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COMMUNITY CONSERVATION
TRAINING INITIATIVES IN EAST
AFRICA

Deborah Snelson



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COMMUNITY CONSERVATION TRAINING INITIATIVES IN EAST AFRICA¹

One of the challenges of introducing a new discipline is the need to ensure that people working in the field have the relevant knowledge and skills to undertake their newly-defined functions. The introduction of community conservation approaches within protected area authorities within Eastern Africa has exemplified this point, particularly in the context of traditional policing or law enforcement tactics. Through its work in the region the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) has been assisting its partners to address training needs and several initiatives have been launched. This paper focuses on the more structured in-service training courses that have been developed.

Relying on a blend of community development, extension, enterprise development and wildlife utilisation expertise it is hardly surprising that there were no existing training opportunities which encompassed the needs for Community Conservation training. In 1988 the College of African Wildlife Management commissioned the preparation of a new course 'Man and Wildlife' to be taught as part of the College's diploma and certificate courses. The course looked at the traditional ways man and wildlife had coexisted, how this changed as protected areas were set up which excluded local communities and their access to traditional resources, and went on to look at the initiatives underway in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Collecting material for course texts was difficult as much was only to be found in the 'grey literature', and students felt uncomfortable with no set text book for the subject. Despite this, post-course evaluations ranked the course as one of the most popular offered by the College - primarily because the students recognised its importance for their understanding of contemporary protected area management. The College continues to offer this course, and it has evolved a lot. Many more books have been published which form useful reference texts. From 1997 the College will offer an entirely new syllabus of which a large proportion is based on community conservation approaches.

The 'Man and Wildlife' course offered at Mweka over the past eight years, may have served as a useful introduction to community conservation issues, and perhaps some students were able to share the information and knowledge they had gained with colleagues on their return to their home countries, but for most of the practising wardens throughout East Africa, there were just no opportunities to learn - yet there was a huge perceived need. This was verified in 1992/3 when the Protected Areas Conservation Strategy (PARCS) project undertook a training needs assessment of over 400 wardens across sixteen countries in Africa (BSP 1995). Community conservation consistently emerged as one of the top three training needs identified by protected area managers across the continent.

At the same time the Kenya Wildlife Service's (KWS) Community Wildlife Service started to develop an in-service training course for training its community wildlife officers. The rationale was to create a practical course which taught appropriate knowledge and skills and

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to build the students confidence so as to feed into evolving policies and procedures of the new Community Wildlife Service. Recognising that the students would not to be able to be away from their work stations for long periods of time, the course was designed in 4 progressive modules culminating in a final project assignment back in the workplace. The main topic areas of the modules were an introduction to community wildlife management processes and practices; community dynamics and extension; wildlife entrepreneurship and utilisation; and participatory project operations and management.

Time was spent working with the Human Resources Department of KWS to look at how the in-service course could become 'officially recognised' with links to follow-up evaluation of performance related to promotion. Such a process is logical but takes time to establish. The rationale was to create a course which participants deemed important, with a view to enhancing their commitment to the course and the follow-up activities, as well as contributing to their professional development.

After the initial concept design, which benefited from external input from Professor Marshall Murphree of the University of Zimbabwe, there followed a protracted curriculum development phase. It was hoped that much of the course could be co-ordinated and taught by KWS personnel. However, the competing demands of an ongoing community wildlife programme severely affected how much time was available to contribute to the course design and implementation. Then it was decided to contract out the modules based on the module content developed to that time which allowed the selection of contractors to be undertaken. Two different parties each undertook two modules. The Training Unit of the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) is experienced in community development, extension and project planning and management methodologies and undertook Modules 2 and 4. The staff of the 'Enterprise Education Project' taught Modules 1 and 3. As the latter team lacked expertise in wildlife utilisation, this component of the course was taught by a private consultant. Prior to the course the contractors worked with KWS staff to finalise the course content and develop monitoring systems for the course.

The first course was successfully run between May and August in 1995. Due to pressure to undertake the training quickly all the modules were taught concurrently. This did create heavy pressure on the participants and the original sequential module design will be put in place in 1996. The course was held at the Naivasha Wildlife and Fisheries Training Institute (the in-service training wing of KWS) and several of the Institute's lecturers attended the course. This was a deliberate effort to use the first course as a 'training of trainers' opportunity with a view to both institutionalising the course within the Institute and reducing the costs of the course in the future. In 1996 the Institute will run the course itself using the curriculum, and teachers' and learners' notes developed by the contractors and will hire course lecturers where needed.

Whilst it is too early to say definitively if the course was successful - an evaluation strategy for the course has been developed and will follow-up on both first and second course participants - initial feedback from participants, through their post-course assignments and from discussions, indicate that overall the course did increase the confidence and ability of participants to undertake community work. Unfortunately not all the participants are currently

deployed within the Community Wildlife Programme so some potential impact of the course was lost as a result of the selection process. This will be redressed in the 1996 course.

The KWS course benefited greatly by having a donor-funded project providing expertise and significant funds for the course. Whilst this has allowed the development of a course which Naivasha Wildlife and Fisheries Training Institute hopes to open for a wider audience in the future, it does not provide a particularly replicable model for other protected area authorities.

Under the second phase of the PARCS project AWF is working with Uganda National Parks and through Mweka College to develop structured in-service training plans and courses, for the warden level. A particular emphasis has been on developing courses that meet the key training needs identified in the needs assessment and community conservation has been a major focus. As described in other sections of this Bulletin, AWF has an active community conservation program in the region and is working closely with practitioners from Uganda National Parks (UNP), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) Mweka College and the Wildlife Division in Tanzania. Through this work the need for a spectrum of training courses in community conservation has emerged and it seemed prudent to combine know-how, and work together to develop short low-cost in-service training courses. In January 1996 a workshop was hosted by Mweka College, to identify needs and ensure synergy.

What emerged was the idea that each country needed to develop a short course for senior policy and decision makers within protected area authorities and associated ministry staff to keep these executives abreast of the emerging professionalism in community conservation and trends in the field. Orientation courses were needed for protected area authority staff not working directly with community conservation. Though there may be some overlapping themes, it was felt that each course should be developed specifically for each country.

The areas of greatest overlap related to ranger/guard - level training and training for Community Conservation Wardens/Officers. The ranger training presents some particular challenges - as most rangers are trained in a very militaristic way. However there are times when different approaches to communities adjacent to a protected area would be judicious, and greatly help the work of a community conservation programme. Training modules to serve both Tanzania and Uganda are being developed. This sort of training is different from that needed for community/village scouts, where there already is a community link in place and one is working to develop understanding of basic ecology and a cohesive committed unit - often through drill practice and other military techniques.

The second initiative is the development of a series of training courses for Community Conservation Wardens. The rationale here is similar to the modular course in Kenya, in terms of building up knowledge, skills and tools but different in that it will focus only on practising wardens, and will offer two or three courses which progressively build upon the experience and constraints of these wardens in their workplace. The courses, if timely, will be tailored to the growing pace of a cadre of wardens, and will greatly enhance the capacity of these wardens and contribute to a growth of professionalism within the agency. Preliminary topics which will be included in such courses include the principles of community extension and adult learning; techniques for information gathering; methods for

community participation; consensus building; communication skills; building community acceptability; and project planning.

Again this is a work in progress, although one course run by Mweka College and TANAPA staff was held in October 1995 for Tanzanian protected area authorities staff. This has formed the basis for the first of the community conservation warden courses. AWF, TANAPA and UNP staff ran a different course in March 1996 in Uganda which was based on the concepts to be included in the second level course for Community Conservation Wardens. It is through initiatives such as this that information sharing networks can be forged and future training materials that may be developed can be taken up and used more widely.

The issue of sustainability of these initiatives is relevant to allow such sharing of course materials. Mweka College is planning to expand its range of services and include more in-service training courses in the future. In addition the newly established Community Conservation Service Centre in Arusha, Tanzania, will be able to offer community conservation training courses, based on this model both in Tanzania or elsewhere in Africa. It is hoped that the community concepts for ranger training will also be included in more formal ranger training in various ranger training schools in the region. These agencies will however not be able to meet the continuing demand for knowledge and skills that protected area authority staff and their client communities will need. What will be crucial to success will be for the community conservation wardens, trained in adult learning approaches and participatory techniques, to take those lessons and their own experience, and recognise the responsibility they have to share their knowledge and skills, be it through informal on-the-job training or by developing more structured training programmes. Community Wildlife Officers within KWS have already begun this by developing and running game scout training courses.

References

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**COMMUNITY CONSERVATION
DISCUSSION PAPERS**

The African Wildlife Foundation is an international non-governmental organisation working for conservation and development in Africa. As part of its Community Conservation programme, AWF is active in the field of involving rural people in conservation.

This discussion paper has been produced as part of AWF's Community Conservation programme. Its aim is to present preliminary findings and on-going work from AWF's activities. We welcome any comments and feedback.

For further details, please contact

**The African Wildlife Foundation,
PO Box 48177, Nairobi, Kenya.**

Telephone: [+254 2] 710367 Fax: [+254 2] 710372

Email: awfnrb@awfke.org