

**MPhil Community and Development**  
**Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology**  
**University of Stellenbosch**

**Community participation and sustainable development in the |Ai-|Ais  
Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Park  
(Kozette Myburgh, December 2003)**

**Abstract**

This study is titled “Community participation and sustainable development in the establishment of the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Park”. It encompasses the area and stakeholders on the South African side of the Transfrontier Conservation Park (TFCP), which falls within the Richtersveld municipal area. It covers the whole process of the development of the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld TFCP, from its Conceptual Phase to the signing of the International Treaty to formally establish the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld TFCP<sup>1</sup>.

This development is expected to hold numerous benefits for the stakeholders that are involved in its process, especially job creation through increased tourism. It is an exceptional project, as the main stakeholders are the communities who are the legal landowners of the Richtersveld National Park. The management structure of the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld TFCP allows full participation by the local communities through elected members from the four towns in the surrounding area (Khuboes, Eksteenfontein, Lekkersing and Sanddrift) as well as local pastoralists.

The theoretical approach that will be used in this study is that of sustainable development. The key components required for sustainable social, economic, and environmental development will be discussed, and are used as yardsticks against which the actual process of establishment of the TFCP will be ‘measured’. Participation is regarded as a main aspect of sustainable development and is highlighted in this study.

The methodology that was employed included interviewing and participant observation as well as an in-depth documentary analysis of aspects of the TFCP.

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<sup>1</sup> The |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Park consists of the Richtersveld National Park in South Africa and the |Ai-|Ais Hot Springs Game Park in Namibia (see map on p vii)

The benefits and value of the methods used is discussed, as well as the limitations of the study.

On paper and in the minds of the majority of stakeholders that were involved, the findings show that a good start has been made with sustainable development in the sense of people's participation in the process of establishing the TFCP. However, whether this development will be sustainable in the long-term remains to be seen. Hopefully the expectations that were created in the course of the process will be realised.