



# THE LIVING CULTURE FOUNDATION NAMIBIA

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### Dear Friends of the Living Culture Foundation Namibia.

A lot has happened in the last six months here in Namibia. We would like to inform you, dear friends, about our progress so far and give you an overview of all the Living Culture Foundation Namibia's projects, both established and developing.

But first, we would like to thank you for all your invaluable interest and support. Our philosophy, our work and ideology has given many people in Namibia the freedom and independence they need to take control of their lives and make decisions about their future. Because we value the freedom that allows us to make our decisions free and fast, we have chosen to remain independent and don't work with governmental organisations. Of course this helps us to save on unnecessary administration costs but

it also means that we can only finance ourselves with private donations. So as you read this newsletter be aware that it is your help and support that has allowed us to realise our aims here in Namibia.

### Infrastructure Project: "Water for Grashoek"

In co-operation with LCFN and Scintille



The old diesel pump in Grashoek

Those who have visited the great Kalahari thirstrand know how important water is to the people who live there. This is especially true for the San, for whom water has a central meaning. But water in Western Bushmanland does not simply come from the kitchen tap. Instead it is pumped from a depth of almost 200 metres into a tank by old diesel engines which, dating back to the occupation of the South African army, waste almost as much water as fuel. Only once it has been pumped can the tap be

opened and the water transported back to the homes of villagers in a wide array of plastic containers.

This is exactly the situation in Grashoek, the small village which - we are proud to say - has become renowned in Namibia as home of the Living Museum of the Ju/'Hoansi. Here the villagers spend a lot of money pumping water into a leaking tank with an inefficient and expensive diesel engine - something we would really like to change!

For this reason the LCFN, together with the Italian non-profit organization *Scintille*, have decided to invest in a sustainable infrastructure project. Together we have laid the foundations for a project called "Water for Grashoek". The first step is already complete following the installation of a brand new 5000 litre tank financed by *Scintille*, and the rest is now set to follow. By the end of the project we hope to have a fully functioning solar-powered water pump installed in Grashoek which, without any further cost to the community, will pump enough water for the village, the school and eventually for the campsite - which means that for the first time ever we will be able to offer visitors a bush shower and running water!



Handing over the new 5000 litre tank to the people of Grashoek from LCFN and Scintille

### The Living Museum on DVD

Documentary about the Ju/'Hoansi-San



DVD-Poster

In November last year Moritz, a German film student, spent a whole month in Grashoek making a documentary about the Living Museum and its effect on the community as a part of his thesis. The actors in the Living Museum, whose talent is in no way inferior to that of international movie stars, have now been honoured with their very own DVD. Lasting forty-eight minutes, Moritz's film provides a fascinating insight into how the Living Museum influences the life of the San and demonstrates how its unique structure has allowed San culture to survive in a modern context.

The San will benefit from the video in 2 ways. Firstly the DVD will be used to raise awareness of their work in both Germany and Namibia, and secondly Moritz has given the community the right to sell the DVD for N\$ 150 in the Museum. The profits will be invested in infrastructure projects for the Living Museum.

If you would like to buy a copy of the DVD (which is only available in German) please send Sebastian an email at [sduerschmidt@lcfn.info](mailto:sduerschmidt@lcfn.info). The money will be invested in our projects in Namibia.

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## Founding of a partner organisation in England

### The Living Culture Trust will raise money for infrastructure projects in Namibia

More than a year ago we met Aislinn Pearson, a young English woman who decided to establish a partner organisation in the UK after visiting the Living Museum of the Ju/'Hoansi. The idea has developed over the last few months and she has agreed that the aim of the partner organisation will be to promote LCFN projects in the UK and raise money for the infrastructure projects that will benefit our museums - as Living Culture Namibia e.V. is doing in Germany.

And so the idea of the Living Culture Trust is born. At the moment Aislinn and her fellow trustees, Melanie and Wanjiku, are busy climbing bureaucratic mountains. However it looks optimistic and we hope that the Living Culture Trust UK will be officially registered and able to raise funds for the LCFN in Great Britain early next year. The aims of this Trust will be a bit different to those of the LCFN. Their focus is not establishing new Living Museums but rather finding the money to invest in the infrastructure that supports projects which already exist. Money raised will be directly invested in the building or upgrading of campsites, the renewal of streets and roads or for the development of the water system in Grashoek. We are excited and watch with anticipation to see how the Trust develops in the coming year.

## The Living Museum of the Mafwe

### Half a year of successful work in the Caprivi



The actors of the Mafwe Museum

Nothing happens over night in in Namibia. With all our projects the most important prerequisites are patience and an acceptance of "Africa Time". Rushing, pressure and exaggerated haste in the pursuit of quick success are uniquely European traits. Here in Africa these characteristics often end in a shaking of heads on behalf of the project group. So its not surprising that establishing a Living Museum can take several years – as with the museum of the Mafwe in the Caprivi.

Since the start of 2006 we have often travelled to the Caprivi to explain our concept and to try to motivate the Mafwe, convincing them that there is reward to be found in building a Living Museum. After a year of hard work the Mafwe started to really understand our ideas and began to build their traditional village, making traditional costumes and jewellery and starting to study the original dances and rituals of their culture. Twelve months later, as reported in February in 2008, the Mafwe opened their museum and since then it has continued to represent their unique culture. As with all projects there were some teething problems in the beginning but the museum has developed into a great tourist attraction over the last six months and we are optimistic that, within the next year, it will achieve the same high standard as the Living Museum of the Ju/'Hoansi – which is a touristic highlight in Namibia receiving up to 4 groups of tourists a day during the high season.

## Progress with the Damara Museum

### The Museum of the Damara at Twyfelfontein takes on shape



The youngest member of the LCFN, Amelie at a project meeting with the Damara.

Museum. The opening now seems unlikely, our work here is not yet done.

Although it still lacks in authenticity, a very beautiful traditional village now exists near Twyfelfontein - for which there are sadly no actors. Of course this has hindered the development process as needless to say, there cant be a Living Museum without actors. We had a project group meeting at the end of August and made some suggestions that we hope will help find talented actors for the museum. We have a second meeting planned for the project group towards the end of November, and hope to see some actors ready and willing to show off their traditional culture, clothing and original dances.

## Further News

### Kavango Dance Group

There is some progress with the Kavango Dance Group. The group recently performed at a traditional festival in Katutura that was seen by the Namibian President, Hifikepunje Pohamba and this has injected new life and motivation into the group. They are now working harder than ever to perfect the representation of their traditional culture for other such big events.

### A New Living Museum

After fruitless negotiations with a Kavango group in the area west of Rundu in Northern Namibia, we have turned our sights to another group further east that have showed great interest in our Living Museum concept. Not far away from the Okavango River, this is a great opportunity to build a project that combines a Living Museum with a communal nature conservation project.

### Another Movie About Grashoek

The German filmmaker Roman Teufel, who has become popular after screening his documentaries about different indigenous language groups at several international film festivals, visited Namibia in May 2008 to make a movie about the Ju/'Hoansi of Grashoek. For a month he travelled Namibia with medicine man /Gao and Morris, a young guide and translator from the Living Museum, in order to replicate the age old journey that the San made from the Kalahari to the Atlantic Ocean. The movie is in post – production at the moment but as soon as it is released we will let you know!