

Case Study B: Ecosystem Disservices from Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas

What is the problem?

Community-based Conservation (CBC) approaches have been hailed by proponents from government and non-government sectors alike to be participatory and widely beneficial, despite the difficulties of evaluating their impacts on people and nature. In Tanzania, Community Wildlife Management Areas (CWMAs) are a common form of CBC representing an alternative approach to the fortress conservation and central government control by putting in place policies and legislation that put communities in focus for conserving natural resources. CWMAs were first initiated during the 1990s to increase participation of local communities in the management of wildlife resources and to deliver benefits for local communities, wildlife and the environment. Since then, over 22 CWMAs have been initiated and another 16 are planned with government, donor, community and NGO investment supporting their development and growth in the country.

The CWMAs comprise different ecosystems, socio-political structures, and a broad range of ecosystem services and a range of ecosystem disservices. Between 2013 and 2016, ESPA funded a multidisciplinary project to evaluate the performance of the CWMAs. The Poverty and Ecosystem Impacts of Payments for wildlife conservation initiatives in Africa: Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas (PIMA) project studied six WMAs representing a diversity of environments and governance structures, and rural populations whose livelihoods depend upon a range of strategies. The team worked with civil society organisations and government research institutes, and sought input from wildlife users, practitioners and policy-makers.

Findings

The PIMA evaluation revealed that the intended win-win from the CWMAs is still elusive. The evaluation established that the areas were characterised by land conflict, wildlife damage to people and crops, lack of tourism potential and high administration costs among other negative impacts. Table 1 presents some of the issues and the results from the PIMA evaluation.

Table 1: Issues identified during the CWMA evaluation

Problem	Result
Large share of revenue apportioned to central government and for CWMA management	Negligible income for village development
CWMA revenue is distributed on the principle of 'equal benefit sharing' to all member villages	Mutual resentment between villages who may have different levels of wildlife and crop damage
Reduced access to key natural resources (such as firewood and grazing) and land	Compromised household incomes and livelihoods, often particularly difficult for women
Lack of transparency in CWMA implementation	Villagers fail to understand implications of CWMA agreements, e.g. that they lose decision-making power over village land
Changing population-to-land ratio	Pressure on grazing and agricultural lands, leading to conflicts over land and boundaries
Poor protection from wildlife and no compensation for crop damage and livestock losses	Human, crop and livestock damage by wildlife; local resentment of and resistance towards conservation actors

Questions for discussion

1. What kinds of benefits do you think a CWMA could provide to local people? And to the global population?
2. What costs and risks do the Tanzanian CWMAs seem to be imposing on local people?
3. How do you think CWMAs could be organised to increase the level of benefits (and reduce costs) to local people?

Further readings

- Bluwstein, J., Moyo, F. and Kicheleri, R. (2016) Austere conservation: Understanding conflicts over resource governance in Tanzanian Wildlife Management Areas. *Conservation and Society* **14**: 218- 231.
- Homewood, K. *et al.* (2017) Realising the promise of Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas. Policy and Practice Briefing, ESPA. Available at: <https://www.espa.ac.uk/files/espa/Realising%20the%20promise%20of%20Tanzania%20Wildlife%20Management%20Areas.pdf>