

THEME 6-1: PASTORALISM, SOCIAL, GENDER AND POLICY ISSUES--ORAL SESSIONS

Perceptions on Governance for Effective Adaptation to Climate Change within Community-Based Wildlife Conservancies in Kenya

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Description

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Perceptions on governance for effective adaptation to climate change within community-based wildlife conservancies in Kenya

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Key words: [Access to pasture and water; livestock mobility; wildlife conservation]

Community-based wildlife conservancies (CBC) represent a broad spectrum of new management arrangements and benefit sharing partnerships in natural resource management by none state agents, but who, by virtue of their collective location and activities, are critically placed to shape the present and future status of these resources. This approach of wildlife management is increasingly gaining popularity as an option for achieving sustainable co-existence and complementarity between wildlife conservation and livestock production in the drylands of Kenya. Despite difference in ownership and governance structure in place, all conservancies have instituted new rules of control and access. This study sought to understand whether the governance system promoted inclusivity among the various social groups and secondly whether or not the model promotes enhancement of household resilience. Quantitative and Qualitative data based on household surveys, focus groups discussions and Key informants' interviews were collected in two counties of Samburu and Isiolo and subjected to Q1Macros for descriptive analysis. The CBCs are governed by a board, supported by sub-committees. The board provide leadership and oversight and ensures transparency, adherence to the law, and equitable representation and sharing of revenue. Women representation in the boards recommended, and almost compulsory in Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT) supported conservancies. Broadly, household's social amenities as health facilities, bursaries for school going children, and access to credits have improved under CBC. Movement of livestock between conservancies in search of pastures and water during drought is managed through grazing committees but is not effective during times of prolonged droughts. Traditional system based on the value of reciprocity, is eroding with the creation of new forms of resource management where others may be excluded. Simmering mistrust amongst neighbouring pastoral communities is not in common. Reciprocity for water and pastures within and between communities and within neighbouring Counties must be factored in CBC implementation plan.

1.0. Introduction

Community Conservation (CC) or Indigenous Community Conservation Areas (ICCAs) or Community based Conservancies (CBC) represent a broad spectrum of new management arrangements and benefit sharing partnerships for the involvement in natural resource management of people who are not agents of the state, but who, by virtue of their collective location and activities, are critically placed to shape the present and future status of these resources, so as to enhance their conservation and the well-being of local communities (Barrow and Murphree, 1998). Conservancies are defined by World Parks Congress as private protected areas (Goriup 2005). The CBC model is a counter-narrative that promises to reconcile conservation and development objectives, and ensure the interests of the local people are taken into account. It is based on three pillars; benefit, empowerment, and conservation (Barrow and Murphree 2000; Murphree 2009; Dressler *et al.* 2010). As a natural resource management approach that allows communities to manage and benefits from wildlife resources it has been a subject for research in the last two decades. Earlier studies focused on principles and practice behind approach and policy (DeGeorges and Reilly 2009; Barrow et al 2000; Barrow and Murphree 2001) however in the recent past perhaps due to existence of a number of CBC for more than a decade, focused have shifted to design and implementation (Keane et al 2016; Kicheleri et al 2019), evaluating effectiveness to deliver conservation and development objectives (Mariki, 2019; Measham and Lumbasi, 2013; Glew et al 2010), as well as social and ecological impacts (Oduor, 2020; Mureithi et al 2019; Pas 2018). The extent to which these twin objectives have been realized is a subject of debate. There are mixed reports with some success stories (Mureithi et al., 2019; KWCA, 2016) as well as failures (Mariki, 2019; Simasiku et al 2008) on attainment of intended objectives.

What is clear however is that the popularity of CBC continues to grow in the Africa region especially in Kenya. As at 2016, there were 160 conservancies in Kenya, 76 of which were Community Conservancies and 26 were Group Conservancies, others were private Conservancies. Cumulatively they were managing land of about 6.4 Million ha (approx. 11% of total Kenya's landmass) spread across 28 counties and new entries are expected (KWCA, 2019). It has been observed that establishment of CBC has been accompanied by rules and regulations that have

compromised resilient pastoral livelihood strategies such as livestock mobility (Pas, 2018; Bedelian and Ogotu 2017). Despite increasing popularity of the system, there is paucity of knowledge on the how accompanying changes in governance in view of climate change affect the intended outcomes. This study therefore sought to investigate whether the CBC governance system promote inclusivity among various social groups and secondly whether or not the CBC promotes enhancement of community resilience through effective adaptation to climate change.

1.1 Governance

Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's/community's ecological, social and economic resources for development (ADK, 2005). Whereas linkages between the functioning of governance and notable improvement in people's lives may not be obvious, both practitioners and academics agree that many determinants of household's ability to cope with stress, seize opportunities and invest in their future are intimately linked to governance outcomes (USAID, 2014). Good governance has been fronted as being participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows rule of law (UNESCAP, 2009). These attributes form the basis for the study.

1.2. Adaptation and resilience building

Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts or changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change (UNFCCC website). Climate change affects ecosystems and social systems in unpredictable ways and therefore it is best tackled in multi-disciplinary ways through different knowledge systems with participatory practices that enable learning (USAID, 2014).

2.0 Methods and Study Site

We did a review of literature from across Africa combined with a case study in two CBC in northern Kenya. We searched for published and grey literature on subjects as community-based conservation, community based natural resource management, Indigenous community and conservation, community-based conservancies, and community wildlife conservancies using google search engine, Web of science and springelink.

In addition, we collected both qualitative and quantitative data primary data. We used open ended questionnaire, participant's observations and focus group discussions (FGD) to collect qualitative data, while household surveys and Key Informants Interviews was used to gather quantitative data. Stratified random sampling was adopted to select informants. Sampling was stratified by villages and randomized within the villages. Data collection was done for six months scattered between 2017, 2018 and 2019 in Samburu, Isiolo, and Laikipia Counties. Pastoralist communities from Counties of Samburu and Isiolo were targeted. Kalama and Nasulu Community Wildlife Conservancies in Samburu and Isiolo Counties respectively were selected for in-depth study. The two were selected based on long-term experience and governance structure dynamics.

In total we interviewed 115 people; 65 men and 50 women of different ages from among members and non-members of the conservancies. We also conducted 11 focus group discussions; 6 in Samburu and 5 in Isiolo Counties. Each FGD consisted of 4-6 persons, separated by gender (men and women) except among the peri-urban Borana community where joined FGD was conducted. Interviews were conducted by field assistants using local dialects, Kiswahili and English depending on the target group and immediately translated as necessary. Data was later coded according to the topics and analysis was done using Q1 Macros (KnowWare International Inc. 1996-2014). We assessed resilience building based on USU-IAS, Bioversity International, IGES and UNDP (2014) resilience indicators toolkit based on whether or not CBC facilitate (1) access to heterogeneous landscapes that provide greater biodiversity and ecosystem services; (2) integration of knowledge and innovations, (3) governance and social justice and lastly (4) livelihood and wellbeing.

2.1. Study Area

Samburu and Isiolo Counties where this study was done falls within arid and semi-arid lands of the greater 83,000 Km² of Ewaso Ngiro catchment that stretches from the slopes of Mt. Kenya to Moyale in the north and Garissa in the East. Ewaso Ngiro River that derives its water from Mt. Kenya and Aberdares ranges separate the two counties (figure 1).

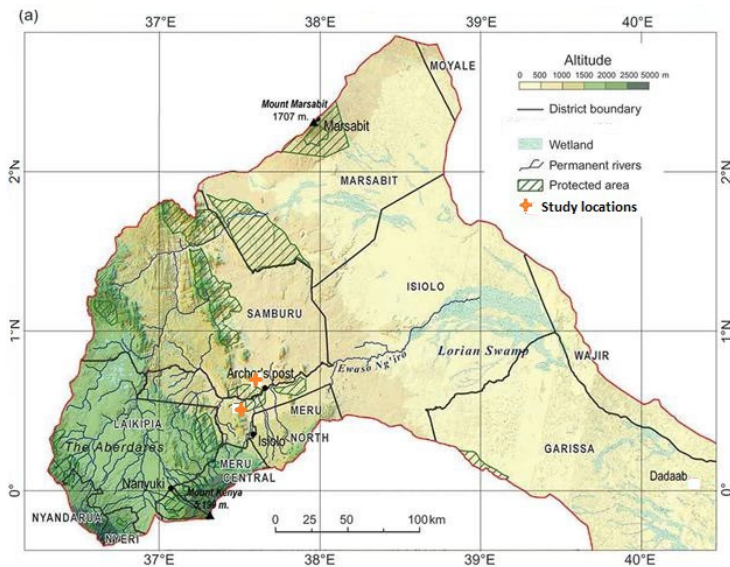


Fig. 1. Map of Ewaso Ngiro Catchment in northern Kenya showing the study sites – orange dots (Adopted from Ericksen et al., 2012).

3.0 Results and Discussions

Paradigm shift from state-driven protectionism (Fortress conservation) strategies to community-driven conservation in natural resources management has been rising as a dominant discourse based on experiences in East and Southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. The CBC has continued to grow despite doubts being raised concerning their effectiveness to achieve conservation and development goals.

3.1. Governance

Perhaps due to the complexity and woolliness of the term community, some Community Conservancies have been implemented successfully while others have encountered many challenges despite similarity in their approach. Inclusion of women in the Conservancy boards and youth in the grazing committees have been highlighted as one major achievement in the governance structure of the CBC particularly those under Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT). This strategy seemed to have motivated the women and some men alike. The level of vibrancy due to women participation was palpable in Kalama Conservancy. During focus group discussion, one woman quipped

“Nowadays women are busy with development matters for the community and they have left gossiping to men” Respondent 13.

Resource use regulation and enforcement, regular meetings and access to natural resources was also indicated as a success stories by CBC members. Incorporation of traditional institutions as part of decision-making organs benefits from indigenous/local knowledge. This support knowledge integration and innovation as expounded USU-IAS, Bioversity International, IGES and UNDP (2014).

Governance in multi-ethnic owned Conservancies seemed strained compared to single ethnic owned CBC despite ‘regular meetings and elections. Tensions among communities emanate from among others (1) Strong held position that they are the rightful land owners and that others were co-opted to buy peace (2) That there is no equity nor equality in the sharing of benefits. The use of quota system often used is perceived to be biased and advantageous to communities with smaller population (3) perceived skewed representation in conservancy boards, grazing committees and even employment opportunities shared based on ethnic composition irrespective of population size. Absence of identification cards does not make it any easier given fluidity of membership. Claims of non-members benefitting from CBC resources have been reported. An example was quota system NRT Trading used to buy cattle from Conservancy members as a means to destock during drought. Communities who did not have adequate numbers are claimed to have purchased cattle in Isiolo market and resell them to NRT Trading due to premium prices offered. This action denied members who were willing to destock more of their livestock to do so.

Cases of exclusion have also been reported where establishment of CBC led to a tenure system arrangement that allow certain parties and excluded others (Kibet, 2019; Pas, 2018; Grainer, 2012; CDC et al 2009) and this has been source of tension and often violent conflicts. In CBC owned wholly by one ethnic community, reported elite capture, bungled elections, and elements of corruption in benefits sharing are some of the challenges in its governance system as pointed out by a female respondent who had recently been elected to office in Kalama Conservancy.

“As a subcommittee mandated to manage the disbursement of bursaries not a single complain has been raised in the last two years they have been in charge, unlike previous years when there were many members complained. I don’t understand where the money has been disappearing to in the previous years”. Respondent No. 18. She went ahead to highlight key projects they have been able to support on health and education.

The exercise of power and authority by those elected into Conservancy boards and grazing committee were ineffective during times of prolong drought. As such time, collective actions as CBC community is greatly compromised as more of individualization of decision and actions takes root. Often at such times long distance livestock mobility (sometimes several hundreds of kilometres) far beyond the conservancy boundaries is witnessed. Cases of blatant disregard for bylaws by herders are also common at such times (Pas 2018).

The CBC governance system is viewed with suspicion by non- members whether or not non-members belong to same ethnic group as members or not. Enforcing rules and regulations under CBC deprive non-members access to previously accessible resources. For example, communities living within the suburbs of Isiolo town who previously made a living by making charcoal from Leparua and Nasuulu community conservancies had no kind words for the changed status. Occasional illegal charcoal making occurs in the two conservancies. There has been simmering mistrust amongst neighbouring pastoral communities in Isiolo County since armed Conservancy Rangers/scouts were introduced to enforce CBC land use regulations.

3.2 *Adaptation and resilience*

Good governance espouses effective participation, inclusivity, consensus building, representation and equitable sharing of benefits. Good governance strengthens community adaptive capacity and resilience to shocks and stress. The NRT which currently coordinate 39 CBC across 10 Counties, indicated that as at 2019, 20% of board members, 8% of conservancy managers, 6% of Scouts and 5% of Rangeland coordinators were women (NRT, 2019). In the two conservancies we studied, there were 3 and 4 women in Kalama and Nasuulu 13 and 16 member-boards respectively.

Effective and efficient representation, and equity in benefit sharing is still a challenge particularly among multi-ethnic owned CBC and does not help in building effective adaptation. During our fieldwork in Nasuulu Community Conservancy, the research team noted presence of camels browsing in an area preserved for dry season grazing. It later emerged that a non-member had been allowed access by relatives who are members of the conservancy contrary to grazing by-laws. Absence of identification marks makes it extremely difficult to separate members from non-members’ livestock.

Large tracts of land have been invaded by *Acacia reficiens* (*Olchurai* in Samburu) rendering them bushlands with low grazing capacity even during years with good rains. Active removal of invader species (*Acacia reficiens*), controlled grazing, creation of core conservation areas and ban on charcoal making in Kalama and Nasuulu Conservancies constitutes ecological impacts of CBC governance. Controlled grazing and weed removal promote increase in both plants and animal’s species diversity and ultimately ecosystem services.

The expectation to earn income from tourism has not been realistic in a number of Conservancies due to varied challenges. Kaptuiya and RUKO Conservancies located in Baringo County, for example, have hardly receive any meaningful number of tourists since their establishment mainly due to insecurity concerns (Grainer, 2012). Similarly, Nasuulu and Leparua Conservancies based in Isiolo County continues to rely 100% on NRT funding support to run its operations and this raises a question of their sustainability in absence of donor funds. It however true that some CBC have made significant development from utilizing their natural resources such as Namunyak, Kalama, Il Ngwesi and Sera in northern Kenya. NRT reported Kshs. 133 Million (US\$ 1.33 Million) revenue mainly from tourism that accrued to CBCs (NRT, 2019).

Most CBC under NRT have continued to diversify sources of income for their members through sales of goods and services such as livestock and beadwork through NRT Trading and businesses ventures. Access to microfinancing from Nabulu Saving Scheme and The Northern Rangeland Savings and Credit Cooperative (NR SACCO) have made it easy to access start-up capital. Direct benefits to individuals are reviving hope for those who had lost their livelihoods from lost livestock or ban of charcoal making. One respondent from Nasuulu Conservancy could not hide her joy.

“We are fortunate my son got sacco loan. He bought a motorbike he uses for transport business and this has helped a lot during the dry season when there is no milk. We use the money from the business to buy milk in Isiolo town” (Respondent No. 7)

Livelihood diversification is thought to promote community ability to adapt to shocks (Wan et al., 2016; Lenaiyasa et al., 2020). Availability of affordable transport and access to medical services in was rated highly in Kalama and Nasuulu Conservancies. In an area with poor roads, transport for sick people is a big challenge. The prospect of owning a conservancy vehicle carried the day when Girigiri Group Ranch members were deliberating on the establishment of Kalama Conservancy. One respondent recall,

“When Lewa Conservancy boss came to inform the elders about benefits of a Conservancy, Namunyak had established their own some 2-3 years earlier. Around that time there was an outbreak of a disease and the Namunyak vehicle was so hardy in transporting sick people to hospital. We all admired them and we agree to start our own Conservancy” (Respondent No. 12)

Other benefits thought to boost community adaptation to climate change reported include access to bursaries for education, employment opportunities, and access to schools by children, and water for domestic and livestock. USU-IAS, et al., (2014) recognizes that efficient and functioning infrastructure such as communication, health, and education together with availability of opportunities to engage in sustainable income generating activities greatly support communities’ resilience to shocks.

Strong views on enhancement of peace and security under CBC was central during focus group discussion among members of Turkana community from Nasuulu Conservancy. They stated that CBC has brought peace in the valley. Violent conflicts between Turkana and Samburu and/or Borana and/or Somali over access to water and pastures were a common occurrence during times of drought. In 2012 for example, fight broke out between members of the Turkana and Somali communities, with some Borana involvement. This was triggered by unattended camels that trespassed into people farms, and forage on food crops, reserve pastures, and live fences during time of time of migration. At least 10 died and over 2,000 people were displaced (Safeworld, 2015). One major responsibility of NRT council of elders (made up of all chairpersons elected on members CBC) is to broker peace and security in the region. Wherever applicable, adaptation to climate change must be informed by conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Reciprocity during time of drought among pastoralists remain strong social capital that seem to have be weaken by CBC governance due to exclusion rules and regulations.

Besides governance related issues, human-wildlife conflicts and livestock preventive healthcare have yet to be fully addressed. Some CBC members raised concern that with successes in wildlife conservation, human-wildlife is likely to increase and may lose their livestock/crops or even lives. During our visit to Kenya Wildlife Services offices in Isiolo county, the research team witnessed a widow making a compensation claim having lost all 18 goats she had to hyenas. The officer in charged informed us that approximately 700 claims are filed every month in Isiolo office alone. The process of reporting and verification is long and tedious; unfortunately, actual compensation is slow due to financial constraints on the government. As at 2018, the last time compensation was done was in 2013.

4.0 Conclusion

Community based Conservancy (CBC) has been widely marketed in Kenya and the World at large as an answer to natural resource conservation and livelihoods development needs for rural communities. Significant success has been witnessed in attainment of conservation needs, however, livelihood development is subject to debate. The CBC in the country have made significant contribution towards promoting wildlife and rangeland conservation and more are being established. Perceptions on CBC governance structure is mixed both amongst

members and non-members alike. Incorporation of women and youth in decision making organs of CBC has been hailed as innovative, however perception of skewed representation, lack of accountability and absence of equity in sharing of benefits remains source of disillusionment. CBC governance structure supports tenets necessary for communities to build their resilience against shocks and stress such as impacts of climate change. This includes promotion of income diversification, sustainable enterprises based on local resources, enhancement of livelihood and wellbeing. However, weakening of social capital such as reciprocity compromises adaptation.

- There is need for each conservancy to brand their livestock with unique marks for ease of identification of non-members livestock grazing on the conservancy, as well as identifying ‘genuine stock’ during offtake by NRT Trading.
- Due to challenges that may arise with possible increase in wildlife populations, livestock disease preventive health plan is necessary so that their co-existence may not be strained. Equally important is improvement in the implementation of wildlife on human-wildlife conflicts compensation.
- Reciprocity for water and pastures within and between communities as well as neighbouring Counties must be factored in areas planning to implement CWC model to support landscape thinking.

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