

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 1/2012

Dear BOTSFA members!

2012 WELCOMED US with open arms and is providing yet another exciting period for BOTSFA's promotion of an even stronger cooperation between Sweden and Botswana. The Association has continued to bring together its members and friends of Botswana, enabling them to share experiences from working and/or living in the two countries.

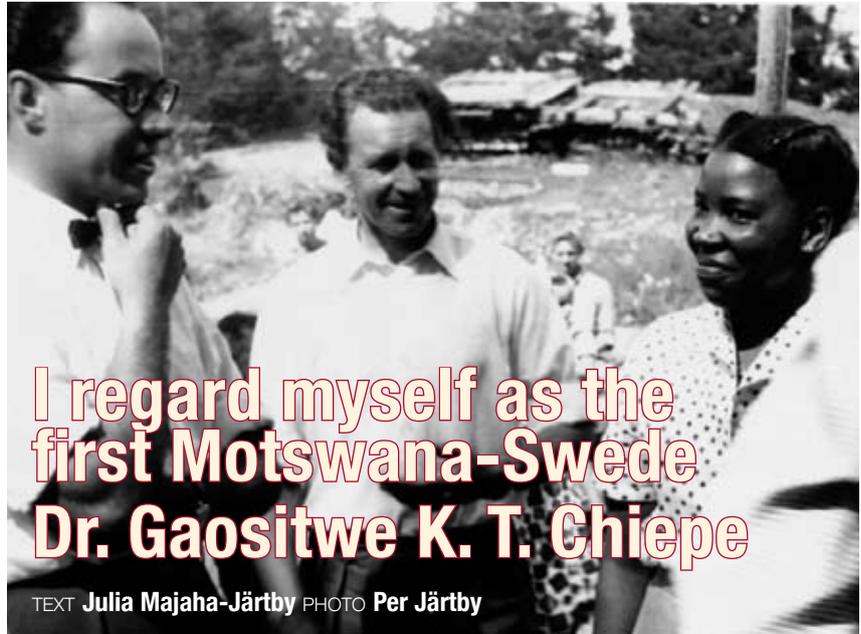
In this issue of Dumela, you will read an article on an interview with Dr. Gaositwe K. T. Chiepe, the first female cabinet minister in Botswana and one of a handful Batswana, irrespective of gender, to attain higher education in Botswana of the yester-years. In an article »Turnaround for Botswana's San population«, Sten Rylander takes us through the outcome of the San people's court cases. There are lessons to be learned from cross-cultural co-existence.

Let's welcome 2012 with open arms!

Julia Majaha-Järtby
BOTSFA Chairperson



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012 will be held at Etnografiska museet in Stockholm on March 24, at 14.00. Further information will be posted on www.botsfa.nu and sent by e-mail to members.



I regard myself as the first Motswana-Swede
Dr. Gaositwe K. T. Chiepe

TEXT Julia Majaha-Järtby PHOTO Per Järtby

I WAS HUMBLLED by meeting Dr. Gaositwe K. T. Chiepe, the first female cabinet minister in Botswana and one of a handful Batswana, irrespective of gender, to attain higher education in Botswana of the yester-years. Born in Serowe, in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate, Dr. Chiepe did not only defy the odds of accomplishing higher education, she crossed the oceans and maintained an overwhelmingly brave struggle against colour bar and gender bias.

– My mother decided that I should continue with my education despite advice from relatives that Standard 2 was adequate to carry me through life. I not only come from a poor family, my father died the year I started school. My father's cousins were of the opinion that it was enough that I could write my name when I got married. I had virtually no means of

support for going to school – but my mother persevered, says Dr. Chiepe with no hard feelings.

The insistence by Dr. Chiepe's mother that she continues her education planted a strong seed that not only generated a merit result in Standard 6, but fed into the excellence that Botswana later benefitted from. Dr. Chiepe continued her education at Tiger Kloof high school in South Africa, under the support of a bursary. She later attended Fort Hare University (South Africa) sponsored by the government, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Diploma in Education (teaching).

One other woman played a key role in Dr. Chiepe's path to stellar academic achievements. She remembers, with fondness, a Women's Hostel Warden at Fort Hare who was a Professor of Anthropology. Says Dr. Chiepe:

– This Warden/Professor had seen an advert for a Rhodes scholarship for women in Southern Africa and encouraged me to apply. I applied but, lo and behold, did not get the scholarship. It was awarded to a man from Lesotho. My former Warden >>>

▶ persevered and finally I got a British Council scholarship to study for my Masters' degree in Bristol. When I later met the man who had »snatched« the scholarship targeted for women's benefit, in Bristol, we laughed over the saga.

Our meeting began over a nice cup of tea and freshly baked scones. Dr. Chiepe continues with her story and stands up and picks a black and white photo from a sideboard.

–I regard myself as the first Motswana-Swede, she says. It was in 1955 when I was travelling by the Union Castle ship, from Cape Town to South Hampton, when I met Swedes the first time. I was the only black person on the ship, carrying about 500 passengers. I was on my way to the UK to study at the University of Bristol.

Dr. Chiepe recounts how she spent two weeks on the ship.

–Being black, I could not share a cabin with any of the other passengers. I also had a designated table for my meals. Only a few of the passengers were »brave enough« to say hello. But something interesting happened. Two little girls approached me and we started talking, laughing and singing together. The girls turned out to be daughters of a Swedish missionary couple returning to Sweden from South Africa. They took to me and I took to them.

The innocent defiance of colour bar by the two girls resulted in Dr. Chiepe visiting Sweden at their parents' invitation and cost.

–When I got the train ticket for Bristol to Dover and boat trip to Gothenburg, I could not believe my eyes. Once in Sweden, I travelled all over the country. The missionary family kept their promise and our friendship and communications continued for quite some time. Unfortunately we lost contact over time.

When, in January 1970, she was appointed Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Dr. Chiepe had yet another pleasure of revisiting the country that had welcomed her with a difference.

–I was not the first Botswana ambassador to Sweden, she says. The late Moleleki Mokama, our first Motswana Chief Justice, was the first, followed by Bias Mookodi. But I had the privilege of my 1950's visit to Sweden. The ambassadorial posting gave me the opportunity to visit Sweden several times.

Dr. Chiepe was accredited ambassador to Sweden for five years and covered the responsibility from London. In 1977, she was appointed Minister of Mineral Resources and Water Affairs, a responsibility that opened further avenues for working with Swedes. Swedish aid extended to

village water reticulation falling under the responsibilities of her ministry.

–When, later, Sweden would wish to cut down aid to Botswana on grounds that the country was doing well, I was disappointed. I pushed for continued Swedish aid to Botswana arguing that the money was being well spent and accounted for. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, I continued to push for Swedish support not only to Botswana, but also the broader southern Africa region. Swedish aid came with no strings attached and we greatly appreciated that, she concludes.

Another story that puts a smile on Dr. Chiepe's face is the mentioning of the bestowment of the Royal Order of the Polar Star by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. The order is awarded to members of the Royal family, and foreigners who have contributed essentially for Sweden and in the interest of Sweden, and she had the honour of being the first and only Motswana to receive it. The occasion of the bestowment of the order provided the opportunity for her to reunite with one of the Swedish »girls« she had met on the Union Castle ship.

–I was very happy to see one of my »little girls« again.

The Swedish Embassy (under Ambassador Annika Jagander) had traced

the »girl's« whereabouts and ensured that she attended the ceremony.

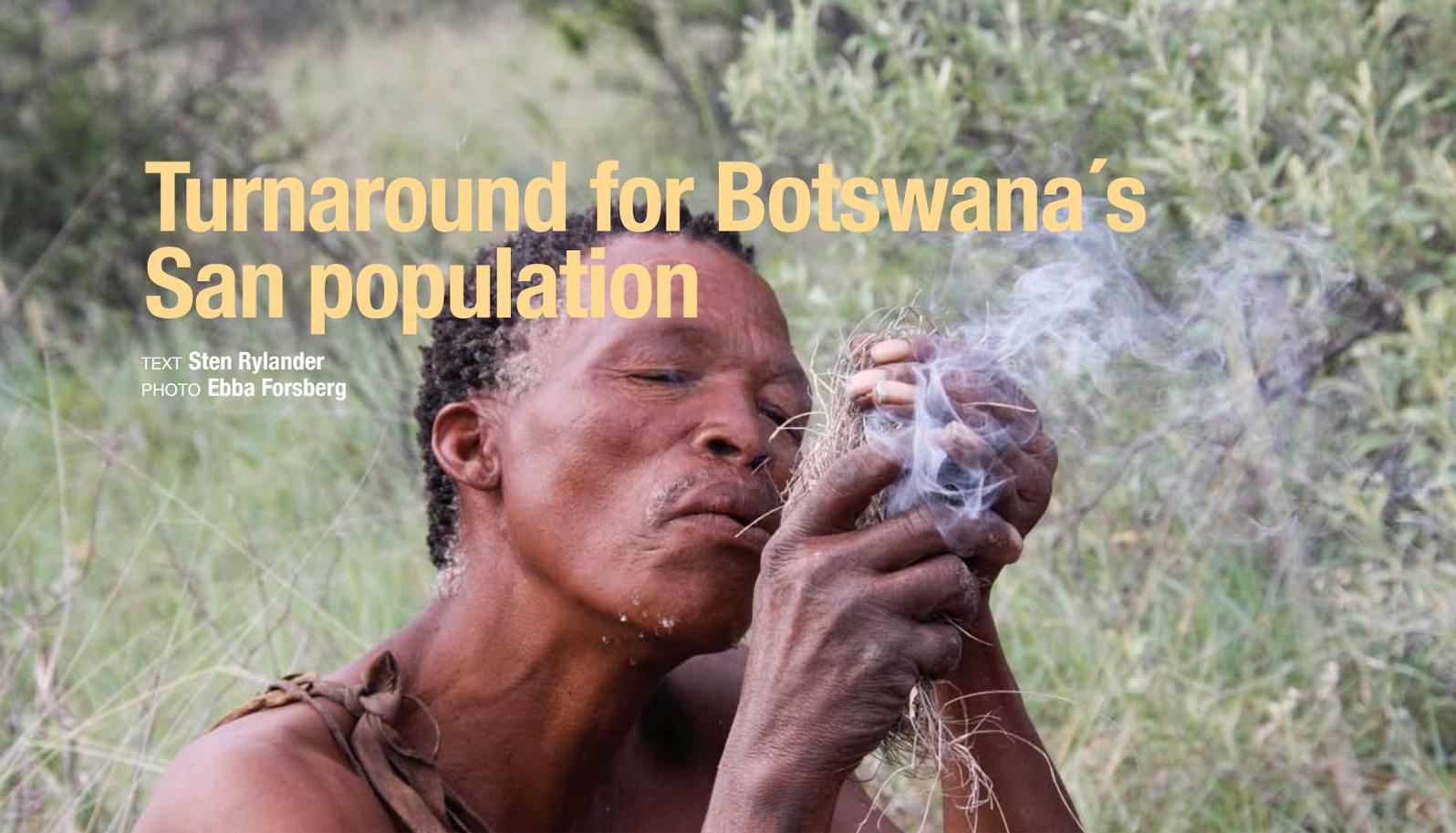
Sweden also sent the then Deputy Prime Minister, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, to deliver the order in 2006.

–I have the picture of the Deputy Prime Minister and me on display all the time, not because of your visit. Sweden and the Swedes have always been very special to me, she says as she graciously walks us out of her neatly maintained residence. ▲



Turnaround for Botswana's San population

TEXT Sten Rylander
PHOTO Ebba Forsberg



As is well known, there has been a problematic relationship, ever since independence, between the Botswana Government and the country's San population (around 50 000 and 60 000 or approximately 3% of the total population). This became particularly evident in the 1990's when the Government started an active process to remove the San out of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) – a fairly large area corresponding to the size of Denmark. Clearances or forced removals took place in 1997, 2002 and 2005 – according to some sources – in order to pave the way for tourism development and diamond mining.

The Government's position was that the removals were necessary in order to provide social services to the scattered San population. A rather tense situation developed over the years between the Government and the San, represented by First People of the Kalahari and backed up by strong international NGOs – particularly Survival International. International attention grew even further when the founder of First People of the Kalahari, Roy Sesana, received the 2005 alternative Nobel prize, the Right Livelihood Award.

On the initiative of the San, this whole conflict was referred to the courts in Botswana. It became the

longest and most expensive legal case in Botswana's history. On 13 December 2006 the Botswana High Court made its historic ruling, which went in favour of the San. The refusal to allow entry into CKGR without a permit and the refusal to issue special game licences to allow Bushmen to hunt were, according to the High Court, »unlawful and unconstitutional«. The San had the right to live and hunt in CKGR and had been »forcibly and wrongly deprived of their possessions« by the Government. But the ruling also stated that the Government had no obligation to provide services to the Bushmen inside CKGR.

Roy Sesana stated outside the High Court: –Today is the happiest day for us Bushmen. We have been crying for so long, but today we are crying with happiness. Finally we have been set free. The evictions have been very, very painful for my people. I hope that now we can go home to our land.

As regards the services issue, particularly as it pertained to water supply, the San proceeded with another court challenge, this time directed at the Botswana Court of Appeal. The appeal was made against the Government regarding the prohibition to access drinking water inside CKGR, through boreholes. The Court of Appeal made its ruling on January 27, 2011 and also this time it went in favour of the San. According to the ruling, they have

the right to drill boreholes to access water – including inside CKGR. The Court stated that the Government was guilty of »degrading treatment« and that the situation facing the San was »a harrowing story of human suffering and despair«.

Although the legal situation has now been cleared, the San struggle continues. The Government has accepted the rulings but has been slow in living up to the implied obligations. Thus some of the tensions remain.

Finally a memento to us Swedes, in this context. We do not have much to be proud of when it comes to how we have been dealing with our own indigenous population, the Sami people. It is only during the last two decades that the Swedish Government has developed policies which may be described as reasonably decent. Against this background, I have always felt that we should be very cautious in trying to teach Botswana and Namibia any lessons on how to deal with indigenous people. But what we should all do is to be inspired by these people's courageous fight for their own rights. When I worked in Namibia, we invited the Laplanders or Sami people and the Aborigines to come and visit the San. It was a wonderful exchange and experience: they have so much in common and we still have much to do to live up to our intentions of respecting their rights! ▲

VISIT
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for concert tours in Sweden by BOTSFA member Ebba Forsberg, who lived in Botswana in the 1970/80's

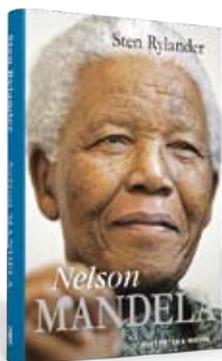


PHOTO Hasse Schröder



Sten Rylander

Nelson Mandela

Tolerance and leadership

Visit <http://botsfa.nu/news.html> for an English overview of Sten Rylander's book, Nelson Mandela, targeted for release in April 2012. Translation of the book into English is underway.

Photo Exhibition

– In the footsteps of the
»No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency«

March 7–30, 2012 at Lidingö Library

Photographer and journalist, Mats Ögren Wanger, has for several years, pictorially followed the work of author Alexander McCall Smith and his book series, the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, based on Botswana. For more information, please visit www.lidingo.se/bibliotek



BOTSFA Photo Competition 2011

Congratulations to the winners of the 2011 photo competition. There were 25 entries by ten photographers. Winners are:

- ★ **1st »Old Naledi School«**
by AnneMarie Bergström
- ★ **2nd »Pan Walk«**
by Mats Ögren Wanger
- ★ **3rd »Lion-hunter's wife (Ghanzi)«**
by Ebba Forsberg

The photos below are cropped, to view all photos visit www.botsfa.nu



It is time for the BOTSFA Photo Competition 2012

You are invited to submit 1–3 photos. The theme for the 2012 competition is »Botswana – Sweden 50 years of partnership«. The winning pictures may feature in a coffee table book to commemorate 50 years of Botswana's independence in 2016.

Rules:

- The picture(s) should have been taken by the member
- Prints, slides, scanned or digital images
- Closing date is August 31, 2012
- All entries may be printed in Dumela or shown on BOTSFA web site

Images may be sent electronically to per@jartby.com or by post to:
Per Järtby,
Olof Skötkonungs väg 25, S-193 32 Sigtuna, Sweden

THE PICTURES WILL BE ANONYMOUSLY JUDGED BY A JURY TO BE CONSTITUTED.

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