikarawe and Tchecku trusts are at best a yearly occurrence.

The lack of sustained, consistent capacity-building is a well understood issue within the field (Lempert, 2015) and is clearly listed as a primary challenge in the IUCN's strategic framework stating that "[t]oo much capacity development is short term, donor driven, and donor reliant, resulting in capacity development activities that are short term and too limited in scope to benefit wider organizational or societal needs" (2015, p. 4). The Birdlife Botswana capacity-building project exemplifies the short-term donor driven problem well. Returning to my interview with the UNDP representative, when asked how long the workshops lasted, they responded:

> [a] day because we moved around them. So, we'll go and capacitate one CBO and then we move to the next. Then we had what we called a knowledge exchange. Where all of them were present. They were sharing knowledge on how they are successfully running their CBOs. How they are dealing with their finances and so on. (Interview with UNDP official, November 2023)

The effectiveness of any workshop, no matter the content or scope, must seriously be questioned if it involves at most two days of instruction and knowledge exchange. Even more so, if the workshop then only takes place once a year. The other aspect to this problem rests in the fact that, in many countries there is no "on-going institutionalized framework for continuous availability and delivery of learning opportunities" (IUCN, 2015, p. 4). During our interview, the founder of TOCaDI shared the sentiment of a Norwegian Church Donor they had recently met who explained "…how the donor world has changed. There is no organizational support or capacity-building long term. There is no sympathy any more for building up a process or walking the walk with a certain organization" (Interview with founder of TOCaDI, February 2024). Perhaps the most poignant and striking piece of data I collected in this regard came from one of the board members of the Shaikarawe Trust who, when asked about what they knew about NCONGO, replied "…NCONGO used to teach us capacity-building and how to make some proposals, but it did *once.* It did *one* day. So, we don't know much [about] doing that paperwork" (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO board member, November 2023).

5.1.3 Effective Communication

It became apparent over the course of my fieldwork that meaningful and deliberate communication between the stakeholders was a relevant factor in improving capacity for the Shaikarawe and Tcheku Trusts. A board member of the Shaikarawe trust explained how ineffective communication can impact their relationship with other stakeholders and provided an example of what problems can ensue. They stated:

> According to [me] there is a kind of relationship with the TAC, but it seems like the TAC they don't bring information to [us] clearly or consult [us] when they want to do something. They just take some actions to their office and then when something has happened that is when they are come here to give us some information. (Interview with Shaikarawe Trust board member, November 2023)

The sentiment expressed here is that the TAC, whose primary role is to advise CBOs on CBNRM related projects, does so inconsistently or when it is too late. If their guidance is provided on time, then it often is not informative or helpful on the issue at hand. The example the board member then shared was in regards to the agroforestry project that JICA funded for which the TAC played a supportive role.

> A typical example [I am] talking about is the mongongo oil machine. The TAC in collaboration with the Birdlife Botswana, they made their decision, only their decision without coming to us. They bought the machine which is not working well and not producing the oil. After they brought the machine, then [we] put a complaint that it's not a good machine. That's when they started communicating with [us] and said OK if it's like that, we will look for another machine. But [they] are still looking now. (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023)

A lack of meaningful communication between the stakeholders involved in this project resulted in the purchase of an ineffective machine that is poorly suited to press oil from specific nuts growing on the trees native to the area around Shaikarawe. Had a more deliberate dialogue existed between the trust and the other stakeholders involved, a properly designed oil press, better suited for Mongongo nuts could have been decided upon collectively before a half dozen machines were purchased that now sit idly in the corner of the trust's office.

The story of the Mongongo oil machine is indicative of how a lack in communication resulted in a failure of the Shaikarawe Trust to begin what is seemingly a good CBNRM project for the trust to implement. The story then also begs the question, what use does providing advice

or consultation have in building-capacity for CBOs? Referring to section 4.1.4 which introduced JICA as a stakeholder for the Shaikarawe Trust, we can now understand the minimal impact that their 'turnkey' CBNRM project had on building the capacity of the Shaikarawe Trust. Apart from the informal consultation or "chat" that took place with some members of the trust, every other aspect of the project was handled by outsiders, in this case, the Department of Forestry and Ranger Resources, the TAC, and Birdlife Botswana who acted as consultants. Excluding the trust from the project was described by one of the board members in such a way:

> JICA just picked the [consultant] they said they can hire to do the work here. They didn't come to us ask which consultant we want. They didn't come to ask us. They made their plan with the department of Forrest and Ranger Resources. The one they have been in contact with. They talked with that department, the Forestry and Ranger Resources because we are doing conservation in *their* veld. They said this area where this veld is for the department. So everywhere [we] do conservation, the department must be involved. (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023)

The benefits of this JICA's involvement are not denied. However, considering the trust participated so minimally in the projects design and implementation, i.e. they were not involved in the discussion. Therefore, at no point in the project, were they given a sincere opportunity to build their capacity by helping with designing the project, thereby learning what project design and implementation entails. Also, this project implemented by JICA, the TAC, and by Birdlife Botswana exemplifies the problem of top-down development initiatives that are imposed on communities without their input or participation (Craig, 2007). Moreover, Molosi and Dipholo (2016) describe how these imposed projects risk perpetuating the notion of powerlessness held by some within the San communities and their ability to engage with other stakeholders regarding development projects. By denying the Shaikarawe Trust the ability to meaningfully participate in the project's design and implementation, could have potentially reinforce this notion of powerlessness.

Not all field data that was collected painted such a negative picture about the TAC. Members of the Tchecku Trust spoke in very positive terms regarding the TAC and the work they do. Why the two CBOs expressed such differing views on the TAC is an interesting question, which, with more time I would have liked to explore further. The information the Tchecku Trust member shared suggest they understand well what sort of support they can expect from the TAC. Returning to the story of the poor relationship with the private investor discussed in

section 4.2.3, my informant explained how such a legal dispute could have been avoided if the trust had followed the advice provided by the TAC:

> In most cases, the TAC advises not to sign any agreements without them being involved. The TAC should be included in any action. They are not there to make decisions, but they are there to *advise*. We saw [the TAC's advice] as something very difficult and we saw it as a disturbance. But really that was not true. The TAC came with a good point. It was *advise!* (Interview with Tchecku Trust board member, November 2023)

While the trust ultimately ignored the advice the TAC provided, and signed a poorly negotiated agreement, in retrospect they acknowledged how important the support was that the TAC could have provided. The question still remains on how much providing advice alone builds capacity. The desired outcome would be for CBOs to be able to negotiate such agreements on their own. Nevertheless, effective communication and timely advice does provide vital support for CBOs and would seem to build their capacity to a certain extent if they take the information provided, learn from it, and use it to their benefit.

One last aspect of effective communication which needs to be discussed is in regard to feedback that is provided when project proposals are submitted. The Shaikarawe Trust mentioned how they submitted a SGP proposal a year ago, after which they never received any follow-up. No information regarding its apparent rejection, and on which grounds.

> We drafted a proposal here with the help from someone with the TAC. So, we gave them that proposal so that they can submit. But we were never called back regarding it. No feedback. We have not been given any feedback. Which to me means failed, because maybe there is something in the proposal we did not do well. (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023)

The frustration this research participant expressed is not adequately represented in this excerpt from our interview. To put time and effort in a project proposal and not receive any feedback to learn why it was rejected, is something any person in academia can certainly sympathize with. Considering how challenging it can for a CBO to get funding, as discussed in section 4.2.2, providing feedback on project proposal is a crucial form of communication between the relevant stakeholders and a necessary factor in building capacity. The Tcheku Trust was able to receive funding for a project in part because of feedback they received on their proposal directly from the National Steering Committee. The trust's public relations officer described how useful this feedback was:

> [The proposal] went to the National Steering Committee and there were some recommendations they made. They referred it back to us with some corrections that were necessary. Then we sent it back again and that is when we were granted. (Interview with Tchecku Trust public relations officer, November 2023)

It is fair to assume that perhaps a large qualitative difference between the two trust's SGP proposals was the main reason why one made it to the final review committee and the other not. However, this does not excuse the fact that when Shaikarawe Trust, even with the advice and support from the TAC submitted a proposal, it was never heard about again. The failure to provide feedback from the other stakeholders, resulted in a failure to build any amount of capacity towards improving their ability to access funding. They never had an opportunity to learn from their mistakes so to improve upon the next proposal they write.

5.2 The Support San CBOs Want and Need

5.2.1 The Basic Needs

The most clearly articulated needs that the San CBOs expressed involved support in the administrative aspects of their trusts. This included financial management support and help accessing funding with a particular emphasis on submitting project proposals. Even more basic needs such as transportation, internet access, and office supplies also were mentioned. Section 4.2.2 discussed how accessing project funding was a persistent challenge for the Shaikarawe and Tchecku trusts, so it is unsurprising that help in this regard is most prevalent in the data. A member of the Shaikarawe Trust explained that they need help with the administrative aspects of drafting a proposal:

> My concern is about getting the right forms for the proposals. If you know how you could help us get these forms on time. It would be helpful if you can help us get these forms for the proposals. We have problems because we don't have access to them. That is the real problem we are facing here. (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO member, November 2023)

The issues raised here suggests that logistical factors are involved which prevent the trust from submitting a proposal. Failing to meet a deadline could be the result of an inability to access the forms perhaps for lack of internet access or to a printer. The Shaikarawe CBO, whose village lies approximately 20km away from the town of Shakawe, does not readily have access to the infrastructure of Shakawe. If for example, they need to use the internet,

make a phone call, visit the TAC office, the post office, or any other service they might need to submit a proposal on time and correctly.

Aside from administrative help, the board of trustee members I interviewed expressed a need for technical support in conjunction with submitting project proposals. This would include drafting proposals that clearly address the thematic areas that the donor has identified or devising a budget with enough detail. One board member I interviewed from the Shaikarawe CBO shared information which suggests a critical lack of knowledge when it comes to writing proposals. When I asked why had their proposals been unsuccessful, they first explained, "when making a proposal, we first make a budget stating how are we going to use the funds we are requesting. Usually, it is because of the budget why our proposals fail." I then asked if they addressed the thematic areas of the call for proposal, using traditional knowledge for conservation as an example, to which they replied, "we didn't put any aspect of traditional knowledge in our proposal because we are not knowledgeable or properly advised on how to include it in the proposal" (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO board member, November 2023). Understanding the importance of submitting a well drafted proposal was perhaps most clearly demonstrated by a board member of the Tchecku CBO when they stated:

> Proposals are all about describing what do you want to do. What are the challenges and how are you going to overcome those challenges. That is what proposals are all about. So, if you know exactly how to write a proposal it is very easy to take an organization forward. You can drive a certain organization forward if you know how to write a proposal. (Interview with Tchecku CBO board member, November 2023)

The lack of capacity the CBOs experience regarding submitting a project proposal, finds support from my own fieldwork observations. My field assistant who accompanied me during my scoping trip is a board member of TOCaDI, who has experience submitting project proposals to a variety of different donors and institutions. Together we drove to Shaikarawe to meet the board of trustees and to make introductions. My presentation lasted only about 15 minutes allowing for follow-up questions and general pleasantries. For the remainder of the meeting, which lasted approximately 45 minutes, the board of trustees and my field assistant were engaged in a discussion, for which the board members were quite attentive. I was unable to understand the exact details of the conversation because it was conducted in Khwedom. However, I was able to glean the nature of what was being said from certain English words

which often slipped into the discussion. Words such as “form,” “upload,” “SGP grant,” “file,” “Global Green Fund,” etc. What was initially intended to be a meet-and-greet for myself and my project, I can confidently surmise, had turned into an impromptu information session on submitting proposals for a few different donor institutions. The board members asked question after question, a few took notes, and my field assistant did nearly all the talking. From my perspective, I could identify a sense of urgency on the side of the board members to ask my field assistant everything they could before we left. While I did not ask my field assistant how often they visit Shaikarawe, from the nature of the meeting I would assume it is infrequent at best.

5.2.2 Support From the Other Stakeholders

Another area in need of help that members of the Shaikarawe and Tchecku Trust expressed was more sincere and consistent support from the other stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the TAC. From the data presented in this chapter and chapter four, it has become clear that the function of the TAC encompasses more than simply playing an advisory role to the CBOs and their projects. They organize capacity-building workshops, act as a financial intermediary for handling project funds, they even help with the purchase of project equipment and materials, despite the TAC’s primary mandate and responsibility is to simply provide advice. This discrepancy in what support the TAC is officially responsible for and what support they provide seems to be a point of confusion and frustration for the Shaikarawe Trust and its board members. One member perceived the support of the TAC in what seems to fall in line with its more ‘conventional’ job description. They stated:

> The TAC is helping the trust but that much because the TAC are government employees. They have their duty, their work in their offices’ so they can’t work full time with us. They just advise the trust what to do and how to do it. They’ll come to write some supporting letters and show us what to do when [we] want to do a proposal…but none of that full time. You see that’s why we are failing. (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023)

This individual seems to understand that they can expect only consultation support from the TAC, even if it is not deemed adequate. Another member of the trust seemed to have slightly different expectations regarding the support they want from the TAC.

> …if the TAC says that [they] are helping the Shaikarawe Trust, then they should actually show us the real help that they have given. Don’t just to come here and sit and

> tell [us] that they are helping, because well, there is nothing that they have helped that I can see. (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023)

The expectation from this individual seems that the TAC should offer more concrete and tangible help then just providing advice. A third member of the board had expressed yet another set of expectations for the TAC and what support they should offer the trust. Such as helping apply for a land concession or providing governance training. To add even more confusion into the mix, this individual claimed that the TAC told them that "anytime when we want to have a meeting or we want to do anything, we should involve the [TAC]. We shouldn't do anything without them" (Interview with Shaikarawe board member, November 2023). In light of what the TAC has actually done for the trust, such as their role in the agroforestry project with JICA, help with drafting proposals, or providing capacity-building training, it can be understandable how such differing expectations for this particular stakeholder are set by the Shaikarawe Trust. Moreover, it can therefore be deemed reasonable for the trust to hold such a negative sentiment against the TAC. The ambiguity regarding the TAC and its roles and responsibilities was mentioned in previous assessments of CBNRM in Botswana (Center for Applied Research, 2016).

Section 5.1.3 described how the Tchecku Trust experienced more effective communication with the TAC then Shaikarawe. It is therefore not surprising that the trust's public relations expressed their relationship with the TAC in much more positive terms by stating that:

> I perceive the TAC as one of the most important key players in the management of trusts and even the included CBNRM [projects]. TAC has been an advisory to our community trust, and we have that close bond. Whenever we need any advice from them, we usually call them they come, and we sit down for a meeting. (Interview with Tchecku Trust public relations officer, November 2023)

It is clear from the opinion expressed here that the public relations officer understood what support they can expect from the TAC. The two board members I interviewed held similar viewpoints and both emphasized the TAC's role as an advisory body to their trust. However, one board member did admit that "[b]asically, the TAC should be involved in any activities" (Interview with Tchecku Trust board member, November 2023), and the other member shared an example where the TAC helped mediate a dispute between board members that was leading towards a vote of no confidence. What this suggests is even Tchecku Trust has

expectations of the TAC that extend beyond advising on finances, joint-venture agreements, or project matters.

It needs to be addressed that one possible reason for the Tchecku Trust to hold the TAC and their advisory support in such high esteem is because in the past, the trust had deliberately ignored advice the TAC offered when negotiating a joint-venture agreement with a private investor (see section 4.2.3). This disregard resulted in the precarious legal situation they find themselves in currently. Nevertheless, what the Shaikarawe and Tchecku Trust have shared in this section demonstrates their desire for the TAC to provide, or at least continue to provide, meaningful and consistent support. Whether it is in the form of a consultation over a joint venture agreement, helping draft a project proposal, or providing governance training, each facet would provide an opportunity for building capacity for the trusts if it were done with a sincere effort and consistently. What this requires in practical terms is twofold, effective communication and frequent and sustained support. If all the roles and responsibilities of the TAC are effectively communicated to the trusts, then reasonable expectations can be set for the support the trust can receive. If the support is then delivered on a consistent basis or and when the trust calls for it, the expectations will be met as well.

5.2.3 The Support That Once Was – TOCaDI

The Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives (TOCaDI) was briefly mentioned in the data discussed in section 5.1.1 but has not been formally presented as a support organization or as a relevant stakeholder. TOCaDI is an offshoot of a larger San support organization called the Kuru Development Trust. Founded back in the 1980s by a local church congregation to tackle the problem of unemployment within the Ghanzi district, over the ensuing years it grew into a large network of different organizations perusing various development projects with a particular focus on San communities in the region (Le Roux, 1998). TOCaDI became the organization that would manage and promote development projects for San communities in Ngamiland district (Saugestad, 2001). The organization does still exist in the most basic sense, that is to say, it has an office in Shakawe and it has a board of trustees. My field assistant being one of them. However, it was not introduced in section 4.2 along with the other stakeholders who make up the existing support structure given that throughout the course of my fieldwork, TOCaDI was only ever referred to in the past tense. It should be mentioned on recent CBNRM assessments, TOCaDI is listed as part of the CBO

support structure (Center for Applied Research, 2016; Mbaiwa, 2011). However, at no point did any of my informants suggest they do any meaningful work for CBOs currently. The only positive example I experienced regarding TOCaDI, was the observation I shared in section 5.2.1. where my field assistant helped answer questions regarding project proposals. Many of my informants expressed the importance of TOCaDI when it did provide support in the past, and how helpful of an organization it was then. It was described to me as "the mother to different CBOs" (Interview with Tchecku Trust public relations officer, November 2023). Considering it was responsible for the formation and registration of many San trusts in the area, this description would seem appropriate. A member of the Shaikarawe Trust explained it in more explicit terms:

> There was an NGO called TOCADI that supported this trust. From the start where it helped with planning and registering of the trust. That organization was helping or supporting this team when we wanted to register the trust. That's why we are here today, because of that organization. (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO board member, November 2023).

TOCaDI was mentioned in connection with some form of support for the Shaikarawe and Tchecku Trust in five of the seven interviews I conducted with community stakeholders, indicating it was perceived as a vital stakeholder whose help is severely missed. The same board member quoted above indicated as much when, upon reflecting on their 20 years of experience working in CBOs they stated:

> Considering my 20-year experience working within community trusts, I know how an NGO can helps a trust. It can help with the planning, the budgeting, and teaching the managers for the trust how to run the organization. All the employees are taught by the NGO. When you look to our trust now, we don't have an NGO that is supporting us. (Interview with Shaikarawe CBO board member, November 2023)

This board member went on to explain that because they lack such a supporting organization is exactly the reason why the trust is failing to meet its objectives and goals. Their desire for such an organization to come back cannot be understated. By the time the audio recording device had been turned off and the interview progressed into an informal conversation, they continued to stress the need, with what I observed to be an underlying sense of urgency, for an NGO to support their work.

In light of the factors that make capacity-building effective, discussed in the first half of this chapter, it becomes clear that TOCaDI was doing important work. They were a community-

led organization and an established institution, not some short-term donor funded project that popped up on the behest of a foreign NGO. They provided consistent capacity-building workshops, which the organization's founder I interviewed stated, happened as frequently as once a month. Most importantly, as described in section 5.1.1, the capacity-building they provided was geared towards the San and their cultural values and customs. It was led in part by the San, and was not imposed upon them by an outside organization or institution, who set the agenda or the expected outcomes. It can therefore be asserted that TOCaDI had in many ways, managed to address the problems associated with capacity-building highlighted in the literature review chapter of this thesis. To further emphasize the significance of what TOCaDI achieved, it must be reiterated that their approach to capacity-building closely mirrored the policy and approach that the IUCN's strategic framework and the UNDP state should be utilized within Indigenous communities. TOCaDI was able to help create an enabling environment in which the societal capacity of the San could be strengthened.

In light of all that TOCaDI once provided the San CBOs, it is truly unfortunate that it is no longer considered to be a meaningful support structure. As to why this is the case, traditional San governance can provide some insight. The founders the Kuru Development Trust and who would later lead TOCaDI, were themselves not San. Despite many San taking on leadership positions within this wide network of organizations (Bolaane & Saugestad, 2011; Kiema, 2010), the ultimate managerial authority rested on several key non-San individuals. This was the case with TOCaDI throughout the duration of its more active and effective years. In 2008, these individuals stepped down and members from the San communities were placed in charge. These new board members were, in those cases I am familiar with, well-equipped to take on the role. They were well educated, had experience with CBNRM activities with governance of CBOs. The perceived lack of support from TOCaDI nowadays that I observed can be explained by the reluctance of these individuals to accept the responsibilities of their leadership positions within TOCaDI. Traditional San governance customs, as described by Barnard (2002) and Guenther (1999), compel a person to refrain from taking on individual authority within the community. This cultural characteristic helps ensure the egalitarian ethos of foraging societies can be upheld through a form of self-regulation that prevents individuals from assuming too much control or power.

There is evidence within published research that supports this explanation as well. For example, anthropologist Richard Lee describes what they calls, “the problem of the headman” (2012, pp. 122-124) in reference to observations made during their ethnographic fieldwork. They posited that the San community they were involved with (a group of Ju|’hoansi) did not have a hierarchical system of leadership. The problem of not having a designated headman can have both positive and negative effects within an egalitarian society, for instance when conflicts or disputes fail to be settled and risk turning violent. Individuals did achieve a significant level of political sway in the community. However, as Lee describes, “[t]hese leaders work in subtle ways; they are modest in demeanor and may never command, but only suggest, a course of action (2012, p.124). Hays (2016), reflecting on their work developing a mother-tongue education program for a San community in Namibia, observed instances where San teachers found it incredibly challenging to shoulder the responsibility and managerial duties their position demanded. Some teachers, so encumbered by the authority attached to their profession, turned to self-destructive behavior in attempts to sabotage their career. Thereby they would relieve themselves of the stress of being in a position of leadership (Hays, 2016). While the issues with leadership discussed here are challenging, they should not discourage capacity-building interventions from helping San individuals attain and manage positions of authority. However, like the founder of TOCaDI described in section 5.1.1, these interventions need to be led by the San in a manner they choose. They should decide what leadership means to them and their communities in the modern world.

5.2.4 What the Other Stakeholders Think the San CBOs Need

The other stakeholders I interviewed (TAC, NCONGO, and the UNDP), acknowledged the need for CBOs to improve their ability to access funding. The NCONGO representative explicitly mentioned this issue and said they had previously held some proposal writing workshops in collaboration with the UNDP. The UNDP official shared a similar viewpoint and said failing to access funding is only one part of the larger problem that projects are often not implemented successfully, despite if they get funded. Official reports from the UNDP have reiterated this issue as well (UNDP, 2017). This all should be self-evident considering chapter four discussed this challenge and described how the support structure is attempting to address the funding problem. However, the fact that the community stakeholders I interviewed placed such emphasis on their lack of capacity in this regard alludes to a larger problem within the realm of capacity-building, which Craig calls the “carrot of funding”

(2007, p. 353). The San board members I interviewed, made no direct indication that they would prefer capacity-building support that promotes their cultural values and accommodates their traditional forms of governance for CBNRM projects, despite those being important and critical factors that needs to be considered. Even when expressing their desire for an organization like TOCaDI to come back, they spoke only in terms of the administrative support it provided, not for the their culture and traditions it advocated for. During my interview with the founder of TOCaDI, they made direct reference to the carrot and stick analogy when I asked if the San CBOs addressed their cultural customs in connection with capacity-building.

> From what I've seen it was not in the [training] that I've observed. There has not been much of that articulation. Because I think the atmosphere is like: "We don't know anything, you know everything." Especially if there are expectations that if you do this training and you can follow these things then you will have more support from us. There is the carrot at the end of the stick. So, therefore you are reluctant to put your foot down and say "yes but in my culture we won't address it like that." So, there has not been much done. (Interview with the founder of TOCaDI, February 2024)

The desire for culturally considerate capacity-building support was noticeably absent from the perceived needs the San CBOs expressed during my data collection. Similar to what Molosi and Dipholo (2016) describe, this absence can be attributed to the entrenched belief that the only capacity-building support they are in need of and entitled to, is the support that will get their projects funded on terms and conditions set by the other stakeholders. They perceive themselves too powerless to advocate for capacity-building interventions that address anything else.

For the San CBOs, the funds that an SGP grant can provide seems to be such a big 'carrot' that they have failed to consider advocating for capacity-building that might better empower their communities. For the SGP, who is one of the largest donor institutions for CBNRM or community sustainable development projects, this has serious implications. Their stated policy, as discussed in section 4.1.3, is one that promotes community empowerment through capacity-building, all for the sake of getting communities involved with SGP projects. Their capacity-building interventions would seem, are only working towards SGP funding and not towards creating an enabling environment. In doing so, they ignore the chance to truly help empower communities by promoting and supporting the cultural characteristics that make them a "community." Craig (2007) differentiates between true community empowerment and

capacity-building and explains why donors like the SGP seem to ignore the former. They write that capacity-building "is perused by powerful partners to incorporate local communities into established structures and mechanism rather than having to face the challenges to those existing structures which effective [capacity-building] with deprived communities presents" (Craig, 2007, p. 350). Effective capacity-building for the San would therefore require donors like the UNDP or the GEF to fundamentally reassess how SGP projects should be implemented for this particular Indigenous community. Admittedly a difficult task, considering the SGP is meant to target Indigenous communities across the world, each with their own unique cultural values, customs, and traditional governance structures. However, the "carrot of funding" is ultimately yet another expression of the overarching problem that top-down capacity-building efforts create when they are imposed upon Indigenous communities. The carrot sets the expectations Indigenous communities have regarding their own capacity-building needs and objectives.

5.2.5 What the Experts Think the San CBOs Need

This final section will share what the perceived needs of San CBOs are from the perspective from two designated experts, the UB professor and the founder of TOCaDI. Both the UB professor and the founder of TOCaDI expressed the need for capacity-building efforts to focus not only on the board of trustees, but to target the wider community and to other relevant stakeholders as well. Given the challenges that a frequently changing board causes CBO, the UB professor mentioned how a strategy had been considered which would extend capacity-building towards the entire community. This strategy would "build capacity at the macro level" thereby improving the skills and capabilities of the larger pool from which board members get elected. If a vote of no-confidence triggers a reelection, then new perspective candidates are better positioned to lead the CBO, and would not require immediate training or support. The UB professor does acknowledge the logistical and financial challenges such an approach would require, especially in multi-village CBOs where the pool of potential candidates can range in the thousands. It would however reflect what discourse in capacity-building has been promoting, the idea of targeting the community as whole instead of just training or developing the skills of individuals. Ensuring more people get access to capacity-building can have a wider reaching impact and help address broader systemic issues, such as a lack of education or a lack of participation from the community.

For the other stakeholders, the UP professor explicitly mentioned the inadequate capacity of the TAC. Regarding the individual qualifications and experience of the people who make up the committee the professor explained:

> They also need the capacity by the way. They also need the capacity to be at the level of writing proposals well. Even if you talk to them, they will tell you "we also need the same capacity." The TAC is like an appendage to their actual duties in the office. So really, they also have too much work on them to be able to assist these communities effectively. (Interview with UB professor, November 2023)

The consequence of TAC members being overworked due to their regular government jobs, combined with their inexperience in drafting proposals, results in an reluctance to help CBOs draft their proposals unless it simply needs some light revision or editing. Supporting community project proposals from the conceptual phase until the finished draft can be submitted is, as the professor explained, simply outside of the committees' abilities, both in terms of available time and skill. Official reports examining the state of CBNRM projects in Botswana have consistently criticized the TAC's effectiveness as a support organization. A 2016 review by funded by the US agency for international development reported:

> TACs seemingly lack resources such as available manpower, transport, and other logistical support. CBO support requires support structures with dedicated time and budgets to facilitate the growth and sustainability of CBOs. (Center for Applied Research, 2016, p. 30)

This falls in line with a 2011 review which criticized the TAC as a"weak institution…[who] failed to facilitate CBO and CBNRM development in various areas of the country" (Mbaiwa, 2011, p. 45). The review makes a reference to what the UB professor discussed in our interview regarding how the TAC is considered an "appendage" to its members' day jobs within the government. Therefore, many individuals in the TAC "lack the commitment" (Mbaiwa, 2011, p. 45). They prioritize the governmental work which falls directly within their official purview, and for which they are held directly responsible. Data collected for this thesis demonstrated both positive and negative sentiment towards the TAC and their effectiveness, which suggests that in some cases the TAC can function in a helpful manner. However, considering the criticism reoccurring in official CBNRM assessments, along with data presented here, it stands to reason that the TAC remains a chronically weak institution, in need of developing its own capacity. In doing so, it could better provide and deliver, dedicated and effective support for CBOs and their projects.

During out interview, the founder of TOCaDI made a reference to the epistemological deficiency that Tedmanson (2012) explains is lacking among capacity-builders who work with Indigenous communities. When asked how government stakeholders might better come to understand the specific needs and cultural context of the San, they replied:

> There has to a reason why people would overrule their predisposition. Their own thoughts about the San communities. Its discriminatory but it's not always meant as discriminatory, but its prejudice. So, the prejudice would have to be ruled away. Give them some reason why they need to learn more about these communities. (Interview with founder of TOCaDI, February 2024)

To clarify their point, mitigating the bias or prejudice that exists within the government of Botswana, would require building up a specific aspect of *its own* capacity. Which in this regard, is the government's ability to respectfully engage with the San, their culture and traditions. To provide a reason why people would set aside their predisposition would require addressing the epistemological deficiency that currently exists among those who, not only conduct capacity-building projects within San communities, but who also make policy decisions that impact these communities as well. It must be emphasized that this epistemological discrepancy must first be addressed before capacity-builders are themselves capable of creating an enabling environment or building the societal capacity of the Indigenous communities they are working in. Turning to the literature presented in section 3.4 and 3.5, we can find some possible remedies to treat such a deficiency. The CIRCLE framework proposed by Chino and DeBruyn (2006) encourages a significant time be spent building relationships as a form of building capacity. Fostering meaningful relationships builds trust and respect, i.e. an enabling environment, and can help change the assimilative attitude that many within the government of Botswana still hold. Tedmanson (2012) suggests promoting the concept of *capacity sharing*, whereby stakeholders with differing worldviews and value systems meet on equal ground in what amounts to an epistemological exchange. This exchange would allow for a capacity-building project to better utilize the "new pragmatism" approach suggested by Kacou et al. (2022). The government or NGO provided technical and practical focused training would be complemented by the culturally grounded and contextually relevant aspects that the community share.

The UB professor discussed the need for an institution or organization to take on a specific role with key responsibilities and who can act as a mediator between the community and the

other stakeholders. The UB professor referred to this role as a facilitator who would help specific communities implement their projects. This facilitator would "shoulder the responsibility" for the projects and by "going to the community… knowing them and their needs" they would ensure the project is wholly "owned by the community" (Interview with UB professor, November 2023). The facilitator would be able to recognize the social or ethnic power dynamics at play within the community to ensure marginalized groups such as women or certain ethnic groups are able to participate in the project and that it reflects their needs. The facilitator role sounds similar in scope to the role of "lead applicant" that an NGO can take on behalf of the community. The NCONGO representative I interviewed, discussed such a role in section 4.1.2. However, it seems that a facilitator, as described by the UB professor, would offer help extending beyond lead applicant and provide sustained and thorough support for one community project, throughout its duration.

It is interesting that the founder of TOCaDI alluded to the need for something similar to a facilitator, albeit for slightly different reasons. What they called an "interfacing role" would involve an institution or even an individual person who serves a similar function to the facilitator but with the added responsibility of providing cross-cultural communication between the stakeholders. The founder of TOCaDI explained how a family member of theirs had previously played such a role, interfacing between local government officials and San communities within the Shakawe area.

> [The family member] tried to interface between these two forces by inviting the [other stakeholders] to first experience what is beautiful and different about the San communities. Then getting them to look with a different perspective to help them understand that things which work in their environment might be different in the San's [environment]. (Interview with founder of TOCaDI, February 2024)

An interfacing role would mediate between the stakeholders and would advocate on behalf of the community. They would help promote San cultural customs and norms in the face of the strong assimilative attitudes that still prevail throughout the ranks of government officials and those conducting capacity-building interventions.

Whether facilitator or cultural interface, the role in its two concepts can address many of the systemic issues within capacity-building discussed throughout this thesis. A facilitator would mitigate the power imbalance by helping ensure the objectives and agenda of any project reflect the needs and will of the community, and are not imposed upon them by an outside

donor, agency, or institution. A facilitator would also provide the technical support a community needs to design and implement their projects, by navigating through administrative or bureaucratic obstacles or offering experience and skills to an otherwise underfunded, poorly educated CBO. A person or institution with the responsibility to culturally interface between stakeholders can help address the epistemological deficiency that afflicts capacity-builders when they work in Indigenous communities. They can walk in both worlds, mediate disputes or buffer criticism directed either way. They would be well positioned to promote the concept of capacity sharing and help build meaningful relationships as a prerequisite to building societal capacity and creating an enabling environment for the San.

5.3 Summary of Chapter

The first half of this chapter explored the various factors involved that make capacity-building effective for San CBOs. It was discussed how the importance of the specific cultural context of the San, that is, how their traditional forms of governance and resource management practices influence the success of capacity-building endeavors. Another critical factor was the frequency and duration of capacity-building projects. The data presented and discussed demonstrated that these projects are offered far too infrequently to achieve any lasting effect. A meaningful and deliberate dialogue between stakeholders was examined as another critical factor. Ineffective communication was shown to result in CBNRM projects stalling because the community was not properly consulted on the details of the project and denied the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. Ineffective communication also led to missed opportunities for the community to improve their ability to design and implement projects since the other stakeholders took over most those responsibilities.

The second half of this chapter was focused on the specific needs of the Shaikarawe and Tchecku trusts. How other stakeholders perceive the needs of the trusts and what insights a few experts have on their needs. The important role the organization TOCaDI once had for providing capacity-building for San communities in the region was discussed as well. The trusts themselves expressed the need for basic technical assistance ranging from logistical support to help drafting project proposals. They also expressed a desire for more meaningful help from other stakeholders in the support structure, with specific reference to the TAC. The data presented showed the TAC, its roles, and responsibilities, are not always clear or

consistently carried out. For board of trustee members this can foster negative sentiment towards the TAC or provide a false set of expectations. The other stakeholders perceived the needs of the San CBOs in line with the conventional beliefs held by capacity-builders. They expressed the communities lack proper governance and lack the capacity to access funding. The consequence of focusing merely on these two aspects is that it pushed the San communities into the "carrot of funding" trap. They perceive their own capacity-building needs merely in terms of their ability to access funding, thereby disregarding other important needs their CBO and their communities have. TOCaDI was discussed as an important former member of the support structure who the San communities now perceive as ineffective. The work the organization once provided, mirrored much of what the literature on capacity-building states should be implemented within Indigenous communities. They were conducting culturally considerate capacity-building programs and focusing on building societal capacity and creating an enabling environment. Finally, the opinions of two experts were presented and examined. Both expressed the need for capacity-building to extend beyond the board of trustees to include the wider community and other stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the TAC. The experts described how the other stakeholders could benefit from building their technical capacity as well as their capacity to engage with San communities in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner. Both experts described the need for a facilitator/interfacing role who could address some of the common problems within the field of capacity-building. By mediating the cultural and epistemological incongruencies between San communities and the other stakeholders, facilitator/interfacing roles could foster an enabling environment for the San to engage and participate with the other stakeholders on a more equitable and meaningful way.

6 Conclusion

While the primary aim of this thesis was not to explore and discuss the issue surrounding CBNRM in detail, it is however, within this context that capacity-building directed towards the San often takes place. Considering it is the responsibility of their CBOs to implement CBNRM projects, it was the objective of this thesis to explore the challenges San CBOs contend with, to better understand what capacity-building needs they might require while working within this particular development framework. This thesis also set out to examine the structure in place which provides support for San CBOs, not from an analysis of the structure's policy, but from the qualitative experiences from those in the structure, and from those the structure is meant to help. Once this contextual setting was described and discussed, this thesis sought to identify the factors that make capacity-building more effective for San CBOs, considering the established critique that exists within the broader discourse of capacity-building for Indigenous peoples. Finally, the perceived capacity needs of the San CBOs were examined and compared to how the support structure perceives theirs needs.

Capacity-building is an important and fundamental component to any development initiative (Venner, 2015). The success of any development project ultimately rests on the capacity of the stakeholders to implement it. Despite its widely recognized importance, in practice the concept of capacity-building often does not reflect how it is discussed in the discourse and policies of international development. Too often capacity-building projects fail to truly empower the communities they target. Instead they reinforce the established and unequal power dynamics that favor the agendas, priorities and objectives of the capacity-building practitioners, their donors, whether that be development NGOs or national governments (Eade, 2007)

Indigenous peoples from the Global South, with weak political organization and limited recognition of rights, often find themselves on the receiving end of development projects which aim to alleviate their poor socioeconomic conditions (OECD, 2019). For the Indigenous San of Botswana, development opportunities usually come in the form of projects utilizing the conservation oriented CBNRM framework. Despite promoting community involvement in conservation strategies, in practice this framework ultimately imposes Western notions of conservation and tries to incentivize sustainable resource use for its economic benefits above all else. For Indigenous peoples, including the San, it does little to

promote traditional, inherently sustainable livelihood strategies or conservation methods, let alone provide genuine control and ownership of the land and resources (Dressler et al., 2010). Moreover, the implementation methods of the framework also impose Western notions of resource management policies and governing institutions like the CBO. These notions disregard traditional forms of governance, making CBNRM both in concept and in practice, a completely foreign sustainable development strategy to many Indigenous peoples. Finally, the imposition of this framework with its non-indigenous governance and management practices, not only undermines traditional institutions, but in doing so can also create conflict between communities and within communities as well.

The findings discussed in this thesis demonstrate that Shaikarawe Trust and Tchecku Trust experience a lack of capacity in several key areas which hinder their ability to participate in CBNRM activities. These included the ability of the Shaikarawe Trust to submit well drafted proposals and secure enough funding for their respective projects to be implemented in a sustainable way. Failing to secure funding for projects can also impact their more basic needs as a CBO. A lack of fundings makes even simple administrative tasks difficult. The inability to cover expenses, such as paying for transportation into Shakawe, paying internet services providers, or purchasing office supplies, all affect their operational capacity to function. The challenges faced by the Tchecku Trust included a lack of capacity to manage their accounts properly and to negotiate a JVA in an equitable manner with an investor. The consequences of which, resulted in a financial audit and turmoil and division within their board. While these challenges did not impact their basic administrative functions as much, it did impact their operational capacity. Financial audits can sow mistrust among the community and so can a poorly negotiated JVA, both of which can lead to the board of trustees being voted out. A constantly changing board does not provide the long-term stability needed to see CBNRM projects drafted and implemented, a process that can take years.

The challenges briefly summarized above speak to acute capacity building needs which I argue can be addressed by the other stakeholders within the existing support structure. Throughout my interviews with these stakeholders, they reiterated what recent assessments on CBNRM in Botswana reported (Center for Applied Research, 2016; MENT, 2021) and acknowledged the existence of these persistent challenges. These challenges and needs, I believe, can addressed through the more ‘conventional’ or ‘typical’ methods of capacity-

building programs that focus on technical training at the individual and organization level. Capacity-building in this regard could help better informed board members draft proposals, to sign JVAs or to keep the CBO's books in order. However, to make the conventional means of capacity-building more effective, it would require first and foremost more meaningful and deliberate support from the TAC. Their responsibilities have been shown through the data to include more than providing advice. They serve important functions that can support the CBOs in a variety of ways and address the challenges highlighted throughout this thesis. What is needed from the TAC, along with the other stakeholders, is better communication with the CBOs they support. If the communication is deliberate and sincere, it can help ensure the projects are more effectively implemented. Effective communication also can lead to more meaningful participation by CBOs. Not only would this better reflect the 'bottom-up' approach to development, but it would also provide learning opportunities and experiences for the CBOs, thereby offering additional capacity-building possibilities. What is also required is for more frequently available and sustained capacity-building projects. The findings demonstrate that the support structure in its current state, does not organize and provide enough capacity-building programs which can effectively train CBOs on the technical skills they need to address their most pressing challenges.

Throughout this thesis, I emphasized the importance of considering the community's cultural context for any capacity-building intervention. The findings of my research indicate that the capacity-building programs targeting San CBOs do not make this consideration. Examples from my collected data show capacity-building practitioners utilize a one-size-fits-all method that makes no effort to situate their programs into the cultural context of the various CBOs they work with. This reflects the opinions expressed by that Kacou et al. (2022) which criticize capacity-building programs for using a best practices approach that have a few quantifiable objectives and are easily replicable, but are ultimately ineffective. I acknowledge that these programs, if done as described earlier, could help address the acute needs and challenges of San CBOs, since their content is usually oriented towards building technical skills like governance training and financial management. However, it is necessary to emphasize that these programs are still problematic for San CBOs, since they are usually founded on what Craig (2007) and Tedmanson (2012) call a deficiency approach. This approach disregards the traditional knowledge of the San and the significant role it plays in making capacity-building interventions effective. Moreover, it disregards the ecological

aspects of San traditional knowledge that could help CBNRM utilize more effective conservation strategies. Most importantly, this approach can have assimilative effects and risks perpetuating the notion that the cultural traits and traditional lifestyle of the San is a stigma which capacity-building needs to correct.

My findings indicate that the current support structure is failing to address the crucial element of capacity-building that aims to build 'societal capacity' within San communities. What the IUCN (2015) and the UNDP (2008) refer to as an creating an enabling environment, building societal capacity would involve addressing the uneven power relations San communities have with neighboring ethnic communities, with the government or with NGOs. Societal capacity would help ensure the San could engage and participate more equitably with other stakeholders, to promote the needs of their community and the ways they wish to manage their resources. It is understood that this facet of capacity-building is an important factor for achieving genuine community empowerment (Hunt, 2005; Molosi & Dipholo, 2016). However, considering the government of Botswana denies the San their rights as an Indigenous people, I acknowledge that building societal capacity for the San is not easily achievable. If the San do not have the right to self-determination and all the legal and political power this right affords them, the ways in which they can effectively challenge the uneven power relations with other stakeholders are limited. Moreover, without the right to self-determination, the San cannot assuredly determine what their societal capacity is and how should it be built. I argue that TOCaDI once helped create an enabling environment for San communities within the Ngamiland district. The organization was able to advocate and lobby on behalf of the San communities and provide an inclusive space where the San could meaningfully participate in their own development affairs. It functioned as a cultural interface between the government and the communities and facilitated a more equitable relationship between the two. TOCaDI thereby helped address the epistemological deficiency that so often plagues capacity-building practitioners when they work with Indigenous communities. For the San communities in the Ngamiland district of Botswana, TOCaDI was the best and most effective capacity-building support organization available.

The importance of societal capacity is reflected in the capacity-building policy of all noteworthy or influential development institutions, whether it is the UN or a wealthy country from the Global North (Whittle et al., 2012). What development policy states will not always

be reflected in practice. Nevertheless, the CBO support structure in Botswana needs to make a concerted effort so their practices better reflect the rhetoric and policy that guides the field of capacity-building. For the San communities within the county, this could have significant benefits. As noted throughout this thesis, the San have been the target of top-down development interventions for decades. If capacity-building is the "engine that drives human development" (UNDP, 2009, p. 5), then effective capacity-building for the San can drive them down the road in the direction towards genuine empowerment for their communities.

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Appendix

Table 1 - Research Participants

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT	DATE	LOCATION	RELEVANT OCCUPATION	TRANSLATED INTERVIEW
PARTICPANT A	12.11.23	Shaikarawe	Board Trustee	Khwedam/English
PARTICPANT B	12.11.23	Shaikarawe	Board Trustee	
PARTICPANT C	13.11.23	Shaikarawe	Board Trustee	Khwedam/English
PARTICPANT D	13.11.23	Shaikarawe	Board Trustee	Khwedam/English
PARTICPANT E	14.11.23	Tobere	Trust Public Relations Officer	
PARTICPANT F	14.11.23	Tobere	Board Trustee	
PARTICPANT G	15.11.23	Tobere	Board Trustee	
PARTICPANT H	16.11.23	Shakawe	TAC Member	
PARTICIPANT I	21.11.23	Maun	NCONGO Representative	
PARTICPANT J	27.11.23	Gaborone	UNDP Representative	
PARTICIPANT K	23.11.23	Gaborone	University of Botswana Professor	
PARTICIPANT L	9.2.24	Video Conference Call	TOCaDI Founder