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**Development through Enterprise– A Pilot Study of Social and  
Environmental Enterprises in Namibia**

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## ABSTRACT

There is growing interest inside and outside academia in the role social and environmental enterprises can play in sustainable development and poverty alleviation in the Global South. Many of these enterprises operate in both the formal and informal economies, yet research in this area remains nascent. Existing research examining this subject is fragmented with limitations in its spatial coverage and in the issues addressed. In this paper the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia are mapped with enterprise clusters identified. The nature of these clusters is considered with reference to case examples of different innovative business models. This is followed by a wider consideration of some of the characteristics of the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia. Finally attention is given to the legislative, policy and wider institutional environment surrounding these sectors.

## INTRODUCTION

In a 2011 speech at the Pan African University Campus in Lagos Nigeria, British Prime Minister David Cameron became the latest international leader to state that trade not aid was the key to Africa's prosperity. These remarks echo earlier words by Kofi Annan (2001), and more recent sentiments by Hilary Clinton (2011). Entrepreneurship is a central component of the vision for Africa's development articulated by these leaders. It is viewed as a way to address widespread social inequality, and provide the basis for sustainable development across the continent. While the idea of development through enterprise is not new, in recent times there has been a resurgence of interest inside and outside academia in the role entrepreneurship can play in development. Development through enterprise is a key component of base of the pyramid (BoP) and subsistence market place approaches which have emerged over the last decade (Prahalad, 2004; Kandachar and Halme 2008; Sridharan and Viswanathan, 2008). BoP approaches essentially consider *"market based and entrepreneurial activity aimed at poverty alleviation and development"* (Kandachar and Halme, 2008:1).

Within BoP literature two broad paradigms have emerged. In the first the poor are re-imagined as consumers for whom business, and in particular multinationals, can tailor their products and services to expand their market share (Prahalad and Hart, 2002; Prahalad, 2004). This is often described as BoP 1.0 or first generation corporate BoP strategies (Simanis and Hart, 2008). In second generation strategies (BoP 2.0) the poor are both producers and consumers, co-creating value (Simanis and Hart, 2008; London and Hart, 2011). In this latter paradigm a central role is ascribed to local level entrepreneurship, largely in terms of micro, small and medium sized enterprise development, as a means for addressing social, environmental and wider sustainable development issues.

Typically the BoP market is defined as those living on less than \$2 per day, or more recently by WRI (2007) as those earning less than \$3000 per year in local spending power. Thus this segment is estimated at 4 billion living in or near poverty. Other descriptors have also emerged such as 'subsistence markets' (Sridharan and Viswanathan, 2008), however we prefer the term 'low income segments' as used by practitioner organizations such as

*Reciprocity in South Africa* who work within these markets (Reciprocity, 2011). We feel this more accurately reflects the relative position of economically excluded segments of society across nations of different levels of economic parity.

Within the wider call for entrepreneurial activity within low income segments as a catalyst for development, there are calls to focus in particular on social and environmental enterprises. The development of these kinds of enterprises is viewed as a mechanism for locally-led sustainable development, as a means to improve incomes and strengthen livelihoods, as a way to tackle poverty and marginalization, and to manage and conserve natural resources and ecosystems (SEED and IISD, 2009). However, research in this area remains nascent and fragmented (Hall, Daneke and Lenox, 2010), with little exploration of the 'native capabilities' of enterprises (after Hart and London, 2005). Often such research is also complicated by the size and importance of the informal economy in developing countries, with many of these enterprises operating at the nexus of the formal and informal economies. Oftentimes these enterprises are also operating in environments where government institutions are weak and formal registration of enterprises is complex and costly.

This paper contributes to the wider understanding of entrepreneurial activity in developing countries and the informal economy by focusing on social and environmental enterprises within one African nation, proposing conceptual frameworks that might be applied in a wider setting. Therefore in this paper we consider the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia drawing upon a mixed mode of data collection through questionnaires and secondary data to address the following objectives:

- To propose a typology of enterprise clusters within sub-Saharan Africa based on the analysis of the clusters of organizations developed during this detailed mapping in Namibia;
- To explore the key trends and characteristics of these sectors; and
- To consider the institutional environment informing the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia.

## **DEFINING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENTERPRISES – A NAMIBIAN PERSPECTIVE**

The terms social and environmental enterprise and entrepreneurship rarely feature in existing academic literature on development in Namibia. These terms are also largely absent from government policy documents, or in non-academic grey literatures outside a few mentions on business and NGO websites and sporadic newspaper reports (Alkatib, 2010). However as we discuss in this paper this does not mean social entrepreneurial activity is not occurring in Namibia. Nor does it necessarily mean that there is an absence of academic and wider research on these kinds of organizations and their activities. At a wider level this suggests that within developing nations the frequent lack of reference to social or environmental enterprises in either policy or research does not mean activity of this type is not occurring.

In this paper a social enterprise is understood to be an organization with a primarily social purpose that engages in some form of trading activity. Profit is a means to an end rather than an end in itself, and is used for social value creation rather than individual or shareholder benefit. This understanding of a social enterprise draws upon the pantheon of social enterprise definitions that exist, with a number of key recurring characteristics identified (Holt, Littlewood and Harrison., 2011). In particular the primacy of social purpose, a requirement that a social enterprise engage in some form of trading/business activity, and the disbursement of profits for something other than individual or shareholder gain. For a more comprehensive review of social enterprise, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship definitions see Peredo and McClean (2005), Kerlin (2006) and Chell (2007).

Some definitions of a social enterprise specify a percentage of an organizations income which must be generated from trading activity. In the case of the UK Social Enterprise Coalition (2011) this figure is 50% of income. Some definitions also specify an amount of trading profit distributed to individual owners or shareholders that should not be exceeded, for the UK's Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2010) this should not exceed 50%. In this paper these kinds of boundaries are not specified. They are not viewed as suitable for economies where the informal business environment makes up a significant proportion of total economic activity and where many social and environmental businesses are working primarily in and around this economy. Muñoz (2010) introduces the idea of proto-social enterprises, where a small percentage of an organization's revenue comes from income generating activities while these organizations establish themselves and move towards more sustainable self-funding models. In Sub-Saharan Africa, while there has been a proliferation of social innovation and entrepreneurial activity and an increase in the number of NGOs engaging in some form of trading activity to generate income, these organizations often employ hybrid funding models and may remain quite reliant on donor funding. In the longer term these organizations may have plans for self sufficiency through trading activity, in other instances they may be limited in how far this can be achieved. The data necessary to make these kinds of distinctions is not presently available for the Namibia dataset, or indeed many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It was also felt that through such a cut off a rich body of data would unnecessarily be removed.

We define environmental enterprises as those that have a product or service that is based predominantly on managing or using environmental/ natural capital and consider (to varying degrees) the three aspects of the pillars of sustainability, incorporating environmental, social, and economic criteria. This environmental enterprise definition draws upon a host of literatures on green/environmental enterprises which have been written in particular over the last 20 years since key publications by Bennett (1991) and Berle (1991). For a more comprehensive discussion of these literatures see Issak (2002, 2005), Holt (2011), Holt *et al.* (2011) and Schaltegger (2002). In this definition two key characteristics of a green/ environmental enterprise are identified. The first is the presence of a product or service that is based predominantly on managing or using natural/environmental capital. The second is that the enterprise should consider, albeit to varying degrees, the three pillars of sustainability. Note that in this definition we avoid reference to specific sectors or industrial classifications, to the relative significance of environmental motivations, or to specific products or markets. This is done to avoid ambiguity in the definition, for example delimiting environmental enterprise sectors may needlessly exclude some forms of environmental entrepreneurial activity.

In our definitions of social and environmental enterprise it is recognized that a neat separation of the two is in many instances not possible (Dart, 2004). Addressing environmental concerns is also often a social issue, and there is often an environmental component to many social problems. Many of the organizations examined in this research are active in both social and environmental spheres. Many of the challenges they tackle are social and environmental in nature. In some of the literature, the term social enterprise is used as an overarching term to describe both enterprises with a social agenda but also enterprises with a social and environmental focus. In other instances the term sustainable enterprise has been applied to describe these types of hybrid organizations. In this paper these types of organization are simply described as hybrid social and environmental enterprises. As will be discussed, many organizations working in the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia fall within this category.

While the terms social and environmental enterprise and entrepreneurship rarely feature in academic writing about Namibia, various literatures exist examining organizations and practices that may be classified in this way. As with wider social and environmental enterprise literature, much of the work undertaken in this field in relation to Namibia has been quite sector specific. For example work has been carried out examining the solar energy sector (Robertson, Sandbrook and Sheehan, 2010; Schütt, 2007; Wamukonya and Davis, 2001), focusing on business opportunities for solar energy and its current and potential development contributions, particularly in rural areas.

A much larger body of literature exists in relation to Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and Namibia's conservancies. CBNRM is not unique to Namibia, there are CBNRM programmes in other countries across Southern and Eastern Africa, for example the CAMPFIRE program in Zimbabwe. Conservancies have also been established in other countries, for example community based tourism in Kenya around the Selenkay, Ol Kinyei and Olare Orok Conservancies. CBNRM is about the sustainable utilization and management of their natural resources by rural communities. CBNRM does not necessarily mean the non-use of a resource, but rather its use in a way that contributes to social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability. In Namibia CBNRM has occurred through a model of conservancies, which are defined in Namibia's Nature Conservation Amendment Act (1996) as:

*“a group of commercial farms or areas of communal land on which neighbouring land owners or members have pooled resources for the purpose of conserving and using wildlife sustainably. Members practice normal farming activities and operations in combination with wildlife use on a sustainable basis. The main objective is to promote greater sustainable use through cooperation and improved management. Conservancies are operated and managed by members through a Conservancy Committee.”*

Whether Namibia's conservancies in themselves should be classified as hybrid social and environmental enterprises can be debated. They have been included in this mapping of social and environmental innovation in Namibia because of the centrality they give to sustainable development objectives, for their goal of local community upliftment, for the importance they ascribe to participatory governance, and for the fact that they have often

provided the base for more clear-cut examples of social and or environmental enterprise activity.

As noted later, craft producing and selling enterprises have often been established within conservancies, with some conservancies in Namibia also communally selling environmental products, running community campsites and in many instances engaging in joint ownership and shareholding agreements with guest lodges. There is a substantial body of work addressing Namibia's conservancies considering a variety of issues including: the economic, development and livelihood impact of conservancies on communities (Barnes, MacGregor and Weaver, 2001; Halstead 2003; Jones and Weaver, 2008; Long, 2002), conservancy governance and local community participation (Jones and Mosimane, 2000; Shackleton, 2002), and issues of wildlife management and conservation (Sullivan, 2002; Weaver and Skyer, 2005). Of particular relevance for this research is existing work considering lodge developments in conservancies in Namibia, and the benefits and problems these kinds of developments bring to communities and the local environment (Ashley, 2000; Ashley, Roe and Goodwin, 2001; Barnes, 2008; Massyn, 2007; and Nicanor, 2001). Namibia's conservancies are well researched, yet there has been little examination of these entities and the organizations and institutions that support them from a management perspective and through the lens of social and environmental entrepreneurship and innovation. Their role in the wider social and environmental economy in Namibia is also little considered.

A final illustration of the sector specific nature of social and environmental enterprise literature in Namibia can be found in work on Namibia's microfinance sector. Studies have been undertaken examining this sector, focusing for example on the sustainability of microfinance providers (Adongo and Stork, 2005a); barriers to microfinance institution development (Adongo and Stork, 2005b; Saviye-Chirawu, 2008); and how best to promote pro-poor financing (Mushendami, Kaakunga, Amuthenu-Iyambo, Ndalikokule and Steytler, 2004). However again these studies demonstrate little explicit engagement with social entrepreneurship agendas. Therefore we suggest the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia are under researched, with patchy coverage of existing research focusing on particular sectors. There have been few if any attempts to step back and view Namibia's social and environmental economy as a whole. By mapping Namibia's social and environmental sectors this paper aims to make a worthwhile and original contribution to what has hitherto been a neglected area of enquiry.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Namibia is a country in Southern Africa that borders Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the east, and South Africa to the south (See Figure 1). Namibia is sparsely populated with its population concentrated in the north and central regions. Although rich in natural resources much of Namibia's population is poor, with 55.8% of the population estimated to live below the national poverty line (CIA World Fact Book, 2011). Namibia is amongst the least equitable countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.74 (UNDP, 2007). Unemployment, which in 2008 was 51.2% (CIA World Fact Book, 2011) and is currently around 45%, and the country's high HIV/AIDS prevalence (estimated at 13.1% of adult population by UNAIDS 2009) also pose daunting development challenges. Namibia is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

**FIGURE 1: Map of Namibia**



Namibia ranks 69<sup>th</sup> in the world (from 183) in terms of the overall ‘Ease of Doing Business’, and is 6<sup>th</sup> (from 46) in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2011). However rankings for starting a business (125) and registering a property (137) remain low. It is considered one of the least corrupt countries in Africa, though corruption is still apparent. Over 50% have cell phone coverage, with literacy rates around 88% for both men and women. However, only 31% of the population has access to electricity (see Spring and Rolfe, 2011 for this composite data on the sub-Saharan region).

For this research, data on the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia was collected in a number of ways. An exhaustive web search was first undertaken to identify as many potential social and environmental enterprises and support organizations in Namibia as possible, by scanning newspaper articles, donor reports, general website key word searches, and directories or specialist publications considering issues such as fair-trade, organic, community development. The eligibility of these organizations was then cross checked according to the social and environmental enterprise definitions previously discussed, namely in the case of social enterprises:

- Do these organizations have a primarily social purpose?
- Are they engaging in some form of trading activity?
- Are profits used for a social purpose rather than individual benefit?

In respect of environmental enterprises:

- Are they managing or using green/environmental/natural capital?
- Are they considering (albeit to varying extents) the three pillars of sustainable development?

In total, 270 social and environmental enterprises and support organizations were identified in 2011, through the data mining protocols. Where possible, these organizations were then emailed and asked to complete a questionnaire as part of the registration process for a

wider project that considers the social and environmental enterprise sectors across 19 countries in Southern and Eastern Africa. As part of this wider project an online directory of social and environmental enterprises across these countries is being constructed. Research in developing and emerging economies is challenging, especially when considering remote mechanisms of data collection. Therefore to augment data from the initial internet search and from questionnaire responses, a further data mining exercise was then undertaken of websites, and web documents and materials providing information about these 270 organizations.

Response rates are not calculated as this data collection represents organizations that might also operate in other countries. Organizations register in this free directory which is available for the entire region, registration remains ongoing. In order to analyze the wider dataset the Namibian sample is explored to develop exploratory frameworks to guide subsequent cluster analysis. Those that do not self register are registered by the research team into the directory as 'unverified' organizations. Therefore these 270 organizations will be entered into the business directory for the 19 countries. Where possible data was collected in relation to the following fields:

- 1) Classification- The organizations were classified according to 7 possible criteria: (1) Cooperative or membership association; (2) Donor or funding organization; (3) Provider environmental goods or services; (4) Fairtrade or similar certified organization; (5) Not for profit; (6) Social enterprise; (7) Other not listed. These classification criteria were drawn from the questionnaire used in the wider project and multiple classifications were permitted.
- 2) Multiple Classification- It was recorded whether multiple classification were used.
- 3) Multiple Country- Data was collected on whether organizations were working in other countries studied in the wider project.
- 4) Green Classification- Those organizations identified as environmental enterprises or hybrid social and environmental enterprises were given a further green classification. 10 possible green classifications were identified. These classifications were also drawn from the wider questionnaire and mostly related to sector and types of activity, multiple classification was again possible. These classifications were: (1) Solar/renewable energy; (2) Beauty products; (3) Training and or advice; (4) Legal; (5) Consultancy; (6) Organic; (7) Recycling; (8) Energy efficiency; (9) Ecotourism and or conservation; (10) Other not listed.
- 5) Receives donations- Have organizations received donations of money, goods or services either in start-up or they receive them on an ongoing basis?
- 6) Social/Environmental/Hybrid- Organizations were identified as either social, environmental or hybrid social and environmental types
- 7) Evidence of participatory governance- Evidence of participatory governance structures was recorded
- 8) Legal status- Where possible data on the legal status of these organizations was collected.

This data forms part of a larger study across the Southern and Eastern African Communities focusing on the role of social and environmental enterprises in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. This paper develops the conceptual frameworks used in the larger Directory across 19 countries by focusing on a detailed analysis of the Namibian context.



A number of limitations with the approach employed and data collected for this research are recognized. The subjective nature of classification, of identification as a social/environmental or hybrid organization, and in relation to organization status as non-profit, profit or hybrid, is clear. Even with clear definitions of these different statuses, classifications, and organization types, there is considerable scope for differences in interpretation between researchers. The actual data available from internet sources was also frequently limited, for example information might not be available on the legal status of an organization, or on its governance structures, or certain aspects of its activities would not be included. A further limitation recognized is that the identification of organizations is limited to those with a meaningful web presence. This may exclude some organizations without or with a very small web presence in particular small and micro level organizations and enterprises often those based within the informal economy. Another limitation identified relates to the fact that websites and web materials may be out of date and may not accurately portray an organizations current status or present activities. A final limitation is the low response rate so far, for social and environmental enterprises in Namibia completing our questionnaire, with 28 registered organizations in the Directory (from a current sample of 270 across the wider country sample). While these various limitations are recognized it is still regarded that the mapping exercise discussed in this paper provides a number of conceptual frameworks that can be tested in wider cross-country comparative studies.

### **CLUSTERS AND CASE STUDIES**

The review of the 270 organizations in Namibia identifies ten significant clusters within the social and environmental enterprise sectors. These clusters reflect organizations working in the same broad sector, with similar goals, using similar and/or complimentary approaches. The complex nature of social and environmental enterprises in Namibia means that these clusters are not mutually exclusive.

These clusters are:

- CBNRM, Conservancies and Support Organizations
- Craft Production, Sale and Marketing
- Donor, Finance or Funding Organizations
- Green/ Eco Tourism
- Conservation Organizations
- Employment of Vulnerable Groups/ Work Integration
- Micro and small scale enterprise development and support
- Produces and or Sells Green/ Environmental Products
- Environmental Training, Education and Research
- Consultancy

#### **CBNRM, Conservancies and Support Organizations**

CBNRM and conservancies are a key part of the Government of Namibia's approach to rural development and poverty alleviation. They are fixture in Namibia's 5 year National Development Plans, and have a central place in Vision 2030 Namibia's longer term national development strategy. As of 2010 there were 64 registered conservancies in Namibia covering over 144,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land and incorporating more than 234,000 people (IRDNC 2011). Conservancies, enterprises associated with conservancies, and organizations

supporting conservancies form a significant proportion of the 270 social and/or environmental enterprises or support organizations identified in this research.

As registered organizations they form part of the formal economy; however other economic activity within conservancy areas and by conservancy members often remains informal, for instance small scale craft production or harvesting of natural resources for sale. Social and environmental enterprises established within, or working with, conservancies may tap into these informal economy activities. For example craft production may occur within conservancies on an individual or small cooperative basis in the informal economy. The crafts produced by these individuals and small groups may then be purchased and/or sold on by social and environmental enterprises that are more formally registered businesses. These kinds of social and environmental business straddle the divide between the formal and informal economies, and perform a bridging role facilitating access to market for small producers.

***Case Study 1: Conservancy***

This conservancy in Namibia's Northern regions was registered in the late 1990s and has over 3000 share-members. The conservancy employs 9 members directly, 7 of those as environmental shepherds, with trophy hunting and own-use hunting undertaken. The conservancy also runs a community owned campsite. A high-end tourism lodge in the conservancy is owned by conservancy members but managed by a private sector partner. Full community ownership of lodges in conservancies is relatively unusual in Namibia and more widely. Profits from trophy hunting, from the campsite and lodge have been used to build schools and clinics, to provide a community kitchen for the elderly and for vulnerable groups and to award bursaries to promising school pupils. Initial funding for the lodge was provided by international donors.

Namibia's conservancies have been, and continue to be, supported by a variety of local and international organizations. These are also included in this mapping exercise either as support organizations or as social and environmental enterprises in their own right, as illustrated by case 2.

***Case Study 2: Conservancy Support Organization***

This support organization is a Namibian non-governmental organization and registered trust which was established in the early 1980s. In the 1990s it began working with Namibia's conservancies and is now involved with more than half of them nationally. The organization assists conservancies to become registered, to establish management and governance structures and to form linkages and effective and equitable partnerships with the private sector. The organization depends on donor funding however it also runs a non-profit consultancy to bring in additional income.

**Craft Production, Sale and Marketing**

Many of the 270 social and environmental enterprises identified were active in craft production, sale or marketing, or supported organizations working in this area. Many of Namibia's conservancies engage in some form of craft based entrepreneurial activity. There are a variety of different models for organizations working in this cluster. Some are exclusively producers; others provide training for producers or work in an enabling market-

linkage role, for example by providing support to producers to help them commercialize their products. Still others provide producers with access to markets and a space to sell their wares. Craft production, marketing, support and sale may be undertaken by a number of organizations working in partnership, or it may be integrated in a single organization as illustrated in case 3.

### ***Case Study 3: Craft Based Social Enterprise***

This social enterprise was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged women improve their standard of living and that of their (extended) families. It is registered as a voluntary association. The social enterprise is active in craft production and sale, particularly of textiles. It also provides training in crafts and tourism, and sells crafts made by other organizations with similar objectives. In addition to its craft activities it runs a tuberculosis program, provides support to women in nearby informal communities, and provides interest free housing loans. The social enterprise gains income from donations but also from craft production and sale, and a variety of tourism activities including: workshop tours, township tours, a guest house, a campsite, luxury bungalows and a restaurant.

### **Green/ Eco Tourism**

Namibia has a variety of 'eco' tourism resorts, hotels, lodges, guesthouses, campsites and wider travel providers. However, verifying the ecotourism credentials of these organizations is more difficult than finding them. At a global level there is no universally recognized definition of an eco-lodge or eco tourism travel provider. Many organizations describing themselves in these terms do so without external verification. In this research the following criteria were used in defining an eco lodge/hotel/guesthouse/resort/camp/travel provider:

- 1) Local community beneficiation and participation
- 2) Green/ sustainable practices integrated into core business activities and decision making rather than as an added bonus. Beyond good environmental management.
- 3) Neutral or positive net environmental impact.
- 4) Some form of external certification or validation of environmental credentials.

In Namibia there is an Eco Awards Certification scheme for accommodation. Accommodation establishments gain a mark of distinction if they can demonstrate a certain standard of environmental care, and the implementation of sustainable business practices which recognize the triple bottom line imperatives of people, the environment and profits. Establishments are awarded a number of desert flower awards commensurate to their environmental commitment. This standard is based on similar certification schemes that exist in some other countries across the region. It was used as a basis for identifying eco-lodges and wider eco-tourism businesses.

### **Finance Organizations**

Included in this cluster are microfinance providers, cooperative banks, credit unions, building societies, NGOs providing low interest loans or grants and also larger scale international donors and funding agencies. The financial providers included in this cluster are guided by pro-poor development values and objectives. Frequently, they are providing

finance alongside wider support and mentoring to businesses and individuals operating in the informal economy.

### **Micro and Small Scale Enterprise Development and Support**

These types of organization straddle the boundary between the formal and informal economies. They may assist micro businesses operating in the informal economy to formalize and become registered. They may provide business advice, support and training for these businesses. They may assist micro and small enterprises in developing linkages with larger businesses helping them enter into more formal supply chains. They may also work with larger companies who wish to find local suppliers.

### **Conservation Organizations**

In this cluster are organizations using some form of trading activity to at least part fund their conservation activities. An example of this type of organization is outlined in case 4. Some conservancies may be included in this grouping however not all have a particular conservation focus.

#### ***Case Study 4: Conservation Organization***

Founded in 1990 this organization is a non-profit non-governmental organization contributing to the conservation of big cats and their ecosystems in Namibia. The organization undertakes research, education and conservation activities. Donations from private individuals and businesses are important sources of income however it also undertakes a number of trading activities. The organization gains income from visitors and sells gifts locally and online, but it also uses trading activity in a more direct way in its conservation activities. In 2001 an off shoot company was established harvesting and processing undesirable invader bush species which are detrimental to big cat ecosystems and health. These species are marketed and sold by the company as wood fuel briquettes, employing 20 Namibian's. These briquettes are forest stewardship certified.

### **Employment of Vulnerable Groups/ Work Integration**

In this cluster are those organizations that perform some kind of employment integration role for particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Case 3 performs this role as the women it helps often have few skills and a limited education. They also frequently have some kind of disability or suffer from illness. Another example of this type of organization is a monthly social issue magazine which provides employment for vulnerable and homeless Namibian's as street vendors working in the informal economy. Another example is a cafe and coffee shop which discriminates in employment in favor of people with disabilities.

### **Produces and or Sells Green/ Environmental Products**

In this cluster are assorted organizations which produce and or sell environmental products. This is a broad cluster and includes for example businesses which sell or produce solar products, companies producing and/ or selling natural beauty products, and enterprises like the one described above selling fuel wood briquettes (case 4). These organizations do not necessarily have an exclusively environmental focus they may also have social goals

complimentary to their green activities. These kinds of businesses may also have linkages with the informal economy as illustrated in case 5.

**Case Study 5: Solar Technology Environmental Enterprise**

This non-profit organization works in the Caprivi region of Namibia. Its aim is the development of sustainable business models to meet the needs of off-grid communities in Namibia and Southern Africa by providing access to appropriate sustainable energy technologies. The organization works in a number of project areas. These include a pilot energy shop distributing sustainable energy technologies to people across the Caprivi Region established in 2010, working with entrepreneurs largely in the informal economy to promote Appropriate Sustainable Energy Technologies (ASETs) across the region, and a solar light project (their first project in Namibia). In this project they work with conservancies to sell solar lights at a subsidized rate to conservancy members. The organization has also formed partnerships with local schools and is donating ASETs to them. These donations are funded from its trading activities.

**Environmental Training, Education and Research**

In this cluster are a variety of organizations engaging in environmental training, education and/or research. In one example of this type of organization donations and grants form a significant part of its income, however money from education groups visiting its centre, from the sale of curios, from consultancy work and bank interest are also significant.

**Consultancy**

Numerous environmental and wider social and sustainable development consultants operate in Namibia. Many Namibian NGOs are also undertaking consultancy work as an extra source of income.

**SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENTERPRISE NAMIBIA: TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia are complex and heterogeneous. In the previous section some significant organizational clusters undertaking similar or complimentary activities were identified. These clusters are not mutually exclusive, with many organizations active in multiple areas. Nor is it suggested that these clusters cover all social and environmental entrepreneurial activity in Namibia. Social and environmental enterprises in Namibia have complex organizational structures and are often active in a variety of fields.

**TABLE 1: Distribution of types of organizations in Namibia associated with social and environmental enterprise activity**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Environmental Goods and or Services	143
Cooperative, Membership Association or similar	116
Not for profit	59
Social Enterprise	55
Donor or Finance Organization	4
Fairtrade or Similar Certified Organization	3
Other not listed	19

In this research the 270 identified social and environmental enterprises in Namibia were classified according to 7 possible categories with multiple categorization possible. Of these 270 organizations 105 were given multiple classifications owing to their complex nature and diverse areas of activity. In some instances three and even four classification criteria were selected to describe particularly complex hybrid organizations. This frequency distribution is illustrated in Table 1.

In Namibia a high number of organizations were classified as providing environmental goods or services. This classification includes for example Namibia’s ecotourism providers, environmental consultants, renewable energy businesses and many organizations working in or around CBNRM. Table 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of organizations classified as providing environmental goods or services.

**TABLE 2: Types of environmental activity**

<b>Green Classification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Eco tourism/ Conservation	89
Training, advice and research	33
Solar/ Renewable Energy	10
Other not listed	9
Consultancy	8
Recycling	7
Cosmetics/ Beauty	1
Organic or similar certification	1
Energy Efficiency	0
Law	0

The high number of cooperatives, membership associations or similar reflects the significance of conservancies in Namibia, and community tourism ventures. The not-for-profit classification was often applied to NGOs engaging in some form of trading activity but frequently still at a low “proto” social enterprise level (Muñoz, 2010). The social enterprise classification was applied to organizations in which trading was at a more advanced level and comprising a larger proportion of income. These organizations could potentially be classified as social enterprises in stricter definitions, for example that used by the UK Social Enterprise Coalition (2011) where trading for a social purpose should constitute 50% or more of income. The relatively low number of organizations given this classification illustrates the evolving nature of the social enterprise sector in Namibia, and raises questions about the application of social enterprise definitions which focus on a high level trading income in this research, and in studying social enterprise in Africa more widely.

In relation to the low numbers of Fairtrade or similar organizations it was found that many would often state that they employed fair trade practices. In one of the questionnaires completed it was suggested that the costs involved with Fairtrade certification were prohibitive. Limited evidence of microfinance and pro-poor financial organizations was found. Whether this reflects a real limitation in these types of organization in Namibia, or simply a gap in searching techniques, needs further investigation. A limited number of organizations were classified in the other not listed category this is an encouraging sign for the broad applicability of the other classifications.

Of the 270 organizations identified as social and environmental enterprises in Namibia only 19 of them appeared to be active externally in any of the other 18 countries studied in the project. Many of these organizations are operating at a small or micro scale focusing on particular regions or communities. As suggested previously, donations were found to play a significant role in the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia. Of the 270 organizations identified, in 185 cases evidence was found of some degree of reliance on donor funding either for start-up or on a continuing basis. In 68 cases, organizations were found to be independent of donor funding, in 17 cases funding sources were unclear. During the mapping exercise the 270 organizations identified were additionally classified as either social, environmental or hybrid social and environmental based on the definitions and understandings outlined previously. Thus 115 were classified as hybrid social and environmental enterprises, with 75 environmental and 80 social respectively. This illustrates the often close interweaving of social and environmental concerns within these kinds of organizations in Namibia.

Some social enterprise definitions highlight the importance of participatory forms of governance, with such understandings particularly prevalent in mainland Europe. Evidence of participatory governance was sought in the 270 organizations identified as social and environmental enterprises and support organizations in Namibia. On the whole this was difficult to identify with 141 cases where governance structures were unclear. In 44 cases evidence suggested that such governance was not occurring, while in 85 cases it was found. Participation is an important aspect of CBNRM and Namibia's conservancies. The need for greater local and recipient participation in wider development efforts has also been a subject of discussion for many years. Given this importance, more work is needed examining the issue of participatory governance in this sector in Namibia and more widely. Information was finally sought on the legal statuses used by social and environmental enterprises in Namibia. This information was frequently unavailable, however where it was the following statuses were most often encountered: An incorporated association not for gain; conservancy; voluntary association; trust; closed corporation; Section 21 Company (Non-profit). These statuses will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

The local focus of Namibian social and environmental enterprises is apparent in the questionnaire data. Environmental goods and services, social enterprises and not-for-profit are the primary classifications self selected by respondents. Organic and Fairtrade organizations seem less well developed. Data collected on the importance of financial donations and donations of goods and time to social and environmental enterprises suggests that 62% of respondents receive some kind of financial donation, with international donors, local and international business and private individuals identified as particular sources of funding. Mining companies through their CSR activities are an important source of funding for NGOs and social businesses in Namibia. A further preliminary insight coming out of the questionnaire data is the apparent significance of volunteers both international and local albeit to a lesser extent.

## **LEGISLATION AND POLICY**

Social and environmental enterprises and their support agencies exist in a variety of legal forms in Namibia. These enterprises may be registered as nonprofit companies (or as "a company not for gain") under section 21 of the Companies Act (1973) amended (2004),

however few examples of section 21 companies were encountered in this research. The limited number of section 21 companies in Namibia's civil society is similarly noted by Iheme (2009), who suggests that the costs and requirements associated with registration as a section 21 company mean that it is rarely used. Social and environmental enterprises in Namibia may alternatively be registered as Trusts or Foundations. Provisions for both these statuses are found in the Moneys Protection Act (1934). They may also exist as voluntary organizations or community based organizations, the former are particularly prevalent in Namibia's civil society (Iheme, 2009). A legal status frequently encountered was an incorporated association not-for-gain. To have this status an association must be not-for-profit with any profits made used for the purpose of the association. Further statuses encountered included cooperatives, conservancies, closed corporations and propriety limited companies.

There is a legislative gap in Namibia in relation to social enterprises and the wider NGO sector. There is no specific legislation for these types of organization, with no legal status created specifically for social and environmental enterprises in Namibia. Given the heterogeneity and complexity of the sector as discussed in the previous section it is unsurprising that social and environmental enterprises exist in Namibia in so many different legal forms. A voluntary association is a common legal status for NGOs in Namibia. The high prevalence of organizations registering as voluntary associations has been suggested to relate to the relative ease with which organizations can register in this form as opposed to more expensive and bureaucratically onerous options like a Section 21 "Company not for gain" (Iheme, 2009). In the context of discussions about the position of social and environmental businesses in the formal and informal economies in Namibia further research is needed to examine the relationship between legal status and social enterprise development i.e. how legal status relates to the relative size, development and area of activity of social enterprises and whether they are active primarily in the formal or informal economy. Legal status may also change as social businesses become more or less established and as their fortunes fluctuate.

There has been little direct policy or legislative engagement by the Namibian government with social and environmental enterprises outside of its support for CBNRM and the country's conservancies. While legislative and policy development in relation to CBNRM by Namibia's government has been progressive, in relation to wider social and environmental enterprises progress has been more limited. In 2005 the Namibian Government released its Civic Organizations Partnership Policy. To date this has been its most meaningful policy engagement with the country's NGO community. A role for the NGO sector in Namibia's development is recognized in Namibia's National Development Plans (NDP 1, 2 and 3). However this role is only addressed in quite general terms. The Civic Organizations Partnership Policy (2005) is the government's attempt to make more explicit how it can work with NGOs and wider civil society in the country's development. In theory this would include social and/or environmental enterprises. However there is no mention of these organization types in the document and only a single reference to enterprise more widely. At a sectoral level the Namibian Government has started to recognize the potential of social and environmental enterprises to contribute to national sustainable development. For example in Namibia's 1998 White Paper on Energy the potential of solar and other renewable energies to contribute to sustainable development and energy use is identified, however to date limited progress has been made going beyond recognition.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents a preliminary mapping of the social and environmental enterprise sectors in Namibia, illustrating key clusters of organizations engaging in similar or complementary activities, and illustrated with reference to case study examples. Some preliminary trends and characteristics of these sectors are also identified. Finally the policy and legislative context surrounding these sectors and the organizations active within is reviewed. This contributes to the wider understanding of the nature of the social and environmental sectors in an African context.

Research that examines social and environmental enterprise in Namibia, and more widely in Southern and Eastern Africa, remains in its infancy. This paper aims to add to the growing body of knowledge in this area. It also aims to provide a starting point for some of the analysis that will be undertaken of wider study data across 19 African countries. For example the clusters of social and environmental enterprises identified may provide insights for future development of a wider organization classification system. The paper also reinforces and highlights the need for deeper examination of issues like social and environmental enterprise funding, governance and decision making, the complex practices and organizational structures of social and environmental enterprises, and the hybrid makeup and constitutions of these organizations. It is also clear from the data presented that many of the organizations seek to engage with, or provide employment for, those in low income segments. Many of these individuals earn an income through informal means, especially those located in cooperatives, craft production and tourism. Whilst the umbrella organization may be formally recognized through various local statutes, they often source their products or services through more informal economy channels.

Future research planned as part of the wider study will utilize these preliminary findings analyzing the Namibian context to guide the frameworks employed during detailed case analysis in fieldwork across three African nations during 2012. This fieldwork will explore in more detail the specific relationship between the informal and formal economy and the benefits of such enterprises to low income segments. For future researchers this paper provides insights and sheds light on an African-centric view on social, and environmental, entrepreneurial activity. In particular we propose the following contributions to the wider conceptual literature.

Firstly, we suggest that social enterprises in Africa, and therefore perhaps other developing nations, demonstrate a greater diversity in the contingencies that define them than those in developed nations. Thus the boundary of what constitutes a social enterprise in the US or UK might not be applicable in the African context. This is perhaps related to the nature of the needs addressed by the social enterprise models in Africa. If these are considered in terms of Maslow's Hierarchy we might suggest social enterprises in Africa address fundamental basic needs which are not supplied by the state. Whereas, in the main, social enterprises in the developed nations address gaps in higher order and 'self-actualization' needs.

Thus whilst there is undoubtedly great diversity in the social enterprises in a Western context this is related mostly to the services or products they offer. These sit more firmly in discrete categories unlike the hybrid models emerging in Africa. This might be related to the

nature of the formal economy in developed countries where the vast majority of organizations are formally registered and therefore fit into categorical boundaries. In Africa the informal economy plays a much more significant role in people's daily economic lives and in national economic activity. Formality is often the domain of larger domestic and multinational businesses rather than the myriad of small and micro indigenous enterprises through which so many people in African countries make a living. This suggests that in nations with a large informal economy there will be a hybridization effect where organizations fall into multiple business categories (such as NGOs, social enterprise, environmental, membership, association, not for gain) reflecting the diverse channels through which they seek legitimacy.

The reasons behind these blurred boundaries between the different types of organizations are also a key consideration for future research. In nations where institutions are weaker there are often multiple types of designations that might apply to an organization, and registration may often be in a category that is 'easier' or has lower barriers to entry. The lack of a consensus on what a social enterprise is, or a cooperative, or other designations such as 'not for gain' means that funding assistance from outside a nation may not actually target the organizations they wish to reach due to confusion as to their eligibility. Indeed we would argue that policy makers and those designing support packages to promote development through enterprise aimed at the low income segments delivered through indigenous organizations must reflect, and recognize, this diversity. That it is quite common for these hybrid organizations to intermingle commercial, not-for-profit and public sector roles under one roof.

Also we suggest that such enterprises may themselves be part of the 'formal' economy in order to access funding and gain legitimacy but they may be reliant upon informal sector suppliers, many of whom will not have the level of protection and rights offered to an 'in-house' employee. Thus there is a need to consider the boundaries of where the formalized structures of the enterprise end. Within this is a key question for the future, related to the extent to which the protections and support services offered to a formalized business in the UK or US, such as sick pay, medical, business support services and loans, are offered to organizations that are located in the informal economy in Africa. There is emerging evidence of banks reaching out to the informal economy offering loans and indeed many microfinance institutions specifically target those in the informal economy.

It is clear that the Namibian dataset we explore in this paper is very different from social and environmental enterprise sectors in countries in the developed world. To encourage development through enterprise (and especially as some suggest by focusing on social and environmental enterprise activity as a way to develop sustainably in Africa), policy makers, funders, researchers and individual governments need clarity on the context specific nature of social and environmental entrepreneurial activity in Africa. We believe this paper offers some interesting insights that help to add to this emerging area of enquiry.

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