



Rolf Sprung
CFNEN Programme Coordinator:

What I wanted to say before I leave...

When I took over the coordination of the Community Forestry in North-Eastern Namibia (CFNEN) project in January 2002, I did this at a time of flooded rivers in Eastern Germany and rumors that the German Government has to abandon support for new emerging projects due to its financial obligations to help the heavily affected residents in the 'german floodplains'. The ongoing civil war in Angola had led to security problems in Kavango Region with no project activities for two years and a blocked Caprivi strip that made our colleagues in Katima working like 'islanders' as Caprivi region was only accessible through Botswana. Plans to relocate the Osire refugee camp to the Mkata area seemed to

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New road signs demonstrate community empowerment

By Wolfgang Adamek, CFNEN, Rundu

Travellers in north-eastern Namibia are nowadays facing newly erected road signs alongside of main roads passing through community forest areas. The new road signs, designed and approved by Roads Authority, show by passers that they are entering protected forest areas, which are managed by local communities. Thirteen of these community forests have been legally established seven months ago under the Governments policy of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and its commitment to decentralisation and community empowerment. The

erection of the new road signs is the final manifestation of a process in which conditional forest use rights were transferred to local communities in order to improve resource protection and control as well as to enhance local peoples income opportunities through sustainable utilization of forest products.

Altogether eight community forests, which receive technical, administrative and logistical support from Community Forestry in North-Eastern

Namibia (CFNEN) project, are presently busy with the road sign erection. The communities are: M'Kata in Western Tsumkwe region, Masida, Lubuta and Bukalo in Caprivi region and Ncumcara, Ncaute, Ncamagoro and Mbeyo in Kavango region.



Chief John Arnold (IKung Traditional Authority) FMC-members and Senior Councillors at the new signboard along the C44 in West-Tsumkwe.



CFNEN supervisor Mr. Johannes Strauss (centre) and his local building team in M'Kata.

Structures in M'kata and Bukalo put up speedily, economically and with a high community commitment

By Ivonn Kramm, CFNEN, Rundu

In less than 6 weeks time community structures in M'kata and Bukalo were erected and finally completed in November 2006. During the construction process the FMC's and local people in both communities

were strongly committed and highly involved. They were assisted by the project through building material and personnel: CFNEN supervisor Mr. Johannes Strauss and 3 skilled builders. *Continued on Page 4*



Directorate of Forestry



Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst



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The Project Community Forestry in North-Eastern Namibia (CFNEN) is a cooperation of the Directorate of Forestry (DoF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the German Development Service (ded) and the German Development Bank (kfw).

Harvesting and Marketing of Firewood in M'Kata Community Forest

By Josef Kaimbi, John Nehemia and Dr. Karsten Feuerriegel, Kanovlei

Lesson learned from the first harvesting year with a focus on implementing a harvesting and marketing scheme in the community

The FMC M'Kata maintains the commercial harvesting of dead Camelthorn (*A. erioloba*) firewood based on an inventory and management plan approved by the Directorate of Forestry (DoF) in Rundu. The results of the inventory suggest harvesting no more than 325 tons of dead wood annually. Referred to this suggestion the FMC decided to offer 300 to 325 tons of firewood with a total value of more than 106.000 N\$ annually to Blystroom Charcoal, a local company which operates successfully in the Otjozondjupa Region. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between Blystroom Charcoal and the FMC describing the obligations and commitments of both parties. The contract was valid from 1. October 2005 till 30. September 2006.

Details of the Harvesting Scheme: Individual community members apply at the FMC for a harvesting verification sheet (permit) free of charge. The FMC explains the harvesting rules and conditions and issues a permit, valid for a 3-month period. Most individuals are than organized into different harvesting teams so that the team members can harvest their firewood in a specific area. According to the MoU the operator provides all movable equipment and assets like mobile saw, tractor, trailer, bags and scale, necessary for the processing, transport and loading operations.

Results of the Harvesting Scheme: In total 355.106 tons of firewood were harvested within the contract period, an excess of 9.2% (30.1 tons)



Firewood harvesters of M'Kata receiving their food-for-work payment

towards the suggested amount. This difference will be put forward, respectively will be deducted from the yield of the new contract (2006/2007). The average amount harvested by an individual was 3.58 tons of firewood (min. 0,0 and max. 14.39 tons). Altogether 99 individual harvesters participated in the first year, while the actual number of people involved (part-time support during harvesting and processing) was probably twice as much.

Some harvesters, which have been assigned to harvesting grounds far from the villages complained about water and food supply during the harvesting operations and a lack of appropriate timing for packing and scaling. In general, the FMC and sometimes even the project had to give advances (usually food) to the harvesters so that they could continue in their field operations. The operator faced only a few problems e.g., due to damage of his transport and sawing equipment.

Details of the Marketing Scheme: The FMC managed the firewood on behalf of the

community members according to the above mentioned contract. The operator paid 300 N\$ per ton to the FMC while the FMC paid only 150 N\$ per ton to the harvesters. This looks pretty unfair at the first glance but made perfectly sense for the first year of operation. The fifty percent withhold by the FMC has been used to advance the costs of operations (advances and pay to the harvesters, to cover the costs for loading, scaling and bookkeeping and last but not least to compensate miscalculations). Further, these precautions were necessary because sometimes the operator delayed in the agreed three-monthly payment.

Results of the Marketing Scheme: Parallel to the implementation of the firewood scheme the FMC introduced a community store system to offer basic food and household items for the harvesters. M'Kata is a very remote place and the next shopping opportunity is 15 km away from the village. The community store system developed from a food-for-work scheme to a proper payment system. Some

community members suffer from serious drinking problems and as a result, the majority of the female community members would still prefer a food-for-work scheme (50 percent in kind and 50 in cash). However, due to lack of transport and appropriate spending power the community store could be made available only once per week.

The total annual revenue of 45718.50 N\$ will be used by the FMC for community investments e.g., to engage for the next ploughing season a private tractor to prepare the mahangu fields and to maintain the community store without project support. Other services to the community e.g., support for the kindergarten and to the school children are under discussions. The FMC is aware that the project will withdraw its support step by step and particular precautions must be taken to improve the management and bookkeeping skills.

The challenge to run the bookkeeping for the firewood harvesting scheme and the community store will quite possibly result in the engagement of some trained community members as store- and bookkeepers. Although this increases the costs of operations, it is considered a positive development due to the job creating effect. Based on the experiences made, the FMC decided to increase the pay for the harvesters from next year onwards to 180 N\$ per ton. In case the costs of operation can be kept at a reasonable level for the next six month (period 1 and 2 according to the MoU) the pay could even be increased to 200 N\$ per ton.



**Supplement to the article
"Refreshing beverage from the
forest" CFNEN Newsletter 3/2006**

The referred article dealt with the small scale production of marula beer and oil in Katima Mulilo where the producers use a mechanical press to squeeze out the juice respectively the oil from the marula fruits. Since the article did not cover specific aspects of the oil press used, we would like to append the following for our readers: The juice/oil press was supplied by the national Indigenous Plant Task Team (IPTT) through its system of Eco-Regional Satellite Centres with sponsorship from MAWF's National Agricultural Support Services Programme (NASSP) co-funded by the EU's EDF8. The press was developed by CRIAA SA-DC and is manufactured in Namibia by the Katutura Artisans Project (KAP). About 40 copies have been sold in the north-central regions over the past six years. It can be ordered from CRIAA (tel. 061-220117, fax. 061-232293, or criaawhk@iafrica.com.na)

Establishment of a woodlot and a fruit orchard in the emerging Community Forest of Sifuha

By Andreas Mench, Katima

Community Forestry is about the sustainable management of forest resources by local people. This might include the planting of trees in areas where the resources are already scarce. Most favorite are indigenous tree species but in some areas limited sized plantations of foreign species may also be an appropriate option due to the faster growth rate or the good adoption to the given environmental conditions.

In Sifuha, an emerging Community Forest located in the floodplains of East Caprivi region; community members, supported by the Directorate of Forestry (DoF) and the Community Forestry in North Eastern Namibia (CFNEN) project established a woodlot with eucalyptus trees in March this year after the rainy season. Since poles for construction purposes are very scarce in the area this plantation was much welcomed by the local residents.

After having received some training and a remarkable amount of saplings, community members took over the plot, prepared the land, provided

manure, planted the small trees and watered them during the dry season - they cut down competing grasses and protected the plants from wild fires and grazing animals.

In addition, community members established a fruit tree plot with paw-paw and guava trees. This fruit orchard is supposed to enrich the diet of the people and to generate some cash money with the

of the plots by the community members. Now, after the beginning of the next rainy season the wood lot as well as the fruit orchard will be



Community members of Sifuha in their newly established orchard.

marketing of the surplus fruits in future. To protect the fruit trees from grazing animals, community members erected a fence only being assisted by the CFNEN project with wire, transport and some training.

The plants are growing well due to the good maintenances

further extended. Beside more Eucalyptus trees for the woodlot the fruit orchard will be enriched with Mango, Lemon, Orange and Guava trees. The Community members of Sifuha are very proud of the well visible success of their efforts.

Prime Minister visits CFNEN exhibition stand at Kavango trade fair

This year the annual Kavango Summer Festival and Trade Fair in Rundu had the honour to be officially opened by Namibia's Prime Minister Hon. Nahas Angula. During his walk over the new fair ground the prime minister also took the chance to visit the CFNEN exhibition stand where he was welcomed by members of the Forest Management Committee (FMC) of Ncumcara and representatives of CFNEN. Beside posters and pamphlets providing information about the project, its development and achievements, the nicely decorated stand offered a wide range of products originating from community forests like fruits, jam, firewood, woodcarvings, baskets, thatching grass, etc..



Picture: The Prime Minister of Namibia Hon. Nahas Angula after visiting the CFNEN exhibition stand at the Kavango Trade Fair.

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M'kata: The Community Forest in M'kata already sells regularly big quantities of firewood to a local contractor. Thus, a big structure for storing firewood and other forest products and a small office space was required. Arrangements with a local building contractor from Tsumeb were made to erect a steel structure of 270 m² covered by a zinc roof. After having erected this hall within 1 week on site only, Mr. Strauss joined the local building team with skilled workers to complete the structure: A 24 m² office/store was erected speedily, a concrete floor was laid, the hall fenced with local material. Finally, a gravel road was constructed allowing a

truck to access the storage space. The joint effort of a contractor, and the building team of committed local and project staff made up the success of this construction project.



View of the meeting room in the office building in Bukalo.



Frontside of the new community forestry structure in Bukalo.

Bukalo: In Bukalo, similar experiences were made when Mr. Strauss and three builders joined a local building team of FMC members and five local trainees. After having clarified the need of the FMC for a simple structure of 65m² (including office space, a meeting room and an in and

outside storage space as well as a dry toilet) the work was done speedily and with a high community involvement. After only 4 weeks a first workshop on HIV/Aids was held in the meeting room of the house. Finally, on December 21st the building will be officially inaugurated.

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make any attempt of introducing sustainable resource management futile with regard to the prospect of thousands of people being moved to an area that in terms of water sources and income opportunities can hardly sustain the local San residents. And it was the time when only two pilot community forests with a total area of about 1200 ha had been established at Bukalo and Mkata and were raising a lot of question marks whether the pilot phase would be able to determine the feasibility of a large-scale project. CFNEN was hardly known outside the circle of its three partner organisations and a few highly motivated and enthusiastic DED and DoF members directly involved in the project.

Now, five years later, CFNEN constitutes the second branch of community-based natural resource management in Namibia's Northeast, gazetted and emerging community forests cover over one million ha of land and CFNEN in close cooperation with MAWF's Directorate of Extension and Engineering Services has involved more local people in fruit and vegetable gardening than any other project in the country.

The project is not only known, but highly appreciated and supported by local communities, traditional authorities, political representatives and a variety of other stakeholders as a viable component of rural development in general and natural resource management in particular. And the comprehensive resource management approach in cooperation with conservancies may even serve as a model for other countries.

Without question these achievements were facilitated by positive political developments and a clear commitment of the partner organisations and stakeholders involved. But the main driving force of CFNEN's successes has been and will be the high motivation and professionalism of my Namibian and German colleagues and their critical and constructive contributions with a focus on interests, needs and capacities of local people.

With only three years of large-scale project implementation we still face a lot of challenges. Already 'gazetted' communities still

need to be further supported in consolidating sustainable resource management and income generation activities. Just to make as much money as possible means nothing and might even contradict community forestry objectives, if the FMCs are not capable of using such funds in the best interest of the communities and with the aim to maintain and improve the current status of natural forest resources. Leasehold allocations and resettlement schemes need to be better coordinated with CBNRM activities, hopefully through a participatory and integrated land use planning process among all stakeholders. And current law enforcement procedures need to be made more effective not only with a clear sharing of responsibilities between forest management committees, traditional leaders and Government authorities but also with the provision of sufficient means to carry out such responsibilities in the long run. In this context, the commitment and support of all parties involved will be as crucial as clear consequences and penalties if such responsibilities are violated.

In the past years, CFNEN has moved through some ups and downs. But over-pessimistic views of its early days have been proven as wrong as the opinion that community forests will be the best land use option each and everywhere. A sound and critical evaluation of the feasibility of this approach will be required for each new site and will always have to be balanced against alternative land use options and interests. The overall success of community forestry in Namibia will continue to depend on the commitment and motivation of all parties involved and their credibility in defending community forests not as the only but as an important complementary component of rural development.

During my six years with CFNEN that will come to an end in February 2007 I had the opportunity to work with a lot of great people at various administrative levels and I always felt like being part of a family that strives for a common goal despite our differences in character, culture and qualification and the ever present day-to-day problems. I thank all of you and I wish not only for my successor but for all current and future project staff members a similar experience.

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