



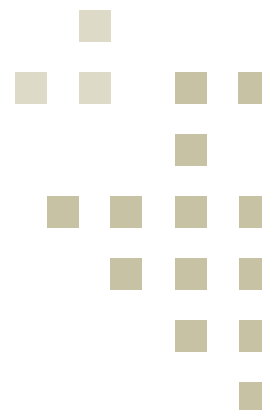
# [671] Notat

## Indigenous to Indigenous Cooperation

Review of the Saami Council Projects in Africa

Axel Borchgrevink

No. 671 – 2004



Utgiver: NUPI  
Copyright: © Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt 2004  
ISSN: 0800 - 0018

Alle synspunkter står for forfatterens regning. De må ikke tolkes som uttrykk for oppfatninger som kan tillegges Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt. Artiklene kan ikke reproduseres - helt eller delvis - ved trykking, fotokopiering eller på annen måte uten tillatelse fra forfatterne.

Any views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Besøksadresse: C.J. Hambros plass 2d  
Adresse: Postboks 8159 Dep.  
0033 Oslo  
Internett: [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no)  
E-post: [pub@nupi.no](mailto:pub@nupi.no)  
Fax: [+ 47] 22 36 21 82  
Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

# Indigenous to Indigenous Cooperation

Review of the Saami Council Projects in Africa

Axel Borchgrevink

**[Abstract]** The Norwegian section of the Saami Council has been cooperating with two indigenous organizations in Africa since 2002: the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa, based in Tanzania, and the First People of the Kalahari, in Botswana. The report evaluates this cooperation. It concludes that both organizations are potentially very relevant, but that for different reasons, the full potential has not been reached. Recommendations for how to strengthen the work are given.



## CONTENTS

1	Executive summary.....	3
2	Introduction.....	8
2.1	Background.....	8
2.2	Terms of Reference.....	8
2.3	Review.....	9
3	The Saami Council.....	11
3.1	Structure of SC.....	11
3.2	Indigenous to indigenous development cooperation.....	11
3.3	The NORAD project.....	12
3.4	Administration of the project.....	13
3.5	Information activities.....	15
4	OIPA.....	16
4.1	Background.....	16
4.2	Relevance.....	17
4.3	Achievements.....	18
4.4	Weaknesses.....	19
4.5	The Saami Council cooperation.....	23
5	The First People of the Kalahari.....	25
5.1	Context.....	25
5.2	FPK.....	27
5.3	Cooperation with the Saami Council.....	39
6	Conclusions.....	44
	OIPA.....	44
	FPK.....	44
	The Saami Council.....	46
7	Recommendations.....	49
7.1	OIPA.....	49
7.2	FPK.....	49
7.3	The Sami Council.....	50
7.4	NORAD.....	51
8	Appendices.....	53



# 1 Executive summary

## **Background**

Since 2002, the Saami Council has received NORAD support for two projects in Africa. Both projects involve institutional support to indigenous peoples organizations. The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) is an umbrella organization aiming to represent indigenous organizations and peoples of the continent, and is based in Tanzania. The First People of Kalahari (FPK) is an organization of San people in Botswana. In both cases, the Saami Council support has comprised both core funding and training courses, with the objectives of raising competence and strengthening the organizations.

In supporting the Saami Council for this work, NORAD placed emphasis on the organization's particular experience of indigenous organization and struggle for indigenous rights and recognition, at national and international levels. It was felt that this was a valuable background for contributing to building indigenous organizations in Africa. A condition of the original approval of a three-year project was that there be an evaluation in the course of that period. On this background, NORAD commissioned this review of the project. In the Terms of Reference, the overall purpose of the review is stated as assessing the Saami Council's ability to enter into strategic partnerships with organizations in developing countries, and whether these partnerships contribute to the organizational capacity of partners and the relevance of their work. Furthermore, the value added of 'indigenous to indigenous' cooperation should also be assessed.

The review was carried out between September and December 2004. Axel Borchgrevink of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) was asked to lead the review. He was accompanied by Alais Morindat for fieldwork in Tanzania, and by Ketsile Molokomme and Janet Hermans in Botswana. In addition to fieldwork in Tanzania and Botswana, a number of interviews were conducted in Norway and Finland, with representatives of the Saami Council and other resource persons

## **Findings:**

### **OIPA**

There is a need for an organization representing the indigenous peoples of Africa. The Saami Council support for OIPA is therefore highly relevant. However, a greater clarity about the proposed division of labor with the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) is needed.

The one important achievement of OIPA has been the work done in connection with the World Parks Congress in 2003, when a two-week preparatory workshop was arranged, and the African indigenous organizations attending produced a declaration that was fed into the WPC proceedings. To a limited extent, OIPA probably also serves useful functions for its smaller and weaker member organizations by providing

possible linkages towards donors and international processes, while board meetings and the workshop form a place for meeting other organizations, experiencing organizational practices and learning about international indigenous issues. OIPA is well endowed with human resources.

However, there are considerable weaknesses. OIPA does not have a clear vision for what indigenous should mean, and lacks a strategy for organizational development. Recruitment of new members seems random and without any clear strategy. There is very little information going from OIPA to its member organizations, and OIPA likewise does not have a strong visibility outwards. While the Saami Council funding has allowed an administration to function since 2002, this has left few traces in terms of archives and collected documents and information. It has not even been possible to get hold of a current list of member organizations, in spite of repeated requests. Thus, much less has been achieved through the Saami Council cooperation than could have been hoped for. It seems that a lack of commitment to the objective of advancing OIPA – especially among the key member organizations – is part of the reason for this.

### **FPK**

There is an evident need for a rights-oriented interest organization representing the San in Botswana, so the Saami Council support to FPK is highly relevant. Yet building a strong, democratic and effective organization poses great challenges, due among other things to the dispersed settlement pattern over a huge area, linguistic and cultural diversity, and low educational levels. The difficulty of the task is evidenced by the limited impacts in terms of institution building from the earlier experience of ten years of IWGIA support to FPK. It is possible that the Saami Council underestimated the difficulties involved.

The board members of FPK have a clear vision of the kind of rights-oriented organization they want to have, but the board plays a fairly weak role. Currently, the chairman is the one who actually fulfils the functions of the full board. Low educational levels have historically led to difficulties for the board to assume the functions of controlling and instructing the staff. The relationship to the constituency is difficult to assess. Probably FPK is relatively well known, but there is undoubtedly a need for more systematic organization of communication, including regular board member elections as prescribed in the constitution. Developing a functioning administration has been a major problem of FPK, and continues to be so. Furthermore, staff time is taken up with the ongoing Central Kalahari Game Reserve court case. The Saami Council cooperation has therefore not led to any administrative strengthening.

The FPK ambition is to represent San throughout Botswana. Currently, they have board members representing most of Ghanzi District, while their work is limited to the CKGR case (directly involving only a small fraction of the San of Botswana, even though potentially the case may have a great symbolic and political impact on a national scale). The FPK currently does not have the capacity to expand, nor to establish the national San council that is their ambition. FPK ought to be open for the possibility of working with other organizations for the realization of this goal. However, historically FPK has been quite unwilling to accept a role for other organizations wishing to work with the San. Currently, due to the dynamics of the



court case, FPK is losing alliance partners and becoming increasingly alone. For the San sake, FPK should seek to build broader civil society alliances.

### **The Saami Council**

There have been weaknesses in the follow-up from the Saami Council in both cases. The problems encountered with the two organizations are of largely different kinds. In OIPA's case, the basic problem has been the lack of effort invested on the part of local partners. With more commitment from them, very much more could have been achieved in terms of developing OIPA. It is possible that if the Saami Council had played a stronger and more active role in terms of following what was happening, and requesting information and explanations to a much greater extent, this might have spurred the key member organizations to greater efforts. And if this had not been the case, the Saami Council ought to have let this have consequences for whether and how to continue funding.

In the case of FPK, on the other hand, problems were related less to lack of commitment and more to difficult circumstances. Thus, even with better and closer follow-up from the Saami Council, miracles in the short term should not have been expected. However, through a closer interaction as dialogue partner with FPK, slowly taking up the wider strategic issues and together with FPK tried to find ways of addressing them, the Saami Council might have contributed both to the long-term strengthening of FPK and to the overall cause of working for San rights and representation. The Saami Council support has kept FPK alive, but apart from that not contributed to any organizational strengthening. The support has, however, allowed FPK to play a pivotal role with respect to the CKGR court case, a case of potentially great symbolic importance.

Common to the two cases seems to have been a concentration on the concrete and technical issues of establishing an office and administrative routines, while other and more strategic issues of organizational development have been left aside. In this narrow focus, the real reasons for why support to these organizations is important are forgotten. This is a serious shortcoming if one wishes to play a role in strengthening weak organizations working for indigenous rights, and one that the Saami Council should seek to address in its future development cooperation.

For this reason, the full potential of indigenous to indigenous cooperation has not been realized in this project. However, there are elements where the comparative advantages of this type of development cooperation are visible, notably in terms of the OIPA and FPK visits to Norway and Saami Land and the exposure to indigenous organization and experiences involved. These visits have had important functions in terms of raising awareness of international instruments and of forms of indigenous organizing.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **OIPA**

OIPA should clarify its overall strategy – including issues of organizational development and recruitment of new members – and develop operational plans on the basis of this strategy.

Requirements of the constitution should be observed, or changed if this is not possible.

External visibility and engagement on issues needs to be promoted.  
Communication with member organizations should be improved.  
Office routines must be strengthened.

## **FPK**

Mechanisms for regular elections of board members and contact between board members and communities need to be established.  
Administrational strengthening should take place in a long-term perspective and not be more ambitious than what the board can oversee.  
For the San sake, FPK needs to extend its cooperation with other civil society actors. If helpful for establishing a national level San council, FPK should be open to letting other organizations contribute.

## **The Saami Council**

The Saami Council should consider very carefully whether it is worthwhile to continue the cooperation with OIPA. If so, strong safeguards must be put in place to guarantee that better use of the funds is made than what has been the case up to now.

The cooperation with FPK should continue. However, in the continuation, the Saami Council needs to take a much stronger role. The Saami Council should expand its focus from the administrative issues to engage with the strategic issues mentioned in this report. Continuity among the persons visiting FPK is necessary for building a relationship based on trust.

The Saami Council should seek to relocate its indigenous cooperation unit to joint offices with another institution, so that the project coordinator can benefit from a broader work environment. The Saami Council should also work out a coherent strategy for its development cooperation. Finally, the Saami Council should make greater efforts to take up and inform about its development cooperation through its information work in Norway.

## **NORAD**

Even if the Saami Council has not yet fully realized the potential of indigenous to indigenous development cooperation, the organization does have a very real potential for contributing to Norwegian development assistance to indigenous peoples, and NORAD should continue supporting it.

The condition for further support, however, should be that the Saami Council actively and systematically seeks to overcome the weaknesses in its role as identified in this report. In this process, a close dialogue between NORAD and the Saami Council should be maintained. Continued support to OIPA should only be considered if far-reaching changes are made, in the follow-up from the Saami Council, as well as in the organizational set-up in Arusha.

NORAD should also accept that in this kind of development cooperation, administrative costs will be higher than the normally accepted 8%. However, the Saami Council should be able to reduce their administrative costs, while still allowing responsible follow-up of the project.

NORAD should promote a relocation of the project office to joint premises with another institution engaged in similar work. If necessary, it should be accepted that this office be located outside of Norway.

## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 Background**

Since 2002, the Saami Council has received NORAD support for two projects in Africa. Both projects involve institutional support to indigenous peoples organizations. The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) is an umbrella organization aiming to represent indigenous organizations and peoples of the continent, and is based in Tanzania. The First People of Kalahari (FPK) is an organization of San people in Botswana. In both cases, the Saami Council support has comprised both core funding and training courses, with the objectives of raising competence and strengthening the organizations.

In supporting the Saami Council for this work, NORAD placed emphasis on the organization's particular experience of indigenous organization and struggle for indigenous rights and recognition, at national and international levels. It was felt that this was a valuable background for contributing to building indigenous organizations in Africa. A condition of the original approval of a three-year project was that an evaluation should be carried out in the course of that period. In line with this agreement with the Saami Council, NORAD commissioned a review of the project in the second half of 2004.

### **2.2 Terms of Reference**

In the Terms of Reference, the overall purpose of the review is stated as assessing the Saami Council's ability to enter into strategic partnerships with organizations in developing countries, and whether these partnerships contribute to the organizational capacity of partners and the relevance of their work. Furthermore, the value added of indigenous to indigenous cooperation should also be assessed.

Among the specific issues to be covered with respect to the Saami Council, the review should seek to understand the philosophy and strategy underlying the development cooperation; how that cooperation correspond to the local and national contexts of the cooperating partners; and assessing the impacts of the cooperation and whether goals and objectives were reached. Furthermore, the review should assess the capacity and potential of OIPA and FPK and their roles with relation to civil society and other actors important to indigenous issues. The review should also look into how the Saami Council was using the support for information activities received from NORAD. The full Terms of Reference are reproduced in Appendix 1.

## 2.3 Review

Axel Borchgrevink of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) was asked to lead the review. He was accompanied by Alais Morindat of the MS Training Center for Development Cooperation (Arusha, Tanzania) for fieldwork in Tanzania, and by the independent consultants Ketsile Molokomme and Janet Hermans in Botswana.

On the Norwegian side, interviews were made with different representatives of the Saami Council and other Saami resource persons, as well as with representatives of the University of Tromsø<sup>1</sup>, the Norwegian Church Aid<sup>2</sup> and NORAD. A telephone interview was also made with the IWGIA project coordinator who handled relations with FPK when IWGIA was supporting the organization<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, on several occasions, Borchgrevink was able to meet with representatives of OIPA and FPK during their visits to Norway, before undertaking the fieldwork in Tanzania and Botswana. On a trip to Karasjok and Ohcejohka, to meet with different Saami representatives and the Saami Council secretariat, Turid Arnegaard of NORAD accompanied Borchgrevink.

Fieldwork in Arusha was done between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November. A number of interviews were made with OIPA staff, board members and representatives of member organizations from Tanzania and Kenya. The very short time frame meant that not all aspects of the organization and the cooperation with the Saami Council could be explored in detail. But the thorough knowledge of Alais Morindat with respect to civil society and development cooperation in Tanzania, particularly concerning Maasai and pastoralist issues, meant that we were able to cover a lot of ground in a short period of time.

Fieldwork in Botswana took place between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of November. It involved a trip to Ghantsi District, where meetings and interviews were held with the board of FPK, with the District Commission and District Council, with the village development committee of New Xade, and with representatives from different NGOs working with San issues. In Lobatse we were able to follow the court proceedings, as well as meet with the San legal counsel, FPK staff, representatives of other NGOs and with the government's RADP program. In Gaborone, we were also able to meet with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the Ditshwanelo Centre for Human Rights and the University of Botswana. In addition to this substantial number of interviews, it should be pointed out that both Hermans and Molokomme have long experience of working with San-related issues. Molokomme has among other things given a number of training workshops for the FPK board. Their insights into the issues have been crucial for the understandings expressed in this report.

A complete list of people met and interviewed is enclosed in Appendix 2.

While this report has been written by Axel Borchgrevink, it must be emphasized that the product is really a collective effort. It is through the discussions and sharing of

---

<sup>1</sup> Which together with the University of Botswana has a San research program.

<sup>2</sup> Which has supported different organizations working with San issues over the years, including the FPK.

<sup>3</sup> IWGIA supported FPK from 1993 to 2002.

experiences with Alais Morindat, Janet Hermans and Ketsile Molokomme that these interpretations of OIPA, FPK and the Saami Council cooperation have been built. Thus, while I must take the responsibility for their formulation in writing, it would not have been possible without their participation. In addition, Sidsel Saugestad has contributed valuable information and comments for the section on FPK.

## **3 The Saami Council**

### **3.1 Structure of SC**

The Saami Council is an NGO representing the Saami people in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. It was established in 1956, and its main objectives are to promote Saami economic, social and cultural rights, nationally and internationally. The fifteen-member board (the Council) is elected by the Saami Conference, held every 4<sup>th</sup> year with 65 delegates from the four countries. The secretariat of the Saami Council is located in Ohcejohka (Finland), and currently has a staff of 3-4 persons. The work of the Saami Council is divided into five areas, with the following five organizational departments: Cultural Unit, Human Rights Unit, Arctic Unit, Project Unit and Indigenous Cooperation Unit.

For pragmatic reasons – largely related to making it easier to deal with national authorities – there are also national sections in the four countries. As NORAD set as a condition for its project support that it should be for the Norwegian section, and administered from Norway, the secretariat for the indigenous aid unit is located in Kautokeino.

### **3.2 Indigenous to indigenous development cooperation**

Since the nineteen eighties, the Saami Council has been involved in different forms of international aid and cooperation with indigenous groups in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Funding for these activities has come from NORAD, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SIDA, FINNIDA, the EU and from own funds. In the African context, activities before the start of the project under review largely consisted of training programs and workshops on international human rights instruments, organized for and with indigenous organizations from different African countries. In one of these workshops, held in Tanzania in 1999, and financed by the European Commission, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) was founded, with the First People of Kalahari (FPK) as one of the founding members.

The Saami Council has argued for the advantages of using an indigenous organization in the North for channelling development support to indigenous groups in the South. In the original application to NORAD for the project under review, it is for instance maintained that “experience seems to show that Saami development workers are often more sensitive towards the needs of other indigenous peoples, their assessments and long term goals than are non-indigenous development workers”. Moreover, the application states that “the Saami Council has extensive institutional experience and knowledge of international legal and political processes... This competence base is seen by the Saami Council as very decisive for the results of the future work with promoting ... the rights ... and interests ... of other indigenous peoples.” In assessing the application, NORAD concludes that “the Saami Council seems to be an

organization that can contribute an added value through its indigenous to indigenous programs. The Saami Council has extensive knowledge of the problems indigenous peoples are exposed through in the meeting with the majority society, national authorities and international actors.” (Internal NORAD-document 2001/2184-11 822.1)

### **3.3 The NORAD project**

The program under review is based on an application from the Saami Council received by NORAD on 01.10.01. The Council applied for support for its cooperation with indigenous peoples in Africa, with the aim of strengthening existing indigenous organizations through increasing organizational competence and knowledge of human rights. The program is proposed to be of three years duration, with four components: Support to the First People of Kalahari (Botswana); to the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (based in Tanzania); to one or two Masai-organizations in Tanzania/Kenya that are not identified; and to Himba groups in Namibia aiming to establish their own organization. NORAD responded favourably to the application, although only the first two components were approved, and the grant was reduced with 10% compared to the application of the Saami Council.

The Saami Council has on several occasions expressed that the cooperation with FPK was initiated because NORAD asked the organization to do so. This is for instance stated several times in the application for funding for 2005, submitted by the Saami Council on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2004. However, it has not been possible to confirm this. Neither the original application from the Saami Council (from 2001) nor the internal NORAD document on the processing of that application makes any reference to any such request from NORAD. A telephone interview with the former General Secretary of the Saami Council, Nils Ole Gaup, who played a key role in developing the original project proposal, likewise failed to support this version of how the cooperation was initiated. He presented FPK as an organization the Saami Council had come into contact with on different occasions, saw as a sister organization with common ideology, and for this reason wished to support.

The project, as it was revised after the partial approval from NORAD, included core funding for OIPA and FPK, as well as support for institutional strengthening for both organizations in the form of administrative and organizational training courses.

For different reasons, implementation of the project has been slower than originally envisioned. Due to the need to recruit a project coordinator, and to have a subsequent ‘fact finding mission’, the core funding for the beneficiary organizations only started up in the second half of 2002, and no courses were held during that year. In 2003, some of the activities planned for 2002 were realized, while the activity level has been lower again in 2004. The cooperation with OIPA and FPK, and the reasons for delays, are further discussed in the following sections.

An integral part of the Saami Council’s original ideas was to complement the NORAD funded support with Fredskorpset exchange of volunteers between Norway and Tanzania and Norway and Botswana. For different reasons this took longer than what the Saami Council had envisioned. The exchange was only approved from mid-



2004, when a Masaai from OIPA came to Kautokeino to work in the Saami Resource Center, while a Norwegian Saami started working in OIPA.

While unrelated to the program under review here, it should also be pointed out that in 2004, the Saami Council received NORAD funding for another program, aimed at human rights training with indigenous peoples organizations of Asia. Furthermore, from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Saami Council received funding for supporting the court case which residents of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve of Botswana have started against their eviction from the Reserve, where FPK is playing an important role.

The Saami Council has applied for an extension of the program with another three years (2005-2007). This application contemplates both the continuing of the ongoing organizational support for OIPA and FPK, as well as a new project with one of OIPA's Tanzanian member organizations focusing on AIDS education.

### **3.4 Administration of the project**

A substantial part of the budget was also allocated for the administration of the program. Due to the requirements of the particular budget line under which funding was available (i.e. the grant for Norwegian NGOs), NORAD insisted that the funding had to be for the Norwegian section of the Saami Council, and that the project had to be administered from Norway. A secretariat was therefore established in Kautokeino.

It is the opinion of the consultant that this decision had unfortunate consequences on several levels. For the Saami Council as an organization, splitting its activities into different national sections is negative for its ambition of creating unity across the national borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. And for the North-South indigenous to indigenous cooperation, the establishment of a one-person office in Kautokeino as a secretariat meant loss of potential synergies both with related international work carried out by other national sections of the Saami Council (primarily the Swedish section), and with the general work of the Saami Council administration.

A constant discussion theme between NORAD and the Saami Council has been the amount of funding to be used for administration of the program in Norway. The general rule for NORAD funding, as expressed in the guidelines for support to civil society, is that NORAD will give 8% of project costs as a general contribution to administrative costs, for which accounts need not be given. On the other hand, the organization is expected to contribute 10% of the project costs. The Saami Council has argued that due to different circumstances (the need to establish a new secretariat, the difference between the Saami Council and mainstream development NGOs, limited fund raising capacity, and additional costs related to the location in Finnmark), they are dependent on receiving more support for administering the project than this standard norm. NORAD has accepted this as necessary during the start-up of the Saami Council's cooperation with African indigenous organizations, but has kept insisting that the amounts used for administration in Norway need to come down. The Saami Council, on the other hand, has consistently resisted this, citing the reasons given above.

Looking at the actual figures, as they appear from the budgets and accounts for these three years, it is difficult to support the Saami Council contention that NORAD has shown a lack of appreciation of the Saami Council's special needs for administrative support.

	<b>2002 Budget</b>	<b>2002 Expenditure</b>	<b>2003 Budget</b>	<b>2003 Expenditure</b>	<b>2004 Budget</b>
Total costs (NOK 000)	1,851	1,040	1,760	1,779	1,650
Adm. costs Norway	816	843	870	716	790
Percentage Norway	44%	81%	49%	40%	48%
Saami C contribution	2.8%	6%	10%	10%	10%

It should be pointed out that administrative percentages are not absolute figures, but rather constructs that are highly amenable to manipulation and tweaking. Thus, if for instance travel costs for Saami Council staff and consultants were included among the Norwegian administration costs, the 'Percentage Norway' would be above fifty for all columns. Moreover, the 2004 budget includes NOK 100,000 for the evaluation as costs in Africa. Were this amount to be taken out of the project budget, the administrative percentage would also jump above 50%. On the other hand, NORAD in their budgeting and accounting guidelines to Norwegian NGOs that were developed in the mid-nineties, accepted that for organizations with no local representations in the countries where they worked, a certain percentage of the work of project coordinators based in Norway could be included as project costs. This percentage should correspond to the time actually spent not on administrative tasks, but on improving and implementing the projects. If the Saami Council followed this line, the administrative percentage would be correspondingly reduced. Thus, rather than searching for the 'true' figure that exactly expresses the administrative costs of the Saami Council program, we should be content with indicating an order of magnitude in the region of 40-50%.

It should be further pointed out that not only are administrative percentages elusive characters that are hard to pinpoint, but they are also relatively meaningless figures to compare across different project types and forms of development cooperation. If the overarching objective were to have as low administrative percentage as possible, then the best development projects would be those that were very expensive, and given minimal follow-up. However, in the context of projects of institutional support to weak organizations, where no infrastructural development is included, it is obvious that close follow-up is needed and project costs should be kept low. This automatically implies relatively high administrative costs. Under these circumstances, a low administrative percentage might actually be seen as an indication of a weak program.

In conclusion, the Saami Council seem to be justified when claiming that the program ought not to be managed on an 8% administrative budget. If NORAD finds the program worthy of continued support, they should continue to give greater

administrative support than the norm as expressed in the guidelines. On the other hand, the amounts spent in Norway and the administrative resources dedicated to the program are quite high when compared to other, similar programs. It should be possible for the Saami Council to become more efficient in using its administrative resources. This is all the more the case as the following sections will demonstrate serious weaknesses in the follow-up that the Saami Council has given in its cooperation with OIPA and the FPK.

### **3.5 Information activities**

The Saami Council has also received funding from NORAD for information activities 'at home'. An annual grant of NOK 100,000 has been given for 2003 and 2004. NORAD's aim with the information support is to disseminate knowledge, and to create commitment for and debate on North-South and development issues.

The staff at the Saami Council secretariat informed us that the funding for 2003 had been used for developing the Saami Council web page, while the 2004 grant has been used for the web page as well as for different costs related to the Saami Council Fifty Years Anniversary Conference in Honningsvåg (participation of representatives from OIPA/Tanzania, interpreters, press conference).

The Saami Council web page (<http://www.saamicouncil.net/>) was redesigned in 2003. The new design has subsections for the different activities of the Saami Council, and presents information in five languages: Saami, English, Norwegian/Swedish, Russian and Finnish. Unfortunately, the Saami Council has not yet had the capacity to develop all these areas. Currently (December 2004), there is no information in Russian and Finnish. In English and Norwegian, the sub-page for the indigenous to indigenous cooperation program has not yet been developed. In the Saami version, there is a brief description of the cooperation with FPK and OIPA – about half a text page – with no illustrations. Due to lack of linguistic competence, the consultant is unable to report on the content. From the links page, links to 22 organizations and institutions working with indigenous peoples and development cooperation in the South can be found (with a bit of work, as these are somewhat counter-intuitively placed under the references for Arctic cooperation, at least in the Norwegian pages). This seems to be the only items on North South and development issues of the web page.

I cannot judge the value of the activities of the Honningsvåg conference in terms of the objectives of NORAD's information support. However, it seems clear that so far, the web page development is still a long way from realizing these objectives. In general, there seem to be few links between the international cooperation of the Saami Council and the information activities supported by NORAD.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The Saami Council points out that they have significant information activities about the North South cooperation and indigenous peoples in Africa through other channels (e-mail from Geir Tommy Pedersen, 15.02.05).

## 4 OIPA

### 4.1 Background

The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa was founded on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1999, at a training workshop organized in Arusha, Tanzania, on international human rights standards and policy processes. The founding members of OIPA were 21 different organizations and representatives of indigenous groups from seven African countries – Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. The First People of the Kalahari (FPK) was one of the founding organizations. The workshop had been arranged by the Saami Council, with funding from the European Commission.

The mission statement of OIPA says:

Organization of indigenous peoples of Africa is an organization that seeks to bring together all the indigenous peoples of Africa under one umbrella so that they can be able to articulate issues that affect them in a unified way with a purpose to enhance their self determination and identity both now and in time to come.

A broad list of areas in which OIPA should work was drawn up. It included networking among indigenous peoples of the continent; participation in UN processes relevant to indigenous affairs; disseminate information; promote sustainable economic development and human rights awareness; cooperate with governments and other institutions and organizations; to establish an information centre; and to publish its own information material on indigenous issues. A board representing all the seven countries was elected.

However, after the conference, the organization remained largely dormant, due to a lack of funds. A few things happened – in 2000, IWGIA arranged a meeting with IPACC (the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee) to work out a division of labor between the two organizations, and in 2001 the Saami Council arranged a study tour to the European Union headquarters for the board members. However, it was only with the support from the Saami Council from 2002 onwards that OIPA was able to establish its own secretariat and hold board meetings with any regularity.

The objective of the Saami Council support, as specified in the first year's NORAD proposal, was to contribute to competence-raising and institutional development in OIPA. The intention was to fund the running of an OIPA administration, as well as biannual board meetings. In connection with the latter, the Saami Council intended to arrange training courses on organizational management and international processes related to indigenous affairs.

Funding started up in the second half of 2002. No board meetings or courses were held that year. In 2003, a board meeting was held in March, and a two weeks preparatory workshop for the World Parks Congress was held in August. In 2004, a board meeting was held in April. It was planned to hold a General Assembly before the end of the year, but as far as I am aware, this has not been achieved.

Through the Norwegian exchange program Fredskorpset, the Saami Council has received funding for an exchange of volunteers, where a representative of OIPA is working with the Saami Resource Center in Kautokeino, while a Saami Council volunteer works with OIPA. The exchange started in July 2004, and is planned for a year. As this exchange is not directly part of the NORAD-funded program, it will not be explicitly dealt with in this report.

## 4.2 Relevance

The organization of indigenous peoples in Africa has progressed considerably over the last decade or so. Yet, the status of indigenous organization still lags considerably behind what is found on the other continents, and the voices of African indigenous peoples are weaker on the international arena. Not unrelated to this are the facts that the concepts of indigenesness and of indigenous rights are highly contested in Africa and receive little or no acceptance from governments. Still, indigenous peoples of Africa continue to live in marginalized conditions throughout the continent, with their rights to land and resources increasingly being eroded, with high poverty levels, little access to services, limited political voice and facing discrimination. On this background, an organization with the aims of OIPA is highly needed. There are thus no doubts about the relevance of the objectives of the Saami Council support.

However, one might question the need for OIPA with reference to the fact that there already exists another organization – IPACC – which is both older, larger, and better consolidated. Given the weak situation of indigenous organizing in Africa, there is of course room for more than one umbrella organization, and new efforts should be welcomed. But to avoid competition, conflict and diverting energies away from the cause, there should be a division of labor between the organizations and an idea of how they might complement each other. In this sense, the meeting facilitated by IWGIA in 2000 was highly important. Unfortunately, though it has been promised, OIPA has not been able to produce the minutes of that meeting, nor has the leadership been able to explain what agreements were arrived at. They were rather dismissive of the organizations.

This also appears from the minutes of OIPA's board meeting in 2004, where it is stated that OIPA has 'a grass root approach to IPs issues as it's a membership organization of IPs as opposed to IPACC, which ... [is] not answerable to anybody' (OIPA, Minutes of board meeting 18.04.04). Similar attitude were expressed in our interviews with the OIPA leadership, placing further emphasis on the claim that non-indigenous people working on behalf of the indigenous peoples dominate within IPACC.

While I have had no direct experience with IPACC, the contrast OIPA argues for does not seem correct, at least if the information on IPACC's homepage can be trusted. It

states that IPACC consists of more than 70 members; that any community organisation that can provide a founding constitution and agrees to adhere to IPACC's constitution and code of ethics is welcome to join, and that annual General Assemblies are held. Furthermore, both the chairman and deputy chairman are indigenous. On the other hand, OIPA appears not to have held any General Assembly since its founding in 1999. Moreover, article 7.2 of the constitution of OIPA – while somewhat ambiguously formulated – seems to open for also support organizations to become members.<sup>5</sup> It is quite possible that in practice, OIPA's member organizations are closer to the grassroots than is the case of IPACC's – the fact that the annual General Assemblies of IPACC are held in connection with the meetings of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) in Geneva, Switzerland might indicate this. But formally, the organizations are largely similar.

In conclusion, having two organizations does not have to be a problem, it can even be a strength. But there is a need for a clear vision of how the organizations should complement each other.

### 4.3 Achievements

It should be pointed out that the objective of OIPA – of becoming an organization representing all the indigenous peoples of Africa – is an extremely ambitious one. Given the state of indigenous organization on the continent, and the widespread opposition toward indigenous rights, it is clear that this work must have a long time horizon. Moreover, OIPA is still a very young organization. Thus, it is clear that OIPA's achievements must be measured not against their overall objectives, but in terms of what they have managed to realize over the years of the Saami Council support.

The most important thing the organization has done has been the work in connection with the World Parks Congress. 24 representatives of indigenous organizations from seven African countries participated in a two-weeks workshop. The program both allowed participants to present case stories of conflicts between indigenous peoples and national parks from their countries, as well as to participate in trainings on international agreements and processes of relevance to these topics. An output of the workshop was a declaration on behalf of indigenous peoples of Africa, highlighting cases from Tanzania, Uganda and Botswana where indigenous peoples were losing rights due to national park policies of the governments. OIPA further got funding for a delegation of 16 to take part in the Congress in Durban, and the declaration from the workshop was used as an input into a joint statement of indigenous peoples of the world that was presented to the Congress, thereby raising international attention to the cases. Here OIPA managed to play an important role in developing and bringing the African indigenous voice to an important international event. The workshop professionally planned and conducted, and a real impact was achieved. In many ways, it was an example of the potential of an organization like OIPA.

---

<sup>5</sup> Article 7.2 states: 'Any indigenous organization or group of Africa shall be eligible to become a member, provided that such organization is a represents Indigenous Peoples community in Africa or has *or has special interests in Indigenous Peoples issues.*' (emphasis added).

Furthermore, OIPA has undoubtedly played a role as a learning arena, especially for its smaller and newer member organizations. The workshop mentioned above, as well as board meetings, has functioned as meeting places as well as training workshops in organizational management and indigenous issues. For some organizations this has undoubtedly been useful.

Similarly, many organizations – again particularly the smaller and more recent ones – see OIPA as a means for establishing links to the outside world. This involves both getting into contact with donors, and spreading information. One case where OIPA has played the function of spreading information to international journalists is with respect to the recent land conflicts of the Maasai in Kenya, which brought welcome international attention to the issue.

The funding of the Saami Council has also given OIPA a standing and international visibility which aids in getting funding from other sources, for instance for participation of representatives in different international and UN meetings. The fact that OIPA has recently received a request for a funding proposal from the EU is also seen as an effect of the Saami Council cooperation.

Finally, OIPA has started the process of mapping indigenous organizations in the region, including the collection of data on the activities and areas of operation of these organizations. While this work is only starting – it reportedly covers some 60 organizations, mainly in Eastern Africa – this is obviously part of what OIPA ought to engage in.

## **4.4 Weaknesses**

In general, even if one starts from the premise that a long time perspective is needed for building OIPA and achieving its objectives, it must be concluded that considerably more could have been achieved with the support from the Saami Council over these years.

### **4.4.1 Strategic level**

There are serious weaknesses at the strategic level. There are several aspects to this: the lack of a strategy for organizational development; the failure to have clarified in a convincing way what indigenous is to mean; and the lack of a clear conception of what the division of labor with and relationship to other organizations should be. The latter point has been alluded to in the discussion of IPACC and will not be repeated here.

As appears from the list of proposed work areas referred to in the presentation of OIPA, they cover a wide range of different types of activities. Similarly, the report from the board meeting in March 2003 details an extremely long list of proposed activities, including: organizational issues; information work; research and documentation; work on livelihood issues; lobbying, awareness-raising and taking part in international processes; and land and land rights campaigning. Apart from the

World Parks Congress work, virtually nothing on this ambitious agenda has been achieved – or even addressed. One gets the impression that faced with such an overwhelming list it is impossible to know where to start and nothing gets done. What might help is a strategy for what can be achieved over a definite period of time, such as three or five years, and yearly operational plans with clear and realistic targets. Not having developed any such instrument over these years is a serious weakness.

The concept of ‘indigenous’ is a complicated one. While there is some agreement on the elements comprised in the concept – such as first come, non-dominance, cultural distinctiveness, attachment to land, self-ascription – they are not easily merged into one straightforward and easily applicable definition. To a certain extent it must be acknowledged that the ascription of indigenesness will always be open to negotiation. Yet this does surely not mean that ‘indigenous’ can be taken to mean anything. And in particular in Africa, where the concept is so contested, and governments are so wary of recognizing any rights adhering to it, it is important not to use the concept too loosely, so that it is watered down and loses its moral power. In my opinion, OIPA is in danger of doing just that. When questioned about how organizations from an ethnically uniform Somalia could be accepted as member organizations of OIPA, the board leadership argued that some Somalis, who have lost their cattle and are forced to take up agricultural work, form a marginalized and discriminated group, which can therefore be considered as an indigenous group. I find this a highly tenuous argument. Furthermore, one of the recent member organizations of OIPA – which is even represented on the board – is the Coalition of Somali Women. This organization, however, works with Somali refugees in Kenya. While they are certainly an ethnic minority in Kenya, they cannot be described as indigenous<sup>6</sup>. By showing such lack of attention to what kinds of organizations should be eligible for OIPA – and even the OIPA board – the organization reveals a fundamental lack of strategic clarity with respect to the fundamental issue it is supposed to represent and promote.

#### **4.4.2 Constitution**

The constitution contains a number of provisions that are not followed in practice, for instance that the General Assembly shall be held every two years and meetings of the board of trustees every three months. Furthermore, only the General Assembly can elect board members, the term is two years but reelection is possible, and a 50% quorum is needed for the General Assembly. This of course raises the question of how new board members have been elected and old ones reelected over the years.

It is problematic when constitutional requirements are not followed. This impedes the democratic development of the organization. To some extent, the failure to abide by the constitution may be due to provisions that are impossible to follow in practice for an organization such as OIPA. If this is the case, then these provisions should be sought changed through the appropriate organizational mechanisms. In other cases, increased efforts should be made to follow the constitution.

---

<sup>6</sup> Even if other, permanent Somali groups in Kenya might very well be categorized as indigenous within the Kenyan state.



### **4.4.3 Expansion and recruitment**

The ambition of OIPA is to become an umbrella organization for all indigenous peoples of Africa. If this is to be achieved, there is a need for a systematic strategy for expansion through the recruitment of new member organizations. This does not seem to be taking place.

Analysis of this is difficult, however, as I have only received a list of the 21 original members of OIPA. Reportedly, there are now 30 member organizations, so some recruitment of new members has been going on. But since OIPA in spite of repeated requests has been unable to come up with a list of the current member organizations, it is difficult to fully assess what kinds of new organizations have been recruited, and whether many of the original ones have dropped out. However, on the basis of the program set up by OIPA for the evaluation team, we learnt of five organizations that had joined OIPA after the founding. They were all from Kenya and Tanzania<sup>7</sup>. One of these new organizations was not working with indigenous peoples at all, while another completely lacked any indigenous perspective to its work.

Among the founding organizations, Maasai organizations are numerically dominant, and 12 of the 21 organizations are from Tanzania and Kenya. In order to reach its objectives of becoming an organization representing indigenous peoples for all of Africa, conscious efforts would seem to be required to overcome this imbalance. The impression seems to be that the opposite has actually been taking place: That the recruitment of new members has been on the basis of organizations key OIPA persons have accidentally come into contact with, with little attention to geographical distribution or commitment to indigenous perspectives.

It was also alleged to us that while a number of new and weak organizations had been brought into OIPA, several of the stronger founder organizations with clear indigenous visions had dropped out. Not having received a list of current members, it has been impossible for us to verify whether this is correct or not.

### **4.4.4 Communication with member organizations**

OIPA could serve an important function in supplying member organizations with information on indigenous issues, news updates related to indigenous struggles in different countries, presentations of different organization, and so on. OIPA should also regularly inform the member organizations of its plans and activities.

Nothing of this seems to be done. Even member organizations based in Arusha appear to be quite uncertain about what OIPA really does.

---

<sup>7</sup> Naturally enough, as we were only able to visit Arusha.

#### **4.4.5 Visibility**

In discussions with the leadership of OIPA, it appeared that their objective was that OIPA should be an active participant at the global level, representing Africa in different UN processes related to indigenous issues. Also at the continental level OIPA might play a role, for instance with respect to the African Commission, but so far the organization has not been able to do anything at this level. At the national level, however, the idea seemed to be that lobbying and campaigning should be in the name of the member organizations.

It is possible that this is a wise strategy. However, it obviously ties in with the fact that OIPA is a largely unknown and invisible organization. Just as there is little internal information to members, there is no external information, campaigning or publicity work. OIPA does not have a website, it does not even have a sign outside its office. For a long time, the organization has been saying that they need a logo. Apparently, however, they have not done anything to develop it.

It will be extremely difficult to reach the objective of becoming an organization for all the indigenous peoples of Africa if nobody ever hears about OIPA.

#### **4.4.6 Administration**

Through the Saami Council funding, OIPA has been able to have a secretariat since the second half of 2002. It has been staffed with a coordinator, and at times also with a program officer, volunteer secretary and a Norwegian volunteer. The first office held during the period of cooperation was deemed inadequate – in particular when a Norwegian volunteer was coming. Since mid-2004, OIPA has rented its own premises, with three rooms, and phone and Internet connection.

The first coordinator did not perform satisfactorily, according to reports. In 2004, he was first demoted to program officer, and subsequently let go. A new coordinator was hired from mid-2004. Unfortunately, due to obligations in Kenya it took some time before he could assume the position, and even after he did, he has been absent from the office for much of the time.

When the Norwegian volunteer arrived in July 2004, she came to an office that was completely bare except for one desk and two computers. There were no files and no other furniture. While the latter has been acquired and some documents have been dug up from different locations, there is a striking lack of order and content to the files. Fundamental documents such as a list of current member organizations and the agreements between OIPA and IPACC have been unavailable, while it took repeated requests and a search among other offices and board members to uncover board minutes (from two meetings) and a list of the founding members of OIPA. The material of OIPA's 'resource and documentation center' – which it was the proposed task of the Norwegian volunteer to establish – does not exist.

#### **4.4.7 Lack of commitment**

When asking board members and representatives of OIPA what was needed for the organization to advance towards its long-term objectives, the answer was inevitably more resources: for additional staff, capacity building and activities. However, it is evident that the Saami Council funding could have been put to much better use, and a lot more could have been achieved over these years. In a sense, an opportunity has been wasted, and the problem has not been lack of funds or resources, but the failure to make use of those available. Nor can low educational levels and lack of skilled people be an explanation – as is part of the explanation for limited achievements in Botswana – because the OIPA leadership are strong and competent people who are doing excellent work with their own organizations. The likely reason must be that these persons have been tied up with the work of these organizations, and have therefore failed to put sufficient efforts and will into developing OIPA. However, it is clear that if OIPA is to advance towards its objectives to any degree, there is a need for its member organizations to show responsibility and commitment to this cause, and use part of their organizational resources for this purpose.

Before finalizing the fieldwork in Tanzania, these findings were presented in a debriefing meeting with representatives of the board, staff and member organizations of OIPA. There was a general agreement that this was a fair assessment of the organization.

#### **4.5 The Saami Council cooperation**

When one discovers so fundamental weaknesses and such a clear failure to make use of the opportunity offered by the cooperation, the donor must share in the blame. In this case, the Saami Council should have required more from OIPA and tied the funding to clearer conditions on how it should be used and what the organization should do and achieve.

There are probably different reasons for why the Saami Council did not do so. Partly, it is probably because the Saami Council felt that doing so would be contrary to the trust, the avoidance of using the power of funding and the equal and balanced relationship that ideally should characterize an indigenous to indigenous partnership. However, it is clear that such an ideal sets requirements on both parties to the partnership. If the recipient does not fulfil their side of the agreement, a responsible donor cannot maintain a hands-off attitude and let funding continue uninterrupted. However, this of course requires that the donor be aware of the situation.

This brings us to the other reason for why the Saami Council did not take a stronger role. To a great extent, it seems that many of the weaknesses described above went unperceived, as the Saami Council chose not to focus on those areas. The Saami Council project coordinator appears to have seen the cooperation with OIPA largely in terms of the technical aspects of setting up a functioning office and administration. Thus, in this area, she did work for improvements: Pressing for new offices after seeing the conditions of the original; insisting on a new coordinator when it was clear that the first one was incapable; requesting reports and accounts. But with respect to the larger issue of whether the support was helping OIPA move towards its overall objectives, there was much less interest from the project coordinator. Therefore,

weaknesses in terms of strategic development, recruitment of new members, contact with member organizations, and general visibility appear to have gone unperceived. For the Saami Council to realize the full potential as a donor in indigenous to indigenous development cooperation, they need to transcend this narrow and technical perception of the cooperation.

On the positive side, it should be pointed out that the visits to Norway, Saami Land and the Saami Council – that have been arranged for a number of representatives of OIPA and OIPA member organizations – have undoubtedly been valuable. This has allowed participants to see and experience indigenous issues and struggles from new contexts and perspectives, and has undoubtedly led to reflection and deeper understanding among the individuals taking part. It seems likely that this has also been useful for the organizations they work with. Here the Saami Council is able to do something a non-indigenous donor could not have done.

## 5 The First People of the Kalahari

### 5.1 Context

San is a group of indigenous peoples that are found in Southern Africa. The total population is estimated to be around 100.000. About half of them live in Botswana, while they are also found in Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola and Zambia. In Botswana San are often referred to as Basarwa, Bushmen or N/oakwe. There is considerable diversity between different San groups, including linguistic diversity: a number of different languages exist among the Botswana San. The San population is spread throughout the country, with the highest concentration in Ghanzi District, where the First People of Kalahari has its base. About half of the San population lives in this district<sup>8</sup>, where they make up close to half of the population.

Traditionally, the San have been hunters and gatherers, and thereby distinguished themselves from the cattle-keeping groups who dominate in today's Botswana. As access to land, game and other natural resources has become increasingly constrained, traditional adaptations are harder to maintain. Yet, the San to a large extent continue to live in remote and marginal areas, often concentrated in government-established settlements. In the face of reduced access to natural resources, and limited employment and income opportunities in the settlement areas, poverty and dependence on government welfare programs are widespread. The San are marginalized within Botswana society in a number of ways – living in remote areas, having low educational levels and high poverty levels, having little political voice and representation, and facing discrimination in encounters with other groups and government institutions.

Official policy towards the San has tended to deny any indigenous status and the particular rights this entails. Also the ethnic element has been downplayed, and the main policy instrument has been the Remote Area Development Program (RADP), targeting poor people living in remote areas and settlements in general, not the San population per se. As Sidsel Saugestad has argued, this way of defining the problem leads to interventions that fail to take into account the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and discriminatory dimensions of the San marginalization (Saugestad 2001).

Rights to land and resources have been among the central problems facing the San. Livestock farms, protected areas and restrictions on hunting have over a long period consistently reduced their possibilities of maintaining traditional life styles. A key case in this respect has been the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, which was established towards the end of the colonial period and covers about 10% of the national territory. Originally it was envisioned as an area where the resident San population could maintain its traditional adaptation. However, concerns over alleged

---

<sup>8</sup> As there is considerable uncertainty about the total number of San in Botswana – in part due to different ways of categorizing – these figures should be taken as indications only.

over-exploitation of resources and the difficulty of providing services led to a decision by the Botswana government to relocate the people living inside the reserve. Despite protests from many sources, a large number of people were moved to two new settlements outside the park in 1997. This was followed up in early 2002, when services (including water) were cut off for the remaining inhabitants, who were also removed from the reserve. Opposition against this government policy has taken different forms, evolving from a negotiation strategy to a legal strategy of a court case against the government that is currently ongoing.

The First People of the Kalahari was established in 1992/93, in the aftermath of two regional conferences that took up the situation of the San peoples in Southern Africa. The objective was to establish a representative organization for the San in Botswana, that could promote their social, economic, political, legal and cultural rights vis-a-vis the government and the Botswana public. A key person behind the founding of the organization was John Hardbattle. His untimely death in 1996 was a hard blow to the organization, made even harder by the passing away of more than half of the other founding members over a relatively short period. IWGIA funded core activities and institutional strengthening of the organization from 1993 to 2002. An evaluation of this support was carried out in the first half of 2004. It describes in considerable detail the activities and achievements of the organization over this period. In general, however, the overall conclusion remains negative: IWGIA underestimated the difficulties of contributing to the building of an organization representing a group as marginalized as the Botswana San, and there is little that remains in terms of a functioning institutional structure after almost ten years and more than ten million Danish Kroner. While an institutional analysis of FPK today is found in the following, the reader interested in the further details on the development and activity of the organization since 1993 is referred to the thorough and knowledgeable report of Robert Hitchcock and Martin Enghoff (2004).

It is important to note that several other organizations working with San issues also exist. WIMSA – the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa – works for San issues on a regional basis, and while the headquarters is in Namibia, the organization has a national office in Botswana. The Kuru Family of Organizations (previously the Kuru development Trust) works with different development efforts among a number of San communities, both in Ghanzi District and in the Okavango. Also Ditshwanelo – the Botswana Centre for Human Rights – and the Botswana Christian Council have been involved in promoting San causes in different ways. In addition, there exists a number of local San organizations or ‘trusts’ set up for development purposes, largely in response to the possibility of getting recognized rights to local resources through the Community Based Natural Resource Management schemes of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. While many of these organizations are fledgling, and not set up as interest organizations, they might nevertheless serve as an important basis for extending San organization.

To some extent, there have been resentments between the different organizations working with San issues all along. The FPK has seen itself as the only organization *of* the San themselves – and not simply *for* the San. Thus, it has claimed a particular status and legitimacy in terms of representing the San, and other organizations have experienced the FPK as being unwilling to cooperate. The Central Kalahari Game Reserve court case has to some extent accentuated this situation. Initially, a group of

different organizations cooperated on the CKGR Negotiation Team and the supporting CKGR Coalition (which included among others international organizations such as the Saami Council, Norwegian Church Aid and IWGIA). However, as the strategy ‘hardened’, first with taking the government to court, and subsequently through firing the original lawyer team and following what has been perceived as a strategy devised by the UK-based campaigning NGO Survival International, the alliance has shrunk, and currently FPK and WIMSA Botswana are alone among the Botswana civil society organizations actively supporting the court case. However, this is a fluid situation, and processes are underway seeking to reintegrate other organizations into this alliance.

## **5.2 FPK**

This section sets out to give an institutional analysis of the First People of Kalahari. The intention is to give an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, both in terms of the internal challenges of developing a strong and well-functioning organization, as well as the external constraints posed by the institutional and political context of Botswana. Only on the basis of such an understanding is it possible to assess the cooperation of the Saami Council and the extent to which it has succeeded in addressing the real needs of the organization and ultimately in strengthening the organization.

### **5.2.1 Relevance**

There is an evident need for an organization representing the San people in Botswana. The San are marginalized and discriminated against in many ways: Income poverty is high; educational levels are low; access to basic services is lower than for other segments of Botswana’s population; they have experienced abuses from police and anti-poaching officials; their access to resources are gradually being eroded; due to a combination of lack of knowledge and education, structural factors related to cultural differences and living in remote areas, and discriminatory attitudes among the Botswana public and government officials they have general problems of securing their citizen’s rights.

To reverse this situation, actions at different levels and of many different kinds are needed. But it seems obvious that an indispensable requirement for this to happen is the existence of a strong organization representing the San themselves, giving voice to their own interests and fighting for their own rights. The Saami Council’s goal of strengthening indigenous organization in Botswana is therefore highly relevant.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Even if the goal of strengthening indigenous organization in Botswana is highly relevant, one could still question whether FPK is the best or only vehicle for addressing the issue. This is further discussed in the analysis below, in particular in sections 5.2.5 and 5.2.6.

### 5.2.2 Constraints

The constraints to creating a strong, efficient and democratic San organization are great. A first element concerns physical distance. Botswana is a huge country of 581,000 square kilometers<sup>10</sup>, with only 1.6 million inhabitants. The San live in small settlements dispersed throughout the most remote and inaccessible areas of this territory, where roads are poor and public transport, telephone lines and radio communication are largely missing. As an example of the challenge this poses on organization building, the FPK is currently based only in one district, Ghanzi<sup>11</sup>, and the board members of the organization do not represent all the settlements in this district. Still, in order to collect the board members for an interview with the evaluation team, the board chairman needed to spend three full days of driving to pick them up. He then managed to get hold of ten of the 14 members.

Related to geographical distance is the complicating factor of linguistic diversity. Language differences may hamper communication. They may also serve as markers of diverse groups within the San, groups that do not necessarily always have the same priorities. A national San organization will need to bridge such divisions.

Further challenges for building a strong organization are found in the low educational level of the San, and the extremely limited exposure to the formal bureaucracies of modern societies and nation states of the majority of the people living in the settlements. Having a board where the majority of the members are illiterate has throughout FPK's history hampered the establishment of a functional division of roles between board and staff. In particular, this has been the case with respect to board ability to control and instruct the staff. Furthermore, the formal structure of a modern organization is a new and alien organizational form. While a board may receive training and through that come to understand and appreciate these organizational principles, it is a much larger task to ensure that such understanding is disseminated through the constituency so that it is able to take up the functions on which the organizational model is premised.

### 5.2.3 The FPK board

The evaluation team met with ten board members representing different settlements. The ten members showed a fair distribution between old-timers who had been board members for a long time, and newer and younger members. Two of the board members were women.

In presenting their vision for the organization, most of the board members spoke. They were quite consistent in their ideas about what the organization should be. FPK should fight for the rights of all the San of Botswana. Their statements on this included: Fighting for San land rights; for an end to oppression and discrimination; for legal rights; for representation in national and local level political institutions; redress and protection against rape of San girls and women; against exploitation and abuse of San in cattle farms and other places of work; for the recognition and continuation of San culture. It is noteworthy that none of these statements included

---

<sup>10</sup> Almost double the size of Norway.

<sup>11</sup> Even though the ambition is to eventually represent all the San in Botswana.



tasks of a more development-oriented kind, such as for instance developing income-generating activities or working on HIV/AIDS issues. In conclusion, then, the board demonstrated a clear and uniform vision of the kind of organization they wished to build. When organizations have clear goals like this, donors should not seek to modify them by tying funding to specific activities not really falling within these goals. The Saami Council – similarly a rights-oriented interest organization – has naturally enough had no difficulties in accepting the FPK’s chosen focus.

Unfortunately, however, the board plays a relatively weak role within FPK. This seems to have been a problem throughout the organization’s history. The difficulty involved in arranging board meetings is an important factor. For this reason board meetings are seldom called and held. In connection with the evaluation, and the bringing together of the board to meet with us, a board meeting was held on November the 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004. The previous meeting had been held on March 5<sup>th</sup>, in connection with the IWGIA evaluation. The meeting before that again was held in October 2003, during the Saami Council project coordinator’s visit. Because of the infrequent meetings, most board members – apart from the chairman – were reluctant to speak about the details of the cooperation with the Saami Council, as they felt they knew too little about it. It is also worth pointing out that at least the last four board meetings have been called in connection with such meetings with outsiders. Of course, this saves costs. But one might raise the question of how many board meetings there would have been over the period had not these outside meetings been scheduled. If the number had been lower, this would to some extent call into question FPK’s insistence that it is different from other organizations working with San issues since it is wholly managed by the San themselves.

In spite of not having an active role (maybe even because of it) there are evident tensions within the board with respect to priorities. The CKGR case directly involves only a couple of thousand San, maybe 5% of the San in Botswana, or 10% of the San in Ghantsi District. Clearly, the court case is not necessarily the number one priority of all San. While there are natural differences in opinion within the board on how much attention should be given to the case, we are uncertain to which extent the board has been able to discuss such strategic issues to any extent.

In the absence of an active board, the chairman has assumed a key role, and to a large extent taken up the functions that the board as a whole should have. He is the one who makes decisions related for instance to the cooperation with the Saami Council. As he has purchased one of the vehicles of the FPK, and as he lives in New Xade<sup>12</sup>, he is more accessible than the other board members, and therefore able to play this active role. With the vehicle, he is also able to provide transport services to FPK, such as collecting board members for meetings, and hopefully the car is better taken care of when it is now his personal vehicle rather than belonging to the organization.<sup>13</sup> Still, there are questions to be asked about the appropriateness of the chairman acquiring the organization’s car at a price that was reported to be quite favorable, and then

---

<sup>12</sup> The new settlement to which inhabitants of the CKGR were relocated, and where the first phase of the court case was held.

<sup>13</sup> One of the problems FPK has had throughout its history is taking care of the vehicles. These have been roughly handled by staff and have broken down frequently. The organization still has two cars in disrepair. During the board meeting in November 2004, it was decided to sell the one in the worst condition, to finance repairs of the other.

charging mileage for the use of the vehicle in the organization's interest. Even if the prices involved are fair, the very fact that the chairman ends up with the vehicle may send the wrong signals for an organization wishing to build a functioning democratic structure. While the Saami Council has not funded this car, we believe its representatives ought to discuss the issue with FPK.

Historically, there has been a difficult relationship between the board and the staff. Staff members and number changed over the IWGIA period, but at times they were as many as eight (including field workers engaged in CKGR mapping). Even if all (except for a driver) were San, there has nevertheless been a strong feeling among the board that these educated 'children' disrespected them for being 'illiterate and ignorant'. (Since FPK's founding, a large part of the board – the majority? – have been illiterate.) Thus, staff failed to consult with and involve the board in the running of the organization. According to the board, they related more to IWGIA as the donor than to them. Thereby the board was sidelined and unable to perform the real function of a board. Towards the end of the IWGIA period, the coordinator at the time took advantage of the board's limited possibility for exerting control to use the organization's resources for personal benefit. On the basis of these experiences, the board is now quite wary of hiring a new qualified coordinator. Rather than hiring someone they do not know, with the right qualifications, the board prefers hiring people they know, even if they do not have all the skills required.

A key element for assessing the organization is of course its relationship to its constituency. To what extent are the San people living in the settlements aware of the organization's existence and activities? To what extent do they support it? How are their concerns brought to the attention and taken up by the board and staff? Thus, to what extent can the board and staff – and the organization itself – be said to represent the San? A brief review such as the one we have conducted cannot hope to answer these fundamental questions to any depth. But a few indications can be given. According to Hitchcock and Enghoff (who had more time for fieldwork than was the case for us),

'in Ghanzi district, awareness of the goals and objectives of the FPK was relatively widespread... At the local level in Ghanzi, San and other community members D'kar, East Hanahai, West Hanahai, Bere and Ka/Gae were aware of the efforts of FPK, especially on human rights of San and on the CKGR relocation issue.' (Hitchcock and Enghoff 2004: 14)

The board members are the fundamental links between the organization and their communities. According to the constitution, they should be elected every two years. In practice this has not been implemented in any systematic way. Seemingly, new members have only been appointed when old ones have died or have dropped out. As we were told, appointing a new board member as representing a settlement involved calling a meeting to elect a person. While some of the board members told us that they were active in discussing issues and the FPK with people in their communities, there were no institutionalized mechanisms for ensuring that this took place. In practice, such communication is therefore dependent on the initiative of the individual board member, and the extent to which it is practiced will therefore in all probability vary strongly from one settlement to another. One indication that some communication has been taking place is the way cases where San face problems with

employers or officials are brought to the attention of the board by the board members. During the times when there was FPK funding, many such cases were followed up<sup>14</sup>. Today, they are at most passed on to WIMSA and Ditshwanelo, who reportedly rarely have resources to follow them up. In conclusion, it can be pointed out that relations between board and constituency are tenuous and unsystematic, and that there is a need for concrete mechanisms to improve communication and contact. However, a potential difficulty for making such mechanisms function is that the FPK is a controversial organization – in particular now with the court case and the Survival International alliance – and some people may fear identifying themselves with the organization at the grassroots level.

The constitution of FPK is not followed in terms of regular board elections. There are also a number of other stipulations of the constitution that are not followed – for instance that the FPK is formally a membership organization – even with individual members paying yearly subscriptions – or that board meetings should be held at least three times a year. Indeed, since the constitution is in English, and runs to 19 detailed pages, it has not been available to the board members until last year when it was translated for them by evaluation team member Ketsile Molokomme during a training workshop she facilitated in connection with a board meeting. At that time, it was actually a big surprise to the board members to learn that FPK was a membership organization. This training was undoubtedly an important step for strengthening the organization, but it needs to be followed up. It is important for an organization not only to know its constitution, but also to follow it. If not, the organization almost automatically becomes the instrument or ‘property’ of one strong leader or of a limited group of central persons. There is therefore the need to introduce practices for implementing the constitution, and, where this proves impractical or impossible due to the particular situation of the FPK, to introduce changes to the provisions of the constitution to ensure that they can be followed. One task for a donor should be to discuss with FPK how this can be achieved, and support the measures that are required.

#### **5.2.4 Administration**

Ensuring that the organization has a functioning administration has been a perpetual problem for the FPK. While the IWGIA funding allowed the hiring of a staff that ought to be more than sufficient for realizing the basic tasks of running the organization, there were continuously problems in making sure that routines were followed, letters answered, donor requirements met, etc., in addition to the problems of the relationship between board and staff, mentioned above. For details on this, see Hitchcock and Enghoff, who conclude that the ‘capacity and experience of FPK in office management and administration is and has been uniquely low’ (2004: 35).

The gap between the ending of the IWGIA support and the start of the Saami Council support led to new problems. Equipment and assets of the organization – including VCR equipment and computers – were stolen or lost in the course of the period without any office. Former staff lodged claims for severance pay from FPK with the

---

<sup>14</sup> See Hitchcock and Enghoff for a number of examples.

Department of Labor, claims the organization still does not know whether will have to be paid.

One asset FPK acquired during the IWGIA period is a plot just outside of Ghanzi. At some point, electricity lines were brought to this plot, as a first step in the organization's dreams to develop offices and other functions such as a cultural center on the plot. While there are still no buildings and no electricity use on the plot, it seems that the subscription rate is nevertheless being charged. Apparently, the accumulated debt to the electricity company has now come to 30,000 pula (around USD 7,000).

When the Saami Council funding started up, there was no functioning administrative structure of the FPK at all. The solution that was arrived at was to channel funds through WIMSA Botswana, who had an office in Ghantsi and a coordinator who could work part-time for FPK. This arrangement, however, was not a success. Probably, the FPK leadership were never happy with the idea, but failed to express their dissatisfaction for fear of endangering the funding. Anyway, contact between the WIMSA coordinator and the board was extremely limited during the year's time that this arrangement lasted. As the Saami Council funding did not comprise funding for any activities apart from the training courses that kept being postponed, the organization was not really functional during this year. After a year, FPK and the Saami Council decided to bypass WIMSA and let FPK establish itself on its own. The transfer of funds and assets from WIMSA to FPK was also a drawn-out affair, and the whole experience has not been helpful for strengthening relations between FPK and WIMSA.

As mentioned, the FPK board has become wary of hiring qualified coordinators they do not know, and take their time in this process. Thus, for the time being, they make do with one 'office manager' who they know well and who has been working with the organization for a long time. He is able to do the basic paperwork. His main strengths, however, are reported to be in fieldwork, and currently, all his time is taken with the court case. Alongside him works the previous chairman of the board, Roy Sesana, who has played a very central role throughout the CKGR case – both internally in identifying and mobilizing claimants for the case, and externally in promoting national and international attention. Thus, the organization has staff to follow up what the organization sees as the number one priority at the moment – the CKGR court case – while clearly lacking what is required to transform administrative routines or strengthen the organization in other respects.

The first test of this administrative set-up in terms of fulfilling donor requirements could be said to be the submission of accounts. When these finally were prepared for the period leading up to 31.03.04, there was an amount of Pula 32,783 (approximately USD 8,000) for which accounts could not be given.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the arrangement was clearly unsatisfactory in terms of financial management. Since then, however, an arrangement has been made with a local auditor who now handles the financial side. Funds are only released by him upon presentation of disbursement requests signed by two board members, and he ensures that all required documentation is collected.

---

<sup>15</sup> This was out of a total of Pula 218,003 spent over two years, 68,307 of which were spent (and accounted for) during the time when WIMSA was acting as intermediary.

During the November 2004 board meeting, he also presented the organization's economic situation for the board. Thus, the problems of financial management seem to be resolved.

Currently, then, the situation is that the FPK has an office (rented) in Ghantsi, with phone, computers and e-mail-connection. There is a cleaner there daily, who is able to take a message if somebody calls. Apart from that, however, the two other staff spend most of their time – certainly all of the last six months – on issues relating to the court case, whether seeking out claimants in the settlements, working with the legal team and preparing witnesses, traveling to the US and Europe to gather international support, or following the court proceedings. Thus, the administration of the organization continues to be neglected – mail keeps piling up and routines are not followed. The organization clearly recognizes that there is a need to hire somebody with higher qualifications, and a job description and a profile for the person sought has been developed. But there are dilemmas related both to the fact that for the salary they can offer, it is difficult to find somebody with the required qualifications who is willing to stay in Ghantsi, and to the fact that they want somebody they can trust. One possible solution is to select a young person they know and trust, who may not have all qualifications yet, but who has the capacity to develop and can be groomed through on-the-job training. At least one such candidate exists, but selection is a delicate issue involving the consideration of the overall balance of different San linguistic groups in key positions within the organization, and the board is yet to take a final decision on the issue.

The FPK also has a dream of building its own office on the plot they have. Rather than keeping on paying rent for hired premises, it would make much more sense to invest some money in building something that would be theirs, and for which no rent would have to be paid. Economically, this would be much better in the long run, is the argument of the board. So far, however, no donors have been willing to support this idea. It is also worth pointing out that even if owning means no rent, it does mean maintenance costs, as well as assuming the responsibility for ensuring that maintenance and repairs are done. For a weak organization that has had difficulties with fulfilling a range of obligations, it might be better to leave this responsibility to a landlord.

### **5.2.5 Coverage/representation**

The FPK was established with the aim of representing and promoting the rights of all the San of Botswana. One aim of the FPK since its inception has been to establish a national San council. Thus, in the constitution, as one of the objectives, it is stated 'to create a representative (duly elected) National council as a negotiating partner with Botswana Government'.

Currently, the FPK is a long way from achieving anything like this. In terms of representative structure, they have board members representing most – but not all – of the settlements in Ghantsi District, and no representation outside that District. Even though this is the District with the strongest San presence, there is an equal number of San living in other areas of Botswana. As discussed above, it is also an open question whether board membership from a settlement really means representation. Formerly,

with the greater funding during the IWGIA years, the FPK was able to do some information work about the organization also in communities outside of Ghantsi District. In practice, however, the focus of the work that has been carried out over the period of the Saami Council cooperation has been on the CKGR, which directly concerns only a fraction of the San in Ghantsi District, let alone in Botswana.

It is easy to understand why this is priority number one for the FPK, and not only because the present and the former chairman of the organization are among the people relocated. It is also an issue of great symbolic and informational value, and experiences from other parts of the world have shown that such issues can be very efficient for raising concern and understanding about indigenous issues in the general public, as well as for internal mobilization among the indigenous people themselves. While the Alta case in Norway directly affected a relatively limited number of Saamis, the case nevertheless assumed tremendous symbolic importance and marked a watershed for the recognition of Saami rights<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, there is a danger inherent in focusing the struggle for San rights only on those groups who have managed to maintain traditional livelihoods to the greatest extent. Those groups that no longer hunt and collect in the traditional manner, and that have lost the traditional knowledge that inhere in these activities, are maybe less colorful and exotic. Possibly, a strategy focusing on the most 'traditional' of the San may be in danger of failing to promote the interests of these other San groups. Yet where they live under difficult circumstances, perhaps as farm laborers under feudal conditions, and with their oppression legitimated locally with reference to ethnical prejudices, their need of representation may be equally great.

It is evident that at the moment, FPK on its own does not have the capacity to establish the national San Council envisioned in the constitution. For the consultant writing this report, it is impossible to know whether the time is ripe for the establishment of such a body. It is indisputable that there is a need for such a body that could promote San rights and negotiate with the government. This would be important nationally. It would also be relevant in the regional context, given the fact that such national councils have been established in South Africa and Namibia. But if such a body should be able to represent the San at the national level, there would necessarily have to exist structures at the local level through which Council members could be elected or appointed with a degree of democracy and a meaningful notion of representation, and with mechanisms that could also secure feedback from the Council to the communities. Clearly one cannot wait for the perfect system and structure for community contact to be established. But if one attempted to create a national Council prematurely, without any such grassroots base to build on, one would have a body that could not represent the San people in a true way, and such an experiment might easily lead to loss of any legitimacy of the Council and a probable setback for the San cause. As mentioned, a number of local San development organizations or trusts have come into being over the last years, and they might be able to serve as such a grassroots base for a national council. But whether these organizations are still too few and fledgling, I have no means of judging.

---

<sup>16</sup> Paradoxically, even though the struggle to stop the power development plans was largely unsuccessful.

The important point to make, however, is that if – or when – conditions are ripe for establishing an organizational structure at a national level, the FPK should not stand in the way of this, even if the organization is not able to play the leading role. Rather, the organization ought to welcome such a development and support it to the extent it is able, just as it should welcome any attempts at creating new San interest organizations that might arise in other districts of Botswana. The current attitude of the FPK leadership seems to be that the creation of a national San Council is their prerogative, and that notwithstanding the fact that they are currently unable to do so, other organizations should not try to get involved in this task. This was the attitude expressed by the FPK board. Moreover, the WIMSA invitation to work together for the establishment of a San Council and the Kuru Family willingness to contribute for this purpose have not been taken up. These initiatives seem rather to be resented as interference in the FPK's area. If this attitude of FPK blocks the creation of a representative San body at the national level, it is counterproductive for the San cause. Serious FPK donors ought to try to play a constructive role in preventing that organizational jealousies work against the overall objectives.

Some dimensions of this issue are further discussed in the following section.

### **5.2.6 Relations with other national actors**

As mentioned, there are a number of other organizations working with San issues in Botswana. Relationships between FPK and these other actors have varied over time. While there have been ups and downs, the general tendency over the last years has been that FPK is becoming increasingly isolated. A sense that other organizations are competing with FPK, and a claim that since it is the only organization managed wholly by the San themselves, other organizations do not have the same legitimacy to represent the San, seem to be basic underlying factors.

The Kuru Family of Organizations (formerly Kuru Development Trust) is a cluster of organizations working with various San issues, mostly related to income-generating and cultural issues. At one point in the early 1990s, a division of labor was agreed between FPK and Kuru, where FPK should work on political issues and Kuru with development. On this basis, the organizations helped each other in different small ways throughout the years. Apparently, however, the relationship soured considerably during the process through which the Kuru Development Trust was divided up into the number of smaller organizations currently making up the Kuru Family. This was a painful process for many, both staff and community stakeholders of the organization, and when FPK attempted to intervene at the request of individuals who felt they were losing out, the relationship between the organizations deteriorated considerably.

With WIMSA, there have been strains in the relationship since the founding of the organizations. In 1994, FPK representatives, including the founding father John Hardbattle, walked out of one of the meetings laying the ground for the foundation of WIMSA, claiming it was aiming to take over the functions of FPK. However, FPK is a member of WIMSA, and there has been practical cooperation and on-the-ground coordination over the years. However, the decision of channeling the Saami Council funds for FPK through WIMSA Botswana was not a happy solution, and the aftermath did create stronger resentments between the organizations than had existed

before. The fact that at present, the two organizations are the only two left among the Botswana civil society organizations backing the court case means that they are forced to work closely together now. But whether this will help to overcome the underlying disagreements is highly uncertain.

Ditshwanelo – the Botswana Center for Human Rights - has been an important cooperating partner for FPK over the years. Perhaps the clearer differences in mission of the two organizations have made it easier to complement each other rather than compete with each other. Thus, over the years Ditshwanelo has followed up and assisted in a number of legal cases involving San. Ditshwanelo has also been an important ally for the work with the CKGR case, both during the negotiations and in the first phases of the court case. Recent developments over the court case have however led to a falling-out, and Ditshwanelo has withdrawn from backing it.

The court case is a long and complex legal battle. It took more than two years of struggle over technicalities to get the actual court proceedings started, and with postponements and adjournments – as well as possible appeals – it may well take even longer to reach a final verdict. Formally, the case is between 242 claimants who have been relocated from the CKGR and the Government of Botswana. A number of organizations have been backing the claimants. However, there have been disagreements among them over the strategy to pursue. When to leave the negotiation strategy and go for a legal strategy was a difficult discussion, and a lot of observers seem to feel that the negotiation strategy was discarded too early. Furthermore, the involvement of the campaigning NGO Survival International became a contentious issue, especially after the organization started an international campaign claiming that an interest in diamonds was the real reason behind the Government's decision to evict the San from the Game Reserve, and promoting a boycott against what they termed Botswana's 'blood diamonds'. Including a lawyer whose expenses were covered by Survival International on the legal team representing the claimants thus became a matter of much discussion among the supporting organizations. Subsequently, after the first phase of the court case, the claimants – represented by former FPK chair Roy Sesana – informed the organizations making up the coalition for the case that the original legal team had been fired, and that the Survival lawyer would be the new lead counsel. This caused Ditshwanelo to pull out and the coalition to collapse, leaving FPK and WIMSA Botswana alone among the Botswana organizations supporting the case. As mentioned, however, this could change again if attempts at reintegrating other organizations are successful.

There were objective grounds for dissatisfaction with the former legal team, and consequently for taking such a decision. However, the way it was taken without consultation with the wider group of stakeholders, and the perception that Survival was assuming control of the process, were the main reasons why other organizations dropped out. For the claimants and the FPK representatives involved, it was of course difficult to foresee all the consequences. The legal complexities of the court proceedings were difficult to assess for anyone involved, and as the FPK trusted Survival as an ally through many years, it was perhaps natural to rely on them and their advice. Furthermore, the FPK has expressed that they feel many other organizations – including Ditshwanelo – are too soft on the government, and that FPK is relatively alone in its willingness to take the strong confrontational position that is



sometimes necessary. If such a confrontational strategy is a wise one, is difficult to say – the possibility that it is should at the very least not be discarded offhand.

However, what is lamentable here is that the way these decisions have been implemented have pushed cooperating partners away, and left FPK increasingly isolated in the organizational landscape. This comes on top of FPK's historical unwillingness to allow other organizations a role in what they seem to understand as their responsibility and prerogative, and is unfortunate because in order to reach the objectives of FPK, an alliance with other civil society actors is crucial.

The tensions between organizations of the indigenous peoples themselves and support organizations working on behalf of these peoples – as well as the intermediate organizational forms – are common for indigenous struggles in many countries. And it is clear that as they gain strength, the indigenous organizations should be the ones to assume center stage. However, it is equally true that in a historical perspective, this will often involve a process, where support organizations have a relatively stronger role while the indigenous organizations themselves are being created and consolidated. In Botswana, San organization is still weak, and consequently organizations not run solely by the San themselves still have an important role to play. Rather than focusing on possible competition, FPK could perhaps pay greater attention to the objectives held in common with other organizations, and explore ways in which cooperation may make their attainment more feasible.

### **5.2.7 Achievements over the period of Saami Council support**

When assessing the impacts of the Saami Council support, it is firstly worth noting that it has been quite limited in financial terms. The annual budget for running costs over these three years has been in the region of 130-170,000 Pula (approximately USD 30-40,000), considerably less than the annual budgets during the years of the IWGIA support. Still, this has allowed the organization continued existence, the reopening of an office, the holding of four board meetings, as well as a couple of training workshops for the board. Without this support, the organization would in all likelihood have been dormant, and perhaps closer to death than to continued existence.

Furthermore, it should also be pointed out that even though the three-year project is now coming to an end, this is not perceived by FPK as three years of cooperation with the Saami Council. The first disbursement from Norway to Botswana was only made in the second half of 2002, a little over two years ago. Moreover, the first year's support was channeled through WIMSA, and FPK (understood as the board) did not get many benefits out of that. Thus, it was really only from the time of the training workshop held by the Saami consultant in August/September 2003 and the subsequent release of funds from WIMSA to FPK that the cooperation started in full. In reality, then, the effective duration of the cooperation can be considered to be less than one and a half years. This limited time frame is also worth taking into account when assessing the achievements.

Over this period, the FPK has also been able to play a pivotal role in terms of the court case. FPK has had important functions in terms of connecting with the people

who were relocated; enlisting the claimants for the case; selecting and preparing witnesses and facilitating information for the legal counsel; and fronting the issue in public nationally and internationally. Given the potential importance of this case, these are significant contributions, and FPK's concentration on the CKGR case may be a strategically smart focus. If supporting the court case had been specified as the aim of the support from the Saami Council, the project would have been quite successful.

However, it is clear that the focus on the court case has taken attention away from all other areas. Thus, apart from the fact that the organization is still alive, there are few other signs that the stated objective of 'contributing to increased competence and organizational development' has been achieved. Even if the trainings held with the board may have contributed to raise the understanding of organizational principles among the individual board members, this has had very little impact in practice as the board has had a very weak role. Similarly, the visits to Norway (the Saami Council) and Tanzania (OIPA board meetings) for international meetings of indigenous organizations have undoubtedly played a role for developing the understanding of indigenous rights issues at the international level among the individual who have taken part in these visits. Yet, this learning has still to manifest itself in new organizational practices.

### **5.2.8 Future plans**

In the plans and budget for 2005 developed by FPK, a number of different activities are listed. These include:

- a) Continuing with the CKGR activities
- b) Cultural activities
- c) Feasibility study for a San museum and cultural center
- d) Organizational promotion, including the printing a brochure about FPK
- e) Publishing a booklet on San concerns and demands
- f) Training of paralegals in the communities
- g) Legal assistance
- h) Staff and leadership training
- i) Study tour and networking with similar organizations

It does not seem realistic for FPK to realize all these activities. The organization will undoubtedly wish to continue with a). The second area of priority is reportedly f) the training of paralegals in the communities and g) the establishment of a fund for legal assistance to San individuals or groups in need. This seems like a sensible area to give priority to for FPK. But in order to realize this ambition, the organization will probably need – in addition to funding for these activities – to hire a coordinator to follow up the activities.

The San museum and cultural center is an old dream of FPK for developing the plot of land they have. However, it seems unrealistic for the organization to realize this project in the near future. Furthermore, it is possible to suspect that this wish stems more from a sense of competing with the Kuru organizations – who already have established a gallery and small museum, as well as a craft sales room and exhibition –

than from the need of any additional San cultural centers or analysis of the economic viability of such an undertaking.

## **5.3 Cooperation with the Saami Council**

### **5.3.1 Starting point**

For the Saami Council, working with FPK has posed a tremendous challenge. The Saami Council had no previous experience with this kind of cooperation in Africa, and the project coordinator that was hired during the first year of the cooperation had not worked with Botswana before. Furthermore, the Saami Council was taking over a task that IWGIA had given up after close to ten years of fairly close involvement that had not led to any sustainable strengthening of the organization. IWGIA's conclusion seems to have been that the circumstances were still too unfavorable for a project of building a strong FPK to be feasible. Moreover, in the period between the end of the IWGIA funding and the start of the Saami Council cooperation, the organization had effectively collapsed, and parts of its assets had been lost in the process.

Thus, the Saami Council was undertaking a project with ambitious objectives that certainly could not be attained in the short run, and which strongly actualized the difficult question of whether and to what extent it is possible to build organizations from the outside. Furthermore, the collapse of an administration that had never been very efficient meant great practical problems for the cooperation with a donor with no in-country representation. An assessment of the role of the Saami Council and the achievements of the cooperation so far needs to take this difficult starting point into account.

It is not quite clear to what extent the Saami Council realized at the outset the complexity of the challenge. They did have meetings with IWGIA to be informed about their experiences. In discussions with NORAD before the funding was approved, they were asked about the IWGIA withdrawal. According to the NORAD documents,

the Saami Council emphasized that they have another approach than IWGIA, as their development project will be 'indigenous to indigenous'. The Saami Council knows which mistakes the IWGIA project made, and will develop their work on the basis of the experiences that have been made. (NORAD Beslutningsdokument 2001/2-184-11. 822.1, my translation)

In spite of these assurances, however, it is difficult to see that the Saami Council in its practice showed any clear appreciation of the complexities involved, or any clear strategy to avoid 'the mistakes the IWGIA project made'. It is possible that the Saami Council to some extent has been trapped within its own rhetoric of the advantages of indigenous to indigenous cooperation, and therefore has underestimated the difficulties they were facing. This point is discussed further in the concluding part of this report (section 6.5).

While the cooperation started at a difficult time for FPK, it was nevertheless a highly opportune time to receive funding, seen from the point of view of the recipient. On

the one hand, it meant that the period without funding turned out to be relatively brief. And on the other hand, it allowed the organization to function and play a valuable role for the CKGR court case.

### **5.3.2 Cooperation**

The Saami Council has struggled with finding an appropriate mechanism for the financial aspects of the cooperation. The first attempt at channeling funds through WIMSA was not a happy solution. The second option, of sending funds directly to FPK, did not have the necessary safeguards for ensuring that all expenses were appropriately accounted for. The current arrangement, however, with a tripartite agreement between FPK, the Saami Council and a local auditor, seems promising, and will hopefully resolve this problem. However, as this agreement was only in place in July this year, one might conclude that the learning curve has been a bit long.

These different arrangements have led to delays in the disbursement of funds. Over the first period, funds tended to stay with WIMSA. In the transition to the second mechanism, it took a long time to agree on the amount owed by WIMSA to FPK and transfer it. And thereafter, delays in auditing the 2002 and 2003 accounts meant that disbursement of funds from Norway in 2004 were kept back. Thus, it has been a continuous problem that funds have arrived late.

Since office routines at FPK have never been strong, visits have been essential for the communication between the two organizations. Quite a few visits from Norway have been realized over these years. However, one problem has been that the visits have involved changing Saami Council representatives to a considerable extent. In some cases, the project coordinator has - for different reasons unconnected to the program - been prevented from traveling herself. Furthermore, the Saami Council has also wished to involve more of its people in the cooperation, and thereby ground the project more firmly within the organization. Whatever the reasons, this change of contact persons has undoubtedly been unfortunate for the cooperation with a weak partner organization such as FPK. The personal element – the building of trust and mutual understanding – is important in all NGO development cooperation. When one partner is quite weak, and communication for this reason is intermittent and incomplete, the establishing and gradual strengthening of such personal links is particularly crucial. Frequent changes in Saami Council representatives mean that this process has been slower than what might otherwise have been the case.

Planning processes have developed over the years. The first year's proposal – with quite detailed plans for the content of training courses to be arranged with the FPK – seem largely to have been developed in Norway, with little input from FPK representatives. For the following years, the mechanism seems to have been that FPK has developed budgets to fit within the allocations that the Saami Council has indicated. For 2003 and 2004, the Saami Council has been consistent in avoiding taking budget decisions on FPK's behalf. This self-imposed restriction on the part of the Saami Council is commendable in that it assigns the responsibility where it should be – with the FPK board – even though that board does not always seem prepared for or used to having this responsibility.

On the other hand, the downside may be that the underlying assumptions for what components should be supported have remained unchallenged. No space for a common discussion of these issues has been opened. Thus, funds have been allocated for office running costs (including staff), board meetings, and training courses – the components originally envisioned in the first-year proposal that was developed largely with Norwegian inputs. More fundamental questions as to the contents of the cooperation have therefore not been taken up between the two partners, or only quite late in the program period. Thus, a question that seems not to have been raised is whether an organization can be strengthened only through covering its core expenses, or whether some funding for activities is also essential for it to gain experience, recognition and consolidate itself. It is quite possible that with the limited support from the Saami Council, it is best to concentrate it on core funding only. Still, the question does not seem to have been explicitly discussed between the organizations.

Similarly, whether courses for the board is the highest priority, and furthermore, whether using a Norwegian Saami to hold them is the most effective and cost-efficient way, is another question that could have been taken up earlier. Courses have been taken out from the 2004 budget, and it is recognized by the Saami Council that it is anyway probably better to use local human resources for this purpose<sup>17</sup>. However, if it took two years to arrive at this realization, it probably indicates that open and constructive dialogue on the contents of the cooperation was deficient.

In addition to the contents of the support mentioned above, there is an additional element in the cooperation that has probably been quite useful, and that is the exposure of FPK representatives to indigenous organizations in other contexts, notably through the visits to Tanzania for OIPA board meetings and workshops, and to Norway for Saami Council arrangements. This has given the individuals who have participated both learning of organizational issues, as well as increased insights into indigenous issues and international human rights instruments. While the limited activities of FPK have not really allowed these insights to be expressed in practice so far, they are still a resource that may be useful for strengthening the organization and its work in the future.

Perhaps the major weakness of the Saami Council cooperation has been its narrowness of vision. The focus seems really to have been on developing a functioning office and administration only. All the other fundamental strategic issues of building a strong and representative San organization – relating for instance to the relationship to its constituency, how to build a national level organization, the necessity of establishing more fruitful and cooperative relations with other civil society actors in Botswana, the need for a fit between the organization's constitution and its practice, and so on – have largely been avoided in the work of implementing the NORAD funded project. It seems an open question to what extent they were even perceived as important for the project, even if some of these issues were discussed in meetings with the SC political leadership.

---

<sup>17</sup> When a Norwegian Saami was sent for the courses in 2003, this was primarily due to the need for follow-up and gaining better knowledge of FPK, according to the Saami Council. Questions still remain, however, of whether this was effective and cost-efficient as follow-up (since a consultant not permanently engaged by the Saami council was employed), and whether this ensured an optimal way of realizing the trainings still considered important at the time.

The Saami Council defends its hands-off policy by saying that FPK must be allowed to make its own decisions on these issues. Donors should not impose their own agendas on recipient organizations. There is a lot to be said for such reticence, as too many donors opt for the opposite practice and do harm to recipient organizations by using the funding leverage to make them engage in activities not really corresponding to the organizations' own mission. In a way, the fundamental dilemma of all development cooperation is how to strike a balance between conditionality and 'recipient responsibility'. This is a dilemma that must be resolved individually in all cases, depending on the characteristics of the partnership and the cooperation involved. But as a rule of thumb, the weaker the recipient is, the stronger the involvement of the donor should be. For an organization that struggles with a number of fundamental strategic issues, and that have failed to come to grips with them over a period of time – such as is the case with the FPK – a donor needs to get involved. Simply sending funds and saying 'you must work out your own solution' means not facing up to the responsibility of helping the partner where help is needed, apart from funding and open-ended training.

This does of course not mean that the Saami Council should simply tell the FPK what they should do. What is needed is to become a dialogue partner for FPK in a continuous discussion on how to address the key issues and move forward towards the organization's overall objectives. In this discussion, the Saami Council should show critical solidarity, expressing openly its own opinions on issues, pressuring for difficult questions to be faced, yet in the final count respecting that the decisions must come from within the FPK. This, of course, is an extremely difficult role to play. And it does not depend solely on the willingness and attitude of the Saami Council. Playing such a role is only possible if the FPK allows the Saami Council to do so. And this will in reality only be possible on the basis of mutual trust between the organizations – a trust that needs to be built. But this is precisely an area where indigenous to indigenous cooperation may have a significant comparative advantage. The fact that both organizations represent indigenous peoples may offer a greater potential for building such a relationship characterized by mutual trust and openness.

However, it seems that the Saami Council's failure to take up these wider strategic issues with FPK does not simply relate to a reluctance to try to influence FPK's decisions, but also to a lack of awareness of many of these issues. The Saami Council does not seem to have been very diligent in trying to understand and get information about a number of these concerns. Researchers at the University in Tromsø, and staff at the Norwegian Church Aid and IWGIA possessed information and insights that might have been sought out to a much greater extent. There seems to have been little interest in exploring the internal issues of FPK, such as those related to board elections and constitutional requirements, issues of geographical coverage, or board weaknesses<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, FPK itself has been the main source of information, and there does not seem to have been any systematic attempts at understanding the viewpoints of other civil society actors. The exception to this is with respect to the court case, in which the Saami Council has taken considerable interest, and for which some funding has also been secured from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To a large extent, however, this interest has been on the part of the political leadership

---

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps apart from the recognition of the need for training workshops for the board, as expressed in the original project proposal.

of the Saami Council, while the project coordinator expresses that she has been less involved in the political issues. This conceptualization of ‘the political’ as outside the bounds of the technical development cooperation is in itself problematic, especially for a project such as this, and very much related to the too-narrow focus the Saami Council has had in the this cooperation.

Finally, the rivalry and lack of cooperation between the different organizations working for the San has from time to time led to duplication of efforts, squandering of resources, and lost opportunities. The FPK attitude of seeing itself as the only legitimate representative of the San is one important factor behind this state of affairs.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, the Saami Council ideas about the unique nature of indigenous to indigenous cooperation are highly compatible with the FPK’s attitude, and may serve to reinforce it. For this reason, one might say that the Saami Council has a special responsibility in trying to promote alliances and cooperation with other organizations wherever this may further the San cause. In connection with the CKGR court case, the Saami Council has attempted to play such a role.

---

<sup>19</sup> This should not be taken to imply that all responsibility for the lack of cooperation and coordination between Botswana civil society organizations rests with FPK, and none with other organizations.

## **6 Conclusions**

### **OIPA**

There is a need for an organization representing the indigenous peoples of Africa. The Saami Council support for OIPA is therefore highly relevant. However, a greater clarity about the proposed division of labor with the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) is needed.

The one important achievement of OIPA has been the work done in connection with the World Parks Congress in 2003, when a two-week preparatory workshop was arranged, and the African indigenous organizations attending produced a declaration that was fed into the WPC proceedings. To a limited extent, OIPA probably also serves useful functions for its smaller and weaker member organizations by providing possible linkages towards donors and international processes, while board meetings and the workshop form a place for meeting other organizations, experiencing organizational practices and learning about international indigenous issues.

However, there are considerable weaknesses. OIPA lacks a clear vision for what *indigenous* should mean, as well as a strategy for organizational development. Recruitment of new members also seems random and without any clear strategy. There is very little information going from OIPA to its member organizations, and OIPA likewise does not have a strong visibility outwards. While the Saami Council funding has allowed an administration to function since 2002, this has left few traces in terms of archives and collected documents and information. It has not even been possible to get hold of a current list of member organizations, in spite of repeated requests. Thus, much less has been achieved through the Saami Council cooperation than could have been hoped for. It seems that a lack of commitment to the objective of advancing OIPA – especially among the key member organizations – is part of the reason for this.

Also the Saami Council must take its share of the responsibility for the lack of achievements. The Saami Council has not been giving very close follow-up to the cooperation, and has not been sufficiently interested in the wider strategic issues of developing OIPA. It has rather concentrated on the concrete and technical aspects of establishing a functioning administration – but even here more should have been required from its partner organization.

### **FPK**

There is an evident need for a rights-oriented interest organization representing the San in Botswana, so the Saami Council support to FPK is highly relevant. Yet building a strong, democratic and effective organization poses great challenges, due



among other things to the dispersed settlement pattern over a huge area, linguistic and cultural diversity, and low educational levels. The difficulty of the task is evidenced by the earlier experience of ten years of IWGIA support to FPK with few results in terms of institution building. It is possible that the Saami Council underestimated the difficulties involved.

The board members of FPK have a clear vision of the kind of rights-oriented organization they want to have, but the board plays a fairly weak role. Currently, the chairman is the one who actually fulfils the functions of the full board. Low educational levels have historically led to difficulties for the board to assume the functions of controlling and instructing the staff. The relationship to the constituency is difficult to assess. Probably FPK is relatively well known, but there is undoubtedly a need for more systematic organization of communication, including regular board member elections as prescribed in the constitution.

Developing a functioning administration has always been one of the major problems of FPK. Due to difficulties with previous staff who failed to respect and abide the relatively uneducated board, there is currently a reluctance to hire a fully qualified coordinator. The board prefers for the moment to make do with people who are known and trusted. Furthermore, staff time is taken up with the ongoing Central Kalahari Game Reserve court case. The Saami Council cooperation has therefore not led to any administrative strengthening.

The FPK ambition is to represent San throughout Botswana. Currently, they have board members representing most of Ghanzi District, while their work is limited to the CKGR case, directly involving only a small fraction of the San of Botswana. The FPK currently does not have the capacity to expand, nor to establish the national San council that is their ambition. FPK ought to be open for the possibility of working with other organizations for the realization of this goal. However, historically FPK has been quite unwilling to accept a role for other organizations wishing to work with the San. Currently, due to the dynamics of the court case, FPK is losing alliance partners and becoming increasingly alone. For the San sake, FPK should seek to build broader civil society alliances.

The Saami Council has struggled with establishing mechanisms for cooperating with the administratively weak FPK. The first arrangement of channelling funds through WIMSA-Botswana was not successful, and effectively meant a year's loss of the cooperation. The next attempt at letting FPK handle funds on their own did not ensure proper financial management. The current arrangement with a local auditor handling this side seems promising.

In terms of planning, the original proposal was made with little input from the FPK, and it is doubtful whether training courses led by Norwegian Saamis were really priority number one for FPK. Yet these components were carried over into the second year's plans, and only dropped for 2004. No support for other activities has been introduced.

The major weakness of the Saami Council support has been the narrow focus on establishing a functioning administration, while little attention has been given to the wider strategic issues. It is unclear to what extent the Saami Council has been aware

of these issues, and anyway, it has been unwilling to interfere in what it sees as FPK's internal decisions. Yet with a weak partner organization who has been struggling with issues for a long time without being able to resolve them, the very partnership idea requires that the Saami Council gets involved as a dialogue partner.

In conclusion, the Saami Council support has kept FPK alive, but apart from that not contributed to any organizational strengthening. The support has, however, allowed FPK to play a pivotal role with respect to the CKGR court case, a case of potentially great symbolic importance.

## **The Saami Council**

There have been weaknesses in the follow-up from the Saami Council in both cases. The problems encountered with the two organizations are of largely different kinds. In OIPA's case, the basic problem has been the lack of effort invested on the part of local partners. With more commitment from them, very much more could have been achieved in terms of developing OIPA. It is quite possible that if the Saami Council had played a stronger and more active role in terms of following what was happening, and requesting information and explanations to a much greater extent, this might have spurred the key member organizations to greater efforts. And if this had not been the case, the Saami Council ought to have let this have consequences for whether and how to continue funding.

In the case of FPK, on the other hand, problems were related less to lack of commitment and more to difficult circumstances. Thus, even with better and closer follow-up from the Saami Council, miracles in the short term should not have been expected. However, through a closer interaction as dialogue partner with FPK, the Saami Council could have achieved the building of a stronger partnership foundation in the form of trust and openness between the two organizations. And by slowly taking up the wider strategic issues and together with FPK tried to find ways of addressing them, the Saami Council might have contributed both to the long-term strengthening of FPK and to the overall cause of working for Sami rights and representation.

Common to the two cases seems to have been a concentration on the concrete and technical issues of establishing an office and administrative routines, while other and more strategic issues of organizational development have been left aside. In this narrow focus, the real reasons for why support to these organizations is important are forgotten. This is a serious shortcoming if one wishes to play a role in strengthening weak organizations working for indigenous rights, and one that the Saami Council should seek to address in its future development cooperation.

In part, this shortcoming is related to the philosophy underlying the development cooperation of the Saami Council. This contains a very strong respect for the rights of recipient organizations to make their own strategic decisions. As expressed by one Saami Council representative, 'they must be allowed to make their own mistakes'. To a certain extent the Saami Council deserves credit for this attitude. Not only does it mean that the Saami Council thereby avoided imposing its own agenda on its cooperating partner, it also meant that the principles of recipient responsibility and

local ownership were abided by. For instance, in several instances, the Saami Council refused to take the role as the ones to decide when their partner organizations asked for approval on whether to rent this office or hire this coordinator. Saying that these were decisions for their partner institutions to make meant that responsibility was put where it should be in order for these organizations to grow.

Thus, as a starting point, such a hands-off policy is a good thing. However, it must be accompanied by a close watch on how these decisions are handled and the consequences they have for the overall objectives of the cooperation. If and when things do not work out, the Saami Council should be aware of this, realize the consequences, and take appropriate actions. This means that the Saami Council needs to take on a more active role in following up the cooperation and its partner institutions: be more inquisitive about all aspects that may potentially be important; dare to ask critical questions and explore issues that the partner institution is not necessarily interested in sharing; and seek a greater understanding of the local and national context, including the existence and opinions of other civil society actors doing work that somehow relates to indigenous issues.

In a sense, this puts greater responsibilities on the Saami Council administration than what it has had up to now. It thus adds weight to the argument that these projects need more than an 8% administrative overhead. Still, the present arrangement of a full-time project coordinator and only two partner organizations to follow up should ensure more than enough capacity for a very close follow-up of these projects. It is unfortunate that the project coordinator has to make do with only a home office. Synergies could probably have been achieved in many ways if the coordinator was part of a larger work environment, particularly with people working in similar forms of international cooperation. Working alone and starting up a new office and activity means that routines and requirements have to be developed from scratch and with few opportunities for consultation. On the other hand, many of these start-up costs, both with setting up the institution and with getting to know the partner institutions, have now been assumed. If these first years have been a learning phase, then the Saami Council could be in a position to do a much better job in the future. In any case, the Saami Council should seek ways of localizing the indigenous cooperation unit together with another institution.

To a large extent the Saami Council strategy for development cooperation is said to involve an 'indigenous to indigenous' cooperation. However, what this really means or what the advantages are is not really spelled out. Before looking to whether this has given 'value added' to the Saami Council cooperation, it is necessary to look into these issues at a more general level.

Theoretically, one can delimit three main forms of advantages in indigenous to indigenous development cooperation:

- 1) The indigenous donor will be better able to understand the situation and the aspirations of the indigenous recipient.
- 2) The indigenous donor will have experiences from own struggle for rights that may be useful for the indigenous recipient<sup>20</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> It should be pointed out that learning may very well go both ways, i.e. that also the donor may learn things from the relationship that may be useful for the home context. However, for simplicity's sake, this element is left out in this schematic discussion.

- 3) The fact that donor and recipient are both indigenous may facilitate the trust and open communication characteristic of a true partnership.

On the other hand, these advantages are not automatically realized just because both parties are indigenous. Some possible obstacles include:

- 1) The fact that even though there are striking structural similarities between indigenous peoples and their struggles throughout the world, there are also many things that are different. Believing that understanding is automatic may prevent one from looking for and understanding these differences. This may impede both understanding of the other, understanding of how own experiences may be useful for the new context, and the establishment of trust. Making efforts in learning about the partner group or people and in particular the social and political context they live in is therefore extremely important.
- 2) Even if both parties are indigenous, it is nevertheless not necessarily an equal relationship. The North-South divide – in terms of differences in access to resources, for instance – can also be reproduced in relationships between Saamis and indigenous peoples in the South. Moreover, the power-laden relationship of donor and recipient is a reality here as in any other aid relation. This means that it can be just as difficult to establish an open, equal relationship built on trust among indigenous organizations as in other cases of development cooperation.
- 3) There is also a form of professionalism involved in development cooperation. If this is not present to a sufficient degree, and the project or cooperation therefore fails wholly or partly, this will endanger the realization of the potential advantages of indigenous to indigenous cooperation.

Looking at the role of the Saami Council in these terms, one could generalize by saying that it has been fairly careful of avoiding the second danger by not imposing its own agenda or decisions on its partners. However, with respect to the third, greater professionalism in development cooperation would have meant that the weaknesses of OIPA had been seen and addressed at an earlier stage, while a closer attention to the local particularities and political context (the first danger) might have helped the Saami Council to make contributions that could have furthered the San case in the longer-term perspective.

Still, some indigenous to indigenous advantages have undoubtedly been realized. The visits to Norway and Saami Land – for representatives of both FPK and OIPA – have given new perspectives on indigenous issues to the participants. Furthermore, while it takes time to build a relationship of trust with an organization such as FPK, it seems like this is gradually being achieved. The visits of staff and the chairman to different conferences in Norway in September/October 2004 were undoubtedly important in this respect. This improved relationship may give the Saami Council an opportunity for playing an important role for FPK in the future.

## **7 Recommendations**

### **7.1 OIPA**

On the basis of the weaknesses identified, it is possible to make a number of recommendations for OIPA:

There is need for clarifying a number of issues at the strategic level. OIPA needs to be clear on what indigenous means; there is a need for a three or five year strategic plan for organizational development with yearly operational plans with realistic targets; and there is a need for a strategy with respect to recruiting new members.

Organizational practices must be in correspondence with the provisions of the constitution. Where this is impossible to achieve for practical reasons, OIPA must seek to amend the constitution to make it possible to follow it. Developing membership contracts – specifying more clearly what membership entails in terms of rights and obligations – is another element OIPA might consider for its institution-building.

OIPA needs to do more to ensure external visibility – both through advertising its presence in different ways, and by engaging in public debates and campaigns.

Communication with members needs to be greatly enhanced. This relates both to communicating about indigenous issues and developments in general, as well as informing about the activities of OIPA and its member organizations. Visits to and contacts with member organizations are important, as is the continuous presence of staff in the office. Developing an electronic newsletter could be a cost-effective way of ensuring this. This also relates to OIPA's ambition of establishing a resource center, which should be followed up with more energy. For developing such a center, OIPA needs to keep updated on research and developments on indigenous issues; collect various types of information and documents; seek donations of books; and develop a strategy for how this material will be made available and used.

Office routines need to be improved.

There are thus a number of issues that OIPA could take up that would strengthen its organization and would not require great new amounts of funding.

### **7.2 FPK**

For the FPK, there are also a number of areas that deserve attention:

Care should be taken to follow the constitution, in particular with respect to elections of board members. In this connection, mechanisms for feedback and contact between board members and communities should be sought established and institutionalized.

Strengthening the administration of FPK needs a long-time perspective. Structures should not be built larger or more complex than what the board will be able to control and manage.

For the San sake, FPK needs to extend its cooperation with other civil society actors. If helpful for establishing a national level San council, FPK should be open to letting other organizations contribute.

FPK is involved in a number of larger processes in which they are not in control of the outcome. The court case is one such example, but evaluations represent another. Findings and conclusions from the present review should be fed back to FPK, as should the result from the IWGIA evaluation conducted in the first half of 2004<sup>21</sup>. However, for this to take place, translation and facilitation will be needed.

### **7.3 The Sami Council**

The Saami Council should consider very carefully whether it is worthwhile to continue the cooperation with OIPA. If so, strong safeguards must be put in place to guarantee that better use of the funds is made than what has been the case up to now.

The cooperation with FPK should continue. By starting this cooperation, a commitment has been made that should be followed up – in particular considering that in effect the real cooperation with FPK has only lasted for less than a year and a half. When working with a weak organization like FPK, time horizons need to be much longer.

However, in the continuation of the cooperation with FPK, the Saami Council needs to take a much stronger role. It needs to engage with the strategic issues mentioned in the report, such as: how can the board be strengthened; how can mechanisms for more interaction and communication with the constituency be established; the need to develop a long-term strategy for strengthening administration; developing stronger alliances within the Botswana civil society; and exploring whether and how a San council may be established in collaboration with other actors.

In effect, this means that the Saami Council needs to expand its development cooperation from the relatively narrow and technical focus it has had up to now. Supporting administrative functions of partner institutions must be seen in the context of the total strategy for organizational development and the political context within which it is to take place.

An obstacle to the Saami Council achieving such a role has been the fact that there have been too many different representatives visiting Botswana. It would be very useful if the out-going president of the Saami Council – who has established good

---

<sup>21</sup> The conclusions from this evaluation have not been communicated to FPK.

relations with several of the key FPK people – could continue representing the Council in the cooperation with the Botswana organization.

The Saami Council should seek to relocate its indigenous cooperation unit to joint offices with another institution, so that the project coordinator can benefit from a broader work environment. Ideally, this should be together with others engaged in similar international work – whether within other sections of the Saami Council or in other organizations.

Finally, the Saami Council has still to work out a coherent strategy for its development cooperation. Such a strategy ought probably to focus on the comparative advantages that indigenous to indigenous cooperation entails. Thus, the Saami Council should continue to work with indigenous organizations. Furthermore, in order to make their own experiences from indigenous work relevant, they should concentrate on organizations and projects involved in the explicit promotion of indigenous rights. Organizations and projects oriented only towards mainstream development activities would then fall largely outside this focus, even if working with indigenous populations. Of course, in practice, many organizations combine rights-oriented work with concrete development projects, and indeed the rights-oriented dimensions may gain legitimacy and be strengthened through the concrete efforts in development activities. Thus, a Saami Council strategy could also contemplate support to more mainstream development activities where these are also seen to strengthen indigenous organization and the promotion of indigenous rights. To exemplify, cooperation with rights-oriented institutions such as OIPA and FPK would of course fall clearly within such a strategy, while for instance the AIDS education project for which the Saami Council has applied for funding for 2005 would only fall inside if it was shown that this would also strengthen the rights-oriented efforts of the indigenous partner organization. Working with organizational strengthening should probably continue to be an important area, but could be matched with more support for concrete activities – for instance campaigns, conferences, legal assistance etc. At any rate, it is clear that organizational strengthening is a difficult and taxing area to work in, and the Saami Council might be able to have a greater impact through its development cooperation if it did not only focus on very new or weak organizations.

The Saami Council should make greater efforts to take up and inform about its development cooperation through its information work in Norway.

## **7.4 NORAD**

Even if the Saami Council has not yet fully realized the potential of indigenous to indigenous development cooperation, the organization does have a very real potential for contributing to Norwegian development assistance to indigenous peoples, and NORAD should continue supporting it.

The condition for further support, however, should be that the Saami Council actively and systematically seeks to overcome the weaknesses in its role as identified in this report. In this process, a close dialogue between NORAD and the Saami Council should be maintained, to ensure that the required improvements are being made, and for mutual learning between the two organizations. Continued support to OIPA should

only be considered if far-reaching changes are made, in the follow-up from the Saami Council, as well as in the organizational set-up in Arusha. Among the Saami Council activities supported, NORAD might consider giving greater emphasis to the kinds of components where an indigenous to indigenous value added is more easily achieved. The component of exchange visits to Norway, which has had a positive impact over and above the transfer of funds, might for instance be given a higher weight relative to other components.

NORAD should also accept that due to the particularities of this kind of development cooperation, administrative costs will have to be higher than 8%. However, it ought to be possible to reduce these costs compared to the level they have been at up to now, while still allowing responsible follow-up of the project.

NORAD should promote a relocation of the project office to joint premises with another institution engaged in similar work. If necessary, it should be accepted that this office be located outside of Norway.



## 8 Appendices

Appendix 1:

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### Review of Saami Council projects in Tanzania and Botswana

##### **Background:**

Since 2002 the Saami Council has received Norad support for two projects in Southern Africa. Both projects are based on cooperation with local indigenous people organizations. The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) is the Saami Council's partner in the first project. Although the project focuses on general issues related to the rights of indigenous peoples of Africa, there is a specific emphasis on the situation of the Maasai people of Tanzania. The second project focuses on the situation of the San people of Botswana (often commonly referred to as "bushmen"). The First People of Kalahari (FPK) is the Saami Council's local partner in this project.

The overall objective of both projects has been to promote the rights of indigenous groups that traditionally have been marginalized by the national state and systematically discriminated against. More concretely, this is sought done by strengthening the organizational capacity and skills of the two organizations in mention. The national and regional settings for working on issues related to the rights of indigenous people are considered to be difficult. In the case of Botswana the eviction of indigenous groups from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and the subsequent and still ongoing court case exemplifies this.

The Saami Council has been identified as a relevant partner for these indigenous people groups in Africa because of its experience from establishing indigenous people organizations and institutions in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Representatives of Saami organizations have over a number years played a leading role in promoting the rights of indigenous people on the international arena. Moreover, the Saami Council has experience from cooperation with other indigenous groups in developing countries.

The Saami Council has also received Norad funding for information campaigns in Norway about North-South issues and development cooperation. This review will also look at these activities

**Purpose:**

This review forms part of the assessment of the Saami Council's potential for forming strategic partnerships with partners in developing countries, and whether these partnerships contribute to strengthen the organizational capacity of the partners and the relevance of their work. Such a focus will also contribute to assess the added-value of indigenous to indigenous cooperation.

**Issues to be covered:**The Saami Council:

1. To get an understanding of the basic philosophy and practical work of the Saami Council with regards to its cooperation with partners in the South, as expressed in their guidelines strategies and other documents.
2. To study how the Saami Council cooperation and approach correspond with the local and national context and the challenges met by the indigenous peoples.
3. To get an understanding of the benefits and constraints of belonging to an indigenous people organization when cooperating with local indigenous groups in other countries.
4. To assess whether the objective and goals as lined out in the Saami Council's first project application have been reached.

The partners:

1. To assess the capacity of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA) in Tanzania, while also paying some attention to its regional work.
2. To assess the capacity of the First People of Kalahari (FPK) in Botswana.
3. To assess the potential of these organisation to be agents of change in the local, national and regional contexts regarding the situation for indigenous peoples.
4. Assess how these organisations in Tanzania and Botswana interact with other civil society actors, parliamentarians and government on different levels.

The cooperation:

1. To evaluate the impact the cooperation with the Saami Council has had on the focus and capacity of their respective partners in Tanzania and Botswana.
2. To what degree has the cooperation between the Saami Council and its respective partners strengthened civil society's capacity to promote indigenous peoples' rights in Tanzania and Botswana.

The review will also look into how the Saami Council's development activities correspond with the criteria for support from Norad, as reflected in the guidelines for humanitarian assistance and development co-operation by Norwegian and international voluntary actors (GVA).

In this respect the review should also cover how the Saami Council is carrying out its information campaigns about North-South issues, and whether Norad funds granted for information activity are spent according to the specific guidelines for this funding scheme.

**Methodology:** The study will be based on desk studies of relevant documents, interviews and discussions with the project coordinator and other Saami Council staff, representatives of the First People of Kalahari (FPK) and Organization of Indigenous People of Africa (OIPA), relevant NGOs and international organizations, Norad, the Norwegian embassies and when applicable local, regional or national authorities in the recipient countries.

The study will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 will be a desk study examining the organisation's basic aims, philosophy and documented output and impact of their work.

Phase 2 will test the preliminary findings from phase 1. Phase 2 will involve field visits to local partners in Tanzania and Botswana.

**Time Frame:** The review will commence in September 2004 and be completed no later than 20 December 2004. The desk study is stipulated to 2 weeks. The case study is stipulated to 1 week in each country. The completion phase is stipulated to 1 week.

**Review team:** The team will consist of a Norwegian consultant who leads the team, one or two local consultant from Botswana, one local consultant from Tanzania and one representative of Norad (for the Botswana review only).

**Follow up:**

The findings of this review should be taken into account both by the Saami Council and Norad when considering a future continuation of the two projects in mention and other Saami Council projects involving cooperation with indigenous people groups in the South. Ideally the findings of the review should provide a useful tool for contributing to enhance the quality of the indigenous to indigenous cooperation carried out by the Saami Council.

## Appendix 2:

### Interviews conducted

#### *The Saami Council*

Gunhild B. S. Buljo, head of the Indigenous Cooperation Unit. Main interview: Karasjok 08.11.04. Additional interviews: Tromsø 27.09.04, phone interview 03.12.04.  
Geir Tommy Pedersen, president. Main interview: Karasjok 09.11.04. Also Oslo, 11.10.04  
Tarja Porsanger, secretary general. Ohcejohka 09.11.04  
Marja Riitta Bogdanoff, head of finance. Ohcejohka 09.11.04  
Leif Halonen, resource person. Tromsø 27.09.04  
Nils Ole Gaup, former secretary general, phone interview 07.12.04

#### *OIPA*

John Letai, chairperson. Arusha 16.11.04  
Edward Porokwa, secretary general. Arusha 16.11.04 (also Oslo 11.10.04 and Arusha 17.11.04 and 18.11.04,)  
James Kaipoi, coordinator. Arusha 16.11.04 (also 18.11.4)  
Halima Hasan, board member. Arusha 16.11.04  
Anette Smuk, Fredskorpset exchange participant. Arusha 16.11.04  
Navaya J Ndaskoy, Fredskorpset exchange participant. Tromsø 28.09.04, Arusha 16.11.04

#### *OIPA member organizations*

Olamaiyo (Kenya), John Mwenda, Arusha 16.11.04  
Osiligi (Kenya), Moses Sakain. Arusha 16.11.04  
Coalition of Somali Women (Kenya), Halima Hassan. Arusha 16.11.04  
Kidupo (Tanzania), Fr. Gabriel. Arusha 17.11.04 (also Oslo, 11.10.04)  
Kidupo (Tanzania), William Alais. Arusha 17.11.04  
MWEDO (Tanzania), Ndinini Kimesera. 17.11.04  
MWEDO (Tanzania), Sophia Parkipuny. Arusha 17.11.04 (also 18.04.11)  
MWEDO (Tanzania), Penina T Kisispan. Arusha 17.11.04 (also 18.04.11)  
Iaramatak (Tanzania), Mary Labdaki. Arusha 17.11.04 (also 18.04.11)  
Inutaat e Maa (Tanzania), Jacob T Porokwa. Arusha 17.11.04  
PINGOS (Tanzania) Edward Porokwa. Arusha 17.11.04  
PINGOS (Tanzania) Rafael, Arusha 17.11.04  
CORDS (Tanzania), Benedict Ole Nangoro. Arusha 18.11.04

#### *FPK*

Dauquoo Xukuri, chairman. Dkar 22.11.04 (also Tromsø 28.09.04 and Oslo 11.10.04)  
Roy Sesana, former chairman. Lobatse 25.11.04 (also Oslo 11.10.04)  
Jumanda Gakelebone, office manager. Lobatse 25.11.04  
Duqwai, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Three Pula, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Mary Gwantlae, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Khantlae, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Nirga, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Willy Morris, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Kashe, board member. Dkar 22.11.04

Joseph, board member. Dkar 22.11.04  
Petras Thomas, board member. Dkar 22.11.04

*Others consulted in Botswana*

M G Mochanang, District Administrator Ghantsi District Commission. Ghantsi  
22.11.04  
Walter Monnanyana Machao, Social and Community Development Ghantsi District  
Council, Ghantsi 22.11.04  
Andrew Molatole, Assistant Council Secretary Ghantsi District Council, Ghantsi  
22.11.04  
Arun M. S., manager Moores Rowland Certified Public accountants, Ghantsi 23.11.04  
New Xade Village Development Committee, New Xade 23.11.04  
Maria Camm, secretary Dkar Trust, Dkar 24.11.04  
James Morris, Dkar Trust/Kuriu Family of Organizations, Dkar 24.11.04  
Hendrika Mothibi, Dkar Trust, Dkar 24.11.04  
Aron Yohannes, Dkar Trust, WIMSA, Dkar 24.11.04  
Makomako, Komko Trust, Dkar 24.11.04  
Mathambo Ngakaeaja, WIMSA-Botswana, Lobatse 24.11.04  
Gordon Bennet, CKGR case legal team, Lobatse 25.11.04  
Kali Mercier, Survival International/legal team, Lobatse 25.11.04  
Chief Mothakaja, Assistant Coordinator Remote Area Dwellers program, Lobatse  
25.11.04  
Rosina Masilo Rakgosi, Dept. of Wildlife and National Parks, Community Service  
Unit, Gaborone 26.11.04  
Annika Jagander, Ambassador, Swedish Embassy, Gaborone 26.11.04  
Stefan Anderson, Second Secretary Swedish Embassy, Gaborone 26.11.04  
Alice Mogwe, Director, Ditshwanelo Centre for Human Rights, Gaborone 26.11.04  
Keitseiope Nthomang, University of Botswana Basarwa Research Project, Gaborone  
26.11.04  
Maitseo Bolaane, University of Botswana Basarwa Research Project, Gaborone  
26.11.04  
Molefe Rantsudu, University of Botswana Basarwa Research Project, Gaborone  
26.11.04  
Kgosi Motshabi, University of Botswana Basarwa Research Project, Gaborone  
26.11.04  
  
Sidsel Saugestad, University of Tromsø, Tromsø 27.09.04, Gaborone 27.11.04, phone  
interview 16.12.04  
Hans Petter Hergum, Norwegian Church Aid, Oslo 02.11.04  
Diana Vinding, IWGIA, phone interview 03.12.04