

Rights and entitlements for Baswara San in Kang

Severe droughts in Southern Africa have left the people of galagadi (commonly known as the Basarwa or San) with serious food shortages. There are around eight hundred Basarwa living in and around Kang and most of them rely on government food rations. Traditionally they are nomadic foragers who depend on hunting wild animals and gathering food; but their way of life and livelihoods are becoming increasingly threatened by restrictive, costly local hunting laws and global climatic changes.

Alongside local NGO Tquii Xu Yani (TXY), which represents the Basarwa San community, Skillshare International in Botswana is working to address the issues of poverty, food security, poor shelter, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, poor education and skills gaps faced by the Basarwa San. The vision is to enable them to participate effectively in the mainstream social, economic and political development of their area and their country. The work with TXY is an example of how we are applying and combining our strategies of organisational change and social change.



Skills training at TXY

This year, in collaboration with Botswana's Ministry of Agriculture and funded by our PPA with DFID, Skillshare International has placed an agricultural specialist development worker to train and develop the skills of TXY in food production. Interested members of TXY fully participate as a group and as individuals. A plot of land (8.8km radius) has been allocated to the community and within that they have drilled a borehole and grown vegetables like spinach, tomatoes, carrots and staple foods such as maize, beans and melons for both consumption and cash.

We have also been working on a long terms basis with TXY to build their capacity in lobbying and advocacy. *"TXY is now very strong in lobbying and advocacy. They have identified and formed partnerships/allies ... they know and understand the government structures and whom to go to for what case and have no fear of going to the highest level."* Bakoetse Tsiane (Country Programme Officer, Skillshare International, Botswana)

During 2005/6 TXY have been involved in two notable cases:

TXY engaged in a dialogue with the government to protest a decision by the government to relocate Basarwa children away from their parents to a boarding school 100 km away. As a direct result, parents who wanted their children to remain in the village and continue at the local school were given that choice.

TXY also assisted one of their tribesmen in Zutshwa in a conflict with the wildlife department. Although the community is allocated hunting licenses, they were experiencing continual harassment from police and wildlife staff with accusations that they are poaching beyond their allocation. In some cases their dried meat had been taken away from them. TXY, with support from Skillshare International Botswana, held several meetings with community members to help them to understand government policy on hunting, and their entitlements within that policy so that they were able to confront the situation from an informed position.