

Award Rationale
!Khwa ttu San Culture and Education Centre
in South Africa



Klaus Betz

on behalf of

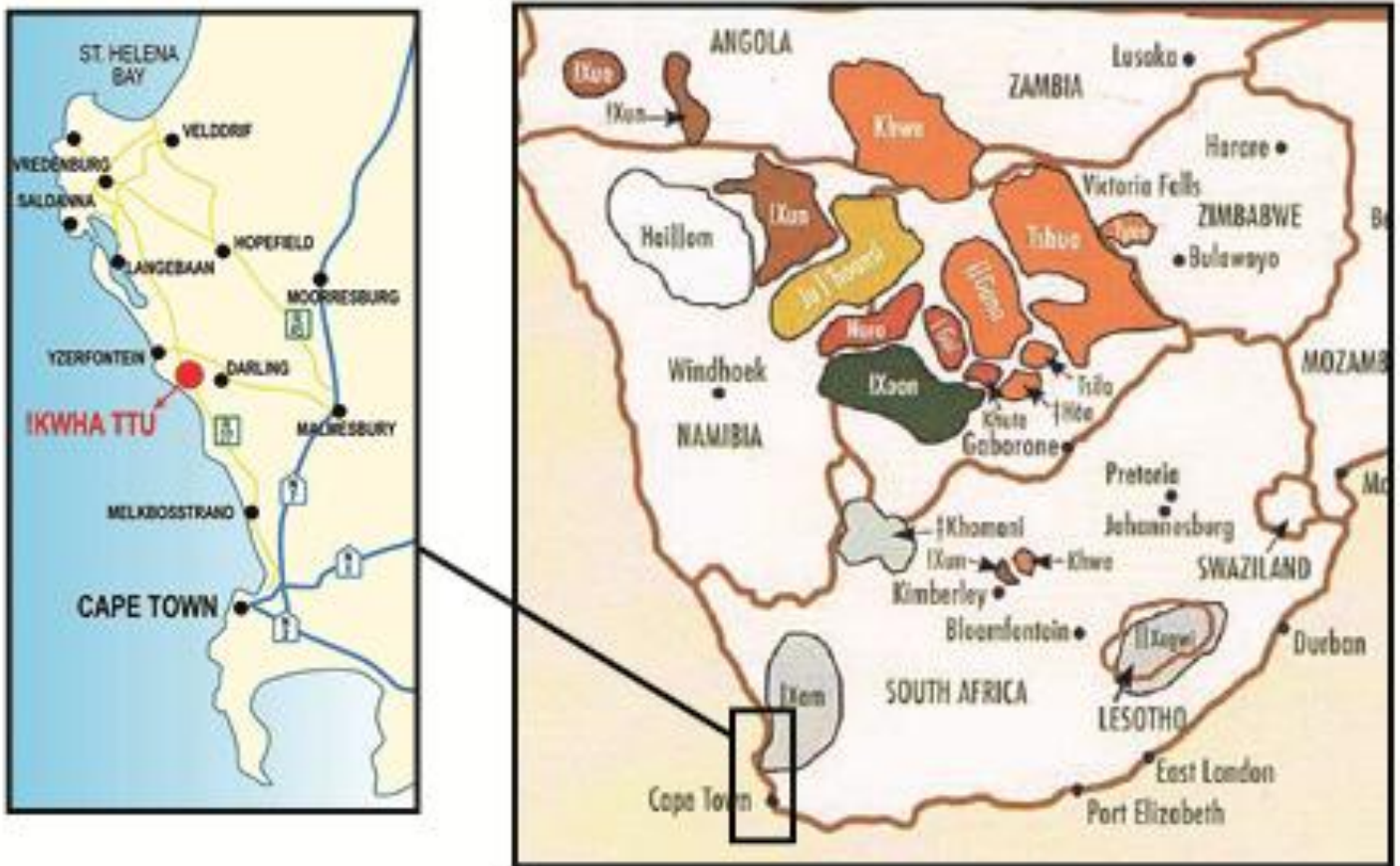
**Institute for Tourism and Development
(Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.)**

January 2018

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Overview of the areas and languages of San ethnic groups in Southern Africa¹



„My parents were not in the position to teach me. Now I received education and I can teach my children. We can never go back to our old places and the old life but with !Kwaha ttu we have a place to tell our story to visitors and the San. We can talk about what happened long ago, what happened in between, where we are now and where we are heading to“.

André Vaalbooi

¹Source: !Kwaha ttu

1 INTRODUCTION

The application for the TO DO! 2018 was submitted by the non-profit organisation !KHWAA TTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE from Yzerfontein (Western Cape province) in South Africa. The project was nominated by the TO DO! jury. Klaus Betz travelled in South Africa from 30th November to 7th December 2017 as an expert on behalf of the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.) to check on location the information submitted by !KHWAA TTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE².

On the basis of his insights and findings, the author recommends awarding **!KHWAA TTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE** with the TO DO! 2018.

2 BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The countries of Southern Africa are globally known for their often vast national parks and wildlife reserves, reflected in tuneful names like Etosha, Kalahari, Okavango, Caprivi, Chobe and Gemsbok national parks – up to the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). For nature studies or safari tourism in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, these protected areas are flagships of nature and wildlife conservation. They are attractive and at the same time they generate income and are therefore lucrative destinations.

However, it has often been overlooked that several of these world famous conservation areas have been implemented and enforced without respect for the traditional environments and ways of living of the San (as hunters and gatherers). External decision-making, top-down. The San (pronounced with a long „a“) are the original population of the above mentioned Southern African countries of today. They therefore belong to the indigenous peoples. Similar to the First Nations in Canada or the US, the Aborigines in Australia, or the Sami in Scandinavia, the San peoples have from the beginning of colonisation often been de-qualified and marginalised as nomadic (i.e. landless) and "primitive" bushmen, up until recent times. It was therefore easy to successively displace the San from the emerging national parks and conservation areas. They were no longer allowed to stay and hunt in those areas and were thus deprived of their self-sufficient ways of living. Without compensation and without livelihood options offered, they were left to their own devices – with all the consequences of impoverishment, uprootedness, and loss of dignity.

As hunters and gatherers the San peoples practised one of the first forms of "shared economy" (food was shared). Indeed, they practised a sustainable and sophisticated seasonal mobility – following food supplies and hunting opportunities without overusing them. In the past, this was neither acknowledged nor appreciated. On the contrary: Often enough, after national parks and wildlife reserves had been earmarked the San had no choice but to work on the farms or to serve – without having been asked for their approval – under mostly undignified conditions as "tourist attractions" (motto: "Come and see the last surviving bushmen"). More than that, under Apartheid the South African army employed them as trackers both in Namibia and especially in Angola during the civil war. Once the conflicts were over, the San scouts and their families from Namibia and from the south of Angola were – far away from their original places – put up in temporary camps in Schmidtsdrift and Platfontein, South Africa (close to Kimberley, the diamond city, Northern Cape province), where they were once again left to their own devices.

Similarly, it remained unrecognised in the past that the San as such have not been a single homogenous ethnic group, nor have they shared a common language. Instead, the San belong to the peoples with the highest genetic diversity, and to the oldest groups of people

² In the !Xam language, *!Khwa ttu* means water hole. !Xam belongs to the !UI-TAA family of languages of the Southern San who mainly live in South Africa today. The exclamation mark represents a certain palatal click sound at the beginning of a word. It is pronounced almost simultaneously with the first character.

living today.

Almost 120,000 San still live in the countries mentioned above. They speak about 12 different languages which can be categorised in three different language families (see explanation in the box below³). A common feature of all San languages (which are often also called Khoisan languages) are the famous click sounds.

SAN LANGUAGES are generally considered to come from three major families of languages in Southern Africa. Here are some examples of San languages. The words Ju, Khoe, !Ui and Taa all mean 'a person' in languages from each of the families.

JU LANGUAGE FAMILY (NORTHERN SAN)	
!Xun	
!Kung	
Ju 'hoansi	

KHOE LANGUAGE FAMILY (CENTRAL SAN)	!UI-TAA LANGUAGE FAMILY (SOUTHERN SAN)
Khwedam	N uu
!Gana	Xam
Gui	!Xegwi (Berg San)
Naro	!Xoon
Tshua	†Haa
Hai om	
Tsila	

In 1996, a first meeting of all San peoples was held in Namibia. Until then, many San hardly knew anything about their “relatives” in other countries. How could they have known, without any school education worth mentioning, without means of communication, without money and in view of the huge distances they could hardly overcome. Following the first meeting, the highest common body currently in existence was founded in 1998: The WIMSA (Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa).

WIMSA is in the first place an NGO and advocacy network that is active mainly in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Angola and that focuses on strengthening the respective San groups in their communal self-governance, on asserting their human rights and on giving them access to education. Furthermore, WIMSA (www.wim-sa.org/ and/or www.osisa.org/) works to protect the San's culture and their heritage, and last but not least – in order to prevent bio-piracy – to defend intellectual property rights⁴. Within the WIMSA structures, the !KHWATU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE (www.khwattu.org/) plays a special role. It is currently the only educational and vocational training institution with a cultural, touristic, environmental and socio-political orientation which is dedicated to the San ethnic groups throughout Southern Africa and which is able to work independently, thanks to the political conditions in the Republic of South Africa.

All of this under the roof of a San institution which to the outside acts as a tourism enterprise and which was founded and built with decisive financial support from the Swiss Ubuntu

³ Source: !Khwatuu

⁴ This includes, for example, protecting the knowledge of medicinal plants in such a way that international corporations will not be able to exploit this knowledge and register it as their “own” patent. Instead, the aim is so called *Access and Benefit Sharing*; an adequate share of the profits – as compensation for the access to this knowledge – which the San organisations were for the first time able to enforce in the case of the Hoodia cactus (Kalahari diet).

Foundation⁵ (<http://www.ubuntu-foundation.ch/index.html>).

3 The !KHWATTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE and its relevance

3.1 History and objectives

The South African anthropologist and today's CEO of !KHWATTU, Michael Daiber, has for more than 25 years been studying the culture of the San and their often desolate situation (as described above). In 1998 he met the Swiss photographer and anthropologist Irene M. Staehelin, active in Southern Africa, who was looking for contacts with groups working for the human rights and the development of the San.

The encounter with the later donor and president of the Ubuntu Foundation, founded in 2001,⁶ led to the purchase of 850 hectares of former farm land north of Cape Town, and to the modification of the buildings there. As part of a 50/50 joint venture (with the participation of WIMSA mentioned above, the South African San Institute (SASI), and under the legal control of the South African Communal Property Association [CPA]), today's !KHWATTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE was developed.

The !KHWATTU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE (!KHWATTU in the following) mainly addresses the young descendants of the uprooted "bushmen" generation (in Angola, Namibia, Botswana, and the Northern Cape province of South Africa). In many cases, these young people neither have jobs nor perspectives. Every year, !KHWATTU offers about 30 female and male San an opportunity to step on the bridge between yesterday and today; between their earlier lives at the campfire and the technical, digital requirements of the modern professional world.

Seen in this way, !KHWATTU fulfils three functions at the same time:

Firstly, !KHWATTU works as a professionally managed tourism funding organisation and vocational training institution. The restaurant offers 60 seats, and in addition rooms for seminars, conferences, team-building, and other events. A maximum of 34 guests can be accommodated, either in individual simple bush camps (large tents with beds, fireplaces, toilets) or in a total of four comfortable guest houses with or without self-catering (modern kitchens).

Secondly, with its "||Kabbo Academy"⁷ in the same location, !KHWATTU provides about seven months of education in teaching, learning, and vocational training for young San. Mainly in the field of touristic professions/cultural education, nature and environmental protection, in the preservation of traditional knowledge, crafts and handicrafts, in imparting technical knowledge or administrative skills. (The comprehensive curriculum is available at www.khwattu.org/projects/kabbo-academy/curriculum/?id=106).

Thirdly, on its 850 hectares of land, !KHWATTU offers its 18,000 annual visitors different experience and adventure programmes, introducing them to the world of San culture and

⁵ *Ubuntu* is a word from the Xhosa language and a metaphorical paraphrase for mutually practiced humanity; for encounters on equal terms. Derived from „Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu“ – which in turn means: “a person is a person through other people“.

⁶ According to its statutes, the Ubuntu Foundation supports indigenous organisations or individuals in their right to cultural autonomy, in the protection of basic rights, politically adequate representation as well as the right to property and the use of traditional dwelling zones and their natural resources. Geographically, the foundation is focused on Southern Africa. As a central project, the construction and operation of the “!KhwatTU San Culture and Education Centre“ in South Africa is being supported. According to the foundation's objectives, it does not pursue any commercial objectives.

⁷ The symbol || stands for a so-called lateral click. Colloquially, a "coachman's click sound" – used to urge a horse to move forward. "Kabbo" refers to the name of an important San-|Xam story teller from the last century.

providing them with experiences of nature.

3.2 Concept and programme

Eventually, the work of !KHWÁ TTU focuses on the restitution of the dignity of the San, their culture, and social cohesion. This concern is packaged in various touristic products and services dealing with the living environment of the San and the value of their culture.

All this is authentically shared by close to 40 employees, all of them being young San from different Southern African countries who have been trained at the “||Kabbo Academy”.

On the one hand, the staff includes young ||Kabbo graduates or trainees (with rotating tasks in the kitchen, in the restaurant service, in housekeeping, technical service and at the reception). On the other hand, there are permanent San employees. Many of them have already been working here for years. Depending on their preferences, permanent employees work as culture, nature or ethno-botanical guides, take care of the guests and their well-being as receptionists, or work as technicians, gardeners, or in the administration at the back office.

The objective is to enable young San to be able to decide for themselves in the near future whether they, for instance, want to continue their studies, whether they want to apply for jobs with other companies, or whether they would like to return to their home communities in order to start their own cultural and/or tourism related businesses⁸. The respective tour packages can be booked by one day or weekend excursionists, or by guests who will be staying for several days. They are organised around different themes and take one and a half to two hours (in the morning or afternoon). Each of the programmes is preceded by a round of introduction in the exhibition room at the restaurant building, during which the female and male guides first explain the languages of the San (demonstrating the different click sounds) and their localisation in the countries of Southern Africa.

The most popular tours are guided tours to a replica of a San camp in a slightly remote location in the vast !KHWÁ TTU area. There will be a demonstration of how to make fire with a wooden stick, an explanation of methods of persistence hunting with bow and arrow, a discussion on the daily life in a San camp, the preparation, sharing and keeping of food, the production of ornaments, courtship among young people, and even real track identification. In the hilly area that resembles bush and savannah landscapes, people are surrounded by wandering zebra, eland, gemsbok and steenbok, springbok, ostrich, warthog, a large number of small animals, and of course many bird species. The most flamboyant ones are the yellow weaverbirds that have installed their artistically woven nests for instance in the fig trees in front of the restaurant.

The guided hikes and mountain bike tours offered by !KHWÁ TTU are also aimed at nature experiences/wildlife watching. The area with a size of about 8.5 square kilometres and several crossing trails offers many possibilities, including visits of beautiful resting areas with fire places on hills that offer great views – either to take a sundowner or to, conversely, enjoy an outdoor breakfast. The ethno-botanical excursions concentrate on wild plants and/or medicinal plants and herbs for which a kind of educational trail has been established in the nearby surroundings. In addition, in the restaurant garden (fresh vegetables, lettuce, eggs from the hen-coop belonging to the house) guests may try tea made in the San’s way (blends of various and dried wild herbs).

In the nearby museum and art gallery with its changing exhibitions one can get information on the ancient and contemporary history of the San. In the craft shop their handicraft items (vessels, necklaces, ear ornaments, ribbons, and, as mentioned, also different types of tea) can be purchased. Only in the restaurant menu an adequate compromise is practised. Apart from eland burgers or a respective carpaccio, San food as such is not offered. After all, most

⁸ So far, apart from !Khwá ttu there is only *one* San-owned company: The “Dqae Qare San Lodge“ in Botswana (<http://www.dqae.org/>).

of the visitors – including school groups – are from South African cities and prefer the food they are used to (fish, chicken, cheese, paté, quiche, Asian vegetarian dishes).

4 EVALUATION AGAINST THE TO DO! CONTEST CRITERIA

Comparing the activities of !KHWATU SAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE with the TO DO! contest criteria leads to the following assessment.

4.1. Participation

In which ways have the interests and needs of the local population been taken into account in the planning phase and throughout the project?

!KHWATU fulfils this criterion in three different ways. Indirectly, directly, and locally and/or regionally. Given the fact that !KHWATU has from the beginning been working as an ethno-oriented San organisation, it indirectly ensures in the above mentioned Southern African countries that the interests and needs of the marginalised San are recognised in tourism in the first place, and that they are respected. One way, among others, is through local and regional San organisations, but also by setting an example themselves. And it is through young San who have gained self-confidence, who return to their home region and who, after their education at !KHWATU and the appreciation they experienced there, no longer accept being showcased in tourism. They know that they themselves can present their culture and address it as a theme in a self-determined way instead of being directed by others.

Irrespective of these indirect effects, the !KHWATU ||Khabbo Academy ensures that after their training the young San will finally be able to escape the widespread poverty and unemployment and for the first time earn their own money in jobs in tourism. The author has a list of alumni and their different employers (also including !KHWATU itself) and jobs ranging – both male and female respectively – from tourist guide to restaurant staff, landscape planner, gardener, mechanic, chef, farm manager, and training assistant. It is important to know that beyond the known large, booming cities (especially in the sparsely populated Northern Cape province), South Africa is an emerging economy at most. Many families depend on the support of those relatives who have a job (see also 4.3 and 4.4.).

Thirdly, !KHWATU closely cooperates with local businesses and suppliers in Darling, a small town nearby. While !KHWATU was developed, companies were set up in Darling which are today among the trend setters for a new South Africa. They consistently rely on local economic development and local branding: Darling cheese, -beer, -bread, -toffees, -olives, etc. In addition, there is the long-established wine-growing estate “Ormonde” with its top quality wines. All of these companies make products that are offered or processed at !KHWATU’s restaurant.

Furthermore, the “Darling companies” are now also recommended to !KHWATU’s guests as additional destinations for excursions (tasting, factory tours), while !KHWATU is pointed out to visitors in Darling. It is therefore a win-win situation.

4.2. Economic benefit

Ensuring the economic participation of broad local population strata in tourism

In the case of !KHTWA TTU, this criterion correlates with points 4.1 Participation and 4.5 Decent Work. Besides, !KHTWA TTU is certified by Fair Trade Tourism (South Africa). Irrespective of the economic participation criterion, !KHTWA TTU is first and foremost about providing young San with future jobs and about training them accordingly in the tourism enterprise and ||Kabbo Academy. Most of these young people are from almost entirely impoverished, remote, rural communities.

Out of roughly thirty ||Kabbo graduates per year, about 80 percent usually find a job or continue to be employed by !KHTWA TTU as trainees (re. wages and working conditions see 4.5).

The entire running operations are financed from the income generated by about 18,000 guests (restaurant, accommodation, guided programmes, craft shop, and donations). This includes the personnel costs as well as the teachers/trainers at the ||Kabbo Academy. The current construction of new modern staff accommodation and of a new museum building is handled by construction companies from the locality and from the region. Whenever possible, food and beverages are purchased from local suppliers (in the nearby towns Darling and Yzerfontein). So this means that the economic benefit is shared and diffuses into the region and beyond, as most of the !KHTWA TTU staff financially support their families back home.

4.3. Awareness raising

Enhancing the awareness of local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development for their economic, social and cultural lives

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4.4. Cultural identity

Strengthening local culture and the cultural identity of local people, avoiding/minimising any social and cultural damage caused by tourism, supporting intercultural encounters and exchange between hosts and guests

Applying these two criteria has limitations, as the situation for the San ethnic groups has been just the opposite: Decades ago, they already became victims of a partly arbitrary planning of national parks and wildlife reserves. As previously described, most of the San groups in Southern Africa lost control over their ancestral land and over the access to their natural resources. A process which, by the way, also took place in many other developing countries in the 1980s and 90s. With a one-sided focus on nature conservation and a touristic “eco-image“, the economic, social and cultural concerns and needs of the local population – in this case the San – were almost entirely ignored. Against this backdrop, !KHTWA TTU see their task in highlighting – through information and education for both domestic and international visitors – the history of the San, their heritage, and their right to preserving their identity. Current and future ambitions are therefore concentrated on social upliftment on the one hand, and on the empowerment of young San to cope with the upcoming challenges of modern professional life on the other hand

4.5. Decent work

Creation of qualified jobs and/or improvement of the working conditions in tourism with regard to social security, working hours, education and training, and remuneration

First of all, the way in which working hours are regulated is striking. While in tourism enterprises working hours are often irregular and long, !KHWATTU keeps strict timings as a rule – from 8.30 / 9.00 am in the morning to 5.00 / 5.30 pm in the late afternoon. During these hours all employees are highly motivated and cheerful at work, and with great attention to the guests. After 5 pm, however, the restaurant and the reception are closed (with the exception of weddings or events). Guests staying over night may, if they prefer to eat later, get their evening meals and drinks sent to their respective guest houses (and heat the food in the microwave), or they may do their own cooking in the fully equipped apartment's kitchen, or they may go out to one of the restaurants in the neighbouring communities.

Before 9 am, short staff meetings are usually held. In case of more complex projects there will be longer team meetings. With regard to the meetings, it is striking that they are not chaired or moderated by the CEO of !KHWATTU, but by a team leader (mostly a long-term, experienced San employee). The staff and trainees have staff rooms. Quite a few of them live in the staff quarters a bit away from the venue, but within sight (single or family apartments). They get three weeks annual leave.

The remuneration is in line with the usual salaries in South Africa. It is important to know that in relation to the prices and rents the average income in South Africa is rather low. Salaries of around 8000 to 10.000 rands (500 to 700 euros) are quite common. Positions with a higher degree of responsibility are remunerated with 12.000 to 15.000 rands (about 800 to 1000 euros) and already belong to the higher income category. The minimum wage is 3600 rands (about 250 euros). So the young trainees (though already during their education at the ||Kabbo Academy) get this minimum wage, while long-term employees with more responsible tasks earn more.

It is distressing that South Africa does not have any public health insurance which would in any way compare to the German system. The only alternative is or would be a private insurance. Quite a few South Africans therefore do not have any health insurance. In serious cases, !KHWATTU supports employees with a loan if necessary.

4.6. Gender equality

Equal participation of women and men in planning and implementation processes within the frame of their cultural background and values

Most of the applicants for a training course at !KHWATTU's ||Kabbo Academy are from remote communities with little infrastructure, in South Africa or in neighbouring countries. In such communities – also among the San – the understanding of roles is often traditional (earlier, only men used to hunt, while the women obtained/collected the remaining food needed). This role model changes only gradually. In the employment relationships at !KHWATTU, however, this seems to have been overcome, or it is no longer visible. Overall, both among the trainees and among the permanent staff, there is a gender balance between male and female employees. Two female employees already work as tour guides and nature guides, which earlier used to be considered rather “male” domains.

4.7. Environmental sustainability

Taking into account criteria of low environmental and climate impact and sustainable use of natural resources

!KHOWA TTU has its own “Green Team“ (comprised of staff from all areas of work and tasks) and is remarkably active. Activities range from the ethno-botanical educational trail already mentioned to setting up gardens (vegetables, lettuce and herbs) and ponds, composting facilities, tree nurseries, to water and energy saving measures. Besides, bush and savannah landscape management also plays a role, as these landscapes are threatened especially by the coojong (the so called Port Jackson willow) that was once introduced from Australia and overgrows everything. Last but not least, !KHOWA TTU, which is rather isolated on the vast former farm land and far from any water and sewage systems, has installed a subterranean multiple sink pit system for the sewage, at the end of which the grey water irrigates nearby tree and bush forest.

4.8. Future sustainability

Ensuring the economic and institutional sustainability of the project

In the first instance, !KHOWA TTU has a solid economic base. It seems to be secured by both the reliable structures upon its foundation and the intentions of the Swiss Ubuntu Foundation. Given the framework in South Africa, !KHOWA TTU is politically recognised as an organisation that works for the indigenous population.

Nevertheless, as an enterprise with a touristic orientation, it depends on guests and visitors and therefore tries (consequently) to become even more attractive for the South African market. This year (2018), !KHOWA TTU will open a new and architecturally very impressive museum gallery fitting well into the landscape in order to attract new and repeat visitors. New programmes for young people are to be launched (mountain bike tours). In tandem with the successful enterprises in Darling with their local branding (see 4.1.) the attractiveness of !KHOWA TTU will certainly be increased further. The goal is 20,000 visitors per year.

5 CONCLUSION

Apart from the touristic aspects, during his visit to **!KHOWA TTU** the author was most impressed by the fact that so many young people he was able to meet there have gained confidence and assert their San identity – after a training of only seven months, coming from a depressing situation without perspectives, and as members of a marginalised group of the population.

Appendix 1: Tourist Brochure.pdf

Appendix 2: 2017 Pricelist !Khwa ttu.pdf

Recommended reading: Paul Weinberg ”In search of the San“, 1997, Porcupine Press, Johannesburg, South Africa, ISBN 0-620-21231-4

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