

Are Livelihood Security and Attitudes Towards Wildlife, the National Park and the Conservancy/CBNRM Interlinked?

JUANITA GARCIA-SAQUI

Community-based natural resources management programs (CBNRM), their benefits and influence in conservation attitudes, needs further study. Positive attitudes towards community based programs have been correlated to favorable attitudes towards conservation which are also correlated with good livelihood. However, some studies also show that local attitudes can be negative towards conservation, wildlife and the national parks. Here I present and comment on the findings of a study carried out in three villages in 2007 which make up the Wuparo Conservancy, as well as the preliminary results of the summer 2008 field season in Northern Botswana.

The objective of this study was to evaluate attitudes towards wildlife conservation, the national park and the conservancy after an intervention such as the establishment of a CBNRM program in the Wuparo Community in the Caprivi Strip, Namibia, and in Sankuyo, Mababe, Khwai and villages of the Okavango Community Trust (OCT) in Botswana. A proportionate-to-size sample households was randomly selected and interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire in each village within the conservancy boundaries.

Results indicate that in Wuparo household income is predominantly from cash crops (55%), followed by a

variety of natural resources collected and sold (20%). It was noted that a significant portion of household expenses go to food (43%). However, households appear to spend little on education (4%) and health (2%), relative to electronic purchases (17%). The study also showed respondents' satisfaction with the conservancy or CBNRM. A large percentage (78%) of the sample reported being either happy or very happy with the conservancy. A similar percentage was seen regarding livelihood improvement and trust towards the conservancy. Finally, the study also documented people's attitude towards wildlife and the Mamilli



National Park. Most people were neutral about the park (51%), but among the remaining 49%, the vast majority had either positive or very positive attitudes towards the national park. People's attitudes towards wildlife were also found to be positive (56%).

In Sankuyo, household income is predominantly from wage employment with the CBNRM. 75% of the respondents had one member of their household employed in the CBNRM, while 12 % had two members employed by the CBNRM. Respondent's satisfaction with the CBNRM was found to be very positive. 98% of the respondents reported being either very happy or happy with the CBNRM while 2% were unsatisfied because they felt discriminated upon. Attitudes towards wildlife were found to be very positive. 98% of the respondents reported being very happy or happy and having positive attitudes towards wildlife, in spite of the fact that they are unable to cultivate their crops anymore because of wildlife intrusion. They attributed this positive attitude to wildlife because they felt that even though they can't farm they now have a job (from wildlife) which allows them to be able to supply the necessities for their family's survival. The results for Mababe were similar to those of Sankuyo where most households (90) have a family member working with the CBNRM and their attitudes were also found to be positive towards wildlife and the national park.

The situation of the communities in the OCT was found to be different. The CBNRM is not seemed as supportive of the community. Only a selected few benefit from the CBNRM (personal communication) and benefits are not seen to be reaching the individual households. However, their attitudes towards wildlife and the protected area was predominantly positive ~70% were happy with and liked wildlife while 20% were neutral about wildlife.

Juanita Garcia-Saqui is a doctoral student in Geography.

