



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Co-designing and implementing independent  
journalism and archiving with the indigenous San  
community in Donkerbos through a self-sustainable  
model.**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Journalism and Media Technology (MJ MT)

In

Faculty of Computing & Informatics,

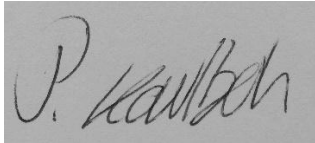
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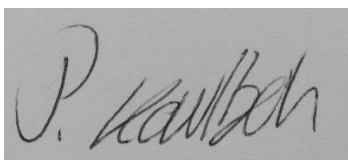
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## Abstract

This master thesis explores the impact of a multimedia project in a San community, focusing on podcast episodes and digital storytelling initiatives. The project aimed to amplify the voices and stories of the San people [in Donkerbos] while addressing various topics such as politics, cultural practices, and community projects. Through participatory methodologies, the project engaged community members in the production process, ensuring cultural sensitivity and authenticity. The study responds to the systemic underrepresentation and misrepresentation of San communities in mainstream media, which are often shaped by external perspectives. It investigates the project's influence on the San community's awareness, empowerment, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development. It examines the reception of podcast episodes among community members, accounting for their perception and attitude toward the content. Additionally, the thesis explores the effectiveness of digital storytelling initiatives, such as videos on social media platforms, in promoting cultural awareness and challenging stereotypes. Methodologically, the thesis employs a mixed-methods approach, including focus groups, workshops, and content analysis. It draws on theories of indigenous media, participatory communication, and cultural preservation to frame its analysis. The findings show that participants gained technical media skills, expressed increased cultural confidence, and began engaging more actively in the documentation of their community's stories. Challenges included infrastructural limitations and questions of long-term sustainability. The research contributes to the growing body of literature on indigenous media, community-based research, and cultural preservation. It concludes that participatory multimedia initiatives can enhance cultural resilience and representation, while offering a sustainable framework for community-driven storytelling.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Most media coverage of indigenous people<sup>1</sup>, individuals, or tribes is written by outsiders, leading to prejudice, and preventing communities from sharing their stories (Stichel et al., 2018). Stichel et al.'s study reports on collaborative efforts with the San in Donkerbos, to create digital self-representations that are authentic and reflective of their cultural identities. This approach promotes digital empowerment and self-determination among these communities (Stichel et al., 2018).

Donkerbos, where the particular project is carried out, is a small village located in eastern Namibia, primarily inhabited by San community members. Donkerbos is surrounded by [Herero] farmers who own the land. The community has only a small piece of land to live and farm on. The village faces numerous socio-economic challenges, including limited access to education and economic opportunities, which are compounded by the community's lack of infrastructure and limited access to healthcare services.



1; Location Donkerbos

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipacc.org.za/southern-africa/>: The contested nature of indigeneity stems from the diversity within and between indigenous groups. Definitions often need to accommodate a wide range of cultural practices, languages, and historical experiences. In Namibia, indigenous groups such as the San, Nama, Himba, and others each have distinct identities and face unique challenges regarding recognition and rights. This diversity complicates the creation of a single, encompassing definition of indigeneity.

Media coverage of indigenous issues often comes from a nonindigenous perspective, which can result in misrepresentations and prejudice. This issue is particularly notable in Southern Africa, where indigenous minorities such as the San, Ovaherero and Nama Communities face significant challenges. These groups are often depicted in ways that do not accurately reflect their cultures or current realities (Fernando et al., 2018). This misrepresentation perpetuates stereotypes and marginalises their voices in public discourse (Hitchcock, 2019). The San people in rural communities often struggle with access to healthcare and face high rates of tuberculosis, with barriers including discrimination and the remoteness of healthcare facilities. (Namibia: Discrimination Deprives Indigenous San People of the Right to Health as TB Poses Serious Risk to Their Lives - Amnesty International, 2021).

Indigenous people around the world, such as Native Americans, have historically been negatively portrayed and subjected to stereotypes in the media. Early colonial newspapers in Canada called indigenous people "savages" and "heathens," laying the groundwork for enduring prejudices in media representation. These stereotypes, which portray indigenous peoples as "angry warriors" or "pathetic victims," are still prevalent today and reflect ingrained biases in public discourse, impeding the truthful and respectful portrayal of these peoples (Harding, n.d.). This is a problem that has been recognised by [some] media researchers globally, such as Sunuwar (n.d.) and Harding (n.d.)

### 1.1.1 San People in Contemporary Namibia

The San ethnic group is one of the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa. Before the colonial era, they mostly lived in small nomadic groups that had an excellent understanding of the natural environment (Dieckmann et al., 2014). As Bantu-speaking tribes settled in the region, more San communities began to engage in trade involving natural goods. However, during the German colonial period, the San were increasingly dispossessed of their natural habitat, mainly due to land appropriation by the colonial rulers (Dieckmann et al., 2014). Under the South African apartheid regime, which followed World War I, the San were allocated only a small "homeland" compared to other non-white Namibian tribes. This homeland was located in the Tsumkwe District West and Tsumkwe District East (Dieckmann et al., 2014). By the 1970s, only 3% of the San population had land rights (Dieckmann et al., 2014). During the fight against the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the South African Defence Force recruited many San individuals as trackers, capitalising on their traditional hunting skills (Dieckmann et al., 2014). After Namibia's independence, most San people remained landless and became dependent on others. Some groups continued living in national parks, where they could maintain aspects of their traditional lifestyle. However, many San communities ended up residing on commercial farms or in minority settlements. (Dieckmann et al., 2014)

As Suzman (2001) noted, several of the resolutions called for in Namibia, like the establishment of a multi-sectoral program, targeted the San as a development priority, rather than subsuming their issues into broader economic frameworks. There was not much evidence according to Suzman (2001) that the government had given these resolutions any thought at all, apart from the development of policies relating to education and, to a lesser extent, conservation.



*2; Kids playing a traditional game*

Following a report (Namibia: Discrimination Deprives Indigenous San People of the Right to Health as TB Poses Serious Risk to Their Lives, 2021) on the living conditions of the San people by Dr. Libertina Amathila, Namibia's Deputy Prime Minister from 2005-2010, the government acted in the form of the San Development Programme (SDP). The main objective of the SDP, in relation to the Vision 2030<sup>2</sup> plan, is to integrate the San into Namibian society (Dieckmann et al., 2014). The SDP places a strong emphasis on education. Specific

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<sup>2</sup> Vision 2030 – National Planning Commission (gov.na)

projects include the establishment of Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and the Village School Project, which uses local languages and culturally relevant materials to teach San children. The program encourages various income-generating activities such as community gardening, beekeeping, and local craft-making. These projects are often supported by NGOs and aim to create sustainable livelihoods for the San. The SDP supports the establishment of Traditional Authorities (TAs) and conservancies that empower San communities to manage their own resources and make decisions about their land. There are efforts to improve health services for the San, addressing critical issues such as malnutrition and access to healthcare. The program also includes social support systems like food aid and pensions, which many San communities rely on for their basic needs (Dieckmann et al., 2014). The main characteristics of extreme poverty within the San have been identified by Dieckmann (Dieckmann et al., 2014) as follows. These apply differently to different San groups in Namibia:

- Hunger
- Being without family
- Depending on others
- Having disabled or physically weak household members
- Lacking proper clothing
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Lack of adequate housing/dwellings

Another challenge has been the high school dropout rates of San learners, which was the focus of a research study by Kays (2020). She developed a mobile counselling platform for Grade 7 primary school learners in Donkerbos (Kays et al., 2023). The platform aims to build resilience among San learners, helping them to overcome adversity and reduce dropout rates. The platform was co-created with the [Donkerbos] community and evaluated to ensure it met their needs and preferences (Kays et al., 2023). As a result of the high dropout rate, many San learners lack the educational foundations necessary to access employment opportunities. Many adults work in low-paid jobs, typically on farms or in other low-paying sectors (Dieckmann et al., 2014). The high school dropout rate is related to several factors: Some of the school children see themselves as victims of bullying at school, by classmates and teachers (Kays et al., 2023). As shown in the project by Kays et al. (2023) the reasons are manifold, but clear. It is shown that there must also be a change within the families for their children to be able to finish their school education. These prejudices frequently lead to the San being

given simple jobs and not being trusted with larger responsibilities (Stichel et al., 2018). Stichel et al. (2018) suggest that many San people internalise this victim role, which undermines their confidence and limits their agency. There is a persistent alcohol problem within portions of the San population in Namibia (Dieckmann et al., 2014), which has become a defining stereotype projected onto the group as a whole. These factors contribute to external perceptions and internalised self-doubt, leading to a reinforcing cycle of marginalization (Stichel et al., 2018). The above-mentioned factors complete the concern regarding the loss of culture and traditions of the San, and even more so the issue of misrepresentation by others.

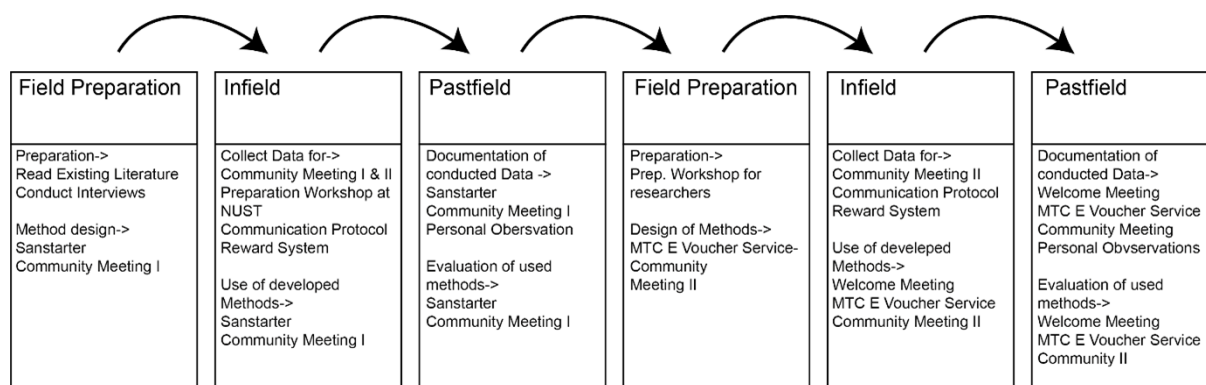


*3; Community members gathering for a meeting*

### 1.1.2 Previous Work

The Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Cluster in the Faculty of Computing and Informatics at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) plays a vital role in this research. The cluster focuses on incorporating

indigenous knowledge into modern technology solutions to support community development<sup>3</sup>. In the projects that have been carried out in the community so far, the main point is the inclusion of the community in all processes (Kaulbach, 2020). This is achieved through co-design projects under the IK Cluster. The approach suggests that the community participates actively in the process of developing the methods to be used and thus shape the projects in such a way that they serve the community's needs. This was formalised in a communication protocol by Kaulbach (2020). The protocol emphasises the importance of motivating the community to recognise the benefits of participation, whether these benefits are intellectual, communicative, material, or related to community building (Kaulbach, 2020). Thus, it is vital that for all projects the community is motivated to participate and recognises the benefits that the projects bring. This can be problematic to communicate, as some projects have no material value but are related to knowledge enhancement or have indirect/direct positive impact on self-sustainability. Therefore, in such cases, it is even more essential to communicate these projects clearly and to motivate the community to get involved in all processes, as participation alone can foster understanding of broader socio-political issues. Taking the example of VR games (Rodil 2020), these show what digital possibilities there are, they motivate the community to familiarise with the technology and to have fun interacting with something formerly unknown (Rodil 2020). These projects indicate how the community can pick up and understand new subjects. The project by Kaulbach (2020) used interactive methods to communicate the project, which proved to be successful throughout the research, as it was easy for participants to stay engaged. Participants clearly understood that the research aimed to include their voices and perspectives, which was ensured through active participation during the project.



4; Research Cycle formulated by Peter Kaulbach in "Creating Communication Protocols [...]"

The research in this thesis aimed to empower the San community in Donkerbos by developing a platform for

<sup>3</sup> <https://indiknowtech.nust.na/>

them to create and disseminate their own content. Community media, such as radio and local broadcasts, can be key tools to counter misrepresentation by providing a platform for them to voice their own stories and perspectives. These community-driven media outlets allow indigenous people to control the narrative and share their cultural heritage, values, and concerns with a broader audience. This form of media not only helps preserve indigenous languages and traditions but also empowers communities by giving them a voice in the public sphere. Research has shown that community radio can significantly enhance the participation of indigenous people in media and contribute to their socio-economic development. (Ní Bhroin et al., 2021)

By addressing the issues of misrepresentation and marginalisation, this project seeks to promote the cultural values and heritage of the San people, while also providing practical benefits such as improved education and economic opportunities. The success of such a platform depends on active community involvement in design, implementation and maintenance, ensuring that it meets their needs and reflects their perspectives. Through such efforts, the voices of indigenous communities can be amplified, leading to greater recognition and respect in broader society.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Most media reporting on indigenous individuals, people, or tribes is conducted by outsiders of the respective indigenous community. This often leads to misrepresentation and perpetuation of stereotypes, as the narratives are shaped by those who do not belong to these communities. Reasons for this include discrimination, lack of access to education, and limited reach due to a lack of access to technologies (Stichel et al., 2018). This issue is particularly pronounced with the San in Namibia, where external portrayals often fail to reflect their true cultural and historical realities. The core problem addressed by this research is the lack of authentic representation and the marginalisation of indigenous voices in public discourse.

While existing research has increasingly recognised the need for participatory approaches with indigenous communities, most studies concerning the San have historically been conducted about them, rather than with them. Moreover, there is a notable lack of research on participatory or co-designed media projects specifically involving the San [in Namibia]. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how community-led media production can serve as a tool for representation, empowerment, and cultural continuity.

## 1.3 Objectives

The main research question which the study aims to answer is how to support independent reporting and storytelling within an indigenous San community in Namibia in their development towards being an equal part

of public discourse. The objectives are:

1. To identify and establish a digital platform to support independent reporting.
2. To enable the community to create and disseminate content.
3. To evaluate the usability and experiences.

#### 1.4 Ethical considerations

In conducting this research, several ethical considerations have been meticulously addressed to ensure a respectful and sustainable interaction with the Donkerbos community. These considerations are grounded in established communication protocols and ethical guidelines designed to navigate the complexities of working with indigenous populations<sup>4</sup>.

The choice of population and the sampling size were carefully determined to ensure a representative and respectful engagement with the community. The selection process adhered to principles of inclusivity and fairness, aligning with the San Code of Ethics (SAN CODE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, n.d.-a), which emphasises fairness and justice in all interactions.

Confidentiality could be paramount in this study. The researcher, who is actively involved in the fieldwork, ensures that any information shared by participants is treated with confidentiality. Participants are informed about the limits of anonymity, understanding that while their identities are protected if desired, complete anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. The ethical approach to confidentiality includes secure handling of data and ensuring that identifying details are anonymised in all reports and publications, if this is wanted by the participants.

Building and maintaining respect and trust within the community is a fundamental ethical consideration. The researcher, conducting this research, is committed to acting in the best interests of the participants, with no intention of causing harm. This involves transparent communication, honouring commitments, and being sensitive to the cultural and social dynamics of the San community.

To understand the emic perspective—the insider's viewpoint—the researcher consciously mitigates personal

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/affiliated-codes/>

biases and interpretations. This involves a reflective practice, continual self-assessment, and adherence to the communication protocols set by the community. The communication protocol, developed in collaboration with the community, provides a framework for ethical engagement. This protocol includes guidelines on respectful communication, consent processes, and the management of sensitive information. They serve as a foundation for the researcher's interactions, ensuring that the community's values and norms are upheld throughout the study (Kaulbach, 2020).

By adhering to these ethical considerations, the research aims to foster a collaborative and respectful relationship with the San community, promoting their agency and ensuring that their voices are authentically represented.

## **2. Literature Review**

Indigenous media and journalism play a vital role in representing indigenous communities, promoting cultural preservation, and challenging dominant narratives. It also plays a crucial role in promoting social change, cultural resilience, and community empowerment (Pollard, 2020). This literature review examines key studies that portray the current landscape of indigenous media. It furthermore explores the impact of indigenous media on indigenous communities and approaches towards the development of sustainable indigenous media and their effects.

Despite growing interest in indigenous communication, there remains a significant lack of research that documents co-designed or community-led media initiatives involving San communities in Namibia. This review therefore identifies a research gap that this study seeks to address: how participatory and self-sustained indigenous media projects can serve as tools for authentic representation and empowerment.

The literature reviewed here provides the conceptual foundation for the research objectives defined in Section 1.3, particularly in relation to the role of indigenous media in public discourse and the significance of community involvement in digital storytelling. Insights from these contexts have shaped the methodology and informed the data collection process. Understanding the challenges of representation, funding, and technological adaptation has supported the interpretation and analysis of the data.

The literature review was conducted through a structured process to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Relevant databases and journals were systematically searched using carefully selected keywords. Studies were screened for relevance, critically reviewed, and thematically organised. This methodical approach ensured that the literature review reflects both the breadth and depth of existing research and provides a solid foundation for the empirical and theoretical focus of the study.

### **2.1 Indigenous Communities' [limited] Role in a Globalised Digital World**

Indigenous communities, regularly also referred to as marginalised communities, have had the issue of being “represented by others” (Sabiescu, 2015).

An indigenous community can be defined as a group of people with shared ancestry, cultural practices, and spiritual relationships to a particular land, who self-identify as indigenous and are recognised as such by others. While indigenous communities often face marginalisation, it is important to distinguish between the two terms, as not all marginalised groups are indigenous, and not all indigenous communities are marginalised in

the same way (Smith, 1999; UNDRIP, 2007).

Globally, indigenous communities face significant challenges in asserting their presence and perspectives within the digital world. Ginsburg (1991) argues that indigenous media provides a crucial platform for these communities to "talk back" to dominant narratives, offering a space for cultural preservation and social engagement. Indigenous communities in Africa such as the Masai are being described within the digitalisation process as often actively being left out (Otenyo, 2017). Stichel et al.'s (Stichel et al., 2018) research documents the negative perception and self-perception of a San community in eastern Namibia, reinforced by digital and traditional media. The research explains that in the confrontation which stereotypical characteristics such as laziness, stupidity, childishness, most of the San grow up with adapting the position of the marginalised victim or stand in a consisting fight for a counter-narrative (Stichel et al., 2018).

In North America, the Native American Journalists Association<sup>5</sup> (NAJA) works to improve media coverage of indigenous issues and support indigenous journalists, addressing the widespread misrepresentation in mainstream media. In Latin America, community radio stations are vital in cultural preservation and social activism. Rodríguez (2001) highlights how these stations empower indigenous communities by giving them a voice to express their concerns and preserve their cultural heritage. Similarly, in Asia, Telles (2024) emphasises the role of indigenous media in preserving culture and advocating for indigenous rights in the Philippines. The editors of *Digital Media and the Preservation of Indigenous Languages in Africa* make the case that digital media outlets should be recognised and welcomed by African cultures. These platforms are crucial for supporting lifestyles that honour the richness and significance of indigenous cultures, even despite their tendency to serve as hubs for epistemic colonialism (Makananise & Shumani, 2024). The intersection of traditional practices and modern media technologies shapes the landscape of indigenous journalism in Africa. Sabiescu (2015) emphasises that indigenous communities often face exclusion from the digitalisation process. In Kenya, the Maasai of Laikipya utilised digital storytelling to preserve and share their cultural practices, increasing both cultural pride and external recognition (*Digitizing Indigenous Culture: The Maasai of Laikipya*, n.d.). In an article on *News@NWU*, Prof. Abiodun Salawu, the Director of North-West University's Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA) research entity, emphasises that despite the difficulties faced by indigenous language media, it continues to be a powerful tool for organising people in support of developmental objectives and advocates for collaboration with local media. In this period of the fourth industrial revolution,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://indigenousjournalists.org/naja-history/>

he emphasised the necessity for practitioners of indigenous language media to include internet and social media into their work (Ogundeji, 2023).

In Southern Africa, indigenous journalism is pivotal for community engagement and cultural resilience. The San people in Namibia use indigenous media to combat stereotypes and promote a deeper understanding of their culture and current issues (Stichel et al., 2018). Additionally, Wagner Fernández-Ardèvol (2020) discuss the potential of mobile technology to aid self-representation, though its effectiveness depends on overcoming barriers like limited technological skills and infrastructure. As this study is positioned within this broader context by examining the specific challenges and opportunities faced by indigenous journalists in Southern Africa, the literature highlights how these journalists navigate the dual pressures of cultural preservation and modern journalistic practices, influencing both local and broader societal perceptions of indigenous issues.

Critiques within the field often address the difficulties indigenous journalists face in maintaining objectivity and credibility. McCallum and Waller (2013) discuss the challenge of balancing cultural representation with journalistic standards. Funding and ownership sustainability are significant concerns, as indigenous media outlets often struggle to secure stable financial resources. Additionally, the conflict between traditional communication practices and new media technologies presents a nuanced area for exploration, particularly regarding the digital divide and access to resources (Wagner & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2020). The reviewed studies critically examine indigenous communities' roles in the public sphere and the impact of present narratives within globalisation. Wilson and Stewart (2008) delve into the multifaceted relationship between indigenous peoples and the media, exploring media strategies, representation, cultural expression, and challenges faced by indigenous media. Their case studies from different parts of the world, including North America, showcase diverse ways in which indigenous communities engage with and shape media landscapes. This includes filmmaking, digital archiving, and radio.

## 2.2 Indigenous Communities' Interest in Technology Digitalisation

The ambition of indigenous communities to establish media varies, but throughout different studies it was observed that urgency is one of the main contributors towards indigenous media. Many times, this is connected to the loss of cultural values and traditions, as it can be seen in Tremblay et al. (2018) research, where the participants engage in a photovoice project. Kaulbach (2020), Stichel et al. et al. (2018) and Rodil et al. et al. (2020) furthermore disarm, in respect to the San community in Donkerbos, one general assumption of indigenous communities' lack of interest in technology. In the research, their interest and ambition in making use of the internet and what it offers is expressively shown. Stichel et al.'s (2018) research showcases

the community's interest in the practical use of technology, as they engaged in video recording and showed responsibility in recording the sessions and taking pictures themselves. The VR project by Rodil et al. (2020) suggests that even state-of-the-art technology such as VR, can prove to be usable in such a setting and create a lot of enthusiasms.

Indigenous communities globally have used social media lately to raise awareness of political, social, and ecological issues (Johnson & Rajadurai, 2020). The use of VR technology within the project of Rodil (2020), shows the existing uncertainty in the use of new technologies, but it also emphasises the general interest in exploring new things in a positive setting. During the personal observation of the implementation of the project, it seemed that the hesitation was mainly about problems of understanding and interacting with something unknown. However, after these concerns subsided, the interest of community members was sparked. This confirms the statement that, at least in the case of the San community in Donkerbos, there is an openness to new technologies. Furthermore, it is noted that some community members own smartphones and are active on platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram or use YouTube to watch videos. Nonetheless, it can be argued that digital media has only a limited effect in rural indigenous communities because there are certain conditions that must be met. These include, first and foremost, the availability of the technology, i.e. smartphones, laptops, or tablets. Furthermore, an internet connection is needed to share and obtain information. In addition, the use of these technologies must be understood or learned. Are these conditions met, digital media offer many benefits for indigenous communities (Budka, 2018). Among others, it raises awareness of local and national news, health information and political agendas (Du, 2017).

The mentioned conditions do also contribute to some reluctance of indigenous communities to interact with digital media (Rennie, E; Crouch, A; Wright, A; and Thomas, 2011). Furthermore, some scholars argue that the use of digital media can contribute to conflicts within the community. It is displayed in research (Wagner & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2020) that the choice of medium can cause political issues. In the research by Wagner Fernández-Ardèvol, the mobile mediated communication degraded the face-to-face communication, which has been a valuable arrangement within the respective community.

### 2.3 Indigenous Journalists and Journalism

In the research review on indigenous journalism, it is shown that only a few studies examine to what extent indigenous journalism facilitates new opportunities for indigenous communities to process media and thus amplify their standing in public discourse (Ní Bhroin et al., 2021).

Indigenous journalism can be defined as a practice of news production and storytelling carried out by and for

indigenous communities, which reflects their cultural frameworks, language, and knowledge systems. It differs from mainstream journalism through its emphasis on community ownership, culturally specific content, and resistance to dominant narratives. (Couldry, 2004; McCallum and Waller, 2013)

Alia (2010), in "The New Media Nation: Indigenous Peoples and Global Communication," explores how global communication technologies are used by indigenous peoples to create new forms of media and engage in global discourse. Alia's work highlights the significant potential of digital platforms in providing indigenous communities with a voice in the global arena. This potential includes amplifying their narratives, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering global solidarity among indigenous groups. The integration of global communication technologies has enabled indigenous media producers to challenge dominant narratives and assert their perspectives on issues affecting their communities.

Couldry (2004) in "Theorising Media as Practice," provides a theoretical framework for understanding media practices, which is crucial for situating indigenous journalism within the broader media landscape. Couldry's perspective helps elucidate how indigenous journalism operates as a practice that not only disseminates information but also actively engages in cultural production and social change. This theoretical approach underscores the importance of recognising indigenous media as a distinct and significant field within global media studies.

Mhiripiri and Chari (2017) examine media practices and policies in Africa in "Media Law, Ethics, and Policy in the Digital Age." Their analysis highlights the ethical and legal challenges faced by indigenous journalists, including issues of censorship, freedom of expression, and media regulation. These challenges are critical for understanding the constraints and opportunities for indigenous journalism in Africa. Mhiripiri and Chari's work underscores the need for supportive legal and ethical frameworks to ensure that indigenous journalists can operate freely and effectively.

Nyamnjoh (2005) in "Africa's Media: Democracy and the Politics of Belonging," provides insights into the role of media in African societies and how indigenous journalism can influence democratic practices and cultural preservation. Nyamnjoh argues that media in Africa plays a crucial role in shaping notions of belonging and identity. Indigenous journalism, therefore, becomes a vital tool for promoting democratic engagement and preserving cultural heritage. This perspective is essential for understanding the broader societal impacts of indigenous journalism in African contexts.

Maweu and Mare (2021) discuss the role of media in conflict and peace building in Africa in "Media, Conflict,

and Peacebuilding in Africa." Their work offers insight into relevant challenges faced by journalists in Southern Africa. The authors illustrate how journalism can contribute to peace building efforts by providing platforms for dialogue and conflict resolution. This is particularly pertinent in regions where media can either exacerbate tensions or foster understanding and reconciliation.

Biesele and Hitchcock (2010) highlight in "The Ju/'hoan San of Nyae Nyae and Namibian Independence," the Ju/'hoan San people have utilised forms of media to maintain their cultural identity and assert their perspectives in the broader political landscape. Their storytelling and media initiatives have helped their development and democratic engagement, demonstrating the transformative potential of indigenous media in empowering communities and challenging stereotypes.

Couldry (2004) offers a critical perspective on media practices, highlighting the complexities and challenges faced by indigenous journalists. They discuss issues such as the balance between cultural preservation and the demands of modern media practices, and the difficulties in maintaining journalistic objectivity and credibility while representing community interests. This critique is vital for understanding the inherent tensions in indigenous journalism and the strategies used to navigate these challenges.

Alia (2010) critically examines the role of global communication technologies in indigenous media, addressing issues of access, representation, and sustainability. Alia points out that while digital platforms offer significant opportunities, they also present challenges related to equitable access and the risk of commodifying indigenous cultures. These critiques are crucial for a balanced understanding of the impact of global communication technologies on indigenous journalism.

McCallum and Waller (2013) examine the role of indigenous journalists as mediators between indigenous and mainstream Australian society. The article explores the challenges and ethical considerations faced by indigenous journalists and their contribution to indigenous news production. McCallum and Waller's (2013) work emphasises the importance of indigenous journalists' perspectives and their role in shaping public discourse. The role of indigenous media and journalism, according to the scholars, is not only to inform but also to empower, challenge stereotypes, and facilitate self-determination. They, furthermore, explore the challenges and prospects of indigenous journalism and media ownership. The article by McCallum and Waller underscores the importance of indigenous media in providing a platform for indigenous voices, cultural preservation, and self-determination. It addresses issues of ownership, funding, and sustainability, shedding light on the struggles faced by indigenous journalists and media outlets. The challenges faced by indigenous journalists in terms of credibility, objectivity, and representing indigenous perspectives are highlighted too. It

discusses the complexities of the tensions indigenous journalists navigate in reporting indigenous news by shedding light on the intricacies of indigenous journalism and the importance of diverse indigenous voices in the media landscape.

Ginsburg's (1991) article explores the tensions and complexities surrounding indigenous media practices. The article interrogates the challenges faced by indigenous media producers in balancing the preservation of cultural integrity and external demands. Ginsburg argues that indigenous journalism allows them to talk back, which can be backed by Stichel et al.'s (2018) more recent research, which gave the Donkerbos community a platform to engage in a non-immediate discourse with people living in Windhoek.

This literature provides a conceptual foundation for the research objective of supporting independent reporting (Objective 1), by outlining both the opportunities and challenges of indigenous journalism. It also illustrates the significance of enabling the community to create and disseminate content (Objective 2), especially through locally meaningful, culturally grounded media practices.

## 2.4 Importance of Indigenous Media

The use of indigenous journalism and media aims to empower [marginalised] communities and improve their self-representation (Wingert & White, 2017). In their research, Akpana et al., (2015) come to the result "that the use of indigenous media of communication had significant joint contributions to the utilisation of development information" (Akpana et al., 2015, p. 7).

Indigenous media can be broadly defined as media created by and for indigenous communities, rooted in local knowledge systems, language, values, and cultural expressions. It not only counters external misrepresentation but also reclaims narrative authority. Indigenous media, however, does more than distribute news. It serves as a community forum that can help reinforce cultural values and languages. Ultimately, it holds the potential to reaffirm an indigenous community's identity (Pollard, 2020).

This potential is increasingly realised through media formats such as community radio and digital storytelling, which are further discussed in the next section. Stichel et al. (2019) argue that if a media platform is rooted in community ownership and values, stereotyping or prejudice can be reduced or provide more understanding of their current position in Namibia. (Stichel et al., 2018)

Wagner and Fernández-Ardèvol (2020) argue that "limited mobile technology skills combined with commercially oriented mobile media services can hinder creative and adaptable mobile media practices, and

in turn, undermine decolonising mobile appropriations” (p. 83). Wagner and Fernández-Ardèvol (2020) findings imply that a crucial self-determining process, in which sovereignty over the meanings and purposes of mobile media is gained, is required for the efficient use of mobile media for self-representation. Furthermore, indigenous people often are considered in existing stereotypes by mainstream media and as mentioned, spoken on behalf of (Sabiescu, 2015; Stichel et al., 2018; Suzman, 2001). Indigenous communities are typically under siege by dominant cultures, which leads to marginalisation on many levels. Therefore, supporting the creation and maintenance of community-controlled indigenous media platforms is not only a cultural intervention but also a political and developmental necessity.

"What separates indigenous journalism from other forms is its reason for existence and its place it holds outside of and often in opposition to institutions that mainstream journalists are tied to" (Garcia, 2021).

Mundy and Compton (1995, p. 87) believe that indigenous communication platforms are being utilised for development strategies and practices because:

- They have value in their own right.
- The contemporary media have limited range.
- Indigenous channels have high credibility.
- They are an important conduit of change.
- They offer opportunities for participation by the local people.
- They are democratic.
- They are not necessarily top-down, as most mass media are.
- If ignored, they can lead to inappropriate development.

Language plays a central role in indigenous identity and self-representation and thus also in [indigenous] media. It is not only a means of communication but also a carrier of worldviews, cultural memory, and collective values. In the context of indigenous media, the use of indigenous languages challenges dominant linguistic hierarchies and affirms cultural sovereignty. Scholars such as Wilson and Stewart (2008) and Smith (1999) argue that the revitalisation of indigenous languages through media is a powerful act of resistance and

healing.

This literature underpins Objective 2 of this study: enabling the community to create and disseminate content. It also provides context for Objective 1 by explaining why indigenous media must be community-led to truly support independent reporting.

## 2.5 Exploring [Indigenous] Media Platforms

Johnson and Rajadurai (2020) investigate the role of community radio in promoting social change within indigenous communities. They emphasise the contributions of community radio stations to local development, cultural preservation, and community participation. The study highlights how community radio platforms provide spaces for dialogue, expression, and community mobilisation, ultimately fostering social transformation.

Chikaipa Gunde (2021) investigate the role of community radio in Malawi. The study explores how community radio stations empower local voices, foster cultural dialogue, and address community challenges. It emphasises the importance of community radio in promoting local expertise, preserving traditional knowledge, and creating spaces for community-led development.

Community radio is particularly suited to indigenous contexts due to its participatory nature, it is grounded in local languages and cultures, and it emphasises community ownership and control. It enables horizontal communication rather than top-down information flow and allows community members to become both producers and audiences of content. These affordances make it a powerful tool for reclaiming narrative authority and fostering civic engagement (Johnson & Rajadurai, 2020). These characteristics distinguish them from commercial or state-run media and make them particularly suitable for indigenous self-representation.

Rao et al., (2022) examine the role of indigenous film in fostering cultural resilience and identity among indigenous communities in the context of indigenous nutrition. This study explores how indigenous film utilises media platforms to challenge stereotypes, assert cultural rights, and promote community well-being. It emphasises the importance of indigenous film in preserving cultural heritage, empowering indigenous voices, and reinforcing cultural identity. “A participatory filmmaking process in the context of community nutrition can enable participants to question unequal power relations by enabling the most marginalised to voice their perspectives with the support of cameras and filmmaking skills.” (Rao et al., 2022) It, furthermore, contributed to a broader discourse by viewers about ideas to re-establish certain knowledge and use of indigenous food.

Shiri et al., (2021) examine the use of digital storytelling as a tool for preserving indigenous knowledge and promoting cultural heritage. The research explores the experiences and challenges faced by indigenous communities in utilising digital media platforms for knowledge transmission and cultural revitalisation. The study highlights the potential of digital storytelling in bridging intergenerational gaps and revitalising indigenous knowledge systems.

In a project with the Sami people from Finland, the authors engage in the design process of a digital archive, emphasising the importance of brainstorming sessions, design workshops, prototype development, and user tests. They emphasise the cultural sensitivity and design sensitivity, which they refer to as “double sensitivity” (Moradi et al., 2020). In the design process they focused on the tonality of the design, usability, sociability, ethical considerations, and technical errors (Moradi et al., 2020). Implementing digital archiving in an indigenous community Moradi et al., (2020) raised awareness of “two intertwined sensitivities, i.e. a cultural sensitivity and a design sensitivity. The aim of this project was to ensure cultural preservation and ease the access to such knowledge. One major conclusion of this project was the focus on sensitivity. “Understanding user needs, capabilities and values, to the project requirements, to aspects of how the system might support those needs, and how the design might redefine practice once it is implemented.”(Moradi et al., 2020, p. 9) This aligns with Ginsburg’s (2008) approach, who used ICTs<sup>6</sup>, a tool of self-representation, to transmit messages independent of the mainstream media, to challenge dominant stereotypes.

Podcasting, as a form of digital audio media, offers affordances that align well with the participatory and culturally grounded media practices discussed above. Like community radio, it emphasises voice, language, and storytelling, but with greater flexibility in production and distribution. Unlike film or digital archiving, which often require more resources or institutional support, podcasting is low-threshold, portable, and relatively easy to adopt. It shares with digital storytelling and participatory filmmaking a focus on narrative agency and self-representation. Podcasting’s asynchronous format allows listeners to engage with the content in their own time and context, while its shareability supports circulation beyond the local community. These characteristics make podcasting a promising medium for indigenous media projects, particularly in rural areas with limited infrastructure but strong oral traditions. (McHugh, S., 2016)

The examples reviewed in this section illustrate how different indigenous media platforms — including radio,

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<sup>6</sup>According to Cambridge Dictionary: information and communication technology

film, digital storytelling, and archiving — are being used to support empowerment, knowledge sharing, and cultural resilience. They also demonstrate the alignment of such media initiatives with Objective 2 (content creation and dissemination) and Objective 3 (evaluating usability and experience) of this study.

## 2.6 Fundamental Approaches Towards Ethical Indigenous Research

Scholars argue that the success of indigenous movements leads to success when there is a strong collective identity (Lupien, 2020).

Coates et al., (2022) argue the case that western methodology neglects to take into consideration the indigenous experience. Budka (2018) promotes the significance of non-western perspectives and realities in conceptualising and understanding the diversity of digital life, advocating for collaborative media production, training, and community engagement.

Kovach (2021) argues the need for indigenous methodology, acknowledging that both indigenous and western methodologies can be employed simultaneously. Using the principles by Kovach and other scholars, Budka (2018) develops a theoretical framework based on two perspectives: Indigenous Standpoint Theory (an indigenous methodology) and Institutional Theory (a Western methodology), combining them into what he calls Indigenous Institutional Theory.

Chilisia et al., (2017) conducted research within the indigenous research paradigm to engage with African communities. According to them, does the paradigm expand “the epistemological and ethical framework options available to both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars. The epistemological diversity also informs multiple methodological frameworks that are accessible to all” (Chilisa et al., 2017, p. 329).

The postcolonial/indigenous research paradigm was developed in postcolonial contexts, notably in Australia, explains Kawulich (2001). A pivotal figure is Māori academic and cultural theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith, whose 1999 book “Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples”, argues for the decolonisation of research processes. Rigney (1997) also played a critical role in conceptualising an indigenous methodology.

This paradigm is rooted in indigenous knowledge systems, critical theory, postcolonial discourses, feminist theories, critical race theory, and neo-Marxist frameworks. It seeks to challenge deficit thinking and pathological descriptions of the formerly colonised, while reconstructing knowledge frameworks that promote transformation and social change among historically oppressed groups (Kawulich, 2001). The general assumption of this paradigm is that multiple socially constructed realities exist. These constructions are based

on a web of connections between humans, their environment, the cosmos, and both living and non-living beings (Kawulich, 2001).

**Ontology:** Community, collectively, social justice, human unity and pluralism are important for many [African] communities and form the basis of social relations (Kawulich, 2001). Indigenous communities often express an I/We worldview, in contrast to the more individualistic I/You orientation of Western thought. Indigenous communities are also generally more closely tied to their environment, with deep bonds to nature and animals (Kawulich, 2001).

**Epistemology:** According to Wilson and Stewart (2008), the fundamental belief within an indigenous paradigm is the relationality of knowledge. In contrast to Western paradigms that emphasise individual knowledge ownership, indigenous paradigms advocate for a cosmic and collective relationship to knowledge (Kawulich, 2001). Knowledge belongs not only to researchers and participants, but also to animals, plants, and the earth itself. Wilson and Stewart (2008) mention language frameworks, storytelling practices, talk circles, and indigenous knowledge systems as methods aligned with this paradigm.

**Axiology:** The values of critical theory, particularly those outlined by Jürgen Habermas, emphasise the importance of equality in the researcher–participant relationship. Kawulich (2001) echoes this by describing mutual respect between researchers and the communities they study. This includes embracing oral traditions, social justice and healing practices, sharing circles, and songs. This ethical stance is particularly relevant to participatory media research, where power relations are reflected in who speaks, who listens, and who frames the message. This approach aligns with Smith’s (1999) decolonial framework, which underscores the necessity of recognising indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives in research methodologies. Smith’s work highlights the power dynamics and decolonial aspirations inherent in indigenous media practices, providing a critical foundation for understanding these complexities.

In challenging the dominant western epistemologies, Williams (2007) provides a critical analysis of the disciplinary frameworks shaping indigenous studies and academic discourses. By advocating for the inclusion of indigenous perspectives, Williams encourages a reimagining of knowledge production that honours indigenous ways of knowing. This reimagining is essential for ethical research. Passive observation and mere information gathering are insufficient (Zaman et al., 2016). Instead, ethical research requires an active engagement with and adaptation to cultural contexts, as illustrated by Maasz et al. (2018), who implemented a sustainable Indigenous Knowledge (IK) system through a comprehensive digitization process. This process involves co-design, conceptualisation, collection, correction, curation, circulation, and creation of knowledge.

Moreover, achieving cultural competence necessitates an increased awareness of the underlying meanings and beliefs that form the foundation of any culture. Colquhoun et al. (2013) stress the importance of understanding these cultural nuances to navigate the profound differences encountered when adapting to new cultural contexts. This understanding is crucial for researchers aiming to conduct ethical and respectful research within indigenous communities. Zimmermann and De Michiel (2018) conducted a case study in which the researchers employed an ethnographic approach to study the collaborative production process between indigenous filmmakers and community members. Their methodology involved participant observation, interviews, and analysis of the documentary's impact on the community.

Deger (2009) uses an ethnographic approach to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social contexts of indigenous media production and consumption. Deger worked with photography, video, and other visual media to document and analyse.

Faye et al. (2002) examined the intersection of indigenous media, reproductive health, and social justice. "Co-creative media is a subset of participative media that involves collaboration between professionals and non-professionals" (Rennie, 2013, p. 23). This model is frequently implemented through workshops and media skills training.

Lupiens' (2020) approach includes four steps: forming advisory groups, tailoring questionnaires to community needs, consultation during fieldwork, and preparing reports for stakeholders. Eriksen et al. (2021) similarly emphasise the importance of collaborative planning and production in their work with the Sami community in Finland, highlighting active participation by community members. Salazar (2015) points out the vitality of preparation, which he compromises to cycles of planning, implementation, and reflection, with the researchers actively collaborating with community members to co-produce.

This literature directly supports the participatory, co-design approach adopted in this study, particularly in relation to Objectives 2 and 3, which focus on enabling content creation and evaluating experiences with media use.

## 2.7 The Role of Participation in Indigenous Co-Design

A participatory approach towards research helps to more equitably share and distribute the power of storytelling and local reporting. Participation in research, particularly in media-related projects, shifts the balance of power and allows historically marginalised communities to take part in shaping narratives about themselves. As the participatory communication approach reduces the power and advantages of dominant

groups (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005) it supports more democratic media engagement. This aligns with the concept of co-design, which goes beyond consultation to include indigenous participants as active agents in the planning, development, and implementation of media projects.

The alternative development theory, since its emergence in the 1970s, defines development as participatory and people centred. It redefines the aims of development, moving away from Western developmentalism (Pieterse, 1998). The theory focuses on local development using alternative methods in-field, with participation as a central feature (Pieterse, 1998). Furthermore, its focus lies on groups who have historically been exploited and spoken for. It believes in people's ability to effect social change (Pieterse, 1998). Thus, the alternative development theory can be referred to as a "bottom-up" approach to development.

In contrast to mainstream development approaches, the alternative approach emphasises basic needs, self-sustainability, and self-development among other core values (Pieterse, 1998). In media-related projects, this translates into giving communities access to the tools and decision-making processes needed to create their own content.

The role of media within this theory is to empower people and reduce the information and knowledge gap between cultural groups, geographic regions, and nations. Another important aspect of this theory is that participating parties are seen as equals and partners in research (Pieterse, 1998).

Critics argue that the alternative development theory is not always clearly defined and may promise more than it delivers. It can be argued that the theory does not fully apply to real-world situations (Pieterse, 1998).

Nevertheless, the theoretical alignment between alternative development and participatory indigenous media research provides a strong conceptual basis for this study. It supports the project's focus on collaborative knowledge production, content ownership, and social change, which are reflected in Objectives 2 and 3.

## 2.8 In Response to the San [in Donkerbos]

The paper by Kapuire et al., (2015) emphasises with regard to indigenous communities in Namibia "the importance of learning, especially of technology, attitude towards the common overall project goal, the intrinsic pleasure of participation, as well as immediate rewards and expectations of resource availabilities and privileges of selection for participation" (p. 2).

Fernando et al., (2018) state that the San often grow up assuming the position of a marginalised victim or someone who must constantly fight stereotypes. In Stichel et al.'s (2018) research, this issue of negative

perception is similarly confirmed. The community's lack of influence over how they are represented, as well as the prevalence of stereotyping, significantly impacts their behaviour and sense of identity.

The San community frequently compares itself to urban society, which reinforces a sense of marginalisation and exclusion (Stichel et al., 2018). Stichel's research points to the use of smartphones and recording tools, which the community actively engaged with to create their own elicitation. This participatory use of digital tools aligns with the aims of this study and reflects Objective 2, which seeks to enable the community to create and disseminate content. As Stichel et al. (2019) report, many urban participants still believe that the San strictly adhere to traditional lifestyles.

The issues of land ownership and poverty are common within the San communities. These issues are often viewed as the responsibility of regional governments, yet many urban citizens remain unaware of such rural challenges (Stichel et al., 2018). Thus, providing space for San perspectives on their own livelihood and development can help broaden public understanding and recognition within Namibian society.

Dieckmann et al., (2014) highlight the importance of direct consultation of San, which aligns with the approach and paradigm of this study. They recommend that adequate time and resources be allocated for integrating consultation mechanisms in development processes. These mechanisms should be based on the principle of free, prior, and informed consent. They must provide clear information on the potential benefits and risks of proposed projects and should result in outcomes that are genuinely beneficial to the community. In alignment with these recommendations, the communication protocol proposed by Kaulbach (2020) is used as a guiding framework.

The reviewed literature demonstrates the significant role and enormous potential of indigenous media in promoting social change, cultural resilience, and knowledge preservation within African indigenous communities.

This section also reinforces the value of Objectives 1 and 2: supporting independent reporting and enabling community-based content creation. It highlights the relevance of participatory methods in ensuring that these objectives are achieved in an ethically grounded and culturally appropriate way.

## 3. Methodology

Building on the theoretical, ethical, and practical considerations outlined in the literature chapter, this chapter outlines the research design and methodological decisions made to investigate how an indigenous [San] community can be supported in developing and sustaining its own independent media. The study responds to the challenges of misrepresentation, marginalisation, and cultural erosion identified in Chapter 2. Based on this foundation, the methodology was structured to address the three research objectives: identifying and establishing a digital platform, enabling the community to create and disseminate content, and evaluating their experiences with the platform. The chapter presents the epistemological and methodological rationale, describes how participatory and co-design principles were applied, and explains the data collection process, ethical considerations, and implementation steps taken during the fieldwork.

### 3.1 Methodological Approaches

The conducted literature review indicates that the specific topic, which this research is concerned with, is in some respects still underrepresented in broader academic discourses. Thus, research close to this issue and case studies around the globe with indigenous communities have been used as reference. In many of those cases, action-based research was used to inform the research. The NUST IK Cluster, under which the general collaboration with the Donkerbos community runs, emphasises the inclusion and empowerment of those who are usually excluded when new solutions are developed. In previous research conducted with the Donkerbos community, alternative development methods such as participatory action designs and grass root development approaches have shown to be successful (Kaulbach, 2020; Stichel et al., 2018).

This study draws on participatory and community-based co-design approaches to empower the San community in Donkerbos in their own development and media production. A detailed discussion of the action-based and indigenous paradigms that inform this research is provided in Section 3.1.1.

The research is conducted within a qualitative research approach under the indigenous paradigm. The qualitative research approach supports many of the used methods in conducted research with the Donkerbos community, such as focus groups (Tisdell, 2016). It aims to observe behaviour of personal experiences and examines the different vantage points of this world by individuals or smaller groups (Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative data explain and contextualise the findings. This approach allows establishing communication. It is based on the aim to create knowledge and information, which can be used for content creation. (Tisdell, 2016)

Community based co-design is ideally based on a long-term collaboration effort between community and

researcher (Kapuire et al., 2015; Winschiers-Theophilus et al., 2015). The researcher conducting this research fulfils these requirements, having conducted research with the community before and supported other researchers in the past on their field trips to Donkerbos. Decision-making on every level, including methodology and procedures, should be equally distributed (Winschiers-Theophilus et al., 2020). In projects such as the VR adaption, Rodil (2020) showcases the importance of co-creation and the success of it, with the Donkerbos community.

The choice of methodology in this study directly responds to the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Objective 1, identifying and establishing a digital platform, which was implemented through a podcast format, will be discussed in detail in 3.4.1. Objective 2, enabling the community to create and disseminate content, is embedded in the participatory processes and shared authorship of media products. Objective 3, evaluating usability and experience, is pursued through feedback sessions and reflective discussions during and after content production. These methods are grounded in the theoretical and ethical principles discussed in the literature review, particularly in relation to indigenous knowledge, participatory design, and communication for development. By aligning design decisions with these frameworks, the research aims not only to generate knowledge but to shift power relations in favour of community-led media practice.

### 3.1.1 Action-Based Research and Indigenous Paradigm

In alignment with this study and broader research approaches in Donkerbos, the methodology integrates action-based research and the indigenous paradigm to develop the critical consciousness of people, build capacities, and transform oppressive structures. Action-based research in this context involves the active participation of the community in both problem investigation and solution development, fostering inclusivity and adaptability while raising awareness (Kemmis, 2009). This approach is deeply intertwined with the post-colonial/indigenous research paradigm (Kawulich, 2001), ensuring that research methods are culturally sensitive and community centred. Similar methodological synergies have been proposed by Rigney (1997), who conceptualised an indigenised research framework grounded in political integrity and community relevance, and by Chilisa (2012), who integrates indigenous and transformative paradigms to ensure culturally grounded and socially just research outcomes.

To apply these paradigms, the research was initiated with community meetings, also referred to as talk circles, which are fundamental in indigenous research methods (Kawulich, 2001). These meetings served as an introduction to the research process, allowing community members to voice their concerns and expectations, thus ensuring that the research questions and objectives were directly informed by the community's needs.

This participatory approach is essential for achieving true equality and inclusivity, as highlighted by Kapuire et al. (2015).

The workshops conducted throughout this research were designed to provide practical training in podcast content creation, emphasising the process rather than the quality of the content to foster early positive experiences. This aligns with Peltier's (2018) emphasis on contextualising research only after engaging with the community and ensuring ongoing community involvement and accountability throughout the research process. By focusing on the technical aspects of software and hardware, the workshops empower participants to confidently create and share their content, addressing their expressed fears of cultural extinction and lack of public voice.

Additionally, exploratory research features were integrated into the methodology to focus on producing meaningful results without preconceived hypotheses (Waters, 2007). This approach ensures that the research outcomes are based on the efficiency and relevance of the content created by the community. Previous research with the San community in Donkerbos emphasised the need to challenge and redefine existing pathological descriptions and deficit thinking, a crucial aspect of the indigenous research paradigm.

The participatory designs, including community meetings and workshops, are not only data collection methods but also platforms for observing interactions, solving communication issues, and sparking diverse conversations (Kovach, 2009). These activities are instrumental in preparing cultural talks and presentations, ultimately aiding in the development of a medium and content creation that reflects and preserves the community's cultural heritage.

By integrating action-based research and the indigenous paradigm, this study ensured that the research process was inclusive, participatory, and culturally sensitive, providing the community with the tools and confidence to share their perspectives and preserve their cultural identity.

In alignment with the community's strong oral traditions, storytelling was considered not only as a cultural element but also as a methodological approach. While not always explicitly adopted as a separate category, the conversational tone and narrative structure of several recordings are shaped by this approach, supporting cultural continuity and participant ownership of content.

### 3.1.2 Data Collection Methods

This research used a mix of two collection methods, for once, the descriptive data collection which allows focusing on a detailed aspect rather than a larger field of data (Jensen, 2021). It is important to observe the

community and their engagement with certain media without external influence. Descriptive research is “aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method” (Ethridge, 2004, p. 24). The descriptive data can be used to explain certain behaviour and interactions. Furthermore, in such research, “thick descriptive” is influential as it allows the researcher to understand the participants’ objectives in depth, and they can focus on what is said by the community (Jensen, 2021). Thus, there is a benefit in the collection process because it allows to observe and listen in community meetings, which plays an essential role in the cultural, traditional, and historical aspects of the process. This is especially helpful in the early stages of the research (Jensen, 2021).

Nonetheless, it was also necessary to engage in experimental data collection. It allows the research to present only certain aspects of a medium, which can support the level of usability for each medium. This can be transferred to the creation of content too, as the experimental data collection allows the research to explore more detailed links between subject and object (Jensen, 2021). The research analyses the interaction with such medium in different settings, which may not be achievable without some kind of intervention by the researcher. In such workshop settings, participants regularly ask for explanations or support, and thus non-intervention is close to impossible to achieve. Thus, it might keep the data less corrupted when choosing experimental collection of data in the given settings. The instruments and workflow can furthermore be more easily adapted throughout the process without corrupting the so far gathered data. (Jensen, 2021)

The data was collected as primary data, in Donkerbos, Namibia, over three field trips, to ensure continuity. The communication protocol by Kaulbach (2020) and the San report (SAN CODE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, n.d.-b) promote collaborations with indigenous community following certain procedures, which align with the given procedures undertaken by NUST students and researchers on trips to the community. Timely action and sharing of information had been planned and communicated. All stages of the research were communicated and agreed upon with the community, according to the communication protocol by Kaulbach (2020). Furthermore, it is indispensable that the research with San in Namibia clearly benefits the community, due to their precarious status in society. These parameters have been set and understood. Cultural and traditional systems are recognised, as according to the indigenous paradigm, indigenous systems reflect a different reality to the ones of the [non-indigenous] researcher (Walker, 2015). Kovach (2009) emphasises such issues in her work, pointing out protocols that can guide collaborations with indigenous people. The communication protocol, established in Kaulbach’s (2020) research, reflects a correct project planning with the Donkerbos community.

To preserve the voice and perspectives of the participants, the qualitative thematic analysis was used for the first part of the study, while identifying the medium which is to be selected as well as during the proceedings of the content creation for the medium. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clark (2006) is a technique for locating, examining, and reporting patterns or themes within data. It allows the researcher to focus on topics and information that occur regularly throughout the project implementation. The constant occurring information can be sorted thematically, providing a narrower focus on important data. The collected data determined the development of the medium, so it is particularly critical to choose the right approach. If the decision-making lies with the community, it is still important for the researcher to keep an overview, and through thematic analysis they can keep the focus upright and steer the conversations in the right direction through targeted intervention based on the analysed themes. It should be noted, as described in the indigenous paradigm approaches, processes can be radically different from the "western approaches" (Watson, 2012).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the constructionist technique looks at how many societal discourses have an impact on events, realities, meanings, experiences, and so forth. The discourse analysis offers a systematic and operational approach to thematic procedures (Jensen, 2021). A main feature of the technique is the focus on understanding communication as a social means (Jensen, 2021). It can be used to test data and hypothesis of already conducted qualitative research. In other words, it can be used to examine the effects of a medium after the selection process. The discourse analysis allows gathering in depth data, with more specific targets. The indigenous research paradigm speaks to all the above-mentioned methods and approaches towards an ethical, correct research process.



5; Welcome Meeting, Trip 1, September 2023

### 3.1.3 Welcome Meeting

The inception of each research trip within the IK Cluster commences with a Welcome Meeting, serving as a platform for introductions, acquaintanceship, and the delineation of workflow protocols, as it is according to the implemented communication protocol by Peter Kaulbach (2020). The indigenous paradigm informs on such meetings as vital for trust building and exchange of information and formalities (Kawulich, 2001; Walker, 2015). A fundamental approach of the participatory design within a long-term collaboration is the dissemination of updates and developments pertinent to the ongoing projects (Servaes Malikhao, 2005). It is imperative that participants are apprised of the projects' nature and their anticipated roles to ensure informed participation (Cochran et al., 2008). Additionally, clear articulation of scheduling details is paramount to guarantee participant attendance (Kemmis, 2009). The community Welcome Meetings serve as the initial engagement point. The Welcome Meeting also serves to discuss the progress of the project and to clarify any hurdles. Accordingly, the researcher can also intervene directly in this setting and emphasise aspects and ask questions. However, the benefits must be communicated directly beforehand and during the Welcome Meeting.



6; Focus Group session; in depth explanation

### 3.1.4 Focus Groups

The focus groups were implemented as they are instrumental in acquainting participants with project objectives and engaging them in critical discussions and deliberations (Tisdell, 2016). While theoretical elucidations are indispensable, their duration was judiciously managed to mitigate waning attention spans (Kaulbach, 2020). Handouts containing essential information were distributed during theoretical segments to facilitate participants' comprehension and retention of discussed topics. Focus group sessions served as platforms for debriefing and result presentations, fostering collective reflection on both positive and negative aspects, which is an important benefit of such approach (Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, these sessions serve to illuminate comprehension gaps for subsequent clarification (Cochran et al., 2008).



7 ; Workshop session, preparations for recordings

### 3.1.5 Workshops

Workshops serve as practical forums for translating discussed focus group content into actionable strategies (Cochran et al., 2008). In the context of this study, workshops play a pivotal role in facilitating participants' hands-on interaction with the technology and its operational intricacies, as this is a vital aspect to keep participants engaged in a project (Kemmis, 2009). It is necessary to internalise the aspects discussed during the focus groups meetings and then emphasise the use of the technology to reach the desired goal. Experimental data collection and analysing, play a crucial role in ensuring that the workshop met the requirements and needs of the participants (Jensen, 2021). This was ensured in advance of the research, as this basically consists of the criteria set by the community. As part of the analysis, both thematic and methodological requirements were identified to ensure the greatest possible benefit for all participants. Clear and measurable objectives, such as how to operate the platform independently and use the available features, were defined to help make the workshop effective and efficient (Kapuire et al., 2015). Learning objectives, participant expectations and success criteria were considered. In accordance with the thematic analyses (Lochmiller, 2021), which looks at the importance of preserving cultural features, the process involved finding

out what the participants expect from the workshop and what goals they are pursuing. The purpose of each workshop was clearly defined due to the technical aspect of the project. Adequate provision of resources is essential to sustain participant engagement throughout the workshop duration (Christopher et al., 2008). Given the unfamiliarity of the medium, a significant portion of workshops must be dedicated to familiarising participants with hardware and software components. The ultimate objective is to equip participants with the requisite skills to independently navigate and interact with the technology post-workshop, as it is defined within action research, which emphasises the vitality to create practical knowledge by participatory means (Greenwood, 2003). During the workshops key points from the previous sessions are reviewed. This serves to present and record the most important points for the workshop. Ideally, this is done in collaboration with the participants (Hoare et al., 1993; Kemmis, 2009), as this allows the researchers to document once again which aspects have been internalised and which aspects still seem unclear.



*8; Group picture after the Departure Meeting*

### 3.1.6 Departure Meeting

Departure Meetings at the culmination of each trip serve as forums for briefings on project outcomes and the identification of key project aspects necessitating attention, including areas for improvement, critiques, suggestions, and wishes (Kaulbach, 2020). Furthermore, food provisions and clothing are handed over to the community during these meetings. Departure meetings create a more intimate atmosphere between researchers and participants, as they can exchange ideas, make their goodbyes, and take pictures together. In addition, both parties can comment on the aspects mentioned, which can be more difficult for certain groups of participants during projects. The researchers and the community can also write down the information discussed and use it to continue working independently and use these notes to start preparing for the next meeting (Kovach, 2021).

## 3.2 Participants and Co-Researcher

The population of this research is the San community in Donkerbos, Namibia. According to a local community member, Donkerbos comprises approximately 300 inhabitants. However, the actual target population for this study was significantly smaller<sup>7</sup>. Throughout this thesis, the term “the community” refers specifically to those individuals who [directly] participated in the research activities. The project focuses on co-designing with the community as such. Thus, it would limit the efficiency if the target population was widened to, e.g., another San community in Namibia or included members of the larger Donkerbos community that are not San or are not part of the direct community. To select research participants, the convenience sampling method was used, as it can only be engaged with participants that are available during the field trips. Voluntary aspects have flown into the sampling methods because this study is only to succeed if participants are voluntary engaged and motivated to take part. However, certain approaches may show themselves to be limited in infield settings. Thus, it has been considered that when interacting with the community, adjustments might have to be made. As part of their bachelor thesis, the researcher conducting this research developed a communication protocol that includes a work plan that should be followed by any researcher interacting with this San community. Thus, this communication protocol can be used as a guideline. It requires a researcher to engage with the community and set up a timetable in cooperation with the participants. Three trips each 3 nights,

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<sup>7</sup> Some community members live several km away from the campsite due to having a job at the school or a farm close by.

with other researchers, was conducted between September 2023 and February 2024.

Language is not only a tool for communication, but also a carrier of cultural identity and epistemology (Wilson, 2008; Smith, 1999). Therefore, this aspect played a major role in shaping the collaborative nature of the research. Participants were encouraged to use the language they felt most comfortable with—primarily Zu/hoasi, but also Afrikaans and English, depending on the context and the individual. Since Zu/hoasi is mainly a spoken language with limited written form, not containing all the characters on traditional keyboards, its use in podcast recordings was particularly valuable. It supported cultural authenticity, lowered participation barriers, and aligned with the oral storytelling traditions of the community, allowing for multilingual expression also strengthened trust and enabled more nuanced contributions from participants. This approach reflected the participatory and inclusive ethos of the research design, and respected linguistic diversity as a key dimension of self-representation. Furthermore, oral communication allows for immediate and direct interaction. Additionally, oral content can be more rapidly and flexibly adapted to current events and developments.

### 3.3 Validity of the Research

Due to the positive relationship between the community and the IK Cluster the data that was gathered for this research shows no indication of being less credible than any other before. The study is transferable to some degree as there are other indigenous [San] communities that have research partners, which can use the approaches and concepts, if shown to be successful, to implement their own specific medium. Conformability is gained since the community expressed their interest in such a project and shared their concerns about a continued loss of values. The study is dependable to a certain degree, as other researchers in other communities but within the same context, will often find a similar need for indigenous driven media, the reasoning might overlap but the approach and findings might differ in such because we are dealing with groups of people with deep cultural relationships and reality concepts.

### 3.4 Research Phases

Each field trip consisted of a number of sessions using a specific method to achieve the agreed upon objectives. As such each trip started with the Welcome Meeting, followed by focus groups and workshops and concluded with the Departure Meeting.

Work Steps	Relevant Methods	Results
Pre-Trip 1: Preparation	Planning, Community Engagement	Established research goals, scheduled initial meetings
Focus Group: Introduction	Community Meeting, Introduction to Objectives	Built rapport, introduced project objectives
Workshop 1: Free and Creative Content Creation	Hands-on Activities, Creative Exercises	Participants created initial content
Focus Group 2: Deepening Understanding	Discussion, Demonstrations	Increased understanding of digital platform
Workshop 2: Creation of Categories and Content	Practical Training, Content Organisation	Created content categories, recorded first content (podcasts)
Focus Group 3: Feedback Session	Feedback Collection, Group Discussion	Gathered insights and suggestions from participants
Post-Trip 1: Follow-up	Data Analysis, Documentation	Analysed data, documented findings
Pre-Trip 2: Preparation	Review of Previous Trip, Planning Next Steps	Refined methods, planned second trip activities
Focus Group 1: Review and Deepening	Discussion, Review of Previous Content	Evaluated and deepened understanding of the platform
Workshop 1: Content Creation	Practical Training, Advanced Content Creation	Created more refined content

Focus Group 2: Feedback Session	Feedback Collection, Group Discussion	Collected feedback on new content
Post-Trip 2: Follow-up	Data Analysis, Documentation	Analysed data, documented findings
Pre-Trip 3: Preparation	Review of Previous Trips, Planning Next Steps	Refined methods, planned third trip activities
Focus Group 1: Deepening and Feedback Session	Discussion, Feedback Collection	Evaluated progress, gathered final feedback
Workshop 1: Content Creation	Practical Training, Final Content Creation	Created final content for the platform
Focus Group 2: Feedback Session	Feedback Collection, Group Discussion	Gathered insights and suggestions for final improvements
Post-Trip 3: Follow-up	Final Data Analysis, Documentation	Finalised data analysis, documented overall findings

The first trip focused on project introduction, community engagement, and initial content development through activities.

Subsequent trips aimed to deepen the understanding of the digital platform, enhance technological familiarity, strengthen commitment to content creation, and improve the quality of content. The purpose of each trip was aligned with the overarching objectives of the research project and aimed to foster long-term collaboration and sustainable outcomes. The evaluation of trip one helped shape the design of subsequent field visits. Given the limited timeframe, repeating and reinforcing key concepts across the second trip was essential to ensure sustainable understanding and practical skills in podcast production.

The third research trip, conducted with a group of journalism students, was intended to be the final trip within this research. The aim was to test and deepen the knowledge and motivation of the participants in podcast

recordings. For the project to be a sustainable and successful medium, it was crucial that participants could record and upload podcasts independently. Additionally, certain framework conditions had to be guaranteed to ensure the project's continuity. These included understanding how to record podcasts, the benefits behind them, how to use the technology and software, and having access to mobile data.

### 3.4.1 Identify and Establish the Digital Platform

A main part of the preparations taken before the research trips was to identify a suitable platform, several platforms were checked for their characteristics. It is important that the platform allows individuality and self-control. It was important that language and culture were considered. This had to be carefully considered in conjunction with the external factors. The focus on spoken content aligns with the oral nature of Zu/hoasi, which ensures the aspect of archiving the language and makes it easier to access this content in the future. It also makes the content creation more efficient and more comfortable for the participants. Especially for other members of this language group, who will be able to listen to these recordings in the future, this could have massive value. It also opens the possibility of using the spoken content for other projects. It would, furthermore, allow participants to be freer and more creative with spoken language compared to written. However, written content offers the advantage of permanent and precise documentation, which is easier to verify and can be distributed more broadly and sustainably. In terms of independent reporting, it is essential that the chosen medium meets the criteria of transparency, objectivity, and impartiality to gain and maintain the trust of the target audience. These aspects are vital to being a credible and reliable source of information.

As highlighted by Alia (2010) and Ginsburg (2008), audio-based media such as community radio [or podcasting] have been shown to enhance participatory communication and preserve oral traditions. Based on these requirements and evaluations, podcasting was selected as the central tool for this project. Its emphasis on voice and oral storytelling aligns with the community's strong oral traditions and the practical limitations of written Zu/hoasi. Podcasting offers low barriers to entry, allows for asynchronous listening, and encourages personal expression in [local] languages. It also supports self-directed content creation and editorial independence—both key aspects in the development of community-owned media. These characteristics make podcasting not only technically feasible, but also culturally appropriate and sustainable. (Mc Hugh, S., 2016) This decision is grounded in the literature on participatory and indigenous media practices and directly supports the research objectives of establishing a digital platform, enabling content creation, and strengthening community voices in the public discourse.

Firstly, a literature and market research were carried out to identify potential platforms that are frequently

used for the creation and management of online communities. The platforms were evaluated against several criteria to determine their suitability for the proposed community. Based on key criteria such as usability, customisability and monetisation (see 3.4.3 for detailed evaluation), the platform was then selected.

The preparation for the workshops and focus groups was thorough and detailed, covering multiple key areas to ensure a smooth and effective execution. Firstly, content development for both the focus groups and workshops was a primary task. This involved creating comprehensive materials that would guide discussions and activities, ensuring they were relevant and engaging for participants. The development process included researching existing literature, leveraging methodological approaches, incorporating personal experiences as a podcast listener, and utilising artificial intelligence to craft insightful and step-by-step guidelines.

Secondly, the technology setup was meticulously planned. This included selecting and testing the necessary software and hardware to ensure they were user-friendly and reliable. Participants needed to be comfortable with the technical aspects, so tutorials and troubleshooting guides were prepared in advance.

Logistical arrangements were another crucial aspect of the preparation. This involved organising the venue (whether physical or virtual), scheduling the sessions at times convenient for participants, and ensuring that all materials and resources were readily available. Communication with participants was also key, providing them with clear instructions and expectations ahead of the sessions.

For the focus groups, specific guidelines were prepared to facilitate productive discussions. These guidelines were designed to provide attainable information for the participants and were developed based on a combination of existing literature, methodological approaches, personal podcasting experience, and insights from artificial intelligence. The guidelines offered step-by-step instructions to ensure clarity and effectiveness.

## ***Step by Step guide to prepare and record a podcast.***

### **1. Define Your Podcast Concept:**

- Before you start, have a clear idea of what your podcast is about. What's your niche or subject matter?
- Define your target audience. Who are you creating the podcast for, and what value will it offer them?

### **2. Choose a Catchy Title:**

- Your podcast title should be memorable and reflective of your content.
- Make sure it's unique.

### **3. Plan Your Content:**

- Create an outline or script for each episode. (Consider using a consistent structure for each episode, which may include an introduction, main content, and a call to action or closing remarks. Use segments or recurring features to maintain engagement.)
- Ensure a logical flow and structure to keep your audience engaged.
- Decide on the episode length and stick to it to maintain consistency.
- **Intros and Outros:** Create a professional and memorable podcast intro and outro. Include essential information like your podcast name, host(s), and where to find additional resources.

*9; Excerpt of the guidelines*

#### **3.4.2 Enable the Community to Create and Disseminate Content**

As outlined in section 3.4, the project was structured across three trips, each building on the outcomes of the previous one. While the overall logic and sequencing have already been described, this section focuses on the concrete implementation of content creation and participant engagement during each trip. The emphasis was placed on hands-on experience, step-by-step learning, and iterative improvement of media production workflows. The number of participants was not constantly the same during the focus groups and workshops as people came and went. During most of the workshops a number of around five to eight male participants took part.

## **First Trip**

### **Focus Group: Introduction**

The project was introduced to the community, explaining its origins and objectives to 20 women and 13 men, with the assistance of a community member who translated. Examples of podcasting, including news reporting, digital cultural circles, traditional lessons, and political discourse, were presented.

### **Workshop: Free and Creative Content Creation**

Participants from the introductory meeting engaged in hands-on activities to explore their creativity and gain practical experience with digital content creation tools. Groups were formed based on different aspects of community life. The workshop aimed to familiarise participants with the content creation process and build their confidence, allowing them to shape their content independently.

### **Focus Group: Deepening the Understanding of Such a Digital Platform**

The second session provided a detailed explanation of podcasting to about 20 adults, reviewing key points from the previous session. Various podcast formats were introduced, using visual aids for better understanding. A guideline for podcast creation was presented, emphasising the importance of topic selection, format decision, research, outline creation, recording, and editing. The session aimed to deepen participants' understanding of the podcasting medium.

### **Workshop: Creation of Categories and First Podcast Recordings**

A lower number of participants organised content into categories and made their first recordings. The session focused on technical skill-building, with detailed explanations and repeated guidance.

### **Feedback Session**

Participants received feedback on their preparations and made necessary corrections before recording. Feedback emphasised delivering a flowing narrative, providing verifiable facts, and preparing interview questions.

## **Second Trip**

### **Focus Group - Session 1 - Evaluation and Discussion of Podcasting Progress**

After five weeks, participants reflected on their progress. Step-by-step podcasting guidelines were discussed, and topics for new episodes were developed.

## **Session 2 - Evaluation of Digital Platform Implementation**

The platform's features (e.g. membership, uploading, events) were reviewed. Participants planned new content and were encouraged to record in their native language, with optional translations for broader audiences.

### **Workshop: Podcast Recordings**

Here, the attention was directed towards recording a podcast. The recording process involved multiple iterations to ensure satisfactory pronunciation and audio quality. Participants composed and recorded podcast episodes, refining their work through group discussions and feedback. The session demonstrated participants' growing interest and understanding of podcasting.

### **Third Trip**

#### **Focus Group: Feedback Session**

Participants discussed challenges and clarified remaining questions. The session helped surface logistical and comprehension issues.

#### **Workshop: Content Creation**

In the following workshop, content for further podcasts was discussed, and participants began to create these. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to brainstorm and develop new podcast ideas. Detailed guidance was given on how to structure the content, and participants were encouraged to take the lead in creating their podcasts.

#### **Workshop: Reviewing Content**

New podcast ideas were developed and structured collaboratively. Existing recordings were redone and edited.

#### **Workshop: Note taking and Speaking Practice**

An exercise using newspaper reading and summarisation was conducted to improve oral presentation and note-taking skills. A participant read out a newspaper article, while the others were asked to take notes and then reproduce the article.

#### **Focus Group:**

Podcasts were played and discussed. Participants received peer and researcher feedback, fostering a sense of ownership and shared improvement.

Overall, the methodology focused on enabling the community to create and disseminate content independently. Through iterative workshops and focus groups, combined with continuous feedback and refinement, the project aimed to foster a collaborative and self-sustaining digital environment for the Donkerbos community.



10; First person view during a session

### 3.4.3 Evaluation of Usability and Experiences

During the entire research, the researcher not only worked actively within the focus groups and workshops but also observed and analysed the interactions. In this respect, it is important that the community processes and utilises the information gathered independently (Cochran et al., 2008). This creates a sense of belonging and ownership of the created content (Kawulich, 2001; Peltier, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to step outside direct participation and thus better understand the participants and evaluate with less bias. This is a crucial aspect of the indigenous paradigm, which views participants as individuals or an individual group that may have different worldviews and cultural perspectives compared to the researcher. Accordingly, the researcher must be able to adapt to these perspectives (Kawulich, 2001).

The selection of the platform was guided by the goal of supporting independent, sustainable journalism within the Donkerbos community. The evaluation process involved a thorough assessment of several key criteria to ensure the platform could foster a self-sustaining digital environment for the community.

The ease of use of the platform was a primary criterion. To analyse this, the researcher observed how quickly and effectively community members could navigate and utilise the platform's features. Feedback from participants was gathered to assess their comfort level and any difficulties they encountered. This feedback was critical in determining whether the platform was intuitive enough for independent use without requiring extensive technical support.

Customisability was another essential factor. The researcher evaluated how well the platform could be tailored to meet the specific needs of the community. This involved observing how participants adapted the platform to create categories for different types of content and how easily they could modify settings to reflect their preferences and requirements.

The platform's monetisation options were analysed by exploring the various revenue-generating features it offers, such as membership fees, courses, and events. The researcher assessed how community members utilised these features to possibly generate income and the effectiveness of these options in supporting sustainable journalism. This included tracking the uptake of monetisation strategies and evaluating their possible financial outcomes.

Content creation features were also critically evaluated. The researcher analysed how well the platform supported the creation and management of content, particularly podcasts, which were important given the oral nature of the Zu/hoasi language. The ease with which participants could record, edit, and share their content was monitored, and their feedback on the usability of these tools was collected.

Communication options within the platform were assessed by examining how effectively the community could interact using categories, direct messaging, and events/courses. The researcher observed the frequency and quality of these interactions to determine if the platform facilitated effective communication and engagement among community members.

Cost efficiency was analysed by comparing the platform's pricing structure with the features it offered. The researcher evaluated whether the platform provided good value for money and if it was affordable for the community given their limited resources.

The success of the training implementation was analysed through thematic analysis, which helped identify patterns and themes in the participants' interactions and content creation processes. This analysis provided insights into how well the platform supported the community's journalistic activities and highlighted areas for improvement. Discourse analysis further examined the communication and engagement within the community, providing a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the platform's communication tools.

Post-analysis involved a sustainability assessment to evaluate the viability of the platform for the community's independent journalism efforts. This included tracking the community's ability to manage their content independently, possibly generate revenue, and maintain engagement on the platform. The overall success of the implementation was measured by the community's continued use and the platform's ability to support their journalistic goals sustainably.

Overall, the evaluation, training analysis, and post-analysis were conducted with the aim of supporting independent, sustainable journalism within the Donkerbos community. The thorough assessment and careful planning ensured that the selected platform could effectively meet the community's needs and foster a self-sustaining digital environment. It is suggested that the chosen methods and tools were well-suited to the project's aims. As discussed in section 3.2, the use of local language in podcasting proved effective, as supported by studies highlighting the importance of linguistic and cultural relevance in community-driven media (Ní Bhroin et al., 2021; Ginsburg, 2008).

While some limitations and contextual constraints were observed during implementation, these are discussed in more depth in the findings chapter. However, the long-term success of the project beyond the research phase depends on several hard and soft factors. Some of these elements lie beyond the direct influence of the researcher.

## 4. Findings

The main objective of this study is to explore the procedures of independent reporting and storytelling within an indigenous San community in Namibia as they develop towards self-sustainability. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To identify and establish the digital platform.
- 2) To enable the community to create and disseminate content.
- 3) To evaluate the usability and experiences

In the following sections, we will discuss the findings in relation to the applied methodology and each of the objectives.

### 4.1 Identify and Establish a Digital Platform

A crucial aspect of the preparations involved identifying a suitable platform for the community. Platforms were evaluated based on their characteristics to ensure they allowed for individuality and self-control, essential for the community's needs. It was important that the platform considered language and cultural factors. During the analysis, it became clear that the platform needed to focus on spoken content due to the nature of the Zu/hoasi language, which does not contain all the characters found on traditional keyboards.

The chosen platform, Mighty Networks, stood out based on several criteria:

- **Extensive Features:** Offers a variety of tools for content creation, management, and member engagement.
- **Customisability:** Highly adaptable to the specific needs of the community.
- **Monetisation Options:** Provides multiple ways to monetise content through membership fees, courses, and events.
- **Ease of Use:** Intuitive user interface for both administrators and members.
- **Cost:** Competitive pricing structure relative to the features offered.

Other platforms were considered but ultimately excluded due to limitations such as lack of customisation, higher costs, and less suitability for larger communities and structured content. The decision to use Mighty Networks was based on its balance of functionality, customisability, and cost-effectiveness, making it the optimal choice for the Donkerbos community.

#### 4.1.1 Preparation for Deployment

To ensure the successful implementation of the chosen platform and the smooth execution of research activities, several practical and logistical preparations were undertaken. The community was provided with several smartphones, a laptop, and a fluffy microphone for recordings, all of which were crucial for quality content creation. An existing mini-solar grid was utilised to provide a sustainable power solution for charging these devices, ensuring that the equipment remained operational throughout the research activities.

A Google account was created for the community to manage both administrative and business purposes. This account facilitated efficient communication by allowing emails to be sent on behalf of the community and managing access rights to various online platforms. The Google account was then linked to the Mighty Networks platform, as well as to Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accounts. Each of these platforms served specific functions to enhance the community's digital presence. The Facebook account was designed to promote the community's campsite by sharing photos, videos, and short texts, encouraging people to visit. Instagram and TikTok were utilised to promote the Mighty Networks platform and share video content, reaching a larger audience and attracting more members.

In addition to setting up the equipment and accounts, detailed preparations were made for the training sessions to be conducted during the focus groups and workshops. The analysis of Mighty Networks provided insights that informed the development of training materials. Content was pre-divided into different categories, allowing participants to choose topics of interest. This categorisation enabled broader participation of community members who had diverse interests and stories to share and helped to establish the actual categories on Mighty Networks.

Overall, the practical and logistical preparations ensured that the Donkerbos community was well-equipped and ready to engage with the chosen platform, fostering an environment conducive to content creation and digital engagement. These preparations laid the foundation for successful research activities and meaningful collaboration with the community.



11; *Introductory meeting*

#### 4.1.2 Structure of Focus Groups and Workshops

The workshops and focus groups were conducted in several structured phases to provide participants with a comprehensive and hands-on learning experience. Initially, participants were introduced to the project objectives, building rapport and establishing a clear understanding of the research goals. The first workshop, “Workshop 1: Free and Creative Content Creation”, encouraged free and creative content creation, allowing participants to engage with the technology and start producing their own content.

The subsequent focus group, “Focus Group 2: Deepening the Understanding of Such a Digital Platform”, deepened participants' understanding of the digital platform, ensuring they were comfortable navigating its features. The second workshop, “Workshop 2: Creation of Categories and First Podcast Recordings”, focused on the creation of categories and the first podcast recordings, guiding participants through organising their content and producing initial recordings. The final focus group, “Focus Group 3: Feedback Session”, was held to gather insights and suggestions from participants, which were invaluable for refining the approach and improving the overall process.

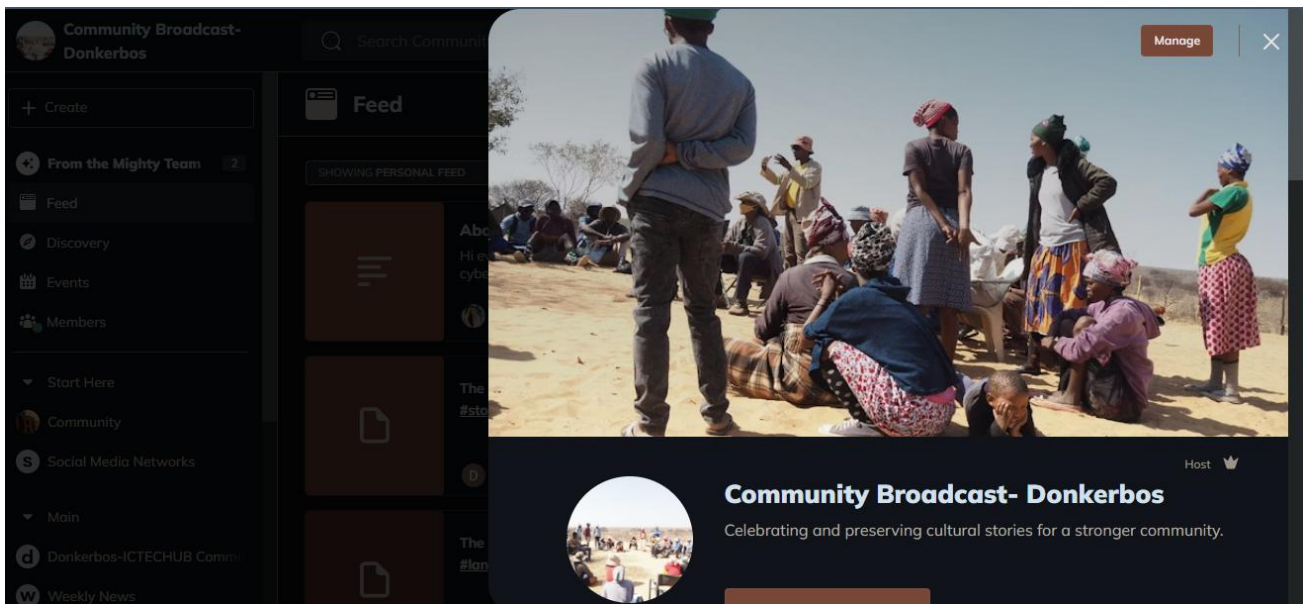
Following the first trip, data analysis and documentation were conducted to analyse the collected data and document the findings. This information was used to refine methods and prepare for the next research trip. The preparation for subsequent trips involved reviewing the effectiveness of previous activities and planning next steps. Advanced training materials and content development guidelines were prepared for future workshops and focus groups, ensuring continuous improvement and engagement with the community.

The second trip began with “Focus Group 1: Review and Deepening the Platform”, where the participants evaluated and deepened their understanding of the platform. “Workshop 1: Content Creation” allowed participants to create more refined content. This was followed by “Focus Group 2: Feedback Session” to collect feedback on the new content.

Post-trip follow-up involved further data analysis and documentation, refining methods, and preparing for the third trip. The third trip included “Focus Group 1: Deepening and Feedback Session”, “Workshop 1: Content Creation”, and “Focus Group 2: Feedback Session”. Each phase built upon the previous one, fostering a collaborative environment where the community's voices were heard, and their cultural heritage was preserved through digital means.

For the third trip, the preparation involved analysing the existing podcasts and making notes on positive and negative aspects. A detailed schedule was created, and content for the workshops was developed, including the "note taking" idea, where participants practised note taking and speaking skills using selected articles.

The iterative process of community engagement, content creation, and feedback ensured that the research remained relevant and beneficial to the Donkerbos community. Each phase built upon the previous one, fostering a collaborative environment where the community's voices were heard, and their cultural heritage was preserved through digital means. The use of Mighty Networks and other integrated platforms provided a robust framework for sustainable community engagement and content dissemination.



12; Mighty Networks, Donkerbos Broadcast

## 4.2 Enable the Community to Create and Disseminate Content

The community's response to the introduction of the project was largely positive during the Welcome Meeting. Albeit cautious, although this is a topic that has been emphasised again and again by them over the years, the importance of preserving language and cultures. While community members may have initially struggled to grasp the concept of podcasting, there was a willingness to engage with the technology and share their knowledge.

*"I think this is very important, because our youth does not know our traditions and culture. And it is not being taught in school". (Community member, See Appendix 1)*

*"We want to share our knowledge with others. And we want them to know about our struggles and hopefully give us support." (Community Member, See Appendix 1)*

Facilitated by Shortman Kandjengo, the head of the community, in the presence of around 30 women and men from the community, Shortman Kandjengo<sup>8</sup> played a pivotal role in initiating the proceedings and extending a warm welcome to all attendees during the Welcome Meeting. In addition, the timetables were

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<sup>8</sup> Shortman Kajango has been selected by the community as their informal spokesperson.

determined, and the general assessment of the projects and the progress of ongoing projects was articulated.

Throughout the three research trips, the number of active participants varied. Most focus group and workshop sessions involved 5 to 8 individuals, with some sessions reaching up to 10–15. While the headman, Shortman Kandjengo, played a central role, other participants included young adults, middle-aged men, and a few women who contributed primarily to video content and cultural formats. Elders were less frequently involved, although they were occasionally referenced or interviewed for traditional knowledge. Children did not participate in the project, even though it was encouraged, as they attended school and thus were not present most of the time.

Language choice played a crucial role throughout the project. Although participants were encouraged to record in Zu/hoasi, many opted for English. Some episodes were thus recorded in both languages, with the English versions prepared as follow-up recordings. However, when speaking in Zu/hoasi, participants tended to express themselves more freely and engage in more intuitive storytelling, which underlines the value of including the local language as a key feature in the podcasting process.

### **Free and Creative Content Creation**

Participants decided to form four groups to create preliminary audio/video recordings in a non-binding manner. Each group focused on different aspects of community life:

- Traditional hut construction: 4 females and 1 male. (Video recording)
- Children's activities: 1 male. (Video recording)
- Meal preparation: 4 females and 1 male. (Video recording)
- Borehole maintenance: 4 males. (Video recording)

These initiatives demonstrated creativity and willingness to engage with technology for knowledge sharing. The community showed joy in sharing their lifestyle and knowledge, aligning with the action-based participation research approach.

### **Deepening the Understanding of Mighty Networks**

When it comes to explaining Mighty Networks, there's no getting round having to explain technical aspects in language. To illustrate this, the processes were demonstrated live on the PC and a step-by-step guide was

handed out. There were some challenges, particularly in terms of introducing new technologies and conceptualising a digital audience. The learning curve was steep, and community members showed willingness to adapt and learn. Training, particularly around the use of Mighty Networks, proved to be essential for helping community members to understand how to distribute their content. However, continuous support and explanations were needed to maintain the use of the platform, which became evident in the explanation of polls. It was obvious that most of the participants could not focus on this type of technical explanation. This is partly due to a lack of basic understanding of technology and partly due to the setting. It is understandable that comprehension problems arise when completely new concepts are involved. On the second trip to the community, one participant asked to explain the use of Mighty Networks again. It shows that step-by-step guidelines may only have a limited use, outside of fixed setting in such projects unless there has been a deep understanding of the basic concepts. The guidelines can be used for maintaining such understanding. These guidelines appeared to be formulated clearly and comprehensibly for the participants. However, if you are in research settings where you have a contact person and can ask questions, it is often easier to understand and carry out such processes.

#### **Creation of Categories/Polls/Survey:**

The categories were created as follows:

**Weekly News:** here participants share important and interesting things from the past week(s). For example, topics such as a broken borehole can be discussed here, which then appear in a semi-public digital space and thus possibly attract greater attention. Unfortunately, there have not yet been any recordings here. This is due to the problems explained later in this chapter.

**Politics:** these are political issues that affect the community and on which they would like to express themselves publicly. The first issue in this category deals superficially with the hunting laws that severely restrict the San community in their traditional way of life. As can be seen from the episode, this creates a feeling of marginalisation for the San, as they are often not taken into account in the legislation.

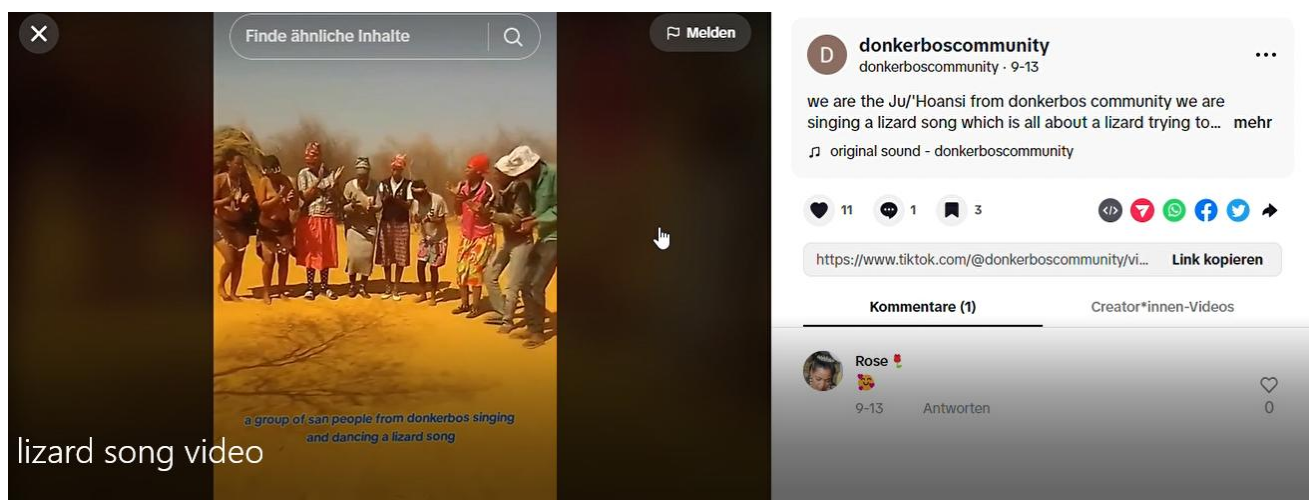
**Project:** in this format the participants can talk about ongoing or completed projects, or about ideas for new projects that they would like to implement. This can help both the researchers who have participated in the completed projects to get more information, but it also allows the community to honestly evaluate projects with some distance and potentially give a more transparent picture to stakeholders. Talking about current or future projects can also help publicise these ideas and get potential stakeholders excited about them. For

example, in one episode they talked about their solar panel project, which has helped the community tremendously as many of the dwellings now have electricity, and they have also been able to install a charging station at their campsite.

**Culture:** This category is for the podcasters to share their culture and at the same time to archive the cultural and traditional stories and practices and make them accessible for further generations. The practice of a "dark room" was explained here and how it plays an important role in a woman's "coming of age". Again, the recording was made in both English and Zu/hoasi.

**Bush Stories:** The word Bush was chosen in this context as the title for the category since the community is located in the Kalahari Desert, more precisely in "Donkerbos" which translates to dark bush. Bush Stories is a category in which members share funny but also exciting and informative stories and tales, such as cultural legends or stories from everyday life. One member of the community had to go in search of a goat that had escaped, encountered a snake and had to hide from a roaming leopard. This was portrayed in a video which can also be seen on Instagram.

The survey option was created to ask the audience about their interests in topics such as remedies, traditional games or language. Furthermore, they can be used to understanding the behaviour of subscribers within the community.



1 3 ; TikTok recording, "Lizard Dance"

**TikTok and Instagram Video:** A group of women created the “lizard dance” video<sup>9</sup>, which gained a few hundred views in the first hour of its upload. One participant started recording the kids playing and women sitting around the fire preparing tea and lunch. Other participants created the “lost goat” video<sup>10</sup> which was uploaded to Instagram and later to Mighty Networks.

Despite some difficulties and challenges at the beginning of the research around the recording of podcast episodes, the progress of the project was encouraging. Participants not only showed a strong interest in digital content production, but were also able to produce qualitative results, as evidenced by the response to their TikTok video and the number of new subscribers.

### **Podcast recordings:**

Starting with the recording process, notes were meticulously taken and then read out without a microphone for the time being. The development of thematic content did not prove to be a major challenge within the workshops. In order to create the podcast, the guideline was then followed by preparations for the podcast episodes. On some episodes a guest was invited to comment. The recordings were made in a gazebo and later on at a participant’s house because the microphone was picking up too much external noise. The recordings themselves were then carried out and were usually finalised after 2 attempts. The transfer of the recordings from the cell phone to the laptop was also carried out independently via Bluetooth. Since some files were in the wrong format, the researcher had to help convert the files. The upload process including the creation of hashtags was done together.

As the recordings were carried out methodically it became clear that there was an understanding of how to create good quality content. They recorded in pairs and started over several times, because, for example, they were not satisfied with the way they expressed themselves or spoke too quietly or loudly. The recordings were also listened to several times and sometimes re-recorded if they noticed any mistakes. In the course of the recordings, this behaviour was somewhat reduced, since we are trying to produce natural content and not pre-recorded texts.

Each episode recorded has a duration of approximately 5 minutes and was recorded in a 30-50-minute span.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.tiktok.com/@donkerboscommunity/video/7278345000692239622?is\\_from\\_webapp=1&sender\\_device=](https://www.tiktok.com/@donkerboscommunity/video/7278345000692239622?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/p/CxI5Catsr9d/>

The participation was not as diverse as envisioned as only male participants and only a few people were willing to record podcast. In the focus group sessions, it became evident that a major reason for the lack of active participants was the inability to speak fluent English and being reluctant to speaking in front of a non-visible audience.

“I think many are hesitant because of the language barrier. They do not speak English so well. So, they don’t want to record podcasts or participate actively in the project.” (Daniel, interpreter and project participant, see appendix 1).

However, the researcher tried to encourage the participants to record episodes in the local language, which serves a larger purpose of archiving stories in not only English but their local tongue. This had been a major factor in the creation of this project as the loss of their language had been a concern they shared but had been ignored at the beginning of the project as the participants felt the need to cater for everyone which means recording in English.

*“We should record in English, because otherwise no one will be interested in our podcasts because they cannot understand us.” Someone in Denmark will listen to it when it’s in English.”* (Shortman Kandjengo, see Appendix 1)

This statement emphasises the understanding that already played a role in the creation of the Community Protocol by Kaulbach in 2020 to cater for a large audience by speaking in English.

The Focus Groups proved successful in introducing the participants to the features and workarounds of Mighty Networks. The participants understood how to use the individual features of the platform thanks to the explanations shown on the PC and the provided guidelines. They also understood the concept of subscribing and how to gain an audience. The most important functions of the platform, such as uploading new content and creating surveys, were also understood.

The use of podcasts and the most important features of it were also successfully explained within the focus groups. The participants understood that with their podcast episodes they are able to present their culture and language on the one hand and on the other hand they can find attention for important topics within but also outside the Mighty Networks community. Furthermore, an understanding of podcast recording and important aspects of it were successfully conveyed. Through the focus groups, precise motivations of the participants were being explained, which helped to better understand their motivation and needs.

*“I am motivated to take part in the project because I hope that more people will hear our suffering.”* (Project participant, see Appendix 1)

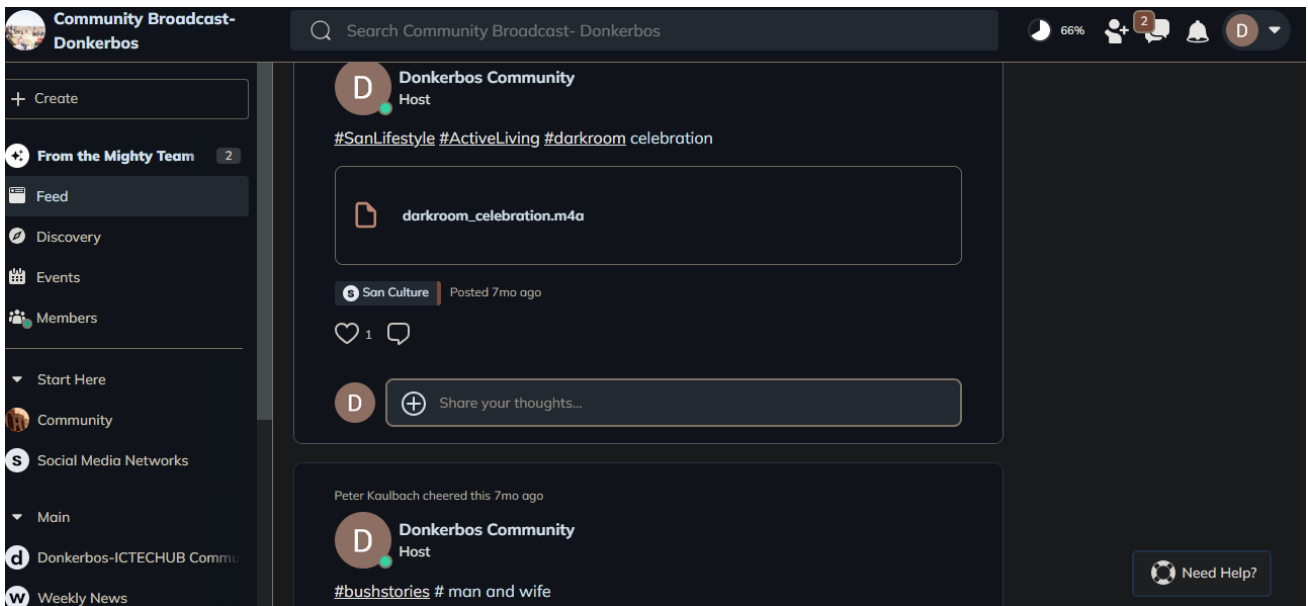
*“I hope that with these podcast recordings many of our traditions and culture will be available for future generations, and they will not forget about their culture.”* (Project participant, see Appendix 1)

There was a clear motivation on the part of the participants to deal with the project and to make it a success. There were only a few aspects where there was a feeling that certain aspects could not be understood or implemented. The number of active participants was quite limited, but they provided positive input and explanations. It was also clear from the translations by the interpreter that the explanations were understandable. The feedback sessions within the focus groups also proved to be effective, as some of the errors were recognised directly and ideas and suggestions for improvement were made independently.

*“You should keep the microphone closer to you, and you need to focus more on the text so that you are more fluent and don’t stutter so much.”* (Daniel, see Appendix 1)

*“It is sometimes difficult to understand me because of the pronunciation of words. I will have to read through my notes more often, and we should do trial recordings just to get more comfortable.”*  
(Project participant to another, see Appendix 1)

During the later focus groups participants were able to acknowledge initial challenges and demonstrated a willingness to continuously learn and improve. Due to these comments, to understand how to take notes and speak more clearly a "read aloud session" in which one participant reads a short newspaper article, was conducted. It turned out that there were some comprehension problems with the language of newspaper articles and that the sentences were written down in full instead of using keywords. This exercise further highlighted the importance of clear communication and effective note-taking techniques, which are crucial for creating well-structured podcast episodes. The note-taking session was particularly beneficial in improving the participants' ability to summarise and organise their thoughts, which directly translates into better podcast content creation.



14; Screenshot of recordings

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of Podcast Episodes and Video Recording:

##### **Politics:**

Government Policies on Hunting:

Host: Shortman

Length: 4:55 min

Language: English

The podcast on government policies regarding hunting offers a valuable exploration of the cultural significance of hunting for the San people. The podcast effectively introduces the topic, providing clear insights into the importance of hunting within San culture. The inclusion of an interviewee sharing personal experiences adds depth to the discussion, highlighting both the cultural and practical implications of hunting bans. On a positive note, the podcast successfully emphasises the importance of conservation and wildlife protection, shedding light on the broader context in which hunting policies are implemented. Furthermore, the discussion of alternative livelihoods, such as farming with livestock, demonstrates a holistic approach to preserving both cultural traditions and environmental sustainability.

However, the evaluation also notes some areas for improvement. The decline in audio quality midway through the podcast detracts from the overall listening experience, suggesting a need for better recording conditions or editing. Additionally, the text suggests that insufficient attention is given to detailing individual laws, which could leave listeners wanting more comprehensive information on the regulatory framework surrounding hunting.

In conclusion, while the podcast effectively addresses key themes and offers valuable insights, there is room for improvement in terms of audio quality and depth of coverage regarding legal aspects. Overall, it serves as a commendable starting point for exploring the complex intersection of government policies, cultural traditions, and environmental conservation in relation to hunting practices among the San people.

#### *Colonial Stories:*

Host: Shortman

Length: 4:18

Language: English

The podcast episode provides a brief examination of the impact of colonial powers on the culture and livelihoods of the San people. It highlights the significance of food gathering in San culture, emphasising the importance of collecting plants for various purposes such as medicine, food, and water. The mentioning of gathering methods and their effects on San knowledge adds depth to the discussion.

However, there are some shortcomings in the delivery of the content. The language quality is deemed acceptable, but it is evident that the content is being read rather than spoken freely. This results in a lack of fluidity in speech, with fluctuations in volume and occasional pauses within sentences. Pronunciation issues further hinder clarity. The audible sound of flipping notes suggests an unpolished production quality.

Despite these drawbacks, the podcast successfully emphasises the importance of community exchange and the sharing of experiences, particularly in preserving cultural heritage for current and future generations. The reflection on the colonial era provides valuable insights into how the introduction of tobacco, alcohol, and Western clothing led to significant cultural shifts, including the migration of San people to farms and the subsequent loss of tradition. The discussion also highlights the oversight of consequences resulting from these changes. Overall, while the podcast effectively addresses its subject, improvements in delivery and production

quality could enhance the listener experience. The emphasis on the consequences of colonial influence and the impact of new laws on land privatisation adds depth to the discussion, offering valuable insights into ongoing challenges faced by the San people.

**Project:**

*Greenhouse garden:*

Host: Daniel & April (Guest)

Length: 3:06

Language: English

The podcast exhibits both strengths and weaknesses in its delivery and content. The initial silence before the first sentence, while unusually long, adds an element of authenticity by incorporating background noises, such as children, indicating genuine recordings. The introduction effectively communicates essential details, including the modern approach to food gathering and its sustainability, offering listeners a clear understanding of the podcast's theme. However, the positive aspects are overshadowed by poor audio quality, making comprehension challenging and detracting from the overall listening experience. Furthermore, the presence of long pauses between sentences suggests that the text is being read aloud, diminishing the natural flow of speech.

The podcast successfully highlights challenges such as harsh weather conditions and utilises an interview partner to add depth to the discussion. Nonetheless, the inadequate audio quality of the interview segment, characterised by low volume and distant microphone placement, presents additional comprehension difficulties for listeners. Despite this, the inclusion of direct questions to the guest fosters engagement and interaction within the podcast.

Overall, in this episode, the excessive loudness of background noises compounds the existing audio quality issues, making it challenging to discern the content amidst distractions. Additionally, the brevity of the episode prevents it from providing a comprehensive insight into the project's processes and approaches, leaving listeners with unanswered questions and a sense of incompleteness. While the podcast demonstrates potential through its authentic recordings and informative content, improvements in audio quality, pacing, and episode length are necessary to enhance clarity and engagement for listeners.

*A windy trip down memory lane (wandering weekend):*

Host: Shortman

Length: 7:18

Language: English

The podcast offers a strong start with clear audio and good pronunciation, enhancing the listening experience. The host demonstrates excellent articulation, crafting sentences and words that captivate the audience's attention. The focus on the community member's trip from Donkerbos to Africhi 202311 in East London, South Africa, sets a compelling narrative for the episode.

However, the evaluation notes an excessive emphasis on the journey, with an abundance of details that may distract from the central theme. Nevertheless, the inclusion of specific details such as dates, times, weather conditions, and locations adds depth to the narrative. Personal anecdotes shared by the participant, such as observations on wildlife scarcity and the cost of amenities during the trip, provide relatable insights. Background noises occasionally disrupt the audio experience, and the sound of flipping notes is audible, detracting from overall clarity. Despite these challenges, the podcast effectively conveys essential information about the conference, including its location and the participant's key learnings. The detailed agenda presentation and emphasis on knowledge exchange with other attendees contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the event's significance. Furthermore, the episode explores important themes such as the suppression of indigenous knowledge by Western culture and the impact of language on learning outcomes, demonstrating thought-provoking insights. Listeners are likely to find the podcast engaging as it offers valuable insights into the conference proceedings and discussions, particularly regarding the influence of colonial powers and efforts to establish indigenous curriculums. Overall, despite some audio challenges and an excessive focus on the journey, the podcast effectively informs and engages listeners, offering valuable perspectives on pertinent topics. The podcast concludes on a positive note, with the presenter delivering a well-articulated and humorous ending, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

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<sup>11</sup> [africhi2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/AFRICHI-BROCHURE-1.pdf](https://africhi2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/AFRICHI-BROCHURE-1.pdf)

*Samkao's Business Training Trip to Hippo.*

Host: Samkao

Length: 2:39

Language: English

The evaluation of the podcast reveals a mixed bag of strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, the recording quality is very good, benefiting from a change in recording location. The initial audio quality is also commendable for its clarity, indicating a personal experience being shared. However, the presence of too many pauses suggests that the content is being read aloud, potentially hindering the flow of the podcast.

The podcast offers a brief introduction to the training content, followed by a description of workshops, including visits to individual shops, where interviews were held. It is noteworthy that personal initiatives, such as the campsite in Donkerbos, were discussed, indicating a comprehensive approach to improving quality and administrative processes.

However, criticisms include the podcast's brevity, the repetition of statements, and a lack of depth in insights gained from the training. Despite highlighting the establishment of businesses and their locations, there seems to be a dearth of substantive content regarding processes and key takeaways.

In summary, while the podcast demonstrates strengths in recording quality and coverage of workshop details, it falls short in terms of depth and length, potentially leaving listeners wanting more comprehensive insights into the training experience. Nevertheless, the podcast concludes positively with the presenter's mention of their engagement with podcasts and videos on YouTube, leaving a promising impression.

*Samkao's trip to Windhoek to present our VR technology.*

Host: Samkao

Length: 4:09

Language: English

The evaluation of the podcast reveals both strengths and weaknesses in its presentation and content. On the positive side, the podcast benefits from good sound quality attributed to the recording location. However,

occasional proximity to the microphone results in crackling sounds, which may distract listeners. Additionally, the episode begins somewhat confusingly, with unclear location statements, though a brief contextual explanation is provided to address this. The podcast presents the personal experience of the speaker's journey to Windhoek, albeit in a segment that may be overly lengthy and lacking in detail about the journey itself. Nonetheless, commendable aspects include the speaker's elaboration on presenting VR technology to a Botswana minister, showcasing an interesting perspective on technological engagement. Particularly intriguing is the linguistic expression of experiences, adding depth to the narrative.

While the podcast offers brief insights into the technology discussed, such as games involving women and men hunting, it lacks further elaboration on these topics, leaving potential areas for improvement in content depth and development. A notable weakness is the insufficient coverage of the conference, failing to specify its location or provide further insights into attendees' impressions and the presentation's proceedings. This lack of detail may leave listeners wanting more comprehensive information about the conference discussed.

In conclusion, while the podcast effectively engages listeners with personal experiences and intriguing technological insights, it falls short in providing adequate coverage of conference details and maintaining a coherent narrative flow, particularly evident in the sudden topic shift at the episode's end.

*The Donkerbos Solar Project:*

Host:

Length: 4:28

Language: Zu/hoasi

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**San Culture:**

*Darkroom celebration:*

Host: Samkao & Anonymous Community Elder (Guest)

Length: 4:10

Language: English / Zu/hoasi

The podcast exhibits both strengths and weaknesses in its presentation and content. On the positive side, the podcast begins with enthusiasm, effectively engaging listeners and enticing them to continue listening. However, the audio quality suffers due to the voice being too quiet, likely stemming from poor microphone positioning. Despite this drawback, a professional introduction sets the stage for the content, emphasising the ongoing practice of the discussed topic in San communities. Pronunciation issues and a lack of substantial content in the subsequent segment detract from the overall quality of delivery.

A notable positive aspect is the introduction of an interviewee dedicated to the topic, although the low recording volume hampers understanding due to reading difficulties. Nonetheless, the podcast manages to discuss valuable and structured content, offering intriguing insights into a San tradition and highlighting the importance of tradition preservation.

While the podcast mentions another interviewee, it remains unclear as the same person continues speaking, providing detailed explanations regarding the tradition's duration, existence, and significance for girls. Notably, the inclusion of a female interviewee is commendable, ensuring authenticity in the narrative, especially considering the relevance of traditions to women and girls. However, her segment is relatively brief. The podcast also acknowledges the responsibility of community members to ensure the sustenance and academic progress of girls during their one-month stay in the "dark room". It would have been beneficial to explore further details, such as communication with schools or employers during this period. In conclusion, while the podcast offers a satisfactory summary, the issues in verbal delivery persist, detracting from the overall listening experience. Despite the use of effective closing remarks, the podcast abruptly ends before completing a sentence, leaving listeners wanting a more conclusive wrap-up.

#### *The Five Animals:*

Host: Daniel

Length: 2:57

Language: English / Zu/hoasi

Again, the file is not in the desired formatting. The podcast presents an intriguing start with a welcoming introduction, setting a positive tone for the storytelling. The audio quality is commendable, enhancing the overall listening experience, and the narrator's clear pronunciation adds to the appeal, particularly in the initial stages. The use of "Hi" in the introduction appropriately establishes the desired atmosphere for a narrative.

The structured storytelling and well-suited voice contribute to its effectiveness, with the emphasis on certain words effectively conveying their significance. However, as the podcast progresses, some expression issues emerge, accompanied by prolonged pauses, which add depth to the narration but may affect the flow for some listeners. Despite this, the spontaneous nature of the storytelling, coupled with colloquial expressions, enhances engagement. The narrative captivates outsiders, largely due to the podcaster's adept narration, while also holding cultural significance in preserving narratives for future generations. Background noises are minimal, primarily consisting of the sound of pages being turned, which complements the storytelling format.

Nevertheless, the podcast could benefit from greater clarity regarding the story's intended message. The ambiguity leaves interpretation solely to the listeners, potentially hindering comprehension. Although a brief conclusion aligns with the story format, providing additional clarity on the message could enhance understanding. Alternatively, a follow-up episode dedicated to explaining the story's purpose could offer valuable insights for the audience.

### **Bush Stories:**

*Man and Wife*

Host: Shortman

Length: 5:21

Language: English

The podcast shows promise with a well-executed introduction that effectively sets the stage for the content. Despite suboptimal audio quality characterised by low volume, the articulate delivery and well-crafted sentences maintain listener engagement. However, there's room for improvement in the emphasis on words, as it currently lacks the dynamic range needed to bring the story to life. Nevertheless, the narrative is well-structured and easily comprehensible. Background noises like ringing phones disrupt the narrative's atmosphere, although the presence of a clock adds a unique character. While the story may captivate listeners, its significance lies in its potential for cultural preservation. However, clarity is lacking regarding whether the story is based on true events or is a cultural narrative, which could enhance its impact.

The precise purpose of the story remains somewhat ambiguous. A clearer explanation of its intent would improve audience comprehension. Additionally, while the ending is sympathetic, the conclusion could be more

seamless, avoiding abrupt statements that disrupt the flow of the narrative.

**Instagram:**

*The lost goat.*

Host: /

Length: 1:05

Language: Zu/hoasi

Subtitles: English

The video presents a mixed bag of audio and visual elements. Unfortunately, the audio quality is notably affected by strong wind interference, which detracts from the overall viewing experience. Moreover, the absence of an introduction makes it challenging for viewers to grasp what the video is about from the outset. Despite these shortcomings, the standout feature of the video is the captivating performance delivered by the community member. Their portrayal is both convincing and expressive, injecting elements of interest and humour into the narrative.

Considering the limitations of recording with a mobile phone, the camera work is commendable, offering decent visual storytelling. However, the subtitles, while understandable, suffer from occasional delays or linger on screen for extended periods, disrupting the flow of the video. Furthermore, the image quality fluctuates due to technological constraints, resulting in inconsistencies in sharpness.

Nevertheless, the video succeeds in its portrayal of a Bush Story, presenting a complete narrative with intricate details and commendable acting performances. Particularly impressive is the confidence displayed by the community member in front of the camera, likely stemming from the personal nature of the story. However, the absence of a proper outro detracts from the overall impact of the video. A well-executed conclusion could have provided closure and left a stronger impression on the audience. Overall, while the video has its flaws, particularly in terms of audio quality and presentation, its storytelling prowess and engaging performances make it a compelling watch.

**TikTok:**

The Lizard Dance:

Language: English (AI) / Song in Zu/hoasi

Length: /

The video has garnered significant attention since its upload, accumulating 783 views within a short period. Impressively, on its first day of upload alone, it reached around 300 views. However, despite its popularity, the video quality leaves much to be desired, primarily due to limitations in the equipment used during production. Consequently, the audio suffers from occasional lack of clarity. Nonetheless, the video incorporates the widely recognised female AI voice, lending an air of internationality to the production.

The video commences directly with the rhythmic clapping of the San, complemented by the voiceover of the woman and subtitles. While this combination adds depth to the presentation, the subtitles linger on screen for extended periods, potentially disrupting the viewing experience. Although most participants are dressed in their usual attire, the decision of two women to wear traditional clothing enhances the authenticity of the video. This choice is particularly notable given that wearing traditional attire can be uncomfortable for many San individuals in Donkerbos (Kaulbach, 2020). Their willingness to do so in a public video underscores their dedication and understanding of the importance of attracting attention and reinforcing the video's authenticity.

Regrettably, both the audio and video quality fluctuate throughout the video, failing to consistently meet desired standards. Despite these technical shortcomings, the singing featured in the video is well-executed and catchy, owing to its captivating rhythm. However, the rationale behind the choice of a "lizard song" remains unclear for a significant duration of the video. While this information is elucidated in the captions, its absence from the video itself represents a missed opportunity for clarity and engagement with the audience. Integrating such explanations directly into the video would have enhanced viewer understanding and engagement with the content.

### **Surveys on Mighty Networks:**

The issue with the three surveys is that they were created at the outset of usage and, due to subsequent postings in the timeline, they have been pushed down and thus do not attract the attention of new subscribers. Consequently, the number of participants in the surveys is very low. This could have been avoided by pinning them to the top of the page.

One of these surveys asks subscribers how much they enjoy the podcast episodes. This is done through a

"percentage poll," where users can select their satisfaction level on a round chart. For instance, one user selected 80%. From this chart, further follow-up surveys could be created with higher interaction to determine where the criticism lies and what users hope for. Another survey is in the format of "Hot and Cold." Here, subscribers can answer whether they are interested in visiting the community campsite. Again, there was low interaction with only 3 users. Subsequent surveys could be created to understand what is important for guests during a campsite visit. The third survey is a multiple-answer survey. Within the podcast category Politics, subscribers are asked which political topics, such as hunting or infrastructure, are of interest to the audience. Again, only 3 subscribers had voted by the time this was written. This type of survey can provide insight into which topics are of interest to the audience in each category. Furthermore, it can delve deeper into specific categories that participants found interesting, gathering further details. Additionally, it can delve into the type of podcast that resonates well with users, such as interviews or content focus, whether it's more legal-oriented or culturally influential. The options of the surveys are intriguing and diverse, offering ample room for interaction with subscribers. The surveys are also simple and clear, as well as easy to create. In total: 9 episodes in English and 3 episodes in Zu/hoasi on the Mighty Networks broadcast.



15; Shortman Kandjengo

### 4.3 Evaluation of Usability and Experiences

The project encountered several challenges throughout the methodical implementation, predominantly logistical in nature. These logistical hurdles hindered the seamless execution of planned activities. Primarily, these obstacles stemmed from inadequacies in equipment availability and insufficient planning in coordinating with the community. This included difficulties in coordinating participants, especially due to different locations of housing in the area. Some participants stayed a few kilometres away from the research site, making it more time-consuming to move between the site and their houses. This is therefore a problem for centralised projects. Due to the digital nature of the project, if users have a recording device at home, they can make recordings at home and then upload them directly to Mighty Networks. The problem here is not necessarily the possession of devices capable of recording, as most participants have cell phones, it is primarily a problem of mobile data, as users have to pay for this and often cannot afford it. Wi-Fi can help here, but this again requires participants to come to a central location. During the projects this is a prerequisite, but outside the projects the community often doesn't come together. Some work or look for day jobs to provide food.

*“There is often no food and no water, people are struggling and trying to make ends meet. They cannot come here to the campsite to record podcasts when they don't know if there's food on the table tonight, and I cannot offer them anything.”* (Shortman Kajango, see appendix 1)

Understandably, a podcast recording is then only of secondary importance. Even the prospect of income from constantly uploading content can only be seen as a secondary motivating factor. Shortman has thought about this problem and has considered setting aside a small portion of the money that comes in from research collaborations for recording days so that he can offer drinks and food when people show up for the podcast recording.

Furthermore, institutional issue from the project managing site arose. Mobile data which was supposed to be obtained in the following week of the first trip, via NUST from MTC, showed itself to be a time-consuming obstacle. The data could only be provided after four weeks. The lack of suitable audio recording equipment and problems with data availability and network availability were also challenging. As the recordings were made outside, wind and noise from other members of the community were causing problems. There were also some problems with the functionality of the microphone, which is why some episodes were recorded using a mobile phone. The importance of microphone positioning, clear articulation and avoiding noise was emphasised.

The organic emergence of podcasting structures such as text on paper and interviews was recognised as part

of the preparation. Participants recognised the need to improve the clarity of sound in earlier recordings. It was also important to speak fluently. Another significant challenge stemmed from translation issues due to language barriers. Communication difficulties impeded the fluid exchange of information and hindered meaningful discussions among some participants and the researcher.

The participants expressed initial discomfort and challenges with the independent recording process but also optimism and success through continuous learning. It proved particularly difficult for participants to speak freely, especially in English; thus, many episodes were first written down nearly word for word and then read out during recording. This practice, while supporting linguistic confidence limited the spontaneity and natural rhythm of the podcast episodes.

The use of English was consciously chosen by many participants, as they perceived it to be a necessary tool for reaching broader, even international, audiences. As Shortman Kandjengo remarked: “We should record in English, because otherwise no one will be interested in our podcasts because they cannot understand us.” (see Appendix 1). Nevertheless, participants were encouraged to record in Zu/hoasi, and some episodes were created in both English and Zu/hoasi as separate clips to ensure both accessibility and authenticity. In these Zu/hoasi recordings, participants felt more comfortable speaking freely and engaging in culturally rooted storytelling.

While translation workflows were not fully developed during this pilot phase, the idea of future multilingual podcasting with subtitled or parallel translations was positively received and discussed as a potential next step.

*“I want them to train on their language skills also outside of the trips, we should come together and record podcasts. If we can integrate this into our daily lives, we will get much better”.* (Shortman Kajango, see Appendix 1)

Moreover, the project faced a notable challenge regarding participant engagement. Compared to similar initiatives, this project experienced a lower level of involvement from participants. This diminished engagement adversely affected the quality, diversity, and efficacy of discussions and information dissemination throughout the project. Furthermore, the complexity of recording, uploading, and using Mighty Networks does not make such endeavours any easier for the community. Here it can be argued that deeper focused and longer trips are needed to create a basis that holds up even in the absence of the researcher. The problem with the lack of mobile data to record the podcast and the gathering of participants, became evident

after the second trip. The agreement here was that the participants would upload at least 8 podcast recordings in the period October-February. Unfortunately, not a single upload was made during this period. A shorter duration between the two trips could have helped to stabilise the project and keep attention on it. In addition, the researcher could have done more to motivate the participants to continue the recordings outside the workshops. The points on remote communication noted in the communications protocol are essential to keep such projects running.

The short-term effects of this research can only be fundamentally answered once the payment system has been established, and it can be analysed whether and how many people are willing to spend money on it, as this seems to be a vital factor for the community in continuing the project. Effects on the situation surrounding the development of the community cannot yet be foreseen, as a greater reach must be achieved, so that the 'right' people become aware of the content.

Accordingly, the long-term growth of this project should be regarded as much more significant than the short-term developments. Nevertheless, the number of subscribers gained on Mighty Networks and the success of the Lizard Dance video on TikTok show that a remote community like the San in Donkerbos have information to share that sparks interest of people outside their cultural circle. The Lizard video achieved around 400 views on the same day. The subscribers on Mighty Networks were 15 at the time of writing. These are not only participants in the project but also outsiders who became aware of it by sharing the broadcast. Among others, a German journalist is part of the subscribers, who has expressed interest in becoming professionally involved in this project, with the community. The interaction in the surveys also suggests that there is some potential for optimisation and that content can achieve greater success according to the audience. The interactions in the surveys show that there are various aspects of San that interest people outside the cultural circle and also that the community itself has many topics they would like to talk of. However, it should be noted that an important aspect of this research and this project is aimed at preserving the language, culture and tradition of the San in Donkerbos. If this is continued consistently, the community will be able to digitally archive and thus preserve a large part of its knowledge in the near future. This can be considered a success regardless of the monetary success of the MN. As a result, the archived information is also of interest to other academics and projects [with the San community in Donkerbos]. It should also be noted that the presence of the journalism students during the most recent trip has led to a greater understanding of the influence of news. A lot of information and personal views were shared. This can at least partly be related to the workshops and focus groups, as these have a clear influence on the understanding of these aspects.

*“It is a blessing that you [journalism students] are here and that you are listening to us and hearing us. These are very important topics for us. And we are very glad that we can share these stories with you. We needed exactly people such as you to come here and show us that others are interested and care.”* (Shortman Kajango, see Appendix 1)

In general, apart from certain aspects of the recording process, there were no points that were discussed in the focus groups that could be carried out without further assistance. However, the success of a workshop can be defined in different ways. Participation, even if low, was consistently positive. The participants were able to log in to Mighty Networks with their Google account. Together, they then managed to create the individual podcast categories on Mighty Networks after the group had defined them independently. The various important features such as uploading and creating the surveys were also mastered together. In addition, hashtags were selected independently to provide the individual episodes with corresponding keywords.

Using the guidelines for creating podcasts, the participants were able to create their first podcast topics for the individual categories independently or in small groups. Participants were able to easily identify topics for the podcasts categories, such as hunting, cultural narratives, and traditional stories. Emphasizing important rules and aspects. These were consistently positive and very suitable and interesting. Projects such as the greenhouse project or solar panel project were discussed. Important political topics such as hunting policies and colonial influence on the San were included. The cultural story about the Dark Room is also very interesting and very appropriate in terms of the cultural preservation of the San. During the note taking session, it turned out that there were some comprehension problems with the language of newspaper articles and that the sentences were written down in full instead of using keywords.

In the initial phases, obtaining comprehensive feedback from participants proved challenging. Feedback from focus groups was limited, thereby posing difficulties in garnering concrete suggestions for project enhancement. This limitation in feedback hindered the project’s ability to effectively address areas requiring improvement in the early stages. Disparities in participant attendance and involvement made it arduous to conduct feedback sessions effectively, as varying levels of participation hindered the coherence and depth of discussions.

The participants took the recordings very seriously and tried to achieve the best possible result. Using their notes, they were able to reproduce the content well and comprehensibly, with a recognisable structure and interesting information. Based on the recordings, the participants also recognised areas of improvement such as clarity of tone, positioning of the microphone and structuring of content were identified that could help to

further develop the project.

*"We need to speak louder, and more fluent so that people also want to listen to us. With the outside noise it's even more important."* (project participants, see Appendix 1)

It became clear that professional preparation and recording requires internalisation, as the notes were whole sentences or whole texts, and these were then read out. The reason given for this was to be able to speak more fluently, especially regarding the English language, and to create a certain structure. Changing this and creating notes based on keywords and still being able to speak in a structured way requires more training than could be provided in the workshops. There were also challenges such as uploading content, which was quite difficult due to a slow internet connection. Accordingly, these were aspects of the challenges that emerged.

The recordings were not always clear, which was partly due to the external conditions, as it was an open area, other people were present causing noise and the wind contributing to the noise. The handling of the microphone, which was often held too close or too far away or moved too much, played a role in the voice quality too. Another point of criticism in the workshops was the small number of participants, which had already been observed during the focus groups. A larger number would have resulted in more diverse content, and topics could have been explored in greater depth. The often-passive participation of some also meant that it was not always clear whether the content was understood.

In hindsight, it can be said that some of the positive developments described in the workshop were somewhat deceptive. As the participants knew how to follow instructions, the explanations were often easy to provide. However, after the trips it often turned out that many of the aspects were not internalised. Therefore, the workshops need to focus even more on internalisation, the practical implementation of the content and to become even more effective, creative solutions need to be found to incorporate the content.

Overall, while the challenges of internet connectivity and the unfamiliarity with podcasts are noteworthy concerns, the benefits of utilising this medium, including its versatility, accessibility, and potential for creative expression and outreach, underscored its importance as a valuable tool for the research in Donkerbos. It became clear that professional preparation and recording require internalisation. Adaptability, commitment, and a focus on language preservation emerged as key themes throughout the project. The success of the workshops and focus groups, despite certain challenges, highlighted the community's potential for growth and development through digital content creation.

## **5. Discussions and Future Work**

### **5.1 Reflection on the Theory and Literature**

The findings of this study have significant implications for the theory and literature on indigenous knowledge systems and their mediatisation. The success of the digital storytelling initiatives supports existing theories that emphasise the importance of participatory and culturally sensitive approaches in media production. This aligns with the work of Ginsburg (2008), Kovach (2021), and the ICTeCHub (IK Cluster) who advocate for the use of ICTs and indigenous methodologies to empower communities and challenge dominant stereotypes. Moreover, the study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of combining traditional knowledge systems with modern digital media. It demonstrates that digital platforms can serve as powerful tools for cultural preservation and intergenerational knowledge transmission, supporting the arguments made by Shiri et al. (2021) and Moradi et al. (2020). However, the study also highlights some challenges, such as technical limitations and language barriers, which need to be addressed to maximise the potential of digital media for indigenous knowledge systems. These challenges underscore the need for continuous support and capacity-building within the community, as noted by Winschiers-Theophilus et al. (2020). As previously defined, the community in focus refers to a small group of San participants from Donkerbos, including young and older adults, who actively participated in co-design activities during the three research trips.

### **5.2 Reflection on the Applied Methodology**

The use of participatory methods such as the indigenous paradigm, action design and participatory design enabled active involvement of community members and encouraged ownership of the project process. One of the most significant achievements of this project lies in its ability to effectively integrate diverse methodologies. These methodologies served as guiding frameworks, empowering community members to actively engage in the project's development and execution. Through collaborative efforts and knowledge exchange, participants were able to co-create meaningful content that authentically captured the essence of San culture and traditions.

The indigenous paradigm appeared to be effective in engaging the community in the workshops and considering their needs and perspectives. The involvement of this paradigm enabled local issues and stories to be authentically captured and gave the podcasts a relevant and meaningful character. The use of indigenous methods and approaches strengthened the bond between participants and fostered an understanding of the culture and traditions. The action design approach proved instrumental in identifying and implementing

tangible steps geared towards achieving the project's objectives. By prioritising practical actions and actively involving participants in the process, this method facilitated the execution of ideas and bolstered the motivation levels of all stakeholders.

Through collaborative efforts and the exchange of diverse perspectives, the methodology facilitated the emergence of innovative content tailored to address the specific needs of the community. The participatory design method served as a pivotal mechanism for empowering participants to actively shape the development of the project. The methodology fostered a sense of ownership and engagement among participants, nurturing a collaborative environment conducive to innovation and collective problem-solving.

A complete answer to whether all aspects of San culture have been adequately considered within the applied methodology cannot be given by a non-indigenous researcher. Despite extensive efforts and preparations to include different perspectives and voices within the community, there is a risk that certain aspects have been neglected or are not sufficiently represented. Notably, the lack of participation of women in this project was a significant shortcoming, which has to be further analysed.

Overall, the study underscores the effectiveness and the merging and transitions of methodologies in the realm of the indigenous paradigm, fostering community involvement and collective solution development. Despite encountering challenges, these methodologies played a pivotal role in achieving the project's objectives and enhancing participant participation and motivation. By proactively addressing issues such as limited interaction and participation differences, project stakeholders can optimise the effectiveness of these methods and ensure the successful attainment of project aims.

### 5.3 Reflection on the Research Problem and Research Objectives

The core problem addressed by this research is the lack of authentic representation and the marginalisation of indigenous voices in public discourse. Most media reporting on indigenous individuals, people, or tribes is conducted by outsiders of the respective indigenous community, often leading to misrepresentation and perpetuation of stereotypes (Stichel, 2018). This issue is particularly pronounced in communities such as the San in Namibia, where external portrayals often fail to reflect their true cultural and historical realities (Stichel 2018).

The main research question which the study aimed to answer is how to support independent reporting and storytelling within an indigenous San community in Namibia in their development towards being an equal part in public discourse. The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and establish a digital platform to support independent reporting.
2. To enable the community to create and disseminate content.
3. To evaluate usability and experiences.

The podcasts and video recordings created served as important tools for documenting and preserving indigenous traditions and narratives. These recordings stand as powerful testimonies to the vibrancy and resilience of San heritage. Despite facing challenges such as limited resources and technical constraints, these recordings offer invaluable insights into a wide array of topics, including hunting policies, colonial legacies, traditional practices, and community celebrations. The inclusion of community members in storytelling and performance adds layers of authenticity and depth to these narratives, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among participants. As one participant remarked, *“We hope that with these podcast recordings many of our traditions and culture will be available for future generations...”* (see Appendix 1). This statement encapsulates the sense of urgency and relevance voiced during the project.

The project’s utilisation of digital platforms such as Mighty Networks for participant engagement and feedback collection underscores its commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness. While initial participation levels may have been modest, the potential of this platform as a vehicle for community dialogue and collaboration is vast. By leveraging technology to amplify indigenous voices and narratives, the project has laid the groundwork for continued dialogue, archiving, and knowledge sharing within the San community and beyond.

The digital media platform (Mighty Networks), including podcasts and video recordings, has enhanced the San community’s ability to document and share their cultural narratives. This aligns with the first objective, when the medium was successfully identified and established. It was ensured that the medium was culturally relevant and user-friendly, addressing the initial research problem of underrepresentation and marginalisation in media.

Regarding the usability of the medium, the study found that community members were able to use the platform to create and share content. Workshops and focus groups played a crucial role in equipping participants with the necessary skills, fulfilling the second objective. The usability was further evidenced by the engagement metrics and feedback from the community, demonstrating the platform’s potential for broader adoption and sustainability. While the choice of English and the use of written scripts may appear to contradict the ideal of oral, spontaneous storytelling, it must be understood as a pragmatic adaptation driven by participants themselves. Their desire to be understood by wider audiences and their confidence in prepared

speech were essential for their active participation.

In examining the short-term effects, the study observed increased community engagement, a sense of cultural pride and belonging, and improved skills in digital storytelling. These outcomes support the third objective and highlight the immediate benefits of the project in terms of empowerment and cultural preservation.

However, alongside these successes, the project encountered its fair share of challenges, ranging from logistical hurdles to communication barriers and technical limitations. Logistical challenges, such as equipment shortages and internet connectivity issues, have posed obstacles to the project's implementation, impacting the pace and quality of activities. Additionally, issues related to language barriers and translation difficulties have hampered effective communication and collaboration among a broader range of participants, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

Moreover, while the project succeeded in capturing a diverse range of topics and narratives, there are opportunities to enhance the depth and quality of content produced. Issues such as audio and video quality, pronunciation, and narrative clarity have been identified as areas requiring improvement, necessitating investments in training, capacity-building, and technical infrastructure. Addressing these challenges head-on can help future iterations of the project deliver even more compelling and impactful content that resonates with both local and global audiences.

Notably, the lack of participation of women in this project was a significant shortcoming. Even though they were asked several times to get involved and record podcasts, this did not happen. The insights gained from the survey indicating the audience's desire for female voices or topics presented by women within San culture were not realised.

The aim of the master's thesis was to analyse the effectiveness of various methods for promoting indigenous culture and participation within the San community. By analysing podcast episodes, video recordings, and surveys on the Mighty Networks platform making use of the methodology, a comprehensive picture of the successes, challenges, and the findings from this study indicate that Mighty Networks, has significantly enhanced the San community's ability to document and share their cultural narratives in the short-term.

The journey of this project, spanning various methodologies, engagement strategies, and content creation endeavours, has been a testament to the resilience and richness of the San community's cultural heritage. As we delved deeper into the successes, challenges, and opportunities uncovered by the methodology, it became evident that there is much to celebrate and even more to explore.



16; *Community meeting*

## 5.4 Outlook and Recommendations

Looking ahead, there are several avenues for further research and exploration that can build upon the foundation laid by this project.

One promising area of inquiry for broader academics is the continued refinement and adaptation of participatory methodologies to better suit the unique cultural context and needs of indigenous [San] communities. By conducting in-depth studies and evaluations, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of community dynamics, preferences, and aspirations, thereby informing the development of tailored and effective engagement strategies. Specifically, future research could focus on exploring culturally sensitive approaches to community engagement, ensuring that participatory processes truly empower and reflect the voices of all community members. Furthermore, there is a need for continued research and innovation in the realm of digital storytelling and cultural preservation. Collaborative projects involving local storytellers, technologists, and cultural practitioners can help unlock new possibilities for capturing, documenting, and sharing indigenous knowledge and traditions in digital formats. By harnessing the power of technology, future

initiatives can reach broader audiences while ensuring the integrity and authenticity of cultural narratives. Researchers could delve into the development of interactive multimedia platforms or immersive experiences that facilitate deeper engagement with indigenous [San] cultural and traditional heritage.

Moreover, there is a pressing need for research and action in the field of language revitalisation and preservation within the San ethnic group. Efforts to document and revitalise indigenous languages such as Zu/hoasi can benefit from interdisciplinary collaborations involving linguists, educators, and community leaders. By developing targeted language preservation strategies and resources, researchers can help safeguard linguistic diversity and promote intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge and wisdom. Future research could focus on the development of language revitalisation programs that integrate language learning with cultural activities and community events, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among San speakers.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to explore the intersection of cultural heritage preservation and sustainable development within the [San] indigenous context. By examining and comparing successful case studies and best practices from similar projects around the world, researchers can identify key principles and strategies for fostering community resilience, economic empowerment, and environmental stewardship. By sharing experiences and resources, future projects can be designed even more effectively, and the sustainable development of indigenous cultures worldwide can be supported. Comparative research could explore the cultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to the success or failure of participatory projects in different contexts, highlighting lessons learned and areas for improvement. By integrating cultural heritage preservation into broader development agendas, future initiatives can contribute to holistic and sustainable outcomes for indigenous communities. Research in this area could delve into the impact of cultural heritage preservation on local economies, social cohesion, and environmental conservation efforts, providing valuable insights for and by policymakers and practitioners.

Furthermore, to ensure the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of projects to promote indigenous cultures, it is essential to prioritise continuous community involvement in decision-making processes, strengthen local capacities and resources, and promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation. Future research could focus on developing frameworks and tools for assessing the long-term impact and sustainability of participatory projects, as well as identifying strategies for overcoming challenges and implementation barriers.

Finally, a worthwhile task for the near future is the development and implementation of comprehensive

education and capacity development programs aimed at raising awareness of indigenous cultures, promoting intercultural competencies, and fostering an appreciation of cultural diversity. By investing in education and awareness-raising, positive changes in the perception and recognition of indigenous cultures can be achieved in the long term. Research in this area could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of different educational approaches and interventions in promoting cultural diversity and combating stereotypes and discrimination.

The present project holds significant potential to shape the format and content of various podcast topics, offering ample material for future episodes that spotlight the voices and narratives of the San community across diverse themes. This opens the possibility of influencing the current situation within the community. Important topics can reach relevant people or motivate subscribers to get involved. Furthermore, exciting approaches for research can be found within these realms. The weekly news podcast with a focus on local events, cultural occurrences, and community projects can serve as a vital avenue for keeping listeners abreast of pertinent developments while providing unique insights into the perspectives of the San community in Donkerbos. Moreover, future episodes could delve into the impacts of hunting laws within the realm of politics, fostering discussions on environmental conservation and the preservation of traditional hunting practices.

The greenhouse project and solar panel initiatives provide exciting fodder for further podcast discussions on sustainable agricultural practices and renewable energy. Future episodes could explore progress, challenges, and best practices in implementing such sustainable development projects in indigenous communities, shedding light on innovative approaches and community-driven solutions. The community can become a pioneer in sustainable projects and a point of contact for institutions, other communities and interested parties.

Delving into cultural themes such as the Dark Room celebration and the five animals can deepen audience understanding and appreciation for San culture, thereby supporting the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, engaging episodes could present firsthand stories from San community members, sharing their life experiences and cultural values through captivating bush stories, thus enriching the podcast narrative with authentic voices and perspectives. Furthermore, utilising social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram to publish videos offers an innovative means of making San cultural practices accessible to a broader audience. Future posts could elucidate the cultural significance of traditions such as the “lizard dance” and provide glimpses into daily life within the San community, contributing to heightened awareness on indigenous cultures and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Looking ahead, this project lays a solid foundation for future research endeavours across various realms, particularly in indigenous communities' development. Researchers can explore the effectiveness of weekly news podcasts in disseminating information and fostering community engagement, while also delving into the socio-economic and cultural implications on indigenous communities.

Ethnographic studies and participatory research methods can uncover hidden insights into the meanings and significance of cultural practices within indigenous communities, ensuring cultural sensitivity and authenticity in reporting on such communities. Comparative studies with storytelling traditions in other indigenous cultures can facilitate cross-cultural learning and knowledge exchange, enriching our understanding of storytelling practices and cultural diversity. Moreover, research on digital storytelling through social media platforms can explore audience engagement and the effectiveness of digital narratives in promoting cultural awareness and challenging stereotypes on indigenous communities. Studies on digital literacy within indigenous communities can inform capacity-building initiatives and empower community members to share their stories effectively, thereby amplifying indigenous voices and narratives in the digital sphere.

The podcast episodes could have a significant impact on the current living standards and life situation of the San community by shedding light on different aspects of their reality and raising awareness on concerns. By providing relevant information about local events, cultural practices, and community projects, the podcast episodes could help raise awareness within the San community. A well-informed community member is able to make informed decisions and actively participate in community affairs. By highlighting the voices and stories of the San community in the podcast episodes, they can help to build self-esteem and empowerment within the community. By being able to share their stories and be heard, community members could be encouraged to actively participate in shaping their own lives and community.

Podcast episodes that deal with cultural topics such as traditions, customs and stories can help to strengthen the understanding and appreciation of one's own culture within the San community. This can help to strengthen the sense of belonging and identity within the community and promote cultural continuity. By presenting educational content in the podcast episodes, community members could gain access to relevant information on topics such as sustainable farming practices, renewable energy and political developments. This could help strengthen community members' skills and knowledge and create opportunities for personal and professional growth. By highlighting local projects and initiatives, the podcast episodes can raise awareness of required resources and opportunities in regard to community development. This could help to improve access to important resources such as education, healthcare, economic opportunities and improve

the quality of life within the community.

In addition, the presence of journalism students on the last trip led to great enthusiasm, as important topics were taken up and published in articles<sup>12</sup>. This has already led to the community drawing attention to important grievances that the journalism students have brought to the attention of those responsible outside the community. However, this depends on the commitment of the students. If they are able to increase the audience of Mighty Networks, the probability increases that the topics in the podcast will reach the people directly and thus a semi-direct and semi-public communication can be created, which exerts more pressure than if its solely direct and private communication that happens exclusively between the community and the people responsible outside.

Summarized, the podcast episodes and themes can have a positive impact on the current standard of living and living situation of the San community by creating awareness, promoting empowerment, strengthening cultural identity, enabling education, supporting community development, and archiving indigenous knowledge. While this project has achieved significant milestones in capturing, archiving, and celebrating San culture and traditions, the journey is far from over. By embracing the successes, addressing the challenges, and seizing the opportunities revealed along the way, researchers and practitioners can continue to support and empower indigenous communities in their efforts to preserve, protect, and promote their cultural heritage for generations to come.

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<sup>12</sup> The articles have not yet been made available to the public.



17; Research team: Peter Kaulbach, Heike Winschiers-Theopilus, JD Sheizlan, Selma Auala, Heike Becker

## **6. Significance of Study:**

This study's importance lies in its contribution towards self-development and self-sustainability in an indigenous community. It contributes to knowledge creation and preservation. Further significance lies in the participatory aspect of the proposed study, as it aims to involve the participants actively as co-designers and main contributors to the selected medium. The Donkerbos community benefits since they can use this platform for archiving and to communicate within/outside their community. The data can contribute vital information to further research and other projects.

## **7. Delineations & Limitations**

This research covers the identification of a research medium and to a certain degree the implementation of such. It is important to understand the reasoning historically and culturally behind why such a medium was chosen. It is nonetheless critical to engage in such, practically, in order to determine the efficiency of such medium in a practical setting. Furthermore, the access to technology has been considered as a possible hurdle in the [creative] development process and usability of a medium. This study cannot cover the full developmental process, in terms of observing the use of this medium in the long-term, and therefore, within this research it is not possible to observe and assess the long-term effects of this medium in the community and outside of it.

## **8. Assumptions**

The assumption of this research is that the under-representation of San in the media is partly responsible for

their marginalisation, with respect to this community. Thus, identifying and implementing a medium on which they can speak for themselves can contribute to more equality and a better self-perception in the public sphere in the long term. Short-term, it can support the community communication and efficiently train participants to express themselves publicly to an audience.

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## Appendix

### **First Appendix**

#### Step-by-Step Guidelines

*Step-by-Step guide to prepare and record a podcast.*

##### **1. Define Your Podcast Concept:**

- Before you start, have a clear idea of what your podcast is about. What's your niche or subject?
- Define your target audience. Who are you creating the podcast for, and what value will it offer them?

##### **2. Choose a Catchy Title:**

- Your podcast title should be memorable and reflective of your content.
- Make sure it's unique.

##### **3. Plan Your Content:**

- Create an outline or script for each episode. (Consider using a consistent structure for each episode, which may include an introduction, main content, and a call to action or closing remarks. Use segments or recurring features to maintain engagement.)
- Ensure a logical flow and structure to keep your audience engaged.
- Decide on the episode length and stick to it to maintain consistency.
- **Intros and Outros:** Create a professional and memorable podcast intro and outro. Include essential information like your podcast name, host(s), and where to find additional resources.
- **Engagement and Interactivity:** Encourage audience engagement through questions, polls, or listener-submitted content. Mention listener feedback and questions during episodes to create a sense of community.
- **Content Research and Preparation:** Thoroughly research your episode topics to provide accurate and valuable information. Prepare well in advance, whether you're scripting or outlining your content.

##### **4. Quality Audio is Key:**

- Record in a quiet environment to minimize background noise.

#### **5. Consistency is Crucial:**

- Stick to a regular release schedule, whether it's weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- Consistency helps build an audience who knows when to expect your content.

#### **6. Engage with Your Audience:**

- Encourage listener interaction through email, social media, or a website.
- Respond to comments and feedback to build a loyal community.

#### **7. Marketing and Promotion:**

- Promote your podcast through various channels, such as social media and email newsletters.
- Optimize your podcast for search engines with relevant keywords and descriptions.

#### **8. Rights and Permissions:**

- Avoid using copyrighted materials without proper licensing or permission.
- Respect privacy rights and obtain consent when featuring guests on your show.

#### **9. Continual Improvement:**

- Be open to feedback and continually refine your podcast based on listener input.
- Keep up with industry trends and adapt as necessary. (listen to other podcasts, use social media to look trends)

#### **10. Monetization:**

- Explore monetization options, such as sponsorships, affiliate marketing, or listener donations.

Tips:

#### **Practice and Improve Your Speaking Skills:**

- Practice speaking clearly, at a steady pace, and with enthusiasm.

- Work on reducing filler words (e.g., "um," "uh," "like") in your speech.

#### **Don't Be Discouraged by Slow Growth:**

- It can take time to build an audience. Be patient and persistent.
- Keep improving your content and marketing strategy.

#### **Stay Passionate:**

- Stay passionate about your podcast, as it can be a long-term commitment.

#### **Guidelines for Mighty Network**

##### **Advantages of establishing a MN:**

- **Preservation of Culture and Language:** A Mighty Network can serve as a digital space for preserving and promoting your indigenous culture and language.
- Members can share stories, traditions, and knowledge, ensuring that these are passed down to future generations.
- **Community Building and Connection:** A Mighty Network can help you to connect to people from diverse locations, fostering a sense of community and unity.

It enables you to connect with others who share their cultural identity, creating a supportive and inclusive space.

You can use the network to share educational resources, traditional practices, and historical information.

It can be a platform for learning and teaching cultural values and skills.

A Mighty Network can facilitate cultural exchange and collaboration with other indigenous communities or interested non-indigenous individuals.

It promotes understanding and appreciation of different indigenous cultures.

You can use the platform to raise awareness of important issues, advocate for your rights, and support indigenous causes.

It can be a hub for organizing events, petitions, and campaigns.

A Mighty Network allows you to have a safe and controlled online space where you can discuss concerns, experiences, and aspirations.

It can serve as a refuge from the potential biases and prejudices you encounter.

Members can collaborate on projects related to indigenous art, literature, traditional crafts, or other cultural endeavours.

The network can be a platform for showcasing and selling indigenous products.

The network can host and promote cultural events, festivals, or traditional celebrations.

Members can come together for virtual gatherings, storytelling, and performances.

A Mighty Network can attract and engage younger generations, ensuring the transfer of cultural knowledge and traditions.

It can provide a space for mentoring and education.

You can share information about educational opportunities, scholarships, job openings, and other resources.

The network can serve as a hub for economic and educational advancement.

By creating and managing your digital space, you can exercise more control over narratives and representation.

It empowers you to tell your own stories and counteract stereotypes and misrepresentations.

A Mighty Network can serve as a repository for historical and cultural documentation.

It provides a platform to store and catalogue important records, artifacts, and oral histories.

You can maintain greater privacy and control content and discussions, reducing the risk of exploitation or appropriation.

1. Resource Sharing and Education:
2. Cultural Exchange:
3. Advocacy and Activism:

4. Safe and Inclusive Space:
5. Collaborative Projects:
6. Cultural Events and Celebrations:
7. Youth Engagement:
8. Access to Resources and Opportunities:
9. Community Empowerment:
10. Record Keeping and Documentation:
11. Privacy and Control:

***Guidelines: Structure of a successful Might Network:***

**1. Define Your Purpose and Goals:**

- Clearly define the purpose and goals of your network. What do you want to achieve? Who is your target audience?

**2. Structure Your Content:**

- Organize your content into topics, channels, or categories to make it easier for members to navigate.
- Set up different spaces for discussions, courses, events, or other content types, depending on your network's purpose.

**3. Invite Members:**

- Invite people to join your network by sharing the link or sending direct invitations.
- Encourage your initial members to invite others to grow your community.

**4. Engage Your Members:**

- Encourage engagement by posting content, asking questions, and starting discussions.
- Be responsive to comments and interact with your members regularly.

**5. Create and Share Content:**

- Create and share various types of content, such as articles, videos, podcasts, events, or courses.
- Provide value to your community and keep them engaged with regular updates.

**6. Use the Events Feature:**

- Utilize the events feature to schedule and promote live events, webinars, workshops, or community meetups.
- Allow members to engage in discussions related to upcoming events.

**7. Monitor and Moderate:**

- Keep an eye on the community to ensure it remains a safe and positive space.
- Moderate discussions and enforce community guidelines as needed.

**8. Build Relationships:** - Encourage members to connect with each other. Mighty Networks has features like direct messaging and member directories to facilitate this.

**9. Encourage Contributions:** - Encourage your members to contribute their content or expertise to the network, fostering a sense of community ownership.

**10. Offer Premium Content (Optional):** - If your network is for a paid community, you can set up premium content or membership tiers to offer exclusive benefits to paying members.

**11. Analyse Analytics:** - Use the built-in analytics tools to track the growth and engagement of your network.  
- Analyse which content is most popular and understand your member demographics.

**12. Seek Feedback:** - Regularly ask for feedback from your members to understand their needs and preferences. - Use this feedback to improve and tailor your network accordingly.

**13. Promote Your Network:** - Promote your Mighty Network through your website, social media, email newsletters, or other channels. - Consider running marketing campaigns to attract new members.

**14. Keep Learning:** - Stay updated on new features and best practices for community building on Mighty Networks. - Engage with the Mighty Networks community and resources to keep improving.

**Remember that building a successful Mighty Network takes time and effort. Focus on creating a welcoming and engaging community that provides value to your members, and be patient as your network grows.**

***Mighty Network paid membership:***

If you can carry out the requirements for the podcast. Of course, this doesn't happen overnight. But if you manage to fulfil these requirements over time, you will be able to charge money for the Mighty Networks membership. This will initially be amounts like 3-5 USD per month. But even that is equivalent to 50-100 NAD per month. If you then follow the guidelines, we have just discussed building a successful Mighty Network, then with 50-100 paying members you will be able to earn 3000-10,000 NAD per month. You will then be able to self-finance Mighty Networks after the one year that UNESCO has paid for expired. You can install a permanent Wi-Fi. And then, you will still have money left over to invest in equipment and other important stuff. To achieve this, it is very important that you have quality and regularity. The mighty networks space must be well-organised and look accordingly. User interaction is also very important.

## **Second Appendix**

### **Quotes by Participants Used in the Thesis**

*“I think this is very important, because our youth does not know our traditions and culture. And it is not being taught in school” (Unknown Community Member, September 2023)*

*“We want to share our knowledge with others. And we want them to know about our struggles and hopefully give us support.” (unknown Community, September 2023)*

*“There is often no food and no water, people are struggling and trying to make ends meet. They cannot come here to the campsite to record podcasts when they don’t know if there’s food on the table tonight, and I cannot offer them anything.” (Shortman Kajango, November 2023)*

*“I want them to train on their language skills also outside of the trips, we should come together and record podcasts. If we can integrate this into our daily lives, we will get much better”. (Shortman Kajango, February 2024)*

*“I think many are hesitant because of the language barrier. They do not speak English so well. So, they don’t want to record podcasts or participate actively in the project.” (Daniel, interpreter and project participant, November 2023)*

*“We should record in English, because otherwise no one will be interested in our podcasts because they*

*cannot understand us.” Someone in Denmark will listen to it when it’s in English.” (Shortman Kajango, September 2023)*

*“It is a blessing that you [journalism students] are here and that you are listening to us and hearing us. These are very important topics for us. And we are very glad that we can share these stories with you. We needed exactly people such as you to come here and show us that others are interested and care.” (Shortman Kajango, February 2024)*

*“I am motivated to take part in the project because I hope that more people will hear our suffering.” (Project participant, September 2023)*

*“I hope, that with these podcast recordings many of our traditions and culture will be available for future generations, and they will not forget about their culture.” (Project participant, September 2023)*

*“You should keep the microphone closer to you, and you need to focus more on the text so that you are more fluent and don’t stutter so much.” (Daniel, November 2024)*

*“It is sometimes difficult to understand me because of the pronunciation of words. I will have to read through my notes more often, and we should do trial recordings just to get more comfortable.” (Project participant to another, November 2024)*

*“We need to speak louder, and more fluent so that people also want to listen to us. With the outside noise it’s even more important.” (project participants, February 2024)*

### Third Appendix

#### Preparations trip September and November

September: Training MN. Set up MN account, set up YouTube account, Community IG account, FB Account, connect to their website.

- 12/09: Morning introduction to the Project. Introduction to the different media.
- 12/09: Morning: Brainstorming session. Decision-making how to use and which medium.
- 12/09: Afternoon: Training/When audio and when video.
- 13/09: Morning: Training medium /Content creation.

- 13/09. Afternoon: Content creation/ Set up so they can continue after we left.
- 13/09 Evening: Premiere of content plus feedback session.
- 14/09: Content creation.

Intro:

Content block, technical block.

- Introduction: community meeting. Explain the concept of “Community Radio”. Print/Digital present “successful” projects. The possibilities short term and long term. Showcase the use/need of it via Whiteboard.
- Listen to what they have to say about it.
- Showcase Podcasts, MN, Connection to IG and FB. Show a small video example In MN. YouTube channel.
- Emphasise the importance of local content Like stargazing/hunting/ projects that are happening there. What do they want to share with each audience?
- Let record something/Interview.
- Focus Groups: Brainstorm ideas, every group comes up with one or two ideas, which can or cannot be connected. Decision process, each group/individual has a vote?
- Set up the infrastructure like space to work, tools/gadget etc.
- Workshops: small groups or one large group. Have examples set up, have basic guidelines and principles that must be adhered to.
- Content creation: According to the participants and the medium, individual or in a group. Come up with ideas. Work on this idea: Showcase before departure. Continue work on it or work on another one.

MN:

Mighty Network→ connect to FB and IG to post short notifications with Pictures and Video. Have a blog entry on the website with a link to the “Podcast” on Mighty Network and the link to FB and IG.

1. Meeting: Explanation: Podcast, Videos (Vlogs), Posts on IG and FB, Blogs whiteboard, Laptop).

2. Brainstorming: Content, Structure, Responsibilities etc. (whiteboard)
3. Training: Usage of equipment (Camera, micro, laptop, whiteboard), Development of Content (laptop, whiteboard, laptop, camera, micro).
4. Content: (Laptop, micro, camera, whiteboard)

November:

Day 1. Session 1:

***Step-by-Step guide to prepare and record a podcast.***

**1. Define Your Podcast Concept:**

- Before you start, have a clear idea of what your podcast is about. What's your niche or subject?
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**2. Choose a Catchy Title:**

- Your podcast title should be memorable and reflective of your content.
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- Create an outline or script for each episode. (Consider using a consistent structure for each episode, which may include an introduction, main content, and a call to action or closing remarks. Use segments or recurring features to maintain engagement.)
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- **Content Research and Preparation:** Thoroughly research your episode topics to provide accurate and valuable information. Prepare well in advance, whether you're scripting or outlining your content.

#### **4. Quality Audio is Key:**

- Record in a quiet environment to minimize background noise.

#### **5. Consistency is Crucial:**

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- Consistency helps build an audience who knows when to expect your content.

#### **6. Engage with Your Audience:**

- Encourage listener interaction through email, social media, or a website.
- Respond to comments and feedback to build a loyal community.

#### **7. Marketing and Promotion:**

- Promote your podcast through various channels, such as social media and email newsletters.
- Optimize your podcast for search engines with relevant keywords and descriptions.

#### **8. Rights and Permissions:**

- Avoid using copyrighted materials without proper licensing or permission.
- Respect privacy rights and obtain consent when featuring guests on your show.

#### **9. Continual Improvement:**

- Be open to feedback and continually refine your podcast based on listener input.
- Keep up with industry trends and adapt as necessary. (listen to other podcasts, use social media to look at trends)

#### **10. Monetization:**

- Explore monetization options, such as sponsorships, affiliate marketing, or listener donations.

Tips:

**Practice and Improve Your Speaking Skills:**

- Practice speaking clearly, at a steady pace, and with enthusiasm.
- Work on reducing filler words (e.g., "um," "uh," "like") in your speech.

**Don't Be Discouraged by Slow Growth:**

- It can take time to build an audience. Be patient and persistent.
- Keep improving your content and marketing strategy.

**Stay Passionate:**

- Stay passionate about your podcast, as it can be a long-term commitment.

***Prepare your podcast for the afternoon session according to the guidelines.***

***Day 1 Session 2: Record podcast examples***

***Day 2: Session 1:***

Use of MN. Introduce MN membership.

**Advantages of establishing a MN:**

- **Preservation of Culture and Language:** A Mighty Network can serve as a digital space for preserving and promoting your indigenous culture and language.
- **Members can share stories, traditions, and knowledge,** ensuring that these are passed down to future generations.
- **Community Building and Connection:** A Mighty Network can help you to connect to people from diverse locations, fostering a sense of community and unity.
- **It enables you to connect with others who share their cultural identity,** creating a supportive and inclusive space.
- **Resource Sharing and Education:** You can use the network to share educational resources, traditional

practices, and historical information.

- It can be a platform for learning and teaching cultural values and skills.
- Cultural Exchange: A Mighty Network can facilitate cultural exchange and collaboration with other indigenous communities or interested non-indigenous individuals.
- It promotes understanding and appreciation of different indigenous cultures.
- Advocacy and Activism: You can use the platform to raise awareness of important issues, advocate for your rights, and support indigenous causes.
- It can be a hub for organizing events, petitions, and campaigns.
- Safe and Inclusive Space: A Mighty Network allows you to have a safe and controlled online space where you can discuss concerns, experiences, and aspirations.
- It can serve as a refuge from the potential biases and prejudices you encounter.
- Collaborative Projects: Members can collaborate on projects related to indigenous art, literature, traditional crafts, or other cultural endeavours.
- The network can be a platform for showcasing and selling indigenous products.
- Cultural Events and Celebrations: The network can host and promote cultural events, festivals, or traditional celebrations.
- Members can come together for virtual gatherings, storytelling, and performances.
- Youth Engagement: A Mighty Network can attract and engage younger generations, ensuring the transfer of cultural knowledge and traditions.
- It can provide a space for mentoring and education.
- Access to Resources and Opportunities: You can share information about educational opportunities, scholarships, job openings, and other resources.
- The network can serve as a hub for economic and educational advancement.
- Community Empowerment: By creating and managing your digital space, you can exercise more

control over narratives and representation.

- It empowers you to tell your own stories and counteract stereotypes and misrepresentations.
- Record Keeping and Documentation: A Mighty Network can serve as a repository for historical and cultural documentation.
- It provides a platform to store and catalogue important records, artifacts, and oral histories.
- Privacy and Control: You can maintain greater privacy and control content and discussions, reducing the risk of exploitation or appropriation.

### ***Structure of a successful Might Network:***

#### **1. Define Your Purpose and Goals:**

- Clearly define the purpose and goals of your network. What do you want to achieve? Who is your target audience?

#### **2. Structure Your Content:**

- Organize your content into topics, channels, or categories to make it easier for members to navigate.
- Set up different spaces for discussions, courses, events, or other content types, depending on your network's purpose.

#### **3. Invite Members:**

- Invite people to join your network by sharing the link or sending direct invitations.
- Encourage your initial members to invite others to grow your community.

#### **4. Engage Your Members:**

- Encourage engagement by posting content, asking questions, and starting discussions.
- Be responsive to comments and interact with your members regularly.

#### **5. Create and Share Content:**

- Create and share various types of content, such as articles, videos, podcasts, events, or courses.

- Provide value to your community and keep them engaged with regular updates.

#### **6. Use the Events Feature:**

- Utilize the events feature to schedule and promote live events, webinars, workshops, or community meetups.
- Allow members to engage in discussions related to upcoming events.

#### **7. Monitor and Moderate:**

- Keep an eye on the community to ensure it remains a safe and positive space.
- Moderate discussions and enforce community guidelines as needed.

**8. Build Relationships:** - Encourage members to connect with each other. Mighty Networks has features like direct messaging and member directories to facilitate this.

**9. Encourage Contributions:** - Encourage your members to contribute their content or expertise to the network, fostering a sense of community ownership.

**10. Offer Premium Content (Optional):** - If your network is for a paid community, you can set up premium content or membership tiers to offer exclusive benefits to paying members.

**11. Analyse Analytics:** - Use the built-in analytics tools to track the growth and engagement of your network.  
- Analyse which content is most popular and understand your member demographics.

**12. Seek Feedback:** - Regularly ask for feedback from your members to understand their needs and preferences. - Use this feedback to improve and tailor your network accordingly.

**13. Promote Your Network:** - Promote your Mighty Network through your website, social media, email newsletters, or other channels. - Consider running marketing campaigns to attract new members.

**14. Keep Learning:** - Stay updated on new features and best practices for community building on Mighty Networks. - Engage with the Mighty Networks community and resources to keep improving.

**Remember that building a successful Mighty Network takes time and effort. Focus on creating a welcoming and engaging community that provides value to your members, and be patient as your network grows.**

***Mighty Network paid membership:***

If you can carry out the requirements for the podcast. Of course, this doesn't happen overnight. But if you manage to fulfil these requirements over time, you will be able to charge money for the Mighty Networks membership. This will initially be amounts like 3-5 USD per month. But even that is equivalent to 50-100 NAD per month. If you then follow the guidelines, we have just discussed building a successful Mighty Network, then with 50-100 paying members you will be able to earn 3000-10,000 NAD per month. You will then be able to self-finance the Mighty Networks after the one year that UNESCO has paid for expired. You can install a permanent Wi-Fi. And then, you will still have money left over to invest in equipment and other important stuff. To achieve this, it is very important

that you have quality and regularity. The Mighty Networks must be well-organised and look accordingly. User interaction is also very important.

Feedback of recordings

## **Session 2: IG, TikTok, Meta Business**

IG for the community. Step by Step

### **1. Create an Instagram Account:**

- Start by creating an official Instagram account for your indigenous community. You can use a shared email address or set up a separate email for the community.

### **2. Customize Your Profile:**

- Add a profile picture that represents your community, such as a logo, traditional art, or an image that reflects your culture.
- Write a clear and concise bio that describes your community, its mission, and the indigenous group it represents.
- Include a link to your community's website or relevant resources.

### **3. Share Cultural Content:**

- Post photos and videos that showcase your culture, traditions, and daily life.
- Share stories, anecdotes, or insights that provide a glimpse into your community's history and values.

- Use relevant hashtags, such as #IndigenousCulture or #NativeHeritage, to increase the visibility of your content.

#### **4. Connect with Other Indigenous Communities:**

- Follow and engage with other indigenous communities, organizations, and influencers on Instagram.
- Collaborate with them on shared projects, campaigns, or cultural events.

#### **5. Promote Indigenous Artists and Creators:**

- Highlight the work of indigenous artists, musicians, writers, and creators in your community.
- Encourage members to showcase their talents and creations on the platform.

#### **6. Educate and Raise Awareness:**

- Use your Instagram account to educate your followers and raise awareness about indigenous issues, history, and cultural heritage.
- Share posts about historical events, land rights, and social challenges facing indigenous communities.

#### **7. Share Traditional Knowledge:**

- Create informative posts or stories that share traditional knowledge, such as farming practices, storytelling, or traditional arts and crafts.
- Share important lessons and insights from elders and community members.

#### **8. Engage with Your Audience:**

- Respond to comments and messages from your followers.
- Host Q&A sessions, live streams, or AMAs (Ask Me Anything) to connect with your community and answer questions.

#### **9. Promote Cultural Events:**

- Use Instagram to promote and share information about indigenous cultural events, celebrations, and gatherings.

- Encourage community members to post their own content related to these events.

**10. Share Personal Stories:** - Encourage members to share personal stories and experiences related to their indigenous heritage. - Use the Stories feature to create temporary content that engages your audience.

**11. Document Important Events and Milestones:** - Use Instagram to document significant milestones in your community's history, such as anniversaries, cultural preservation efforts, or educational initiatives.

**12. Use Instagram Stories and Reels:** - Instagram Stories and Reels are great for sharing brief, engaging content. Use them for quick cultural insights, behind-the-scenes looks, and day-in-the-life stories.

**13. Collaborate with Influencers:** - Partner with indigenous influencers or advocates who can help amplify your community's message and reach a wider audience.

**14. Be Consistent and Authentic:** - Maintain a consistent posting schedule to keep your audience engaged. - Be authentic and genuine in your posts, reflecting the unique identity and character of your community.

**15. Use Instagram's Features:** - Explore features like IGTV to post longer videos, IG Live for real-time interactions, and Explore to discover new content and communities.

**16. Maintain Privacy and Security:** - Be mindful of the privacy and security of your community members. Avoid sharing sensitive personal information and educate your members about online safety.

**17. Network and Collaborate:** - Connect with indigenous organizations, non-profits, and cultural institutions for potential collaborations, support, and shared initiatives.

How to record on IG:

- Choose Your Video Mode:

Instagram offers several video modes, including: Normal: Tap the circle button to start and stop recording.

Boomerang: Captures a short, looping video that plays forward and backward.

Super zoom: Adds dramatic zoom effects with sound.

Hands-Free: Allows you to record videos without holding down the record button. This is useful for longer recordings.

- Select Your Orientation:

- You can choose between landscape (horizontal) and portrait (vertical) orientations. Instagram supports both, but vertical videos are more common.

- **Set Up Your Shot:**

- Frame your shot and ensure good lighting. The front and back cameras can be toggled by tapping the camera icon in the upper right corner.

- **Start Recording:**

- Press and hold the record button to start recording. You can use hands-free mode if you don't want to hold the button.

- **Edit and Enhance:**

- After recording, you can apply filters, add text, stickers, music, and more using Instagram's editing tools.

- **Add a Caption and Hashtags:**

- Write a caption, tag people, and use relevant hashtags. Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags per post.

- **Choose Your Sharing Options:**

- Decide whether you want to share the video to your feed, your story, IGTV, or with specific friends. You can also post to other social media platforms simultaneously.

- **Share Your Video:**

- Tap "Share" to publish your video to your profile or story.

Usage of TikTok for the community.

### **1. Create a TikTok Account:**

- Start by creating an official TikTok account for your indigenous community. Use a shared email address or set up a separate email for the community.

### **2. Customize Your Profile:**

- Add a profile picture that represents your community, such as a logo or an image that reflects your

culture.

- Write a clear and concise bio that describes your community, its mission, and the indigenous group it represents.
- Include a link to your community's website or relevant resources.

### **3. Share Cultural Content:**

- Create short, engaging videos that showcase your culture, traditions, and daily life.
- Share stories, anecdotes, or insights that provide a glimpse into your community's history and values.
- Use relevant hashtags, such as #IndigenousCulture or #NativeHeritage, to increase the visibility of your content.

### **4. Educate and Raise Awareness:**

- Use TikTok to educate your followers and raise awareness about indigenous issues, history, and cultural heritage.
- Share posts about historical events, land rights, and social challenges facing indigenous communities.

### **5. Share Traditional Knowledge:**

- Create informative videos that share traditional knowledge, such as farming practices, storytelling, or traditional arts and crafts.
- Share important lessons and insights from elders and community members.

### **6. Engage with Your Audience:**

- Respond to comments and messages from your followers.
- Host live streams or Q&A sessions to connect with your community and answer questions in real time.

### **7. Promote Indigenous Artists and Creators:**

- Highlight the work of indigenous artists, musicians, writers, and creators in your community.
- Encourage members to showcase their talents and creations on the platform.

**8. Share Personal Stories:**

- Encourage members to share personal stories and experiences related to their indigenous heritage.
- Use TikTok's features, such as duets and stitches, to create collaborative content.

**9. Use Trending Challenges and Hashtags:**

- Participate in trending challenges and use popular hashtags to increase the visibility of your content.
- Put an indigenous twist on popular challenges to make them relevant to your community.

**10. Collaborate with Influencers and Advocates:** - Partner with indigenous influencers or advocates who can help amplify your community's message and reach a wider audience.

**11. Be Creative and Authentic:** - TikTok values creativity. Create content that is engaging, visually appealing, and authentic to your community's identity. - Use TikTok's editing tools and effects to enhance your videos.

**12. Maintain Consistency:** - Consistency in posting is key to growing your TikTok presence. Maintain a regular posting schedule.

**13. Interact with Other TikTok Users:** - Engage with content from other TikTok users by liking, commenting, and following those who align with your community's values and interests.

**14. Promote Cultural Events and Initiatives:** - Use TikTok to promote and share information about indigenous cultural events, celebrations, and gatherings. - Encourage community members to create content related to these events.

**15. Maintain Privacy and Security:** - Be mindful of the privacy and security of your community members. Avoid sharing sensitive personal information and educate your members about online safety.

**16. Network and Collaborate:** - Connect with indigenous organizations, non-profits, and cultural institutions for potential collaborations, support, and shared initiatives.

How to record on TikTok:

- Start Recording:
- Press and hold the red record button to start recording. You can use the timer feature for hands-free recording as well.

- **Edit and Enhance:**

- After recording, TikTok provides various editing tools, effects, filters, text, stickers, and music options.

- **Add a Caption and Hashtags:**

- Write a caption, tag people, and use relevant hashtags. TikTok allows up to 100 characters in your caption.

- **Choose Your Sharing Options:**

- Decide whether you want to share the video to your profile or add it to your drafts.

- **Share Your Video:**

- Tap "Next" and then "Post" to publish your video to your TikTok profile.

What to post on your Facebook Business.

**1. Business Name:**

- Ensure that the official name of your business is prominently featured in the meta information.

**2. Description of the Business:**

- Provide a brief, clear, and compelling description of your business, highlighting its core products or services. This should give visitors a sense of what your business does.

**3. Keywords and Key phrases:**

- Include relevant keywords and key phrases related to your business. These are the terms people might use when searching for products or services like yours.

**4. Unique Selling Proposition (USP):**

- Mention what sets your business apart from competitors. Why should people choose your products or services? This can be a unique feature, quality, or value proposition.

**5. Contact Information:**

- Depending on the platform or page, include essential contact details, such as your business's phone

number, email address, or location. This makes it easy for potential customers to reach you.

#### **6. Call to Action (CTA):**

- Encourage visitors to take specific actions. For example, you might prompt them to "Contact us for a free consultation" or "Shop now for the best deals."

#### **7. Emphasize Local Presence:**

- If your business serves a specific geographic area, highlight your location in the meta information, especially if you want to attract local customers.

#### **8. Hours of Operation:**

- If applicable, mention your business's operating hours to help customers know when they can reach you or visit your physical location.

#### **9. Links to Relevant Pages:**

- Include links to important pages on your website or social media profiles, such as product pages, blog posts, or your "About Us" section.

**10. Social Proof:** - If you have received notable awards, certifications, or recognition, consider mentioning these achievements in the meta description.

**11. Keep It Concise:** - Meta information has character limits, so aim to be concise and to the point. Focus on providing the most relevant and persuasive information.

**12. Stay Updated:** - Periodically review and update your meta information to reflect any changes in your business, such as new offerings, awards, or contact information.

**13. Test and Optimize:** - Monitor the performance of your meta information by tracking metrics like click-through rates. Test different descriptions and CTAs to see what works best and make adjustments accordingly.

Remember that meta information serves as a concise introduction to your business. It should be compelling and accurately reflect your brand and offerings, enticing visitors to learn more or take action. Additionally, it's crucial for SEO, as search engines use meta information to understand the content and relevance of your web pages or social media profiles.

Tip: Everyone should be able to create content for the different platforms. Nevertheless, it is important that you appoint people who deal exclusively with this or who are responsible for the individual platforms. There should be 2 people who are each responsible for one platform. So 2 people who take care of Instagram, 2 take care of TikTok, 2 take care of Facebook and 2 take care of the Mighty Networks. These people have the responsibility to generate content on a regular basis. Be it questions to the followers/members, surveys for the followers/members. Short updates. Uploading schedules or simply interacting with followers/members. Liking posts on IG and TikTok on other channels to get new ideas.

## **Fourth Appendix:**

Africhi 2020 Poster:

## A sustainable interaction between researchers and indigenous communities Crafting Communication Protocols with a San Community in Namibia

P. Kaulbach, H. Afrkaner, B. Stichel, H. Wünschiers-Theophilus

### Abstract

Research and development collaboration projects between researchers and rural indigenous communities have the potential to substantially contribute to knowledge creation while, at the same time carrying the risk of miscommunication. As such it is of importance to jointly establish communication protocols considering the vast cultural differences between University procedures and community attitudes. In this paper we present efforts undertaken towards crafting a communication protocol with a collaborating San community in Namibia. Exploring interventions within existing projects constituted towards practical resolutions.

### Approach

We are presenting a methodical approach, which involves intervention design beyond single cultural and linguistic communication but is facilitated by open communication and thus one-to-one dialogues, experiences and understanding of processes can lead to communication barriers (2), while differing concerns hinder effective and sustainable collaboration with local African communities (3). In this study, data was gathered and analyzed regarding the implications and communication needs in terms of project communication and the role of existing community structures and organizations to participate in projects. Considering past experiences of researchers regard communication with rural people in Southern Africa, the South African San Institute (SASI) spearheaded the development of a San Code of Research Ethics Code (4). It promotes the values of respect, honesty, justice and fairness, core as well as following an agreed upon process.

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### The Collaboration with Donkerbos

The community in Donkerbos consists of 200 San people from the Nama and the !Karas tribes, but all speak Afrikaans. Besides their home language few of the elders speak Afrikaans, Oshanaana and Nama, and only a hand full speak English. They cannot read and write their home language and most of the elders are not formally educated. Most of the youth are school dropouts, but understand and speak basic English and Afrikaans. A few community members own cellphones and a number of smart phones were handed out under the collaboration project. The community has engaged in a long-term collaboration with the inclusive and collaborative Tech Innovation Hub, under the Faculty of Computing and Information at the Namibia University of Science and Technology under which numerous projects are being conducted.



Figure 1: Community members engaged in a discussion during a meeting.



Figure 2: The project is interacting with the community through various steps in Donkerbos.

### Communication Protocol

This protocol is used for the communication of the community to a research project. It is a document that can be used to inform the community about the project and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

#### Project Communication

This communication was established as a way to help the community to understand the project and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

#### Community Communication

The Donkerbos community does not have a formal communication structure, but a number of the community members are active in the community and report to the project.

#### Project Communication

Research and community members meet and discuss the project. This helps to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

#### Community Meeting

The community of 200 members met regularly to discuss the project and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

### Project Communication

This communication was established as a way to help the community to understand the project and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

#### The Donkerbos

The Donkerbos community does not have a formal communication structure, but a number of the community members are active in the community and report to the project.

#### Project Communication

Research and community members meet and discuss the project. This helps to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.

#### Community Meeting

The community of 200 members met regularly to discuss the project and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is respectful and ethical.



Figure 3: Research process

## Fifth Appendix:

### Blog Entries:

#### Blog Entry 1: "Preparing for Community Podcasting: A Journey of Resilience"

Embarking on a community podcasting project is no small feat, as demonstrated by a recent trip to the San community in Donkerbos, Omaheke, Namibia. In this research, preparation was key, with a meticulously packed car and essential equipment ready for action. The primary goal: advancing the podcasting project that

promises to amplify community voices. Detailed guidelines were crafted, providing step-by-step instructions for podcast creation and deepen the understanding of platforms like Mighty Network, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook Business. These guidelines serve as lasting resources, empowering the community to navigate the complexities discussed during the workshops. However, the journey wasn't without its challenges, as unfavourable weather conditions and unexpected delays tested the team's and the community's resolve.

### **Blog Entry 2: "Podcasting Progress: Overcoming Challenges and Celebrating Milestones"**

Day 1 of the community podcasting workshop brought both challenges and triumphs. Unforeseen weather conditions and delays set the stage. Session 1 focused on evaluating and discussing podcasting progress, with some of the 25 participants sharing their experiences. Challenges were acknowledged, from coordination issues to technical difficulties, yet a sense of optimism prevailed. Participants delved into the intricacies of podcasting, discussing content generation, challenges faced, and areas for improvement. Despite the hurdles, the community's commitment to sharing cultural narratives shone through. The journey continues with Day 2, where the focus shifts to Mighty Network implementation and the selection of captivating podcast topics.

### **Blog Entry 3: "Navigating Mighty Network: A Deep Dive into Community Engagement"**

Day 2, Session 1 unfolded with a focus on Mighty Network. Participants engaged in discussions, recalling their experiences and expressing the need to learn more about the platform's features. Challenges were identified, and desired knowledge areas were outlined, setting the stage for enhanced community engagement. The session culminated in the selection of intriguing podcast topics, ranging from a story about a brave to dog that fought a porcupine to traditional remedies and healing practices. The significance of recording podcasts in the native language emerged as a pivotal theme, fostering cultural preservation and language revitalization.

### **Blog Entry 4: "Preserving Language, Connecting Generations: The Power of Native-Language Podcasting"**

In a thought-provoking discussion, the community emphasized the importance of recording podcasts in their native language. While concerns were raised about potential language barriers for an international audience, a dual-purpose approach emerged. Podcasts in the local language not only serve as repositories of cultural knowledge but also contribute to digital preservation. The team proposed solutions, including English versions or accompanying articles, to address accessibility concerns. The commitment to inclusivity and the acknowledgment of women's crucial role in the community's podcasting success added depth to the conversation.

### **Blog Entry 5: "Podcasting Reflections: Crafting 'Colonial Stories' and Setting Future Goals"**

Day 2, Session 2 focused on the podcast recordings. Complications arose, requiring adaptations such as recording via a mobile device instead of the designated microphone. The podcast, initially focused on food gathering policies, transformed into "Colonial Stories," delving into parts of San history shaped by colonial influences. Despite challenges, participants displayed intrinsic interest, signalling a growing awareness of podcasting possibilities. The departure meeting on Day 3 set ambitious goals, with a commitment to producing a minimum of 12 podcasts by February 2024. The journey concludes with reflections on adaptability, commitment, and the critical role podcasting plays in preserving cultural heritage and linguistic vitality.

### NUST Brief:

In response to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of the San community in media, a research project by Peter Kaulbach, Master Student in Journalism and Media Technology, is proposed to empower the San community in Donkerbos, Namibia. Collaborating with the settled San community, the project aims to develop an independent media platform, allowing the community to create and disseminate their own content. The goal is foster cultural preservation, self-sustainability, and addressing issues of prejudice.

The study, which is funded by UNESCO, assumes that the underrepresentation of the indigenous San communities in public media contributes to their marginalization. Identifying and implementing a medium for self-expression is expected to contribute to more equality, improved self-perception, and enhanced public visibility over the long term. In the short term, the project aims to improve community communication and empower participants to express themselves publicly.

The ongoing "community podcasting project" is marking a milestone in the ongoing efforts to empower and amplify the voices of the local San community in Donkerbos, Omaheke region. The project focuses on podcasting and the implementation of Mighty Network (MN). It is showcasing a commitment to overcoming challenges, fostering resilience, and preserving cultural heritage. A key consideration of the project is the recording of several podcasts in the community's native language, balancing the preservation of cultural nuances with accessibility. The individual podcast formats include the topics "Weekly News", "Bush Stories", "San Culture", "Politics" and "Projects". Brief podcasts are recorded on these themes that deal with individual aspects within the respective categories.

The project showcases adaptability, commitment, and resilience in the face of challenges. Detailed guidelines, language preservation efforts, and proactive problem-solving underscore the community's commitment to lasting positive change. The community podcasting project stands as a testament to the transformative power of media in community engagement. Despite challenges, the commitment, adaptability, and resilience

displayed throughout the project signal a positive trajectory for future endeavours.