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EDUCATIONAL POLICY AFFECTING JU/'HOANSI IN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA:
MINORITY NEEDS IN NATION BUILDING CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

The independence of Namibia, Africa's last colony, is now assured: free elections took place in November, 1989 and a draft Constitution was adopted by a Constituent Assembly on December 22 1989. Finalization of the Constitution and the form of government began January 12, 1990. By the time the present paper is delivered in May, 1990, in Alaska, the new government of Namibia, with a South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) representative majority headed by Mr. Sam Nujoma, will be functioning. This paper as delivered for pre-conference publication addresses the present moment of educational challenge in Namibia in the context of political developments to date. Further events taking place in what promises to be rapid implementation of new educational policy between January and May, 1990, will be added to the oral presentation at Fairbanks.

All discussion of educational needs and possibilities characterizing ethnic minorities in Namibia contributes to the discourse on national educational needs now emerging for all Namibians. The country is now committed, in the wake of apartheid and "Bantu Education," to equal educational opportunities for all. Yet building a nation of equal citizens from the ashes of separate development is far from easy. This newest nation on the planet, Namibia, contains one of the most senior of the planet's cultures--the Ju/'hoan Bushmen, who even up to today have managed to get round the strictures of an imperialist foreign administration to hunt and gather for much of their food. Their aspirations toward self-development as farmers have been repeatedly set back by this administration's highly discriminatory policies toward them as "people who cannot govern themselves" (Marshall and Ritchie, 1984, passim).

Special attention to the doubly disadvantaged situation of "Fourth-World" Bushman or San peoples within this state now emerging from apartheid has been paid by the SWAPO leadership in its planning. Dr. Kaire Mbuende was commissioned to write a background paper on the San and the transition to independence as a contribution to the national programme of action now being

readied. He said these people had experienced "colonial domination in a way that set them apart from the other African population groups...What sets the San apart from the other groups is not that their traditional way of life has survived but the cruelty through which it was transformed." (Mbuende, 1989, p.1.)

Because it supports this view, an NGO like the Ju/wa (Ju/'hoan) Bushman Development Foundation can play a part in the assessment of special needs of this minority and contribute at the same time to general national planning. Each ethnic group (there are more than a dozen in Namibia) has its special history and catalogue of needs. Unless these needs are addressed, the effort to build a nation of equals, equally respecting each other, will not succeed. The JBDF has a ten-year record of success as an anthropologically-informed development project, and it is backed by nearly forty years of close friendship and familiarity with Ju/'hoan communities. In preparing needs assessments for submission to the new government and to funding agencies, JBDF consults in detail (and in the Ju/'hoan language) with the people concerned. JBDF celebrates the arrival of independence in Namibia because it means the Ju/'hoansi, along with other Namibians, can at last make their own wishes known on matters that concern their lives.

Since the JBDF began active work in the Nyae Nyae area a decade ago, the rate of change affecting Ju/'hoansi and other Bushman peoples has greatly accelerated. Since the implementation of UN Resolution 435 on April 1, 1989, change has seemed to increase geometrically in Namibia, with the world's attention and its information media suddenly focused on what was for two generations a stagnant backwater under repressive and illegal South African occupation. Now that independence is on its way, the work of the JBDF must expand beyond facilitation of whatever limited development and self-determination was possible under the heavy arm of the South West African administration, to the promotion of Ju/'hoan participation in the creation of a national democracy (see Bieseke, 1990).

Prominent among challenges to such participation, of course, is education. New educational approaches--beyond both traditional Ju/'hoan socialization/learning of subsistence knowledge AND the repressive, authoritarian S.W.A. educational system available to a few Ju/'hoansi since 1962--are needed to enable Ju/'hoansi to take part in a democratic national and international life. JBDF has been asked by a local Ju/'hoan grassroots community organization, the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative, to join with it in planning and presentation of Ju/'hoan educational aspirations to government and funders.

This paper outlines the history of the present educational crisis faced by Ju/'hoansi and evolving plans to meet this crisis. It uses fresh perspectives on minority education from North America as they have informed JBDF and NNFC projects already underway. It suggests approaches which may ameliorate the learning situation, not only of Ju/'hoansi, but of many Namibians

faced with the necessity of rapid change in other parts of a remote and drastically underdeveloped country. All Namibian educational policies will after all be across-the-board, and all decisions will depend on the finances and priorities of the new government. Within the framework of Namibia's first open and democratic educational system, we see a remarkable consonance with the social and economic goals and methods already in place within current Ju/'hoan community projects. We hope that the ongoing work of social, economic and personal transformations of these recent hunter-gatherers will contribute to the national goal of educational renewal.

PART I: ASSESSING NEEDS

Public education in Namibia since 1948 has been informed and dominated by the Verwoerdian policies of Bantu Education from South Africa. In Namibia, the Van Zyl Commission Plan, the Education Ordinance, and the work of the Odendaal Commission --to name only a few sources--created a very deliberate, coherent, detailed and psychologically refined public education system that has the following characteristics:

1. the division of black and "coloured" Namibians into ethnically segregated administrative units responsible for education and social services;
2. separate, redundant bureaucracies for educational administration, all responsible in a rigid, hierarchical structure to the South African controlled Department of Finance and Central Personnel (civil service) authority;
3. the imposition of a repressive, alienating curriculum and pedagogy and requirement of Afrikaans as first language and medium of instruction;
4. unequal financial and administrative policies and procedures that favored whites and "coloureds" over blacks;
5. creation of a politically and often culturally compromised middle class of black and "coloured" public employees, including teachers.

Some ethnic groups--those whose racial grouping is not black or whose home language was already Afrikaans ("Coloured" and Rehoboth Basters)--fared better than others. Pupil/teacher ratios and expenditure per student figures show clearly the differential effects of the apartheid educational system from the early fifties to the present (Ellis, 1984, p. 83: S.W.A. Dept. of Governmental Affairs, 1988, passim).

The net results of South African educational policies in Namibia vary from area to area; but on the whole, the overall effect has been to severely limit the African student enrollment beyond the first few primary years, an effect which during earlier

years was an open public policy toward the education of Africans. The ratio of enrollments in Namibian schools between first year of primary school (Sub A) and the seventh year (Standard 5) has been 574:1, one of the lowest in all of Africa (UNIN 1986, p. 513). One implication of this practice is a high illiteracy rate. Unfortunately, because the records of this system have been kept by South Africa and its colonial administrators, reliable exact information about own-language or other literacy rates within the whole population of Namibia is not available. Informed estimates set the illiteracy rate at around 60% of the total population.

Even those statistics that do exist for Namibian education illustrate clearly that those whom the South African administration has classified as Bushmen have suffered more than others from the public education system. Among this ethnic group--whose numbers are estimated by the administration as totalling 35,000--the figures for pupils as a percentage of total group population is a mere 5%. This is less than one-sixth of the comparable rate for the groups in the neighboring parts of the north (Owambo, Kavango, Caprivi, Hereroland). Illiteracy in any language among the 4,000 or so Ju/wa people of eastern Bushmanland is estimated at 95%--not an unexpected figure considering that there was no school in eastern Bushmanland at all until 1962, and that this first one was a Dutch Reformed Church mission school.

The rest of the 35,000 "Bushman" peoples in Namibia have not been even this lucky, educationally speaking. A chart and map (figure 1) show Bushman Khoi and San language groups and their numbers and distribution in the country. All groups but the Ju/'hoansi have been dispossessed of their land. The few schools available to this dispossessed 31,000 people have existed as a handful of army-base schools in the north and two small church schools in the Gobabis District, where Bushman people live by scattered handfuls on white and Herero farms as underpaid laborers or squatters.

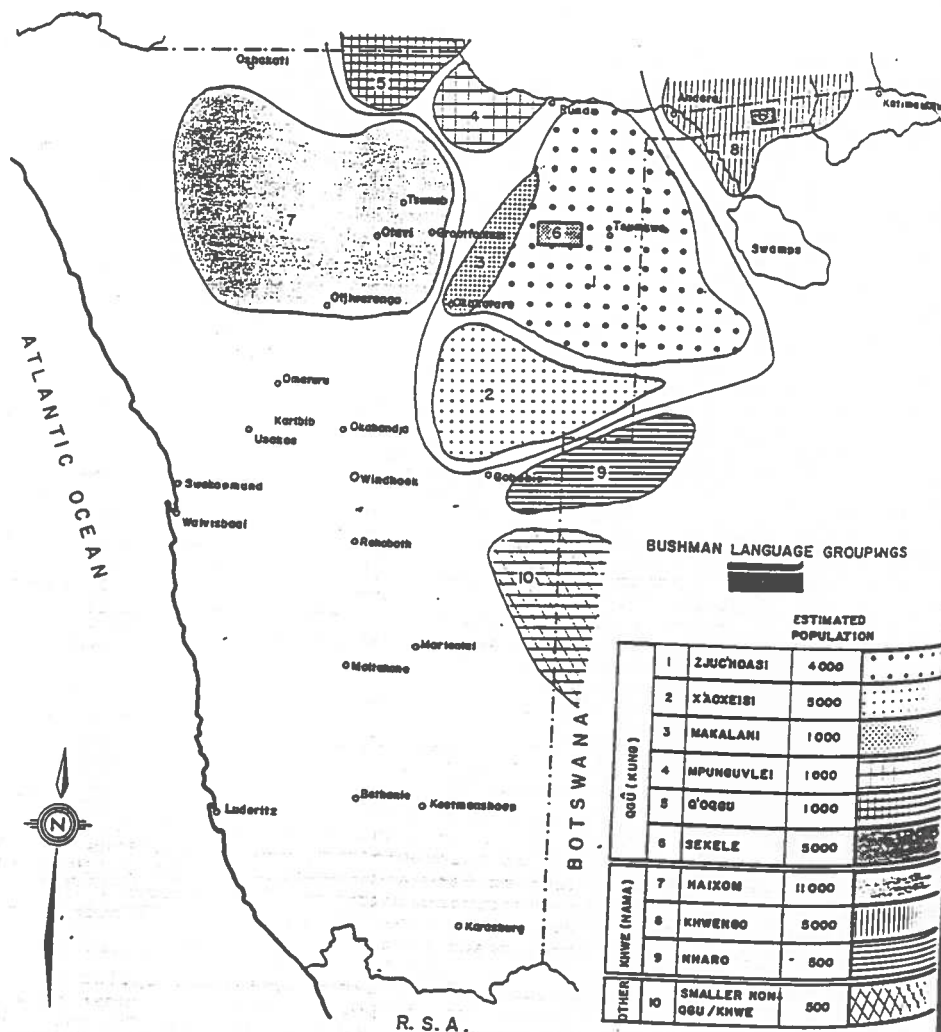
Today most of the 35,000 people classified as "Bushman" in Namibia have no land on which to produce food to eat and are increasingly without work. Many have been squatting and begging or doing ill-paid work for others for so long they never had the chance to learn how to hunt and gather. The classification "Bushman" is a wastebasket into which many sorts of people living on the lands of others or on communal lands--not only those readily identifiable as Bushmen--have been dumped. Thus they are deprived of the right to farm and survive. Between 1982 and 1986 over 3,000 people were dumped into the classification. The population classified as "Bushman" declined from malnutrition and disease by 5% in the decade of the 1970's.

The Ju/'hoan people of Eastern Bushmanland, called Nyae Nyae, some 4,000 out of the 35,000, are the lucky ones: they are still living on a fragment of their ancient land. The only people in Namibia who lived solely by hunting and gathering a generation

NAMIBIA

100 50 0 100 200 km

ANGOLA



BUSHMAN LANGUAGE GROUPINGS

		ESTIMATED POPULATION	
GǀU (KUNG)	1	ZJUCHOASI	4000
	2	XACXEISI	5000
	3	MAKALANI	1000
	4	MPUNGUVLEI	1000
	5	G'OGGU	1000
	6	SEKELE	5000
KHWE (NAMA)	7	HAIXOM	11000
	8	KHWEBO	5000
	9	NHARO	500
OTHER	10	SMALLER KONGG/KHWE	500

35,000

ago are also the only people classified as "Bushmen" left with real residential ties to their foraging territory. The concentration of members of one ethnic group in the Nyae Nyae area was responsible for the establishment of a school at Tsum'kui, the administrative center.

Even if South African mission schools and the National Christian Education philosophy of the later public schools had been truly part of the solution rather than part of the learning problem for Bushmanland (as they actually are), there is still yet a more severe impediment to successful formal schooling in Bushmanland: the Afrikaans language problem. Afrikaans is simply a foreign language for most of the school-age children in Bushmanland. There is in this area no tradition of commerce, employment and public activity enforcing the learning of Afrikaans as a lingua franca for social and economic survival. Among the Ju/'hoansi from the more than twenty n'ores (traditional subsistence areas) in eastern Bushmanland, not more than half the villages have one or two adults who can speak Afrikaans.

And yet the present public school at Tsumkwe is run by the administration from Windhoek just as though it were in Windhoek. Children who know and speak only Ju/wasi are taught and addressed in Afrikaans from the moment they enter the schools in Bushmanland. No principal or any teacher in eastern Bushmanland can speak a Khoi-san language.

Among the 5% of the total "Bushman" population who enter formal schooling, the drop-out rate is extremely high. In a normal year, there are only 2.5% of the students left at junior secondary level of those who entered together at primary level. There are no senior secondary level classes offered anywhere in Bushmanland.

The administration of Bushmanland schools is left to the Department of National Education, which is part of the colonial central administration. This department is the descendant of the Bantu Education authority, staffed and run largely by white South African educated civil servants. Because of the Bushmen's unique status as an ethnic and linguistic group for whom not even a Bantustan administration was developed, Bushmen have virtually no control over their own schooling. Even their formal, transcribed and signed requests (as recently as August 1989) to have instruction in Ju/wasi and English replace Afrikaans in the Tsumkwe school received no reply from the Chief Inspector of the Department of National Education (to whom it was addressed) or from any other official.

From a social and learning environment characterized by linguistic, curricular and administrative exploitation and repression, Bushmanland—together with the whole of Namibia—is now on the threshold of the most comprehensive emancipatory

changes in its history. The substantial victory of SWAPO in the United Nations supervised elections in November assures the implementation of SWAPO's transformational programme for educational reform. In its overall social developmental aspect, this programme is intended to "enhance the unity of the people, promote socio-cultural development and inculcate a sense of justice and solidarity." (Angula 1999a). The first and highest aim of the new Namibian public educational authority is that of nation-building, creating from more than a dozen distinct ethnic groups, exploited as such by the South African government, a new coherent national unity of free Namibians.

For a minority ethnic group like the Bushmen--whose very ethnic name is a frequent racial slur among some other Namibians--the advent of such changes is a challenge of conscientization of extraordinary dimensions. It involves social interaction in such areas as decision-making, consensus processes, identification of kinds of authority, sharing of responsibility, adjustment of boundaries between personal and social rights--all within their own language. The Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative has since September 1988 been engaged in these transformational learning processes (Bieseke 1988). The culmination of this preliminary process has been the writing in the new Ju/wasi orthography of a constitution for the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative. This process has already integrated successfully adult literacy learning within a very practical, very ad hoc context.

The emphasis here on the learning of social-political skills in a practical use of "own-language" literacy training reflects the integrated, nation-building components of NIESIN (National Integrated Education System for Independent Namibia (Angula 1989b). It is an essential part of this system that use of the mother tongue within all Namibian communities play a fundamental role in the attainment of a shared sense of national identity: "National reconciliation and mutual understanding require effective communication and objective knowledge about our society and its various communities. The teaching of mother language will enhance intra-community communication while the teaching of English enhances inter-communities and international communication." (Angula 1989b). Mother-tongue literacy is also the instrumental learning objective of the major community development project characterizing the next phase in the collaboration between the JBDF and the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative.

The current educational projects being implemented by the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative arise organically from the coherence of development between the socio-economic changes and the emergent learning needs of the Ju/wasi communities. Because of the years of prior appropriate technology level work toward the establishment of wells, cattle herds, dryland gardens, and crafts marketing, there is now a realistic and functional connection between on-going community processes and the benefits available

through the skills of literacy and numeracy. This careful planning for naturally integrated spheres of development avoids the pitfalls that beset those stereotypical literacy programmes that fail: viz., the discontinuity between literacy learning and other logically prior socio-economic changes necessary to motivate and sustain learning (Wongoola 1988, p. 178).

To summarize, it is important to perceive clearly that for at least three reasons, the Ju/wa communities of eastern Bushmanland are now in essentially an ideal "moment" of educational need so far as literacy and basic propaedeutic learning skills are concerned. First, because of the independence process, the Bushmen are sharing with other Namibians the transition of concepts of social and political identity. This is not only an added challenge, but a clear positive factor in educational development. (8) The Bushmen need to acquire the communicative skills of citizenship to insure their meaningful participation in a new social dialogue of their country. This must begin with literacy in their own language.

Second, because of the work of the JBDF and the establishment of the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative, the economic and social basis for the necessary skills to be taught are clearly demonstrable right in the *N'ores* themselves. "Les cooperatives et l'alphabetisation ont pu se developper de maniere complementaire." (Abdelkader 1987 p. 17)

And third, there is already developed between the Ju/wasi and the Foundation a relationship of mutual endeavour and trust which makes possible the kind of culturally sensitive research necessary to produce truly effective teaching materials in Bushman orthography. The orthography to be used has been developed under the auspices of the Foundation through the collaboration of linguists Patrick Dickens and Jan Snyman of Witwatersrand University and UNISA, respectively (Snyman, 1975).

The proposed Literacy and Numeracy Pilot Project, therefore, addresses the following educational objectives;

1. through its overall relevance to felt Bushman needs and its providing education by the people for the people, to create a positive, practical image of the role of systematic learning, either formal or non-formal;
2. to develop basic literacy skills across the community in Ju/wa orthography, permitting later language skill transfer for the learning of English, the official language of the new Namibian government;
3. to integrate numeracy, literacy practice and record-keeping skills with agricultural and financial planning necessary

for successful small farm management:

4. to begin (through translations into written Ju/wasi) an introduction of the idea of distant communications through writing for purposes of education in English or other Namibian languages.

PART II: SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC DISPLACEMENT

1. The Educational Failure, 1962-1989.

Clearly, then, one explanation for the spectacular previous failures of the educational system available to Ju/'hoansi can be found primarily in the complete neglect of Ju/'hoan culture and language. It seems obvious that a child coming for the first time to school from a village in the bush would receive a cultural shock, yet nothing in the educational system as implemented by the Tjum!kui school was designed to lessen the child's sense of displacement.

Apart from the physical surroundings of the classroom itself, consider the strange and discomfiting nature of the following aspects:

1) Formal instruction instead of the traditional "learning by watching" method. "Formal instruction" includes disciplining a child (possibly by beating) for disobeying the teacher. No such system of discipline exists traditionally.

2) Being taught the South African "Cape Syllabus". Here not only is everything strange to the Ju/'hoan child, but much of it is irrelevant, or at best, wrongly emphasized. To cite a light-hearted example, we once saw on the blackboard of a Standard 2 class, a teacher's composition about pet animals. As pets, it mentioned dogs, cats and tortoises, and how they should be given food and water every day. The fact is, though, that tortoises are not pets at all among the Ju/'hoansi but a highly prized food. You don't give your tortoise lettuce and water every day, you roast it and eat it! But in a more serious vein, a fourteen year old boy, having passed Standard 5, could tell us all about the South African Battle of Blood River in Natal, but did not know that his grandfather's birthplace, a town called G'am, had been rezoned into so-called Hereroland East by the Odendaal Commission in 1969. The same boy, from geography lessons, knew about the Mediterranean climate of the Western Cape, but had little idea about the uniqueness of his own immediate environment.

3) Being taught in Afrikaans from the very beginning. Not only are the sounds and grammar of this language foreign to a Ju/'hoan, but there are frequently semantic mismatches between Afrikaans and Ju/'hoan concepts.

Apart from these "cultural and linguistic shock" reasons for the failure of the system, two supplementary reasons may also be

cited:

4) Underqualification of teachers. This is a general black Namibian problem, but it is exacerbated in Bushmanland by the fact that no teachers are Ju/'hoan-speaking. No Ju/'hoan has ever been trained as a teacher, although several have reached the educational level from which they could have been (but were never informed of this opportunity).

5) Ju/'hoansi parents, themselves quite uneducated, do not see the value of education, and do not encourage their children to go to school, or force children who drop out, to return.

2. Ways to Arrest the Crisis.

With the coming of Namibian independence and the intense political activity during 1989, many Ju/'hoansi have become aware of the disadvantages of being uneducated, and in particular, of being illiterate. From the new government's point of view, it would not be unreasonable to expect the Ju/'hoansi to become an integrated part of Namibia as a whole. Without education, however, they will always be a "special case."

Having enumerated the causes of the previous educational failure, we now consider how these shortcomings can be redressed.

1) Formal versus Traditional Teaching. This is one aspect of the present system (but excluding corporal punishment) which we believe should not be changed. A "western" kind of education would be best achieved in a classroom/school situation. Unfortunately because of the scattered nature of the Ju/'hoan community, this would have to be a boarding school (as the present Tjum!kui school is). To soften the change from village life to boarding school, if finances permitted, two or three small Sub A and B day schools could be established in areas where the Ju/'hoan villages are clustered and the school would not be too far to walk to every day. After two years at these rural day schools children would then be transferred to the big boarding school in Tjum!kui.

2) The Syllabus. From the beginning children should be able to relate easily to what they are learning. The acquisition of knowledge should thus begin with the child's present social and natural environment and radiate outward to other times, places, and people. Ju/'hoansi should be consulted in drawing up the local content of syllabi for subjects such as geography, history, nature study and language.

3) Medium of Instruction. For the first four years the language of instruction should be Ju/'hoan. This would be in accordance with the new government's educational policy, as well as being sound educational practice. After this, children would be taught in English (having studied this language as a subject during the preceding four years). During the years of English

medium instruction, it would be beneficial if teachers could also speak Ju/'hoan, and give explanations in this language as well, whenever this was necessary.

4) Teacher Training. It is essential that Ju/'hoansi receive teacher training as soon as possible. Only in this way will an appropriate syllabus be able to be properly taught.

5) Adult Literacy Programme. An adult literacy scheme should be implemented in the villages. Apart from being of immediate benefit to the adults themselves, it may also serve to encourage parents to keep their children at school.

3. Effecting the Change: Work in Progress.

The JBDF, which works primarily for the economic independence of the Ju/'hoansi, has joined the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative in trying to spearhead the urgent educational changes needed in Bushmanland. Both organizations recognise that without appropriate education, economic independence will remain out of reach.

Activities currently in progress which are intended to contribute to change, or at least ameliorate present conditions are as follows:

- 1) Six month Pre-school Curriculum for Language and Social Support: an interim emergency measure which will naturally fall away when Ju/'hoan eventually becomes the medium of instruction for the first four years at school.
- 2) Ju/'hoan Literacy Classes. Although two "official" practical orthographies had been created for Ju/'hoan in 1968 and again in 1987, Ju/'hoansi were never taught to read and write their own language. From one point of view it may be considered fortunate that these orthographies were not taught because they both fall short of accurately representing the phonemic contrasts of the language. On the other hand, as has been the case with some of the South African black languages, native speakers, having attained literacy, have a way of sorting out their own orthographical problems.

However, since no one had been taught, JBDF devised another orthography, based on the scientific work of J.W. Snyman (1975) and at present several Ju/'hoansi who are already literate in Afrikaans, are being taught to read and write their language. Progress has been extremely rapid, and we expect the students to be fluent readers and writers within three months (classes are held for three hours a week). The rate of the students' progress attests both to the correctness of the orthography as well as to the pride the students take in their language. This pride is negatively reinforced by their aversion to Afrikaans, which, although up to now the lingua franca of the country, is regarded by the Ju/'hoansi as the oppressors' language. Once completely

literate in Ju/'hoan, these students will be employed in collecting local data for the future school syllabus in the Ju/'hoan medium (for example, writing down folktales, and traditional knowledge of the fauna and flora) as well as translating texts from Afrikaans and English where necessary. The

class is also now actively engaged in inventing terminology for the description of language.

It is the intention of at least one these students (who has already reached the appropriate level of education) to train as

teacher and eventually teach in the Tjumikui school.

3. Child Literacy. Several methods of teaching children to read and write have been examined by JBDF, and it is hoped that when Ju/'hoan is eventually established in the school, literacy in it will be taught by a progressive literacy method such as Breakthrough to Literacy (Rodseth, 1975). Appropriate vocabulary collection for the implementation of this method is to begin shortly.

4. Adult Literacy. It is the intention of JBDF to establish a mobile adult literacy scheme late in 1990 or early 1991. The exact details of this plan will depend on financial resources, but it is envisaged that eight villages will be visited three times a week for one hour. It is expected that as the benefits of literacy become better known to the adult population, they will put a higher value on their children's education.

PART III: EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY

JBDF believes that people can only meet change with the tools they possess when change comes, i.e. with the ever-evolving cultural heritage they walk around with and use as naturally as they breathe. The chairman of the NNFC, Tsamkxao #Oma, expressed this belief as well when he wrote to the S.W.A. Department of National Education shortly before the first Namibian election:

"I am writing about educational needs our cooperative sees for our people in the Tjumikui area. Wouldn't it be good if two new languages, our own (Ju/'hoansi) and English, were to be added to the school curriculum for our children? We want our children to learn in their own language. We feel that if they only learn in a foreign language, Afrikaans, they do not learn well.

"The next thing we see is that English will be a big thing in our country's future. Learning Afrikaans alone will not help us.

"Therefore we want teachers who can speak Ju/'hoansi, just as people in other parts of the country have teachers for their own languages. We Ju/'hoansi are in a difficult time: we feel we will see the best help from learning in our own language first and then in English. This is the best way for our children to truly understand what they are learning."

Ju/'hoan perceptions of the educational moment as a critical one for them have been greatly enhanced by the process of writing

toward economic self-sufficiency via the NNFC. In the absence of other over-arching communicational systems and of a local government structure, the NNFC has taken on wide communicational and educational functions. It was in the context of a meeting of Farmers Cooperative representatives that Tsamkxao #Oma articulated the following sense that economics and educational development are today inextricably merged:

"If the children got good schooling? Some of them could get work in hospitals, medical work, and some could teach children in schools, and some could be police, and some could work in offices and do secretarial work; there'd be men's work and women's work. Or they could have stores or some could learn to work on machines, machines that build trucks, or machines that work with fire (welding), because these days people don't just do one thing but do lots of kinds of things. Some are truck people and others are welders and some work on truck machines and others keep hostels for school children. Some could go to work for the government in another area, maybe in water-works, or some might be in agriculture, and many of them might want to work in water detection and borehole drilling.

"If they had a chance to learn these things, they'd know how to do them. My heart burns for them to learn. That's how work would go forward...

"Others could learn how to take care of cattle. Some could be cattle people and some could be veterinary clinic workers. Some could learn cattle care and some could learn cattle medicine. Others could teach people in the bush about cattle work. Some could learn about the diseases of cattle. Some could learn how to vaccinate cattle, and others could learn about pasturage. They could learn about the grasses which make them sick, and the grasses which make them grow..."

This energetic vision contrasts with the rather fatalistic opinion expressed by the same person in 1987, prior to the new sense of possibility heralded by the coming of UN Resolution 435, the UN Transition Assistance Group, and, most importantly, SWAPO's people-powered campaign:

"...One thing I see is that my children have come to fear schooling. They fear it because they fear being beaten. So they've all separated, left school and gone off in all directions. Every time I'm in Tjum!kui I see kids who aren't in school. They say they're tired of trying. They got along all right with the earlier teachers, but now there's no understanding with the new ones. All they see is pain. And that's why they go about avoiding school these days. They don't want to be there.

"A while back we went to the (school administrator) and asked, 'If beating a child makes him leave school, what good does that do?' And all he said was 'MMM.' So we said, misbehaving is one thing. If a child acts badly on many occasions, and the teacher discusses it with the parents so they understand each

other. Well, okay, go on and hit the child. But don't just beat him as an ordinary thing! Sometimes they beat them for very small things. They don't even tell the child why. They don't even speak to the father about it...

"If the child learns some things but doesn't learn others, you shouldn't just beat him, but tell him what he hasn't learned. You say 'this is the name of this,' and you teach him along, teach him along, and then finally you ask him if he has learned the thing...If instead you go around beating the children, pretty soon you'll see they'll all be gone.

"This is how we tried to talk to the school administrator. But he persisted and finally we gave up."

By September, 1989, in contrast, members of the NNFC were able to offer constructive criticism of educational methods used at a "Boeredag" or Farmers Day educational event hosted by the Department of Agriculture. "What you don't put your hands on, you don't learn," said a man puzzling in front of a diagram on how to make a compost pit.

Ju/'hoansi are in fact becoming conscious now of the strengths of their traditional system of hands-on, practical education. It is a delightful irony that they are calling for a return to tried and true methods and for educational reform in the same breath. Now for the first time in their brief acquaintance with formal education they may have a chance to get both.

In 1978 one of the present authors (Bieseke) presented a paper at the First International Conference on Hunting-Gathering Societies, held in Paris, which outlined traditional Ju/'hoan ('Kung) learning and communication systems. The hands-on, informally reinforced nature of traditional education was further explored in a later paper (Bieseke 1983). There the point was made that teaching procedures which have come to be conventional with literacy may not at all resemble the modes in use during much of preliterate history, because the modes in thus the modes of memory used--are profoundly different. Teaching in oral societies was most often accomplished by indirection. It appears that a "teacher" in hunting cultures may be less an active inculcator than a person who was salient as an example--both socially and in terms of the information transmitted--in the environment at the same time a learning task was accomplished. Jack Goody writes that "oral learning tends to reduplicate the 'initial situation,' the process of socialization." (Goody 1977).

Some scholars have tried to make use of educational insights provided by traditional societies, notably the African educator Dr. Asa Hilliard III, who feels that "education should be informed by anthropology, but it isn't." Dr. Hilliard stresses the need to assess the

systems, known via anthropology as systems of socialization, in successfully conveying instrumental knowledge and values to succeeding generations. People thinking of the design of a new educational approach that would build on the strengths of the Ju/'hoan system have emphasized that skills in reference to sorting, classification, observation, story form and content, communicational skills, as well as scientific data are already provided for in their socialization patterns prior to literacy. These patterns are based on experiential learning, oral tradition, and ritual--and enshrined in the mother tongue--rather than on what we in literate societies have come to see as THE paradigm situation of education, with teacher-learner roles distinct, and, too often, a one-way (top-down) flow of "information" in place of usable knowledge. The educational moment in Namibia seems ripe for the judicious application of insights this "radical": the word after all means a return to roots.

In other parts of the world, similar opportunities for educational renewal are being acted upon already. Cultural Survival Quarterly in 1989 devoted an entire issue to the politics of native language and educational renewal among North American indigenous peoples. Carol Cornelius Mohawk writes that "many Native Americans are in a phase of language renewal to counteract the effects of (an assaultive educational) history. Although the research is scarce, it has been found that when Native American children learn in their own language, as well as English, they not only gain a sense of place within their own unique culture, they also achieve more in their English and academic classes." (Mohawk 1989, p. 15). She also cites Robert St. Clair's observation that in traditional education "learning takes place through participation and the experience of living." (St. Clair 1982). Such observations are leading to a pattern of cultural renewal in education which will improve not only self-esteem but also cognitive academic functioning for these Seneca-speaking children.

In the San Francisco Bay Area an urban American Indian preschool has become a focus for general political and cultural renewal in the community (Lobo, 1989). Parents and grandparents became "cultural consultants" in their children's transition to the culture of school, and in that way were included in a process of creative, rather than substitutive, adaptation. The idea of "cultural rights" has begun to emerge in a way which revitalizes both school and community.

Modern educational concepts also current in North America, such as "whole language pedagogy," whose basic notion is that people learn language by submersion in it, i.e. not by mastering small parts and putting them together but by talking, reading real texts, writing stories and acting them out, etc. Such an approach holds out promise of what might be thought of as "self-literacy" in a culture now becoming literate: the Ju/'hoansi, for instance, will be able to become literate in their own language by reading and telling their own folktales, and by having opportunities to reinvent old ones and make new

ones in writing.

All such experiences and observations are suggestive for the Ju/'hoansi and their consultants as they design a desirable educational system for themselves at this point in history. The JBDF and the NNFC plan already underway, thus, hopes eventually to incorporate the following elements:

1. Adult literacy/lifeskills (in Ju/'hoan language; in the context of education about the function of co-ops (with Nyae N Farmers Cooperative).
2. Own language (Ju/'hoansi) literacy programme for lower Standards, including textbook preparation from own tradition (folktales, etc).
3. English curriculum for higher Standards.
4. Social school support system utilizing language facilitators in the lower Standards; improved hostel management.
5. Employment of local teachers wherever possible; other minorities in Namibia have had effective own-language teachers and curriculum materials.
6. Community-based health education programme.
7. Vocational training (tool and machinery use, repair and maintenance, driver education).
8. Revolving-residency learning centre with mobile outreach capacities.
9. Environmental education and action programme, combining oral traditional knowledge and holistic scientific resource management.
10. Learning through participative storytelling.

These elements should pave the way for a larger programme of cultural continuity, concurrently taken up by the NNFC and the JBDF, which will include the following:

1. Education for self-literacy (local language curriculum for first three years; access to archival cultural heritage materials; appreciation for own cultural contribution--folklore and other texts).
2. Oral history projects, school/community-run, to promote knowledge of local heritage and ensure generational continuity through developing pride in the past.
3. Environmental studies curriculum developed in collaboration with older, knowledgeable persons, who will mostly not be literate, by the "seminar" method. Recognition of the value of local knowledge in a mixed economy in an arid land.
4. Promotion of study and publication by local scholars on cultural heritage in such areas as rock art, music and dance, the curing tradition, and handicrafts.
5. Marketing of handicrafts under local control and promotion of artistic creativity, eg. in fabric-screening projects using

traditional designs.

6. Development of dignified, learning-intensive tourism based on community-controlled ethnobotanical, ethno-ornithological, ethno-zoological etc. conducted tours and warm human contact.

7. Preparation of Bushman archaeological teams who can hire out as experts in their heritage and its excavation and tracing.

8. Preparation of a modern language archive and peoples' dictionaries.

9. Seminars with people of all ages to discover other aspects of cultural heritage they may wish to preserve and develop, such as intensified cultivation of indigenous species of plants and animals for consumption or marketing, etc.

10. School-based collection of contemporary folklore. Modern dramatic presentation of folktales: new attention to the old art of storytelling.

CONCLUSION

The chance to help Ju/'hoansi and similar minorities, in the context of a national transition to independence, toward literate participation in their country and in their country's educational system is an exhilarating one. The actual execution of plans will be lengthy and frustrating, but the notion that a people with one of the most ancient cultural traditions on earth may provide clues to the liberalization of education, to its becoming more relevant at a time of political renaissance on a national level, is well worth the effort. In almost every other situation one can think of when a non-literate culture has become literate, the process has normally involved a kind of cultural rape. But if the transition to literacy can happen in the cultural context of the people, that could be real empowerment, the kind that opens people, rather than keeps them closed, to neighbors from whom they have been too long and tragically separate.

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TITLE: "The Portability of Literacy: Implications for Vernacular Education Programs"

ABSTRACT:

Literacy educators who work among hunters and gatherers in West New Guinea (Irian Jaya, Indonesia) have adapted to local student cultural roles in order to promote more effective education and preserve indigenous values. Teachers in some programs consequently acknowledge the portability of literacy in several ways.

Short units designed for easy teaching out of sequence permit a teacher, or other students, to help a student catch up after absence. Such pedagogy also taps the indigenous educational patterns whereby most skills (for hunting or fishing, or in this case reading or writing) are taught under field conditions, with one mentor and one student.

Encouraging students to keep journals while away from school on hunting forays encourages the perception of literacy as connected with "real life," not just the classroom. A similar assignment entails the carrying of abbreviated texts, workbook pages for one unit, in effect, so that some review and further study can be continued while the student is absent from the classroom.

Some schools, openly acknowledging the semi-nomadic nature of the society, are scheduled to permit a week or more of community hunting and agricultural activities every three weeks.

Such adaptive practices may have wide-reaching effects on educational theory and practice, both locally and in the wider education community. Literacy workers have found that their interventions can also work under the conditions imposed by Indonesian government language education policies that call for resettlement of hunters and gatherers.