



AROAB VILLAGE COUNCIL

Title: Small Village with town Ambition

Quotable quotes

“To serve the community out of the perspective of a woman is of outmost importance, especially for women”.

Fact box

COUNTRY	Namibia
COUNCIL	Aroab Village Council
Baseline score	52
Latest score	
Population	4200
Key characteristics	
Contact person	Mrs. Eliza Laubscher
Designation	Chief Executive Officer
Contact details	063-280513

Aroab Village Council is situated 172 kilometres south of Keetmanshoop in the Karas Region. The council serves a population of at least 4,200 residents. It is one of Gender Link’s seven Centres of Excellence for Gender Mainstreaming in Namibia, and has completed all stages of the CoE process. In 2012, the Aroab Village council participated in the first National Gender Summit and won the Award of CoE for Local Government.

The village council previously had a big challenge of informal settlements and unemployment. With very little economic activity, the council was left to provide for almost all residents, and at the same time sustain itself. Thus the council applied for the social housing scheme, which is the government’s effort to facilitate the initiatives of communities, church organisations, youth, community based organisations, non-governmental institutions, trade unions, women’s organisation and private sector organisations to assist families to break the cycle of poverty. The council also have a gender action plan

that was compiled with the assistance of Gender Links Namibia. In general, the council's leadership is gender aware and the CoE process has been upheld. This is evident in the recent brickmaking project that saw most women being contracted to make the bricks for the social housing project that is currently in phase two of the building of houses. This in itself is economic empowerment of rural women.

The social housing interventions for formerly destitute residents now has brick houses that are part of the village formal structure i.e. the houses are arranged in streets.

Anna Christians, an elderly woman who has benefitted from the social housing scheme and shares it with more than 10 of her dependants said, "I am happy to have a house, a place of safety, a place with running water and electricity." Zenovia De Klerk, who is running her small business from the SME market, says, "Having a place to sell from has provided me with an income and my small business has grown". The SME market has female vendors only, while the social housing scheme has benefitted mostly women.

The council is a small one, led by a female Chief Executive Officer. The council has platforms like community meetings where issues that concern everyone are discussed and input from the community is sourced. The meetings are also platforms where information is shared with the community members.



Figure 1 Anna Christians with some members of her family.

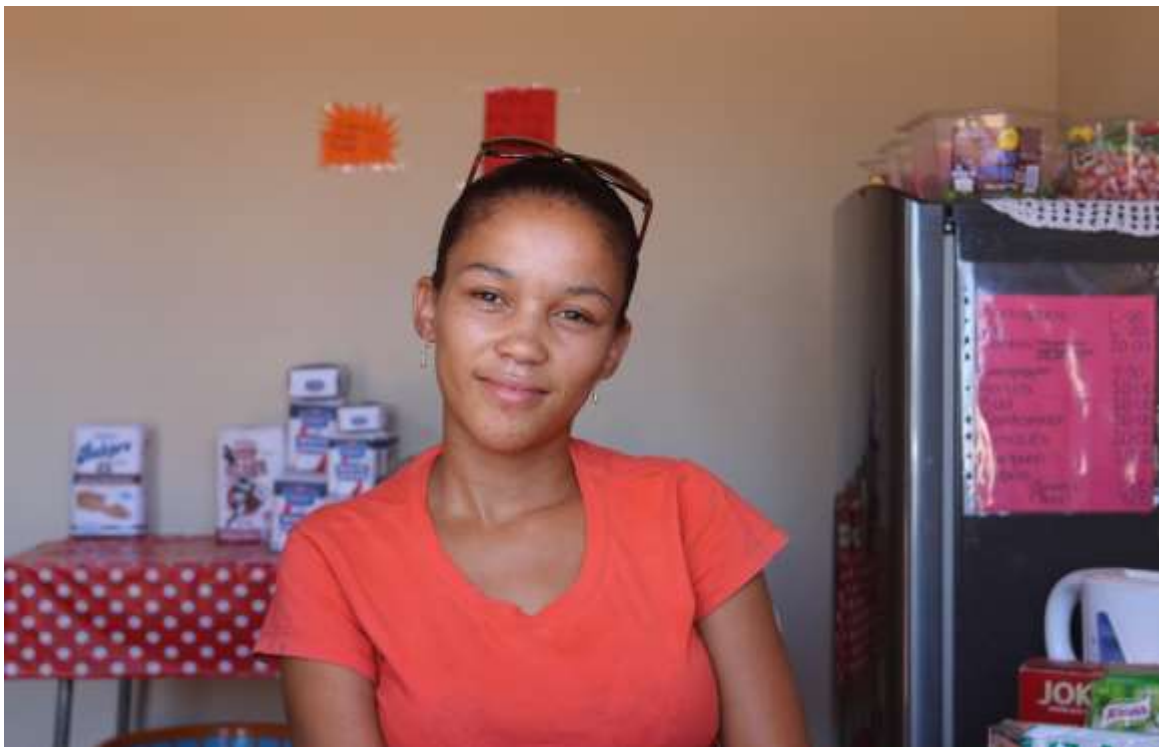


Figure 2 Zenovia De Klerk at the Aroab SME Stall.



Figure 3 Aroab Social Housing under construction.

