

USAID/EGAT Seminar Series: Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction

Jointly sponsored by:
USAID's Office of Natural Resources Management
& USAID's Office of Poverty Reduction

CASE STUDY:

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN NAMIBIA

OCTOBER 2004 – MARCH 2005

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The Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse (NRIC)
Contract No. LAG-I-803-99-00014-00, Task Order 09

October 2004

Table 1. Regional and local institutions for resource management in Namibia

Institution	Level of Responsibility	Membership	Powers	Status
Regional land boards	Regional	Appointees, including CBO reps.	Land allocation and registration with traditional authorities, award of leases for specific (no customary) land uses	Newly established
Wildlife councils	Regional	Governor, MET officials , appointees (including traditional leaders)	Wildlife and tourism management; outside conservancies	Provided for in legislation, but none formed
Rural Water Management Agency	Regional	Reps. of stakeholders in water management	Coordination of regional water management	Being established
Inland Fisheries Regional Advisory Board	Regional	Governor and appointees	Recommendations on Inland Fisheries management	Being established
Regional Councils	Regional	Elected politicians	Existing: development planning. Planned: take over of many central government functions	Established. No revenue raising powers as of yet
Regional Land Use and Environmental Boards	Regional	To be finalized	Land use planning and NRM coordination	Planned
Regional Development Committee	Regional	Regional officer, government officials, reps. of traditional leaders, NGOs, and CBOs	Coordinate regional development planning	Established and some meet regularly
Constituency Development Committee	Constituency (smaller than region, larger than community)	Regional councillor, traditional leaders, government officials, reps. of NGOs and CBOs	Coordinate constituency development planning	Some established
Community Forest Body	Community	Community representatives	Management of natural resources in local forest	Legislation enacted, and some established
Conservancies	Community	Local residents with elected committee	Wildlife and tourism management	31 gazetted, many more being established
Rural Water Use Associations/water point committees	Community	Local residents/water users with elected committee	Water point management	Legislation recently enacted, and many committees established
Traditional Authorities	Varies	Elected/appointed through customary law & ratified by Govt.	Land allocation by Customary Grant & undefined responsibility for NRM	Powers and legitimacy stronger in some regions than in others

Social Empowerment, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, and the Centre for Research, Information, Action in Africa.

LIFE Project Activities

The purpose of the LIFE I and LIFE II Projects has been to enable communities to derive increased benefits from the sustainable use of natural resources. The premise of these projects has been that if communities are allowed to benefit directly from the use of natural resources and gain control over these resources, then they will have an incentive to practice sustainable natural resources management and protect wildlife and other resources for the use of current and future generations.

LIFE I: In this phase, the project operated as a pilot CBNRM effort and was designed to test CBNRM approaches in Namibia. The targeted areas were primarily Caprivi and eastern Otjozondjupa (Nyae Nyae) Regions in the north-east areas of Namibia. Timeframe: May 1993-June 2000; Budget: \$17,216,711; Implementors: WWF-US

USAID Context: From FY91-FY96, the Mission had limited staffing and funds and supported two Strategic Objectives: one in basic formal and non-formal education and a second in natural resources management. Democracy/governance was a “target of opportunity.” The Mission obtained authorization in 1994 to continue with SO1 with necessary changes, add an “expanded program thrust “ in human resource development and “new program thrusts” in democracy/governance and HIV/AIDS. Under the Mission’s Country Strategic Plan for FY1996-2000, there were three Strategic Objectives: SO 1: Improved performance and education/training for historically disadvantaged Namibians; SO 2: Increased benefits to historically disadvantaged Namibians from sustainable local management of natural resources; and SO 3: Increased accountability of Parliament to all Namibian citizens.

LIFE I Results:

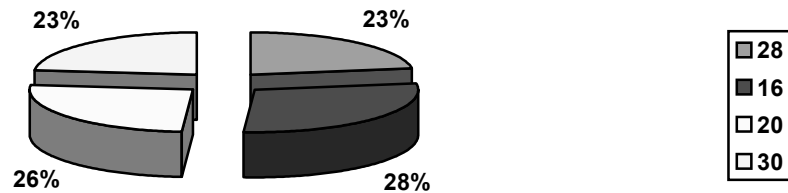
During the three-year time frame of the project, five conservancies were registered in the targeted regions of the LIFE project (i.e., four in Caprivi and one in Otjozondjupa). Of these, three conservancy management committees generated income in all years, one generated income only in its first year and the fifth had two years of no income generation. In non-LIFE areas, six other conservancies were registered, four were pending approval and 14 other conservancies were under development.

LIFE II: This phase provided continuing support for earlier conservancy development efforts and built upon the successful efforts of LIFE I. It expanded program support to Erongo and Khaodi /Hoas areas of western Namibia. Phase II also provided support for the development of an effective national-level CBNRM program management structure. The intent was to build up Namibian capacity, both governmental and non-governmental, to manage fully the program as the WWF involvement was scaled down and phased-out. Timeframe: August 1999-October 2002; Budget: \$10,635,211; Implementors: WWF/US, Rossing Foundation, Management Systems International

USAID Context:

The FY1996-2000 Strategic Objectives are noted above. The FY2000-2004 Strategic Objectives included: SO 1 – Economic empowerment of HDNs through accelerated private sector growth; SO 2 – Improved delivery of quality primary education to Namibian learners in Grades 1-4 in the most disadvantaged schools; SO 3 – Increased benefits received by

Figure 1: Conservancy Benefit Types (%)



Key: (LIFE 2004)

CB Tourism = Community-Based Tourism & includes Enterprises and Local Campsites

Trophy Hunting includes meat revenues; JV Lodges = Joint Ventures with the private sector

Other = thatching grass sales, craft sales, game donations and live sales of game.

Private sector partners in conservancies generated these revenues, while conservancy income/benefits, estimated at \$1.76 million, represent a 31 percent increase over last year. Job creation has also expanded, with 547 full-time and 3,250 part-time jobs created in conservancy areas. The number of beneficiaries has reached 98,995, more than double the target of 48,825. There are an additional 100,000 beneficiaries in the emerging conservancies. In some regions, it is estimated that in 2003, conservancies directly provided 35 percent of residents' total cash income and 28 percent of area employment. Nearly eight million hectares of land are under conservancy management, a more than 80 percent increase since 2002.

Annual game counts reveal burgeoning growth in wildlife populations, especially high-value species such as roan, sable and buffalo. In the Kunene regional alone, gemsbok, springbok and Hartmann's zebra sightings were up by 33 percent, 16 percent and 11 percent respectively from 2002 to 2003. Just as significantly, game is also expanding into new southern tier conservancies. More wildlife translates into increased levels of benefits to communities.

In addition to the socio-economic benefits and increase in wildlife stocks, the historically disadvantaged residents of conservancies now have greater voice and control over the decisions and factors that influence their livelihoods.

Second-Generation Issues for CBNRM in Namibia

- Compared to other resources, wildlife and tourism provide an opportunity to generate the highest financial benefits, but the benefit to individual households remains low, costs of living with wildlife remain high for households, and community proprietorship over wildlife remains weak as rights are limited and highly conditional (Jones 2004).
- Enthusiasm for CBNRM and conservancy participation could wane if household income and benefits do not increase and proprietorship is not strengthened (Jones 2004).
- Because average cash incomes are so low, even small conservancy payments to households have an impact (Jones 2004). However, if other income-generating

opportunities arise, then static levels of conservancy pay-out will be less consequential and household interest is likely to wane.

- The profitability of conservancy activities is reduced when the government chooses to hold on to power and the staff has weak capacity to support them. For example, using a static game quota for every conservancy provides no incentive for better game management by conservancies.
- CBNRM implies that communities are managing resources but in practice, they are enforcing government poaching rules, rather than developing their own local use rules. The Government is retaining most of the management authority. Conservancies are not allowed to make binding decisions on broader land management issues such as zoning of grazing, settlement, forest use or private land enclosures authorized by Government. Capacity needs to be built in community-led CBNRM-related NRM planning, including mapping and inventory information that taps the indigenous knowledge of women and men. While there is a unique opportunity now to apply CBNRM practices to other valuable natural resources, such as forests, fisheries, grazing land and water, it is not clear if the Government will allow communities to engage more meaningfully in management decisions.
- For the most part, there has been inadequate socio-economic baseline data that can be used to document changes in household income, well-being and poverty reduction. This data needs to be disaggregated by household type (female- or couple-headed households) and conservancy-related benefit streams should be researched for male and female household members. In addition, tools such as poverty mapping would be invaluable to get a clear picture of conservancy impacts.
- Measurement systems need to be elaborated to capture other community, household and individual benefits and changes including less tangible CBNRM achievements related to democracy-building, accountable and more representative governance, nutrition and health improvements, skill development, improved status of women and ethnic minorities, etc. This need will become particularly important as the conservancies are tasked with other development duties or managing other natural resources.
- Conservancies, individually and collectively, need to become engaged in policy dialogues related to CBNRM and develop constituency skills related to advocacy and coalition-building. Given the size of Namibia, the dispersed nature of its population, the poverty of many conservancy members, and the status of communications technology in remote areas, networking among constituencies is an on-going challenge.
- Conservancies are filling a sub-regional local governance vacuum created by Namibia's post-Independence administrative reforms. In some areas, conservancy leadership is not synonymous with traditional leadership. Conservancies are proliferating. The Government is discussing the possibility of expanding the focus of conservancies beyond wildlife and applying this model to other resources. At the same time, decentralization is being discussed in Namibia and some regions have established development committees at different levels. It is not yet clear if this multiplicity of local institutions will be in the best interests of communities or the resources upon which they depend.

- Conservancies, as organized local bodies, could sponsor other social and economic programs. For example, conservancies could sponsor HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs. They could also help to introduce technology into rural areas, including information and communication technologies. Will these added tasks strengthen or weaken conservancies?
- Conservancy membership has not necessarily translated into knowledge about, or participation in their activities. In a household survey for seven conservancies, Bandyopadhyay *et al.* 2004 found that only about one in four conservancy households knew about conservancy plans or their structures and only about one in three households reported being conservancy participants. The study methodology does not indicate if women and men within households were interviewed separately. For this reason, their relative knowledge and participation related to conservancies is unknown.
- Conservancy constitutions must include criteria to ensure that they contribute to improved governance and management of wildlife populations and also reduce poverty among members of those special districts by distributing collective and/or individual benefits equitably. These rules have produced systems of representation and accountability that meet fairly stringent criteria of democratic governance. At this early stage in their development, some of these institutional arrangements work better than others in the sense that the spirit as well as the letter of the enabling legislation is translated into practice. For example, in a few cases, the costs and benefits of having wildlife were not always equitably or fairly distributed within a community.
- Conservancy earnings can be allocated to collective goods (e.g., school or health infrastructure, roads, other kinds of community buildings). Earnings could be distributed by some formula to the members—for example, on a per capita basis. They could be invested in economic enterprises in the hopes that these would generate both employment opportunities for district members and increased standards of living in other ways.
- Some households gain from conservancies through cash income, non-cash rewards and community-level benefits but they also bear costs. Bandyopadhyay *et al.* 2004 found that only 12 percent of the surveyed households received a cash income. The highest percentage of household members receiving cash income from a conservancy was 27 percent (Torra) but 75 percent of the households report being conservancy participants. It is not clear why the remaining households did not report sharing in this income. The study found little evidence to suggest that the better-educated or asset-rich were gaining more from conservancies relative to their less-educated or poorer counterparts, but only some weigh benefits in favor of the poorest members. More than 50 percent of the surveyed households suffered crop or livestock damage from wildlife.
- More emphasis needs to be placed on the financial viability of conservancies and the development of the business skills of the conservancy committees and members. In addition, credit should be expanded for micro-, small- and medium sized enterprises in rural areas and credit impediments for women should be addressed.
- Conservancies have difficulties with excluding outsiders from using land or water points that conservancies have designated especially for wildlife and tourism. Sometimes, rich and powerful people have gotten permission at higher levels to enclose conservancy land.

- Despite their important knowledge of local natural resources and major role in managing them for food, income, medicinal and other purposes, women were initially overlooked in CBNRM efforts; however, there have been some improvements over time. Conservation organizations promoting CBNRM more often contacted men about meetings and assumed that they would let their wives know about the meetings. Sometimes, outsiders unknowingly placed local resources under the control of men, even though women had been the ones managing those resources, e.g. palm trees used in basket-making. An initial focus on community game guards only included men. To engage more women and help them to benefit from CBNRM, women were hired in East Caprivi for new positions as community resource monitors. Their mission evolved to become one of community organizers, liaisons with women's groups, collectors of women's indigenous knowledge, and facilitators for information between the various actors involved in CBNRM. Women in some areas adapted better than others to the expectations associated with paid employment and were able to play a wide range of roles for their conservancy (Flintan 2001).
- Gender and economics intersect around several natural resources. Women have difficulty marketing their baskets due to the distance of craft markets from their homes, the unpredictability of the tourist market and time demands that preclude women basket-makers from being able to volunteer their time to a craft stand. Paying a commission to others for basket sales dramatically decreases the profitability. When markets did improve, more people became engaged in basket-making and there was an increasing demand for palms. After depleting their own supplies, one group traveled two to three hours to another community to harvest their palms and generated resentment from locals. Only then were palm gardens planted but they took six months to grow and five to six years to mature. Another product that women sell is thatch grass. It has high earning potential if adequate and reliable buyers are found. However, it also needs to be monitored to prevent unsustainable use (Flintan 2001).
- Tourism in Namibia is projected to grow at six percent per year in real terms over the next several years. Tourism is a force multiplier when it comes to employment generation. Its potential for improving the livelihoods of historically disadvantaged Namibians has only recently been recognized. There is considerable opportunity for conservancies to become an engine for economic growth in the northern rural areas. In addition, the GRN has beefed up the MET's tourism division in last few years.
- Conservancies gain the majority of their income from the tourism industry, which is Namibia's fastest growing sector. Compared to grazing and subsistence uses, the advantages of tourism include: hard currency spending by international tourists, anticipated growth of world tourism industry, attractions of Namibia compared to elsewhere in Africa. However, both regional political unrest and global terrorism have taken their toll on tourism in the last couple of years.
- Private sector partners need greater incentives and security to make investments in remote, high-risk locations. The economic promise of conservancies has been premised largely on the development of tourism joint ventures.
- To date, conservancy plans have not generally addressed contingencies, conflict management or pro-poor safety net strategies. The support organizations for CBNRM need to attract or develop expertise in these areas.

Seminar 3: Assets, Poverty Traps and Rights

1. The LIFE Project found some interesting ways to engage women in conservancy planning, governance and economic activities. What are some other ways that CBNRM projects in Namibia could improve women's asset status?
2. Discrimination is illegal according to the Namibia constitution and the constitutions of the conservancy. However, in practice, female-headed households, women in couple-headed households, minority and less-powerful ethnic groups may not get a fair share. Which procedures would ensure a more equal allocation of conservancy benefits?
3. Drought can trigger or exacerbate poverty spells. What options are available to governments and CBNRM projects to provide safety nets and ameliorate this specific poverty trap?

Seminar 4: Markets and Trade

1. There is interest in community-based management of other natural resources via conservancies. How is the management of other natural resources (i.e., forests, fisheries, grazing lands and water) different or similar to wildlife and the other resources being managed now by communities (e.g., thatch, craft supplies)?
2. What are the local, regional and international markets for the products from these other natural resources and what type of income streams will they provide?
3. How can cluster-based, demand-driven business approaches be applied to tourism and other economic conservancy activities?

Seminar 5: Key Macro and National Issues

1. How can valuation of and payment for environmental goods and services approaches address the household costs related to damages from problem animals?
2. How can insurance schemes be adapted to damage from problem animals?
3. Is CBNRM a means for government to avoid a more fundamental redistribution of resources, e.g. land redistribution of commercial farms?
4. Much of the number-crunching related to conservancies has focused on aggregate revenues, either for individual conservancies or for Namibia as a whole. While aggregate work is important, can these numbers be disaggregated to capture how particular regions, households or women as a group are benefiting from conservancy activities?

Seminar 6: Migration, Marginal Lands and Least Favored Areas

1. In what ways do urban Namibians contribute to the success of rural conservancies?
2. Some might argue that with its marginal resources, frequent droughts and unstable neighbors, Namibia should not become overly reliant on tourism. What are the

4. Which aspects of CBNRM in Namibia require different tools or analytical approaches?
5. How are your priorities different than the actual design of Phase III?

