



Okavango Community Trust
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Background Of The Organization

Okavango Community Trust (OCT) is a community based organization (CBO) for the villages of Seronga, Gunotsoga, Ereetsha, Beetsha and Gudigwa located in the Okavango eastern Panhandle of the Okavango Delta. OCT was established in 1995 and was legally registered in 1996 and has been allocated tourism concession areas in photographic tourism.

The population of the OCT catchment area is approximately 8000 people with Seronga as the largest population center (2674 people). The people are largely agrarian, keeping small number of livestock and practicing flood recession farming. Fishing is also a significant livelihood as well as harvesting of aquatic and veld resources. Unemployment remains high, especially for youth, education was literally the local students doesn't perform well on their Junior Certificate examinations, the only secondary school being Ngambao JSS located in Seronga. Human wildlife conflict is rampant in the area and contributes to increasing poverty levels in the area.

OCT is strategically positioned to drive the socio-economic development of the area, if and only if, the leadership of the Organization has capacity to make strategic decisions and deliver on them. Over the past fifteen years, OCT has been able to raise significant amounts of money from its tourism enterprises; however, corporate social responsibility has been a challenge to service the young and old community members. It is therefore envisaged that with partnership from prominent educators with relevant qualified and experienced specialists as well as targeted exposure, OCT will be able to deliver competent leaders of tomorrow which may spearhead the much needed socio-economic development in the area.





■ Mission

To assist in developing and marketing the products of Okavango Community trust Members which include wildlife management, handicrafts, game products, timber and natural resources.

■ Vission

To become the hub of sustainable socio-economic, tourism and commercial activities to transform the beneficiary villages into a Business centre.

■ Organization Structure And Management

The OCT is led by a Board of ten (10) Trustee member, two from each member village, who are nominated by each respective village. The Board has a secretariat led by a Trust General Manager who serves as the secretary of the Board. The Trust Manager is supported by an Accountant, Environmental Officer and other support staff, which works at the Office, Trust commercial Undertakings and in the Concessions.

Since its inception in 1996 Okavango Community Trust has thus far acquired/archived the following:

1. The trust managed to acquire plots and operates General Dealer at Gudigwa and Beetsha, both Shops are operational. The Beetsha plot measuring 1200SQM is fenced with 2 blocks one used as a General Dealer store, the other block is available to be leased as it is vacant. It has electricity and water connection. Employing 6 employees, 3 shop assistant and 3 Security Guards (all locals).

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2. The Gudigwa plot measuring 1597SQM is also fenced with one block and a toilet, the blot is currently in use as the operating General Dealer, with some other two vacant rooms, which can be used as Bakery and bottle store. We have since wired the block and applied for electricity connection (Awaiting Response from BPC), water is connected. Employing 6 employees, 1 cleaner, 2 shop assistant and 3 Security Guards (all locals)

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3. In Eretsha the trust has acquired 2 plots for Cultural Village measuring 2.1565 Hectares and Pre-school measuring 1007.0SQM (currently used by the Government for the Primary School in the village). The cultural village plot is not developed. The Trust has recently applied for the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) to develop the plot into cultural Village Employing 3 security Guards (all locals). OCT has a borehole in Eretsha Village.
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4. In Gunotsoga the Trust acquired a General Dealers plot measuring 1186 SQM which the trust changed its use to Hardware and the hardware is operational, as from Mid May 2019. It has electrical and water connection. Employing 7 employees, 4 Hardware Assistants and 3 Security Guards (all locals)
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5. In Seronga the Trust has a 7253SQM plot where the offices are situated, the use of the plot is General dealer and Bottle Store of which the Trust have since applied for change of use for a Selected hotel. The office house the offices, fuel point and storerooms, The General Manager, Accountant, Environmental Officer, Buyer, Facility Officer, Receptionist, Cleaner and Grounds Man are housed here all the administration duties of the trust are done here. (all locals)
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In Seronga the trust also has a 1238SQM mortuary plot, which has an operational mortuary, which has show room, cold room, storeroom and a chapel, with complete burial equipment with a backup generator in case of Electric cut-off. It employs 3 Mortuary attendants, Mortuary car driver and 2 security guards. (all locals)

The trust also has a pottery plot measuring 1168 SQM, in Seronga, which is not in use but was fenced with one room, in which the trust has proposed to operate a grinding mill.

The trust has also applied for a 40m by 40m Bar plot which is yet to be allocated but approval letter for beacons has been issued.

6. The trust has also have major assets in Vehicles 4 x 4.2 Pick Up bakkies, a Surf Mortuary Car, a combi and Hino 6 tonnes Truck which transport the hardware and shop stock, of which we have 6 drivers for the vehicles.
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7. The Trust have employed 4 Community Escort Guides based in the 4 camps in 2 concessions, being Little Vumbura, Vumbura South, Vumbura Noth (NG22) and Duba Plains (NG 23)

8. The trust has developed a human resource development, financial management and governance policies that are in operation at the moment.

9. The trust of recent have employed 3 Elephant safety Bus Drivers, in partnership with Ecoexist, the buses which is a donation from Mapula Lodge and Natural Selection, the purpose of the buses is to assist residents of the five villages with transport to and from the Clinics and Schools as a form of mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict.

10. Summary

Village	# of Plot/ Operations	Status	Employment
Gudigwa	1	Operation	6 Employees
Beetsha	1	Operation	6 Employees
Eretsha	2	Un-operational. 1 plot lease to the Government for a primary school	6 Employees
Gunotsoga	1	Operation	7 Employees
Seronga	3	2 operational 1 un-operational	17 employees from the mortuary and office
Totals	8	6 Operational	39 Employees
Other Employees		4 CEGs 6 drivers 3 Bus Drivers	52 employees
Grand Total			52 Employees

According to the Joint Venture Agreement between the Trust and Investors, the investors have committed to employ local people into their camps in different position, of which more people from the locals have been employed in the camps for the past years since the Trust's inception.



■ Revenue Generation

The major revenue generator for the Trust is the annual Lease pay from the investors who run camps in the concessions Leased to Trust, the Investors are Okavango Wilderness Safaris (OWS) which operates 3 camps in NG22 (Vumbura Plains North and South and Little Vumbura) and Great Plains Conservations (GPC) which operates 2 camps in NG23 (Duba Plains and Duba Explorer), with a combined lease fee of about P3 975 021.88 annually (as at Dec 2018). The trust also has the following commercial undertaking which boosts its revenue:

- The Mortuary through premiums and funeral services, the Okavango Sub-District Department of Social welfare has contracted the OCT Mortuary to assist their beneficiaries.
- The Gudigwa and Beetsha General Dealers, generating revenue through retailing of consumables.
- The Gunotsoga Hardware generating revenue through retailing of Building materials, Council projects has started sourcing materials from the hardware.
- Vehicle hire, the trust does hire out the vehicles to the community for use and also hire them to the Investors to use during staff run/movement.

■ Proposed projects

- The trust has proposed Change of Use of the Seronga plot from General Dealer to a selected hotel; this is because of the gap observed by the trust in the hospitality industry which is shortage of Accommodation in the Eastern panhandle of the Okavango area. Upon change of use the Trust will construct a selected hotel with 11 accommodation rooms, a conference room, a restaurant and a bar, an Architectural Design for the Hotel has already been completed awaiting approval from council.

- Eretsha Cultural Village the trust has applied for funds from Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) if funded the Trust will develop a Cultural Village comprising of the following 8 thatched Tswana traditional huts, a fully furnished restaurant, where traditional meals will be provided, a dance arena, Curio Shop, Art gallery, an information center and a managerial office.
- A Community Camp at NG 22 concession in partnership with Okavango Wilderness Safaris the 2 parties have already made a formal agreement during a joint meeting held on the 22nd and 23rd of May 2019, the two parties agreed to jointly construct and operate a Community Camp in the Kwedi (NG22) which is 572 km² currently leased to the Okavango Community Trust (OCT) and subleased to Okavango Wilderness Safaris. The trust has already made a submission for additional beds to the Tswana Landboard to make it a 24 beds camp.
- The trust is on the verge of acquiring a PPADB to allow the trust to apply for government tenders, as of now the Government through S& CD they use the trust mortuary services. Great Plains Conservations and Okavango Wilderness Safaris also have shown interest as it has already started purchasing some building materials from our Hardware.

OKAVANGO COMMUNITY TRUST



Hardware

"Building the Community"

We Sell: Building Materials In Kind, Doorframes,
Window Frames Doors, Cement,
Roofing Sheet, Timber Etc

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■ Community Projects

- During the past years OCT has sponsored local youth to study different courses in Tourism and Hospitality, Construction and Real estate at schools like Career Dream, TSL, Baisago in Maun and FCTVE in Francistown. Most of this graduates are mostly absorbed within OCT investment Partners' camps. One of our sponsored students graduated in September 2019 from Baisago as Best Student in his programme of study.
- The trust has built 10 toilets in the villages for vulnerable people.
- The Trust donated big tents and Chairs to the VDCs in all the 5 villages, to be used for kgotla meeting and some of events.
- The trust built 4 destitute houses in the past in the villages of Seronga, Gunotsoga, Beetsha and Gudigwa.
- The trust donates money for Independence Celebrations, every year in all 5 villages (P10 000.00 each village)
- The Trust donates funds for Prize giving events every year in all primary schools in the 5 villages (P2500.00 for primary Schools) and Ngambao JSS (P5000 for secondary school) through adopt a school programme.
- The Trust donates money to people with burnt houses or natural disaster currently its P3000.00 per beneficiary.
- We offer complimentary transport to the sick and during funerals to members of our community.
- In partnership with Ecoexist Trust, Unchartered Africa and Natural Selection, the trust has a secured a donation of 2 16 Seater buses to transport Children to school, patients to the clinics among the 5 villages, this is an effort in mitigating Human –Elephant conflict in the area, the buses are scheduled to start in April employing 3 drivers
- In partnership with Botswana Open University, OCT has embarked on opening a Learning Centre at Beetsha for local learners who didn't do well in their JCE and BGCSE to re-write their exams, with the help of appointed tutors by OCT and BOU, which is its first enrolment will be for the year 2020.

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■ Working Relationships With Other Trusts & Organizations

- For the past years the Trust has gone for benchmarking trips in both the Ngamiland and the Chobe area, attending AGMs for Sankoyo, Kwai, Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust, Chobe Enclave Trust likewise they also visited us.
- Pula funeral Services have also shown interest in partnering with OCT for Mortuary Services, they had a benchmarking trip to Seronga midyear 2019.
- Mabutswana Sub TAC also visited OCT for Benchmarking Exercise in 2019.
- In October 2019 the trust welcomed Visitors from South America from Countries of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay for a bench marking trip.

■ Challenges

Major challenges are:

- The trust has been for the long time operating without the Head lease for the 2 concessions of NG22 and NG23, which lessens its negotiating powers with the investors.
- Taking long by Government Authority to approve applications and proposals. i.e. the long applied for Change of plot use, approval of the Seronga Kgotla Shelter, and delay in connection of Electricity at Gudigwa Shop, also the long applied for Additional Bed for a Community Camp at NG22.
- Challenges on monthly travel and night out expenses to process monthly financial Requisition through the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and District Commissioner, which increases the Trust monthly expenditure. Also the trust doesn't do Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), instead it pays suppliers with Cheques, which makes difficult to pay some of the suppliers who doesn't accept cheques.
- Shortage of accommodation and other utilities for Community Escort guides, due to financial constraints.
- Shortage of Transport in Government department which compels the trust to use its vehicles to help, which also increases the trust expenditure in fuel and drivers overtimes.

Major Service Providers To The Trust

COMPANY NAME	SERVICES
Ngami Toyota	Car service and maintenance
Supa Quick Botswana	Wheel alignment and supply
MacOne Filling station (Puma Maun)	Fuel supply
Saoshoko Filling Station (Shakawe)	Fuel supply
The Office Shop	Stationary supply
Dingake Attorneys	Attorney at law, Legal Representation
STC	Cleaning Chemical Supply

PARTNERS:

1. The Government of Botswana
2. Local Community
3. Ecoexist Trust
4. Great Plains Foundation
5. Children in The wilderness
6. Botswana Open University (BOU)

BANKING

The Trust has 3 accounts with Stanbic Bank

- Holding account
- Savings Account and
- Current Account

The trust also has 3 Current accounts with Barclays Bank

INSURANCE

The trust has insurance agreement with Botswana Life where all its assets are insured, While metropolitan is the underwriter for the Trust's mortuary insurance services.





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