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LINKING ENTERPRISE TO
CONSERVATION: EXAMPLES
FROM KENYA

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INTRODUCTION

"Conservation tends to be for idealists who care about the natural world and would like to see some of it salvaged from the harmful influence of man. When this means demanding that legal protection be given to rare species, their job is difficult enough; when it means demanding that land should be set aside to safeguard a remnant of the natural world, conservationists are up against both ideological and economic opposition" (Joffe, 1969). However to achieve a natural balance, conservationists and development agents must understand that economic development and sound environmental management are complementary. Without adequate environmental protection, development will be undermined, without development protection of the environment will fail (World Bank, 1992).

It is therefore clear that conservation needs development and development needs conservation. It is based on this that the USAID COBRA (Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas) project of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) evolved. This paper explores some of the work of the African Wildlife Foundation has been involved with KWS concerning dialogue, benefit sharing and more specifically enterprise development.

EARLY EFFORTS: TSAVO WEST COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Tsavo West Community Conservation Project aimed at establishing dialogue between park authorities and pastoral communities living around the Park and, implementing programmes through which communities living next to the park could benefit from wildlife. As an example the project addressed the problem of illegal grazing of livestock in the Park by Maasai pastoralists from Kuku and Rombo group ranches, which are two community managed areas of rangeland bordering the Park. Portions of this land were leased to outsiders for cultivation, and this loss of grazing combined with an increase in livestock numbers was accommodated by the Maasai moving into the National Park to graze their livestock, resulting in serious over-grazing within the park and competition for available grazing between wildlife and livestock resulting in environmental degradation and loss of habitat.

Between 1990-92 community conservation dialogue involved many different stakeholders both individual and in groups. Over 700 meetings were held with livestock owners both individually and in groups from the group ranches; over 200 meetings were held with men and women who herded livestock in the park; 105 meetings were held with local chiefs, their assistants and councillors; and 18 meetings with senior district level officials. The meetings were used to agree to a 5 km wide buffer zone along a 60 km edge of the park which would only be used for dry season grazing.

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The importance of partnership and dialogue is exemplified by the initial agreement with the Maasai not to graze within the park, an agreement which was later rescinded during the 1991 drought. This was done on the understanding that the group ranches would move their livestock out of the park as soon as the rains started. With the re-introduction of livestock in the park, the use of the buffer zone as a dry season grazing area for livestock as had earlier on been agreed upon had been violated. Negotiations to re-establish the zone are presently under way. This shows that community conservation can achieve results even without revenue sharing, but such gains can be fragile, being affected by external factors such as climate, politics, changing land use.

The other outcomes of this project include the establishment of wildlife committees with the group ranches; an agreement by irrigation farmers to use water more efficiently with an apparent increase in the water down stream for use by livestock and wildlife outside the Park; meetings with group ranch management committees on such issues as leasing of land for cultivation and its effects; a completed livestock auction yard to facilitate livestock marketing and reduce grazing pressures; and conserving a swamp, outside the Park for the benefit of both the wildlife and livestock from the surrounding group ranches. Dialogue and community understanding of conservation potentials need to be understood, before benefits can be shared responsibly. To help link conservation to rural development with the local Maasai communities, tour companies were introduced to the area, bird hunting concessions were created, thereby increasing the benefit flows.

In 1991 KWS set aside approximately \$115,000 to be shared by the 4 Maasai group ranches within the Amboseli ecosystem as part of a trial revenue sharing scheme. The criteria for sharing the funds included proximity to the park; proportion of wildlife distributed on the ranches during migration; and the original ownership of Amboseli Park land. However a number of conflicting interests emerged including defining equitable mechanisms, addressing political agendas yet working within political and government structures. During the eight months debate between 1990-91 a total of 298 meetings and dialogue events were held on the distribution of revenue sharing fund. Twenty eight meetings were held with Parks staff, 17 with women, 22 with Maasai pastoralists, 19 with local politicians, 14 with the County Council, 36 with group ranch members, 27 with the group ranch management committees, 17 with the various NGOs involved and a total of 118 with other interested parties in this debate. This process resulted in an agreed format for the distribution of revenue, and set the scene for developing projects to be funded.

After the allocation of revenue sharing funds, further meetings were held on what each group ranch should use the money for, comprising 5 meetings held during the group ranches annual general meetings, 18 meetings with the four group ranch management committees and discussing their projects with the Amboseli Park Warden, 30 meetings with sub-district development committees and group ranch committees, and 16 meetings with relevant district authorities so that proposed projects, for instance a cattle dip, school building and dispensary, were approved. This enabled KWS to develop mechanisms for actual disbursement.

Such benefit sharing is seen as another component of the livestock ranchers income earning options and strengthens the case for compatible land use systems. But it needs to be balanced with compatibility of wildlife management.

BENEFIT SHARING MORE FORMALIZED - COBRA

Some components of the Tsavo West Community Conservation Project overlapped to the COBRA Project. The COBRA project provides the main financial support for the Community Wildlife Programme of the Kenya Wildlife Service from 1992-1997. The goal of the COBRA project is to promote socio-economic development through conservation and sustainable management of Kenya's natural resources while the purpose of the project is to increase the socio-economic benefits to communities co-existing with wildlife from the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife and natural resources, through

- KWS management support by establishing a functioning CWS unit with qualified and capable staff at headquarters and in the field;
- Human resource development by supporting orientation and training in KWS on new approaches in working with communities;
- Community and enterprise development fund aimed at supporting communities in community and enterprise development activities;
- Studies, Research and policy analysis which will assist KWS to further define key policy issues in wildlife - related management and utilization; and
- Modest levels of commodity assistance i.e. vehicles, motor bikes, microcomputers and software, to help support the CWS headquarters and the field units' capacity to co-ordinate, implement and monitor the COBRA project and CWP.

The underlying philosophy behind the Community Wildlife Programme and the COBRA project, is that KWS can work directly and indirectly with target communities to demonstrate that wildlife has economic value which can benefit local communities, and that wildlife can "pay for itself" in various ways. The pilot "wildlife use rights" programme, currently in operation in Laikipia, Machakos and Nakuru Districts, is a clear demonstration of how, in some places, communities, who have wildlife on their private land, can earn money through their own enterprises on a long-term, sustainable basis. Indeed, pilot activities show that "wildlife use rights", whether they be tourism-related or consumptive can provide benefits, and that such activities strengthen communities' abilities to be meaningful partners in the business of conservation.

Economic improvement is both morally imperative and essential for environmental sustainability. Previously economic growth and environmental protection were carried out in isolation, which often resulted in accelerated degradation. Thus "the deeper agenda, for most conservationists, is to make nature and natural products meaningful to rural communities. As far as local communities are concerned, the agenda is to regain control over natural resources, and through conservation practices, improve their economic well being" (Western & Wright, 1995). As a means to improve their economic well being, communities will only invest, where they can get better and quicker returns, within a short term.

KWS has evolved the revenue sharing into a WDF (Wildlife for Development Fund), as a mechanism to share benefits and encourage viable conservation related enterprise projects. Contributors to this fund include KWS Revenue-Sharing, donor contributions, and the Government of Kenya. The WDF is designed to provide a pool of funds to support sustainable community and enterprise development projects for communities which co-exist with wildlife or neighbouring protected areas, so that they can invest on environmentally friendly income generating activities, as well as projects of a more community development nature. This approach has enabled communities to set up conservation related enterprises, for instance wildlife sanctuaries, concession areas with private sector business, campsites, tourist bandas, and other eco-tourism activities.

The aim of this approach is to benefit rural people, conserve the environment, and so the biodiversity and uniqueness of these ecosystems. The example of Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary illustrates this.

BENEFIT SHARING TO ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT THE EXAMPLE OF KIMANA COMMUNITY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary, owned and managed by the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch members, is situated along the corridor between Amboseli and Tsavo West National Park, two of Kenya's prestigious national parks. This corridor is a critical wildlife habitat which needs to be conserved. The Sanctuary encompasses a swamp which is fed by two permanent streams namely the Kimana and Isinet. There are also numerous springs in the upper portion of the swamp. These springs owe their existence to the subterranean waters from Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. The swamp also supports the seasonal "Kikarankot" river which feeds two seasonal wetlands namely "Olngarua lo Lochalai" and "Olngarua Lenkerr". "Olngarua" is a Maasai word meaning wetland. This wetland creates a panoramic view lying between the undulating Chyullu range and Mt. Kilimanjaro, and is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

Historically, Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch was a designated hunting area before the hunting ban 1977. As a result the local community's demands for incomes to fund education for their children and other community programmes could no longer be met from benefits accruing from hunting. When KWS initiated its revenue sharing programme in 1992, the pastoralists in the area could again start to accrue benefits from conservation.

The Kimana area opened up for tourism in, and around the Amboseli Area as many tour operators made game drives to the Kimana Group Ranch. The tourism potential for Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch was confirmed during the closure of the Amboseli National Park for three weeks during the floods in the area in 1990. The Group Ranch earned approximately US \$2500 as game viewing fees from 118 vans who brought in over 826 tourists in the area during that 3 week period. Income generated from the "Sanctuary" will be used to pay school/college bursaries, community scout salaries and provide direct dividends to members of the group ranch.

The Kimana Group Ranch committee were further inspired to develop the Wildlife Sanctuary from visits they made to the Laikipia commercial ranches in 1992 and from the visit to Olchorro Oiruwa Sanctuary in Maasai Mara in 1993 where private wildlife sanctuaries have been developed as private enterprises and are benefitting local people. The link between enterprise and conservation is well demonstrated as communities engage in conservation-for-profit activities in the commercial ranches in Laikipia and Narok.

Another reason for establishing the Sanctuary relates to the land designed for the sanctuary not being suitable for agriculture due to the high salinity levels of the soils. The development of a wildlife sanctuary seemed the most viable land use for the Kimana community. The establishment of the sanctuary will help create a wildlife corridor between Amboseli and Tsavo West National Parks, and so a much larger conservation area. The creation of the wildlife corridor on local community initiatives is in turn a milestone effort towards the conservation of biodiverse resource areas.

This example demonstrates that a substantial synergy can exist between alleviating poverty and environmental conservation. This is a clear indication that a link can be created between enterprise development and conservation. Economic development in wildlife areas is closely linked to conservation and that development of one, to the exclusion of the other causes imbalances.

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