

## 4. THE PROBLEM OF ISOLATION

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### Summary

The !Xú & Khwe communities have resided in Schmidtsdrift in the Northern Cape for the past 9 years. The nearest bigger settlement is that of Kimberley (approximately 90 km from the settlement).

The possibility of self-employment (i.e. farming) does not exist due to the properties, which do not belong to the community. The opportunity to space-utilization does not exist seeing that properties are limited to the SANW sector whereby the community is allowed to move in.

The distance of the people culminates in a variety of social and welfare quarrels and deterioration. It is not only the traditional culture of the people that is subject to a constraint turn. Also the new value system of the modern, westernized world that is now the order of the day, has to be adjusted in order for the changed lifestyles to be able to the survive and be understood. The remoteness of Schmidtsdrift contributes to the poverty and poor economic performance of the area, limiting development.



### The Problem of Isolation

The !XU & Khwe communities have resided in Schmidtsdrift in the Northern Cape for the past nine years, as previously stated. A landscape area tent-camp serves as a centre in which activities take place. The settlements are provided with the basic services in a limited infrastructure. The nearest town (Douglas) is 45 km from the settlement and is linked by an earth road. The next large centre is that of Kimberley (approximately 90 km from the settlement).

There is indeed a problem of geographical isolation and the limitations of access and contact with the outside world bring further social & welfare deterioration.

Due to limitations in transport this group begin to feel hopeless and become short-sighted in their outlook. The need for schooling and skills exists, but opportunities of further training and transport are limited. School-going children can reach standard 10, but they do not leave the community to obtain more education due to the long distances involved. It is impossible to have a good career and still be part of the community. Work and bussiness opportunities are limited. The possibility of self-employment (i.e. farming) no longer exists because the land does not belong to the community any more.

The opportunity of merely occupying the land no longer exists due to the limitations of property in the SANW sector

whereby other communities are allowed to move in. The !Xu & Khwe community have in the past been people of the veldt who could freely move around and were often nomadic. The remoteness of the people culminated in a variety of social and welfare problems. An inability to conform to this new requirement seems to be the cause of large-scale confusion and conflicts.

Persons within the community are aware of the need for skills and education, but are unable to prepare themselves for the outside world because of their isolation. Contributing to this is the weak economic situation that limits studies and work-related education. This not only includes the financial aspect, but it is also impossible to study part-time and gain more experience. School-leavers are ideal for the opportunities that exist within the community (i.e. shops or administration), but an opportunity to enter the labour market rarely exists and the single opportunities that do exist are limited by the long distances involved.

Education and the "attending school" concept is often challenged. It is a constitutional requirement, but without hope of any further improvement of lifestyle motivation to achieve is limited. Poor school attendance and high school drop-out rates demonstrate this.

Isolation is not really a problem in itself since the community would be able to survive traditionally. It is, however, Western life-style goals that put pressure on the survival of the community. Poverty due to isolation becomes a greater concern. Elevation from poverty is a slow and often very arduous process. This process requires programmes and planning as well as funds to give individuals training outside of the community to enable them to generate money that will in turn be brought back to the community. The option of letting people work in the community requires a product and skills that can be generated within the community so that in turn money can be put back into the community. Again, it is the remoteness and 'temporary' nature of Schmidtsdrift life-style that hamper skill-acquisition, increase poverty and limit development.