



The issue of who are the key beneficiaries may be addressed through a more targeted analysis of the WILD data sets.

The perspective adopted by WILD is that it is essential that communities receive the support they need to explore what options are available to them through the conservancy beyond cash handouts and employment as ways to support livelihoods. If conservancies and the CBNRM support-programme stakeholders want to support livelihoods, then practical ways to support rural productivity need to be found (as with supporting livestock production). Another good example of such a strategy is through supporting plant-based natural resource harvesting, processing and marketing. In Caprivi, for example, natural resources, particularly reeds, palms, thatch grass and fish, provide items for domestic use, consumption and sales. There are also wild fruits and other plant-based resources that also offer potential (in the cosmetics industry for example). These resources may offer a comparative advantage over livestock and cropping for poorer groups since they require little investment to harvest. Gaining an income from these resources, however, requires access to markets, which are currently not easily accessible. The conservancies could build on the advantages they experience in being networked through the NGOs and donors to push for securing better market access for the sale of natural resource products. The comparative advantage of natural resource products is that the cash raised through their sales goes directly to the 'producers/harvesters' and in this way has an immediate and direct impact on livelihoods. Currently this aspect of resource use and management is of marginal interest to many CBNRM practitioners in Namibia, since the net economic returns are low compared to that available through wildlife and tourism, yet the effectiveness for livelihoods of supporting such small-scale initiatives of this kind is high³⁹. The economic returns can be significantly improved if an economy of scale approach is adopted, and this linked to southern African regional initiatives (for example through the activities of Phytotrade⁴⁰). In this regard, while revenues from wildlife and tourism contribute to economic development at a regional and national level, alternative and more focused natural resource use strategies are appropriate at the individual and household level.

Another important issue relating to natural resources is that for the majority wild food resources continue to play a role, albeit to varying degrees, in people's consumption strategies. Wild resources are therefore not only of value in terms of providing an income. Wild fruits, invertebrates and wild animals are all consumed. This allows for the least secure to meet some of their food requirements and allows other

better-off members of the communities to reserve their own resources (livestock or crops) for use at some time in the future. It is important that conservancy and CBNRM programme activities recognise this, build existing wild food utilisation into its planning processes (especially for valued resources like wildlife) and seek ways to minimise the negative effects of restricting access, particularly for poorer groups. To do this, conservancies need to understand current use patterns and their significance in terms of both their importance to the livelihoods of different people in their communities and in terms of the impact harvesting has on the resource base. This could form one component of a conservancy livelihoods support strategy. The issue of existing wildlife consumption is critical and yet little is known about it. The following chapter addresses the importance of these livelihood resources and strategies associated with harvesting and consumption in more detail.

Issues of differentiation – the rich and the poor

The ability for individual households to achieve livelihood security varies considerably between rich and poor groups. For the wealthier groups, formal and informal employment, high levels of stock holding or crop production and the ability to make stock and crop sales provide a high degree of security. The diversity of existing options available to the wealthier groups (without formal employment) is also significant. In contrast the poorer groups have less access to employment, have lower levels of stock holding, less access to the means of production for cultivation and are generally more reliant on natural resources to meet their livelihood security needs. The poor generally have access to a narrower range of opportunities and their strategies are less diverse.

The material presented above draws attention to the differences in resource endowment and livelihood strategies associated with the different groups. This issue is of critical importance in terms of targeting appropriate support to households within conservancies. Key here is the issue of equity, since the incomes and resource management practices of the conservancies are built on common property resource management principles. The question we need ask then is should the poorer groups be treated any differently to the rich?

People respond to this question in a variety of ways. When it comes to HWC, conservancy members would argue that all stand to lose crops and livestock and there should not be any discrimination (positive or negative) in dealing with the problem. Yet if a household with only a small area of crops and no cattle experiences extensive crop losses to elephants they are left much more vulnerable than those with

³⁹ It has been suggested that the money invested to date by donors in supporting crafts production and sales could have produced a better return for crafters had it been put into an interest earning bank account and then the money distributed among producers (C. Brown pers. comm.). While an interesting suggestion this approach fails to recognise that the producers of craft enjoy a regular small injection of cash when they sell baskets and that this has a high social development value for households since the money is controlled by women and spent on household food, educational expenses and health care. An investment approach would not meet these needs.

⁴⁰ Phytotrade Africa represents small-scale producers in the natural product sector in the southern African region. The association's objective is to develop a reliable, efficient and enduring natural products' industry in southern Africa based on natural resources that are accessible to rural producers. They can be contacted through info@phytotradeafrica.com.



many stock and large crop areas (see Caprivi case study above). Many respondents involved in this research also expressed a genuine concern for targeting the poor and vulnerable in their communities. This was in part in recognition of the need to assist those less fortunate, but also in recognition that these people were the ones most likely to hunt illegally and to exploit natural resources in unsustainable ways. Others expressed concern with an inability to identify who the poorer and more vulnerable were, since being poor was not a constant condition and that people could move in and out of the more or less secure categories for a variety of reasons. Despite this there was consensus in relation to key indicators of differentiation. What makes people poor and vulnerable was widely known – for example low levels of or no cattle holding in Caprivi.

Whether conservancies chose to favour the less fortunate in their communities and for whatever reason is a decision that they must make democratically. The research materials presented here, however, suggest that there are a number of reasons why the issue of targeting the poor would have a positive effect on the conservancies. Data presented above from Caprivi, for example, indicates that at least half of the survey respondents did not own any cattle. This meant that they did not necessarily have access to the means to plough. This then puts them in a position of livelihood insecurity. To mitigate against this the poorer groups rely on the use and sale of natural resources. Providing direct support for those with the least cattle, through providing credit or grants to hire oxen for cultivation, could strengthen the position of these less secure households, leading to less reliance on natural resources. In turn the money used by the conservancies to assist this group would also go to the wealthier households who owned oxen and were able and willing to hire them out. If a combination of approaches were used that specifically addressed the different concerns of the different types of households in conservancies there would be a much higher likelihood of achieving a greater degree of fit between CBNRM and livelihoods.

That different groups have different priorities is important and leads to the need for consideration of providing support for livelihood security as well as exploring options for livelihood diversification. For the poorest groups their concerns are often more about livelihood security in the short term than with diversifying their income sources over the longer term – although the latter is also desirable. To this extent the poor and rich have different priorities. For the poor or less secure groups, finding enough food and income is obviously a priority. For the wealthier groups, their concerns relate more to opportunities for improvement and for investment, for example in buying more cattle or goats and extending their areas of cultivation.

These differences not only raise the question of the conservancies adopting different approaches for different

groups, but also the question of what the implications of livelihood improvements may mean in terms of the conservation objectives of CBNRM. Wealthier farmers, for example, may choose to invest conservancy incomes in more stock, or in clearing land. They may also benefit from initiatives to support livelihood production strategies (as above example in terms of access to veterinary drugs and diesel fuel). These kinds of initiatives may have the effect of strengthening the livelihoods of secure households and lead to larger stock holdings. This is an important issue and raised here as red flag in terms of the possible negative consequences of directly supporting livelihoods. The research and analysis presented draws attention to this issue, since it needs to be addressed by conservancies if they choose to adopt a livelihoods support strategy. It is something that can be addressed through the development and adoption of appropriate conservancy-level policies relating to the distribution of benefits and opportunities.

Summary of a possible conservancy livelihood support strategy

The material presented in the main body of this chapter highlights the way in which livelihoods concern a variety of resources and strategies. This implies that a truly effective livelihoods support strategy would require taking a multi-pronged approach that addressed simultaneously a number of livelihood opportunities for different groups. This would enable a conservancy livelihood support strategy to include a suite of options of which different people could enjoy the benefits. Some of the options discussed above are currently being implemented, and others were provided as examples of the kinds and levels of support that are required. To implement a livelihoods support strategy, it is essential that appropriate methods and participatory tools for analysis be designed and adapted for use within the conservancies (details of suggested approaches can be found in Annex 3). This would enable context-specific livelihood support options and implementation strategies and plans to be developed. To illustrate the kinds of options that may be of value, the following have been identified by WILD based on the findings presented above. A generic conservancy livelihoods support strategy may, then, include the following options:

1. Supporting existing livestock and cropping strategies through the provision of micro-credits (for labour, draught power, access to breeding stock and veterinary drugs).
2. Continued focus on HWC to mitigate negative consequences of crop and stock losses.
3. Continued distribution of cash dividends to households (where appropriate and income levels are high).
4. Supporting the development of natural resource-based cottage industries and access to markets within and beyond the southern African region.