

# Summary and Key Lessons from a Comparative Review and Analysis of Community Conservation in East Africa

Edmund Barrow<sup>1</sup>, Helen Gichohi<sup>2</sup>, and Mark Infield<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly Community Conservation Co-ordinator with the African Wildlife Foundation until 1997, presently Programme Co-ordinator for IUCN EARO's Forest Conservation and Social Policy Programmes

<sup>2</sup> Director, African Conservation Centre, Nairobi, Kenya

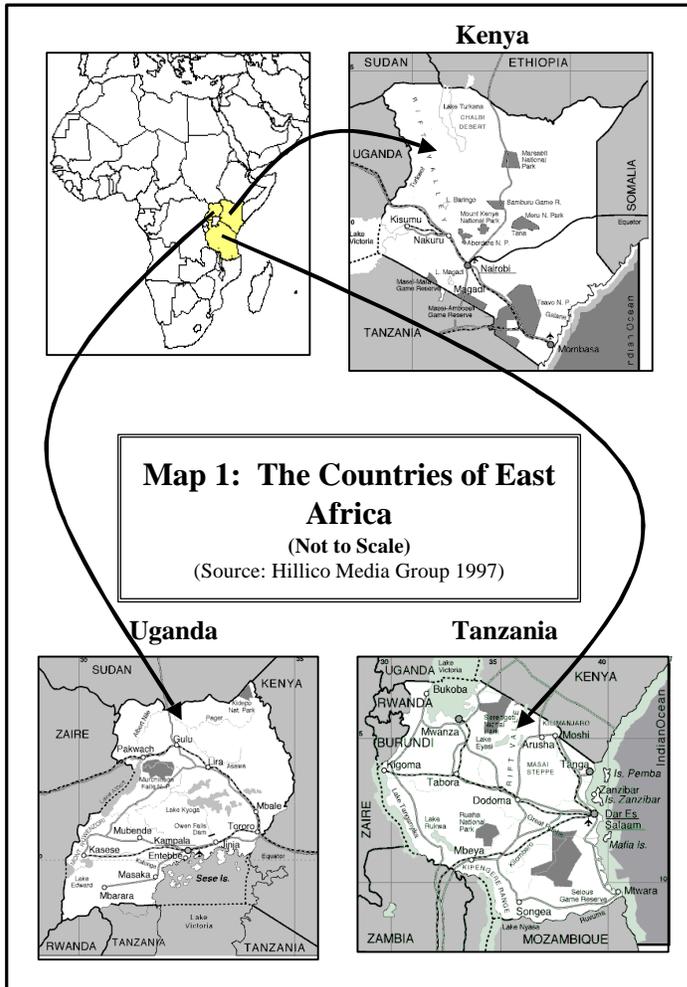
<sup>3</sup> Formerly with African Wildlife Foundation, presently Research Associate with the African Wildlife Foundation studying for a PhD at the University of East Anglia

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# 1. East Africa - Its Diversity

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda straddle the equator on the East of the African continent. Kenya and Tanzania border the Indian Ocean, while Uganda is landlocked (see Map below). Most of Uganda (236,580 sq. km) lies between 1,000 and 1,500 m. above sea level. Kenya covers an area of 580,370 sq. km with altitudes ranging from sea level to over 5,000 metres (Mt. Kenya). Tanzania, the largest of the three East African countries (945,090 sq. km) has most of the country located in the Central African Plateau, at an altitude of 1,000-1,500m above sea level. Kenya and Tanzania are dominated by arid and semi-arid lands, which comprise about 75% of Kenya and about 50% of Tanzania. Uganda is mostly high potential and about 25% mainly in the north is dry. Compared to many countries, Uganda has large amounts of fresh water in its lakes and wetlands covering a total of 13% of Uganda's land surface.



**Map 1: The Countries of East Africa**  
(Not to Scale)  
(Source: Hillico Media Group 1997)

The East African Region is one region of great biological richness. A range of climatic and geographical characteristics give rise to habitats ranging from coral reefs to miombo woodlands, and afro montane forests to deserts. There are a number of reasons for this floristic and faunal richness. The region is influenced by the vegetation systems from the north (Ethiopia and Somalia), by those of West Africa and those from southern Africa. The three countries span several biogeographical regions and fall into a number of different areas of endemism (IUCN and UNEP 1986); (WWF and IUCN, 1994). Uganda sits at the interface between the forest communities of West Africa and the savanna communities of Eastern and Southern Africa. Tanzania shares the Zambezi region with Southern Africa, and Kenya shares the Somali-Maasai with the Horn of Africa.

The frontiers of cultivation have been pushed into forests, river-valleys, and semi-arid areas. The impact on forests has been the decrease in forest cover at between 0.3% and 1.7% per annum (FAO 1997), and, with critical migration routes being closed off, large areas of dry forests have been cleared. The semi-arid areas support spectacular wildlife

populations for which Kenya and Tanzania are famous internationally. The spread of agriculture into these area has taken up space formerly available to wildlife, and has resulted in habitat change and the truncation of important ecosystems. Such closure threatens the well being of these spectacular populations and the ecosystems themselves. This also impacts on the economy, as well as local income and livelihoods.

Economically the three countries have low GNPs, though that of Kenya is significantly higher than either Tanzania or Uganda. Wealth is unevenly divided, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania where the majority of the population live at or below the poverty line. In addition this is a large increase in non-traditional export crops over the last decade which impacts on wildlife. Tourism is a major foreign exchange earners, and has expanded greatly during the post independence years (WTO 1992). In Tanzania, tourism is now

the second largest earner of foreign exchange, after agricultural crops. But tourism is fickle, as was shown in Kenya during 1997-1998 due to insecurity, tribal clashes and poor infrastructure. While conservation tourism is increasing in Tanzania, the rate of increase has been much lower in Uganda. Despite large incomes to the nation and to the tourism industry, little tourism revenue accrues to local communities, and the distribution of benefits remains an issue. Likewise there is still no direct link between the revenue earned by hunting on community lands and income to those communities. As a result wildlife numbers continues to decline on most private and communal lands, with the notable exceptions of Kajiado and Laikipia in Kenya (Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing 1996; Rainy and Worden 1997; Barrow 1996).

There are many threats to the region's biodiversity. A powerful threat is the requirement to satisfy the growing needs of rural communities, communities that are themselves growing at over 3.5% per annum, and the management of this rapid growth represents one of the most important challenges East Africa faces. This striving for food security is coming at a high risk. Biodiversity is being lost, and environmental resilience reduced. The effects of the dry and drought times have been exacerbated by such increased risk and reduced resilience. It is in this nexus of competing demands, and the requirement to balance the achievement of regional food security and the conservation of biodiversity and functioning ecosystems that community conservation seeks to play a significant role, both in terms of actively contributing to rural livelihood needs as well as contributing to conservation objectives. Such involvement needs to include land use and national economic planning, so as to balance the agro-ecological potential with conservation and biodiversity and livelihood objectives, and the need to regulate the level of extraction of natural resources. Wildlife cannot simply continue to be conserved for its own sake, and the biggest challenge lies in finding ways to accommodate both, while providing economic and non-economic values to the nation as well as people who live with wildlife.

## **2. Community Conservation Issues in East Africa**

Community conservation as a practice embodying protected area outreach, collaborative management and community based conservation, is a relatively "new" phenomenon in East Africa (See Barrow and Murphree 1999 for a detailed discussion on a practical framework for community conservation). New in the sense that it is only now being embodied by conservation authorities, NGO's and others as the long term method to involve local people in taking more responsibility for their natural resources on a sustainable basis. However community conservation is old in terms of societies in East Africa historically living, to a greater or lesser degree, in harmony with their natural resources, when population pressures were low. Since the onset of the colonial era this has changed with a more preservationist and law enforcement approach to conservation. It is only over the past ten years that there has been a concerted institutional effort to redress this imbalance. Before that the community conservation efforts, visionary and important though they were, lacked continuity and institutional commitment (Barrow 1996).

### **2.1. History and Institutions**

The lack of a clear understanding of local and customary knowledge on the management of resources and the range of local rules and regulations governing use by colonial authorities and newly independent governments set the stage for the introduction of new sets of rules. Many customary arrangements were not visible or were poorly understood by western technicians who replaced local leaders implementing traditional systems. This formed the basis for the governments of the time to alienate lands by gazetting forests, national parks and reserves, and centralizing their management and control, and inevitably, their benefits.

The first comprehensive legislation concerning wildlife in Uganda was the 1899 Game Regulations No 20 which established the first Game Reserves and specified licensing procedures for hunting. These included a 'native's license' authorizing the indigenous population to hunt (Kamugisha 1993) pp29). But the separation between conservation and human use was as marked in Uganda as elsewhere. The story is similar in Kenya and Tanzania where, as early as the 1950s protected area authorities in Kenya were confronted with problems of conflict between people and wildlife, and many of the early developments of community conservation took place in relation to the Amboseli ecosystem (Western and Thresher 1973; Western 1982; Berger 1988; 1993). Although these initiatives resulted in a change of the wildlife policy in 1975 (Western and Wright 1994), their impact remained localised and was short lived, and

depended on the attitudes and personalities of individual wardens. The involvement of local people as benefactors in conservation was not articulated in policy documents.

Tanzania is distinguished from Kenya and Uganda by a broader range of categories of protected estate with different management emphases, and does provide for sport hunting and some local consumptive use of resources. A network of forest reserves provides for similar management objectives with an emphasis on forest products and water catchment. In 1959, the Ngorongoro conservation area was excised from the Serengeti national park to become an early experiment in multiple land use combining wildlife conservation and pastoralism. A recent review of the wildlife sector in Tanzania analyzed the roles of no less than eight organizations (Wildlife Sector Review Task Force 1995). More recently an additional, Marine National Parks and Reserves has been designated under the authority of the fisheries department (Tanzania United Republic of 1994). As various government owned lands and assets are privatized, decisions with a major impact on wildlife and natural resources are also being taken by the parastatal sector reform commission and the investment promotion centre.

In Uganda, various types of conservation area are provided for under the recently promulgated Wildlife Statute of 1996, and the Forest Act of 1964 (Uganda Republic of 1996). The Wildlife Statute specifies two forms of protected area, National Parks and Wildlife Reserves, and two forms of conservation area, Animal Sanctuaries and Community Management Areas. The Forest Act specifies three categories of gazetted forests, Central Forest Reserves which are managed by the Forest Department, Local Forest Reserves which are managed by local government with advice from the Forest Department, and Village Forests which are managed by local authorities for the benefit of local communities.

In Kenya the wildlife statute specifies four forms of protected area - National Parks and Reserves and local game reserves and sanctuaries. The National Parks are managed and controlled by Kenya Wildlife Service and the National Reserves by and the relevant local authorities. The focus of forest policy in Kenya was on catchment protection and the management of natural forests; sustainable use of trees from natural forests, and the development of a forest industry. Though many of the catchment functions have largely been successful, there have been significant problems in Kenya's forest conservation estate, in particular to the loss of higher value more productive natural forest (IUCN 1996; Kenya Government of 1968). This has been caused by over exploitation and degazettment, and a lack of adequate forest planting, and in some cases driven by land grabbing, well documented in the press.

The complexity of environmental issues demands comprehensive and coordinated environmental management policy and legislation. Such coordination has not been adequate and the various environmental issues are divided into different vertically defined government bodies, which show little horizontal integration. This creates uncertainty, confusion, and conflict. It is yet to be determined whether the current focus on decentralization and localization of development and service provision will improve the situation. Governments have recognized that they cannot do everything on their own. As a result they are starting to decentralize responsibility for the management of natural resources. Though certain and significant exceptions, notably the retention of central control over national parks, wildlife reserves and many forest reserves, local government responsibility for natural resource management is increasingly becoming an important feature of government policy.

While this localization and decentralization is positive, the environment is still a low priority to most local authorities and districts. The link between the environment and the well being of rural people is still not clear, as it is not directly related to rural livelihoods. Short-term perspectives have led to potentially unwise decisions on the use of natural resources. Tanzania and Uganda have a national environment policy and legislation, while Kenya's has recently been published. This will assist in the formulation of policy and legislation to create an enabling environment for increased community responsibility for resource management and prevent local governments from creating by-laws that contradict national law.

## **2.2. Policy**

The losses of wildlife and forest cover in the region present a pessimistic perspective for the future of conservation in the region, but this has to be analyzed in the context of the policy and political climates at the time, where conservation alienated rural people from their natural resources. This destroyed local level responsibility established through customary arrangements for ownership and use, placing them in

the hands of distant national governments. Local rights were removed, and with the rights, local responsibility to conserve declined. With reducing government budgets for conservation combined with increasing populations demanding more land for cultivation, it is no wonder that severe losses have occurred. It is also, perhaps, explains why community conservation has come to the fore in efforts to stem the loss of biodiversity.

In Uganda the importance of both involving local communities and of working to ensure that conservation contributes towards rural livelihood economies is stressed. A clause inserted into the 1996 Wildlife Statute by parliament itself during the debating of the bill requires, by law, that UWA shares 20% of its entry fees with local government for use in the development of communities living around the protected areas. Though the wisdom of including a fixed percentage in the legislation may be debated, it underlines the strong populist emphasis of the policy and legislation. The inclusion of the principle of use rights within the legislation is a significant step away from the proprietary stance of earlier legislation which made legal access to wildlife resources by the majority of the people of Uganda almost impossible. The combination of the use rights clauses and the new category of Community Management Areas creates the potential for a wildlife industry in Uganda, under the control of private landowners or community groups, based on both consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife. The intention of the legislation is clear, however progress in its implementation is slow. In recent years, the Forestry Department has also begun processes to examine the use of community conservation in forest management.

A Bill to amend the 1977 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act to establish the Kenya Wildlife Service was passed in 1989 (Kenya Republic of 1989). The functions of KWS relating to community conservation included providing wildlife conservation education and extension services to create public awareness and support for wildlife policies; sustaining wildlife to meet conservation and management goals; providing advice to the government, local authorities and landowners on the best methods of wildlife conservation and management; and rendering services to the farming and ranching communities (Kenya Republic of 1989). Strategies to achieve its community conservation objectives include enabling local people to benefit from wildlife; minimising conflicts between conservation and legitimate human settlement; educating people about Kenya's wildlife; promoting better land use; and increasing co-operation with other sectors (KWS 1990b). This explicit statement of support for, and commitment to community conservation in both the Wildlife Act and the policy is key, and it lays the foundation for integrating practise with policy.

There has been the recognition that forestry can no longer be left entirely to the Forest Department, and that other partners must participate in its development, including agriculture, environment, wildlife, water and energy. However unlike the Wildlife Policy, the Forest Policy does not articulate the extent of community participation. It states that it will enhance social and farm forestry, including diversification of farming systems by tree planting, to ensure improved water catchment management, higher land productivity and increased rural incomes, and to reduce pressure on indigenous forests. The policy states that the Department will concentrate on policy matters such as regulation and monitoring (Kenya Republic of 1996).

In 1998 the new Tanzania wildlife policy was approved, with a strong community conservation focus in its vision to "involve all stakeholder in wildlife conservation and sustainable use, as well as in fair and equitable sharing of benefits; promote sustainable use of wildlife resources; and contribute to poverty alleviation and improve the quality of live of the people of Tanzania" (Tanzania United Republic of 1998). The policy continues to recognize and support tourist and resident hunting, as well as wildlife ranching and farming. More importantly it actively recognizes Wildlife Management Areas or WMAs as a means "to promote the conservation of wildlife and its habitats outside conservation areas, and to transfer the management of WMAs to local communities, and ensure that the local communities obtain tangible benefits from wildlife conservation" (Tanzania United Republic of 1998).

TANAPA has evolved a strong community conservation capacity, which is now well institutionalized both at Headquarter and at Park levels (see TANAPA 1994; Bergin 1995; Bergin and Dembe 1995). Community Conservation Wardens (CCW's) operate in all twelve parks, implementing extension and

benefit sharing activities based on national and park based strategic plans. The programme is supported by national TANAPA policy, and budgetary mechanisms (see Bergin 1996; Bergin 1998).

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) is supposed to be a multiple land use area with Maasai pastoralists co-existing with, and benefiting from the wildlife in, and around the crater area, and has been extensively documented (Parkipuny 1989; Homewood and Rodgers 1991; Berger 1993; Parkipuny and Berger 1993). However the NCA has had a mixed reputation for the extent of its community involvement and range of benefits which accrue to the local communities (Perkin and Mshanga 1992). The NCAA has recently published a new general management plan for the area (Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority 1995). Despite criticism (Lane 1996; Taylor and Johannson 1996), the General Management Plan has been a more participatory process than any preceding it (Bensted-Smith and Leaver 1996). While not perfect in terms of the extent and scale of local consultation, the General Management plan provides for developing greater participation of the Maasai. Of more concern than the plan itself is the NCAA's ability and commitment to implement its provisions, especially for community conservation.

Tanzania approved a new forestry policy (Tanzania United Republic of 1997), which changes the focus from one of more centralized government management and control to a more integrated approach which recognizes the rights and responsibilities of communities and rural people. Perhaps more than either Kenya or Uganda, Tanzania has gone furthest with respect to collaborative and joint management of forests "to enable participation of all stakeholders in forest management and conservation, joint management agreements, with appropriate use rights and benefits will be established. These agreements will be between relevant government authorities, at local or national levels, and organized local communities or other organizations of people living adjacent to the forest. Local communities will be encouraged to participate in forestry activities. Clearly defined forest land and tree tenure rights will be instituted for local communities, including both men and women" (Tanzania United Republic of 1997). This unequivocal support for community conservation is already starting to show benefits, and significant areas of forest land have been put under such collaborative management (see Wily 1995, 197b; Wily and Haule 1995; Nurse and Kabamba 1998).

The pervading policy message is one of active decentralization, increased community management and control over natural resources in a government climate of reducing budgets, and a global drive to more responsible community involvement.

### **2.3. Tenure**

Two of the most persistent themes of the last ten years in development, privatization and community empowerment, come into direct conflict with each other over the issue of land and how it should be held. The privatization lobby stresses the need for investors to be made secure and for wealth to be created by the state's letting go of land ownership, and allowing a market for private real estate to emerge. However privatization of the rangelands in East African would necessarily mean the fragmentation of community resources and a reduction in scale to the point where large game and ecosystems can no longer be viably managed. Pastoral lands are particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon.

Two sets of contrasting tenure rules—statutory and customary—co-exist in many areas. Conflict arises because in statutory law land is treated as a single unitary resource, while in customary law it is not. This quandary and confusion of the relative status of customary and statutory laws relating the land and resources tenure has lead to a number of African states to revise and formulate new land laws. At least nine sub-Saharan countries, including Uganda and Tanzania are in this process,

In both Tanzania and Uganda the prospective Land Bills have their origins in the shared goal of making land more readily available for investment, and as a stimulus to economic growth. Both consider that changes in the way land is owned and transfers regulated are necessary, and that the process of registering rights in land and issuing certificates of proof has a part to play. However they adopt different strategies to this (Wily 1997a). In Kenya the complexities of land tenure and the need for reform stem from wider questions of governance (Leach 1996).

The Land (Group Representatives) Act of Kenya under which “group ranches” have been formed tries to preserve some element of traditional and modern law by giving group title deeds on a co-operative basis to a communal area (Kenya Republic of 1969; Wanjala 1990). The focus is now to subdivide land under this Act into private title deeds, which often benefit the more powerful and wealthy. Conversely the state of the poorer people is further eroded. The conversion of customary rights of access into individual tenure, and the conferring of exclusive property rights of parcels of land has been a characteristic of modern tenure (Leach 1996).

Tanzania’s land law has been described as ‘a legal quagmire’ (Shivji 1994). Whereas many states are struggling with the need to reconcile traditional and modern tenure systems, Tanzania is, in addition, struggling with the consequences of the disruption of tenure caused by the 1970’s ‘villagisation’ process in which people were moved from homesteads to village centres to facilitate access to services. The new Tanzania Land Bill builds upon a strategy of land change for growth, which recognizes customary land rights as equivalent to more formal “European” based tenure regimes. Knowing that customary land is already bought and sold, Tanzania has formally declared such lands as tradable (Wily 1997a). There is also a strong commitment, through the imposition of constraints on land use for speculation, to equity and promoting growth in the small holder sector. Control over land registration is, wherever possible, at the community level. This represents a brave attempt to modernize traditional regimes, and enable communities and villages make decisions about tenure and land use (Wily 1997a; 1997c).

Although land use controls exist in the legislation in Uganda, these tend to be scattered through a number of different statutes and are under the control of several ministries. The constitution recognizes three forms of land tenure, customary, freehold and leasehold. Though positive in many respects, the constitution actually provides little guidance in the matter of land tenure. This continuing uncertainty has led to high levels of land disputes in Uganda and inhibits sustainable development. The new statute differs considerably from that of Tanzania, and assumes that customary tenure does not provide a basis for commoditisation on the grounds that customary rights do not represent private, or tradable property; and small holding is a less desirable target for investment than commercial farming (Wily 1997a). This promotes a programme which transforms landholding into “European” forms of ownership; weakens small and traditional rights, and in particular communal rights, further; and targets the investor over the small holder with minimal constraints upon land accumulation (Wily 1997a).

While it has been argued that only private, individualised land holdings can promote sustainable development, others state that communal land ownership and management is equally effective when closed access regulatory mechanisms are in place, it is clear that an environment of overall uncertainty over land tenure cannot promote development. Both investment and responsible stewardship are endangered when landholders and users are uncertain that they will be permitted to remain on the land, and stimulates a tendency to mine the resource. This makes the development of community based wildlife management systems more difficult.

Communities occupying lands without secure title, such as the trust lands of Kenya, are in a much more difficult position since land tenure is vested through the state. Although the tenure of these lands may be customarily recognised, it is vested with local authorities, not local communities. This makes successful community conservation difficult, and where there are conservation related enterprise projects, the benefits are more likely to accrue to the local authority than local people.

Changes in policies and practices affecting the management, and assumptions of the rights and responsibilities over natural resources by communities and local governments cannot be achieved in the absence of a re-examination of tenure issues. Secure tenure over land and natural resources, including wildlife and trees, or clear rights to their use is of crucial importance, if rural people are to manage their resources. As a result ownership, control of and access to land and resources is becoming the single most contentious issue in East Africa. The issues concerning tenure in East Africa are similar and include the role of the state in land ownership; the future of traditional forms of land ownership; the extent to which land regulation should be democratised; and the extent to which a market in land may be encouraged without unrecoverable social costs (Wily 1997a).

## **2.4. Governance**

While the role of government and governance has been evolving, bureaucracies are still based largely on colonial models, with command and control legacies. Recent moves on democracy and decentralization have started to change this, but the concepts have only been partly embedded in government. Governments are now being forced into more democratic and decentralized processes by re-trenchment and structural adjustment policies. This is an important leverage point for community conservation.

East Africa has seen rapid changes in population pressures, land use patterns, systems of governance and transparency since the 1960's, which have accelerated over the past 10 years, and has been characterized by burgeoning state bureaucracies in a climate of declining incomes precipitating a rapid increase in the levels and scale of corruption. Structural Adjustment Policies, retrenchment and decentralization have all focused on the necessity for devolving rights and responsibilities from the centre to the periphery. In all areas of government, including natural resource management, increased responsibility has been decentralized. Local councils and authorities are expected to be more responsible for the development of social infrastructure, payment of local officials, and the management of local resources. Unfortunately, though, the command and control, personal patronage systems, which invest traditional client – patron relationships with a new and often malign significance, and corruption are still a fact of daily life despite rhetoric to the contrary.

Depending on how conservation authorities work with political influences can dramatically affect the success of community conservation. Politicians are an important group hitherto not responsibly involved in conservation. Bringing conservation into the political limelight creates a wider and more transparent analysis of a nation's conservation estate and the distribution of conservation benefits. At a practical level, concentrating conservation benefits solely at the national level is no longer acceptable. Politicians need to see how conservation can be a viable land use creating local benefits.

## **2.5. Influencing forces**

Much of the early community conservation work was instigated, undertaken and implemented by NGO's, both local and international. These efforts were based on the premise that community conservation was good for communities and good for conservation, and based on the emerging fact that preservation and law enforcement alone were not solving conservation problems and issues. Pressures were put on conservation authorities to embrace this more enabling approach. Partnerships between conservation authorities and NGO's seemed to provide the right mix of conservation value, flexibility and community experience to allow this. As community conservation started to achieve some success, bilateral and multi-lateral donors started to fund activities.

Strong pressure from donors and international NGO's has been an important factor in the development of community conservation. These agencies have brought about change where they have been involved in projects that include support for resource access, development of community institutions, training of staff in community conservation skills, and community development activities around national parks.

USAID is one of the main donors for community conservation (USAID 1996; 1997). USAID funded the Tsavo Community Conservation Project from 1988 to 1994, before funding the Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas Project (COBRA) in Kenya from 1992 to 1998 (African Wildlife Foundation 1990; 1994; COBRA Contract Team 1994). A similar programme of support exists in Uganda through the Action Plan for the Environment (APE) Programme (1994-1998). A strategic objective for biodiversity and community management in Tanzania has also been approved and funded (USAID 1997).

The EU has been providing assistance to the conservation sector since 1983 in Uganda, and has more recently become involved with projects relating to community conservation in the region funding the Serengeti Tourism, Extension and Education project (IUCN 1986), a Tarangire Conservation Project to research community land use, and the Community Conservation Service Centre, (African Wildlife Foundation 1997). As part of the Protected Areas Wildlife Services (PAWS) programme with KWS the EU funded the elephant fencing programme which endeavoured to involve communities in the design and maintenance of electric fences. The EC funded Community Development Trust Fund in Kenya is starting to fund conservation related activities, including enterprise development. The World Bank helped broker

and coordinate the multi-donor Protected Areas Wildlife Services (PAWS) project of KWS from 1991 to the present, and is in the process of establishing a similar programme with UWA. In both Kenya and Uganda, while the development of KWS and UWA institutional and infrastructural capacity are the main objectives, community conservation, while not directly being funded by the World Bank, is seen as an important and integral component of this.

GTZ is implementing a programme in Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda, which includes an important community component. However GTZ is better known for its long term support to the Selous Game Reserve and the community conservation work around that reserve (Balduis 1991). The Selous conservation programme has supported the establishment of village WMA's which have provided local income, as well as meat in a tsetse infested area.

The Royal Netherlands Embassy has focused on district based rural development programmes, and conservation activities are being integrated into these programmes. In Uganda the Royal Netherlands Embassy has supported two important projects which involve community conservation - the Kibale-Semuliki Conservation and Development Project (KSCDP) since 1988, and the Uganda Wetlands Programme. KSCDP has a sister project in the Mt. Elgon Conservation and Development Project, funded by NORAD, and both have similar objectives of conservation area integrity, and linking conservation benefits directly to rural people, for example through collaborative management arrangements.

The British Overseas Development Administration ODA (now called DFID) has supported a range of activities in the region relating to community conservation, and has also supported land tenure reform in Uganda and Tanzania. Within the forestry sector DFID is best known for its support to the Kenya Indigenous Forestry Conservation Project (KIFCON, Wass 1995). Currently DFID is supporting institutional strengthening and capacity building activities with the Forest Department of Uganda where collaborative management is important. In Tanzania DFID supported the Ruaha Ecosystem Wildlife Management Project which had a strong and focused community conservation programme (Hartley 1995, 1997). In 1996 ODA sponsored the African Wildlife Policy Consultation which brought together many wildlife experts from the continent (Overseas Development Administration 1996).

The past ten years has seen a large increase in the number and size of donor funded projects relating to conservation, and more importantly ones which also relate directly to community conservation, both through official conservation authorities and with NGO's. The relatively large level of funding for community conservation activities has provided an important financial basis for community conservation in the region. This has complemented and supported existing smaller scale NGO funding for such activities. However there are serious questions of sustainability. Few initiatives have been maintained post project, and some projects have stopped before the end of the project.

Apart from global changes in conservation paradigms to ones which emphasize sustainable use, individuals have influenced policies, directions and paces of community conservation. The influence of key events and players is often underestimated, and rarely given the analysis deserved. Conservation in East Africa, as elsewhere, has attracted its own array of key players and "characters", as well as being informed and influenced by key events. Tanzania and Uganda has been influenced by what has gone on in Kenya. The KWS Director's twenty-five per cent revenue sharing promise in 1991 was heard in Tanzania and immediately taken up by local politicians near parks. It took TANAPA much expense and time to educate leaders about the Support for Community Initiated Projects (SCIP) programme which was already in place with much better links to conservation objectives and extension work.

At a park level in East Africa, there seems to be a direct correlation between the capacity and commitment of the community warden, and the development of the community conservation programmes in each park. This shows that leadership is essential. In TANAPA the commitment of a Community Conservation Co-ordinator who also has credibility with park wardens was essential to the acceptance of the Community Conservation Services. The Director General decided that the CCS was the right thing to do at the time, and expanded the program into parks in advance of the donor anticipation.

It is almost inevitable that external funding sources will continue to be required to fund community conservation in much of East Africa, but not necessarily from conventional donor sources. It is not a

coincidence that the theoretical development of community conservation has been largely spearheaded by international NGO's and agencies. The role of donors has been key in this respect, enabling risk to be taken by individuals. But donor funded projects may be over zealous in their promotion of community conservation, focusing on project outputs, rather than the longer term needs of local and national stakeholders. There is of some concern that the ownership of community conservation remains external to official national conservation agencies, many of which remain relatively traditional, and who may see community conservation as an idea imposed from outside, and one which attracts funding.

In Uganda, the adoption of a community focus has been a conditionality of donor support for the wildlife sector. Inevitably such projects have largely failed to increase general capacity within UWA, though they have made significant improvements on the ground in the relationships between parks and communities. Consistency of approach is critical, and this is only likely to come about if UWA clearly makes community conservation part of its programme, and provides an operational budget for it, both at Headquarters level and within the individual protected areas.

In Tanzania, though a range of NGO's and donors were involved, they were coordinated by the Community Conservation Coordinating Committee of TANAPA. While community conservation in Kenya had a larger national community conservation projects which operated in pilot areas. Many activities were implemented outside existing policies or even legal provisions, and though consistent at the protected area level were not necessarily consistent between protected areas. The wide range of experience created by the independence of action of field based projects has helped to inform and influence evolving community conservation policy and practice by providing examples of what has worked, and what has not, in relation to a wide variety of conditions. As the private sector increasingly acknowledges the importance of community conservation to their own activities, so more responsive private sector arrangements are evolving.

### **3. Criteria for Success and failure of activities**

Most community conservation activities in East Africa have evolved from protected area outreach, and primarily in relation to savannah national parks. Less attention was given to forest parks, wetland and marine systems. This is changing with the emergence of collaborative management arrangements. Although wetlands and marine areas are often important areas of biodiversity and resources for rural people, it is only recently that they have been brought into community conservation.

#### **3.1. Of Policy**

Government policies have encouraged decentralization, which has created an enabling framework, and a positive pressure for community conservation. Although, many of the parks and reserves are still under central management, authorities are seeking better local level integration, and encouraging partnerships with local communities. Lower level accountable administrative units are supposed to become more responsible for the management of natural resource within their jurisdiction, which assumes that natural resources are of direct value to the district and its people - an assumption not always true where wildlife benefits were externally accrued. It also provides, though it does not guarantee, opportunities for increased participation of communities in wildlife management. This changing emphasis is supported by the evolution of new wildlife statutes through provisions for issuing use rights to communities and individuals (Kenya and Uganda), the establishment of Wildlife Management Areas (Tanzania and Uganda), and the creation of conservancies, Wildlife Forums and Associations (Kenya).

The idea of collaborative management was incorporated into UWA's policy following the inclusion of forest reserves into UWA. The legislation, though stating that extraction of resources from national parks is illegal in general terms, provides a clause absolving UWA from "... compliance with the provisions of subsection (1) of section 23" (Uganda Government of 1996). This clause creates a framework for collaborative management of resources in conservation areas, but does not make it explicit. Section 24 (b) provides for "regulating and controlling harvesting in the wildlife protected area" (p. 67). Collaborative management (as defined in (Barrow and Murphree 1998)) is a relatively new "formal" phenomenon in East Africa. In neither the national parks of Kenya or Tanzania is any form of collaborative management arrangement allowed. Collaborative management arrangements are being tried in Uganda, but have yet to be integrated into formal UWA policy. The Forestry Departments in Uganda and Tanzania are initiating

collaborative forest management arrangements with communities at national and district levels. The potential exists in Kenya for the use of collaborative management agreements for improved natural forest management, and the 1994 draft forest policy, though not specific on collaborative management can allow for responsible community involvement.

The new Tanzania wildlife policy requires that communities have a land use and management plan that includes wildlife, and that they demonstrate capacity to manage it. Having met these conditions, the community is to be empowered to decide in what way or ways it wishes to utilize its wildlife including concessions for sport hunting, harvesting for direct use, building of camps or lodges, walking safaris etc.

Lessons from pilot practice in Kenya have helped inform and influence research and analysis, and helped find ways to reduce conflicts between people and wildlife through research on wildlife utilisation and user rights, land use and proprietorship and finally by developing a legal base that is consistent with beneficial wildlife use. An in-depth study on utilisation combining biological, technical, marketing and economic components has been undertaken in Kenya (Heath 1995; 1996). Together with the findings of the "Five-man Review Team (Kenya Wildlife Service 1994), land use and legal study, and the range of experience gained to date have created the framework for a revised Wildlife Act.

The Community Conservation Coordinating Committee or C4 was established by TANAPA in 1991 (see Bergin 1996; 1998), because TANAPA decided that it could not afford to send mixed messages and decisions to its neighbours. The main achievements of the C4 are two: the CCS emerged as a programme owned by TANAPA and only supported temporarily by outside agencies such that the CCS has carried on with activities despite the end of donor funding. Secondly TANAPA has a consistent and rationalised approach to its relationship with communities.

Park Management Advisory Committees (PMAC) in Uganda provided a useful institutional arrangement which allowed Park and community representatives to meet and discuss issues relating to conservation, and have been involved in the implementation of UWA's Revenue Sharing programme (Uganda National Parks 1994). But PMAC suffers from confused and contradictory 'ownership', as the concept of a committee to support community involvement in protected area management came from outside. The lack of formal links between PMAC and the Local Council system has placed it in an uncertain position. In response to these issues, UWA has proposed that the Production and Environment Committees of Local Government, both required by law, should take responsibility for the management and conservation of natural resources at the local level, and act as the link with UWA. Where particular issues arise due to the existence of a protected area, this committee should provide members with a mechanism to represent the interests of communities living around the protected area (Uganda National Parks 1994; UWA 1997).

It is clear that conservation authorities and land users are testing and trying out different institutional arrangements to foster the improved and responsible involvement of land users in conservation; create mechanisms for dialogue and devolution of authority; establish functional and representative structures. This is all with the aim of conservation and creating improved benefit flows to those living with, or affected by conservation. Lessons are being learnt and these institutional arrangements are continually evolving.

The region is poised for progress in community conservation. A number of significant policies are in place, which have been given added impetus and focus by declining government budgets, and structural adjustment policies forcing retrenchment. Community arrangements for the management of natural resources are now a necessity not a luxury. A general reluctance on behalf of most conservation authorities to fully implement community conservation policies, reflects continued concern over loss of power equated with loss of control, which is strengthened by vagueness in many policies, which allows wide interpretation.

Though community conservation has been promoted as a way to reduce government investment in conservation areas, it is by no means clear that this can be achieved. Certainly in the short term, it is clear that community conservation programmes are expensive and do not result in immediate returns. Investment in community conservation must compete for limited funds with other conservation management practices. Though TANAPA has successfully established budgets for their community

conservation programmes, KWS and UWA have found this difficult, especially in light of declining budgets. The tendency among bureaucrats to adopt low risk strategies and avoid innovation has meant that the development of community conservation programmes and practices has been largely donor funded. This perhaps was inevitable, given the nature of donor funded projects, but it means that conservation authorities must adapt these structures to the more modest financial resources available internally.

A gap still exists between evolving practise at the resource user level, and co-ordinated implementation of policy and law. Conservation authorities are practising forms of community conservation under different disguises, such as "trial", "at the discretion of the Director", which enable them to avoid commitment to the principles, but allows them to undertake some testing. TANAPA has come furthest by establishing institutional programmes for community conservation. Key to the acceptance of community conservation is whether it can be integrated into an institutions work ethic and practice. Failure to create real change in attitudes in institutions more familiar with protection and preservation has been a stumbling block, though this has often not been recognized or acknowledged. While evolving wildlife policies are vital, more decentralized and supportive policies in other sectors can give an added synergy, for example in forestry and with decentralization.

### **3.2. Of Ownership**

Successful community conservation requires community ownership of the process, and devolution of rights and responsibilities, and ultimately of the benefits of conservation. The process of interacting with communities to implement various forms of benefit and revenue sharing arrangements in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda has led to a stronger emphasis on community needs and aspirations (Bensted-Smith 1993; Barrow, Bergin et al. 1995; Bergin 1995; Makilya, Lembuya et al. 1996). Though these initiatives tend to be seen as supportive of conservation objectives, the change in emphasis is resulting in a gradual reappraisal of the role conservation plays in East Africa, demonstrated by the increasing pressures being placed on conservation authorities for community conservation.

Collaborative management arrangements are an attempt to redress the balance between negotiated rights of access and agreed to responsibilities for the conservation of the resources on which those rights are based. Forestry policy in the region is evolving, particularly in Uganda and Tanzania, to cater for these sorts of changes, and learn lessons from practice. It is also based on the recognition that the permit system has not effectively replaced the customary institutions which previously governed rights of access through responsible use, governed by locally based community sanction. Collaborative management and traditional community access to resources became an important issue in Uganda with the conversion of forest reserves into national parks. This led to a radical departure from national policy, allowing for consuptive use of resources and put Uganda at the most extreme edge of National Park management in Africa. Implementation of the policy has remained patchy, however, and has generally come into practice only where a donor funded project provided both the impetus, and technical and financial support.

Wetlands cover a significant area of East Africa, and particularly so in Uganda where 13% of the land surface is wetland. Wetlands are complex systems, which supply goods and services at local, district and national levels. Wetlands are interconnected, and changes in one part of a wetland may have deleterious effects down stream. This presents an especially complex set of challenges for community conservation. Uganda has evolved their wetlands programme the furthest and in the most coherent manner. The country has a well defined wetlands policy, and actively acknowledges the important role rural people and communities should play in wetland management (Uganda Government of 1994). Various forms of collaborative management are being tested, which integrates the complexity of the systems with community resource needs (Uganda Government of 1996).

Collaborative management provides a practical and low cost natural forest management approach for Tanzania, and goes beyond the sharing of forest products, to devolving authority for management to the villages concerned. In Lushotho this has been taken a step further where a collaborative management agreement is being negotiated between villages and the Forest Department, concerning an area of plantation forest (Wiley pers. comm., also see Hitchcock 1995a; Hitchcock and Shauri 1995b)). The Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development programme in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania have established draft collaborative management agreements

for coastal fisheries and mangrove forest management. To date in excess of 425,00 Ha. in Tanzania are under some form of collaborative management or community based forest management arrangement (Wily 1999). Currently within Kenya there are no collaborative type management arrangements of the nature evolving in Uganda or in Tanzania. Recognising that a number of Kenya's indigenous forests are very important in terms of biodiversity and have the capability to accrue significant visitor based income, KWS and the Forestry Department have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for the joint management of these important resources (Kenya Wildlife Service and Forestry Department 1991). This is not a community conservation MOU *per se*, but represents a step in acknowledging the importance of these forests in terms of biodiversity conservation and meeting rural people's needs.

Community based conservation is still in its infancy in East Africa, though significant initiatives have started over the past few years. In the broadest sense community based conservation includes natural resource or biodiversity conservation by, for, and with the local community. Advocacy of community-based conservation is driven by several perceptions: the importance of areas outside direct state control for biodiversity conservation; the impotence of the state agencies to manage conservation areas; the potential for cost-effective local management, using informal social pressure and sanction, and drawing on detailed local knowledge of ecological dynamics; and local communities enhanced motivation to conserve natural resources when conservation is of direct economic benefit to them. With recent changes in conservation law and policy in Uganda and Tanzania (Uganda Republic of 1993; Uganda Republic of 1996), this potential can start to be realized. Inclusion of provisions for granting use rights, and the establishment of Community Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Uganda and Tanzania, as a category of conservation area creates both the climate and the legal structures for community based conservation.

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), established 35 years ago has been Africa's pioneering experiment in combining community development and wildlife conservation, and its history has been well documented (Homewood and Rodgers 1991; Kijazi 1995; Thompson 1997). The NCA has achieved much during this time, and helped pave the way, at least conceptually, for many of the other community conservation initiatives. Now, though resident Maasai people and wildlife have continued to coexist in the NCA, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) is facing increasing difficulties in reconciling conservation and development, particularly as human populations continue to grow and demand more development inputs (Bensted-Smith and Leaver 1996; Lane 1996; Taylor and Johansson 1996). Many of the challenges relate to land use conflicts and benefit accrual streams.

The recent General Management Plan was created with, for the first time, a significant active community participation (Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority 1995; Bensted-Smith and Leaver 1996), which was well organized, and most community members were satisfied with the levels of participation, though some stated that the review stage was too hurried (Bensted-Smith and Leaver 1996). Many residents openly stated that this was the first time that the NCAA had actively sought the views of the local people concerning the future management of the NCA. It is vital that the participatory process started in the General Management Plan is fostered, otherwise loss of trust and further conflict may result

In East Africa both traditional and modern community institutions have been weakened by high levels of political, social, and economic uncertainty, and by high levels of population movement. Many communities are now highly diverse, often divided, and unable to cooperate internally. Community conservation programmes have worked hard to support the development of stable institutions, often however without great success. Some projects have been able to find stable and effective traditional community institutions functioning, and have been able to incorporate them into their programmes. The strength of community institutions and their ability to exert control over individuals is a critical requirement. A general problem for many of community based institutions is the lack of management and business skills. Insufficient funding has made them dependent on donors. The large areas some of these institutions cover and the lack of real understanding of, or interest in these institutions by their membership is also a serious problem for management. The role conservation authorities, NGO's, donors and projects who may have pushed forward the establishment of community institutions at the cost of understanding and ownership of the process by the institutions may also have weakened them.

### **3.3. Of Value**

Economic improvement is both morally imperative and essential for environmental sustainability. Previously economic growth and environmental protection were carried out in isolation from each other and from the local level, often resulted in accelerated degradation. 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. Benefits from tourism tend to accrue to commercial interests that dominate the industry at either national and/or international levels. Their activities may provide significant benefits to local resource users, but unless the benefits are equitably negotiated, and dividends accrue in a mutually agreed transparent fashion, this is not a true partnership. There is clearly the potential for more responsible private sector-community arrangements.

Some important lessons from recent efforts to create sustainable enterprise development projects with such rural communities include that it takes a great deal of time to plan and implement such projects in a manner that is most likely to be sustainable, and the diversity of activities required to ensure success can also be large. Examples of such processes that have led to “successful”, though formative initiatives include the formation of Mwaluganje Community Game Reserve and Kimana Game Sanctuary in Kenya, the concession agreements and local level involvement of Dorobo Safaris with villages in the Simanjiro plains to the east of Tarangire National Park in Tanzania, and the evolution of conservancies in Kenya and Wildlife Management Areas in Tanzania (Leader-Williams, Kayera et al. 1995; Leader-Williams, Kayera et al. 1995; Robin Hurt Safaris 1995; Songea and Nyanchuwa 1995; Makilya, Lembuya et al. 1996; Tibenyenda 1996).

Though an economic analysis of the value of contributions made to communities by protected areas would almost certainly reveal that they are insignificant in economic terms, they are locally important in many other ways. Access to specific resources may have great social and cultural significance. Provision of access to bamboo shoots in Mount Elgon National Park to the local Bagisu people, for whom the bamboo plays a critical role in their ritual as well as their diet, is an example as “there is no substitute” for the ritual functions of bamboo (Scott 1994b pp. 112). The negotiation of access to water through Lake Mburu National Park for the livestock of certain communities living around the park has been of critical economic importance to these people, and the general understanding that the park forms the water resource of last resort during severe drought is also important (Namara and Infield 1998). Provision of access to valued plant resources in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park for use in both handicrafts and medicine has helped to support and strengthen traditional institutions as well as stimulating the development of new ones (Wild and Mutebi 1996).

The hunting industry in Tanzania is operated by national and international hunting companies, and carries out its operations in Wildlife Division controlled areas. Few benefits accrue back to the rural communities who live in such areas. The Wildlife Division shares 25% of certain types of revenue with District Councils, but this opportunity rarely benefits the rural people affected. The Cullman Wildlife Project and the Selous Conservation Project are efforts to foster an improved conservation ethic through sharing hunting benefits (Baldus 1991; Krishke, Lyamuya et al. 1995; Robin Hurt Safaris 1995).

KWS began by offering a 25% share of revenues from gate fees to communities neighbouring parks (Bensted-Smith 1992; 1993; KWS 1992; COBRA Contract Team 1994; African Wildlife Foundation 1995; Barrow, Bergin et al. 1995). Criteria for the revenue sharing included the importance of the dispersal area, wildlife damage, goodwill and commitment, Park revenue, size and needs, conservation value, and other urgent needs (KWS 1990a; 1990b; 1992; Bensted-Smith 1992; KWS 1992; African Wildlife Foundation 1995). It soon became clear that KWS could not deal with all the demands, and neither could it sustain this level of revenue sharing. There was also no clear linkage in the minds of local communities between the development projects with the well being of wildlife on their land. The revenue sharing programme evolved into the WDF (Wildlife for Development Fund) in 1993, as a mechanism to share benefits and encourage viable conservation related enterprise projects country wide in areas important for conservation (KWS 1993; 1994; 1997). This 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.

TANAPA's Support for Community Initiated Projects (SCIP) was initiated in 1992, with board approval in 1993, as part of TANAPA HQ, and Park strategic planning (Tanzania National Parks 1994). No fixed percentage of what types of revenue were stated, however this is now evolving to a percentage of total recurrent expenditure deemed sustainable. The SCIP programme works with communities bordering or close to National Parks, and stresses supporting **community initiated** projects. The approval mechanisms are at the Park level and there is increasing liaison with enterprise type tourist related projects that neighbour parks.

A number of ranches in Kenya, for instance around Laikipia, and some in Tanzania have tourism ventures, which create a bundle of economic choices for the landowner. In some cases conservation has become the main economic choice, for example Lewa Downs Ranch in Laikipia. Such conservation related economic activities are helping land users become more responsible.

While many of these activities and projects have yielded benefits, it is questionable as to whether real economic gain has been achieved. This relates to a more general failure of community conservation to really take economic factors into account, particularly with respect to the opportunity costs of community conservation to rural communities, and the need to provide greater incentives and direct benefits from wildlife to rural people.

## **4. Key Impacts of Community Conservation**

Early efforts were characterized by varying degrees of "trial and error"; the important roles of NGO's in the process; the recognition by protected area authorities of the need for real responsible community involvement; and a range of lessons from practice evolving. The pilot experiences set the scene for community conservation to be institutionalized and adapted for a wider spread both in scale and scope in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Since then community conservation has developed greatly, and much experience gathered. The key impacts are broadly discussed under the headings of sociology, economics and ecology.

### **4.1. Sociology**

While community based conservation activities have been the core of community conservation work in, for instance, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia (Mwenya 1990; Metcalfe 1994; Murphree 1995; Mwima 1995; Modise 1996; Jones 1997; Murombedzi 1997), this has not been the case in East Africa. This is due to a variety of reasons including:

- The heterogeneity of peoples and landscapes in East Africa;
- The complex arrays of conservation estates and biodiversity richness;
- Population pressures not normally found in Southern Africa;
- Policies which tend to favour more centralised government control of East Africa's biodiversity;
- Strong preservationist lobby and international interest; and the
- Dominance of migrating populations which are harder to manage in terms of community conservation.

Protected area outreach and, more recently, collaborative management arrangements have been the basis for community conservation in East Africa. But with the increasing focus on decentralisation and on creating local level conservation responsibility, community based conservation activities are now evolving quite rapidly.

Participatory approaches are used extensively based on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). However the depth of, adherence to, and belief in the different forms of PRA differ, and PRA tools have not been used as extensively, or in as participatory manner as they could be, as field staff still emphasize the use of the more traditional community meeting. There are examples of this changing though. At least five important areas need to be constantly thought of, including:

- Taking a regional view with a focus beyond the village;

- Continuity where success is an agent for enthusiasm;
- Importance of reaching under-represented groups;
- Importance of building on the traditional knowledge base; and
- Importance of explicit focus on rural institutions.

The example of the Ngorongoro illustrates the issues relating to participation where, no matter how desirable it is not possible or even practical to involve everyone, and is rarely, if ever, achieved in participatory rural development with its much longer history of working with participatory processes. But it is clear that the political, economic and social climates have had to embrace the real participation of rural people. Uganda illustrates the problems faced by a national organization with a national mandate and conservation estate trying to become more decentralized, and attempting to undertake processes to include communities in wildlife conservation. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is bordered by 52 parishes located in three districts. The difficult terrain, poorly serviced by roads, which become impassable during the rainy season makes it difficult to simply visit each parish during consultative processes.

As a result of these dilemmas of balancing resource use and participation with the real limitations of a conservation authority's human resources, other arrangements are being tried. These include creating alliances and partnerships with others, and the establishment of a range of representative groups. All these are aimed at providing community conservation inputs and services to more structured and representative groupings at a lower level.

The history of removal of communities from conservation areas is particularly long in Uganda. Eviction and resettlement have always caused problems and human suffering. They have been carried out for a range of purposes, conservation being one. The reasons for having to evict or resettle need to be clearly understood. Steps taken by government in recent years in Uganda to remove resident populations from conservation areas have met with varied success, both in terms of the degree to which government's aims were achieved (reducing human population in the protected area), and being able to reduce the degree to which communities were negatively affected. The range of issues which need to be addressed in such resettlement programmes include

- The tenurial rights of the people;
- Appropriate and equitable alternatives being available;
- Land of similar quality and proximity available;
- Understanding of the objectives for the reasons behind having to evict; and
- Fairness, equity and responsible political process

Stability is important for successful community conservation, both within communities, and in implementing institutions. At the community level, instability is a poor environment for successful community conservation, where security and personnel safety are more critical. Stability can, however, favour conservatism and maintenance of the *status quo*, thus making the introduction of new ideas such as community conservation more difficult. In Uganda, for example, the relative instability of the national organization has made it relatively easy for community conservation ideas to become incorporated into the organization. But this very instability may predispose community conservation to failure, or impose it to tensions, or even be damaging, through raised expectations which cannot be met.

Community conservation practises and policies continue to evolve, and experience from practice provides important lessons for its continued development. However, changing attitudes, both of rural people and conservation authorities takes time. Results are not quickly visible, nor easily quantifiable. Various forms of partnership are crucial to the long term success of community conservation. To re-enforce this, community conservation needs to be tied to strong institutional and policy support. Policies and procedures for the provision of benefits, resources, training and human resource development are all important for encouraging the establishment of community structures which will persist, will build positive relationships with conservation area authorities

For local communities to undertake responsibility for resource management, responsible local and national leadership is required, and not simply based on power. Leadership must exist within the conservation authority, who need to devolve authority, and share it with others. It must also exist within communities to ensure that they are able to undertake these responsibilities. At a local level where customary institutions are still strong, responsible leadership can still be found.

Based on practical experience the different conservation authorities in East Africa have evolved institutional mechanisms for working with rural people and communities, which include some or all of the following components:

- Some form of community conservation service and coordinating mechanism;
- Staff for community work come from conservation institution or recruited externally;
- Training programmes to re-orient and train staff to work with rural people and communities;
- Various institutional arrangements to ensure that norms and procedures are in place and approved;
- Having resources committed for community conservation;
- Working with different local level institutions and recognizing the importance of operating within local and national political environments;
- Creating institutions which specifically address conservation issues to better and more actively integrate different groups of stakeholders.
- Range of benefit sharing mechanisms resulting in benefit sharing policies, and including realising the importance of private sector involvement; and
- The need for improved understanding of land tenure and land use issues, together with regional collaboration, especially in areas of shared ecosystems.

Park outreach has sometimes been portrayed on a continuum of community conservation as second best or as a poor excuse for true community participation. It is important to note, however, that protected area outreach has the different and limited function of providing a **linking mechanism** between two different management regimes, usually conservation area management inside and community management outside. It is not in itself a system of management, but can contribute to conservation objectives, as well as support community objectives.

The Collaborative Management Task Force in Uganda has assisted in a process to support not just collaborative management in its strictest sense, but UWA's wider community conservation program. The consultative process should support the formation of a national community conservation strategy capable of being flexible, responsive to changing community needs and perspectives, and based on adaptive management principles. Given the pressures on, and the level of resources for Governments and Forest Departments, collaborative management represents a logical mechanism for improved and sustained natural forest management. Each country is making tentative practical and policy steps to realise this, though each is weary of the loss of control implied through such devolution of rights and responsibilities to rural peoples.

Community based conservation shifts the locus from conservation to livelihoods. Where conservation benefits are significant, conservation objectives will become rural land use objectives. Where they are small or insignificant conservation value is likely to be lost. Community conservation should enable landowners to derive economic benefits from conservation and contribute to rural livelihoods. Though conservation objectives will be a secondary concern, the potential influence that use rights could have on land use is of great interest to conservation. Creation of tangible and dominantly economic values will support conservation on private or communal land, in the absence of which, these valuable natural resources may disappear.

#### **4.2. Economics**

Benefits which accrue from conservation areas are not all obvious nor are they divided among people in a manner proportional to the "costs" to local people living near or in a conservation area. The costs of wildlife conservation are better understood than the benefits. The problem of wildlife costs and benefits is not one of productivity but of equitable distribution (Barrow, Bergin et al. 1995).

The process of negotiating what type of benefits to share, with whom, over what duration and for what purpose is long, and fundamental to community conservation. The possibility for success is increased if the activity addresses community needs, and represents an approach around which a community has formed a consensus; benefits community members in an open, easily understood and straightforward manner; is one in which the maximum number of members of a community or group benefit and see themselves as benefiting; and, stands the greatest chance for long-term sustainability. An agreed framework needs to be established to satisfy all the varying stakeholders, which has policy support, and be practically oriented. Policy guidelines have been instituted for the sharing of benefits in East Africa, namely the Wildlife Development Fund - Revenue Sharing (WDF-RS) in KWS and Support for Community Initiated Projects in TANAPA (SCIP), and Revenue Sharing in Uganda (KWS 1993; Uganda National Parks 1994; Bergin and Dembe 1995)

These forms of benefit sharing have been variously seen as handouts, buying good will or responsibly sharing some of the protected area benefits with surrounding communities and others. These schemes have shown the efficacy of working with rural land users and communities, that rural people do care about conservation - as long as benefits are accrued. This has helped set the scene for income generation, collaborative management and community based conservation, where conservation becomes part of economic land use, with its investments and recurrent cost needs combined with equity in dividend and benefit accrual. Some of this work has been analysed (See Emerton 1998; 1998), and is becoming an increasingly important component of community conservation.

This argues for improved and increased incentive structures and financial mechanisms for community conservation. While Government has been the main player in the past, increasingly community conservation should be driven by community needs. It is clear that the economic benefits of community conservation need to be seen in the context of wider economic conditions, particularly relating to poverty and agricultural policies, as many such policies still have perverse incentives for community conservation. Paradoxically, the "feel good" attitude of much community conservation also contributes to these perverse incentives.

### **4.3. Ecology**

Showing that community conservation has a positive impact on biodiversity is key to long term success. Changes in conservation status and biodiversity maybe influenced by many factors -some local, for example due to community conservation; others national, for example due to changing land use policy, natural forests degazetted; while others are of a global nature, for example due to global warming, and more recently the effects of the El Nino phenomenon. It is difficult to make direct cause and effect analyses as a result of community conservation initiatives. However attempting this analysis is crucial for the long-term success of community conservation as a conservation and rural development tool. Most initiatives established to develop community conservation did not implement adequate monitoring programmes to look at the ecological or biological impacts. Even defining these impacts, together with functional measurable indicators was found to be difficult.

One of the key indicators of conservation impact of community conservation programmes is the extent to which they either mitigate conflicts in land use between parks and surrounding areas, or actively establish compatible land management regimes on contiguous lands. The CCS of TANAPA has had some impact on the former in Tanzania, whereas the establishment of WMAs and conservancies attempt the latter.

The community conservation work pioneered in Amboseli in the early 1970's ensured that the seed for community involvement had been planted and the potential to benefit economically from wildlife had been demonstrated. Through this period and into the nineties a range of activities that attempted to link benefits to conservation have been undertaken, and have been discussed (Berger 1977; 1988; 1993; Barrow, Kangwana et al. 1995). The impact of these has been reflected in the relative stability of wildlife populations in Kajiado district even during periods when there were severe declines elsewhere. The total number of wildlife in the Kajiado district in 1977 was 175,260. In 1994 the number was 148,770, a 15% decline in the area over a period of almost 20 years (Grunblatt, Said et al. 1995; Rainy and Worden 1997). This was a relatively small decline compared to the other rangeland district of Kenya where losses of 40%-80% have been recorded. In Laikipia district wild herbivore densities increased in ranches where there has been direct involvement and benefits from wildlife.

The relationship between development and conservation is difficult. There are growing demands that conservation of wildlife must pay for itself. Some suggest that conservation is actually immoral unless it contributes directly to human welfare, and others believe that conservation will fail unless it responds to the needs of local communities. There is a wide recognition that there is actually a dilemma. Conservationists have recognized the value of a variety of techniques and approaches to the conflicts between conservation and development and have begun working with them to improve the effectiveness of conservation initiatives. Although these tools may bring benefits to local communities, this is seen as a by-product to the intention of improving the conservation status of areas of conservation importance. It is thus important for conservationists to be able to measure whether the investments being made in community conservation are worth while.

Without carefully designed programmes to monitor biodiversity it will remain difficult to measure the impact of community conservation empirically, and it will be necessary to rely on more subjective measures of its success, together with anecdotal indicators. It should be noted, however, that the political and institutional success of community conservation will make it difficult to retreat from this approach to conservation.

## **5. Conservation and People to the New Millenium in East Africa**

The East African experience of community conservation has been largely developed through the establishment of a variety of programmes focused on conservation areas. The impact of outreach has been uneven, and many difficult conflict issues remain. Research has indicated that the effort made by the park authorities to work with communities and to provide support to their development projects has had a positive impact on community attitudes towards the park and conservation. From the protected area outreach focus, arrangements for collaborative management and community based conservation have evolved in recognition that community conservation is more than outreach, but has to relate to livelihoods and sustainable use.

These fundamental shifts in attitude have put conservation to the forefront of the political limelight. This shift from hostility to friendliness and partnership has created opportunities for other community conservation arrangements with communities, thereby increasing potential benefit flows and contributions to rural livelihoods. It also argues strongly for the increased integration of conservation into land use planning, where conservation should be able to compete with other forms of land use on an equal basis.

Despite the good intentions of institutions concerned with community conservation, it is unclear whether there has been any real handing over of ownership and responsibility for natural resources and their management to local communities. The reasons for this are complex. Government authorities, both conservation and at district levels, may remain unconvinced of the desirability of allowing true partnerships with communities. Despite this commitment to community conservation, however, there are real obstacles to the sound management of natural resources. The continuing weakness of government institutions, hampered by low wages and corruption is an important factor, and this is exacerbated by structural adjustment. The lack of land use planning and ongoing uncertainty over land tenure is also important. Conservation and forestry authorities can contribute significantly to improved national land use by showing that conservation can and should be a valid economic option, among other land use options, in helping determine appropriate and sustainable land use.

The capacity of communities to accept the role that community conservation programmes and donor projects would have them play is also a constraint. In several areas, community institutions are strong enough to take responsibility. In other areas they are not. It is clear that an essential activity is strengthening community institutions, and this can probably be best achieved by working outside the conservation authorities, so they can manage responsibilities for natural resources, and can place sufficient pressure on the authorities to be granted responsibility in the first place. Various forms of partnership are crucial to the long term success.

The notion of community management of natural resources, both within and outside protected areas, presupposes true commitment of community institutions towards the sustainable management of the natural resources and the conservation of the protected areas. It also presupposes the genuine commitment of the management authorities to share responsibility and management control. It is not clear to what extent these conditions have yet been met, either individually or together. Both are integral to long term success. Significant strides have been made towards establishing these preconditions. Until they are achieved, community conservation will remain an uneasy but productive compromise between the demands of communities, the reservations of management authorities, and the interventions of external agents.

Community conservation needs to be set in an appropriate and acceptable policy environment. The degree to which community conservation has been integrated into the policy and practice of conservation authorities is one important gauge of its sustainability. Community conservation practises and policies continue to evolve, and experience from practice provides important lessons for its continued development. The emphasis on community participation is clear and strong, and even if much of the emphasis remains on paper, it creates opportunities for the future. Constraints to the full implementation of policies are equally clear. As such community conservation is an aspiration which has provided useful experience, but the policy rhetoric has gone far beyond contemporary practice.

In East Africa the stage is set for collaborative management and community based conservation to be used more widely. Protected area outreach has evolved to nearly all protected areas in the region, and has demonstrated the efficacy of community conservation as well as creating a range of conservation and livelihood benefits. Conservation authorities are making this change in emphasis at different speeds and in different ways. However this process is hampered by a lack of integration of collaborative management and community based conservation into land use planning and in particular with the agricultural sector. This is a major evolving policy area. Because of East Africa's complex and diverse array of ecosystems, people and land uses, there are significant and real opportunities for community conservation to increasingly contribute to both livelihood and conservation objectives. World demand for decentralization, for sensitive and ecologically friendly tourism further supports community based initiatives. Conservation as embodied in the notion of sustainable use by the Convention of Biological Diversity and other instruments ties rural land use and conservation directly and has created the space for collaborative management agreements.

The review has shown the importance of demonstrating to communities that there is willingness amongst conservation area authorities to change their ways of perceiving and interacting with them. Though the economic value of the resources shared with communities remains small, the number of jobs created, few, and the degree of genuine partnership, low, the programmes have begun to slowly alter the nature of the relationship between communities and conservation authorities. It is unsure, however, whether these fragile advances can be maintained in the face of increasing pressures for development from growing human populations, and whether the level of commitment to the policies and programmes will be maintained in the face of budgetary constraints and increasing pressure on resources from communities.

Uganda is facing up to a problem which will overtake other countries in Africa before too long, namely of how to find room for wildlife and their wild spaces in a land of more people - more people not just expanding in numbers but with expanding expectations for a more secure and comfortable livelihood which satisfies their needs. It is likely that population and land use pressures will have a greater influence than any other single factor on the success, or not of community conservation, due to the shifting balance of conservation and livelihood objectives in a situation where the conservation resource is finite. This augurs for conservation finding a distinct and important niche, particularly external to protected areas, for rural livelihoods and land use in the future, for example to meet contingencies, to mitigate risk and improve resilience, to provide goods and services that other forms of land use cannot. Ultimately conservation of natural resources on rural landscapes has to have a comparative advantage over other forms of use, while protected areas must have sufficient local, national and international support to enable them to persist.

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