

Negative Impact of Community Development Through Community-based Wildlife Conservation: From the Case of Kimana Sanctuary, Southern Kenya

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Abstract

Today, theories about wildlife conservation emphasise the importance of local participation and decentralisation, and wildlife benefits are regarded as an incentive for local people to join the conservation effort. In Kenya, where more than three-quarters of wildlife habitat is outside protected areas, Community-based Conservation (CBC) has been initiated on community lands. Kimana Sanctuary was a flagship case of CBC. It was established with the purpose of habitat conservation and benefit sharing through practical local participation in management of the protected area and in the tourism business. At first, the sanctuary was managed by local people, but because of the meagre benefits obtained, it was leased to a tourism company in four years. With the change in management, the community received an increase in benefits and achieved local development, i.e. land subdivision and the adoption of agriculture. The people understood the value of wildlife for tourism, but they did not agree on wildlife roaming on their lands. CBC assumed three factors: empowerment, benefits, and local initiative. Of these, only benefits have been achieved. Local empowerment for the management of the sanctuary was insufficient, and the people did not accept wildlife conservation on their lands, which outsiders intended to push forward. Receiving the wildlife benefit without participation in practical activities, the local people had no conservation initiatives. To realize collaboration between the locals and the outsiders, consensus on conservation outside of protected areas and provisions against wildlife damage are essential.

Key words: Community-based Conservation, Benefit, Development, Kenya

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Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s, researchers working in Africa began to realise the importance of including human activities in discussions about wildlife conservation (Western 2003). Since then, theories about wildlife conserva-

tion have emphasized the importance of local participation and the decentralization of conservation management from the state to local communities (Child 2004; Hulme and Murphree 2001; Western and Wright 1994a; Woodroffe *et al.* 2005). Among researchers, opinions differ about various issues (Meguro, 2009a), but their views about benefits are almost universal: tangible benefits from wildlife conservation are regarded as a

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necessary incentive for local people to join the conservation initiative.

In Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), established in 1990, initiated community-based conservation (CBC). KWS works to achieve local participation based on the CBC philosophy, because more than three-quarters of wildlife habitat in Kenya is outside protected areas, and, thus, conservation efforts on community lands are essential (KWS 1990). The Kimana Sanctuary was one of the first community sanctuaries established in Kenya. Community sanctuaries, one CBC programme, are protected areas with tourism facilities formed on communal or individual lands. The goal of a community sanctuary is to contribute to wildlife conservation by the provision of protected areas where resource use by the local people is restricted and to improve rural development through encouragement of tourism. The sanctuary opened in 1996 under local management and received considerable international attention as a flagship case of CBC within Kenya (Mburu *et al.* 2003; Rutten 2004; Watson 1999). After the sanctuary opened, the management was terminated after four years. Since 2000, the sanctuary has been leased to a tourism company. Rutten (2004) argued that this change in management was because of failure in acquiring substantial benefit and has resulted in increased benefits to the community through the company's investments.

Study Objectives

The main objective of this article is to examine sanctuary's achievements with regards to benefit sharing with the local community. This study discusses not only the amount of benefits, but also their use for local development, and local opinions about wildlife

conservation after enjoying the benefits. CBC has different definitions among scholars (Berkes 2007; Barrow and Murphree 2001; Mehta and Heinen 2001; Western and Wright 1994b). This study is based on the concept of CBC applied by KWS at that time: CBC attempts 'to empower the person on the ground to benefit from wildlife and therefore take the initiative in conserving it' (KWS 1996, p. 37). Under this assumption, benefits received by the people entice them to take the initiative to conserve wildlife, and this view has been adopted and supported in empirical studies as "benefit-based approaches" (Kideghesho *et al.* 2007; Romañach *et al.* 2007).

Concerning the relation between wildlife benefits and local attitudes, the way local opinions change after receiving economical benefits from wildlife was studied with several cases. Then, such benefit-based approaches sometimes failed in bringing intended effects because the amount of benefits is small compared with cost of conservation which wildlife impose on local people, or the people cannot understand the linkage between benefit and wildlife/conservation activities (Archabald and Naughton-Treves 2001; Gadd 2005; Kideghesho *et al.* 2007; Walpole and Thouless 2005). In short, of critical importance is whether the people themselves conceive they are beneficiaries of wildlife rather than 'victims' (Meguro 2007).

Data Collection

Fieldwork was carried out intermittently for 9 months from October 2005 to February 2008. General information was collected from local leaders and elders, and literatures. Information on the process by which consensus was reached among stakeholders concerning the sanctuary was collected from

former Group Ranch (GR) Committees and a former KWS staff member, who had worked with the community. Both former and current GR Committee members and elders confirmed the process by which the people reached agreement about the sanctuary among the community. For the discussion of the community management era, I interviewed a former sanctuary manager, former KWS staff who trained and supervised game scouts, and the GR chairman at that time. Three current officials (chairman, secretary, and treasurer) of GR Committee discussed the benefits that the community received and explained their usages and decision making on them. Company managers and a senior warden offered information about management conditions, such as visitor numbers, employee numbers, staff salaries, and so on. Local opinion towards wildlife was evaluated by interviewing the heads of 63 households who were randomly sampled with at least one registered member of Kimana GR.

Relationship between Local People and Wildlife

Kimana Sanctuary is situated within Kimana Group Ranch (25,120 ha) in Loitokitok District (around 635,600 ha, formerly a part of Kajiado District) in southern Kenya. Annual rainfall in the area is around 346.5 mm, with occasional droughts (Altmann *et al.* 2002). There are some rivers and springs, due to water veins from Mt. Kilimanjaro, and the sanctuary contains Kimana Swamp, where wildlife often go for water. Amboseli National Park is situated at the centre of the district, and is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Kenya because of its elephants and views of Mt. Kilimanjaro. The park is entirely opened, so wildlife come and

go, moving around a vast area. However wildlife movement has become more and more difficult as the human population increases and agricultural areas expand, destroying wildlife habitats and cutting off corridors (Okello 2005).

Most of the current residents are traditional pastoralists of the Maasai people. Other residents include Kikuyu, Kamba, and Chaga. A majority of the non-Maasai population arrived in the area in search of fields along rivers or business in towns. It is estimated that the local Maasai households in Kimana GR is around 800 to 900. Kimana GR was formed in the early 1970s and now has 843 registered members, who have a legal right to GR land that was originally communal, with no private allotments. The GR Committee has 25 members, who are elected by the members in general meetings.

Cattle are important to the Maasai for subsistence but also for cultural and social reasons (Homewood and Rodgers 1991). Maasai society is comprised of age sets, each with its own function. Prior to the 1960s, the people around Kimana migrated with their livestock and household members in the dry season looking for pastures. At that time, herds were usually fended by both uncircumcised boys and circumcised warriors. Kimana GR is rich in water, but pastureland is insufficient in the dry season, so the warriors go to neighbouring GRs for 2 to 3 months. However, after the 1970s, more and more local Maasai undertook farming due to severe droughts and loss of herds in those decades (Campbell 1993).

Among the Maasai, hunting is practiced by warriors, and its main purpose is to kill wildlife that is dangerous to livestock and to people. Hunting has cultural significance only in terms of lions, as warriors demon-

strate their bravery and manhood to other community members by successfully killing a lion. The government banned hunting in 1977, as ivory poaching and smuggling by the Somali had intensified (Steinhart 2006), and there were international pressures to take measures. However, the Maasai continued hunting to protect their livelihoods until KWS strengthened its crackdown on poaching in the 1990s.

Monetary Benefits from the Kimana Sanctuary

History of the Sanctuary

When Kenya became a British protectorate in 1895, the colonial government introduced modern Western ideas of wildlife conservation, which were basically 'fortress conservation' policies that neglected the opinions and lives of local people and denied their customary rights (Adams and Hulme 2001). Amboseli was declared a national reserve in 1948, which allowed local people to use its land and resources. In 1974, its status was changed to that of a national park, and local use inside was prohibited. This resulted in the loss of an important water source and grazing land for the people, a change that generated fierce local opposition and the killing of numerous animals in anger (Western 1994). The government initiated community projects and constructed water pipes as a form of compensation, but the facilities were soon unusable.

KWS first introduced the idea of a community sanctuary to Kimana GR in 1992. The community took three years to accept the plan, before agreeing to construction of the sanctuary in 1995. The Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary was opened with 6,000 ha in 1996. The sanctuary was supported with international aid from USAID,

the World Bank, and the EU, among others. By the opening year, infrastructures like the main gate and driving roads had been constructed, and staff was trained by the donors. The manager, a local person with a bachelor's degree, was trained by KWS for 6 months before the opening. He managed the sanctuary in cooperation with the GR Committee. Through the sanctuary, KWS focused on habitat conservation outside the park and community development through tourism with local cooperation and participation (KWS 1996). Kimana was chosen as the site of the sanctuary, because it has a swamp where wildlife often come and is near a famous tourism destination.

In 1996, the sanctuary received an international award from the British Guild of Travel Writers. However, the number of visitors decreased, owing to insecurity (riots over the 1997 general election and the 1998 terrorist attack on the US embassy). In 1999, the community decided to lease the sanctuary to a tourism company. In 2000, the African Safari Club (ASC) took over the management of the sanctuary and the community withdrew completely from its management.

Change of Management Body

Kneigt (1998, cited in Ruffen 2004, p. 15) stated that the sanctuary netted the community almost Ksh. 1 million (US \$17,000) in its first year. However, Watson (1999, p.19) reported that the number of guests during the first year was 'more than 800,' and the maximum calculated income using this figure is only US \$8,000 (around Ksh. 450,000 at that time), as the entry fee for foreigners was US \$10, and Ksh. 100 for Kenyans. The entrance fee was the only source of income and, in addition, the reve-

nue figure does not consider the cost of maintenance. In the agreement with ASC, the company pays the community a land fee (per month) and visitor fee (per person). The sanctuary received 23,339 guests from November 2004 to October 2005 (a record for ASC). The land fee increased each year, and during this period, according to the GR Chairman and Treasurer, it was Ksh. 24,500. The visitor fee was fixed at Ksh. 250. Therefore, the total revenue to the community was about Ksh. 8.7 million (around US\$ 120,000). Increased employment was an additional benefit. When the community was managing the sanctuary, the only job opportunity for local people was as a game scout, and only about 15 jobs were available. However, the ASC constructed three lodges (around 160 beds) and employed 149 people, 107 being Maasai.

The attempt at community management came at a time when the tourism industry in Kenya was suffering a series of security problems due to the uprising over the 1997 election and the 1998 terrorist attack. However, the small benefit was not only a result of bad timing. When the sanctuary was opened under community management, no accommodations were provided by the sanctuary, and the only income came from the gate fees. Tourists need accommodations and usually stay at hotels while viewing wildlife in the national park. Although the sanctuary entry fee was lower than that of the park, the sanctuary could not be the primary tourist destination. On the other hand, ASC introduced its own Cessna planes and vehicles, in addition to constructing three lodges, and thus was able to provide a tour plan for visitors that established the sanctuary as a place to stay and view wildlife.

To attract more visitors, who mostly

come from outside Kenya, international advertising is crucial, in addition to improved tourism facilities (Walpole and Thouless 2005, p. 127). Although ASC has an internet home page with beautiful pictures accessible in several European languages, the community mostly advertised domestically like on the radio and on billboards. The manager in the era of community management said that there were no problems at that time and that his dismissal was due to politics within the community. He had graduated from university, was highly educated by community standards, and had trained with KWS for six months before starting work. Considering that he did not understand the importance of advertising abroad, it is questionable if he had sufficient knowledge about tourism. In the end, the financial benefits under the tourism company management have exceeded those of community management.

Local Development with Wildlife Benefits *Sanctuary Benefits and Land Subdivision*

About 60% of the income from the community-managed sanctuary was said to be spent on the community (Muthiani 2001; cited in Rutten 2004, p. 15). However, from my interviews with the community leaders and a former KWS staff member who worked with the community at that time, it was learned that the use of this money was unclear. The former KWS employee said that there was almost no benefit to the community, due to the low level of income and mismanagement. Current GR Committee members also said that only after ASC took over management did benefits reach the community and local development initiative begin. The money from ASC was used for educational and medical subsidies and land subdivision. The educational subsidies were used primarily for

secondary schools. In 2000, 72 children received subsidies, of which 58 were for secondary education. The maximum amount was Ksh. 20,000, but as the applications increased, the individual share decreased. Medical assistance subsidies depend on total expenses and applicant wealth. The largest subsidy confirmed in this study was Ksh. 45,000.

In terms of rural development and conservation, land subdivision is more important than these subsidies. Traditionally, land was communally managed (Campbell 1993). Some rules governed the resource use but people used them in a free and equal manner. Farming has spread in the district since the 1930s. Because Kimana has extensive water resources, after the severe droughts in the 1970s and the 1980s, local people attempted farming to provide a reliable subsistence resource. To initiate farming on communal land, people only had to obtain permission from the local leaders. There was no clear regulation of farmland use; people were free to farm as much land as they chose. As more fields were cultivated, boundaries became less clear, and land claims began to overlap. The community wanted land subdivision in order to obtain title deeds to clarify landownership and borders for avoiding such disputes. Other factors also encouraged subdivision, such as a fear of the land being seized by the government or immigrants of agricultural peoples, and the desire to have a land parcel for permanent settlement near the farm or towns.

As the GR secretary explained, the total subdivision procedure cost more than Ksh. 20 million, including land surveys, mapping, road construction, and acquisition of titled deeds from the government. Previously, the community had not been able to amass such

a large sum of money, but with the arrival of ASC, they secured income source. With the subdivision, each GR member received a farming parcel of 0.8 ha and 24 ha of dry land. The farming fields were distributed among two zones surrounded by electric fences (Okello and D'Amour 2008). The sanctuary remained communal property, together with some other areas for public use.

Community Development through Land Subdivision

Land subdivision had a significant influence on development because the change of land ownership affected local subsistence. Privatisation made free roaming of livestock around the dry lands which used to be communal difficult. The free movement is necessary because rainfall in the area is unevenly distributed in terms of time and space. All 63 interviewees said that pastoralism would become more difficult after the subdivision, and the leaders also admitted it was evident to them. Also, traditional pastoralism became difficult, as year-round irrigated farming requires much work, and more children go to school, creating a labour shortage for traditional pastoralism. In light of these situations, those who believe that agriculture provided a reliable subsistence invested more labour in farming, which means a decrease in labour force for pastoralism. Until now, people still moved their herds to neighbouring communities where the land was not subdivided, but the subdivision of these lands were under way and the people understand that in the near future their pastoralism must become a much smaller scale.

The shift from pastoralism to farming was initiated prior to subdivision and is expected to continue (Campbell 1993; Mwangi

2007; Okello and D'Amour 2008). According to the GR Committee then, when community members debated subdivision at an annual general meeting, no one opposed the subdivision of fields, although some opposed the subdivision of dry lands. As far as I interviewed, no one evaluated the subdivision negatively and admit unfavourable opinion in the community. Traditionally for Maasai men, cattle abundance was socially important, apart from subsistence, but now even elders who do not know how to farm and have never attempted it admit that community development involves more farming and education. Compared to other case studies on GR subdivision, where various rationales and pressures were reported (Mwangi 2007; Woodhouse 1997), one feature of the Kimana case is that the people clearly intended the subdivision to expand farming which they thought of as community development. The GR Committee is rumoured and criticized to have embezzled cash income from ASC and bought houses, cars, and other private goods. The corruption may cause land-related troubles among the community and throw back the process of subdividing. Yet, as the subdivision was formally decided and members' plots were demarcated, a return to traditional pastoralism became highly unlikely.

Effect of Wildlife Benefit on Conservation Initiative

KWS (1990; 1996) stressed the importance of CBC outside of public protected areas, as wildlife cannot survive only within protected areas. In terms of wildlife conservation, an increase in farmland means a decrease in wildlife habitat and reduction of wildlife corridors, as well as a greater risk of wildlife damage to crops outside protected areas

(Emerton 2001; Ntiati 2002; Okello 2005). In the Amboseli ecosystem, African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) are the biggest conservation target and the greatest tourism resource. The elephant population increased from 480 in 1978 to 1,087 in 1999 (Moss 2001), and currently was estimated at around 1,500 (Amboseli Trust for Elephants, personal comment 2008/8/8). Yet, without habitat conservation, the endangered specie cannot survive (Western 1994).

Although the people understood that tourists came to the sanctuary for the wildlife and that the sanctuary provided the money for the land subdivision, they were opposed to wildlife conservation on their private lands. Of 63 residents interviewed, only 8% agreed with the idea of wildlife roaming outside Amboseli National Park and the sanctuary, whereas 68% disagreed and another 24% set conditions for wildlife movement, such as limiting the number of animals allowed, allowing only animals that are not dangerous or allowing them only if they roam without causing damage. In the latter group, interviewees thought that there were too many elephants and that this was dangerous, meaning that 92% disagreed with the current status. Every interviewee supported an increase of the elephant population, provided it occurred inside the protected areas because they bring the income to the community. The people understood the value of wildlife for tourism, but with regard to wildlife conservation, their attitudes were completely opposite to that of KWS and other donors.

Tourism Benefit and Hostility to Wildlife

When wildlife damage is direct but wildlife benefits are indirect or negligible compared to the benefit which they received, then local

residents tend not to regard themselves as beneficiaries (Archabald and Naughton-Treves 2001; Gadd 2005; Kideghesho *et al.* 2007). The situation in Kimana was similar to it. However, some people in the community receive personal and direct benefits from tourism, namely those employed by the sanctuary. The number of these beneficiaries was not large (107 persons employed) compared with the size of the community (800 to 900 households). However, new tourism enterprises were planned in Kimana: in October 2007, two lodges were under construction, and another two conservation areas with accommodations were agreed with landowners. Employment opportunities may increase soon.

In the sanctuary, local Maasai were mostly employed in non-technical occupations, such as game scouts or security guards, with monthly salaries starting at Ksh. 6,000. Employees often requested salary increases at community meetings, but their salaries were large enough to employ people to tend fields or livestock. In the community, people usually paid Ksh. 2,000 to 3,000 a month for field labourers or livestock tenders. A scout (male, 45 years old) who had worked for 3 years said that he would like to produce more food by employing more workers using his salary from the sanctuary. He thought both agriculture and livestock keeping were necessary, but with tourism job, he was able to earn more money. However, he rejected the idea that current wildlife conservation was no problems. He pointed out the risk of damage to those who enjoyed no direct tourism benefits was high, and stated that KWS should do something. Benefits can positively affect local attitudes towards tourism, but if it produces supportive opinion of wildlife

conservation is concerned by wildlife damage.

Lessons from the Kimana Sanctuary

Results of the Sanctuary

KWS (1996, p. 37) explained that CBC involves 'attempting to empower the person on the ground to benefit from wildlife and therefore take the initiative in conserving it.' In Kenya, CBC assumed three factors: empowerment, benefits (from utilization of wildlife), and local initiative. Of these, only benefits have been achieved in Kimana Sanctuary: Ksh. 8.7 million and more than 100 employment opportunities. However, Kimana Sanctuary cannot be judged completely successful, as no local CBC initiative has been demonstrated, and the benefits were not produced through local community management. With regard to empowerment, even after training, the manager's understanding of tourism was insufficient. From a literature review (KWS 1996; Watson 1999), it is uncertain whether KWS and donors established a sanctuary without accommodations, intending a small-scale business that would be easier for the community to run. Regardless, the benefits from the community-managed sanctuary were not satisfactory to the local people, and so community participation in management was abandoned, suggesting that the donors underestimated the expectations of the community.

With the change in management, the community received an increase in the type and amount of benefits, but the change created little sense of local ownership or initiative towards wildlife conservation. Walpole and Thouless (2005, p. 124) stated that without a 'clear understanding of the linkages between the receipt of benefits from wildlife and the need to conserve it', tourism

benefits cannot motivate local people for conservation. People in Kimana understood that wildlife conservation was necessary to attract tourists and receive the benefits, but at the same time, they thought that wildlife were problematic and must be conserved within protected areas by KWS or the company. Now that the management body is ASC, the community had only to wait to receive the benefits without any effort. The direct beneficiaries of tourism profits supported the sanctuary and understood the linkages between the benefits of wildlife and the need for conservation, but, in their view, conservation occurred on protected areas and was therefore the task of the outsiders. Receiving the wildlife benefit without participation in practical activities, the local people had no idea of the necessity of their conservation initiatives.

Benefit as a Trigger for the Next Change

The importance of sharing benefits with local communities cannot be denied. The history of 'fortress conservation' proved that local hostility towards conservation initiative or organization can really hinder the progress of conservation (Hulme and Murphree 2001; Western and Wright 1994a). Emerton (2001) stated that the fundamental factor is not the distribution of benefits but their excess over costs. However, such a benefit-based approach seems to overlook the function of benefits, especially monetary benefit, as a trigger for future change or community development. The money is used to improve local lives, or to develop local subsistence or enterprises, and some forms of them are devastating to conservation.

Western and Wright (1994b, p. 10) insisted that local rights should be acknowledged along with local responsibilities and

capabilities. They expressed misgivings that the devolvement of rights can cause further destruction. However, as Hackel (1999, p. 731) pointed out, 'even most enlightened programs, if wildlife conservation is to be a priority, must reduce people's land-use options forever because large areas of natural habitat must be preserved.' The dilemma is that if CBC truly acknowledges local rights, communities may use their benefits and rights in ways that undermine conservation. At the same time, if conservation agencies try to control how beneficiaries use their benefits, it smacks of paternalism. Between development and conservation, objectives of CBC initiatives which each stakeholder has in their mind may differ. This study showed that to realize collaboration between the locals and the outsiders, consensus on conservation outside of protected areas and provisions against wildlife damage are essential. Now, there is no local system for deliberation on these issues. The next challenge is to study a possible way to reform CBC so as to reconcile local livelihood needs and wildlife conservation urged globally (Berkes 2007; Meguro 2009b).

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