

GOBABIS INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADING

Freedom square, Gobabis

Planning with the community
and not for the community



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**Namibia Housing Action
Group & Shack Dwellers Federation
of Namibia**

This booklet reflects on the Namibian experiences for building partnerships towards upgrading an informal settlement in the town of Gobabis in the Omaheke Region.

CONTENTS

Acronyms	8
1. Project Background.....	9
2. Community Land Information Program facilitates bottom-up planning.....	10
3. Learning and Building partnerships for Planning and Settlement Upgrading.....	12
4. Planning studios	14
5. Re-Blocking for Security of Tenure through the Flexible Land Tenure Act	16
6. Registration and plot allocation. Introducing the Social Tenure Domain Model.....	17
7. Land Survey-diagrams	18
8. Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)	19
9. Service Installation	22
10.Lessons Learned	23

PARTNERS & THEIR ROLES

Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)/Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG). The SDFN is the network of women led saving groups working with their support organization NHAG, facilitate community driven processes in Namibia and linkages between communities and other actors

SDFN supported communities in Gobabis to implement CLIP and the upgrading of the informal settlement. NHAG provided technical and administrative support for CLIP participatory planning, coordinate the program and the involvement of the stakeholders.

Office of the Governor, representative of the president in the Omaheke Region.

The office of the Governor participated in the review of CLIP in Gobabis and provided guidance and support for the upgrading process in the town

Omaheke Regional Council, provide guidance for the replication in other areas.

Participated in the review of CLIP in Gobabis and provide guidance and support for the replication in other areas.

Gobabis Municipality is the capital of the Omaheke region. Four informal settlements accommodate 9,200 of the total of 19,101 inhabitants of the town.

Gobabis Municipality signed an MOU with NHAG/SDFN on 15 August 2013 with the aim to upgrade the settlement through a participatory planning approach involving the community and the students from NUST. The Municipality is an active participant in the process, participate in community meetings, assisted with service plans, clearing of land and roads, and availed office space for the community to digitally capture the data.

Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD), facilitate and finance the land infrastructure and housing development as part of urban development in Namibia.

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development supported the pilot and participated in the learning for the settlement upgrading. They signed a MoU with NHAG/SDFN on the implementation of CLIP. The MURD also provided funding for the installation of toilets and water taps in the settlement.

Ministry of Land Reform (MLR), responsible for the implementation of the Flexible Land Tenure Act.

The Ministry of Land Reform supported the pilot for the learning on the implementation of the Flexible Land Tenure Act, as well as settlement upgrading.

Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), is the international network of urban poor Federations. The Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS), is a network of planning schools across academic institutions in Africa.

SDFN forms part of SDI. AAPS and SDI signed an agreement in 2010 to promote collaboration between planning schools and country based SDI-affiliates with the aim to promote initiatives, plans and policies that will result in pro-poor and inclusive cities in Africa

Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), is part of AAPS through the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning.

NUST signed a MoU with NHAG/SDFN for collaboration on Work Integrated Learning and research. The Town and Regional Planning is a member of AAPS and the students participated in the studios as part of the participatory planning process.

Association of Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN) and Namibia Association of Local Authority Officials (NALAO) are the national bodies for respectively the Local Authority politicians and officials.

Representative of both Associations participated in the learning and exchange programs during the implementation and both agreed to support the signing of MoU's that will facilitate CLIP and informal settlement upgrading.

Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), a global alliance based in UN-Habitat focusing on developing pro poor land tools.

GLTN provided training on the use of the STDM tool, finance for implementation share experiences and progress on global levels.

MicroAerialProjectsL.L.C is a company registered in the USA, supporting the use of drones (UAVs) for mapping and survey purposes

The project assisted with the drones taking updated images of the Freedom Square settlement which assisted the community with the allocation of the plots

GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), support to land reform in Namibia under the ministry of land reform.

GIZ, as part of the support to MLR, financially supported the hiring of a professional land surveyor for the survey of the outer boundary of the settlement and participated in the learning exchanges.

Spanish Cooperation, Supported the community Land Information Program in Freedom Square.

Spanish Corporation financially and technically supported the national Community Land Programme working towards social and environmental improvements in the informal settlements in Namibia.



Acronyms

CLIP	Community Land Information Program
FLTA	Flexible Land Tenure Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
GPS	Global Positioning System
MLR	Ministry of Lands Reform
MURD	Ministry of Urban and Rural Development
NHAG	Namibia Housing Action Group
NUST	Namibian University of Science and Technology
SDFN	Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia
STDM	Social Tenure Domain Model
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gobabis is the regional capital of Omaheke region, situated in the heart of the cattle farming area 200 km from Windhoek. The town has a population of more than 19,000 according to the 2011 national census estimates. More than 47 percent (9,200) of the towns inhabitants live in four informal settlements according to enumerations carried out by the informal settlement communities as part of the Community Land Information Program (CLIP) in 2012. Informal Settlement residents in the town have limited access to water, no sanitation and no security of tenure.

The oldest existing informal settlement in Gobabis is Freedom Square. The settlement, previously known as Damara Block, developed spontaneously on the western side of Epako. Initially the Local Authority planned to relocate the residents to another location, but opportunities for upgrading emerged through community participation in the CLIP, learning exchanges, planning studios, re-blocking and registering families for security of tenure and servicing. This is done in collaboration with various local, regional, national and international agencies. Exposure to practices in South Africa as well as Gobabis during the activities brought a variety of local and international partners into the development of the first participatory settlement upgrading in Namibia.



2 COMMUNITY LAND INFORMATION PROGRAM FACILITATES BOTTOM-UP PLANNING

The CLIP was initiated by NHAG/SDFN in 2007 with support from Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD), as a tool to be used by informal settlement residents to better understand their communities, discuss their development priorities and negotiate for better living conditions in settlements. Residents further use the data they collect and analyse themselves to share their development priorities and affordability levels with local authorities and negotiate for services. The CLIP forms the foundation for bottom-up and inclusive planning, while also providing a land administration tool for Local Authorities. On a national level the MURD signed a MoU with NHAG to collaborate on the CLIP activities.

Gobabis informal settlement residents with support from SDFN members from other regions in Namibia, conducted a city-wide enumeration in four informal settlements (Freedom Square, Kanaan, Tuerijandjera and Owambo Block). The enumeration process was community driven and feedback discussions on development priorities of each settlement were shared with the Gobabis Municipality and various stakeholders.

The enumeration in Freedom Square, done in 2012, initially included 709 households with 3,149 occupants of which 52% is female. Following the data collection community meetings were held to validate the data and discuss the priorities. When the data was shared with the Gobabis Municipality the residents were able to discuss and reflect on their highest prioritised development need, which emerged as security of tenure. The community representatives clearly stated that they do not want to be moved, but would prefer the settlement to be regularised with each resident having a parcel, proper roads to make way for emergency services and for the residents to build permanent structures.





3 LEARNING AND BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR PLANNING AND SETTLEMENT UPGRADING

Subsequent to the sharing and discussion of the data a team from the municipality, including a Gobabis official, councillor and community member participated in a learning exchange facilitated by the Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) to upgrading projects in South Africa. The lessons about participatory planning and re-blocking as collaborative initiative between Local Authorities, the support NGO and community, were instrumental in reaching an agreement for the upgrading of Freedom Square. NHAG/SDFN and the Gobabis Municipality signed in 2013 a Memorandum of Understanding which path the way for their collaboration on the upgrading of the Settlement.

Stakeholders and communities continued to learn through exchanges as the further steps for upgrading were implemented. Freedom Square became a pilot for participatory informal settlement upgrading. Planning

studios to assist in the layouts for re-blocking was possible through the collaboration between the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), operating as the Polytechnic of Namibia at that time, the Association for African Planning Schools (AAPS), the SDI as well as NHAG/SDFN. During the studios and implementation, other stakeholders which include other Local Authorities, the Regional Council, MURD, MLR, ALAN, NALAO, GIZ and UN Habitat became exposed to the work taking place. This resulted in the implementation of an upgrading process that did not end with a planning exercise, but continue to implement re-blocking, service installation and a process of registering the community to secure tenure.





4 PLANNING STUDIOS

As part of the first planning studio in 2014 which focussed on a situational analysis, teams from the community, NHAG staff and the Town Planning students mapped features in the settlement such as communal water points, flooding zones, parcel layouts, protected trees, dumping sites using aerial images of the settlements and GPSs. Six months later, a second studio took place where students presented the outcomes of the situational analysis and the communities within the blocks then designed their layouts with the students. The planning studios changed the atmosphere in the community, having more community members participate in discussions and the layout exercises which took place under the trees in the settlement.



The planning with the students and data collection provided communities with new skills, such as working with a GPS and reading maps. The studio further created an awareness of the environment to the community, as some participants remarked on understanding the flow of the flood waters using the contour map and identifying protected trees. New leadership emerged in the process. For the students, the participatory planning process provided insight in the community's development needs and the importance of planning with the community instead of planning for the community in isolation. Experiences like these assisted in changing the mind-set of the future town and regional planners. Some of the graduates already initiated similar processes in the towns they are working.



The Town Planning lecturer of NUST assisted the community to prepare the final layout which was digitized by NHAG and submitted to and approved by the Gobabis.



5 RE-BLOCKING FOR SECURITY OF TENURE THROUGH THE FLEXIBLE LAND TENURE ACT

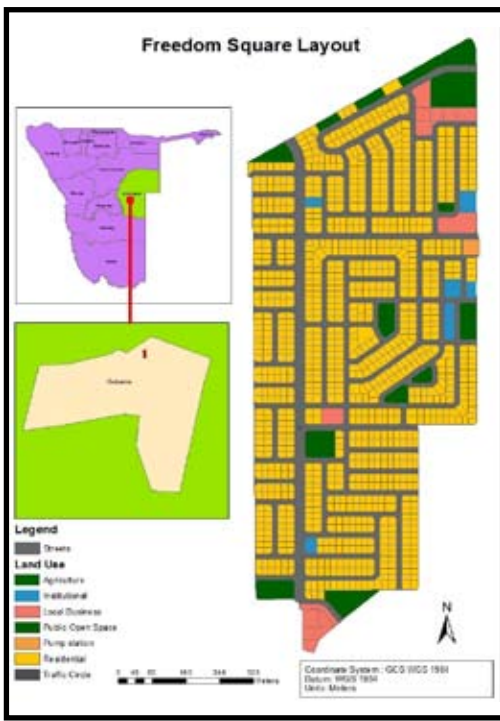
The community was eager to start “making streets” as they express the re-blocking exercise, and as security of tenure for the inhabitants was critical to enable the improvements of the living environment, Freedom Square upgrading project was included as a pilot for the Flexible Land Tenure Act (2012). This Act makes provision for a block of land to be surveyed and registered as a Block Erf, while the households inside the block can form a legal body in the form of a voluntary association. The members of the association will be able to register and transfer their rights as part of a starter title or a land hold title. The Ministry of Land Reform (MLR) initiated the implementation of the Flexible Land Tenure System as a pilot, supported by GIZ and the Global Land Tool Network of UN-Habitat. This pilot included Freedom Square and a professional land surveyor was appointed by GIZ to survey the external boundary of the settlement. Support from the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) from UN-Habitat to enable the measuring of the blocks by a land surveying technician and the measuring of the individual plots by the community and the NHAG Technical Team, which included a land surveying student. Initially a measuring tape was used and then to fast track the process GPS surveying equipment was hired to complete the process.



6 REGISTRATION AND PLOT ALLOCATION

Introducing the Social Tenure Domain Model

The survey work was completed within two months and the allocation process had to be done within a short period to facilitate the installation of a bulk sewer line that could serve the settlement. The data collected by the community formed the basis of the registration and allocation. Data collected by the community in 2012 was updated in 2015 with the intention that it will form part of the Flexible Land Tenure Registration and exploring the application of the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM). Structure numbers were updated changing the old DB – Damara Block to FS - Freedom Square and all new structures were also numbered. The updating of the data ensured that all the new households, or those not previously registered, were included, and resulted in that 1,024 main structures were identified. An aerial image captured in 2014 by MicroAerialProjectsL.L.C offering to use their drones was used for the mapping of the structures. The final settlement layout was over-laid on the aerial image and residents identified which structures need to be shifted onto the plots. The process clearly showed that residents of informal settlements can play a crucial role in development processes, with enough knowledge and understanding of their settlement to contribute positively to change.



7 LAND SURVEY-DIAGRAMS

Few amendments were done after the land survey by the land survey technician. Although topographic data was used to finalise the design, water collected and flood some plots during the rainy season. These areas were identified and after consultation with the municipality, the areas were filled with sand steering the water towards the planned roads. These plots were subsequently occupied. The other amendments to the layout were to add more plots to cater for the secondary households. This was done by subdividing parcels left for business or open spaces for residential purposes. The process of measuring took place during November 2016 and relocation started, firstly to make space for bulk water line sewer line that will serve the settlement and then all the other structures that require shifting onto plots had to be moved. The rearrangement was based on identifying the designed parcels that are closer to the structures, those households who could not have their parcels within their blocks had to move to open parcels in other blocks within a period of 2 months 70% of the households occupied their land.



8 SOCIAL TENURE DOMAIN MODEL (STDM)

Exposure to and training in the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), developed as a pro-poor land tool by the GLTN, enabled the technicians and the community to identify it as a tool that have having the potential to serve as a bridge to secure and certify the households' occupational rights, as the FLT regulations are still in the pipeline to be promulgated. At the same time the FLTS could assess the tool for its usefulness in the implementation of the FLT as part of the pilot.

As the community already collected and updated their data the STDM could assist them to link the information of the household to the position of the structure on the newly allocated plots, and produce certificates. Community members participated in the registration of residents in their settlement, and the software applied is available for free, which make it affordable to both the local authority and community. Community members were familiarised with the use of the STDM tool through two training session and continuous practice. The first training session in 2015 included participants from Land Administration and Town

Planning students of the NUST, officials from Karibib and Gobabis Municipalities, Ministry of Land Reform and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and community members from informal settlements. The training focused on the design of the forms, importing of data into STDM and the design of a certificate template.



The Gobabis Municipality availed office space for the capturing of the data by community members. The data entry started a few months after the first STDM training in 2015, entry of the household data was made using Access Database on four desktops. Eight members from the data collection team captured the data from the enumerations (1024 households), working on a rotational basis. Once the data was completed, a list of all the records and households names was printed for inspection at the municipality, errors in the data was identified and the data team had to clean up the data.

Further feedback was given to the community on the total number of residents in the community and this was also a platform where the community discussed the way forward regarding the next phase. Discrepancies in the data were identified which included double entries

of households and some household records that were outstanding could be captured. They were then given an opportunity to be surveyed and corrections were made for names wrongly recorded.

The structure information was captured in STDM, with each owner's information entered in the attribute table for the parcels of Freedom Square. Changes were made in the field manually on the layout and addition updating had to be made to the captured data.

All residents of Freedom Square who have been allocated parcels are to receive a certificate recognising their right to occupy and develop, as well as their future registration rights for Land Hold Titles under the FLTA, once regulations are finalised and promulgated.



9 SERVICE INSTALLATION

NHAG-SDFN and the Gobabis Municipality applied for funding for community service installation from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD). Funds were allocated by the MURD to buy the material for the services. The community members are installing the water and sewer reticulation themselves as part of a training program by an experienced plumber.

The installation of water reticulation for Freedom Square started in November 2016 and by the end June 2017 all households will have access to water. The community members of Freedom Square and other nearby settlements are trained on site how to excavate trenches, install water lines, read the service layout plan and where to use different sizes of pipes. On completions of the water reticulation the training will continue for installing the sewer pipes.

A technical committee comprised of the Gobabis Municipal councillors, and Officials, the Omaheke Governor, Omaheke Regional Council representatives, NHAG and the community is managing the coordination and providing direction of the project. The committee meets on monthly basis while the MURD housing and habitat officials visited the site during the installation to monitor the progress and quality of work.

10 LESSONS LEARNED

- **Community's participation is the key to the process:** When the community were given an opportunity to make a choice of how the settlement should look like (Participatory Planning) it created a sense of ownership of the project and willingness to follow the process through.
- **Women took the leadership:** The fast pace of learning mostly amongst the women resulted into women taking up leadership roles in the project. The community formed up new Federation Groups.
- **Skills transferred:** The community members gained various skills on community organisation, data entry, mapping, using of GPS units, planning and using computers. Furthermore they learned plumbing skills which will enable them to secure affordable services through a community driven service installation.
- **Consultations and partnerships:** The community have learned the element of working together as unity through the process and the Municipality have learned to plan with the people. The technical committee established for the installation of the services provided a structure element that can be put forward for future projects.
- **Ownership of the process by community and partners:** The community driving the process in partnership with their local authority and stakeholders acquired skills and understanding of the process that lead to the project sustainability.
- **Political leadership to be part of the process:** Local and Regional authorities working with the community as their partners helped them to understand community development needs.
- **Stakeholders' contributions and scaling up:** The awareness of participatory process led to more community members doing the work with the support of their local authorities.

- **Updating of data needs to be continuous and rigorous:** Through committee and organised structure all new occupants in the Freedom Square need to be updated regularly.
- **Pilot for Flexible Land Tenure:** The engagement with the Ministry of Land Reform needs additional steps as the role of piloting is not commonly agreed upon, following changes in the staff component of the Ministry.
- **Security of Tenure is part of an integrated process:** One aspect not appreciated and facilitated currently in the pilot phase of the Flexible Land Tenure is the integration needed between the steps, and therefore the stakeholders, to enable the implementation. The Local Authority, although having jurisdiction of the land is an important role player, but it is not the only stakeholder for implementing the process.





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