

**Approaches to Community-based Conservation in Kenya: Case Studies from
Amboseli, Maasai Mara, and Laikipia**

Kathleen Godfrey

Abstract

In recent decades, with a global shift from fortress conservation models to community-based conservation (CBC), a number of approaches have emerged to address the simultaneous demands of human development and environmental conservation. A primary objective of CBC, in theory, is to empower local communities to be stewards and beneficiaries of their diverse environments, whether that be through tourism, payment for ecosystem services, or revenue sharing schemes. The aim of this paper was to survey current literature on CBC in Kenya – specifically in Amboseli, the Maasai Mara, and Laikipia – to identify successful strategies and compare approaches. We found that the highly complex sociopolitical realities and histories of these areas in Kenya, as well as foreign influence in the ecotourism and development realms, has resulted in very few communities actually owning and managing their own conservation operations. Only one very unique example of ‘true’ community-based conservation – owned, operated, and managed by a local community – was reported. The findings point to huge discrepancies between the on-the-ground realities of CBC and the purported aims of a more holistic approach to conservation. Further, we found that private-community partnerships (PCPs) – which involve foreign ecotourism investors and operators – were the most common conservation-related approach across sites, which means a more thorough understanding of the governance structures of these partnerships is needed. While CBC as a conceptual framework is ripe with potential, the social, economic, and political entanglements of stakeholders in conservation are so far proving to be barriers to tangible community benefit in Kenya.

Introduction

The global shift to community-based conservation (CBC) has become a vital process in improving relationships between local communities, protected areas (PAs) and the natural world (see Brooks et al., 2012, 2013; Keiti et al., 2013; Lamers et al., 2014a,b, 2015; Otto et al., 2013; Ruiz-Mallén et al., 2015; Western et al., 1994; Western et al., 2015). Emerging in the 1980s, CBC aims to empower and instill feelings of ownership and stewardship in local people over the natural resources they live near or within, while equally prioritizing the goals of human development and environmental conservation (Brockington, 2002; BurnSilver, 2009; Kipkeu et al., 2014; Ondicho, 2006, 2012). With increased integration of development and conservation goals (Biodiversity in Development, 2001; UNEP, 2012; UN, 2014), we need to ensure that opportunities to benefit from biodiversity in a meaningful way are both available and effective for local people (Kipkeu et al., 2014; Western et al., 2015, p. 52).

There are a number of approaches to CBC, ranging from conservation enterprise (i.e. tourism), payment for ecosystem services or wildlife corridors, community-owned conservancies, and wildlife sanctuaries, to revenue sharing from PAs or national parks (BurnSilver, 2009; Goldman, 2003; Ondicho, 2012; Rutten, 2002; Southgate, 2006; Western, 2015). Each approach has its respective strengths and weaknesses, each being extremely context and project-dependent. As such, it is important to explore approaches on a case-by-case basis (Snider, 2012). That being said, multiple approaches can be applied simultaneously within organizations, projects, and communities, having potentially enhancing effects. Ecotourism in particular has become widespread across countries like Kenya, encouraged by governments and NGOs alike, as wildlife-based tourism operations are considered a “viable tool not only to curb further wildlife losses but also to reconcile the otherwise intractable conflicts between conservation and development” (Ondicho, 2012, p. 43; Southgate, 2006). Current literature attests to the fact that ecotourism intersects most approaches to CBC, with great variability among the composition, structure, and management within organizations. While ecotourism will be mentioned throughout this paper, it will not be framed as an approach per se, but rather a consequence of the CBC model. Ecotourism is often considered the most useful means for enhancing community conservation behavior because “direct benefits accrue from successfully building and operating businesses” (Fox, 2002, p. 33, cited in Van Wijk et al., 2015, p. 113).

The CBC model is riddled with a number of complications, such as benefit abundance and sharing, sustainability, and the role of the state or foreign investors within CBC schemes (BurnSilver, 2009; Homewood et al., 2009; Kipkeu et al., 2014; Ondicho, 2012; Rutten, 2002). A main objective of CBC is reframing perceptions of wildlife not as liabilities, but rather assets, the management and benefits of which communities can participate in (Western, et al., 2015). While

the concept of CBC is well-intentioned and *theoretically* provides benefits to all parties involved, the institutional barriers and complex social realities of places where CBC is introduced often interfere in its ability to have a significant positive impact (BurnSilver, 2009; Homewood et al., 2009; Ondicho et al., 2012).

In the following paper I investigate approaches to CBC in three sites across Kenya – Amboseli, Maasai Mara, and Laikipia – to identify key factors that lead to successful CBC. I will outline the most popular approaches to CBC as per the current literature in hopes of understanding the future directions of CBC in Kenya. Studying Kenya specifically is crucial due considerable declines in wildlife biodiversity in recent decades as a result of factors such as shifting land use and management (Blackburn et al., 2016; Western et al., 2006; Norton-Griffiths, 2007).

In my literature review, CBC initiatives will be identified by a devolution of rights and responsibilities for wildlife management to local, active stakeholders, and as providing direct benefits to communities (Brooks et al., 2012, p.21265). While I acknowledge that “success” can be evaluated a number of ways (see Brooks et al., 2012, 2013), in this survey, the relative success of CBC projects across sites will be based on two factors: (1) whether local communities are benefitting economically, with equitable benefit-sharing and (2) whether local communities or representatives have significant ownership, control, and decision-making power. For a CBC approach to be effective, financial or ecological benefits from natural resource conservation *must* outweigh the costs associated with wildlife interactions or exclusionary conservation tactics, and contribute positively and sustainably to local livelihoods (Blair, 2008, p. 59; Kipkeu et al., 2014; Okello et al., 2011, p.10; Western et al., 2015).

That being said, the economic, social, and political entanglements of various stakeholders in the management and governance of natural resources via CBC in Kenya (and elsewhere) are

real and often difficult to navigate. This paper, as a preliminary review of the recent literature on the complex topic of approaches to CBC, will serve as a starting point for further exploration into the functioning of various approaches to CBC in the three study areas.

Amboseli

The Greater Amboseli Ecosystem (GAE) is recognized as the ‘birthplace’ of community-based conservation (BurnSilver, 2009; Western, 1994). As a “cultural and economic core area for Maasai pastoralism in southern Kenya”, Amboseli boasts high biodiversity and wildlife abundance, leading to high instances of human-wildlife conflict as well as opportunities to benefit from wildlife (BurnSilver, 2009, p. 161,164; Fitzgerald, 2013; Western, 2001). As such, the Amboseli area is a prime site to study approaches to CBC, especially since CBC efforts have been adapting to changing conditions over 40 years of research (Western et al., 2015, p. 53).

In Amboseli, the national park acts as a central hub of contestation between conservationists, landowners, and pastoralists, and many approaches to CBC have been implemented in the surrounding wildlife dispersal areas (Fitzgerald, 2013; Kipkeu et al., 2014). These efforts have concentrated in bordering Maasai group ranches (GRs), through conservancies or sanctuaries. With a number of wildlife-rich PAs like Amboseli National Park (ANP), the Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary (KCWS), and the presence of NGOs like the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), the creation of community sanctuaries allows for establishment of ecotourism operations and implementation of payment for ecosystem services (PES) projects. The AWF, specifically, has been working for many years in the Amboseli area to implement their lease conservation program using PES (Fitzgerald, 2013, 2014). Lastly, a recent trend in conservation is that of ‘landowner associations’, whereby stakeholders form partnerships to collaborate in natural resource management; the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) is one example.

The formation of communal sanctuaries in Amboseli was originally stimulated by external NGOs, but in recent years increased local participation in this process has encouraged more community ownership and management (Fitzgerald, 2013; Kipkeu et al., 2014; Ondicho, 2012). These sanctuaries are established to attract tourism, which is largely recognized to be the most lucrative outcome of a CBC model. Kipkeu et al. (2014) investigated motivations for CBC within communities in Amboseli, and found that 68% of respondents considered community sanctuaries a viable option for wildlife conservation, followed by lodge or camp development (p. 79). Indeed, it appears that in terms of proprietorship, all of the sanctuaries in Amboseli are owned and run by local members of GRs (see Table 1, below).

In 1996, KCWS was established on a section of the Kimana GR following an amalgamation of privately owned Maasai plots (Ondicho, 2012). Motivated primarily by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), it has historically represented a prime example of a community-based project that “promotes the ideals of local participation in wildlife management and creates opportunities for local Maasai pastoralists to benefit from wildlife tourism” (Ondicho, 2012, p.41). With great ethnographic detail, Ondicho’s (2012) work traces the history of the KCWS and ecotourism development within Kimana, citing mismanagement of profits on the part of the GR committee (a management board appointed by the KWS), among other challenges (p. 49-51). Two years after opening, the GR committee agreed to lease the Sanctuary to a private tourism investor without community consultation, thereby losing formal control of the Sanctuary (Ondicho, 2012, p. 51). The public-private or private-community partnership (PPPs/PCPs) between the GR members and the tourism operator, in theory, could have profited the community, but due to corruption and malpractice within the GR committee and tourism agent, no tangible benefits ever reached the household level (Lamers et al., 2014a). While *intended* to be a positive community-based initiative,

the complex sociopolitical realities within the GR and beyond made it difficult for the wider Kimana community to assert any control over the project. This case study should serve as a reminder to be critical of partnerships such as these, and recognize the discrepancies between intent and practical application.

In 2009, the AWF established their PES program in the area between ANP and the KCWS, partnering with a tourism operator and the KWS to lease land from 340 private Maasai landowners that would then be used for biodiversity conservation (Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 1). Being wildlife-oriented, the aim of this AWF program was to create a corridor between two high traffic wildlife zones. PES, according to Fitzgerald (2013, 2014), is a voluntary process, that includes legally binding leases outlining very clear restrictions on land use (p. 1-3). Important in this approach to CBC, is the conditionality of the arrangements, whereby payment is only made if community members follow strict land use guidelines (Fitzgerald, 2013). In this agreement, direct landowner payments are made via e-transfers into individual bank accounts of the 340 landowners, and 'landowner associations' act as the forums of engagement between the AWF and local Maasai (Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 8-9, 12). This PES approach seems promising – the direct deposit aspect is very positive – but the conditionality of the leases and inclusion of an external governing body (AWF) and tourism operator significantly limits the extent of local involvement and control.

It has been implied by Osano et al. (2013) that in Amboseli generally, payments from ecotourism operators to local communities involved in creating sanctuaries (PPPs/PCPCs) are based on bed-night fees which are then funneled through communal institutions rather than directly to households (p. 244). While direct household payments are mentioned in the PES system, it remains unclear whether the tourism enterprises partnered with the KCWS continue to use bed-night fees, as opposed to fixed annual land lease fees, for example. The results of Shauna

BurnSilver's (2009) evaluation of Maasai livelihoods in Kajiado District, Amboseli, reveal that revenue sharing and ecotourism-based CBC structures often do not provide communities with adequate benefits at the household-level, with only 8% of households benefiting through wildlife-based income (p. 183). Further, Ondicho (2012) found that 81% of community members in the Kimana GR wanted to manage the KCWS themselves, as "ecotourism has served to reproduce and strengthen the predominant values, beliefs, and institutional procedures which benefit the state, foreign tour operators and investors as well as a few local elites" (Okello et al., 2011, p.8; Ondicho, 2012, p. 59).

Maasai Mara

The Maasai Mara Ecosystem (MME) is known internationally for its huge diversity of ungulates, many of which are found in the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR), Kenya's highest earning wildlife tourism destination (Aboud et al., 2011; Lamprey & Reid, 2004; Norton-Griffiths, 2007; Snider, 2012). Housing many PAs, the MME has benefited from a booming tourism presence, and as such is recognized as a "high-earning conservation" area (Homewood et al., 2012, p. 242) compared to other areas where tourism is not as developed. In the early 2000s, the Mara experienced a 'conservancy movement', which occurred as a reaction to the privatization and subdivision of Maasailand and GRs (Blackburn et al., 2016; Kieti et al., 2013; Lamprey & Reid, 2004; Osano et al., 2013; Snider, 2012). As such, community-based conservancies have played an important role both in improving wildlife conservation and human livelihoods in the MME (Blackburn et al., 2016, Osano et al., 2013; Snider, 2012). These conservancies are

classically defined as areas “adjoining private properties established for the conservation and production of wildlife” (Dublin & Wilson, 1998), but more complex renderings now exist.

Jandreau and Berkes’s (2016) provide a comprehensive definition of the conservancy model and associated drivers of the conservancy movement in the Mara. Here, a conservancy is a “commons institution” (Hoole & Berkes, 2010), “whereby individual landowners or communal resource users pool lands to create a singular trust where benefits from wildlife and tourism development are shared by participants” (Sørli, 2008, cited in Jandreau & Berkes, 2016, p. 2-3). In the Mara, this model has taken on a basic form that restricts Maasai grazing and associated activities through leasing agreements (Jandreau & Berkes, 2016, p. 3). In these arrangements, communities partner with local, national, or international tourism operators who pay for exclusive access to land and infrastructures, and provide monthly or annual payments that are guaranteed, “independent of tourist volume” (Jandreau & Berkes, 2016, p. 3). For a conservancy partnership to be sustainable and consistently benefit communities, this guarantee is vital.

Snider (2012) highlights the importance of transitions in land ownership from common to private land through parcellation in areas surrounding the MMNR (p. 202; Lamprey & Reid, 2004). Given the spatial needs of wildlife and pastoralist livelihoods, land ownership is a central factor to consider in the context of CBC initiatives. While the negative effects of land privatization on wildlife abundance and pastoral livelihoods have been documented (Gadd, 2005; Lamprey & Reid, 2004, p. 997; Western et al., 2015), Snider found this change in land use to be economically beneficial to Maasai landowners in the Ol Kinyei GR, where 171 of them linked their private land titles together to create a conservancy and leased it to “a socially responsible tour operator” (Ol Kinyei Conservancy, 2013; Snider, 2012, p. 204, 206). Now, the individuals who combined their plots to form the conservancy receive the most equitable share of the associated ecotourism

benefits when compared to their common land ownership counterparts (Snider, 2012, p. 204, 206). Osano et al. (2013) explain the structure of conservancy-tourism partnerships (PPPs/PCPs), whereby amalgamated individual plots create “large viable game viewing areas”, and land lease agreements are brokered with coalitions of commercial tourism operators “under institutional arrangements modelled in the form of payments for ecosystem services (PES)” (p. 244). It should be noted that the impacts of ecotourism activities on indigenous communities are related to the *level* and *type* of control that host populations have over the development of these projects, and while the Ol Kinyei conservancy has been successful in many regards, other partnerships can completely disenfranchise local communities (e.g. Rutten, 2002). In light of continued subdivision in the GRs surrounding the MMNR, Lamprey and Reid (2004) recommend that cooperation of landowners to establish conservancies is required for communities to receive substantial tourism – and thus conservation – benefits (p. 1025; Snider, 2012).

These community-owned conservancies mark a valuable turn away from the “wildlife associations” (WAs) of the 1990s, which resulted in “elite capture” of benefits from game viewing fees (Brooks et al., 2012, p. 104; Jandreau & Berkes, 2016, p. 3; Lamprey & Reid, 2004, p. 1024). Following the failure of the WAs, Lamprey and Reid (2004) describe the management model of the ‘Mara Conservancy’, “a not-for-profit management company...established to manage the [Mara] Triangle in collaboration with the Trans Mara County Council” (Mara Conservancy, 2011). The Triangle area, as the northwestern sector of the MMNR, benefits from park fee distribution through the Mara Conservancy-Trans Mara County Council (private-public) partnership (Mara Conservancy, 2011). Of the 55% of ticketed sales given to the Trans Mara County Council, 19% of the total amount is distributed to the group ranches bordering the Triangle (Mara Conservancy, 2011). The exact pathways of benefit distribution from Council to GR is not described, but based

on previous knowledge of coercion, corruption, and financial mismanagement (e.g. Narok County Council; BurnSilver, 2009), we must be wary of figures such as these. Indeed, transparency in tourism revenue sharing is a huge factor limiting local community benefits in the Maasai Mara area (Osano et al., 2013).

While Lamprey and Reid (2004) are hopeful about the work of the Mara Conservancy, a direct quote from the Director of the Mara Conservancy – Brian Heath – regarding how “involved local communities” are in the conservation process sheds light on how divergent their methodology is from CBC, in terms of real community participation:

We have no direct mandate to work with communities but we have supported a number of projects...We employ 15 members of the community in the villages as community scouts acting as liason[s] between ourselves and the community and to improve communication between us. (Brian Heath – The Mara Conservancy, 2008).

Continued vigilance and examination of the ways that NGOs are involved in resource management projects, especially ones that implicate local communities, must be a priority in this area and beyond.

Conservancies as new forms of institutional arrangements in the MME seem to be largely positive for local communities, despite foreign operator involvement. Osano et al. (2013) provide us with an in-depth description of the management and benefit-sharing strategy used in the Olare Orok Conservancy (OOC). Like in Ol Kinyei, after subdivision, members of the Koyake GR amalgamated a number of individual land titles and resettled off their land in return for direct payment and annual lease fees, paid by a coalition of five commercial tourism operators (Osano et al., 2013, p. 242-244). Like the PES system in Amboseli, the arrangement is voluntary and fees are paid directly, but here tour operators guarantee landowners “a fixed annual land lease fee”

which are assured “irrespective of whether tourists visit the conservancy or not” (Osano et al., 2013, p. 244). This feature has not been made clear in the Amboseli sanctuary arrangement. As seen through the Ol Kinyei and OOC examples, the general structure of conservancies in the MME is promoting CBC goals, and may “provide a substantive buffer to the transforming instruments of privatization and commercialization, as it advocates for large tracts of untilled rangelands while retaining local ownership” (Jandreau and Berkes, 2016, p. 13).

Laikipia

An area of high biodiversity in northern Kenya, Laikipia is located within the AWF’s Sumburu Heartland, and houses more endangered species than any other region in Kenya (Blair, 2008, p. 12; LWF, 2007). Conservation research and community engagement initiatives have been longstanding here, given the presence of PAs like the Samburu National Reserve (SNR), the Lewa Downs Conservancy (LDC), and a strong community forum for wildlife and conservation, the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) (Blair, 2008, p. 12-15; Gadd, 2005; Lamers et al., 2014a,b). Much like Amboseli and the Mara, the conservation enterprises in Laikipia are PPPs/PCPs occurring between tourism operators and community-owned sanctuaries or conservancies (p. 251; see also Lamers et al., 2014b, Van Wijk et al., 2014).

Lamers et al. (2014a) provide us with a thorough investigation of two PPPs/PCPs in Laikipia, involving co-management of land and infrastructures between local communities and external bodies (see also Kieti et al., 2013, p.211). The Koiya GR, through facilitation by the AWF, partnered with a private investor (Oryx Limited, “OL”) to set aside a conservancy on their land and establish the Koiya Starbeds lodge to generate income (Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 256; see also Sumba et al., 2007). The GR members own the “immovable assets” of the lodge and receive bed-night fees, which are then divided up and allocated by the Koiya Conservation Trust, a managerial

body consisting of local GR members, OL representatives, and one individual from AWF (Lamers et al., 2014, p. 251-2, 256). It is not clear *exactly* how the money managed by the trust impacts households individually, as funds are used “for projects that are collectively beneficial” (Lamers et al., 2014, p. 256). Regardless, we have learned about the potential negative features of fixed bed-night fees as opposed to fixed annual land lease fees, which are a more dependable form of payment.

The second PPP/PCP touched on is The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille, a partnership between the Kijabe and Nkiloriti GRs and an investor and long-term partner, Regenesys Ltd., once again facilitated by the AWF (Blair, 2008; Lamers et al., 2014a). Kijabe members set aside “one third of its land...as [a] conservation area” in return for bed-night fees and an annual rights fee paid by the private investor (Blair, 2008, p. 24; Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 257). According to Blair (2008), the Kijabe community has absolute ownership of the lodge and fixed assets, which should ensure that the majority of the decision-making power is located at the community-level (p. 24). However, the validity of this claim is questionable, as management is still in the hands of the private owner (see Table 2, below). As in our Kojja example, a trust was established to manage this partnership and the associated assets, with three “elite” Kijabe representatives sitting on the board (Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 257). While the Kijabe partnership is less stable than the Starbeds arrangement (personal communication, Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 257), of the two partnerships, the Sanctuary contributes more to conservation and the local community (in gross) due to its larger size, despite being a less transparent and accountable arrangement (see Table 3, below; Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 257).

Through their detailed analyses of these two partnerships in Laikipia, Lamers et al. (2014a,b) raise an important question about the role of NGOs like the AWF within these kinds of partnerships. While we have seen the restrictive conditionality of AWF PES leases in Amboseli,

with implications for risk management, it is possible that the AWF PPP/PCP model is more successful in providing community benefits. In their comparative analysis, Van Wijk et al. (2015) found that the majority of tourism ventures in Laikipia are “either owned or managed by private sector parties or local communities”, whereas the AWF model puts ownership of the ‘venture’ in the hands of local communities, and management is undertaken by private sector groups (p. 114). While not the *ideal*, this appears to be a step in the right direction for CBC.

Contrasted against the Koiya and Kijabe case studies, the Il Ngwesi conservancy is one of the first community-led conservation initiatives in northern Kenya (Kieti et al., 2013, p. 213). This ecotourism and community-owned trust operation is collectively owned and run by 499 households, and has addressed poverty in the area by “redirect[ing]...tourism revenues back to the local community” (Kieti et al., 2013, p. 212). As one respondent puts it, the “Il [N]gwesi conservancy and lodge is the perfect example of community conservation achieving near perfect balance between the desire of the community to earn a livelihood and maintain wild animals in their natural habitat” (respondent KWS M2, cited in Kieti et al., 2013, p. 213). Furthermore, within Laikipia, Van Wijk et al. (2015) identified “mass” and “small scale” types of tourism accommodation (see Table 2, below) and found that Il Ngwesi is the *only* example of a tourism operation where both management and ownership are communal, which is an illuminating fact. The success of the Il Ngwesi conservancy is in large part due to specific factors like adjacency to the Lewa Downs Wildlife Conservancy – whose director was willing to share resources – which helped stimulate the emergence of the community-owned conservancy (Kieti et al., 2013, p. 212). As such, while a great triumph as a ‘true’ CBC initiative, the contextual specificities of the Il Ngwesi case makes one wonder the transferability of this model across sites.

Discussion

It is clear that in political and socioecological landscapes composed of “heterogeneous users, conflicting interests, and power differentials”, determining what an ‘approach’ to CBC is, let alone which approach will be most successful is difficult to do (Jandreau & Berkes, 2016, p. 1). Based on current literature concerning Amboseli, Maasai Mara, and Laikipia, it appears that the main approach to CBC is public-private or private-community partnerships (PPPs/PCPs). As we have seen, these partnerships have different arrangements, compositions, and levels of community involvement and control. Problems associated with PCPs “include imbalanced relations between individual private investors and heterogeneous communities, unfair partnership deals, local political struggles emerging after implementation, and misalignment with the wider institutional environment” (Southgate, 2006, cited in Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 251).

It is evident that ecotourism intersects all sites as a primary motivator or result (depending on how you view it) of these PPPs/PCPs, and once again, within these tourism operations, there can be any number of institutional or community arrangements. Ecotourism continues to be one of the most profitable ‘approaches’ to CBC, but cannot qualify as such if tourism operation continues to be exclusively foreign. In Wishitemi et al.’s (2015) survey of poverty, environment, and ecotourism in the Maasai Mara and Amboseli, 27% of respondents indicated that their aspirations for ecotourism development centered on increased “involvement, control, and equality in revenue sharing” (p. 311). To realize these aspirations must be a central focus for CBC organizations looking forward.

With the exception of the Il Ngwesi conservancy, every other example of CBC involved an external actor as a partnership facilitator, managerial body, or investor. Acknowledging the particularity of factors that led to the success of Il Nguwesi, chiefly its proximity to a successful conservancy (Lewa Downs) whose director was willing to aid the GR, it still stands out as an

aspirational goal in the realm of CBC in Kenya. For the time being, it seems we may have to accept that minimal external presence is needed to establish CBC arrangements that are prosperous enough to provide significant benefits to locals. The conservancy model in the MME outwardly seems to be the most lucrative for communities, especially due to the fixed land lease fees, thus I would deem it the most successful approach to CBC in Kenya currently, second only to the specific case of Il Ngwesi.

The overall trend in Kenya regarding PAs has been one towards community-based conservancies more so than national parks or reserves, with the number of conservancies growing from 10 in 1991 (when the KWS formed) to 230 in 2014 (Western et al., 2015, p. 56). Given what we know about the potential for community-based conservancies to provide local communities with adequate direct and indirect benefits (e.g. Il Ngwesi Community Conservancy, Olare Orok Conservancy), this national trend is potentially very positive. I say this with hesitation, as the successful and equitable operation of conservancies is not a given, but rather dependent on a number of complex elements.

Previously, I based the success of CBC approaches on two factors: (1) whether local communities benefit economically, with equitable benefit-sharing and (2) whether local communities or representatives have significant ownership, control, and decision-making power. The fulfilment of these two qualifiers, would mean, to me, the achievement of ‘true’ CBC, where incentives and efforts are purely community-driven. An obvious complication in achieving ‘true’ CBC is non-local influence in the form of funding, control, ownership, and management. Associated with this problem is the lack of political goodwill demonstrated by state representatives at the local, municipal, and national levels, whereby the priorities of wildlife, or even personal financial gain, often take precedence over those of entire communities (Aboud, 2011; Ondicho et

al., 2012; Western et al., 2015, p. 53; Wishitemi et al., 2015). The findings of Wishitemi et al. (2015) confirm that without community control in ecotourism specifically, more often than not, ventures will contribute to unequitable distribution of benefits (p. 311; Kipkeu et al., 2014, p. 79). Ondicho's thorough exploration of the creation and upkeep of the KCWS emphasizes how "profits normally flow to those who are already wealthy, and thus the overall effect of tourism is often to reinforce existing patterns of inequality" (Crick, 1994, p. 94 cited in Ondicho et al., 2012, p. 55). This is clearly a cycle that needs to be broken.

There are a number of recommendations to be made in the realm of Kenyan CBC. With the emergence and proliferation of PPPs/PCPs, transparency is an important consideration. This can be achieved via different avenues, but especially by holding groups involved in CBC accountable and demanding that details of payment and profit be made publicly available. Not only this, but NGOs particularly "should act as 'opportunity seekers', focus on incremental rather than radical innovations, note voids and ambiguities in governmental policies that provide opportunities for non-state actors to assume the role of institutional entrepreneur, and hire staff skilled in business, tourism and strategic management..." instead of taking on managerial and facilitative roles themselves (Van Wijk, 2015, p. 104).

Mistrust and miscommunication among stakeholders are also common barriers to effective collaboration, but are easily remedied by open dialogue (Kieti et al., 2013, p. 214; Kipkeu et al., 2014, p. 79). In this regard, establishment of trusts, like the ones in Il Nguwesi and Amboseli (AET), could be a way to involve all those impacted by wildlife and natural resource management in an effective and representative discussion.

The need for capacity building in communities such that conservation activities can be run independently, and maximum benefits can be earned, is paramount (Kipkeu et al., 2014, p. 82).

Capacity building at the community-level will hopefully remedy the skew seen in ecotourism employment of local community members, whereby they are disproportionately represented in the unskilled and low-paying jobs (see Wichitemi et al., 2015, p. 311 for statistics). This point specifically may be the key to promotion of ‘true’ CBC as dependence on private sector partners is currently too high, which one might argue is systemically perpetuated (Sumba et al., 2007, p. 10). I should mention that in this regard, capacity need not be built by international ‘experts’, but rather capable Kenyans.

In their global comparative approach, Brooks et al. (2012, 2013) explore the relative influence of factors such as national context, project design, and local community characteristics on four outcomes that indicate CBC success (attitudinal, behavioral, ecological, and economic). They found that the most important variable influencing CBC success was that a project be designed with community participation, capacity building, and equitable distribution of economic benefits in mind (p. 21268). This multi-outcome success system provides us with great specificity in determining which CBC projects can be deemed ‘successful’, and which areas may be most important to focus our energies.

Conclusions

In theory, CBC is “effective in changing the top-down approach to wildlife protected area conservation applied by many governments of the developing world as it emphasizes the position of those people who bear the costs” (Kieti et al., 2013, p. 211). This is a much needed change as past approaches to natural resource conservation neglected the voices and roles of key stakeholders in the discussion (Kipkeu et al., 2014, p. 77). CBC as a counter-narrative has been increasingly institutionalized in Kenya and beyond, but with varying success. By investigating the current literature across Amboseli, Maasai Mara, and Laikipia, it has been my aim to identify successful

strategies of CBC by site, and compare approaches. Across the three sites, most authors have referred to PPPs/PCPs, made possible through community-owned conservancies or sanctuaries and foreign ecotourism investors. Based on the works examined, community-run conservancies in the MME appear to benefit local communities the greatest, while Il Ngwesi is the only case study with complete community ownership and management.

For CBC to be effective, there needs to be an understanding of the complex social, political, and historical realities of communities, and productive interactions between all stakeholders. Furthermore, in light of ecotourism as a common trend across sites, Atieno & Njoroge (2015) emphasize “the need to reconcile [the] practical basis of the [ecotourism] concept with actual references of the term” (p. 10). Indeed, Atieno & Njoroge’s (2015) exploration of ‘ecotourism’ as a metaphor for “pro environmental behaviour” (p. 1) could be a useful point of departure for evaluation of specific ecotourism operations within Amboseli, Maasai Mara, and Laikipia. With tourism only increasing in popularity and economic potential, a more thorough understanding of how such initiatives operate is much-needed in the context of Kenyan CBC.

References

- Aboud, A., Kisoyan, P., Said, M. Y., de Leeuw, J., Notenbaert, A., Davies, J., Manzano, P., Omandi, S., & Waithaka, M. (2011). Payment for wildlife conservation in the Maasai Mara ecosystem (ABCD policy brief 2). International Livestock Research Institute.
- Atieno, L., & Njoroge, J. M. (2015). The ecotourism metaphor and environmental sustainability in Kenya. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1467358415619671.
- Biodiversity in Development Program. (2001). *Strategic Approaches for Integrating Biodiversity Conservation in Development Cooperation*. Brussels, Belgium Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK: European Commission and IUCN.
- Blackburn, S., Hopcraft, J. G. C., Ogotu, J. O., Matthiopoulos, J., & Frank, L. (2016). Human–wildlife conflict, benefit sharing and the survival of lions in pastoralist community-based conservancies. *Journal of Applied Ecology*.

- Brian Heath - The Mara Conservancy (web log interview July 5, 2008). Retrieved from <http://safaritalk.net/topic/2661-brian-heath-the-mara-conservancy/>
- Brockington, D. (2002). *Fortress Conservation: The Preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania*. Oxford: International African Institute.
- Brooks, J. S., Waylen, K. A., & Mulder, M. B. (2012). How national context, project design, and local community characteristics influence success in community-based conservation projects. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(52), 21265-21270.
- Brooks, J., Waylen, K. A., & Mulder, M. B. (2013). Assessing community-based conservation projects: A systematic review and multilevel analysis of attitudinal, behavioral, ecological, and economic outcomes. *Environmental Evidence*, 2(1), 1.
- BurnSilver, S. B. (2009). Pathways on continuity and change: Maasai livelihoods in Amboseli, Kajiado District, Kenya. In Homewood, K., Kristjanson, P., Trench, P., & Radeny, M. (Eds.) *Changing Land use and Livelihoods in Tanzania and Kenya Maasailand* (161-201). New York: Verlag Publishers.
- Dublin, H., & Wilson, A. (1998). *The fight for survival: four decades of conserving Africa's rhinos*. Gland, Switzerland: WWF International.
- Fitzgerald, K. H. (2013). *Community Payment for Ecosystem Services in the Amboseli Ecosystem: Leasing Land for Livelihoods and Wildlife* (Rep.). Retrieved from [http://www.awf.org/sites/default/files/media/Resources/Books and Papers/PES_Community_Payment_Land_for_Livelihoods_Booklet_09092013\[2\].pdf](http://www.awf.org/sites/default/files/media/Resources/Books_and_Papers/PES_Community_Payment_Land_for_Livelihoods_Booklet_09092013[2].pdf)
- Fitzgerald, K. H. (2014). *Using innovative land conservation tools in Africa to protect land, enhance resource management and improve community livelihoods*. Prepared for World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, March 24-27, 2014. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K9RS.pdf.
- Gadd, M. E. (2005). Conservation outside of parks: attitudes of local people in Laikipia, Kenya. *Environmental Conservation* 32(1), 50-63.
- Homewood, K., Kristjanson, P., & Trench, P. C. (2009). *Staying Maasai? Livelihoods, Conservation and Development in East African Rangelands*. New York, NY: Springer New York.
- Homewood, K., Trench, P. C., & Brockington, D. (2012). Pastoralism and Conservation - Who Benefits? In D. Roe, J. Elliott, C. Sandbrook, M. Walpole (Eds.), *Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: Exploring the Evidence for a* [Link](#) *Roe/Biodiversity*, 239-252. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hoole, A., & Berkes, F. (2010). Breaking down fences: Recoupling social-ecological systems for biodiversity conservation in Namibia. *Geoforum*, 41(2), 304-317.

- Jandreau, C., & Berkes, F. (2016). Continuity and change within the social-ecological and political landscape of the Maasai Mara, Kenya. *Pastoralism*, 6 (1), 1.
- Lamers, M., van der Duim, R., van Wijk, J., Nthiga, R., & Visseren-Hamakers, I. J. (2014a). Governing conservation tourism partnerships in Kenya. *Annals of Tourism Research* 48, 250-265.
- Lamers, M., Nthiga, R., van der Duim, R., & van Wijk, J. (2014b). Tourism- conservation enterprises as a land-use strategy in Kenya. *Tourism Geographies* 16(3), 474-489.
- Lamers, M., van der Duim, R., Nthiga, R., van Wijk, J., & Waterreus, S. (2015). Implementing tourism-conservation enterprises: A comparison of three lodges in Kenya. In *Institutional Arrangements for Conservation, Development and Tourism in Eastern and Southern Africa* (219-238). Netherlands: Springer.
- Lamprey, R. H., & Reid, R. S. (2004). Expansion of human settlement in Kenya's Maasai Mara: what future for pastoralism and wildlife? *Journal of Biogeography*, 31(6), 997-1032.
- Norton-Griffiths, M. (2007). How many wildebeest do you need? *World Economics*, 8, 41–64.
- Okello, M.M., Buthmann, E., Mapinu, B., & Kahi, H.C. (2011). Community opinions on wildlife, resource use and livelihood competition in Kimana Group Ranch near Amboseli, Kenya. *The Open Conservation Biology Journal* 5(1).
- Ol Kinyei Conservancy. (2013). Retrieved from http://www.maasaimaraconservancies.co.ke/conservancy/ol_kinyei_conservancy/index.htm
- Ole Sene, S. K. (2012). Local communities' perceptions on and expectations of conservation initiatives in the Amboseli ecosystem. *Mawazo: The Journal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Makerere University - Tourism, Conservation and Development Issue*, 11(2), 16-29.
- Ondicho, T. G. (2006). Attitudes of Maasai pastoralists towards Amboseli National Park. *Mila* (7), 49-56.
- Ondicho, T. G. (2012). Local communities and ecotourism development in Kimana, Kenya. *Journal of Tourism*, XIII(1), 41–60.
- Osano, P.M., Said, M.Y., Leeuw, J., Ndiwa, N., Kaelo, D., Schomers, S., Birner, R., & Ogutu, J.O. (2013). Why keep lions instead of livestock? Assessing wildlife tourism-based payment for ecosystem services involving herders in the Maasai Mara, Kenya. *Natural Resources Forum* 37(4), 242-256.

- Ruiz-Mallén, I., Schunko, C., Corbera, E., Rös, M., & Reyes-García, V. (2015). Meanings, drivers, and motivations for community-based conservation in Latin America. *Ecology and Society*, 20(3), 33.
- Rutten, M. (2002). *Parks beyond Parks: genuine community-based wildlife eco-tourism or just another loss of land for Maasai pastoralists in Kenya? IIED Drylands Programme Issues Paper No. 111*. London: Institute for International Environment and Development.
- Snider, R. (2012). Land Tenure, Ecotourism, and Sustainable Livelihoods: 'Living on the Edge' of the Greater Maasai Mara, Kenya. PhD Thesis.
- Sørli, E. B. (2008). *The establishment of wildlife conservancies in the Mara: the case of Olare Orok Conservancy*.
- Sumba, D., Warinwa, F., Lenaiyasa, P., & Muruthi, P. (2007). The Koiya Starbeds Ecodge: A Case Study of a Conservation Enterprise in Kenya (AWF Working Paper). African Wildlife Foundation.
- United Nations (UN). (2014). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*. New York, NY: United Nations.
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2012). *The Future We Want: Biodiversity and Ecosystems—Driving Sustainable Development. United Nations Development Programme Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-2020*. New York: UNEP.
- Van Wijk, J., Van der Duim, R., Lamers, M. and Sumba, D. (2015). The emergence of institutional innovations in tourism: the evolution of the African Wildlife Foundation's tourism conservation enterprises. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(1), 104-125.
- Western, D. (1994). Ecosystem conservation and rural development: the case of Amboseli. In D. Western, R. Michael, S. Strum. (Eds.) *Natural connections: Perspectives in community-based conservation*. Washington: Island. 15-52.
- Western, D., Russell, S., and Mutu, K. (2006). The status of wildlife in Kenya's protected and nonprotected areas. Paper commissioned by Kenya's Wildlife Policy and Legislation Review. September 2006. Nairobi: African Conservation Centre.
- Western, D., Wright, R. M., & Strum, S. C. (1994). *Natural connections: Perspectives in community-based conservation*. Washington: Island Press.
- Western, D., Waithaka, J., & Kamanga, J. (2015). Finding space for wildlife beyond national parks and reducing conflict through community based conservation: The Kenya experience. *Parks*, 21(1), 51-62.

Wishitemi, B. E., Momanyi, S. O., Ombati, B. G., & Okello, M. M. (2015). The link between poverty, environment and ecotourism development in areas adjacent to Maasai Mara and Amboseli protected areas, Kenya. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 306-317.

Tables

Name of the Sanctuary	Year proposed / established	Proprietorship	Area in sq. km	Objective	Current status
Kimana Sanctuary	1997	Former Members of Kimana Group Ranch	22.9	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Loosikitok Rhino Sanctuary	1997	Members of Mbirikani Group Ranch	5.69	Conservation Area	Proposed
Olosoito/ Mutikanju Wildlife Sanctuary	2006	Members of Kuku "B" Group Ranch	32.4	Conservation Area/Investor	Proposed
Elerai-Rupet Conservancy	2002	Privately owned by a group related landowners	52.5	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Kilitome Conservation Trust	2008	Privately owned by a group of unrelated landowners	24	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Osupuko	2008	Privately owned by a group of unrelated landowners	13.3	Conservation Area/Easement	Operational
Kitirua/Tortilis Concessional Area	1985	Members Olgulului Group ranch	80	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Eselenkei/Porini Concessional Area	1997	Members of Eselenkei Group Ranch	60	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Olowuaru camp	2005	Members of Rombo Group Ranch	12	Conservation Area/Investor	Operational
Oldonyo Wuas Conservation Area	1987	Members Mbirikani Group Ranch	4	Conservation Area/Investor	Proposed
Kampi Ya Kanzi	1998	Members of Kuku 'A' Group Ranch	2.4	Conservation Area/Investor	Proposed

Table 1. Distribution of community conservation projects in the Amboseli Ecosystem, in ole Sene, 2012, p. 22.

APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION

Example	"Mass" tourism model		"Small" tourism model				
	Sarova Shaba Game Lodge	Sweetwaters Serena Camp	Larsens Camp	Lewa House	Lemari's Camp	Il Ngwesi	The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille (AWF brokered venture)
Accommodation	Lodge with "chalet style" rooms and suites	Tented camp	Tented camp	Thatched main house & family cottages	Tented camp	A collection of bandas	A collection of houses
Size of operations	94 rooms	39 tents (more under construction)	20 tents	4 rooms & 3 family cottages	5 tents	6 bandas	4 houses
Land	National reserve	Private conservancy	National reserve	Private conservancy	Community group ranch	Community group ranch	Community group ranch
Ownership	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Community	Community
Management	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Community	Private
Approx. rate per person*	\$160	\$300	\$375	\$655	\$750	\$345	\$750

Table 2. Overview of main tourism venture models in Laikipia, Kenya, in Van Wijk et al., 2015, p. 108-109.

Items	Koiya Starbeds ecolodge	Conservancy at Ol Lentille
Group ranches involved:	Koiya g.r.	Initially, Kijabe g.r. Nkloriti g.r. through an MOU Later links with other group ranches and communities
Compilation of trust board:	Koiya g.r. (2 members) Oryx Ltd. (2 members) AWF (1 member—chair)	Kijabe g.r. (3 members—chair) Regenesis Ltd. (3 members) AWF (1 member)
Community trustees:	Local/regional level representatives	National/regional level representatives
Group ranch membership:	Koiya g.r.: clear membership	Kijabe g.r.: unclear membership
Private investor:	Oryx Ltd.: neighboring Kenyan investor	Regenesis Ltd.: foreign investor operating on the Kijabe group ranch
Financial input:	Donor grants: \$70k No private investor input	Donor grants: \$500k Private investor: \$1.5 million Loan: unknown amount
Land for conservation:	200 hectares Clear land ownership	Initially: 2,000 hectares Currently: 8,100 hectares Unclear land ownership
Community benefit share:	Guest-night fee: \$85	Guest-night fee: \$80 Rights fee: \$20k per year

Table 3. Summary of partnership arrangement, in Lamers et al., 2014a, p. 258.