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THE ARID AREAS PROGRAMME
CASE STUDY 6: NIEU BETHESDA
(NEW BETHESDA)

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1. BACKGROUND – BRIEF HISTORY

Nieu Bethesda was established in 1878 on the farm Uitkyk which belonged to Mr. B.J. Pienaar. At first it was set aside as a site for a Dutch Reformed Church since it took farmers in the area up to 8 hours to get to the church in Graaff Reinet. The church building was completed in 1905 and the town flourished. A school for 200 children was established as well as a Trading Company. Many farmers built ‘town’ houses to stay in when coming to church. In the 1930’s Nieu Bethesda started to decline due to the depression. Also travelling to Graaff Reinet was now easier and many farmers left their farms. The decline continued until the late 1980’s.

Many farm workers moved to Nieu Bethesda as the farms emptied and then again with the ESTA legislation being implemented.

Athol Fugard wrote his play “The Road to Mecca” in 1985. This put Nieu Bethesda on the tourist map as visitors started coming to look for the Owl House. Since then the town has grown as a tourist destination now hosts 2 coffee shops, a bookshop and gallery, a brewery and delicatessen, 3 restaurants, a community restaurant in Pienaarsig, an Arts Centre, a Fossil Exploration Centre, a labyrinth and maze and 17 guest houses. Five farms in the area offer walks, fossil information and accommodation.

There is a measure of reverse migration and gentrification occurring in that well off people from Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban are buying properties for holiday and retirement purposes and some younger families looking for a rural lifestyle are settling.

2. MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

Development Issues

Nieu Bethesda is part of the Camdeboo Municipality along with the other towns of Aberdeen and Graaff Reinet. (See Map 1: Nieu Bethesda – Regional Locality) Nieu Bethesda lies in the mountains 50 kilometres from Graaff Reinet along a dust road. It has 1044 inhabitants according the 2006/7 Camdeboo IDP. 67% (670) are Coloured with small minorities of Black African (22%, 230 people) and White (11%, 114 people) residents.

The town is still racially divided with the African residents staying mostly in the Kloof road area of Pienaarsig. The Coloured residents abide in Pienaarsig, the former township and the White residents stay along the banks of the Gats River that runs through the town. (See Map 2: Nieu Bethesda Desired Spatial Form – this is a zoning map of the town

indicating where future changes in zoning and developments should occur). Two or three farmers own lands within the ambit of the municipality and use these to grow lucerne and graze sheep and angora goats. Recently an informal area called Koeikamp sprung up on the northern edge of Nieu Bethesda highlighting the housing crisis in Pienaarsig where most of the 2 or 4 roomed houses are home to at least three generations and 2 or three family units.

The main development issues in the town, according the Administrative Supervisor, Mr Phillip Olifant is a lack of housing and the bad road. Unemployment and a gamut of social ills would surely also be an issue. The 2006/7 Camdeboo IDP includes a petition from the Nieu Bethesda Community regarding their priority needs. The list follows:

- 200 houses required in Pienaarsig,
- Improvement of sewerage system in Kloof Street, Pienaarsig,
- Economic development projects,
- Storm water drainage in Pienaarsig,
- Purchase of privately owned land by the Municipality for agriculture, poverty alleviation and economic opportunities,
- Access to commonage land for upcoming farmers,
- Review criteria for indigent policy and
- Street lights for Pienaarsig.

After the 2006/7 consultation process the following projects were prioritised for ward 2: (Ward 2 consists of Nieu Bethesda and the northern parts of Graaff Reinet)

Infrastructure projects:

- Purchases land and build houses in Nieu Bethesda, and
- Storage of water for Graaff Reinet and Adendorp, near Graaff Reinet.

Social/community projects:

- Equipment and staff to clinics and
- HIV/ AIDS treatment centre.

The IDP also lists the socio-economic trends in the area for 2006/7 to be the increase of AIDS, the increase of beggars in the street, the increase of litter from hawkers, the growing numbers of shebeens, increase in crime and drug abuse. They believe the root causes to be unemployment, poverty, the ease of income through shebeens, the fact that youth and street children are not taken care of, the breakdown in family structure and discipline is noticeable as well as general levels of poor interpersonal relations among farmers and labourers. They also attribute the social problems to a lack of skills, low levels of education, the lack of access to land and sustainable water and inadequate law enforcement.

The projects that were included in the 2006/7 IDP Camdeboo Project Register for Nieu Bethesda are listed in Table 1 below. (See Appendix 1: Camdeboo Municipality: IDP 2006/2007 Review)

TABLE 1: Projects for Nieu Bethesda on the Camdeboo IDP Project register 2006/7

Department	Project	Status	Funds 2006/7	Funds 2007/8	Funds 2008/9
External Sector Departments funded projects					
Dept. Social Development	Nieu Bethesda Food Security Programme	Nieu Project – The project is up and running. Chickens and vegetables are being produced and sold locally.	R250,000		
External Sector Departments unfunded projects					
Dept. Roads and Transport	Tarring of Wellwood-Nieu Bethesda tourist road	Carry over – This project has not commenced.	R30,000,000		
Internal Municipal Departments- Funded projects					
Health	Garage Phase 3 for Municipality	Nieu Project – Building is underway.	R60,000		
Housing, land and buildings	Upgrading Community Hall & Crèche	Carry over – Project has not commenced.	R50,000	R50,000	
	Disabled access to Camel Yard at the Owl House	Carry over – Project completed.	R20,000		
	Upgrading commonages, fences, cribs for small farmers	Ongoing – Project completed.	R75,000	R75,000	R75,000
Sanitation	Waterborne sewerage & sewerage ponds 30% counter funding committed MIG	Carry over - Phase 2 of project almost completed. Phase 1 was the ponds, Kloof Street reticulation and the pump station. Phase 2 is the laying of the water pipes.	R1,650,00	R2,500,000	R2,500,000
Water	Upgrading of water furrows	Ongoing – The project has been completed.	R60,000	R60,000	R60,000
Electricity	Provision of street lighting in Pienaarsig	Completed.	R0		

Department	Project	Status	Funds 2006/7	Funds 2007/8	Funds 2008/9
Parks	Cleaning of River/Streets/Cemeteries	Carry over – This takes place annually, when funds are made available.	R50,000		
Refuse	Construction of refuse site phase 1	Ongoing – This project has been completed.	R570,000	R250,000	R200,000
Roads and Storm water	Construction of speed humps	Ongoing - This project is not underway yet.	R0		
Internal Municipal Departments – Unfunded projects (These projects are not underway due to a lack of funds)					
Electricity	Reception/Install Radio 2000	Nieu Project	R20,000		
Health	Garage Phase 2	Carry over	-R80,000	-R60,000	
	Construction Solid Waste Facility Phase 2	Nieu Project	-R150,000		
	Solid Waste Site	Nieu project	-R350,000		
Housing Land and Buildings	Purchase land for 200 houses in Nieu Bethesda	Carry over	-R6,200,000	-R6,200,000	R0
	Purchase of land for agriculture and housing	Carry over	-R5,000,000	R0	R0
	Upgrading caravan park	Carry over	-R40,000	-R40,000	-R40,000
	Upgrading of Community Hall and Crèche	Carry over	-R70,000	R0	R0
	Koeikamp geo-tech and flood analysis	Nieu project	-R60,000	R0	R0
	Town planning and survey of land at Koeikamp	Nieu project	-R300,000	R0	R0
Operational	Photocopier for office and library	Carry over	-R20,000		
	Upgrading of computer and printer, linkage to Graaff Reinet system	Carry over	-R30,000		
	Refuse removal trailer and Nieu tractor	Carry over	-R200,000		
Refuse	Construction of refuse site phase 2	Carry over	-R450,000	-R250,000	-R200,000

Department	Project	Status	Funds 2006/7	Funds 2007/8	Funds 2008/9
Roads and Storm water	Construction of streets and storm water	Carry over	CMIP - R2,000,000	-R2,000,000	-R2,000,000
Sanitation	Construction Sewerage System	Carry over	MIG - R1,500,000	-R2,500,000	-R2,500,000
	Connect VIP to waterborne	Nieu Project	MIG -R2,692,360	R2,500,000	-R2,500,000
Sport and recreation	Upgrade cricket field and sport facilities	Carry over	-R80,000	-R100,000	-R100,000
Water	Bulk water reticulation for Nieu houses at Pienaarsig	Carry over	MIG/Cacadu District Municipality -R2,000,000	-R2,000,000	-R2,000,000
	Internal reticulation	Carry over	DWAF -R1,500,000		

Municipal organogram

The Nieu Bethesda Municipal Office employs 5 staff members, 4 male and 1 female. There is one white collar worker Mr. P Olifant the Administrative Supervisor, and 4 blue collar workers including the tractor driver and cleaning lady. The office is not divided into departments. The Organogram that shows Mr. Olifant's post is attached as Appendix 2: Camdeboo Municipal Organogram. Mr. Olifant reports directly to the Camdeboo Acting Municipal Manager Mr. Langbooi. He also is in direct contact with the department heads where action necessitates this.

Municipal infrastructure

272 houses have water meters in the whole of Nieu Bethesda, white, coloured and black areas included – this accounts for almost all the houses in Nieu Bethesda since there are a total of 305. Houses in Pienaarsig (the coloured and black areas) have a inside and outside taps. The 10 shacks get their water from a tap on a nearby unused stand. The owner of the stand pays for the water. There are 16 houses on the west bank of the river (predominantly white area) that do not receive municipal water and therefore do not have water meters. Borehole water is used.

Many plots in the white area and the agricultural lands within the municipal area have access to furrow water at allotted times. These water rights have a long history and a small amount is payable annually to the municipality. Pienaarsig does not get furrow water due to its location on a steep slope uphill from the water source. The municipality manages and maintains the furrow system.

Nieu Bethesda does not currently have any houses with water borne sewerage. The white area uses the septic tank system and the coloured and black areas use pit latrines. Water borne sewerage is now being installed in 20 houses in Kloof Street, Pienaarsig (predominantly black area). This is the first phase and further installation in Pienaarsig only is on the cards.

None of the roads in Nieu Bethesda and its township, Pienaarsig are surfaced. They are maintained and cleaned by the Nieu Bethesda municipal office.

There is a weekly refuse removal service that operates throughout the whole town and township and informal area.

Pienaarsig has street lights, the white area does not. All the houses in Pienaarsig and the white area are reticulated and operate on pay as you go dispensers.

Municipal Revenue

Tariffs and User fees

The revenue for the Camdeboo Municipality is compiled as a single set of figures. The Camdeboo Municipality do not have a breakdown of separate figures that apply to Nieu Bethesda specifically. Some inferences can be made from the information at hand. Since there are on 305 houses of which 230 are in Pienaarsig the rates income would be minimal. It is charged at R0,0026 in the Rand of valuation. This could account for approximately R10,000. Electricity is supplied by ESKOM. Water is charged at R14.85 availability fee and R1.87 for use of 11kl and upwards. The first 10 kl are free. This could amount to R3,000 per month. The irrigation water is charged R42.42 per annum. Refuse removal is charged at R14.85 per month. This could amount to R4,500 in fees. Thus a total income from Nieu Bethesda could amount to approximately R20,000. On the total operating income this amounts to 0.04% of the Camdeboo Municipal total operating income. The Camdeboo Tariff Income for 2006/7 includes the following:

TABLE 2: Camdeboo Municipality Tariff Income

TARIFF INCOME	BUDGET 2006/7 (R)
Assessment rates	6,686,000
Cleansing Services	1,938,171
Sale of Energy – Consumer Meter	15,113,575
Sale of Energy – Prepaid meters	3,614,963
Sale of water	5,821,607
Sanitation- Kroonvale	0
Sanitation – Umasizakhe	43,000
Sanitation - Aberdeen	511,000
Sewerage	3,340,738
TOTAL	37,069,054

The Camdeboo Municipality have a section called other income that includes sale of sand, sale of tickets at the sports fields, valuation certificates, sinking fund interests etc which comes to R3,575,512.

Camdeboo Total Operating Income for 2006/7 is estimated at R54,699,134

Equitable share and capital grants

The total income for the Camdeboo Municipality from what they call grants and subsidies comes to R14,054,568. Of this R10,728,000 is stated as Inter Governmental Grants and 3,326,568 as Health. The Equitable Share would presumably fall within the IGG aspect. The Camdeboo Municipality does have an indigents policy. Their definition of an indigent household reads as follows: ‘An indigent household is one where the total gross monthly income for all occupants over 18 years of age is below or equals the equivalent of two state pensions per month’. These people qualify for the following subsidies: Free water up to 6 kl per month, 50kWh free electricity, 100% subsidy on rates and refuse removal fees if income is less than the equivalent of one state pension and

50% subsidy of income is the equivalent of up to two state pensions. The Municipality does not have a breakdown of how many people in Nieu Bethesda have applied or receive subsidies. They only have conglomerated figures. Perhaps one could assume that this figure would be similar to the amount of people that qualify for social grants i.e. 269 beneficiaries. Considering that there are only 230 houses in Pienaarsig it could mean that the majority of the township qualifies for indigent subsidies.

Municipal Expenditure

Operating costs and capital expenditure

A summary of the total estimated expenditure for 2006/7 is set out as follows:

TABLE 3: Total Estimated Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	ESTIMATE 2006/7 (R)
Salaries and Allowances	28,603,831
Electricity Bulk Purchases	10,603,000
Other	9,078,043
Repairs and Maintenance	1.988.812
Loan Costs	4,678,584
Capital Expenditure	63,000
Contribution to Special Funds	3,006,000
Actual Estimated expenditure	58,021,270
Less contribution to Special Fund Ad Hoc	3,006,00
TOTAL	55,015,270

From the IDP projects it can be calculated that the projects for 2006/7 in Nieu Bethesda amount to approximately R1,9 million. Expenditure on salaries could amount to R25,000.00. This is approximately 3,5 % of the Camdeboo Municipal budget.

Social/economic projects:

Municipal projects pertaining to Nieu Bethesda are listed in the IDP projects register (See Table 1 above). No specific LED, tourism or land reform projects are underway. The food security project could qualify as a poverty alleviation project. This has amounted to an investment of R250,000 to establish a community based vegetable and chicken production unit. There are however some environmental health projects in terms of solid waster removal upgrading and installation of a water borne sewerage system. There is also upgrading of the commonage areas underway.

3. FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Number of social grants

The social grants are paid out by a Port Elizabeth based company called All Pay on varying days prior to the 7th of every month. The company works from the community hall in Pienaarsig. The Department of Social Development – Welfare representatives come to Nieu Bethesda every 2 weeks to register Nieu applications for social grants.

The statistics from the Department of Social Services for 2006/7 indicates that there are 269 grant beneficiaries in Nieu Bethesda. ¹ If one considers that there are 230 houses in Pienaarsig the dependency of the community at large on the social grants becomes apparent. The grant recipients can be broken down in the following way:

TYPE OF GRANT	No. OF PEOPLE	%
Foster Care Grant	48	18
Child Support Grant	94	35
Disability Grant	5	2
Care Dependency Grant	48	18
Grant in Aid	19	7
Old Age Grant	54	20

The local Community Development Worker, Maureen Smit states that 80% of social grants in Nieu Bethesda are child support grants and about 50% of families also get foster care grants. Her perceptions are exaggerated but the truth is that the majority of grants are child support and foster care grants, 63% in total.

Banks and ATMs

Nieu Bethesda does not have an ATM or other bank facilities. The postal agency used to handle some banking facilities but this was ended due to corruption.² Now people have to travel to Graaff Reinet for these facilities.

Business Types

Nieu Bethesda has the following businesses:³

Shebeens and bottle stores: 4 legal and 6 illegal (that Mr. Olifant is aware of).

¹ Figures were obtained from Mr Booi at the Social Services Offices, No 27 Somerset Street, Graaff Reinet from the Social Services central database.

² The present person with the postal agency is the informant here. He also indicated that the person in question is now serving a community service sentence cleaning the Magistrate Courts in Graaff Reinet

³ This information was obtained from the present chair of the Nieu Bethesda Business Association, Mr A Cilliers.

Trading Stores: 2 in Pienaarsig and 1 close to the Owl House
Retail Postal Agency: 1

Tourism

Restaurants and coffee shops: 3
Community based restaurants: 2
Bookstore and gallery: 1
Tourist attractions: Owl House Museum, Kitching Fossil Exploration Centre, historic water mill, church and dwellings.
Backpackers: 1
Guest Houses: 16

4. INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL

Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities include a cricket pitch and clubhouse for mostly white farmers, a private tennis club with 4 courts and bowling green, a rugby and soccer field in Pienaarsig, a community hall in Pienaarsig occasionally used for games,

Derelict Facilities

There are no derelict facilities.

Schools

There is 1 school, the Lettie de Klerk Primary School in Pienaarsig. It is in a good physical condition. Recently however, the Department of Education had to step in by replacing the headmaster in an attempt to ensure that teachers were not drunk at school and that pupils not sent home or left unattended during school hours.

There is a pre-primary school in Pienaarsig called Sneeuwitjie and one in the white area at what was a school and is now the tennis club.

Transport Modalities

Nieu Bethesda can only be reached by dirt road. There are no formal taxis but 2 local bakkies take people to town at a cost of R70,00 per person return. This is exorbitant considering the daily wage is on average R40,00 per day.

Communication

The cell phone reception for all the cellular networks is good in Nieu Bethesda. There are no communication support services such as internet cafes, office facilities such as faxing, copying etc. TELKOM services approximately 110 clients in Nieu Bethesda.

Housing

There are 230 houses in Pienaarsig. These consist mostly of two roomed and 4 roomed houses built under the previous dispensation. The last houses in Pienaarsig were built in 1998. In the erstwhile white area of Nieu Bethesda there are 75 houses. One Nieu house was built here in 2006. There were 5 Nieu applications received in 2006/7.

Property prices for an average 3-bedroomed house in the erstwhile “white” town have increased dramatically between 2004 to 2006. In 2004 such a house could be bought for R100,000 – R200,000. In 2006 the same house could be sold for R600,000 – R750,000.

The 2 roomed Pienaarsig houses were valued at R8,000 and the 4 roomed houses at R16,500.⁴

There are 10 informal houses in Koeikamp and many houses in Pienaarsig have informal lean-to's attached to the house or an informal house in the back yard. The number of people on the housing waiting list stands at 210. If one considers that the IDP states that there are 900 coloured and black people in Pienaarsig and that Mr. Olifant states that there are 230 houses in Pienaarsig, this amounts to an average of 4 people per house. The question then arises why there is a housing waiting list of 210?

5. HUMAN CAPITAL

Orphans

The number of orphans in Nieu Bethesda stand at 6.⁵ According to Mrs Cane, the resident sister, there are however many children that are being fostered by family members other than their parents due to migrant labour and alcoholism. She feels it affects up to 40% of coloured and black families. She states that this figure is open to debate.

Government Offices

There are no government offices in Nieu Bethesda be it national or provincial.

Health services⁶

⁴ Information obtained from Mr P. Olifant, the administrative supervisor for Nieu Bethesda.

⁵ Information obtained from Mrs G. Cane the resident sister of Nieu Bethesda.

⁶ Information was obtained from Mrs G. Cane, the resident sister in Nieu Bethesda.

There is a clinic in Nieu Bethesda and a resident sister. The clinic does not have any beds. There is a hospital in Graaff Reinet.

Between 500 and 600 persons, including children, visit the clinic each month. (This is more than half of the total population of the village). The Clinic is open every day of the week.

There has been no regular visits from a doctor but the sister is reNieuing attempts to ensure this. An orthopaedic specialist comes once a month. The clinic is trying to organize transport from the dental clinic in Graaff Reinet so that people with dental problems can get to the Graaff Reinet dental hospital for treatment. For ophthalmic problems, surgery etc people have to find their way to Graaff Reinet. Very often there are long periods of waiting for the doctor, ambulance, for patients to arrive when they have appointments etc.

The Sister is treating 10 people with HIV/AIDS that have disclosed and a number that have not. There is one pregnant woman with HIV/ AIDS who has just given birth. The baby will be tested at 6 weeks. There are two AIDS orphans in the village who are HIV+. They are being fostered. Even though the HIV/AIDS numbers are low it has a big impact since the sister is the only staff member and has to do home visits, counselling and assist with applications for anti-retroviral medication and grants. There are 2 hospice volunteers resident in Nieu Bethesda that runs a weekly support group. Terminal patients are referred to the Hospice in Graaff Reinet. A Hospice Sister can be called in to assist in some cases.

To date there have not been any of the cases that have accessed the grants for anti-retroviral medication due to the criteria for application that white blood cell counts have to be below 400.

The clinic has instituted a porridge and milk project providing porridge and milk to mothers with malnourished children. Children are weighed weekly to ensure that they gain weight since mothers sometimes sell the porridge and milk for alcohol. This project is funded by the Camdeboo Municipality, presumably via the Health grant that they have on their books.

The clinic is also trying to institute a food gardening project. They have all the implements, seeds etc but find it hard to motivate people to work if they will not be paid, despite the promise of vegetables.

The clinic sees very little TB cases. There are only 5 of which 3 are recurring cases.

The chief problem the clinic deals with is alcoholism and related ailments. Many people come to get treatment for “babbelas” meaning hangovers. The sister also has to deal with many people who are trying to get disability grants. However, they have to go to Graaff Reinet to get a doctor’s referral letter.

There is no hospital. The nearest hospital is in Graaff Reinet. It has only very basic equipment and does not have a permanent doctor on the staff. Most serious cases have to go to Port Elizabeth for treatment.

The ratio of health staff to the population is 1:1044

Mortality

Burials between 2004 – 2006 amounted to 86 persons of which 80 were buried in Pienaarsig and 6 in the erstwhile white cemetery.⁷

Education

The Lettie de Klerk Primary School has 207 coloured and black pupils. 78% coloured 22 % black. There are 7 teachers, one per grade. Five teachers are employed by the Department of Education and 2 by the governing body of the school. All the teachers are paid by the Department of Education. Grade R has 37 pupils, Grade 1 has 28, Grade 2 has 25, Grade 3 has 29, Grade 4 has 22, Grade 5 has 24, Grade 6 has 2 and Grade 7 has 21.

6. NATURAL CAPITAL

Commonage

The Nieu Bethesda Commonage consists of mostly mountainous terrain that spans 3 481 ha around the town. The commonage used to be rented to mostly white farmers since the emergent farmers were not yet organised. Since 2004 there have been attempts to assist the emergent farmers to organise into a singly farmer's association with a constitution. To date there is a group of 27 and a splinter group of 4. Attempts are proceeding. Camps are being divided and cribs are being installed. Emergent farmers are running small livestock such as goats and some donkeys and horses on the camps. The Department of Agriculture is providing support services to assist the emergent farmers to stock with and run cattle on the commonage. The idea is that losses due to wild animals is too large when running small livestock and that running cattle would thus be more successful.⁸

Leasing policy: R135.00 per live stock unit (LSU) per year and R22.50 per small stock unit (SSU) per year. A special rate has been agreed for emergent farmers. In terms of environmental management there is a rotation practise to try and stop overgrazing. However, emergent farmers do not always adhere to these as can be seen from the descriptions of the uses of camps below. Infrastructure is maintained and there is support from the Department of Agriculture.

⁷ Information was obtained from Mr P. Olifant, the administrative supervisor of Nieu Bethesda.

⁸ Information was obtained from Mr P. Olifant, the administrative supervisor of Nieu Bethesda.

The following camps exist with uses as described (See Map 3):

Lêboskamp (670ha). This camp is used as general commonage for donkeys, horses and cattle. 6 – 12 months free grazing agreement. Camp still needs to be subdivided so that part can be rented out.

Jakkalshoek (400ha). The construction of the solid waste disposal site reduced the camp size by 1 ha. Mr Retief was given 3 months notice and the camp needs to be subdivided for use by emerging farmers.

Lokasiekop (285ha). This camp behind Pienaarsig was in use as general commonage. It has now been withdrawn for 2 years to rest. Now Lêbos is in use. It has been subdivided.⁹

Matjiesgoedleegte (568ha). The fences are being upgraded by the Department Agriculture. Small farmers are in the process of developing a constitution and registration details in order for a lease agreement to be drawn up. This process has taken 4 years to date since small farmers have splintered and agreements can't be reached.

Koeikamp (79ha). Council resolved that this camp be retained as green area and developed as Conservancy since there are no public open spaces (recreational parks or game reserves) in Nieu Bethesda. The sewerage plant to the North will create a wetland that could attract birds and game to the area. The camp has since become home to 10 informal dwellings.

Beerfonteinkamp (837ha). This camp has been subdivided. A lease agreement with Mr Pienaar was concluded. The camp has great potential for the development of a hiking trail along the river course to the perennial fountain which supplies the town's irrigation water.

Donkieskamp (43ha). The municipality feels that all animals on the strip above Pienaarsig must be removed as soon as possible as they are grazing without authorization and severe over-grazing is causing erosion. Stock owners are also lifting the boundary fence and letting animals graze the adjacent farm that belongs to Mr. JP Steynberg. To date there are still animals grazing in this area.

Populierbos (1ha). Mr. Kleintjie Pienaar is renting this camp at a nominal fee, only because it is adjacent to his land which the Council is currently in the process of buying.¹⁰ According to Mr. Olifant the deal the council was trying to set up with a certain Mr. Coetsee to buy this land and exchange it for other municipal land has fallen through

Droëkamp. This is a small fenced off area in Donkieskamp which has been leased to Mr van Staden for years. This was meant as a holding camp for Mr van Staden

⁹ Subdivision is so that rotational grazing can be practised according to Mr. Olifant

¹⁰ This land purchase is referred to in the IDP under unfunded projects. (See Table 1).

only, but people are putting their animals in the camp and using up Mr van Staden's fodder and water. The municipality is looking into creating a larger holding camp that can be made available for persons visiting Piensaarsig, who wish to place their donkeys or horses in a safe area for a few hours or days.

Commercial land ownership

Nieu Bethesda is surrounded by 8 commercial farms. Most are approximately 2000ha big. Further a field there are some absentee landlords who earn elsewhere to co-fund the ownership of the farms. There are also approximately 50% of farms standing empty due to the difficulties of creating economically viable farming enterprises in this area of the Karoo.¹¹ These farms have been on the market for a long time but are now being sold, mostly to foreigners who wish to stock game. The farms Wilgerbos, Baviaans and Eureka are cases in point. Some of them are rented fully or in part by the surrounding farmers to run livestock, e.g. Wilgerbos and Highlands. The farmers say that most of the farms that are operating have been doing so for at least two generations, by implication 'Nieu' farmers are not able to make headway due to bond costs and low returns on farming.¹²

Land purchases in the area

Land prices are on average R1000/ha but can be as high as R2,500/ha.

Farming activities around town

The 8 farms bordering on Nieu Bethesda are used for extensive livestock farming. Some veld (sour veld on the lower lying areas) is only suitable for small livestock units such as sheep and angora goats. Others, on the higher ground stock cattle as well. Most farmers plant their own lucerne for feed in the dry times of year. Most of the fields in Nieu Bethesda are cultivated for lucerne by the surrounding farmers. There is one retired sheep farmer who farms with sheep in Nieu Bethesda. Some of the farms are suitable for growing lucerne in that they have big enough dams and irrigation systems. Most farms have agarve and prickly pear, planted in the 70's as drought fodder. 3 of the farms also have guest house facilities.

7. SOCIAL CAPITAL

Churches

¹¹ Information was obtained from members of the Farmer's Association, Mr A Cilliers and Peet van Heerden.

¹² Information was obtained from members of the Farmer's Association, Mr A Cilliers and Peet van Heerden.

In this small community there are 6 different churches. They all have small congregations, reflected by the numbers in brackets behind the church names that follow: The Old Apostolic Church (50 – 100) and the Nieu Apostolic Church (10), the Anglican Church (10 – 20), the VGK - Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk (10 – 20), the NGK - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (10 – 20) and the Penticostal Church (35 - 100).

The NGK has a big church building in the former white area and the Anglican Church a modest building in Pienaarsig. The other churches operate from back yards and tin sheet buildings. There is no non-racial collaboration between the churches that Mr. Olifant knows of.

Clubs

In the white side of town there is a tennis club and bowling club and a book club that operates. In Pienaarsig there is a rugby club and a soccer club. An athletics club for primary school children is in the process of being formed. These clubs are associated with the school to provide sport for the children. They also have adult teams. The Cricket club consists of members of Pienaarsig and the white area. The Cricket field gets municipal inputs.

The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture provide funding for the development of the sports teams and for art and dance classes in the Community Hall 3 times a week for all to participate.¹³

Political parties

Despite the ward councillor being a DA there is no local visible support for the party. The ANC however have a Branch Executive Committee that operates from a house in Pienaarsig. The chair runs many projects in town but is also serving a community service sentence in Graaff Reinet for corruption.¹⁴

NGOs

There are no NGOs in Nieu Bethesda. The Development Foundation was set up by the erstwhile ANC chair now in Graaff Reinet and does not function any longer. Currently there's only the community development worker, Maureen Smit that supports the community. She was previously in the employ of The Development Foundation. She feels that her task is to assist members of the community to access the available government projects, support services and programmes. According to Maureen there are a few poverty alleviation projects presently running. There is a wool and crafts project which is very low key and does not seem very active. A food security project was initiated by the Department of Social Services in 2007 and has been running for 3 months

¹³ Information was obtained from Mr Mienies the clubs organiser who also works at the Owl House.

¹⁴ Information was obtained from Mr. Olifant

with a vegetable production area and a chicken house.¹⁵ According to Maureen, Uthando Leather Works, Silver Lining Sewing Group and the Sneeuwitjie Community Restaurant are other projects on the go. According to Mr. Olifant the Uthando Leather group is not operative any more and the Silver Lining Sewing Group has become incorporated into the activities of the Nieu Bethesda Arts Centre. According to the director of the Arts Centre the Sneeuwitjie Restaurant has been known to use funds aimed at a feeding programme in the Crèche to also run the Restaurant.

Mrs Kingwill from The Rest trained and supported a project to manufacture sheepskin slippers for many years. The project was handed over to the participants. One participant is still active at the Nieu Bethesda Arts Centre and it is hoped that she can continue the slipper business if assisted with marketing and book keeping. However funding is not available at present.

There is also the privately funded Nieu Bethesda Arts Centre that offers a workshop space, courses, meals and a venue for selling participant's art. The benefactor, Jenni Couzyn, from England has been funding the project herself for many years and holds an annual exhibition of works in London.

¹⁵ According to Kelvin Horn who ran the project it was funded and training was undertaken by the Nieu World Foundation. According to Ms D Hope of the Art Centre two members of the Horn family are currently facing charges for embezzling funds from this project.