



'upwards' participation of community members that is important. Without participation and engagement between community members and conservancy committees, conservancy planning and the key decisions that they take cannot be guaranteed to address the concerns and livelihood priorities of members. Chapter 5 illustrates that for most people key concerns and priorities relate to livelihood security (food and incomes). The extent to which one or other strategy to address livelihood security predominates varies between households however. By contrast, many conservancy activities are focused on improving resource management (specifically but not exclusively wildlife) and on promoting tourism and capturing revenues as a way of providing benefits to their membership.

While it is clear that some of the activities of the conservancies aim to address issues that directly impact livelihoods (for example, efforts to mitigate HWC, provide meat and distribute cash), in terms of existing livelihood activities there is currently little dialogue between the conservancy committees and their broader membership.

In the north-west there are some locally derived conservancy initiatives which take up this challenge directly. Torra Conservancy has planned to use some of its income to support paying for veterinary drugs to improve livestock health. A donation has been made to the Torra farmers' union to subsidise the purchase of these drugs. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas income is to be used to pay for diesel to pump water for those who suffer some of the costs of elephants drinking water allocated for livestock use. In both these cases one possible effect of the support offered by conservancies is that they will only affect those who already have a number of livestock or diesel water pumps. This may lead to further marginalisation of poorer groups within conservancies. While the initiatives are praiseworthy, targeting appropriate support for livelihoods, that does not inadvertently benefit some over others, requires careful attention to establishing means to create improved dialogue and planning between community groups and the conservancies.

Concerns with improving participation in conservancy activities and decision-making needs to be tempered with a recognition of the context in which conservancies have developed. Local communities are still emerging from the pre-Independence apartheid era when they had few rights, had little opportunity to voice their views and had developed a dependency syndrome. A quote from a ≠Khoadi //Hôas committee member cited in Schiffer (2002) illustrates this:

"People are still used to sitting down and waiting. That is due to the history of apartheid."

It should also be recognised that logistics are a problem for promoting good communication and information, particularly in the north-west where people tend to be scattered in small settlements. People interviewed by Schiffer (2002), partners from different sectors of the CBNRM programme, saw the size of the conservancies (in square meters as well as membership numbers) as a challenge. For ≠Khoadi //Hôas, Schiffer reported that dissemination of information, existing options for participation, and a feeling of ownership of the conservancy decrease the further people live from the central settlements and the conservancy office. Participation is not simply about creating good channels of communication (up or down); it is also a process that is centred on building capacity and empowering people within communities to take an active role in determining their own futures. To this extent participation is a process of dialogue centred on problem solving and group decision-making.

While there may be little formal participation in conservancy planning and decision-making, WILD research demonstrates that there are a number of ways in which people currently participate and cooperate in resource management and other key decision-making contexts. These frequently take place at the household and inter-household levels. Li and Vaughan (2003), for example, describe the various ways in which people cooperate and reach decisions in regard to water management; Vaughan and Katjiua (2001) provide evidence of cooperation in respect to livestock grazing; in Caprivi, the Mashi Craft Market is organised as a cooperative (Suich and Murphy 2002) and provides an arena for collective decision-making among women; in both Caprivi and Kunene the traditional authorities and headmen act to resolve disputes and mediate resource use and management conflicts at household, farm and village levels. In addition there are many church groups, farmers' unions, and women's clubs, which become fora that offer opportunities for communication and dialogue.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The discussion in this chapter began with the assertions that to meet the objectives of CBNRM requires effective and functioning local-level institutions; that these need to be recognised as legitimate, through strong links to existing structures of authority and decision-making; that there is synergy and integration between institutions who have responsibility and authority to manage resources; and that the inclusion and participation of the resource users themselves is essential – not only in terms of their continued support, but also to meet their livelihood concerns and priorities. The discussion in this chapter presented research



materials relating to how far these are currently being met within the study conservancies. The findings presented here suggest the following.

There appears to be the general perception at the local level that the conservancy institutions themselves, in terms of their overall management function, are one aspect of the conservancy residents are satisfied with – although the precise reasons for this need further elaboration.

In terms of the conservancies links to traditional authorities there has been a mixed experience across the two study regions. In Caprivi, the strong support provided by the traditional authorities has created a legitimate foundation for conservancy development. In some cases the traditional authorities have formally devolved wildlife management directly to the conservancy committees. They continued to have a role in management decisions, especially regarding any infringements of the law. In Kunene, the conservancy links with the traditional authorities have been less strong, and this has in some cases led to a lack of clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities for key resource management decisions, particularly regarding water and land. In Kunene the traditional authorities are also in a relatively weak position and the emergence of the conservancies has been seen by some as a direct threat to their already limited authority.

There are a range of different institutions with different roles and responsibilities for NRM in the conservancies. In some cases these overlap and there is currently a lack of coordination and synergy between them. Opportunities to create better synergy are being addressed by conservancies (Kwandu for example) and the Government's decentralisation policy offers a structured and legitimate avenue to link conservancy development with regional planning and the activities of other government departments. NGOs appear to have a strong influence on the extent to which conservancy residents are satisfied with the conservancy institutions. A number of questions relating to the role of NGOs require further elaboration. These are dealt with in the recommendations section below.

In terms of the participation and the inclusion of community residents in decision-making and planning, there is no systematic approach being adopted or promoted and participation remains *ad hoc*. In the Caprivi case, links through village headmen to the hierarchy of traditional authority structures continue to provide an effective means of communication between the conservancy and membership. In Kwandu Conservancy there has been a broadly inclusive approach to NRM planning. Elsewhere there appear to be poor channels of communication between conservancies and their communities. External support organisations share responsibility for a lack of participation and poor communication within conservancies, since the

focus of much of their support has been in building institutional capacity, NRM and enterprise development. Each of these issues is elaborated upon further according to the following themes.

1. The links between conservancies and existing structures of authority and decision-making.
2. Institutional complexity and the extent to which there is collaboration, integration and synergy between the different institutions working towards improved resource management.
3. Conservancies, livelihoods and participation.

The discussion concludes with a series of recommendations.

Conservancies and traditional authorities

The institutional design of conservancies is different from the structure of existing institutions (i.e. the contrast between institutions based on strict boundaries, developing constitutions, electing representation and defined membership and those based on customary law, leadership succession through lineage structures and inclusion based on social, ethnic and geographical criteria). Despite this in some cases there is a good fit between existing institutions and the conservancies as the Caprivi cases demonstrate. That new institutions can be adopted and have a meaningful role alongside existing institutions is evidence of the ways in which traditional institutions can accommodate new processes and practices. This varies between regions and conservancies however. The key issue here is the recognition of the role of traditional authorities in resource management decision-making. A comparison, for example, between Salambala and ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancies highlights the importance of the role of traditional authorities. In the north-west, there are some tensions between the traditional authorities and the conservancies. This stems from struggles to control land and wildlife resources, which in some cases, is compounded by the interplay of the agendas of local actors in the context of national and regional politics.

In Caprivi, there is a high level of cooperation and interaction between conservancies and traditional authorities, although this has not always been the case. This stems from the fact that the traditional authorities have not been co-opted by conservancies, but rather have played an instrumental role in their development and view the conservancies as the legitimate institutions for managing wildlife. Despite the lesson from Caprivi, that the inclusion of traditional authority structures in the development and design of new institutions for resource management gives them legitimacy, this is dependent on the extent to which these existing structures are functional and coherent. In Kunene, the traditional authorities occupy a much weaker role than their Caprivan counterparts, yet they remain politically important. While provision can be made in policy for the greater recognition of the role of traditional authorities, there should be sufficient



space for each conservancy to work out its own mode of relationship and for policy to be flexible and not prescriptive.

Although there are certain legal requirements for conservancies to develop constitutions, elect representation, define membership and establish boundaries, there is no single 'blue print' for the institutional design of conservancies. The material presented in this chapter illustrates the difference in structure between a number of conservancies. Each conservancy must establish links with other institutions, particularly the traditional authorities in ways that are essentially meaningful in local political and social contexts. This is a strength.

Institutional complexity and integration

The issue of better integrating the activities of the various institutions that have responsibility and authority for resource management is also important. In some cases, there appears to be some confusion over who has authority and responsibility for particular resource management decisions. This has implications for equity of access and can lead to a situation in which the vacuum created by a lack of clarity leads to the monopoly of resource use and access by powerful individuals. This is particularly the case in terms of water and land management. These two resources are critical for livelihoods.

In the context of water, water point committees may have the ultimate responsibility, but when water installations are damaged and water is consumed by elephants there appear to be differences of opinion as to whose responsibility this is. Some conservancies are already beginning to make payments to cover damage by elephants and this would appear to be a useful way of dealing with this issue. Such compensation for elephant damage, linked to efforts to provide alternative water points for elephants and more formal links between conservancies and water point committees, could mitigate much of the tension caused by elephant problems.

In the case of land, the issue of group tenure raised in the context of both Caprivi and Kunene remains important. Formerly, access to grazing was the responsibility of the traditional authorities and village headmen. A situation of negotiated access prevailed. This led to a degree of flexibility, allowing for the extensive movements of livestock in arid areas and for access to certain areas during drought. For all intents and purposes this system remains much the same, within conservancies (with the exception of access to areas zoned specifically for wildlife). Although the conservancies have responsibility for land they have no authority to enforce exclusion, particularly in conservancies where the traditional authority structures are relatively weak. While this represents a threat to the conservancies in terms of the depletion of their own resources and any lost revenues,

it could also be potentially problematic for the livelihoods of people who live in the boundary areas.

The movement of livestock is a management response to conditions of aridity, it has the effect of mitigating risk. On the one hand, the lack of group tenure and the ability to exclude outsiders creates a potential situation of lost grazing to the conservancy residents; and on the other, any attempts to create exclusivity within the conservancies may minimise the opportunities for conservancy resident farmers to graze in other areas outside the conservancy. There is a need to balance the needs of mobility and negotiated grazing access with the need for conservancies to gain exclusive tenure over their land and resources. Securing group tenure for the conservancies would establish grounds upon which it would be possible to exclude outsiders through the law, or provide the basis upon which negotiations regarding access can be established. This is a necessary step in strengthening the conservancies' rights and authority with respect to resource use and allocation. This is especially the case for southern Kunene, where the traditional institutions and systems have been displaced by the conservancy institutions. There is a need for measures to be taken to re-establish grounds for negotiating and protecting access rights. Strong collaboration between the conservancies, their communities, the traditional authorities, and the Government will be needed to strengthen tenure in appropriate ways. NGOs will be required to support the process of improving group tenure.

The Communal Lands Act may offer the means to create better coordination in terms of land-use planning and integration, through the establishment of the Communal Lands Boards. Conservancies will have representation on these boards, together with traditional authority members and various government departments. In terms of issues relating to the granting of leases for various land uses in conservancies the boards must reach agreements – the fora that the lands boards offer may provide additional opportunities for collaboration and to strengthen tenurial land rights.⁸ The boards are being formally constituted, but there is a lack of clarity as to exactly how the conservancies will be represented and what powers they may have. The same lack of clarity exists in terms of the role of the traditional authorities on these boards.

The issue of integration and sectoral collaboration, however, presents a number of practical challenges. The distances from urban and regional centres – and thus opportunities for better sectoral coordination between the conservancies and government departments – is a particular problem in Kunene. In Caprivi, distance is less of an issue, but the resources need to attend meetings and for better communication are lacking. There also need to be appropriate fora through which collaboration can take effect.



The Government's decentralisation processes offer an opportunity to coordinate the various different resource management committees and institutions, particularly through the VDCs. The CDCs and ultimately the RDCs offer opportunities to link to regional developments and to coordinate various Ministry departments. The effectiveness of decentralisation in achieving better intersectoral collaboration and linking regional planning to conservancy development is hampered by the current slow pace of implementing the policy of decentralisation and a lack of clarity concerning the exact role and function of VDCs. At the time of fieldwork, WILD was given the explicit directive to work through the RDC in Opuwo. This was not possible during the project's three years' duration because although the committee had met on several occasions it was not a functional committee as such. In Caprivi, by contrast, there are functioning VDCs and CDCs. At regional level, there is also a RDC that meets on a regular basis.

Conservancies, livelihoods and participation

In terms of household livelihoods, most resource use and management decisions take place at the household and inter-household levels. In contrast resource management by committees at conservancies level operates at a much broader scale. The result is that in some cases there are essentially two different forms of resource management that co-exist within conservancies. This has the effect of distancing the primary resource users from resource management decisions that the conservancy may make (see also above in respect to group tenure). There is a clear need for better inclusion of resource management practice at the household level with the decision-making and planning of the conservancies.

The livelihood concerns and priorities of the conservancy residents are focused on issues of food and income security. The focus of people's livelihood strategies varies. Some are more livestock focused, others more involved in informal employment, natural resource use and cropping. Material discussed above highlighted the issue of conservancy committees in southern Kunene providing support through the provision of veterinary drugs or through the provision of diesel to pump water. These initiatives aim to provide direct livelihood support. In both cases the potential exists that they will benefit those who are the biggest livestock keepers. There are a number of implications to this. The first is that approaches of this nature will lead to the further marginalisation of poorer groups within the conservancies (i.e. those without significant numbers of livestock, or those who can not afford subsidised drugs, or those without access to diesel pumps). A second potential consequence is that the more marginal groups (in terms of locality and status) may cease to support the conservancies. A third relates to this issue of increasing numbers of livestock and possible competition with wildlife.

The material relating to social relations and power highlighted the fact that it is relatively easy for some elite groups to monopolise access to resources (particularly land and water). There is no reason to assume that it would be otherwise with a limited amount of support for livestock production. The discussion highlights the need for better participation and inclusion in decision-making in respect to a range of conservancy activities. The issue here relates to providing support in order to establish appropriate forums and processes to improve participation and inclusion. The discussion in this chapter has not sought to identify all the issues that would become the focus of dialogue between conservancies and households, rather it has sought to identify a number of current issues which have a range of implications for people in the conservancies. To this extent, the identification of particular problems aims to provide a number of examples where improved dialogue and more inclusion in decision-making processes may lead to more appropriate and context specific outcomes for all conservancy residents. Since the social and economic composition of the conservancy communities is diverse, conservancy decision-making and planning needs to be oriented towards a diversified range of outcomes beneficial for different groups within the community.

While the prospect of improving participation would at first sight appear a daunting task, evidence presented above identifies that people already have effective means of collaboration and participation. There are, for example, a number of groups and clubs, including the churches, farmers' unions and water point committees, not to mention the kin and lineage groups at inter and intra-household farm and village level. While each of these has a specific focus, they also provide opportunities for social interaction that create opportunities for communication and collaboration. These groups offer some opportunity to build on existing decision-making and problem-solving fora and to address the issue of participation. While conservancies are bodies that meet particular legal requirements and are therefore organised accordingly, at a lower level it is important that structures to improve communication and participation are not developed in addition to existing fora.

The issue of participation and communication is not only important in order to address improved decision-making and planning. The issue is at the heart of the legitimising conservancies as institutions. In some cases there are good opportunities for participation. In Caprivi, the traditional authority structures, with representation from individual villages all the way to the chiefs' courts offers an opportunity for the concerns of local people to be included in conservancy decision-making. Both the traditional authority structures found in Caprivi and the other groups (church,

⁸ Traditional leaders in Kunene expressed some concerns over the new land boards, since it remains unclear exactly how conservancy and traditional authority representation will be achieved on these new boards (Vaughan *et al.* 2003).