

## Kerry Jones

### Mother Tongue Transcription and Translation of San Languages



Kerry Jones is a PhD Candidate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Linguistics Department. She specialises in Sociolinguistics, specifically focussing on the area of minority languages in southern Africa. She has been working with mother tongue speakers of Khoi and San languages since 2009 and in 2014 published the first picture dictionary in a San language entitled, *Ju|'hoan Children's Picture Dictionary* along with her co-author Tsemkgao Fanie Cwi. In 2011 she was selected as one of the top doctoral candidates in South Africa and was invited

to join the *Research Capacity Initiative (RCI)* through the *South African Netherlands research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD)* and was the recipient of the *National Research Fund (NRF) Freestanding Doctoral Scholarship* from 2011- 2013. The topic for her thesis is *Language Attitude as a Change Agent for Language Vitality*, specifically working with !Xun and Khwe in Platfontein.

(Presentation 30 min + Q&A 10 min = 40 min slot)

#### Abstract

The documentation of Khoi and San languages in the written form began over 100 years ago. Contributions to the field came from academics working in various disciplines, missionaries and more recently departments of education.

Endeavours directed at documenting minority languages generally need to be conducted in collaboration with local mother tongue speakers. Such efforts are often riddled in politics revolving around issues such as the appropriate selection or creation of an orthography, the development and the intended use of the written form of the language, the local accessibility or inaccessibility to resources (e.g. dictionaries, grammar books, short stories, literacy primers, books from the bible, and song books) as well as local versus international struggles around ownership of the produced materials.

This presentation focuses on three San languages, namely Ju|'hoansi, !Xun and Khwe and how, through collaborative efforts these languages can be recorded, transcribed, translated and taught for the benefit of invested parties. An example for such a collaborative effort is the development of the Ju|'hoan Transcription Group (JTG), the JTG mother tongue training program and the Village Schools Project (VSP) with the Ju|'hoansi of the Tsumkwe region in Namibia. Further projects in the same vicinity include computer and administrative training and assistance primarily from the Kalahari People's Fund and supplemented by other funders. In my presentation I intend to indicate and provide examples of how this successful initiative may be used as a model for future language work with both !Xun and Khwe in Platfontein and beyond.