

Ondao Mobile School, Namibia

A Socio-Economic Impact Study



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Draft Report November 2004

THE FRONT COVER

The front cover picture was taken by Marit Sørvald on 6 October 2004.

It shows a group of girl learners at Orue School about 100 kilometres north-west of the regional capital, Opuwo in northern Namibia . The picture shows that most girl learners still prefer traditional attire, although some are beginning to choose to dress Western style.

In the background is one of the original tents of the mobile school which is used as a classroom. Orue School is one of the minority of schools which moves seasonally. Approximately 40 per cent of the learners go with one of the two tents when the parents migrate with the livestock for water and better grazing.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This is the Final Report of a Socio-Economic Impact Study of the Ondao Mobile School Project in Kunene Region in Namibia. It was prepared on behalf of the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) which was instrumental in starting the school in 1998, and which has supported the school financially for six years. Most of funds have been provided by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation (NORAD) through a framework agreement between NAMAS and NORAD. The project's target group has been children of the Ovahimba and Ovazemba peoples with nomadic and semi-nomadic background. The project is an interesting example of nomadic education, and one worthy of study.
2. The Study was carried out by a two person team for Nordic Consulting Group AS of Oslo, Norway who received extensive assistance from the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC), the Ondao Mobile School administration and NAMAS. The fieldwork was carried out in Namibia between 29 September and 18 October 2004. The study team had consultations in Windhoek, Khorixas and Opuwo and undertook detailed interviewing of over 300 individuals at 17 of the 33 school units in Kunene Region.
3. Since its commencement in 1998 the Ondao Mobile School has established 33 units, with over 2,900 registered learners and 73 teachers. The units are distributed over 40,000 square kilometres (the size of Denmark) in some of Africa's most inhospitable country, with high mountains and extensive deserts.
4. NAMAS has spent about NOK 10 million (USD 1.3 million) on the operating costs of the school which consist of transport, maintenance, fuel technical assistance and administration. This contribution has been absolutely critical to the success of implementation. Approximately 80 per cent has been allocated through the framework agreement with NORAD. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture finances project administration, teachers' salaries and text books.
5. It is estimated that about 16,000 people (primarily Ovahimba and Ovazemba people) live in the project area i.e. the northern part of Kunene Region. Of these 6,400 are school age children and about 45% of these have access to basic education (mainly the Ondao Mobile School). This gives one of the lowest net primary enrolment ratios in Africa. An additional 29 communities with 1,617 potential learners have applied for a school.

6. The guiding principle behind the school was to develop a series of mobile schools which could follow the children in the seasonal migrations of their parents in search of grazing and water for their cattle. The schools were therefore provided with tents and furniture which could be moved. However subsequent experience has shown that parents and households prefer to have their school settled in one place where they know their children are being educated and cared for in a secure environment. Few of the schools are now mobile.
7. Three independent reviews/evaluations of the project have already been undertaken in 1999, 2002 and 2003. All were largely favourable to the project.
8. The Report summarises the results of the fieldwork analyses. After interviewing large numbers of parents, teachers, learners and community members it was concluded that the cultural, economic and social impacts of the School were largely beneficial. It was found that, although initially sceptical to the concept of educating their children, parents and communities had increasingly been convinced of the benefits of education by the Ondao Mobile School itself. The main reason for this was that the parents and communities appreciated that the way the Ondao Mobile School worked, it maintained the traditional life style of the Ovahimba people. It did this by not charging school fees, by not insisting on the use of uniforms, by permitting the use of traditional attire in schools, by using text books and teaching in vernacular languages and by employing local Ovahimba teachers.
9. The Report concludes that, despite many practical difficulties, the School has been a success in achieving its main objectives, that is in providing basic education to the majority of the Ovahimba children, one of the most educationally marginalised groups in Namibia. It had done so by developing the school sensitively in line with local cultural traditions.
10. The report recommends that NAMAS support to the Ondao Mobile School be phased out over a four year period 2006-2009. The level of assistance should remain about NOK 1 million a year. It is recommended that a feasibility study be carried out into how to provide basic education up to Grade 5 for all children currently without access to basic education in the Epupa and Opowu constituencies. It also recommends that urgent attention be given to the question of how parents and local communities can be involved in making financial contributions to the School's operating expenses.

11. Further recommendations are made on adult literacy, internal control procedures, gender awareness, English language teaching and on disseminating more information on this unique project.

1. INTRODUCTION

General

1.1 A consulting team consisting of Michael Fergus (Economist) and Marit Sørvald (Sociologist) visited Namibia from 29 September 2004 to 18 October 2004. The purpose of their visit was to conduct a socio-economic impact study of the Ondao Mobile School situated in Kunene Region, the most northerly region in Namibia (*see Figure 1*). The team, from Nordic Consulting Group AS, Norway was contracted on 10 June 2004 by The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) to undertake the study. NAMAS is a Norwegian non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in 1980 as a solidarity organisation and supported the struggle for an independent Namibia. Presently NAMAS has 4 persons employed in Elverum, Norway, and 4 employees in Windhoek, Namibia. NAMAS has been providing financial and technical assistance (with help from the Government of Norway) to the Ondao Mobile School since its inception in 1998. The Terms of Reference are set out in *Annex I*.

Programme

1.2 The team met with the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (MBESC), the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), the National Planning Commission (NPC), and two research institutes in Windhoek, the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), with the Kunene Regional Education office in Khorixas and the Regional Health Office (Ministry of Health) and the Red Cross in Opuwo. The team visited 15 of the 33 existing Ondao schools (including the remotest school at Otjinungwa some 299 kms from Opuwo) and 2 government schools in Kunene Region. The consultant team spent 12 days in Kunene Region from 4 October to 15 October 2004. The team's programme is set out in *Annex II*.

The Educational Setting

1.3 Since 1990 the Government of Namibia has viewed education as a key issue in the post-independence national policy. The Constitution of Namibia states in § 20 that

“1) All persons shall have the right to education, and 2) Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge.”

1.4 This is also in line with the Human Rights Declaration “*everyone has a right to education*” (article 26, 1948) In addition it is in keeping with Norwegian Government policy to support education for children in developing countries. (See Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Strategy on Education*, 2003¹)

1.5 Before Independence the education system in Namibia was based on racial and ethnic discrimination. The new Government had to reorganise the education system to reflect justice, democratisation and equality. “Education for all” has been a major principle in the development strategy, including a key priority in the poverty reduction plan. However, marginal groups have not benefited greatly from this policy. The Ovahimbas and Ovazembas – the main target group for the Ondao Mobile School – are among the least educated groups in Namibia. The government defines these nomadic and semi-nomadic minorities in Kunene Region as “educationally marginalized children” (EMC). The Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture has been aware of this and has articulated a policy towards EMC. A number of workshops, commencing in 1995 have been held to discuss the subject of educationally marginalised children in Namibia. The Ministry has therefore very much welcomed the Norwegian initiative at the Ondao Mobile School, as will be described later.

1.6 The Ovahimba and Ovazemba are what are defined as “Indigenous peoples”. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) No.169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries² which came into force in September 1991 defines, in Article 1 ”Indigenous Peoples” as

“Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations”

1.7 Norwegian Government policy on indigenous and tribal peoples follows the ILO definition, and has recently been described in detail in a set of guidelines describing Norwegian efforts to strengthen work on indigenous peoples in development cooperation³. In this study it will therefore be useful to use the ILO definition since all characteristics are easily adaptable to these communities. As a minority with very distinct mode of production and way

¹ Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *Utdanning for alle gjennom Norges utviklingssamarbeid*, Oslo, 2003.

² International Labour Organisation (ILO), “*Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*”, Geneva, 1991

³ Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, “*Retningslinjer: Norsk innsats for å styrke arbeidet med urfolk i utviklingssamarbeidet*”, Oslo, October 2004

of life the Ovahimba people are vulnerable to pressure from modern society and the possible social and institutional change linked with modernisation. The following study is therefore based on a **rights perspective** and a definition of the communities and their people regarded as **indigenous people**.

Study Purpose

1.8 The purpose of the Study has been “to assess the impacts of this type of education (the Ondao Mobile School Project) upon the children, the local society, the institutions, the local environment and the local economy”. (See Terms of Reference *Annex I*) In particular the team was to assess possible changes which had taken place in daily activities, production, migration, population composition, boarding for students, attitudes to nomadic life and culture as a result of the operation of the school. It should be pointed out that the mobile school project is an innovative one, and the first of its kind amongst marginalised children in Namibia. It is therefore associated with a very high degree of risk. At this stage in the school’s development where 33 schools are in operation and over 2,700 children are receiving regular education, NAMAS is thus particularly concerned to assess the impact of their efforts to date. They are therefore anxious to obtain an *independent* assessment of the school’s impact with a view to planning their future involvement in the school’s development. The study was to be undertaken in three phases i.e. preparation of a Desk Study (submitted by the consultants to NAMAS on 15 September 2004), a field visit from 29 September to 18 October 2004, and the preparation of a Draft Study Report to be submitted to NAMAS by 29 October 2004. The Final Report was submitted to NAMAS on 10 December 2004.

2. THE PROJECT AREA

2.1 Kunene Region is the largest of Namibia’s 13 administrative regions and it covers an area of 143,000 km² (about 40% of Norway’s surface area). However only 68,000 people lived in the Region in 2001. The Region consists of six administrative constituencies, each of which is represented by a regional councillor. The area currently served by the Ondao Mobile School is situated in the two most northerly constituencies, that is Opuwo and Epupa (which borders Angola). The area served by the school covers an area very approximately 40,000 km² (which is about the same size as a small European country like Denmark). The population of the area served by the school is about 16,000 at a density of less than 0.5 persons per square kilometre, making it one of the least densely populated areas in

southern Africa. Much of Kunene Region is also known by its traditional name of Kaokoland or Kaokoveld.

3. THE PROJECT TODAY

The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) Portfolio in Namibia

3.1 Since the project's inception, NAMAS has been closely involved in the project's design, planning, implementation and financing. In addition it has provided the project with five years of expatriate Technical Assistance. Apart from the Ondao Mobile School Project, NAMAS is actively involved in the other following projects, all of which are in the education sector:

- Bridge-building project: Student exchanges, institutional cooperation and international friendship work
- Further development of preparatory technical education
- University of Namibia: further education for technical teachers
- Education for the San people at Tsumkwe
- School development programme in Hardap region

3.2 In 2003 NAMAS had a budgeted expenditure of NOK 5.54 million of which the Ondao Mobile Project accounted for about 32%⁴.

Learners and Teachers

3.3 The Ondao Mobile School project commenced operations in 1998 and by October 2004 there were 33 schools in operation (including 3 satellite units). Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 33 school units. The roll of registered learners was 2,976. This compares with 2,731 learners in 2003 and 1,890 in 2002. There has therefore been an increase of 46% in the number of learners in the two-year period 2002 to 2004. In the same period the number of school units increased from 30 to 33. Some 54% of the learners in 2003 were boys and 46% were girls. Surprisingly in Grade 4 the share of boys had fallen to 53% and the share of girls had risen to 47%. However from Grade 5 onwards the share of girls dropped substantially suggesting a much higher dropout rate amongst girls. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that, in some areas, girls stay on at school (where they can be cared for on a boarding arrangement whilst their parents are tending their cattle) whilst boys are withdrawn to provide labour for herding.

Table 1 below summarises the enrolment at the schools

⁴ NAMAS, "Namibiaforeningen: Årsmelding 2003", Elverum, 10 May 2004 (Annual Report for 2003)

Table 1: Registered Enrolment at the Ondao Mobile School in 2003

| <i>School</i> | <i>Boys</i> | <i>Girls</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Ratio</i> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Ekoto | 54 | 52 | 106 | 51/49 |
| Otutati (2004) | | | 71 | |
| Okauapehuri * | 124 | 124 | 248 | 50/50 |
| Omuhonga * | 95 | 112 | 207 | 46/54 |
| Orotjitombo | 106 | 99 | 205 | 52/48 |
| Okoupaue ** | 73 | 69 | 142 | 51/49 |
| Okahozu ** | 82 | 73 | 155 | 53/47 |
| K.M.Maundu | 83 | 57 | 140 | 59/41 |
| Ohungumure ** | 52 | 73 | 127 | 41/59 |
| Ombaka | 47 | 43 | 90 | 52/48 |
| Etengua | 60 | 51 | 111 | 54/46 |
| Oroutumba | 43 | 31 | 74 | 58/42 |
| Okapembambu | 32 | 30 | 62 | 52/48 |
| Orue * | 58 | 33 | 91 | 64/36 |
| Okandombo | 53 | 25 | 78 | 68/32 |
| Otjandaue | 43 | 37 | 80 | 54/46 |
| Epembe * | 63 | 55 | 118 | 54/46 |
| Otjamaungu * | 42 | 38 | 80 | 53/47 |
| Otjimuhaka * | 51 | 34 | 85 | 60/40 |
| Okarukoro ** | 73 | 46 | 119 | 61/39 |
| Omuhoro (2004) | | | 112 | - |
| Onjuva ** | 22 | 9 | 31 | 71/29 |
| Orumue * | 14 | 6 | 20 | 70/30 |
| Oruseu | 32 | 25 | 57 | 56/44 |
| Otjinungua ** | 13 | 17 | 30 | 43/57 |
| Otjipemba | 27 | 18 | 45 | 60/40 |
| Otjitambi2002* | 42 | 17 | 59 | 72/28 |
| Otjitanga | 13 | 16 | 29 | 45/55 |
| Ovituambu * | 26 | 28 | 54 | 48/52 |
| Puros | 16 | 10 | 26 | 62/38 |
| Okondjombo | 23 | 7 | 30 | 77/23 |
| Otjirumbu(2004) | | | 94 | - |
| TOTALS | | | 2976 | |

* Visited by Marit Sørvald and team

** Visited by Michael Fergus and team

Administration

3.4 The school is administered by a team of 9 persons, led by a Principal and 4 heads of department, each covering a geographical area. The Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) provides the services of an adviser based in Opuwo. There is a total of 73 teachers. The project is supported by the Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture which pays teachers' and administrative staff salaries, and provides text books and stationery and school meals. NAMAS provides funds for 4 vehicles, maintenance and fuel, equipment and tents used for accommodating the schools, the staff and some learners.

Project Costs

3.5 Table 2 below shows the capital and operating costs borne by NAMAS in supporting the school from its inception in 1998 until today.

Table 2: Capital and Operating Costs for the Ondao Mobile School paid by NAMAS 1998-2003 (in \$Namibian dollars) NOK 1 = N\$ 0.96 in 2004)

| Item | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Teaching Aids | 45000 | 65000 | 85000 | 51522 | 85000 | 100000 | 31000 |
| Inventory | 180000 | 160000 | 483000 | 600000 | 670000 | 165000 | 111340 |
| Buildings | 140000 | 0 | 0 | 20000 | 300000 | 100000 | 54000 |
| TOTAL INVESTMENT | 365000 | 225000 | 568000 | 671522 | 1055000 | 365000 | 196340 |
| Personnel | 64000 | 150000 | 325000 | 335000 | 396000 | 32470 | 0 |
| Project Activities | 0 | 60000 | 220000 | | 231750 | 156761 | 62660 |
| Admin Costs | 83000 | 107000 | 180000 | 293478 | 429300 | 573489 | 416000 |
| TOTAL OPERATING COSTS | 147,000 | 317,000 | 725,000 | 628,000 | 1,057,000 | 763,000 | 675000 |

3.6 The table shows that NAMAS has spent a total of about N\$ 3,446,000 in capital costs i.e. vehicles, tents and buildings and about N\$ 4,312,000 on operating costs i.e. maintenance, fuel, administration. The total amount spent over the 7 years of the project's existence has been about N\$ 7,760,000 or about USD 1 million. In addition come the costs of having an expatriate NAMAS project coordinator stationed in Opuwo for five years, and the costs of occasional consultants from Hedmark University College. These amount to about NOK 750,000 a year and for the full period 1998-

2004 have amounted to a total of NOK 3,143,000. Although there have been considerable changes in the exchange rate, it would appear that NAMAS has provided assistance valued at over NOK 10 million (say USD 1.3 million) over the six years of the project's life.

3.7 No detailed information was available in Opuwo from the MBESC on their annual operating costs for the Ondao School. However according to information received from the Project, MBESC has annual operating costs of about N\$ 2,900,000 (approx. USD 414,000) which consist of the following:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Project Administration: | 500,000 |
| Teacher's Salaries: | 2,200,000 |
| Text books and stationery: | 150,000 |
| Total: | N\$ 2,850,000 |

3.9 All 70 Ondao Mobile School teachers are offered intensive 5 week upgrading courses over a period of 2 years at the Teachers' Resource Centre in Opuwo under a joint programme organised by a cooperation between the University of Namibia (UNAM), Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) from the United States and Hedmark University College of Norway.

3.10 NAMAS, on the other hand, expects to expend about N\$ 675,000 in 2004 and the budget for 2005 was N\$ 850,000. To this should be added N\$ 720,000 for the services of an expatriate advisor and consultants. The total annual operating cost of the Ondao Mobile School project is thus:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Government contribution: | N\$ 2,850,000 |
| NAMAS contribution: | N\$ 1,570,000 |
| Total: | N\$ 4,420,000 |

3.11 NAMAS thus contributes about 36% of the annual operating budget. This is a critical 36% of the budget as it covers transport and fuel for linking the schools with the headquarters in Opuwo. Opuwo is virtually the only place which offers public services in northern Kunene Region (all teachers have to come to Opuwo to cash their salary cheques) and is almost the only place where one can buy goods (the rest of the area is served by occasional itinerant traders). The northern Kunene Region is one of the most inaccessible parts of Namibia as it has no tarred roads, no bridges on the rivers, no public transport, very difficult terrain (many mountain ranges) and a very low population density. Because of the risk of misuse, allocation of funds by Government to transport tends to be a particularly contentious

subject. It is thus certain that if NAMAS did not provide transport, the transport facilities available to the Ondao Mobile School Project would be greatly reduced, with corresponding effects on efficiency.

4. THE SCHOOL'S TARGET GROUP

Ethnic Groups

4.1 The principal groups living in the area served by the Ondao Mobile School are the Ovahimba, the Ovazemba, the Ovatjimba and the Ovaherero, all of whom speak the Otjiherero language.⁵ As pointed out above, these peoples can be regarded as “tribal and indigenous peoples” in terms of the ILO definition, because of their characteristic cultural and tribal organisation. There is also evidence that increasing numbers of Namibia's largest population group, the Ovambo are moving into the area.

4.2 The Ovaherero people, of whom the Ovahimba, the Ovazemba and the Ovatjimba are sub-groups, migrated from the north to present-day Namibia about 350 years ago⁶. They were a cattle-owning and cattle-herding group. They moved to central Namibia leaving the Ovahimba, the Ovazemba and the Ovatjimba to remain in the north of the country along the border with Angola. At the beginning of the 20th century the Ovahereros were almost exterminated in a series of massacres by the German colonial power. The Ovaherero now number about 100,000 people. In the late 19th century the Ovahimba were attacked by the Nama people who forced the Ovahimba to move to southern Angola where many became scouts and mercenaries for the Portuguese colonists. The Ovatjimba moved with their herds into the remote and inaccessible mountains in northern Kaokoland and remained there. The Ovatjimba are thought to be Ovahereros who have lost their cattle and have reverted to a hunting and gathering existence. Most of the Ovahimba moved back to Kaokoland in the 1920s and the 1930s after South Africa took over administration. However the Ovahimba and other groups were “sealed off” from the rest of the country by travel and veterinary restrictions, some of which still exist today. It should be recalled that much of Kaokoland was a “war zone” during the 1970s and 1980s when the South African Defence Force was guarding the border and making incursions into southern Angola during the Civil War in that country. Some Ovahimbas were recruited by the Defence Force as scouts, trackers and security personnel. It is also noteworthy that missionaries were not permitted to enter Kaokoland until the 1950s and this probably increased the degree of isolation. The Ovahimba are

⁵ The Ovahimba are in majority and we often therefore refer to the people as Ovahimba,

⁶ Gewald Jan—Bart, “*Herero Heroes: a socio-political history of the Hereros of Namibia, 1890-1923*”, Oxford, 1999

therefore a sub-group of the Ovaherero who have been deliberately marginalised and isolated by successive wars and colonial powers (Portuguese and South African). They have therefore missed almost all educational opportunities and today are therefore one of the most vulnerable and least educated groups in Namibia.

4.3 Because of the remote nature of Kunene Region and because of its historical isolation, the Ovahimba, Ovazemba and Ovatjimba peoples who live there are amongst the most marginalised of all Namibia's population. They maintain and guard fiercely a highly individual material and tribal culture in terms of mode of production, dress, hairstyles, ornament which attracts tourists and anthropologists from all over the world. Reverence for ancestors' graves is a strong feature of their culture. Frequent exchanges of sexual partners is a feature of society, according to Philippe Talavera.⁷ These practices could expose these people to the dangers of HIV/AIDS if it gained a foothold, although, according to the Red Cross, the current rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Kunene Region is the lowest in the country at 14% (the national average is 26%). Whether marginalisation is equivalent to poverty, however, is a matter for speculation. No statistics exist on monetary incomes, but there is evidence that many parents are willing and able to contribute to their childrens' education. There is also plenty evidence from elsewhere in Africa that cattle-herding communities are not the poorest as they are always able to liquidate funds from the sale of animals.

Access to Education

4.4 It has been estimated that about 40% of the population of Kunene Region, or 27,000 people, are Ovahimba, Ovazemba or Ovatjimba. The 2001 Census shows that literacy rate in Kunene Region of 57% was the lowest of the country's 13 regions. The estimates below show that about 2,800 or 43% of the 6,400 school age children on the project area attend school. This is the net primary enrolment ratio. The 2001 Census estimates that almost 91% of the total population of Namibia in the age group 6 to 19 had attended or were attending school⁸. The same report showed that 67% of the total population of Kunene Region had attended or were attending school. This suggests that northern section of Kunene Region probably has the lowest school enrolment rates in Namibia. These rates are on a par with rates in some of the poorest countries in the world e.g. Ethiopia, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. The reasons for this very low net enrolment are very complex and will be discussed further in the report. With such low rates it is clear that this project

⁷ Philippe Talavera: "Challenging the Namibian perception of sexuality", Windhoek, 2002.

⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics, "2001 Population and Housing Census, National Report: Basic Analysis with Highlights", Windhoek, July 2003

seeks to serve some of Norway's most important target groups i.e. rural, indigenous, marginalised children in Africa, without access to basic education. These facts are even more relevant in the light of the Government of Namibia's policy of "Education for all" - a very important issue in the post-independent era, as mentioned in section 1.3 above.

The Concept of Nomadism

4.5 The Ovahimba are said to be nomadic or semi-nomadic. This presumably means that they move their places of residence on a seasonal basis as they seek grazing and water for their cattle. Our field observations show that there are probably differences between west and east of the project area. The west is dryer and more subject to prolonged droughts. This means that herders there have to travel further and more frequently in search of grazing and water. It seems that some families could range as far as 100 kms from where their children were in school. It seems there was little desire for the school to move and most parents now wanted the school to have a permanent location where children could be "deposited" and cared for by the teachers. In the eastern part of the project area, there appeared to be a tendency to locate the school in the "onganda" or the traditional homestead. Here small stock was assembled near a reliable water source, and old people, pregnant women and small children and other groups not necessarily involved in cattle migration, were assembled here. It was appropriate to locate the school close to the homestead as nomadic or semi-nomadic parents knew where their children were, and that they were receiving an education.

4.6 Another possible aspect is that the teachers' contribution to administering the schools represents a heavy burden on them; the pressure on them may be so substantial that to relocate the tented school is a bit too much. The pressure on the teachers' resources may contribute to reduced mobility of the tented school units. They may calculate that the resources needed in moving the tents around with the migrating community could be used for something else. Teachers as well as adults probably feel that the costs of mobility outweigh the benefit.

5. THE PLANNING OF THE PROJECT

5.1 A Preliminary Field Study Report prepared by Hvidsten and Kavari in 1997 established the basis for the Ondao Mobile School Project ⁹.

5.2 Bernt H. Lund also made substantial contribution to the establishment of Ondao Mobile School. ¹⁰ As former ambassador to Namibia, he was asked in 1995 by the Namibian authorities to consider what kind of priorities should be set in the education of marginalised children in Namibia. He had experience from Northern Norway where the nomadic Lappish people had been target for mobile school units during the 50s and 60s, and which were seen as a success in educating the nomadic and semi-nomadic population.

Table 3 below summarises current access to education in Kunene Region

Table 3: Ovahimba/Ovazemba population in Epupa and Opuwo Constituencies and enrolment in school – 1997 - 2004

| | Communities Epupa, Opuwo Constit. | Population Epupa, Opuwo Constit. (est.) | Children between 6-19 (est.) | Children in govm. school | Children in Ondao M School | Applicants for school 6-19 | Children without registered application |
|-------------|---|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1997 | 1,223 | 16,070 | 7,338 (46%) | 900 (12%) | 0 | n/a | n/a |
| 2004 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2976 | 1,617 | 1884 |

n/a = Data not available

5.3 A survey of 1,223 communities in Epupa and Opuwo constituencies showed that 16,070 persons lived there. Of these 7,338 children between the ages of 6 and 19 were identified as being potential learners, about 46% of the total population. There was an average of 6 learners per community. The study showed that there were already 900 learners in 11 Government schools in the area. It was then estimated that 81 school units with 113 teachers would be needed to provide education to all of these. At the moment 2976 (45%) of the 6,400 potential learners are receiving education at the Ondao Mobile School. This is an increase from 12 % in 1997 (before the Ondao School was established) to 45 % in 2004. In addition an additional 29 communities have now applied for schools from the Ondao Mobile School. They total 1,617 learners and 441 households. There are therefore about 6,400 potential learners, 2,976 are in school, 1,617 have applied for schools that here are still about 1884 unserved in communities which have not applied for schools. In order to serve all the 6,400 potential learners, and to

⁹ Hvidsten Hans and Kavari T., "*Ondao Mobile School, Preliminary Field Study Report*", Opuwo, 1997

¹⁰ Lund, Bernt H. : *Nomadic Education in Namibia*, Oslo, 1995.

achieve universal education in the area of the present Ondao Mobile School, it would therefore be necessary to develop educational facilities for a further 3,400 children. This would mean the development of a further 40 schools with at least 100 additional teachers. In addition it is important to keep in mind that the younger generations represent a large proportion of the population due to an estimated annual population growth at more than 3% per annum. The above estimates show the size and scope of the problem in providing universal education in such marginalised communities. It is clear that meeting the *entire* demand is a formidable challenge.

5.4 The guiding principle behind the Ondao Mobile School was to provide basic educational facilities in the form of tents so that facilities could follow the movement of populations of Kunene during their periodic migrations with cattle in search of water and grazing. It was understood that the Ovahimba would simply not co-operate in educating their children if schools were not located close to family homes, so that children could continue to provide labour for herding animals and fetching water and firewood. Children in these communities represent important supply of labour and have distinct roles in the mode of production. It was also understood that the Ovahimba people would not cooperate with the authorities if they felt that their traditional culture, lifestyle, mode of dress and cultural belief were likely to be threatened.

5.5 However, when the mobile school was started in 1998, it appears that the migration patterns of the Ovahimba people were not fully understood. This consultant team's preliminary research indicates that the majority of the Ovahimba people are not nomadic in the true sense of the word. Most communities are attached to a so-called "onganda" or homestead where the poorer and less mobile members of society (old people, pregnant women, small children etc) live more or less permanently. This is at a fixed location.

5.6 This is also the location of the so-called "Holy Fire" which has an important symbolic function in Ovahimba community life. The younger, more mobile members of society herd the community cattle and range widely, particularly in the dry season from May to December in search of water and grazing. They range in all directions and for periods varying from one day to several weeks. Experience has shown that it is not always practical for the community school to follow the migrations, as these are difficult to predict and as they are widely dispersed. Numerous interviews with local communities, teachers and parents showed a widespread agreement that schools should remain in one place and not move. In fact there was widespread preference for permanent buildings. There was a

common sentiment that tents were not very practical and became very hot in the dry season. On the other hand it appears that some communities, particularly in the north west of Kunene Region (Otjinungwa and Onjuva) are more nomadic than others and do not have a permanent “onganda”. In these areas, schools still find it useful to move short distances in accordance with on-going migrations. During the consultant team’s fieldwork it was repeatedly claimed that over the past five years when a major drought has reigned, it has become increasingly difficult to predict the seasonal movements of the cattle because of the need to range widely to find water and grazing.

6. RESULTS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

6.1 Three reviews of the Ondao Mobile School Project have been undertaken in 1999, 2002 and 2003.

6.2 The first evaluation report was published in December 1999¹¹. The four person evaluation team visited all 12 mobile school units which were then in operation. They reported very positively on the impact of the school saying that interest was high amongst learners and parents and that the school had clearly had a very positive impact on attitudes to education amongst the Ovahimba people. The report pointed out that only 4 of the 12 schools visited had been mobile and that mobility was not a major requirement. It said that parents were already willing to leave their children at school or with older relatives so that their children could attend school. Parents were very positive towards the benefits conferred on society by education.

6.3 Attendance rates were high, often exceeding 80%, although these were affected by seasonal demands for herding labour. The tents, furniture and solar panels for lighting were well suited to the physical needs of the area and the teachers were generally from the area and well integrated into local society with a good understanding of traditional life. However many communities were dissatisfied with tents which they did not regard as proper permanent school buildings. Most schools lacked proper water supplies (and a lot of time was used in fetching water) and there were not even elementary health facilities. The report is very positive about the contributions of the first expatriate coordinator Mr.Hans Hvidsten and the School Principal Mr.Janni Tjivikua (who is still principal). The report recommends that NAMAS continue to support the project because it has raised consciousness about education among the Ovahimba.

¹¹ Shimhopileni, M, Tjahikika H., Tjizu R and Villet C., ”*Evaluation Report on the Ondao Mobile School Units (Kunene Region)*”, Windhoek, December 1999

6.4 The second evaluation was a mid-term evaluation carried out in October 2002¹². A seven-person team visited 15 of the 30 existing schools which at that time had a total enrolment of 2,070 learners. The report concluded that the overall quality of teaching was poor and in need of upgrading. However it commends both the Government and NAMAS for an innovative initiative and pronounces the project as a whole as a “success story”, and a “resounding success” because of its innovative nature. The report found that the tents were unsuitable for education because they were too hot and that there was a major lack of drinking water at most schools.

6.5 Another mid-term evaluation of the project was undertaken in April 2003¹³. This concentrated on financial and operational matters. A three-person team visited 12 schools. The purpose of the evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. About 120 teachers, parents, learners and administrators were interviewed. The evaluation found that the project was well managed. However it found the project very costly because of its decentralised nature --- requiring expenditure on subsistence and travel allowances. The evaluation found there was not enough Government involvement in the project in terms of maintenance and services. It also found that most communities were willing to contribute to the cost of the education. There were a number of operating problems concerning transport, water and delivery of food. Low salaries for teachers were also a problem although there were no problems in recruiting and retention. The evaluation found that most teachers, parents and learners were satisfied that the Ondao Mobile School was securing the local culture. Morale was generally high and there was a pride amongst teachers in being employed by Ondao. The report concludes by saying:

“Ondao Mobile School Project is providing the Ovahimba/Ovazemba children with valuable and excellent educational opportunities in order to enable them to deal with the pressures of the modern world and to take advantage of modern technology and services while preserving their cultural values, belief systems and traditions”

¹² Ndjoze-Ojo Dr.Becky, et al. ”A Report on the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ondao Mobile School Project”, Windhoek, October 2002

¹³ Finance and Commerce Consultancy Services, ”Report on the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ondao Mobile School Project for EMC Children in Kunene Region”, Windhoek, April 2003

7. FIELD WORK, DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Methods

7.1 As indicated above the consultant team undertook a series of interviews in 17 schools and their local communities between 4 October and 15 October 2004. One consultant undertook interviews in 7 schools and the other in 10 schools (one school, Otjerundu, was visited together). In addition one team visited an “onganda” that was applying for a school. The consultant team used Standard Interview Guides (see *Annex III*) on which to base their interviews. The team interviewed learners, teachers, parents, local community leaders and members. It is estimated that the consultant team spent at least 100 hours interviewing and interviewed well over 300 individuals, including the participants at the community meetings. The consultant team presented a set of preliminary findings to the Executive Committee of the Ondao Mobile School in Opuwo on Friday 15 October 2004. These preliminary findings are attached at *Annex IV*. A minute of the meeting setting out the Committee’s reactions to the consultants’ preliminary findings is presented in *Annex V*. This was considered to be a very important exercise. It gave the local community represented by the Executive Committee a chance to have their say on the consultants’ preliminary findings. What emerged was that the Executive Committee were sure that the Ondao Mobile School had had a very positive beneficial impact on Ovahimba society and culture and that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture and NAMAS deserved a great deal of credit for this.

7.2 It should be emphasised that on their visit to Kunene Region the consulting team concentrated on *visiting schools*. This is because the schools are where the *impact* of the project can be most directly measured and assessed. Several of the schools visited are situated between 100 kilometres and 300 kilometres from Opuwo on bad roads. Nonetheless the team considered that this was a more effective way of using their time than trying to assess the project from offices in Opuwo. The results which follow are therefore a condensation and synthesis of the data collected. The consultant team has tried to condense the results as much as possible as many schools came up with very similar views and opinions so that reproducing all the fieldwork results would simply be duplication or repetition, although there are differences between the school units. The results therefore represent the consensus views of most of the persons interviewed.

The Team visited the following schools:

| Date | School | Interviews with | Visited by |
|------------|---|--|------------|
| 5 October | Epembe Permanent building/tent | 3 teachers (1w/2m), 3 learners (1 g/2 b) Community meeting incl. parents, board memb. | MS |
| 5 October | Otjinungwa | 3 teachers, 6 learners, 3 parents | MF |
| 6 October | Ondjuva | 2 teachers, 6 learners, 2 parents | MF |
| 6 October | Okauapehuri Tent | 1 teacher (m), 2 learners (b/g), the headman | MS |
| 6 October | Orue Tent | 1 teacher (m), 2 learners (g/b), community meeting (9 persons - incl. headman, 3/w, parents) | MS |
| 6 October | Otjitambi Tent | 2 teachers (m), 2 learners (g/b), 2 community members (w/m), parents | MS |
| 7 October | Otjimuhaka Permanent building/tent | 2 teachers (w/m), 2 learners (g/b), comm..meet. (headman, 7 men/fathers) | MS |
| 7 October | Otjimaungu Tent | 2 teachers (w/m), 4 learners, 1 board member. | MS |
| 8 October | Ohungumure | Community meeting, Parents,learners, 2 teachers | MF |
| 8 October | Ondoozu ¹⁴ | Community meeting, incl, headman (10 persons, parents) | MS |
| 11 October | Omuangete ¹⁵ Permanent building/tent | 2 teachers (w), 3 learners (2g/1b), comm.meet. 12 members (4m/8w) incl. headman, parents | MS |
| 11 October | Okahozu Permanent building/tent | 3 teachers, 6 learners, 5 parents | MF |
| 12 October | Okopaue | 1 teacher, 6 learners, 3 parents | MF |
| 12 October | Okarokoro | Community, 2 teachers, 5 learners | MF |
| 12 October | Ovituambu Permanent building/tent | 1 teacher (w), 4 learners (2g/2b), comm.meet. (headman, 4w/5m, parents) | MS |
| 12 October | Omuhonga Permanent building | 2 teachers (w/m), 4 learners (2g/2b) | MS |
| 13 October | Muretti SSS* 500 learners | 1 teacher (m) 1 learner (b) | MS |
| 13 October | Otjerundu Gov. | Principal, 2 teachers, 2 learners | MS+MF |

(m=man, w=woman, g=girl, b=boy) *Muretti Senior Secondary School

¹⁴ Formerly the Ondao Mobile School had a unit in the Ondoozu community. Due to size and number of learners and marginal grazing areas the unit was closed down and moved to Okwapehuri, an area that had better grazing and higher number of learners, but could also include learners fro Ondoozu. At that time this was discussed and in line with the community members. The community people met by the Team complained that they did not have a school and that their application for a school was not approved.

¹⁵ The Omuangete Ondao School Unit had two female teachers, and both had built on their own a small house to live in at the school area. This implies that the Ondao School also bring in more permanent dwellings which in a long term perspective might contribute to a new mode of village among the Ovahimbias.

Summary of the Analysis and findings from the Interviews

7.3 The data collected have been analysed by grouping the data into themes to develop indicators for analysis. The data are qualitative in nature and are analysed in line with the Terms of Reference

Cultural Impact

Attitudes to education

7.4 The most easily measurable change observed is that all the learners interviewed define education as positive for themselves and for their culture. Many learners during the interviews were somewhat surprised when they were asked how they considered education. Some of the learners even responded by saying that “*we would like to do what you are doing – read, write and speak English*”. In addition, parents interviewed emphasised that during colonial rule they did not have access to education, that they were not allowed to go to school, and therefore defined the access to education as a positive change towards democratisation and equal rights.

7.5 Since the attitude towards education is perceived by the respondents as something good they have obtained, and seemingly more positive as observed in earlier studies, it should be recalled that the planning of a huge hydropower plant in Epupa, Kunene River (the border between Angola and Namibia) led to massive mobilisation of the indigenous population that was going to be affected. The local population at that time (early 1990s) were illiterate and could not read or write, and they felt deprived without the means to follow the discussions going on during the process.¹⁶

7.6 The cultural impact of the Ondao Mobile School on the Ovahimba community has, according to themselves, been positive. Learners, teachers and community leaders are generally agreed that the Ondao School has had a positive cultural impact. This is because it has empowered society by teaching the Ovahimba to read and write. This makes it much easier for the Ovahimba to defend and foster their own culture and economy, in their encounters with the outside world. Children have been permitted to retain traditional dress and ways and the children are taught in their vernacular language of Otjiherero by Ovahimba teachers. Parents say they fear that a Government “take-over” of the schools will result in children being forced to abandon traditional dress and to adopt expensive uniforms. Parents and local

¹⁶ The Epupa Hydro Power Project has not been realised due to market conditions and to the resistance met among the local people. See Friedman, J. T. “*Mapping the Epupa Debate: Discourse and Representation in a Namibian Development Project*” in “*New notes on Kaoko*”, Miescher, G. and Henrichsen, D. (ed), 2000.

communities were initially quite sceptical to the establishment of schools. They feared the establishment of hostels and boarding schools would bring about cultural dilution. This fear has probably proved to be unfounded. Although it is perhaps too early to say as the coming years will show what happens when some of the learners continue in government schools.

Hairstyle and traditional attire

7.7 What is clear to all visitors who come to the Ondao Mobile School units is that the children use both traditional attire and modern clothing. Girls were generally more conservative in dress and hair-style and tended to retain traditional dress and styles longer than boys. Boys cut their hair to look like other boys and in order to play soccer, according to their own explanations. Many parents want to retain the culture so that the learners can go dressed in traditional attire which are much cheaper than western clothes and is not bought for cash. However there also seemed to be a clear trend for young people to abandon traditional attire. This was for practical reasons. Traditional body covering, red ochre and the like, stains and soils school books and school furniture. Another aspect referred to in a recent study is that shaved heads for boys indicates that you are a schoolboy.¹⁷ This is also supported by the observation that the teachers are becoming adult role models for the learners, and all teachers met during the field visit had shaved their heads or cut their hair and wore modern clothes. In school units where female teachers were a majority, one would find girls in both modern and traditional attire. Some teachers pointed out the problems met by female learners wearing traditional dress, as for example during menstruation.

7.8 There was a pervasive opinion in many communities that if Ovahimba children were educated from an early age they would learn to appreciate the Himba culture and retain their language and their roots into adulthood. Establishing schools locally close to the parents and learners as Ondao had done, helped to retain the culture as children did not travel far to a strange, new alien environment which might change their culture.

7.9 Virtually all schools and communities visited stressed the desirability of retaining and strengthening traditional culture. Very few people argued for a “modernisation” of traditional societies. Starting schools in local communities, as Ondao had done, would retain children in the community and help to strengthen Ovahimba culture. Most parents seemed reassured that the Ondao Mobile School was maintaining traditional values

¹⁷ Shaved head means...”to look like someone who has been schooled and is educated”, p.49. in Talavera, P.: *“Challenging the Namibian perception of sexuality – A case study of the Ovahimba and OvaHerero cultural-sexual models in Kunene North in an HIV/AIDS context”* (2002)

and cultures. The teachers were predominantly Ovahimba and a serious effort had been made to adapt books and the curriculum to Ovahimba values, although they agreed that some more adjustments could be done. Parents and learners saw no contradiction between education and traditional culture. The general sentiment was that education and empowerment strengthened culture.

7.10 There was also a common view that sending Ovahimba children to Government schools would dilute the traditional culture: there would be demands to wear uniforms and Western dress which children would find difficult to resist. This seems to be one of the main reasons for the resistance to a Government take-over of the Ondao schools. One of the most frequently quoted adages about Government schools was: “*Give them your little finger and they’ll take your whole hand*”. People felt that Government promised that they would do nothing to change the culture, but before you knew it everything was indeed changed. People were very sceptical as to Government’s intentions. Resistance towards Government take over has been so strong that the planned transfer of Omuhonga School Unit has been postponed.¹⁸

7.11 Ovahimba teachers, on the other hand, were viewed by communities, parents and learners as very potent role models. They represented the end result of education and a substantial number of learners interviewed expressed a wish to become a teacher and to come back and serve his/her community.

7.12 A large majority of learners interviewed spoke approvingly of their own traditional culture and said they wanted education so that they could return to their own communities to help strengthen the Ovahimba culture. Teachers received a lot of the credit for adapting curricula to local needs. As the majority of teachers were Ovahimba they were able to do this quite easily.

Generation Gap

7.13 There was, however, a view (perhaps most amongst the more wealthy cattle owners) that education would alienate children and take them away from the community thereby diluting the culture. It was argued that by

¹⁸ This school had got a modern school building paid by the government (2001). The decision to postpone the government takeover was made in a Executive Committee Meeting, October 2004. The teachers interviewed at this unit explained that due to the probable takeover by the government, many parents had taken their children out of school. The “supply” of learners had been reduced and to fill up the necessary number of learners, the teachers had travelled to Epupa town (approx. 100 km away) to recruit learners. They had brought about 15 learners who now were living at the school.

giving education you may be taking children out of a society so that they would no longer be willing to look after cattle or their parents. For these communities, cattle stock is the culture, the mode of value, the mean of exchange and the only basic resource for survival. There is therefore a clear “generation gap” between some parents and children, but by no means all.

7.14 There had been some initial resistance in some communities to Ovahimba being educated.¹⁹ However when they returned to their own communities they quickly became “role-models” for the children and gained the approval of parents. Among the respondents there are many examples of how a rising generation gap is evolving, even if there are parents who are more willing to let their children adapt to the changing environment. The acceptance of education as something “good” for their culture is increasingly adopted among the Ovahimbas. However, the Ovahimbas are aware of the danger of their culture’s sustainability when losing their youngsters if they chose to find jobs outside their community. In this context it is very important for the young generation to communicate that education and the following capabilities will be a tool to sustain the Ovahimba culture. There is a certain **dilemma** for the community, but what is a positive trend is the fact that this is being discussed. In this matter, the Ondao School represents an opportunity to empower the community where they can participate in defining their future.

Changing Gender Roles

7.15 There is a clear conflict between the Ondao School and the culture as far as girls are concerned. This has to be understood in the context of control of reproduction. The young women represent the means of reproducing the society through giving birth to new generations. It seems that the majority of girls leave school at the onset of puberty. Traditionally they are regarded as young women by that time and it is not “seemly” for marriageable girls to attend school any more. It is however interesting that some girls have expressed disagreement, since they would prefer to go to school instead of marriage at an early age, but emphasise loyalty to their parents and their decisions.

¹⁹ One person met during the field visit told that his father had threatened to kill him if he continued education. He ran away from the family, and for some years the child stayed in another community without contact with his family. Now they had regained contact, but still the conflict was there, and the family was not willing to provide funds to finish education. Another example shows that the father was very resistant to his son’s education. When he returned back home as a teacher, the father had accepted his son’s new mode of life, especially since he was living in the same village.

7.16 It is part of the Ovahimba culture that women and girls do not mix much with men. It is therefore important for cultural continuity in the schools to have enough female teachers so that the girls can communicate with the teachers if things get problematic. The Ovahimba tradition is to arrange marriage at an early age. After this the girl is regarded as married, however, she does not move to her husband before she becomes mature. It was said that Ovahimba girls were frequently married off early at the age of 13 or 14 in order to “..... safeguard the fertility of the Ovahimba” in order so that they did not mix with other non-Himba groups.

7.17 A strong cultural argument was put forward for up-grading the school to 8th or 12th grade. This would preserve the culture. Learners could continue to wear traditional dress to school if it continued after 7th grade. These strong views could also be interpreted that the communities really do fear what education represents. They are afraid of losing their identity as cattle people, losing their children to the modern society. This fear is a rational expression amongst people well adapted to extreme natural conditions. Nonetheless upgrading of schools beyond 7th grade does not seem very practical because of the huge distances and the very low population densities. But there is a very widely expressed desire for this.

7.18 The Ovahimba are aware of an increasing pressure on their traditional ways of life and culture. These pressures come from tourists, from itinerant traders (often selling alcohol) and from a growing number of African and foreign missionaries. Education will make the Ovahimba better equipped to deal with these new pressure groups. It was said the Ovahimba will never change and will always be Himba. Even top Ovahimba civil servants keep cattle, since their identity and social status are closely linked to being cattle owner.

Economic Impact

7.19 The economic impact on the community has probably been positive so far, and maybe since the school does not yet require an additional cash contribution from the community members. Children learn to read and write and to count and to speak English in a society which is extremely vulnerable to outside pressures and to exploitation. Parents who are invariably illiterate and ignorant of the modern world are easy prey to outside economic exploitation. Educated children can certainly help to abate that problem. The introduction of money economy to nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle people is often seen as a “threat” to their mode of production.

7.20 The marginal cost of educating Ovahimba children is probably very high because of the high costs of transport and because of the low teacher/learner norms. The fact that a large number of learners are probably only undertaking part-time education (many spend a lot of time fetching water or tending cattle) also raises the unit costs of education.

7.21 Learners have a “double burden” of education and work. Traditionally children work in Ovahimba society from an early age. They have a distinct economic role in herding cattle, fetching water and fetching firewood. There was extensive evidence of “rotating” attendance. One week one sibling came to school, one week another came. One day one boy went to fetch water, another day another did. In many cases visits to schools revealed that little more than half the learners on the school roll were actually present on the day in question. However schools and teachers do adapt their hours/timetable for the needs of the learners.

7.22 Boys and girls have distinct economic roles in Himba society. Boys largely tend cattle, and so often have to travel long distances and be away from school for long periods. Girls more traditionally stay near the heart at the *onganda* and so perhaps have more opportunities for attending school regularly. It has been observed in other nomadic societies e.g. Mongolia, that girls often get better access to schools than boys because of the economic importance of boys in cattle-herding. One parent expressed it as follows:

“We believe in our cattle and we believe in education. But the situation is difficult. If we allow our learners to come everyday to school, then our cattle will die and get lost.”

7.23 There may be different economic attitudes to education in different communities. Richer communities often see education as an impediment to cattle herding because it deprives them of labour. They are more dependent on their children’s labour, and so far they have much more to lose in a society where all the children attend school on a regular basis. Poorer communities see education more as an economic or survival strategy.

7.24 In many cases putting children in school may entail a considerable economic sacrifice on the part of families. Semi-nomadic cattle herding is very labour intensive and very hard work. That is probably why most people are willing to permit education for their children but not if they have to pay for it on the top of everything else. It is very difficult to make realistic observations on the “willingness to pay” and the “ability to pay” for education amongst the Ovahimba. Many parents appeared to be strongly against paying anything for education, arguing that people like the Ovahimba

are a special case. On the other hand, it was observed that in some schools parents had been able to collect substantial amounts of money for school purposes. Several schools seemed to collect funds to send learners on soccer tournaments and one school (Otjinungwa) was collecting money to be able to construct a water supply for the school.

7.25 Parents also like local schools because they can draw on the labour of their children as and when they need it. They also feel that a local school and a local teacher can better appreciate the need to withdraw children periodically from school. Many parents probably see education as inevitable anyway. It was much more economic for families to have the children available locally than going off to Opuwo to study, never being available for cattle-herding, and going off to be totally alienated for ever.

7.26 It has now become a very practical economic proposition for parents to leave their children at school. At Ondjuva school in the west of the project area, there were 15 learners of whom 13 lived at the school. They had been given two of the teachers' tents. The children received education, food, childcare and accommodation at school. Many schools have actually become boarding schools and parents certainly see an economic advantage in this.

7.27 Literacy and an ability to count will have a great empowerment impact upon the Ovahimba. There are many examples of illiterate Ovahimba being cheated on cattle sales. It was said at Okahozu School that one goat worth N\$ 300 was traded for a case of Castle beer retailing at N\$ 150.

7.28 Almost all learners had very high levels of ambitions to be doctors, nurses, and teachers --- all professions which the Ovahimba do not possess. They seemed very motivated to return to their community. Schooling has given Ovahimba children ambitions which they could not aspire to before.

7.29 School could serve as a focus for extensive community development e.g. a water point, a health clinic, a school garden, adult literacy classes, Government information and communications. The population is very dispersed at the moment and very difficult to provide with services. Communications are very difficult and the radios provided by the project are probably the only examples in the whole project area. With such a close-knit community the Ovahimba are very vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and have practically no access to medical treatment. In most of the schools visited the teachers have organised what they call "HIV/AIDS awareness club" at the school, where they inform about the danger of sexual behaviour and the tradition of having many sex partners, and inform about the use of condoms. The school and teachers could serve as important agents of change for the

positive. It was suggested that water is a centripetal force, more so than schools. If you develop water a school will develop there too.

Social Impact

7.30 The social impact has probably been positive seen from the community members' perspective. Parents and local communities appear to have become very much more positive towards education now than they were initially. This is because they have been able to witness the clear advantages of educating children and that reading and writing are important competence in the rapid changing environment. In addition many communities which migrate frequently (particularly in the west of the region) recognise advantages in leaving their children in school where they obtain education, food, shelter and childcare from the Ondao School.

7.31 All communities and school units visited responded that they held monthly meetings, every term or upon request when issues related to the school come up. They regard the meetings as very important and a meeting place where they can discuss matters related to their children. They were very pleased that the team had come and raised issues about their culture and their everyday life, since in many respects they feel that they need mediators between them and the outside community. They do not always feel that the government and local authorities listen to them. However, these meetings open up for discussion and provide a safe forum for them to express their opinions on many subjects. It was noted that the principal of the school spent much time participating in such meetings.

7.32 There are, however, still very many significant social problems, although these are not caused by the introduction of schools and education. Medical services seem very deficient in the area. This is probably because of the very high cost of providing services. Some schools are over 200 kms from the nearest clinic and some only receive a visit from the mobile clinic once a year, if that. Child mortality and maternal mortality are bound to be very high in these areas. It was stated that teachers and children were frequently sick and none of them had access to the most elementary health care or medicines. This situation was exacerbated by the lack of water.

7.33 Accommodation for the children is very poor and insanitary --- often an overcrowded and worn out tent. Some children had to sleep in their clothes on a concrete floor. However, in Otjimuhaka a former church building was used as a class room. At night the church was used as dormitory. Teachers were frequently away on courses, on errands for the community and collecting salaries. This could mean closing the school for up

to a week. The responsibility for the children who stay at the school, also when teachers are away, is unclear.

7.34 It was noted that one of the strengths of the Ondao Mobile School was its *flexibility*. Although teachers had to be absent for some time, parents would often help out in looking after children. Similarly children could have to go off for cattle-herding or water fetching tasks and the school was able to take this into account too. A less flexible type of school might fit more readily into the Namibian Government's system of schooling, but it would be unable to retain learners (and teachers) as well as it does.

7.35 Over 30 relatively isolated communities in northern Kunene Region have been provided with 2 or 3 educated persons, the teachers, representing Government by the project. These do a great deal for the community and the Government. They act as a go-between. One teacher from Okoupaue was in Opuwo to fetch diesel for the community as he was the only person who could organise this sort of thing. The NAMAS project transport also provides some sort of transport lifeline for such communities.

7.36 In some areas there is strong resistance to alcohol (often influenced by a religious organisation) whilst in other areas there is no resistance at all.

Analysis

The Time Perspective

7.37 All interpretations relating to illiterate societies such as the Ovahimba and the Ovazemba where education has been introduced should be cautious and take into consideration the time perspective. What has been achieved over a period of 6 years could be defined as a huge leap from the "stone age" to modern times. However, the changes observed have not only been caused by the introduction of education alone. The introduction of modern infrastructure such as highways, tourism, post-independent national institutions as health clinics, vaccination programmes, the money economy, trading in modern products and much more all constitute "pull" factors that change the Ovahimba and Ovazemba cultures. In this context the right to education can be viewed as a tool for the targeted population to tackle the rapid changing environment.

7.38 The time dimension, both for the individual and the community, is vital in making a school similar to more urban schools. The flexibility built into the Ondao Mobile School, where attendance is less compulsory than in

more well-established schools is probably a prerequisite for building up a school system for the Ovahimba and other groups in the region.

Building institutions

7.39 Building institutions for the Ovahimba and Ovazemba will take time. They are aware that they have the right to education and view this as one of the basic rights they have in an independent Namibia. The parents' and grandparents' generations are almost illiterate and it will take time before they fully understand the consequences of education. Building a sound, sustainable education system in Kunene requires participation from the local community, and so far this participation has been at a reasonable level. The adult population state that they have now **accepted** education. They also strongly maintain that they accept education as long as they can control their children and still make use of the labour they represent.

Building capacity

7.40 The teachers are trained and educated while teaching at Ondao Mobile School. This part time education diverts teaching resources away from teaching. However, it is a strength that local resources are educated and trained in their local environment. It is an interesting model, but implies that the results achieved are poorer than if fully educated teachers had been available at the inception of the school system. However this may have been too much to wish for in such a remote area.

Gender

7.41 Gender issues were found to correspond with findings from other studies undertaken in similar societies. Girls meet stronger resistance from parents when it comes to education after the girls have matured. This is both due to their traditional attire which have implications for their movements when they have their menstruation, control of reproduction, marriage systems and perception of gender roles. It is interesting to note that some of the young girls said that they would prefer to get further education rather than marry. Some married women also stated that they were interested in education but other members of the community asked: "*But why do you like education? Why do you need education?*" There is evidence that some women meet strong resistance among kinsfolk when they argue for adult education. Loyalty to parents and the community's traditions are strong. However, tensions between the traditional and the modern society are part of the ongoing social changing processes. It is too early to say if new gender roles are being constructed among the Ovahimbas. There is evidence that young

girls aspire for more education and professions outside the traditional Ovahimba society as the young boys do. As mentioned before, female teachers will probably ease the situation for the girls providing role models for them. Female teachers are also expected to communicate more on equal level than will be the case with male teachers. To avoid a gender bias in the process of education among the Ovahimbas, recruitment of women into teacher positions could be crucial for the young girls of the Ovahimba people. Special efforts must be made to encourage Ovahimba girls to train as teachers.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 1: Previous evaluations/studies

Three reviews/evaluations of the Ondao Mobile School Project have been carried out in 1999, 2002 and 2003. All of them have had very favourable findings on the impact of the School. This study agrees largely with these findings and considers that the impact of the Ondao Mobile School has generally been a success. Its impact on the economy, culture and the Ovahimba people has been benign. The team would like to stress that since these communities are in a process where social change is obvious, the introduction of education should be developed to empower the community members both as individuals and as groups. The Team regards this innovative project to be a key instrument in building institutions and capacity to make the Ovahimba and the other groups more capable of tackling their fast changing surroundings.

Conclusion 2: The Success of the School

The reasons for the School's success are the way the School has been developed by the Government and NAMAS and the approach adopted. The Ovahimba people of the northern Kunene Region are still inordinately proud of their indigenous culture. This is probably why there was originally considerable resistance to the concept of education before the project started. However the Government and NAMAS have developed the Ondao Mobile School sensitively and have been able to overcome most (if not at all) objections. They have done this by using local teachers and languages, local teaching materials and by permitting learners to dress in traditional clothing and hair-styles. The Ondao Mobile School can therefore be regarded as an important contribution to the empowerment of one of Namibia's indigenous peoples. The majority of the Ovahimba people in the area therefore now appear enthusiastic for this form of education. They do not feel threatened by the concept of education and have been brought round to appreciate its benefits and the need for literacy and numeracy in a fast-changing world. The maize meal they get during the school day also seems to be of great importance to them. However, they are used to meat and milk products and they state that they would prefer something more than the maize porridge. Again, they do not pay for the food, which also represents a contribution from the school.

Conclusion 3: Acceptance by the Community

There is a widespread acceptance within the communities that education is needed. However, they seem to feel threatened in the case where their children have to go far away to outside communities for education.

The School can take much of the credit for bringing this acceptance about. In this respect it can be argued that the Ovahimba have been granted ownership and empowerment of their own schools. The school reflects their wishes. However it was noted that some better-off communities have reservations as to the cultural impact because they feel it may harm their economic interests. It can do so by diverting children from their traditional herding and water carrying duties to education in school, and this can have a cultural and economic impact on society. There seemed to be some resistance to paying for education. Perhaps this was because some families thought that losing the labour of the learners was a great enough economic sacrifice to make. However there are clear indications that “willingness to pay” will increase as more and more people accept and recognise the clear benefits of education. It seems that the Ovahimba will be increasingly willing to contribute to the education of their children as they see the concrete benefits of this education. Overall it can be said that the Ovahimba community has accepted the introduction of modern education brought to them by NAMAS and the Government, although there is still a degree of ambivalence in certain areas.

Conclusion 4: Assistance from Norway

The Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture and the Executive Committee of the School accept that assistance from Norway cannot be indefinite. However they have made an appeal for time to be granted for a phasing out period. They fear that phasing out Norwegian assistance in the next year (the current agreement ends on 31 December 2005) would threaten the sustainability of a school which has proved to be a success in bringing basic education to a highly vulnerable and marginalised group. The local community felt that they did not have access to education during colonial rule until Independence. On the other hand it is important that the idea of making a contribution to their childrens’ education (either in cash or kind) should be introduced to the Ovahimba people as soon as possible.

Conclusion 5: Government Schools

There seems to be an unjustified suspicion of “Government” schools amongst the Ovahimba people. The fact that the Ondao Mobile School does not charge fees, operates in vernacular languages, does not require children to wear uniforms and uses local teachers and is situated locally, makes many

communities think that Government schools will change their traditional culture for the worse. Communities attribute the suitability of the Ondao Mobile School to NAMAS' presence although the Government actually contributes about two-thirds of the School's operating costs through paying administrative costs and teachers' salaries. Suspicion of Government by the Ovahimba people may derive from history when the Ovahimba were a highly marginalised people largely ignored, and/or exploited by outside forces. There is, however, a need to change the widespread perception that a foreign-financed "Norwegian" school is better than a Government, because it is not true.

Conclusion 6: The Need for Education

Physically the Ovahimba are some of the toughest, self-reliant people in the world. Their physical environment makes them that way. They have to survive in one of the most difficult environments in Africa with little water, great heat, long distances and little food.²⁰ School teachers think nothing of walking 30 kilometres to Opuwo. However, toughness and self-reliance are not enough as the modern world is fast approaching the northern parts of Kunene Region. The number of tourists is increasing and the Government's strategic interest in the area, for hydropower or port development seems to be increasing. The number of traders and missionaries is also on the increase. In that respect an illiterate people, unable to negotiate confidently are highly susceptible and vulnerable to exploitation and cheating and worse. The Ovahimba are one of the most marginalised groups in Africa and in desperate need of basic education. Such people are a priority target group for Norwegian development assistance.

Conclusion 7: The Mobility of the Schools

The term Ondao Mobile School has become something of a misnomer. Gradually over the six years of its establishment the Ondao School has ceased to become largely mobile. Only two or three schools, mainly in the west of the project area are mobile, and only for parts of the year. (Another school in the east experienced that half of the learners have to migrate with their parents so one of the teachers followed around 25 learners parts of the year.) This trend was noticed already in the first evaluation in 1999. There were a number of reasons for establishing a mobile school. Firstly, it was thought that most children travelled frequently with their parents in search of water and grazing for a large part of the year. This is probably true if there was no alternative form of child-care. Secondly, it seems to have been

²⁰ Their indigenous knowledge should be utilised more in developing curriculum and also for other relevant purposes.

assumed that many parents were reluctant to send their children to school at all, and if they were not reluctant, then they were still reluctant to send them to schools outside the community. For these reasons schools had to be mobile, to follow the children in their travels. Thirdly, using tents and not permanent buildings made it cheaper and easier to establish the School.

The situation seems to have changed fairly radically over the past six years. In discussions with dozens of parents and many communities it is clear that the majority of the Ovahimba people now place great faith in education. The arrival of the Namibian state administration in Opuwo with hospitals and shops and government officers has made the Ovahimba realise that change has come to stay and the best way of facing up to it is to get oneself an education. The arrival of increasing numbers of tourists in Kaokoland also makes the same point for the Ovahimba. Now that the money economy has arrived in Kaokoland for good, there is no advantage whatsoever in being unable to read, write or count. It therefore seems that the Ovahimba are willing to sacrifice a lot more now than they were six years ago to have their children educated. Every community visited by the consultant team was positive towards Ondao School and the benefits of education. A few dissenting households still felt education could destroy the culture and the economy, but they were very much in the minority. What is happening now is that parents and local communities are becoming very aware of their power of decision-making in a democratic society. They are pressing the Government to modify the mobile school idea and to establish permanent schools with accommodation for the children. Parents who need to travel widely to seek water and grazing for their herds want to ensure their children go to school regularly and that they can be under the care of the teachers. Several schools which were originally mobile e.g. Otjinungwa, Ondjavu, Otjitambi and Okahozu had converted teachers' tents to learners' accommodation.

Conclusion 8: Costs of Government Services in Kunene

The unit cost of providing Government services in general to the Ovahimba people is probably extremely high. This is because physical conditions are very difficult with high mountains, great heat, floods and drought, almost no roads and bridges and a very low density of population. In addition much of the population is nomadic and does not stay in one place. This has made it extremely difficult to provide schools, health centres or even water supplies, and this is very evident in the field. Before the Ministry of Basic Education , Sports and Culture and NAMAS appeared in 1998 there were almost no schools for 40,000 people. There is one mobile clinic for the whole of Kunene Region and only about three fixed clinics in the whole project area.

The high unit cost is almost certainly why this part of Namibia had almost no educational facilities prior to the arrival of the Ondao Mobile School in 1998. It is striking to the outsider how little evidence there is of Government presence or investment in northern Kunene Region, except the ongoing construction of a modern highway going northwards to Epupa Falls, where plans to develop a major hydropower plan appear to have been shelved because of widespread protests by the Ovahimba.²¹

Establishing schools in the semi-nomadic environment requires more infrastructure to ensure that a sustainable school system is built up. Further infrastructural investments are to take place if the Ondao Mobile School is to be upgraded. However, this represents a dilemma, since this in turn will imply stronger impact on the nomadic/semi-nomadic way of life.

Conclusion 9: Unit Costs of the Schools

The unit cost of education through the Ondao Mobile School is also probably very high. It would almost certainly be very much cheaper in terms of unit costs if children were collected together in boarding schools, but this would totally undermine the wish of the Ovahimba people to maintain their traditional culture. The main reason for the high cost is that fact that Ondao Mobile School is the largest school in the country with almost 3,000 learners dispersed over 33 sites. Learner/teacher norms have to be considerably lower than national averages in areas like this. And a major constraint is transport. It is more or less impossible to maintain any Government services in this region without a reliable source of transport. It is impossible to provide education to the community at Otjinungwa, 299 kilometres from Opuwo unless there is a reliable form of transport which can freight food, fuel and schoolbooks to the children and which can allow the teachers to travel to Opuwo to cash their pay and to attend training sessions.

Conclusion 10: The Financial Role of NAMAS

Although NAMAS is only responsible for the payment of about 36% of the School's operating costs, it has been responsible for some of the most critical items i.e. provision and maintenance of transport, technical assistance and purchase of fuel. This is, of course, vital for a school distributed over 33 locations in an area of 40,000 km² in some of Africa's most inaccessible terrain. However experience shows that Governments in general are highly reluctant to allocate funds for transport because of the potential for abuse. There is a widespread belief that, if NAMAS withdrew its support to

²¹ "Mapping the Epupa Debate: Discourse and Representation in a Namibian Development Context", in Miescher, G. and Henrichsen, D.: "New Notes on Kaoko", 2000.

transport, the Government would be unable/unwilling to replace it and that the school would no longer be able to operate effectively for lack of transport.

There are clear indications that parents, having seen and experienced the concrete benefits of education, are able and willing to make some contribution to making a financial contribution to school in the area.

Conclusion 11: The Presence of Teachers and institution building

It represents a major social achievement to have located over 70 educated persons i.e. school-teachers in over 30 communities over a period of 6 years in one of the remotest and least developed corners of Namibia. Teachers have acted as important role models for communities and for learners who see for themselves what an educated Ovahimba person can achieve. Teachers, because of their education, often become community leaders and because of their access to transport and outside contacts can play an important catalytic role in local societies which, until now, have been totally isolated. Teachers from the Ondao Mobile School, apart from educating children, can help local communities in contacting Government and in negotiating the provision of Government services. This is a very important impact of the project. NAMAS bears this cost today in the form of purchase of vehicles, fuel and maintenance. It was repeatedly said that if NAMAS withdraws their support at the end of 2005 then the regional education authorities would simply not be able to mobilise the financial resources to provide this level of transport. NAMAS therefore bears that extra cost of educating them in their own cultural environment.

The flexible approach taken by NAMAS and the Government to the teachers at the Ondao Mobile School is commendable. It is clear that with such a widely dispersed school, it is impossible to check or control the physical attendance of the teachers. There are endless good excuses for not being present at school in such a dispersed school e.g. sickness, fetching water and fuel, going to Opuwo for training/consultation and fetching money. However the impression the team gained was that the teachers were conscientious and kept the schools open as much as possible, and that there was no widespread abuse of this flexible system.

Conclusion 12: Information on HIV/AIDS and the School as an Agent of Change

The Ondao Mobile School is performing an essential role in combating and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Ovahimba communities. Several

schools have established “HIV/AIDS Awareness Clubs” and most teachers and learners seem as well informed as they can be on the subject. Kunene Region has the lowest HIV/AIDS infection rate in Namibia i.e. 14%. However the Ovahimbas are particularly vulnerable because of the close-knit nature of communities and because of the sexual practices involving several partners. In this respect the Ondao Mobile School has the potential to serve as an essential agent of change, particularly as regards health services and information how to practice safe sex.

Recommendation 1:

It is *recommended* that NAMAS’ assistance to the existing Ondao Mobile School Project be continued, but phased out over a four year period starting on 1 January 2006 and concluding on 31 December 2009. Under this arrangement all NAMAS assistance to the Ondao Mobile School Project will cease from 31 December 2009. The reason for this is that NAMAS will have contributed assistance for a period of 12 years which should be sufficient to build up and consolidate assistance so that the education of almost 3,000 Ovahimba children from a recently illiterate society, becomes sustainable. This will also allow NAMAS to switch assistance, if it wishes, to needier target groups e.g. communities which have applied for, but do not possess a school. It will also allow for a concerted effort to be made over the four year period to involve parents and local communities in the financial and other support of the School.

Recommendation 2:

It is *recommended* that the level of assistance remains at about to-day’s level i.e. N\$ 1,000,000 a year including the costs of a resident expatriate adviser in Opuwo. It is recommended that consideration be given to granting 100% support to the project from the Norwegian development assistance budget. This is because it is a project which has been developed with considerable expertise and initiative from Norway, and because it supports target groups which represent a priority for Norwegian development assistance, i.e. marginalised, indigenous peoples. The total amount required would be in the region of NOK 4 million for the 4 year period.

Recommendation 3:

It is *recommended* that a brief study be carried out to investigate the feasibility of charging parents/communities a minimum contribution for education of their children. Such a “school fund” has been proposed before, but nothing has materialised. It is recommended that consideration be given

to different fund raising methods, including collection of minimum school fees e.g. N\$ 200 per child per year which could raise up to N\$ 600,000 a year which in turn could be used to phase out the external assistance now provided by NAMAS. As Ovahimba society is used to a barter economy, methods of raising funds through bartering arrangements should also be considered.

Recommendation 4:

It has been recommended in recommendation 1 above that all NAMAS assistance to Ondao Mobile School cease as from 31 December 2009. It is therefore *recommended* that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture should develop concrete plans for taking over complete administrative and financial responsibility for the Ondao Mobile School in 5 years time from 1 January 2010.

Recommendation 5:

It is *recommended* that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture explore the basis for building up more regular adult literacy courses for the community members that are willing to invest in this kind of activity. This is because a widespread interest and enthusiasm was detected for adult literacy courses and because existing facilities are extremely limited. Interest in adult literacy is a direct result of the success of the Ondao Mobile School.

Recommendation 6:

It is *recommended* that a feasibility study be carried out, with Norwegian assistance, of providing basic education facilities i.e. up to Grade 5 for all children currently unprovided for in Opuwo and Epupa constituencies. This study should describe the requirements and costs in terms of buildings (or tents), equipment, teachers, books and transport.

Recommendation 7

It is *recommended* that NAMAS and the Ondao Mobile School's management should improve the gender awareness in the project. To avoid any kind of exploitation of young girls all schools should have a female teacher. This is especially important when the learners of both sexes are boarding at the school area, but also due to the challenges young girls meet in the school situation in general. The increase in "informal" boarding arrangements can put girls at risk.

Recommendation 8

It is *recommended* that NAMAS develop an incentive scheme to retain particularly promising girls with a view to training them as teachers. Unless this is done it will be extremely difficult to recruit women teachers from the Ovahimbas which, in turn, will make the retention of girls in school correspondingly difficult.

Recommendation 9

It is *recommended* that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, in consultation with NAMAS should engage the services of an English language adviser. There is considerable concern that the standard of English amongst Ondao teachers is not adequate and that this affects the learning abilities and capacities of the learners. It is evident that teaching English in the context of Ondao Mobile School is a huge challenge for the learners as well as for the teacher employed. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture employ an English language adviser. Such an adviser might be recruited through the Hedmark University College, Norway.

Recommendation 10

It is *recommended* that more information on this unique project be disseminated in Norway. In the course of six years Norwegian assistance has contributed substantially to establishing widespread basic education facilities for almost 3,000 of some of the poorest and most remote children in Africa. This Report should be used as the basis for a press release in English and Norwegian for widespread distribution (press and internet) through the NORAD system.

Recommendation 11

It is further *recommended* that consideration be given to seeking NORAD support to fund a two day planning Seminar in Elverum with the theme: "Ondao Mobile School: the next Five Years 2005-2009". About 5 representatives from the School and from the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture should be invited to Norway to participate in this planning seminar. Representatives from NORAD, other potential funding sources, Hedmark University College and the press should also be invited.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: THE STUDY TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY OF THE ONDAO MOBILE SCHOOL : KUNENE REGION, NAMIBIA

1. Introduction

The Ondao Mobile School Project – Education for Marginalised Children (EMC) - was initiated in 1997 by the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS) in cooperation with the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (MBESC) which is responsible for implementation. The project is being implemented in the Kunene Region, Northern Namibia, predominantly populated by the Owahimbas (Himba people). The Himbas are semi-nomadic shepherds, estimated at between 20,000 to 50,000 people living in migrating groups, some more mobile than others. The purpose of the EMC project is to comply with the Government of the Republic of Namibia's (GRN) policy to provide education for all, a national policy introduced after independence in 1990. Himbas, have so far been difficult to reach by the authorities. Therefore the GRN supported the idea of the NAMAS project and it cooperates with the Norwegian NGO in the implementation through the MBESC. The project is planned to be phased out and transferred to the national and local authorities during 2005.

The school project has been introduced to proportion of the Owahimba people, but there are still Himba groups not favoured by the mobile education units or any other education projects. 30 mobile units are established and covers approximately 2,500 children.

After 7 years implementation and after two evaluations/Mid Term Reviews, NAMAS wants an Impact Assessment Study to be carried out. The overall purpose of the study is to assess both the positive and negative effects of the education intervention among the Owahimbas. The conclusions and recommendations will be used as background for considering and identifying further project interventions in the Himba society.

The total financial contribution to the EMC by the NAMAS up to 2004 has been approx. NOK 11 million, with most of the funds coming from NORAD and regulated through the Project Agreement between NAMAS and NORAD, signed in 1997 and the Addendum signed in 2002.

2. Background to the Study

The Project was first proposed in a Desk Study by Bernt H. Lund carried out in 1995 and seems to have been based on a preliminary idea and discussion paper by Hans Hvidsten of NAMAS. The main justification was to provide educational opportunities to children of nomadic and semi-nomadic Owahimba people similar to children in other parts of the country which have educational facilities geared to their local societies. It was pointed out that in Namibia as a whole, 94% of children attend primary school, whilst in nomadic societies like the Owahimba and San communities, about 30% of children attend school. This makes these children greatly disadvantaged. It is estimated that as much as 90% of the adult Owahimba

population is illiterate, and parents do not always appreciate the benefits of schooling. The benefits of education are not always apparent to those who have not received education themselves.

The reasons that children do not attend school are not only because their families are on the move. All over Africa, boarding schools have been established to accommodate nomadic children so that they stay in one place and go to school whilst their families pursue a nomadic lifestyle. This has rarely been a success and parents are often very reluctant to allow their children to attend boarding school. A major reason for this is that children in nomadic societies often have very definite economic roles to play in their society e.g. watering and herding livestock. If these children are taken out of society, then their labour and their economic contribution is lost to society.

In the Kunene region the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture together with NAMAS have therefore developed a mobile school, known as the *Ondao Mobile School Project*. This is geared to the needs of the local nomadic communities and is designed to ensure that schoolchildren can also take part in the economic life of their communities. This means a school on the move and this also puts considerable demands on the teachers' flexibility.

The school now has over 30 mobile units educating over 3,000 children in grades 1 to 5, with 70 teachers in a large area (maybe 3,000 km²) up to 150 kms from the town of Opuwo. It is estimated that an additional 1,500 children in the area do not have access to school. It appears that, for various reasons, the mobility of the school has decreased and it was said that only two of the 30 units were now fully mobile.

Two separate Mid-Term Evaluations dealing with different aspects of the project were undertaken in 2002. The first undertaken by a team from the University of Namibia examined the effectiveness of the project and was to serve as a management and planning tool. Its report was produced in October 2002. The report is generally positive towards the project, although somewhat inconclusive. It recommends improvements to infrastructure (tents) and to water supply, as well as up-grading of teachers and the replacement of some mobile units.

A report of a Mid-Term Evaluation of the project by Finance and Commerce Consultancy Services of Windhoek was produced in April 2003. The Evaluation is generally very positive. It states that the project does allow pupils to obtain a modern education while maintaining their traditional cultures and lifestyles. However Government authorities are criticised for not paying enough attention to the project. The Evaluation recommends that inequalities should not be allowed to develop between schools, that more funds will have to be allocated to the project for its running costs, that teachers should be better trained, that local communities should involve themselves more in the project and that care should be taken to recruit teachers with a background in and respect for Owahimba tradition and culture.

3. Objective

The objective of the Impact Assessment Study is to identify the role of the mobile school in the Owahimba and Owazemba society. How the school project has affected their daily life, the mode of production and the social and cultural traditions including gender relations will be assessed. The framework conditions relevant for the study such as the economic conditions, tourism, natural resources, climatic conditions and environment will be reviewed.

The controversy which has surrounded the proposed Epupa Hydro Power Project on the Kunene River may also be a factor in local society. This may have been important for the Owahimba but the threat now seems to have passed over.. The challenge in the impact assessment study is to see what influences what. Education for people in a process of being increasingly exposed to the modern world is expected to mobilise the ethnic identity. However, ethnic identity in modernisation processes is vulnerable to erosion of traditional values and traditional modes of production.

The Study's purpose will be to assess the impacts of this type of education upon the children, the local society, the institutions, the local environment and the local economy. In particular the Study should try to find out what impacts the school project has had on the nomadic/migratory patterns of the Himba people. The two recent Mid-Term Evaluations have provided valuable lessons learnt regarding the implementation and administration of the school project. The Impact Assessment Study will serve as a base for considering further project activities among the Himbas. It is considered that such a study will be particularly useful to the Government of Namibia, NORAD and the many others who provide support to NAMAS and similar NGOs operating in the area of nomadic education.

The Study will be carried out by Nordic Consulting Group AS of Oslo, Norway. The company will field two independent evaluators from Norway. The Draft Terms of Reference is based on preliminary discussions between Svein Ørsnes of NAMAS and Stein Hansen and Michael Fergus of Nordic Consulting Group AS in Oslo on Monday 3 November 2003, as well as the meeting at Elverum attended by Svein Ørsnes, Birgit Andresen, Steinar Rustad/ Project Coordinator, all from NAMAS and Mike Fergus and Marit Sørvald NCG Norway, January 28, 2004. Another meeting was held in Oslo on 10 May 2004, and the team met with Bernt H.Lund, former Norwegian Ambassador to Namibia on 18 May 2004.

4. Proposed Approach

In undertaking the proposed Impact Assessment Study we propose that the methodology set out should be the general standard for evaluation and impact assessment of development assistance projects. The study shall therefore assess the following aspects of the Ondao Mobile School Project:

Impact Assessment : What effects, positive or negative, have been achieved through the implementation of the project?

- improved literacy and adult literacy
- attitudes to literacy amongst adults
- changes in the views on education
- changes in the economy of the semi-nomads
- changes in the daily way of production and division of labour
- changes in migration
- changes in family structure
- changes in youth culture

- changes to the physical environment
- changes in gender relations
- cultural impoverishment or cultural mobilisation
- changes in the perception of modern society and cultural values (in general)
- changes in culture like clothes, food, and introduction of modern items in their everyday activities
- changes in health conditions
- the issue of HIV/AIDS as it affects the area

In the case of the Ondao Project it seems that the most important target groups and areas for analysis for the impact assessment will be

- (i) The schoolchildren and their parents/families (the Owahimba)
- (ii) The local economy, nomadic pastoralism, urban development
- (iii) Local society, communities, culture and institutions

5. Methodology

In order to assess the Project's impact, the Study shall be divided into three parts as follows:

- Desk Study of the project, background documents and comparative studies on nomadic education from the Internet and review of literature
- Field Visit to the Kunene Region
- Report drafting and discussion with NAMAS

It should be said at the outset that the consultants' methodology will be participatory. In a study like this frequent and frank exchanges of views/ideas/ proposals are essential. The consultants will therefore put forward theories and hypotheses based on the fieldwork, and discuss these with the students, the teachers and the authorities. In this way they should receive feedback which will improve the professional quality of the work. It is considered very important that the consultants make a verbal presentation of their initial findings/ conclusions to a meeting of the Steering Committee on the conclusion of their fieldwork. The idea is to test out hypotheses/proposals with the Committee and then to develop those which seem to be the most feasible. If possible the final report and its findings should be the product of consensus so that recommendations are readily implementable.

Desk Study

A brief Desk Study will be undertaken in Elverum and Oslo, interviewing relevant NAMAS personnel, and examining relevant project documentation such as project description, project plans, progress reports, annual reports and evaluation reports. In addition a brief review shall be made of written sources on the Internet on the experience of other countries/agencies with nomadic education. This will require two person days and will result in a brief 10 page Inception Report which will subsequently be incorporated into the Impact Assessment Study Final Report

Field Visit to Kunene Region

Two consultants from Norway shall visit the Kunene Region for a period of 10 working days. It is expected that the consultants will visit a total of about 15 schools out of the total of 30, depending on the logistics and distances from Opuwo. Interviews will be held with teachers,

pupils, administrators, parents, local authorities and community leaders. The following Methodology and Indicators will be used in the Field Visit.

Proposed Methodology

Basically the Impact Assessment Study is seeking to determine what social and economic changes have taken place as a consequence (directly or indirectly) of the education interventions for marginalised children among nomadic population in the Kunene Region. The question of economic impacts has also been discussed with NAMAS. It is considered that it is perhaps too early to see any direct or specific economic impacts of increasing the numbers of Grade 1-6 school pupils. However there will also be economic impacts in terms of teachers and other wage-earners locating in a small local communities. In addition the fact that Opuwo is set to become a regional administrative centre with new roles and new institutions will certainly mean a new role and new economic potential for the regional capital.

Previous Evaluations/Reviews have largely concentrated on the internal functioning of the schools themselves. This Impact Assessment Study's main objective is to see how the mobile school unit system affects the nomadic communities in general. As part of this, the study will focus on the changes for the nomadic groups that can be directly attributed to the mobile school concept. How have the different nomadic groups absorbed the mobile school intervention into their daily activities and what have been the consequences for their way of life and production, including migration patterns? Have the Owahimba communities benefitting from the schools changed their ways of life, and if so, how? Gender differences will also be a part of the analysis.

In analysing possible social, cultural and economic changes among the nomadic population it will be necessary to identify two different categories of population groups - those who have adopted the mobile school concept as well as those who have not been targeted so far. This division provides a base for a comparative analysis.

In addition to looking into the possible changes in the nomadic communities it will also be of importance to identify the benefits obtained by the communities in terms of their own opinion. Of special interest will be to see how the education among the youngsters is regarded and valued by different age groups.

Interviews will be undertaken of local focal points relating to education, the community, principals, teachers, parents etc. (This will be based on community meetings, interviews with stakeholders and the use of questionnaires and observation in tents with learners.) Additional interviews will be made with local community members to chart their views on community changes.

Recruitment of teachers seems to be an issue of vital importance for the Ondao Mobile School Project. The team will collect data and information about the recruitment process and interview local authorities and representatives from the Owahimba people to identify bottlenecks in this respect.

The methods used will be application of questionnaires and interviews covering all different categories of people in the communities involved in education, being learners – boys/girls, parents, teachers, staff from the local authorities, administration and government (Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture). Group meetings and group interviews will also take

place where relevant. The two consultants will visit up to 15 schools and also hold an appropriate number of community meetings together with interpreters and local staff available from the project.

The Consultants will also make use of an additional two so-called “Control Groups”. These will be selected from communities where no mobile unit has been located. The consultants shall choose a control group from one of the 20 communities which have sought, but not received a school unit. They shall also choose an additional control group from communities which have NOT requested a school unit. This should give a good picture of communities WITH and WITHOUT a school unit, for comparison purposes.

Identification of indicators

Indicators of change (impact assessment) among the nomadic groups will include the following elements and a simple questionnaire will provide a base for collection of data.

Change in daily activities. To identify this one has to ask key persons in the group/community members such as chiefs, parents, teachers, principals and administrators. External persons such as regional authorities and government officials will be resource persons providing their experience and lessons learnt so far in the project cycle. Change in responsibilities for the children and change in division of labour will also provide indicators for social change, since children are expected to contribute in the traditional nomadic economy. Indicators will be how the schooling is integrated into traditional daily activities.

Change in production. Change in production among nomadic groups may take place due to climatic change, drought and other natural conditions. Government interventions and policies will also imply changes in the economy, such as taxes and prices of the cattle. Since the education system is a government intervention one could perhaps expect long term changes as result of the education also in the economy. Is production affected by the withdrawal of child labour, for example? Indicators could be numbers of cattle, composition of cattle, local prices etc. Qualitative data will be acceptable, but if quantitative data are available this would ease the analysis. The control groups will serve as a base for comparison.

Change in migration. Possible changes in migration will be determined by environmental and climatic conditions, supply of water and grazing land. However, if any changes in migration are due to the mobile school units, this is of importance for the study.

Change in population composition within the group. Have there been any changes in the population composition after the introduction of the mobile school units or is it too early to say something about this? Is there any evidence that young people that have gone through the education system have moved out of their nomadic group and migrated to the more urban areas? (Urban migration)

Changes towards Boarding for the students

How is the boarding functioning? What about the gender issue when it comes to boardings? The dressing issue for women? Attitudes among women/mothers? Attitudes among men/fathers/elders?

Changes in attitudes towards the nomadic way of life/culture. Is there any evidence of changing attitudes among the nomads – for instance the younger generation – towards the nomadic way of life? Are youngsters aspiring to leave the nomadic system to go for jobs in more urban centres? To identify indicators for this it will be necessary to ask key persons in the groups whether there are any conflicts among the generations and identify different attitudes within the group. It will be of interest to observe whether students have abandoned traditional ways, modes of dress etc, and what this may imply for the future of Himba society.

How the different age groups define the benefits of the schooling will be indicators for how they perceive change towards more “modern” life. Whether the nomads feel that the education intervention is threatening the nomadic culture will provide as indicators for changing or not changing ethnic identity. It will also be important to get data and information about how the nomads define education as an advantage to protect their rights and ability to survive as minority groups.

The nomadic groups that still have not been introduced to the mobile school units should be used as control for the possible changes identified among the other groups. As stated above some groups have sought schools, and some have not. Both groups should be interviewed. This will be a major control group in the process of identifying impact. In analysing changes between the groups that have been part of the education project and those who have not? In addition to this analysis it will be important to identify views among the different categories of respondents towards change. Are there any differences between the generations? Are there any differences between the households within the Ondanao project the households outside their target groups?

Since the school project appears to have turned out to be less mobile than originally expected the Consultants study will go into the reasons for why the intended mobility is less than originally planned. Is it more convenient to have more stationary schools or are there other reasons? As part of this consideration, parents' attitudes towards boarding schools will be examined, especially when it comes to girls and the threat the girls meet when they are away from their parents.

A key issue in the process of considering possible continuation of the Ondao Mobile School project is the transfer of project responsibility from NAMAS to local educational authorities and Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture. Analysing the willingness and capability of the local authority to take over the responsibility will be crucial in the process of considering NAMAS' future involvement in Kunene Region.

Socio-economic impact. Collection of data available on the nomadic communities from national data bases should serve as background for the Impact Assessment Study.

Of special relevance for the external factors that may be looked into if time at all permits are following issues:

It appears that the international controversy surrounding the planned Epupa Hydro Power Project mobilised the Himbas to become highly conscious about threats to their culture. How such an external threat could affect society and the Himba's aspirations as to their culture – and how education can provide a means to protect the culture in order to survive as a culture – could be of interest to assess. Tourism is limited, however increasing in the area. This is expected to provide additional income but will almost certainly disturb traditional life-styles

of the Owahimbas. As part of the changing framework conditions affecting the Himba culture the impact of tourism in the Kunene Region has to be looked into, and the Consultants must certainly take account of this important factor.

Report-writing Norway

A report not exceeding 30 pages in English shall be produced within two weeks of the Consultants' return to Norway. An executive summary not exceeding 10 pages will be provided in Norwegian.

6. The Consulting Team

The consulting team from Nordic Consulting Group will consist of two persons: Michael Fergus (Economist/Team Leader) and Marit Sørvald (Sociologist). *Michael Fergus* has been a Partner in Nordic Consulting Group AS since 1985 and has undertaken evaluations of several projects supported by Norwegian NGOs in Sudan, Nicaragua and Angola. He has also led a series of major evaluations and project reviews for NORAD, Danida and the United Nations Development Programme. These have included several large education projects for NORAD in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania and South Africa. He undertook a comprehensive evaluation of Icelandic development assistance to Namibia for the Icelandic Government in 1998 (Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund). He is currently preparing a strategy for Norwegian assistance to higher education in Tanzania. *Marit Sørvald* has been a Partner in Nordic Consulting Group AS since 2001 and has a M. Sc. in Sociology and Social Anthropology, research experience, 15 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and NORAD on development cooperation, humanitarian affairs/disaster preparedness, monitoring activities, budget responsible, audit reviews, gender planning and other cross-cutting issues. She has been coordinating MFA's evaluations of development programmes, NGOs, human rights and humanitarian assistance, disaster preparedness, complex emergencies and Norway's role in peace processes. She has recently completed a comprehensive study of agricultural development in East Africa with Norsk Hydro and ICRAF, Nairobi. She has been working with nomadic cultures in Sahel (studies), Ethiopia (MFA) and Kenya (field visits in Maasai Mara). She is currently working on a cultural project at Lamu in Kenya.

It is also considered important that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture participate actively, if possible, in this study. It is recommended that an officer from the Ministry's regional offices in Opuwo be assigned to advise the consulting team during the carrying out of the field work.

7. Time Schedule in

It is proposed that the Desk Study be undertaken in the second half of September 2004. Thereafter it is proposed that the fieldwork will commence in Namibia in accordance with the following approximate time schedule:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 28 September 2004: | Travel to Windhoek |
| 2 October to 17 October 2004: | Field visit Opuwo and Kunene Region |
| 18-19 October 2004: | Round-up meetings Windhoek |
| 20 October 2004: | Return to Oslo |
| 29 October 2004: | Draft report delivered by Consultant |

12 November 2004: to NAMAS
Comments on draft report delivered by NAMAS to
Consultant
26 November 2004: Final Report submitted to NAMAS by the Consultant

**Oslo,
27 May 2004**

ANNEX II: THE CONSULTANT TEAM'S PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND FIELD VISITS

29. September 2004:

15.00 hours: Dr. Becky R.K. Ndjoze-Ojo, Director, Language Centre, University of Namibia, Windhoek (M.Fergus)

30 September 2004:

10.00 hours: National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Okahandja

12.30 hours: Angelika Tjoutuku, Senior Education Officer, African Languages at NIED, Okahandja

14.30 hours: Lloyd Ulrich, Managing Director, Educational Career Development (NGO), Windhoek

15.00 hours: John Ashipala, Researcher, Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), Windhoek

1 October 2004:

09.00 hours: Robin Sherbourne, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Windhoek

12.00 hours: J.Nangola, T.Kakonda, E.Limbo and J.Kavari, Ministry of Education and Culture, Planning Department

15.00 hours: National Planning Commission and Central Bureau of Statistics (to collect statistics)

2 October 2004 (Saturday)

All day working on notes

3 October 2004: (Sunday)

Driving Windhoek to Outjo (400 kms) overnighiting in Outjo

4 October 2004

Driving Outjo to Khorixas (150 kms)

10.00 hours: Kabajawi Kamwi, Regional Director of Education, Kunene Region

Driving Khorixas to Opuwo (370 kms)

5 October 2004

Marit Sørvald to Epembe School interviewing

Michael Fergus travelling to Otjinungwa School all day (overnighted Otjinungwa)

6 October 2004

Marit Sørvald interviewing in schools at Okau, Orue and Otjitambi

Michael Fergus interviewing in schools at Otjinungwa and Ondjuva (overnighted Ondjuva)

7 October 2004

Marit Sørvald interviewing in schools at Otjimuhaka and Otjimaungu

Michael Fergus travelled Ondjuva to Opuwo (220 kms)

Meeting with Steinar Rustad, NAMAS Coordinator, Opuwo

8 October 2004

Marit Sørvald interviewing in Ondoozu community

Michael Fergus interviewing in Ohungumure School

9-10 October 2004

Consultant team at Kunene Lodge with Steinar Rustad, writing up notes, preparing findings

11 October 2004

Marit Sørvald interviewing in Omuangete School

Michael Fergus interviewing in Okahozu School

12 October 2004

Marit Sørvald interviewing in Ovituamba School and Omuhonga School

Michael Fergus interviewing in Okopaue School and Okarokoro School

13 October 2004

Marit Sørvald and Michael Fergus interviewing in Muretti Senior Secondary School and Otjerendu Government School

14 October 2004

Joint Meetings with Namibian Red Cross office Opuwo, and Ministry of Health, Opuwo Regional Office

15 October 2004

Round-up meeting to present Preliminary findings to the Executive Committee of the Ondao Mobile School

16-17 October 2004

Driving to Windhoek via Outjo

18 October 2004

Round-up Meeting with Ministry of Basic Education and Culture in Windhoek, Mr.Nangolo

ANNEX III: STANDARD INTERVIEW GUIDES

IMPACT ASSESSMENT - Interview Guide – Representatives of the Ministry of Basic Education, Ondao School Management; Teachers, Local Chiefs

Introduction by NCG about the objective of the study.

The Respondent's background and involvement in the project.

What are the respondent's overall experiences with the school project?

1. RELEVANCE

How are the different beneficiaries and stakeholders commitment to the objectives of the project?

What evidence is there that all target groups, including both women and men, parents and learners support the project?

How actively have the beneficiaries been involved in the project?

- **CULTURE** – To which degree is the school project in harmony or disharmony with the local culture? Has there been any kind of local resistance?
- **SOCIOECONOMIC** – How and to which degree is the school project relevant for the assessment of the socioeconomic situation among the Owahimbas?
- **ENVIRONMENT** – To which degree is the school project bringing up environmental issues?

What is the situation for the non-participating communities? Do you know anything about how they regard the school project?

2. EFFICIENCY

Have resources been used in an efficient manner?

- Reasonable costs?
- Acceptable time frame?
- Reasonable human resources?
- Reasonable management?
- **CULTURE** – Are there cultural obstacles for efficient implementation of the project?
- **SOCIOECONOMIC** – Are there socioeconomic obstacles for efficient implementation of the project?
- **ENVIRONMENT** – Is environmental conditions relevant for the project's efficiency?

3. EFFECTIVENESS

We would like you to assess the effectiveness of the project:
The school project objectives – what about the achievement?
What are the outputs produced?
Are the outputs produced in accordance with the project objective?
Are the outputs produced in accordance with the contributions made?

- **CULTURE** – Could you mention any cultural traditions that could be important for the effectiveness of the school project and its implementation?
- **SOCIOECONOMIC** – Could you mention any socioeconomic aspects that would be of importance for the implementation and running of the school project?
- **ENVIRONMENT** – Could you mention any environmental aspects which could be related to the effectiveness of the school project?

4. IMPACT

What have been the most positive effects of the school project? (Goal achievement)

- in general and more specific
- **CULTURE** – Is the school project changing the Himba culture? If yes, how?
 - Gender issues – what about the young girls attending school?
 - What about the relation between the younger and older generations?
 - What about the Himba community's traditions – is there evidence of change related to the education introduced to them?
 - Is there any evidence on dissatisfaction among the non-participants?
- **SOCIOECONOMIC**
 - Nomadic way of life?
 - Migration and mobility?
 - Increased urban migration?
 - Reduced mobility?
 - Reduced cattle/herds?
 - Division of responsibility in daily activities?
 - Changes in food traditions?
- **ENVIRONMENT** – Is there evidence of any environmental changes introduced by the school project - directly or indirectly?

5. SUSTAINABILITY

Is it realistic and possible that the Ondao School project could continue at the same level in future?

What sort of changes should be done if the school continues – with or without the contribution from the Norwegians?

Will financial resources be available?

Administrative changes?

- **CULTURE** – Is the school project contributing to the sustainability of the Himba culture?
- **SOCIO-ECONOMIC** – Is the nomadic way of life an obstacle to provide a sustainable education programme for the Himbas?
- **ENVIRONMENT (Natural environment)** – How can the school project be defined as useful for the Himba culture in maintaining environmental sustainable communities?

DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE - ONDAO MOBILE SCHOOL — RESPONDENT GROUP LEARNERS AND PARENTS

Learners:

Name

Age

Grade

Parents:

Name

Age

No. of children

No. of children in school

Grade: 1 – 7

RELEVANCE

How the Respondent defines the school and what he/she expects as outcome of the school project: Very good Good Not so good

Achievements – are the schooling of any immediate benefits to you? Y N

Future perspective, Expectations:

Benefits – long term Y N Explain how

IMPACT

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|---------------------|
| Changes in mobility/migration | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in production | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in economy | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in number of cattle | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in labour in the household | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in daily routines | Yes | No | Explain how/why |
| Changes in culture | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in the youth culture | Yes | No | Explain how |
| Changes in age of marriage | Yes | No | Explain how/why |
| Changes in ways of dressing | Yes | No | Explain how and why |

ANNEX IV: ONDAO MOBILE SCHOOL – PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY PRESENTED TO A MEETING IN OPUWO ON 15 OCTOBER 2004

1. This Note of Findings is prepared for a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Ondao Mobile School to be held on Friday 15 October 2004. It is prepared by a consulting team, engaged by the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS), i.e. Michael Fergus (Economist) and Marit Sørvald (Sociologist) who have been undertaking fieldwork for a Socio-Economic Impact Study of the Ondao Mobile School. The purpose of the study has been to assess the impact of the mobile school project on the children, on local society, the institutions, the environment and the local economy. The fieldwork was undertaken between Monday 5 October and Friday 15 October 2004. The consultant team visited 15 of the 33 Ondao school units, 2 Government schools and one community which had applied for a school.
2. The Ondao Mobile School was established in 1998 and now consists of 33 school units in the northern section of Kunene Region with 2,760 registered learners. The schools offer education in grades 1 to 7. There are 72 teachers. The School is administered by a team of 9 persons, supported by an adviser from NAMAS. The team is based in Opuwo.
3. The following are the team's main findings to date.
4. The project is unique as it is the only operating one directed at the Ovahimba population. Until Independence the Ovahimba had been denied access to education under the system of colonial rule. NAMAS has been courageous and played a catalytic role in this. Over 3,000 Ovahimba children between the age of 6 and 17 have learned to read and write in a formerly illiterate society. The project thus complies with the Government's policy of "education for all".
5. There is an increasing recognition of the benefits of the education amongst parents and community leaders, but resistance has been detected in some communities. For example wealthy cattle-owners often regard education as less relevant to their needs than poor people who see schooling as a way out of poverty. In some areas it is convenient for parents to leave children in school where they receive education, accommodation, food and childcare. This is an important impact of the project.
6. Adult literacy is seen as increasingly relevant to Ovahimba society. This supports the increasing interest in all forms of education. However access seems to vary.
7. The marginal cost of educating Ovahimba children is very high. Unit costs include transport, accommodation, food, water, health, radio contact, solar panels and low teacher/learner norms
8. The efficiency of most schools is reduced because of the double burden imposed on children of herding animals and attending schools. However even more flexible routines could be developed to adapt to the realities of the situation. Efficiency of

teachers is reduced by their complex roles in teaching, childcare, feeding, medical care, clothing etc.

9. The contribution of the teachers to the Ondao Mobile School is critical. They often assume the role of the parents during migrations. Parents increasingly see the convenience of having their children accommodated and looked after while searching for grazing and water. However this multi-faceted role imposed upon the teachers could lead to high turnover amongst the most actively involved.
10. It is clear to us that the idea of the mobile school is changing. Mobility has been reduced to a few schools where a few learners and one teacher follow the movements of the communities. A majority of parents interviewed expressed the wish for permanent schools with lodging facilities for children. This tendency will have an impact on the administration of the School. The implications of this change should be further discussed. A list of different requirements presented by schools and communities to the consultants will be set out in the Final Report.
11. Most communities and learners show a strong interest in keeping the school within the local surroundings, that is where they are now, as they were afraid of the clustering principle. They also expressed a wish that NAMAS continued to support the Ondao Mobile School. This is because they felt that Ondao could guarantee their cultural identity i.e. the use of traditional attire. They also preferred Ondao because it did not charge fees, and because it allowed children to combine education with their role in livestock production. Most were therefore opposed to Ondao's transfer to Government ownership.
12. Like many semi-nomadic societies the Ovahimba appear to be highly opportunistic, using clear survival and investment strategies. Living in a very hostile and very unreliable environment they need to grasp every opportunity for survival. Education could be such an opportunity. It costs relatively little and provides boundless opportunities, at least so far.
13. Ovahimba society is extremely vulnerable to the on-going introduction of the money economy. There is evidence that alcoholism and prostitution are symptoms of this. Illiterate adults who cannot count can very easily be cheated in all sorts of ways. Universal education is an important antidote to this tendency.
14. Schoolgirls interviewed show as much interest in education as their male schoolmates. Drop-out rates for girls and boys are similar until the 5th grade. Married girls continue school, but when moving to their husbands they become pregnant and drop out of education. Some few girls however have indicated a preference for education rather than marriage. They would like to be educated to become teachers and nurses and then get married after returning to their communities. Girls in boarding facilities should be given special attention to avoid abuse.
15. The project has made an important contribution to Ovahimba society by locating over 70 educated persons (the teachers) within over 30 Ovahimba communities on a more or less permanent basis. Their contribution to socio-economic development of these communities will be much more than the education they provide alone.

16. Although education is increasingly viewed favourably there is evidence for a growing “generation gap”. There is consensus between parents and children on schooling up to a certain age. Parents feel threatened by loss of labour, and are critical towards further education. Their children are part of the community’s organisation and production which is highly dependent on child labour. Children favour further education and aspire to advanced education which is difficult for parents to understand.
17. The school can contribute greatly to the building of local institutions. However the lack of other public services such as water and health and transport mean that it is of great importance that the Ovahimba themselves identify their own needs and rights in the wider society.

**Michael Fergus,
Marit Sørvald,
Opuwo, 14 October 2004**

ANNEX V: DRAFT MINUTES – PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY - ONDAO MOBILE SCHOOL – OPUWO, 15 OCTOBER 2004

Participants:

Mr. Steinar Rustad, Project Coordinator, ONDAO School, NAMAS, Opuwo
Mr. Tjivikua, Principal, ONDAO School, Opuwo
Mr. Abia Kambaekua, Head of Department, ONDAO School, Opuwo
Mrs. Menesia J. Tjondu, Head of Department, ONDAO School, Opuwo
Mr. Hansen Muhuka, Teacher Representative, ONDAO School (Okahozu Unit), Opuwo
Mr. J. J. Kuvare, Principal, Putwavanga Junior Secondary School, Opuwo
Mr. A. M. Kapi, Principal, Okorosave Primary School, Opuwo
Mr. Heinz H. Maundu, Community Member, Opuwo

Presentation:

Ms. Marit Sørvald, Team Member, Nordic Consulting Group, Norway
Mr. Mike Fergus, Team Leader, Nordic Consulting Group, Norway

Minutes

Mr. Mike Fergus presented the preliminary findings supplied with comments from Ms. Marit Sørvald

Discussion:

There was no direct opposition towards the Team's presentation of the preliminary findings, but rather strong support for the Team's presentation. No negative impact had so far been identified by the consultants, but the changing framework conditions in Kunene region seems to represent many challenges for the Ovahimba societies as well as the other minority groups living in the area

The discussion was concentrating on the time aspect of the project implementation up to present. **Mr. Kuvare** reminded the audience that introduction of a school project in an illiterate community this project was still very young. He underlined the need for continued funds from NAMAS and Norway. If NAMAS was going to phase out and transfer the responsibility of the ONDAO School entirely to the Government of Namibia within the present timeframe (2005), he foresaw a possible collapse of the ONDAO school as a whole. There was a discussion about begging amongst Himba children. It was agreed that it was the tourists who taught the children to beg. The Ondao School taught children NOT to beg. Posters should be put up in Himba villages telling tourists how to behave and not to patronise the local people.

Mr. Kapi wanted to know about the future plans and the transfer of the school to Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC).

Mr. Rustad said that it was up to the Head Office of NAMAS in Norway to decide upon a continuation after 2005, and that this process would require presentation of a Project Proposal to NORAD and their approval. He also commented upon the transfer of the responsibility to MBEC, since the Ministry already provides approximately 80 per cent of the total budget, something which is often forgotten or ignored when discussing the future. The local communities have the perception that NAMAS was the main partner and identified the project with Norway and NAMAS and not with the MBEC, he said. He said it was important people realised this was first and foremost a Government project. He thought the Ministry's name should be on the vehicles rather than NAMAS'.

Mr. Tjivikua said that the resistance met among the community people towards the Namibian authorities in general was based on fear of being forced to become westernized. All the representatives of the **Executive Committee** supported the conclusion that they would strongly urge for further support from Norway, and that more support would be necessary to provide a sustainable base for the ONDAO school. **Mr. Tjivikua** added that NAMAS had a very important role in giving the Himba people time to change. He said that many Himba people felt that if the Government came in and took over from NAMAS that they would insist on too much change too quickly. He said that the Himba people simply asked us to "give them some time" to change. NAMAS gave this time.

Mr. Muhuka, the teachers' representative, suggested a separate budget line in the Ministry's budget to make clear the Government's contribution. The idea of earmarking funds for ONDAO School was positively received.

Mr. Kapi said that it was important to play with open cards and not hide the reality for the Ovahimba community, but to inform them what education is and why education was introduced.

The team questioned the audience how they regarded a possible co-partner, like another NGO or a UN body like UNICEF. The response was not negative, but the importance of continuing the cooperation with NAMAS was strongly emphasised, since the experience so far was very sound and that it would take time to build up new alliances.

Mr. Rustad reminded the participants that continued support to the already established school units could lead to very limited establishment of new units, leaving 1,600 possible learners without access to education.

Conclusion:

Continued cooperation with NAMAS some more years was strongly supported by all present members of the Executive Committee. The participants urged NAMAS to continue support since transfer of responsibility to MBEC should go slowly. If transfer was going to take place now, the future of the ONDAO School was regarded as highly insecure. That would be a great pity after all the work done by NAMAS and the Norwegians over the past 8 years. There was a strong feeling that NAMAS should continue for another 5 years to consolidate what they had achieved so far. It would be a shame to abandon things now.

**Marit Sørvald,
Outjo,
16 September 2004**

ANNEX VI: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY USED IN FIELDWORK

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Ondao Mobile School, Namibia

A Socio-Economic Impact Study



Mike Fergus and Marit Sørvold
Draft Report November 2004

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