

# People of the Eland/People of ELAN : The Ju/ 'hoan Transcription Group and Ju/ 'hoan Mother-Tongue Literacy

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## **People of the Eland/People of ELAN: The Ju/'hoan Transcription Group and Ju/'hoan Mother-Tongue Literacy**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project (VSP) in Namibia, a primary-grade, mother-tongue literacy undertaking, is a community-based project with professional linguistic credentials. Begun in 1990 and ongoing, the VSP made possible the formation of the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group (JTG) in 2002. Local JTG members received computer literacy and transcription training with ELAN software. They participated in the creation of a national literacy education curriculum in Namibia as well as Ju/'hoan enrichment materials, drawn from their own traditions, for English-medium schools in the Ju/'hoan-speaking area. The JTG provides a case study of a community-based language documentation project that is being used as an example by other San and Khoe language groups in southern Africa. JTG transcribers process, publish, and archive verbal materials ranging from folklore and oral history to political meetings and local creative writing. A growing international reputation has brought them recent work with archaeologists, anthropologists, and filmmakers from around the world. At the same time, they are amassing a community archive available to Ju/'hoan-speaking students and their teachers, leaders, and fellow community members.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project ('VSP') in Namibia, a primary-grade, mother-tongue literacy undertaking, is a community-based project with professional linguistic credentials. Begun in 1990 with educational, linguistic, and anthropological collaboration and still evolving creatively today, the VSP made possible the formation of the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group ('JTG') in 2002. Local JTG members received computer-literacy and transcription training with ELAN software. They participated in the creation of a national literacy education curriculum in Namibia as well as Ju/'hoan enrichment materials, drawn from their own traditions, for English-medium schools in the Ju/'hoan-speaking area. The JTG provides a case study of a community-based language documentation project

that is being used as an example by other San and Khoe language groups in southern Africa (cf. Biesele 2014). JTG transcribers process, publish, and archive verbal materials ranging from folklore and oral history to political meetings and local creative writing. A growing international reputation has brought them recent work with archaeologists, anthropologists, and filmmakers from around the world.

My chapter title makes a fanciful link between the eland antelope (the Afrikaans word is pronounced like the French word *'elan'* by Ju/'hoan speakers) and ELAN, the state-of-the-art transcription software they use in their work. Long referred to as 'the people of the eland', San peoples of southern Africa are now increasingly able to take advantage of the technological empowerment brought by ELAN. This software, favored by a large proportion of those who work in documenting endangered languages, was developed at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and is continually updated there and in Cologne, Germany, for ever-increasing user-friendliness.

Further information about topics directly related to this chapter about Ju/'hoan mother-tongue literacy and transcription work are to be found in other chapters in this book. In Melissa Heckler's chapter there is more about the ongoing Nyae Nyae VSP in Namibia. In my chapter, I discuss the JTG, which also still operates today despite adversity, managing partly through its literacy activism for younger people.

This chapter is also related to work and presentations by several others who attended the CHAGS 11 conference, especially to those by other members of Panel 14, 'Research and Activism among the Kalahari San Today'. Jennifer Hays wrote her Ph.D. dissertation on education in Nyae Nyae and has also just completed a book about the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project (Hays 2016). Maitseo Bolaane's work includes material about higher education and research and their relevance to modern San communities. Tshisimogo Leepang and Isaac Saul both have mother-tongue language education and preservation at the heart of their work commitments. In 2012, Tshisimogo wrote to me expressing his concern about 'the constant flow of tears' caused by some researchers' failure to share language documentation. He linked that failure to a lack of practical means, including financial ones, needed to encourage mother-tongue language use before too many more fluent elders die.

Also in Panel 14, Chris Low discussed the challenges of co-creating a museum, at !Khwa ttu in South Africa, intended to have San languages and communicative strengths very much at its center. At the end of the Kalahari session, Tilman Lenssen-Erz reported on a very exciting departure currently being made by the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group, that of making a detailed, Ju/'hoan-language-based contribution to the archaeology of human hunting. And in CHAGS 11 Panel 10, 'Multimedia Resources for Hunter-Gatherer Research', linguistics graduate student Lee Pratchett reported on documentation and activist work, also based on use of ELAN, with the =Kx'ao//'ae San of Botswana and Namibia.

## BACKGROUND TO THE JU/'HOAN TRANSCRIPTION GROUP

Many of the world's marginalized or endangered languages are spoken by people who recently lived or currently live by hunting and gathering. The recent history of the Ju/'hoan people (see Biesele and Hitchcock 2011) and of their Transcription Group provides a useful example for many San and other indigenous efforts to preserve and develop mother-tongue language and cultural heritage. The Ju/'hoan people are familiar to others in southern Africa and to a wider world that has read about them and seen films such as 'The Gods Must Be Crazy', as knowledgeable hunters of the Kalahari Desert. Yet few outsiders know that community-promoted educational and language-development projects have been going on among the Namibian Ju/'hoan people for a generation's time, or that other communities around the world might learn a great deal from their experience.

This chapter provides historical background on the twenty-five years in which a written form of Ju/'hoan has been in use by the Namibian Ju/'hoansi. Their largest community lives in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy centered on Tsumkwe, in northeastern Otjozondjupa, and to its west and south. The language spoken at home is Ju/'hoan. Tracing from initiatives by Ju/'hoan parents on behalf of their children around Namibian Independence, the chapter provides an outline of collaborations among communities, NGOs, linguists, and the Namibian education system that have led to the Ju/'hoan educational and language projects active today.

Ju/'hoan (Khoisan language family) is the first language of former foragers in north-eastern Namibia and adjacent north-western Botswana, but its future is threatened. At the project site, Nyae Nyae, Namibia, with slightly over 2,000 Ju/'hoansi, Ju/'hoan is still learned at home and precariously holds national educational language status to Grade 4. This status was promoted in the first instance via the Village Schools Project begun by the Nyae Nyae community in 1990, with the help of linguist Patrick Dickens, myself, and educators Melissa Heckler and Lesley Beake. Some Ju/'hoansi youth elsewhere in Namibia are losing the language due to economic and political circumstances, though it often still persists in religious healing contexts. In Botswana, with 4,000 speakers, Ju/'hoan is even less esteemed by children because schooling there is exclusively Setswana- and English-medium, and there is no officially sanctioned production of minority-language learning materials.

Viewed as a language, not a dialect, by speakers, Ju/'hoan increasingly yields to Afrikaans, English, or Setswana in outside contexts. Nevertheless, the language has unparalleled current potential for comprehensive documentation in Nyae Nyae, where the Ju/'hoansi have avoided dispossession and fragmentation by creating an internationally recognized land conservancy, the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. Ju/'hoan culture in Nyae Nyae has been extensively studied via a number of long-term anthropological projects. One of these is the HKRP (the Harvard Kalahari Research Project), which includes myself and, informally, my extensive Ju/'hoan

audiotape collection, now digitized and gradually becoming available online via ELAR, the Endangered Languages Archive at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Additionally, the Ju/'hoan language is now experiencing community revitalization, especially in Nyae Nyae. The revitalization may be traced to young people literate in both Ju/'hoan and English who are being increasingly employed by government and other employers; to the ongoing Village Schools and Library Outreach Projects; to the heritage documentation project made possible by the work of the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group; and among other factors, to a recent Namibian commitment to minority radio.

### THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS PROJECT

In the late 1980s, the problems of remoteness and the painful legacy of *de facto* apartheid combined in Nyae Nyae to create an educational crisis that was deeply worrisome to Ju/'hoan community leaders. As the quotation below from then-Chairman of the Ju/'hoan people's organization Tsamkxao =Oma shows, around that time the leaders were very much motivated to tackle this crisis:

When I look into the future to see what (my children) will see, one thing I see is that my children have come to fear schooling. They fear it because they fear being beaten. So they've all separated, left school and gone off in all directions. Every time I'm in Tsumkwe I see kids who aren't in school. They say they're tired of trying. They got along all right with the earlier teachers, but now there's no understanding with the new ones. All (the children) see is pain. And that's why they go about avoiding school these days. They don't want to be there.

A while back we went to the (school administrator) and asked, 'If beating a child makes him leave school, what good does that do?' And all he said was 'Mmm'. So we said, 'Misbehaving is one thing. If a child acts badly on many occasions, and the teacher discusses it with the parents so they understand each other, well, okay, go on and hit the child. But don't just beat him as an ordinary thing! Sometimes they beat them for very small things. They don't even tell the child why. They don't even speak to the father about it. If the child learns some things but doesn't learn others, you shouldn't just beat him, but tell him what he hasn't learned. You say, "This is the name of this", and you teach him along, teach him along, and then finally you ask him if he has learned the thing... If instead you go around beating the children, pretty soon you'll see they'll all be gone.'

This is how we tried to talk to the school administrator. But he persisted and finally we gave up.

But if the children DID get good schooling? Some of them could get work in hospitals, medical work, and some could teach children in schools, and some could

be police, and some could work in offices and do secretarial work; there'd be men's work and women's work. Or they could have shops, or some could learn to work on machines, machines that build trucks, or [welding] machines that work with fire, because these days people don't just do one thing but do lots of kinds of things. Some are truck people and others are welders and some work on truck machines and others keep hostels for school-children. Some could go to work for the Government in another area, maybe in waterworks, or some might be in agriculture, and many of them might want to work in water detection and borehole drilling.

If they had a chance to learn these things, they'd know how to do them. My heart burns for them to learn. That's how our work would go forward.

(Tsamkxao =Oma, recorded 1987)

Namibia achieved Independence from South Africa in 1990. During 1991, the newly independent nation of Namibia made a commitment to support minority-language education for the first three years of school. Partly this commitment was made because of an internationalist perspective on ethnicity fostered by the SWAPO leadership on its return from exile. Partly it was made because of the historical circumstances of separate development during the period of South Africa's illegal mandate over South West Africa: at the time of Independence, fully eleven 'national' languages were in use. Ironically, however, it also owed at least something to lessons learned from an opposite educational policy in Botswana.

At the time of Independence, the new Namibian director of USAID, Richard Shortlidge, who was transferred to Windhoek from Gaborone, shared with other involved parties his mission to foster minority-language education in the new Namibia. In Shortlidge's view, Botswana's educational language policies had contributed to increased marginalisation for minorities. This view meshed well with that of then Namibian Education Minister Nahas Angula, who opened the way for Ju/'hoansi to form one of several recognised national-language pilot projects in education. The Ju/'hoansi, for their part, were ready to join the national effort, the Basic Educational Reform Project ('BERP'), because they had already worked for several years with linguist Patrick Dickens (see Dickens 1991; 1994) to develop a written form of their language.

For some time, the Ju/'hoan people had been growing aware of the power of media and of their own need for the tools of literacy. World literacy experience has affirmed that the most effective approach is learning literacy in the mother tongue and then generalising this skill as needed, after the first three or four years, to a national language. Around the time of Independence, English was succeeding Afrikaans in Namibia, and the Ju/'hoansi, like many other minority groups, were anxious to develop both skill in English and a written form of their own language. They asked for help from scholars familiar with their community, and they received it not only from linguists and anthropologists but also from highly

experienced educators (see Biesele, Dickens, and Beake 1991; Biesele, Lambert, and Dickens 1991; and Heckler n.d.)

The pilot VSP program called for participation of the Ju/'hoan communities in deciding what from their own traditions would go into literate form as enrichment materials for their children's curriculum. (This approach was called 'self-literacy' in international educational circles.) A starting class of sixteen teachers from the communities was trained to teach at five new local schools. The schools were built in villages strategically chosen to maximise parent help from families related to the students. This and other ideas of the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project were worked out in consultation between the NGO and the Nyae Nyae community members. The Nyae Nyae people concurred with educators who had identified the unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environments and curricula of the few schools formerly available to Ju/'hoan children as important factors contributing to the existing high drop-out and failure rates.

## **CURRICULUM MATERIALS**

In 2002, a project in cultural heritage preservation, language development, and linguistics training for local people spun off from the Village Schools Project. The Kalahari Peoples Fund ('KPF'), a US nonprofit, began to support projects made possible by this linguistic work and the VSP. Tired of the few flimsy mimeographed and desktop-published curriculum materials available in Ju/'hoan, the VSP teachers and other Namibian educators asked for attractive published schoolbooks in the Ju/'hoan language. Academic grants to me and other collaborators from the US National Science Foundation, the US National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, as well as the community-development grants located by the KPF, allowed collaboration with the Ju/'hoansi on a heritage conservation project, the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group. The JTG was to provide the Ju/'hoansi with printed curriculum and archival materials coming from their own culture. Some of these materials were contemporary essays written by the Village Schools teacher trainees in a creative writing course I facilitated in 1992. The project produced a number of materials through the Namibian National Institute for Educational Development's syllabus and curriculum work with the Ju/'hoan Curriculum Committee ('JCC') and the Trafford First Voices Publishing Program, British Columbia, Canada (Biesele and Karahari Peoples Fund 2009).

One critical area where the VSP had managed to keep open a space for creativity was in promoting the idea of Balanced Literacy (called 'Integrated Literacy' in southern Africa). Balanced Literacy is an international reading and writing program that matches cultural values with curriculum materials, in the Ju/'hoan case their egalitarian values and their deep belief in the value of children's work. Also in Balanced Literacy, there has been a realization that genuinely creative literature and non-fiction learning materials must be produced

for readers beyond the first three years, to enable an actual literate tradition to develop — for adults, as well. To do this, Ju/'hoansi literate in their own language had to be enabled, through tools and practice, to generate their own written materials. Authoritative text production has demanded, thus, the creation of a political, social, and technological environment to foster organic intellectual growth.

Accordingly, in June through September 2003, several training and language research activities took place in Nyae Nyae with the help of students and professionals. These involved a number of electronic techniques of creativity and preservation, including the word-processing of life histories and contemporary stories (both oral and written) in a creative writing workshop and transcription from digital audio recordings supplemented by video. Notes on equipment and approaches similar to those used have often appeared in the online journal *Multilingual Computing* ([www.multilingual.com](http://www.multilingual.com)) about similar projects in Navaho and other minority languages. 'Best practice' in such projects is now also constantly reported and updated online in The LINGUIST List/E-MELD and by the Preservation and Access Division of the US National Endowment for the Humanities. Those associated with the generation of language materials for the Nyae Nyae Village Schools Project have attempted to use these best practices to serve the educational needs of the Ju/'hoan people.

The Ju/'hoan texts we started with, recorded between 1970 and the present, ranged from folklore, dreams, and narratives of trance healing to political meetings and oral history. Later, interviews and conversations about the Nyae Nyae Conservancy were recorded as well; these focused on the environment, land rights, and new issues in governance and representation. Transcribed and translated with precision by a collaborative team of transcriber-translators – computer-literate native speakers trained originally by the VSP – these texts are not only research tools for anthropologists, archaeologists, and linguists, but are also valuable archive and curriculum materials for the Ju/'hoansi themselves. They contribute to a movement now developing among indigenous people in many parts of the world, to document and develop their own culture and language for educational, political, and economic goals.

## **HOW THE JU/'HOAN TRANSCRIPTION GROUP WORKS TODAY**

The Ju/'hoan Transcription Group uses an innovative workshop format for processing authoritative texts, one made possible not only by new technology but also by the 'old' technology of collaborative learning that was traditional among the Ju/'hoansi and other San. The JTG has become a comprehensive, contextualized, and critical language project, building as it has on the original work of Dickens and his Ju/'hoan students and on the Ju/'hoan materials I collected in both Botswana and Namibia. At first carried out only when I and my technical assistants could be in Tsumkwe, since 2006 it has been ongoing



throughout the year under the supervision of local individuals like Dam Botes Debe, who was for some time the Ju/'hoan librarian at the Tsumkwe Community Learning and Development Centre ('CLDC') established by the Namibia Association of Norway ('NAMAS'). NAMAS had a San Education Project based at the CLDC, and outgrowths of this project have continued until recently to work closely with both KPF and the Namibian NGO known as NNDFN to foster community education in Nyae Nyae.

The uniquely productive and authoritative heart of the JTG's work is its collaborative workshop format. And to add to the project's efficiency, KPF and the other NGOs involved were able to construct, at community request, a high-speed Internet connection at the CLDC in Tsumkwe, to allow exchange of sound files and translation drafts between the trainees and scholars outside of Namibia. This connection has been used to speed preparation of language material vetted by local experts for both publication and online dissemination.

As a part of the JTG, the first Ju/'hoan trainees, Kagece Kallie N!ani and Dam Botes Debe, began training during 2002 in computer literacy, language preservation, and linguistic techniques. By 2008, the number of experienced trainees had risen to eight (including two women), all keen to continue the work. At present the transcribers are four, all of whom have had at least ten years' work in this project: Tsemkgao /Ui, /Ui N!aici, Beesa Boo, and /Ai!ae /Kunta. All the JTG members received computer-literacy and transcription training with the ELAN software developed at the Max Planck Institute in the Netherlands. What they have learned from the transcription project may be regarded as a substantial contribution to the development of human resources for the study of Ju/'hoan and other San languages.

In recent years, the JTG made possible the Ju/'hoan deposit to ELAR, the Endangered Languages Archive at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. This deposit consists of over 1,100 initial entries plus another 700 entries added during 2016. ELDP, the Endangered Languages Documentation Project, funded Ju/'hoan language research and documentation activities by the JTG through grants to me for several years; our project was at the time the only truly community-based project out of the hundreds supported by ELDP. The ELAR archive is a powerful resource for community archives: the deposited public, online versions can be quickly updated if viewers and listeners, including language community members, find corrections that need to be made or want to suggest different interpretations or translations. This form of publication is attuned both to the traditionally collaborative learning style of the San people and to the spirit of the Internet today, where relevant communities and knowledgeable individuals work together, via Wiki technology, to create and constantly update bodies of shared information.

Ju/'hoan language documentation and mother-tongue education have thus been collaborative efforts by Nyae Nyae community members, local organizations like the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, and scholars and educators. Other important

collaborators have included NGOs, among them the Kalahari Peoples Fund, founded 40 years ago by members of the Harvard Kalahari Research Group, including some participants in the CHAGS 11 Kalahari panel. The KPF ([www.kalaharipeoples.org](http://www.kalaharipeoples.org)), which is run with the volunteer labor of professional anthropologists, educators, and writers, has been involved in many phases of background work to make these language projects possible in Nyae Nyae. These phases include community consultation and development in liaison with the Ju/'hoan people's organization; the founding of an alternative mother-tongue school project (the VSP); the development of an orthography, grammar, dictionary, and teaching materials in the Ju/'hoan language; the training of computer-literate Ju/'hoan teachers; and the training of young Ju/'hoan people in linguistic techniques like translation and the use of ELAN.

Since 2002, digital tape-recorders and video cameras have been used by Ju/'hoan trainees and Village Schools students to gather local information from older members of their communities. Some of the elders are respected healers, and they contributed narratives of psychic healing using altered states of consciousness and laying on of hands. Others are community leaders, and they recorded their memories and perspectives on the exciting political process by which they became citizens of a modern nation state after Namibia's struggle for Independence. Products have included contributions to two websites, [www.kalaharipeoples.org](http://www.kalaharipeoples.org) (active) and [www.kalaharipeoples.net](http://www.kalaharipeoples.net) (in archive status), several books including the 'Ju/'hoan Folktales' literacy primer (Biesele and Karahari Peoples Fund 2009), as well as desktop-published informal curricula.

### **SPIN-OFFS OF THE JTG FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE**

In recent years, the JTG trainees asked to expand their program. They wanted to add a youth component to their work, so younger people, especially young women, could receive training in transcription, translation, and other linguistic techniques. They proposed to do the training themselves, in the spirit of 'each one teach one'.

In 2007, the transcribers, with KPF help, added a Youth Transcription component so they could pass on their new skills to younger Ju/'hoan people, who have very little access to employment. Then in 2013, the Youth Transcription project was broadened from after-hours enrichment to a full-scale project to give more young Ju/'hoansi the chance to become fluent in writing their language. Now called the Ju/'hoan Mother-Tongue Literacy Project ('JMLP') – funded partly by the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research and other KPF affiliates – this project is now running in Tsumkwe under the supervision of Ben Motlatla, a human-rights worker from Gobabis who relocated his family to Tsumkwe. Though, as noted, some financial support for the JMLP was awarded by NAMAS in 2015, this lasted for only a year; thus, future funding for the JMLP and the entire San Education Project in Namibia is in jeopardy. Funding is being sought at

this time by the Kalahari Peoples Fund, so the good start made by the JMLP will not be interrupted.

One extremely exciting development, however, is KPF's informal partnership with the new Namibian project TUCSIN/Tsumkwe, begun in July 2014 with the help of Melissa Heckler, Bruce Parcher, and anthropologist Richard Lee. Drs. Beatrice Sandelowsky and Andreas Wienecke of TUCSIN (The University Centre for Studies in Namibia) completed the purchase of the Tsumkwe Lodge in early December 2013, to provide a campus and income generation for a multipurpose education center for Ju/'hoan and other area students. This campus is intended to house and support many other KPF-related education projects, all in Tsumkwe, including support for 1) secondary school distance education through NAMCOL; 2) KPF's Library Outreach Project to San learners based at the Community Learning and Development Centre; and 3) the ongoing Ju/'hoan Transcription Group. During 2014, the start of this new education center was celebrated via an international San education conference held in Tsumkwe.

## CONCLUDING SUMMARY

Recapitulating the many activities leading up to the current state of education and literacy in Nyae Nyae and other Khoisan-speaking areas of southern Africa is complex. The provision of accurate and culturally appropriate materials has required, minimally, the creation and adoption of an orthography, a grammar, and other linguistic basics; the founding and development of a community-based education project as a matrix for literacy; technical advances (e-mail, laptops, digital recording and transcribing equipment); community consultation and training; comprehensive provision of computer-literacy training; and constant technical updating for best practice. In the Ju/'hoan case, these activities have been carried out over the last 25 years through a complex infrastructural and funding collaboration involving academic, non-profit, and government funding sources. None of the activities would have been possible, however, without the sound linguistic basis in the Ju/'hoan language provided by Patrick Dickens and the sound community educational basis provided by the Village Schools Project.

Of utmost importance has been the participation of closely involved local communities, organizations, and committees themselves, including the (Namibian) Ju/'hoan Curriculum Committee, which brings together the three Ju/'hoan dialect areas in Namibia, and the Namibian Government's Intersectoral Task Force on Educationally Marginalized Children ('ITFEMC'), which brings together the government and NGO entities involved in education for San and other marginalized children. These two groups provide instructive examples to similar San literacy projects in Botswana. In turn, from the Botswana side, the Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives ('TOCaDI') – in conjunction with PANOS Institute (London), the Bernard van Leer Foundation (the Netherlands), and the University of Botswana San/Basarwa Research Project – has enabled

community-based oral history projects and publications in San and Khoekhoe languages in Botswana that now serve as models for similar projects in Namibia (cf. Chumbo and Mmaba 2002). In late 2004, a publication of San communities in both Botswana and Namibia prepared from their own oral traditions, *Voices of the San*, was published to celebrate the ending of the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Peoples (Leroux and White eds. 2004).

These developments are in line with those of similar projects in indigenous communities around the world. Ju/'hoan, so recently an isolated and unwritten language considered exotic and un-learnable even by its closest neighbors, will now become in some sense a world language. The knowledge it contains will become available as far as the World Wide Web can carry it. The data from both audio recordings and isolated word recordings is being registered and deposited according to international guidelines and also archived locally in Tsumkwe. These resources will support not only research but also ongoing community language development.

A guiding principle in all of this language development work is the Ju/'hoan people's empowerment to tell their own stories. A further guiding principle is the continuing integration with the school curriculum of the Village Schools Project, which has now become part of the national school system of Namibia. Last, the projects emphasize respect both for ancient lifeways and for contemporary creativity. They are conservation-oriented, foster moral ownership of the creative process by Ju/'hoan people themselves, and creatively use information technology. Based on sound research and full community participation, they foster educational and documentation measures to protect the Ju/'hoan culture, to produce both curriculum and archives for the Ju/'hoan community, and to provide publications for use by scholars and others via the World Wide Web.

This all sounds pretty good, but no amount of tidy paragraphs can conceal the very real problems faced by projects like the VSP and the JTG. Elsewhere in this book, you will be reading about ways that loss of land, displacement, forced resettlement, and resulting lack of viable economic options increasingly drive San marginalization today. Problems being faced by the projects I have discussed here are of a piece with wider economic and social problems being experienced all over Tsumkwe and Nyae Nyae as well as by San wherever they live in southern Africa, whether they are dispersed, as many are, or still struggling to keep their communities from fragmentation.

I will end on a hopeful note, though, by mentioning a truly community-based project completed in 2014. This is the *Ju/'hoan Children's Dictionary* edited by Tsemkgao /Ui and linguistics graduate student Kerry Jones and created entirely by the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoan community (Cwi and Jones 2014). Several book launches were held in 2014 and 2015 for this dictionary, which was workshopped with the JTG and many others from the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoan community and was published by University of Kwazulu/Natal Press. This book has been placed in the hands of every school-age child in Nyae Nyae and used in many schools in the region. It

was shortlisted for an excellence award in September 2015 from an Afrikaans library association in Cape Town. Like the Ju/'hoan Transcription Group which made it possible, this dictionary is regarded as a good example for literacy and heritage projects in other marginalized language communities of southern Africa – and the world.

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