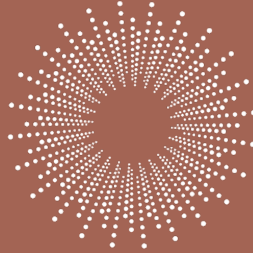


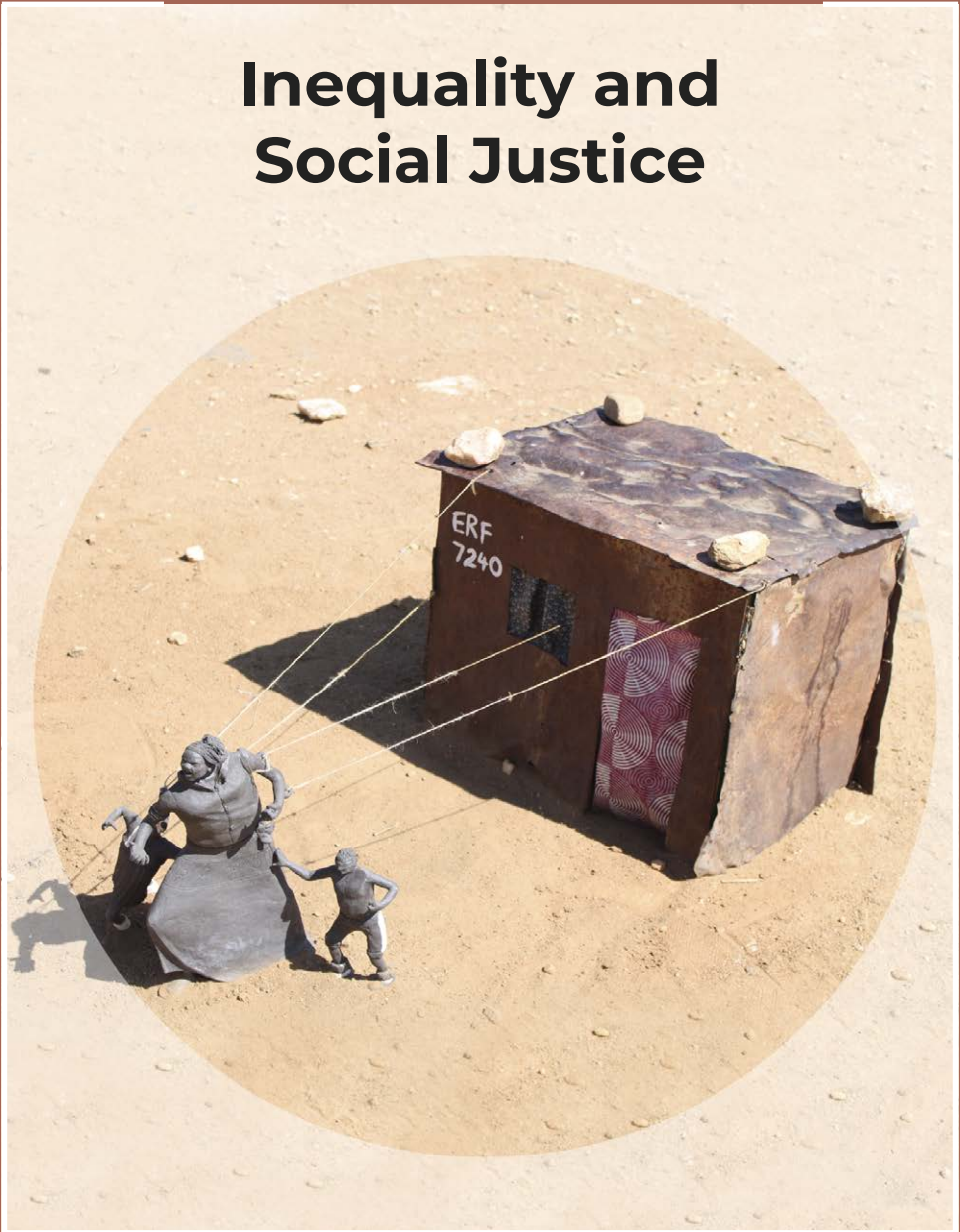
Volume 2

November 2022



Namibian
Journal
of Social
Justice

Inequality and Social Justice



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Artwork on the cover: “Pulling into Tomorrow” by Mitchell M. Gatsi

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ISSN: 2026-8882

Printed by Solitaire Press, Windhoek, Namibia

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www.namsocialjustice.org

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Acknowledgements

The Economic and Social Justice Trust is proud to present the second edition of the Namibian Journal of Social Justice (NJSJ). This edition, on *Inequality and Social Justice*, follows the 2021 edition, which dealt with *Housing*.

We wish to thank the editor, Prof. **Lucy Edwards-Jauch**, and the co-editor of this edition, Dr **Ndumba Kamwanyah**. We are likewise grateful for the contributions of the other members of the NJSJ editorial board, Ms **Ndeshi Namupala**, Dr **Guillermo Delgado**, Dr **Ellison Tjirera**, Dr **Job Amupanda**, Prof. **Trywell Kalusopa** and Ms **Rinaani Musutua**, and for the commitment towards our journal shown by all our **authors** and **peer reviewers**.

We also thank:

- **William Hofmeyr**, for a comprehensive and meticulous language edit;
- **Bryony van der Merwe**, for the design of the journal's cover page and the layout;

- **Frieda Luehl**, from **the project room Namibia**, for introducing us to the artworks printed in this edition;
- **Lynette Musukubili**, **Mitchell M. Gatsi**, **Dörte Berner**, **Saima Iita**, **Trianus Nakale**, **Rudolf Seibeb**, **Ina-Maria Shikongo**, **Titus Shitaatala**, **Mateus Alfeus** and **Tuli Mekondjo** for making their artworks available for publication; and
- all **photographers** for making their photos available for publication in this journal. They are mentioned in the captions of the photos.

A special word of thanks goes to the **Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Namibia Office**, for their generous support that has made the publication of this volume of our journal possible. In particular, we wish to thank the Country Director, Ms. **Freya Grünhagen**, for her unfailing encouragement, as well as the Project Manager, Ms **Inge Neunda**.

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**
Namibia Office

Acronyms and Initialisms

AMCU	Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union
BEPS	base-erosion profit shifting
BIEN	Basic Income Earth Network
BIG	basic income grant
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	civil society organisations
DSD	Differences of Sexual Development
ELCN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
ESOP	Employee Share Ownership Plan
FMS	Finnish Missionary Society
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	gross domestic product
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
GRB	gender-responsive budgeting
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HDI	Human Development Index
HTA	Hai om Traditional Authority
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	information and communication technology
IFFs	illicit financial flows
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	International Mineral Resources
IOC	International Olympic Committee

LMS	London Missionary Society
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MGEPEWSW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MGEPEWSW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MPUCT	Madhya Pradesh Unconditional Cash Transfer
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NLF	Namibia Labour Force
NNSCH	Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Higher-level
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
NSSCH	Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Higher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDS	Public Distribution System
PIT	personal income tax
RMS	Rhenish Missionary Society
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEM	structural equation modelling
SEWA	Self-Employed Women’s Association
TAA	Traditional Authorities Act (No. 25 of 2000)
TVUCT	Tribal Village Unconditional Cash Transfer
UCT	unconditional cash transfer
VAT	value added tax
WHO	World Health Organization
WMMS	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society
WSWB	willing-seller-willing-buyer

Case Study from the South

From Farm Workers to Farm Owners

Ellen Albertz

Introduction

The World Bank's report on inequality in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) recommends improving security of tenure in both urban and rural areas to significantly benefit household income and equity. Land ownership was identified as an anti-poverty tool. The Bank argues that secure tenure is important for agriculture and food security, as it provides incentives for farmers to invest in land and security;

to borrow money for agricultural inputs; and to make improvements. "Land ownership increases household consumption and significantly reduces the probability of falling into poverty," the report stated (World Bank, 2022).

In this case study we place small-scale land redistribution in the spotlight and describe how this led to the empowerment of local communities and the building of self-governing



Photo: Gerrit Witbooi

agricultural cooperatives. We feature two agricultural cooperatives from southern Namibia, namely the Tani-Huigu Farmers Cooperative, and the Aroab Small-Scale Farmers Cooperative.

Agricultural Cooperatives

An agricultural cooperative is a vehicle for farmers to act collectively for the purpose of marketing and processing of farm products and/or for the purchase and production of farm inputs. The cooperative's members together own the cooperative enterprise. Collective action is the core resource of agricultural cooperatives. Cooperatives create social relations that enable individuals to achieve goals that they might not otherwise have been able to achieve by themselves. For example, cooperatives can help farmers to benefit from economies of scale by lowering the costs of acquiring inputs or hiring services such as storage facilities and transport. Agricultural cooperatives also enable farmers to improve product and service quality and reduce risks (Tasmanian Government, n.d.).

The main aim of establishing a cooperative is to increase members' production and incomes by helping better link them with finance, agricultural inputs, information, and output markets. Cooperatives can also help to realise the economic, cultural

and social needs of its members and the surrounding community. Cooperatives often have a strong commitment to their community and a focus on strengthening the community they exist in or serve. They may also empower their members economically and socially by involving them in decision-making processes that create additional rural employment opportunities or enable them to become more resilient to economic and environmental shocks (Sifa, n.d.).

Farmer's Cooperatives have existed for many years. In comparison to regular commercial businesses, cooperatives enjoy certain advantages but suffer from some disadvantages. Cooperatives assist members with purchasing inputs needed for production and with marketing their products. This reduces the individual's marketing risk. Cooperatives also have greater purchasing power than an individual farmer and they can therefore negotiate discounts and reduce input prices for farmers. Cooperatives also provide training to members.

There legal and logistical arrangements pertaining to the cooperative and the resettlement farms they applied for. Members are responsible for providing a salary for the farm manager and contributing a fee for the upkeep of infrastructure

and the livestock. They should also be willing to step in at any time and perform whatever task is required as part of the business. Decisions are taken on the basis of the members' voting. The cooperatives are different from commercial business organisations because they are democratic organisations. Managers must always remember that they are accountable to the membership groups. This may put a brake on the initiative and flexibility they can bring to bear in operating the cooperative, as they do not have as free a hand as managers of commercial business enterprises (Sifa, n.d.)

Sometimes cooperatives are unable to pay the higher salaries needed to attract and retain competent managers and skilled employees, who are drawn to higher-paid jobs in commercial businesses. Another weakness of cooperatives is that the mass of members may lose interest in running the organisation and allow a small group to take over and manage it for their own benefit (MEATCO, 2018).

Tani-Huigu Farmers' Cooperative

Niklaas Kooper and the other members of the cooperative (consisting of 11 men and six women) were farmworkers on other people's farms. Some of them were small livestock farmers, but they suffered great losses during the extended drought

experienced in the country. Kooper said that for years life was a struggle to make ends meet. For the first time, the 54-year-old can sleep peacefully at night, secure in the knowledge that they control their own resources through which they can make a living for themselves and their children. All members are parents, on average of two to three children. Members range in age from 42 to 86 years.

During the drought, the prices paid for livestock decreased, while input costs increased. To keep their animals alive, the former farmworkers and farmers realised they could not continue independently, and that they needed to organise themselves and form of a cooperative to help each other. The various families and community members established the Tani-Huigu Farmers' Cooperative three years ago. "*Tani-Huigu*" is a Nama-Damara phrase which means "we help to carry each others' loads."

The Namibian Government started to support the establishment of cooperatives in 1990. They can be registered at the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry. Before they received a donation, the group's plan for establishing the cooperative was that each member would contribute a once-off input of N\$1 000 or three small livestock to make a start. The Tani-Huigu Farmers'

Cooperative appealed to the Namibian Government for help, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry came to their assistance.

The Tani-Huigu Farmers' Cooperative was resettled on Farm Karinas No. 30, 40 kms south of Köes. The cooperative also received some livestock: six months ago, Niklaas Kooper and community members from the Tani-Huigu Farmers' Cooperative received 25 Karakul sheep as a donation from the Ministry's regional office in Keetmanshoop.

“Our joy left us speechless when we received the call that we would be beneficiaries. We didn't believe it. Us? People who only knew struggle. We never felt we could be considered for any good thing. But God was so good that the same day I was to meet with the Ministry of Agriculture, I also had to be in Keetmanshoop for something else, so I had a lift already to make it to the appointment at 14h00,” said Kooper.

With the livestock they received and a vegetable garden, they want to create jobs. The income they make will be used to plough back into the wellbeing of their community by investing mainly in the education of their children.

The membership of the Tani-Huigu Farmers' Cooperative have been

brought together by the alignment of their business interests and ideals, the goals they have in common, and their shared experiences of being farmers or former farmworkers, facing similar challenges which they wanted to overcome together.

As owners, the members have a financial interest in the success of the cooperative, which encourages them to give their full support. Cooperative members also have a voice in the control of the organisation, and, within the limits imposed by majority decision-making, it therefore delivers the kind of service they want and need.

“We have a board of five people. I am the chairperson, there is a vice chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary. We have appointed a farm manager who stays on the farm, and we meet once every month for operational review, infrastructure needs, financials and other decisions we need to make. As the members we are also the owners and that's why we are responsible ourselves to manage our resources,” said Kooper.

The Cooperative members attended training provided by the Ministry of Agriculture at Blouwes settlement about 51km north of Keetmanshoop in //Kharas Region. The training was on agriculture, food security and growing vegetable gardens. “We want

most of our young people who are unemployed to work at the vegetable garden. We want them to be exposed to the agriculture sector and to start preparing themselves for those careers”, said Kooper.

Kooper explained that as a result of training the farmers have been able to fix water pumps, and other infrastructure on Farm Karinas. “We have also decided that the members ought to give a N\$1 000 per year to contribute to input costs and expenses, and to have cash flow available. Currently each member contributes N\$250,” he said.

The cooperative building process is ongoing. Mr. Kooper noted the membership is still growing and so is the range of livestock. They are still fixing infrastructure and have not started selling their products for an income. When they do, members will benefit by sharing the profit made after expenses have been deducted.

Aroab Small-Scale Farmers Cooperative

The Aroab Small-Scale Farmers Cooperative received land 80 kilometers east of Keetmanshoop on Farm Awaras. Their cooperative consists of 30 persons, and they also received 25 Karakul sheep for farming. These farmers faced an uphill battle for land to call their new home. Many of them used to apply on their own but

did not succeed. In conjunction with another cooperative, Aroab Small-Scale Farmers Cooperative applied for resettlement farms.

At first, they could not be considered as the former legal requirements for resettlement farms did not cater for cooperatives. The resettlement of these cooperatives was historic as the initiative was the first under the land reform programme which made acquired land available to a group of resettlement beneficiaries that are organised into a cooperative, and not only to individuals.

The legal provisions were changed after the Ministry of Agriculture conducted an assessment on the availability of land in the towns of Aroab and Kōes, as well as the communal land of Berseba. It became evident that farmers who organised themselves as cooperative entities are forced to farm on townlands with lease agreements due to the legal impediments to group ownership.

The degradation of rangeland in Berseba due to overgrazing was experienced as a challenge by a group of organised farmers. It was against this background that the government acquired land to resettle local farmers.

Both cooperatives were resettled in October 2021. “When we received the farms, people understood that they

could move to the new farms with their existing livestock and breed and sell under their own ear tags and accounts with Meatco. However, the Ministry of Agriculture explained that they should register an ear tag and marker for the animals of the cooperative as all transactions being done from the two farms will be under that legal entity. The members were somewhat discouraged by the fact that they could only buy and sell livestock under the cooperatives ear tags and markers and not their own individual tags. This caused some people to withdraw from the cooperative as they were not yet ready for this,” Kooper argued.

However, the access to land gave them collateral and assisted them to access credit, and they obtained a loan from Agribank to increase their livestock. They were able to buy more cattle, sheep and goats.

The Chairman of the Aroab Small-Scale Farmers Cooperative, Benedictus Draaier, said that through the cooperative and with access to land, they believe they will be able to build inter-generational wealth. Their cooperative consists of 30 persons and they also received 25 Karakul sheep for farming. “We are old people who were not empowered before so this is our chance. I am 68 years old myself and another member of this group is 80 years old. So, we are doing the work

now so that we can leave an inheritance for our children,” said Draaier.

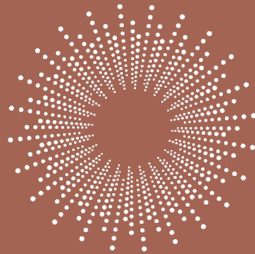
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Namibian
Journal
of Social
Justice

Namibian Journal of Social Justice
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Volume 2, November 2022
ISSN 2026-8882

