

conservation

research findings for development policymakers and practitioners

Community Wildlife Management in Tanzania

Wildlife is valuable for tourism in many parts of Africa. To protect this industry and conserve wildlife, Community Wildlife Management seeks to enable local communities to benefit from wildlife. However, this often causes political disagreements over how to manage these resources.

Research by the International Institute of Environment and Development, in the UK, examines the outcomes of almost 20 years of Community Wildlife Management (CWM) in Tanzania.

Tourism in Tanzania has grown rapidly over the last twenty years, providing between five and ten percent of Gross Domestic Product in 2004. Around 25 percent of land is now set aside as protected areas for wildlife.

For ten years, national policies have focused on giving local communities responsibility for wildlife management outside protected areas. This is because international donors supported this approach in the 1990s, when the CWM model was first put forward. But wildlife in Tanzania also declined in the 1980s, putting pressure on government policymakers to change their approach.

A national wildlife policy, issued in 1998, called for the creation of community-

run Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

This stated that local people would have the right to manage wildlife and earn revenue from activities such as tourism and hunting. The communities would then have incentives to conserve wildlife on their communal lands.

However, there have been several problems with these approaches during the last ten years. For example, communities have invested substantial resources in establishing WMAs, such as setting aside village lands, and protecting wildlife populations. In most cases, local communities are not yet making money from wildlife on their land in return for conserving wildlife.

Furthermore, the research shows:

- The WMAs focus heavily on wildlife, rather than all natural resources in an area, so it is hard to combine forestry and wildlife management.
- Some communities have refused to participate, arguing that WMAs are a strategy to take away their communal lands.
- Tanzania's wildlife authorities have developed bureaucratic procedures for registering WMAs. Communities face difficulties because they must fulfil many conditions, requiring much time and money, before they are able to gain rights over wildlife or access to tourist hunting revenues. By the end of 2006, only four of the sixteen pilot WMAs nationwide had reached this stage.
- There is confusion about who is responsible for management in the WMAs. The structure of WMAs does



Maasai pastoralists graze their livestock in the Ngorongoro highland area of Tanzania. Thousands of Maasai people have been displaced by the establishment of protected conservation areas in Kenya. Maasai interests have been marginalised due to their semi-nomadic lifestyle and lack of political representation.

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not directly involve local governments, instead creating new institutions to manage resources. However, these new institutions take time to evolve and WMAs have not successfully increased community participation.

CWM should be part of broader social processes. This involves creating stronger local rights and access to resources, rather than focusing on short-term technical assistance. The researcher recommends:

- CWM requires adaptability and flexibility – efforts to design and implement CWM through short-term, technically-focused projects (such as most donor-funded projects) are unlikely to succeed.
- The priority for policymakers should be supporting local groups and civil society organisations to support CWM processes, and governance reforms over the long-term.

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Emergent or Illusory? Community Wildlife Management in Tanzania, International Institute for Environment and Development Issue Paper 146, London: IIED, by Fred Nelson, 2007 (PDF)

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Tourism, conservation and community development in Malawi

Protected areas have become one of the most widely accepted conservation methods around the world, by restricting the use of identified resources. Tourism contributes widely towards the costs of managing protected areas. However, experience in Malawi shows that while tourism can generate significant revenues, this does not always benefit local communities directly.

The Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) approach builds on the protected area approach by linking conservation and tourism development and by involving the people living in or near protected areas. Research from the University of Brighton, in the UK, uses a case study from Malawi to examine the impact of this approach.

Liwonde National Park (LNP) is one of Malawi's smaller parks, high in biodiversity and popular among tourists. However, local communities forced to relocate outside the park still experience conflicts with park authorities regarding 'problem animals', such as elephants, which destroy their crops and pose a life threat to community members.

The Department of National Parks and

Wildlife (DNPW) aims to make Liwonde an example of 'best practice' for protecting the biodiversity of Malawi, whilst ensuring its sustainability through tourist revenues. However, the researchers found:

- While tourism has brought in revenue, the park only retains enough to cover operating costs, with the rest going to the government.
- Tourism employs 77 people in park lodges and a few small local enterprises. Besides this, there is little local economic impact from tourism.
- Local people resent the lack of employment opportunities, which they consider necessary since they can no longer rely on natural resources from the park.

While tourism has supported conservation,

it has not brought much development locally. The DNPW is looking at ways to generate more benefits and reduce poaching. However, the authors highlight that:

- Revenues must be shared fairly, encouraging entrepreneurial development and discouraging poaching. The DNPW has been granted permission to share total park revenues between the LNP and the local communities, but nothing has happened so far.
- Village Natural Resource Management Committees have been formed, but the lack of empowerment and human resource development among park officials and local people undermines the involvement of key individuals.
- Further research should assess community attitudes, particularly after the implementation of the scheme to share tourism revenues.

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'Tourism in Protected Areas: Integrating Conservation and Community Development in Liwonde National Park (Malawi)', *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development* 4 (1), pages 47-73, by Marina Novelli and Amy Scarth, 2007

Does community-based conservation work in Tanzania?

Tanzania's village forest reserves have been praised as a successful example of community-based conservation. They appear to provide a 'win-win' solution – they improve the condition of forests, benefit local people and strengthen the local government. But is it really possible to have democratic community-based conservation?

Community-based conservation refers to situations in which local communities are responsible for managing the use and protection of a natural resource. Some experts question whether this is the best way to preserve forested areas. They argue that excluding people from protected areas (fortress conservation), an approach that has been shown to work, should be the focus of conservation efforts. They also feel that trying to combine conservation efforts with development objectives and allowing human access to conservation areas will mean further damage to ecosystems and the extinction of local species.

However, those in favour of community-based conservation argue that conservation areas managed by communities can work at least as well as protected areas. While there are few success stories in community conservation, they argue that this is because local communities and authorities have not yet been given sufficient power.

In Tanzania, the government recognises forest reserves managed by villagers as a model for forest management. The work of

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these committees is celebrated as a success by its initiators. Research from the Institute for Development Policy and Management, in the UK, is more cautious, however. Supporters of village-based management believe that the forest management committees work well because they are embedded in the country's system of elected village councils. However, they are silent about the problems of corruption among village government that has been documented elsewhere.

Claims that village forest reserves are a success for democracy and conservation do not match observations of local government performance elsewhere. Possible reasons for this include:

- It may be that successes have been exaggerated and forest committees and reserves are not in fact functioning well. There is little or no data on the condition of forests or the functioning of committees to confirm or deny this.
- It is possible that reserves and committees do function well, but are undemocratic and serve only one group or faction. Again, there is little evidence to confirm or deny this, but some examples exist of excluded groups challenging management committees.
- It is also possible that forest reserve management

committees both conserve forests and challenge poor local leaders; they therefore not only manage reserves well but also improve local governance and democracy.

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'Forests, Community Conservation, and Local Government Performance: The Village Forest Reserves of Tanzania', *Society and Natural Resources* 20 (9), pages 835-848, by Dan Brockington, 2007

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