

Prof. L.P. Vorster, University of South Africa (UNISA) provided information about the 4000 Bushmen living in Schmidtsdrift, west of Kimberley. They are soldiers of the disbanded 31 Battalion of the South African Defence Force (SADF), and were brought there from Namibia in 1990. Most of them come originally from Angola, recruited by the SADF during the fighting there.

They represent two language groups (Kxoe, a Khoe (Central Family) language, and !Xu, a northern Bushman language). These languages are mutually unintelligible, and Afrikaans is used as the language of communication.

They are settled on an (SADF) farm in Army tents. Although their situation is beginning to change and a Trust is being formed for their benefit, they are still insecure and very uncertain as to their future. A Bushman Council has been formed in cooperation with the SADF. There are no women on the Council as they do not speak Afrikaans. There is a school with more than 900 students, and a clinic, which is run by the SADF but which has Bushman health assistants. Some residents are earning money through arts and crafts or working on nearby farms. A tracking and hunting organization exists, and members are sometimes invited to go to nearby farms to hunt jackal.

During discussion, seminar participants voiced concern for these Basarwa who have had to move from Angola to Namibia to South Africa. These people feel alienated in Schmidtsdrift, and are often resented by the local people there. Vorster and Prof. J.W. Snyman (also of UNISA) both emphasised the sensitivity of the issue and the need for political decisions to be reached.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Ansu Datta, Director, NIR, discussed the international links now existing between NIR and various NGOs and universities. Included were:

- 1) Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation.
- 2) Germany: the Friedrich Ebert Foundation
- 3) Canada: IDRC and the University of Manitoba (particularly the Faculty of Social Sciences)
- 4) USA: USAID, and the University of Florida (particularly the Dept. of Education)
- 5) UK: British Council, ODA, Universities of Manchester (education) and Birmingham (gender)
- 6) Sweden: SAREC and SIDA
- 7) Norway: Norwegian Inter-Universities Council (NUFU), University of Tromso (including grant for this workshop)

Regarding Basarwa studies, Datta noted that it is unrealistic to expect help from all the countries listed above. However, Norway has been helpful, especially with its support of the RAD programme, and the Universities of Oslo and Tromso are known to be interested. Also, it is a good sign that representatives of neighbouring countries are attending this workshop, as this can be mutually beneficial. Datta feels there is a need to draw up a plan of future action. Contacts with Kuru Development Trust and Nyae Nyae Development Foundation, which have been forged here, will be useful.

1994, Developing Basarwa Research and
Research for Basarwa Development
eds. S. Saugestad + J. Tsonepe
Gaborone: NIR 67-68

CONCLUDING SESSION: TOWARDS A PROGRAMME FOR SAN/BASARWA RESEARCH

Patrick Molutsi, Chairman, observed that the overview given by Dr. Datta brought the proceedings over to the final item on the programme: a discussion of ways and means towards a broad programme of research on and with the Basarwa. He opened up the discussion by commenting on the international links mentioned by Dr. Datta that can be very useful in the future.

Sidse Saugestad cited the Native American Studies in the United States and Aboriginal Studies in Australia as examples of multidisciplinary programmes which could provide inspiration as well as practical guidelines for the task ahead in Botswana. At a later stage, such centres can be approached for cooperation in training programmes.

Kenneth Good said that before international links can be utilised, better use should be made of local opportunities. Departments such as Sociology, Economics, Political Science and Law must take the lead in initiating research and teaching schedules, assisted by the Department of History, and centres like NIR and the Democracy Project.

Among the first steps should be the introduction of San/Basarwa studies into appropriate courses in these Departments. He mentioned as an example PS201, Botswana Politics, in PAS. Undergraduate students taking the 'internship' courses that exist at third and fourth year level can be encouraged to take up a topic on San research. Master's degree programmes which are now widespread at UB can promote further vital San research.

Datta commented that the ball is in the court of the University of Botswana, and that a structure must first be established, following which an agenda and timeframe could be put forward. At that point, financial support can be solicited.

Molutsi and Datta described the set-up of the present steering committee which consists of representatives of various University departments. This steering committee should be made permanent, to serve as the University's link with other research institutions, first on a regional basis and later internationally.

There was active discussion following the chairman's suggestion that some broad areas of research be identified. The following areas were mentioned:

- a) Khoesan languages, including sociolinguistics (language use), and the need to develop standardised terminology for languages, dialects and place names;
- b) Basic socioeconomic data on Basarwa as an identifiable group, according to indicators that can compare them to national averages (looking at topics such as gender issues, access to cattle, health, and literacy rates);
- c) Economic activity, marketing, (need for baseline data);
- d) Land rights;
- e) Attitudinal studies, investigations into relations between Basarwa and rest of the population;
- f) Education, particularly adult education.

One participant maintained forcefully that the initial task was one of acquiring and disseminating knowledge, saying that we are neither OXFAM nor adult literacy experts.

P. Molutsi emphasised the need for educating the public about Basarwa and suggested that the steering committee call on people who have worked in this field to give talks about them. For example, Saugestad had addressed his Sociology students last year, and they were very interested. Other ideas put forward were the possibility of doing research on two matters which the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mr. C. Ntwaagae had indicated his Ministry was keen to support: 1) the link between Basarwa and the environment and 2) hunting skills research.

Datta brought up the matter of funding, saying that NIR has some resources. Senior students could be encouraged to do Basarwa research, for which they might receive some remuneration. He also suggested that other research funds, such as the Gender Research Programme, could be utilised for research on gender relations among the Basarwa.

During the discussion a number of more practical aspects of research organisations were touched upon. These had been outlined, eg. in the Background Document that was circulated from NIR before the seminar. A number of objectives have already been achieved, including the arrangement of the present workshop. It was felt that the task ahead should be to keep up this momentum, to consolidate the activities and interests expressed so far, and to create an infrastructure that will be conducive to individual research projects and the gradual establishment of a multidisciplinary, 'umbrella type' research programme.

Datta expressed the view that the present Committee for the Promotion of Basarwa Research should be the appropriate unit for following up the different ideas and proposals that had emerged during the workshop. To this end he proposed that the Committee be given a mandate from the Basarwa Research Workshop to evaluate its present composition, and to take such steps towards restructuring and co-opting new members as the committee might feel useful. He also suggested that the Committee should proceed towards being recognised as a regular Standing Committee under the University of Botswana Senate, quoting the Gender Policy Programme Committee as a relevant parallel case. The participants supported these proposals.

CLOSING REMARKS

Lebohang Letsie-Taole was called upon by the chairman to make the closing remarks. She began by thanking all the organisers, particularly Sidsel Saugestad who had made the workshop possible. She felt it had been a very successful workshop and that it had been an historical, unprecedented event for Botswana. For the University of Botswana it represents a personal commitment to the Basarwa, and she was particularly appreciative that two Basarwa had attended. Workshop members had agreed that Basarwa opinion is needed and that there should be more participatory research, so it was most relevant that Basarwa were present. Also having representatives from Namibia and South Africa has given a regional perspective to the gathering which is important. This would facilitate the pooling together of resources and strengthening collaboration, she said, and expressed the hope that this cooperation will continue. In conclusion, Letsie-Taole stressed the need to explore real issues (including those of gender) and always to seek to be informed.

APPENDIX A

A SUMMARY OF SOME SALIENT POINTS

The workshop did not pass any resolutions. Being the first of its kind ever held in Botswana, much of its objective was achieved by bringing the participants together and starting up a dialogue that hopefully will be continued in many different fora. However, a few points may be mentioned that seemed to set the tone and indicated a direction forwards:

1) The workshop came at a right time, as the University is ready to give priority to research activities. Developments outside the University also highlight the need to address the issue of the Basarwa. The Regional San conference that followed a month after the workshop saw interaction between government, researchers and the San/Basarwa delegates.

2) An independent Namibia and a New South Africa provide new and very promising opportunities for regional cooperation on Basarwa/San research.

3) Concerning research interests and plans, three areas were in focus:

Linguistics:

- standardisation of terminology for language names and orthography
- fieldwork on current status and distribution of Khoesan languages in Botswana.

Law:

- human rights & land rights

Social Sciences:

Two methodological approaches are needed, and should complement each other:

- case studies/community studies for the detailed picture,
- but also need for aggregate data and a more comprehensive picture.

Studies must make it possible to compare Basarwa groups with national averages.

4) The ideas that emerged at the workshop should be followed up in a variety of ways: short-term projects and pilot studies should be encouraged, and over time an 'umbrella-type' research programme should be established.

5) There is a structure in place to follow up the ideas that were put forward. The members of the Steering Committee for Basarwa Research are the following:

African Languages: Dr. Joseph Tsonope, Ms. M. Kopi

CCE/DAE: Dr. Samora Gaborone

Economics: Mr. J. Sentsho

Environmental Science: Mr. Masego Mpotokwane

History: Dr. Paul Lane

Law: Mr. B. Moeletsi

Nursing Education: Prof. Serara Selelo-Kupe

Sociology: Dr. Patrick Molutsi

NIR: Dr. Ansu Datta

Secretary: Basarwa research coordinator/secretary, NIR.