

Assessing the Possible Local Community Benefits from Ecotourism Operations in Kenya

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Local community benefit from protected areas is a vital component of ecotourism and sustainable development. In developing nations, this local community benefit has been considered more difficult to achieve than in developed nations. What makes developing nations' local benefit from ecotourism so different from developed nations' benefit? In order to answer this question, this paper researches the details of Kenyan ecotourism operations' direct, indirect, positive, and negative impacts upon local communities. This research also compares Kenyan ecotourism operations with the Australian government's ecotourism policies and the nation's range of ecotourism opportunities for indigenous people. This comparison allows for an assessment of the possible local community benefits that can be derived from Kenyan ecotourism.

Chapter 2 – Method

I further investigated this topic by traveling to Kenya on the University of Georgia's Kenya Study Abroad Program during Maymester 2003. I sought to explore the positive and negative influences on local communities as a result of protected areas and ecotourism. In Kenya, I was able to interview people who represented public, private, and academic organizations involved in ecotourism. At UGA, I researched Australian ecotourism and its positive benefits for local communities and produced a comparison of the two countries' ecotourism industries in order to assess the possible benefits of ecotourism for Kenyan communities.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

The purpose of this Literature Review is to create a framework for the past and present issues revolving around local community benefits in Kenyan ecotourism. The following section explains ecotourism and the importance of local community benefits for ecotourism. It also provides a description of Kenya's protected areas and their governance as well as Kenya's history of wildlife policy and

treatment of local communities. The remainder of the Literature Review depicts the direct and indirect tourism impacts on local communities and the positive benefits and also the negative costs that stem from these impacts.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism has been named an alternative to mass tourism in that it seeks to remedy the destructive problems associated with mass tourism. Newsome, Moore, and Dowling (2002) state, “the primary goals of ecotourism are to foster sustainable use through resource conservation, cultural revival and economic development and diversification” (p. 14). Ecotourism exists to sustain the development of the world without destroying the environment or the livelihood of the people who live in it. Newsome, Moore, and Dowling (2002) declare five principles of ecotourism, and say, “ecotourism is nature based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educative, locally beneficial and generates tourist satisfaction” (p. 15). This paper focuses on the importance of local community benefits in ecotourism.

Local Community Benefits

Local community benefits are not a separate issue from ecological sustainability. Without these benefits, long-term conservation and sustainability are impossible. Fennell (1999) states, “Sustainable tourism development is unlikely to occur unless the people of rural tourism communities work together to make it happen. There appears to be a certain agreement that if sustainability is to occur at all, it must be done at the local level, and perhaps shaped loosely by a broader national or international policy” (p. 24). If locals do not enjoy benefits, they will not see the value of conservation, which is especially important in developing nations where wealth is difficult to obtain or where wealth usually falls into the hands of a few. People care about their own survival rather than saving the biodiversity of animals and plants.

Description of Kenya’s Protected Areas and Their Governance

Kenya’s protected areas fall under two major categories- national parks and national reserves- and the government manages each type differently. Dieke (2001) explains the differences between the two kinds of protected areas and how each is governed. National parks are owned, funded, and managed by the central government through the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), a semiautonomous institution.

Local governments, called county councils, run the reserves. The central government partially manages and funds these areas, and the reserves are trust lands. The county council is a group of elected leaders in each of Kenya's counties. These groups of local authorities set aside the land to conserve wildlife, but also are expected to benefit local communities with the protected area.

Kenya's History of Wildlife Policy and Treatment of Local Communities

In order to understand ecotourism and its impacts on local communities, one must know the history of Kenya's wildlife policy. The interest in protecting Kenya's wilderness went hand in hand with British imperial rule over Kenya beginning in 1895. Western travelers arrived in Kenya to undertake huge safaris and slaughter indigenous wildlife (Honey, 1999). Colonial interactions with the people and wildlife of Kenya indicate that the British saw the indigenous culture as inferior and had no altruistic need to preserve wildlife. The British wanted protected lands so they could continue their big-game hunting safaris, and they wanted the locals to facilitate these safaris by acting as their servants. Over the years, the British passed laws in order to cater to their own recreational needs, without any regard for surrounding indigenous communities. The National Parks Ordinance of 1945 drove indigenous people out of their lands in order to make way for protected areas. Most of the animals in these areas migrate out of the parks due to incomplete ecosystems, so they must struggle with the surrounding people and cattle for resources (Honey, 1999). The birth of Kenya's protected areas did not bode well for local communities who were immediately faced with the challenges of displacement and human-wildlife conflicts. These issues still exist for local Kenyans because the British ignored local community impacts and complete ecosystems when they created the National Parks Ordinance of 1945.

Impacts on Present Local People

Kenya's ecotourism history has produced some direct and indirect impacts on present day people. The direct impacts include human-wildlife conflicts, local community ecotourism projects and their socio-cultural impacts, and political corruption, and they effect tourism revenues and tourism to Kenya, which affect local community benefits more distantly. These impacts are economic leakage, domestic tourism, international tourism marketing, and political unrest and terrorism.

Human-Wildlife Conflict

One of the largest reasons why local communities in developing nations do not support ecotourism or conservation is because of the human-wildlife conflict. Honey (1999) states that 70 percent of wildlife live outside of protected areas and feed on people's land and livestock. This problem exists because the National Parks Ordinance of 1945 marked off incomplete ecosystems for protected areas. The result of this impact has unfortunate consequences for both the people and the animals. Wild animals, mostly elephants, have been responsible for hundreds of deaths of people in the last twenty years. In addition to lives, they have also destroyed property, including homes and livestock (Sindiga, 1999). Because of the human-wildlife conflict, it is not surprising that "recent studies show that the majority of the local people around protected areas have negative feelings about state policies and conservation programmes" (Sindiga, 1999, p. 105). Until the human-wildlife conflict is mitigated, conservation will have trouble positively benefiting local people.

Local Community Ecotourism Projects and Socio-Cultural Impacts

In many areas, the people who live in or around the parks in Kenya have formed local community ecotourism projects, which are cultural centers where tourists are allowed into a tribe's village by paying an admission fee (Honey, 1999). These villages are at the heart of ecotourism because their inhabitants are directly impacted by tourists who enjoy protected areas. The socio-cultural impacts that result from these traditional model villages, therefore, are indicative of the amount of local community benefits that are derived from ecotourism.

From an ecotourism perspective, the cultural centers are supposed to benefit the local people socio-culturally and economically. Theoretically, they exist to enrich the tourists' knowledge of the local people in order to travel more responsibly by respecting the local culture. Sindiga mentions that another socio-economic benefit to cultural centers is the revival of traditional Kenyan art (1999). The economic benefit from the cultural centers is derived from the admission fees and craft sales. Although there are benefits to the villages, scholars also focus on the costs. They find these centers commodify cultures. The Western tourist desires to see a wild savage, solitarily before a pristine backdrop of the African

landscape to show he is out of touch with the rest of the world. The Maasai portray this image to supply the demand of the visitors, not because they really live or want to live that way (Sindiga, 1999). This difference in a preconceived or artificial image and an authentic lifestyle poses a problem for the indigenous people from an ecotourism perspective, where the local people are to be respected, no matter how they live.

Political Corruption

The history of Kenya's governance outlined above has shown Kenya's past administrators neglected the well being of local communities in order to benefit their own interests. This trend of political immorality remains in Kenya and has created direct negative impacts on local community benefits of ecotourism. The Lake Kamnarock National Reserve is situated in the eastern half of the Kerio Valley, on the side of the Baringo District in the Rift Valley Province, Kenya. This reserve stands as a good example of a politically corrupt government managing a protected area and its communities. The Baringo District County Council runs the reserve and has since its creation in 1983. The politicians in the area created the reserve without the consent or even the knowledge of the local community, the Tugen tribe (Colagiovanni, 2002). The people still live on the land and use its resources, but illegally according to Kenyan law, even though they were never compensated for their loss of property. The allowance of subsistence activities is due only to the lack of government resources for law enforcement (Colagiovanni, 2002). The government's priorities are to develop the area for tourism and to increase enforcement capacity, even though local people have torn down some of the tourism facilities that contractors have attempted to build. However, the Council assumes that the local people will want tourism, and they will see the benefits quickly (Colagiovanni, 2002). Colagiovanni (2002) admits, "while this may very well be the case, the point is that, in the past eighteen years, nobody has asked them" (p. 106). This neglect has led to resentment, frustration, and disempowerment of the people, which is undoubtedly a negative influence on the community.

Colagiovanni (2002) has asked the people about the reserve, and "almost none of the people actually living in Kerio Valley feel that this situation is desirable" (p. 102). The reserve has been in place

for eighteen years, restricting the livelihoods of the people, and the tourism developments and therefore benefits (community development projects) have not arrived (Colagiovanni 2002). At the same time, they have to deal with a human-wildlife conflict because of the reserve. The local communities feel that “the animals are more important than the people” (Colagiovanni, 2002, p. 95). Until these major damages to the lives and minds of the people in Bogoria stop, sustainability to the area will become impossible.

Indirect Impacts

As stated earlier, the indirect impacts of ecotourism on local communities mostly affect tourism revenues and tourism to Kenya. In general, these impacts are less poignant for the local people because they do not deal with these large-scale trends every day of their lives. Economic leakage, domestic tourism, international tourism marketing, and political unrest and terrorism, however, all affect local community benefits in Kenyan tourism.

Economic leakage occurs in a country when a business is run by a foreign operator, and the money that goes into the business leaves the host country. When economic leakage occurs, the indigenous people of the host country do not see many of the benefits of that business (Lindberg, 2001). Kenya’s tourism industry is notorious for its past and present economic leakage. Sindiga (1999) states, “the international distribution of Kenya’s tourism benefits is skewed to the advantage of multinational corporations. Kenya’s tourism leakages are very high” (p. 117). From Sindiga’s (1999) perspective, economic leakage is a negative impact that should be mitigated so that locals can enjoy more benefits from tourism.

Domestic tourism indirectly impacts and potentially benefits the local communities of Kenya for several reasons. During the low season, from April to August, many tourism workers must be laid off (Sindiga, 1999). With domestic tourism, however, the seasonality of tourist expenditure would become less defined and workers could keep their jobs year round. The domestic tourists benefit by experiencing the diversity of all of the regions of Kenya and other peoples’ cultures and different types of protected areas that have various conservation issues. This understanding will empower the people of Kenya and equip them for future national or regional decisions. Domestic tourism also benefits Kenya’s profits

because any variation in tourist arrivals greatly impacts the country's economy since tourism occupies such a high percentage of Kenya's GDP, usually around ten percent (Dieke, 2001). Currently, most tourists come from the United States and Western Europe, and any economic recession in these countries would diminish Kenya's tourism revenue (Sindiga, 1999). With high domestic tourism, an occurrence such as this would not result in dramatically negative economic impacts.

Due to the extremely high percentage of international tourists to Kenya, tourism marketing around the world is vital to Kenya's economy. Kenya ranks as number six in tourism earnings behind South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritius, and Tanzania (Dieke, 2001). These other countries have better marketing strategies which makes Kenya's tourism earnings inferior compared to those of South Africa and Tanzania. The government has created the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) in 1996 to increase tourism promotion for the country overseas. Strategies focusing on oversea promotion point Kenya in the right direction of increasing tourism revenues, which indirectly benefit local communities.

Kenya's political stability and amount of terrorist threat are huge factors that affect international arrivals to Kenya. The events during the 1990's harmed Kenya's image as a safe place to visit. Political unrest in Kenya during this time involved problems among the multitude of the nation's ethnic groups. Sindiga (1999) describes this indirect impact on tourism: "in a sense, the ethnic clashes are a sign of the failure of the country's political institutions to hold the country together. Although there were no direct attacks on tourists, the general feeling of insecurity created a poor environment for conducting the tourism business" (p. 45). In August of 1998, terrorists simultaneously bombed the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing hundreds of people, mostly Africans. Osama Bin Laden, leader of the Al-Qaida network, stands as the alleged perpetrator of the embassy attacks. The US government suspects that the Al-Qaida network plotted the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. So in May 2003 when a report was issued that an alleged Al-Qaida terrorist, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, was planning another Kenya attack, the United States, Britain, and several other nations issued an advisory warning. During the 2003 season, Kenya lost its narrow market of North American and Western European tourists. President Kibaki met with US President Bush in October 2003,

and said that the advisory “had severely affected tourism which was Kenya’s main economic pillar” (Kelley, Bosire, & Kithi, 2003, paragraph 2). At the time of this writing, however, the US government has not lifted the warning. As mentioned earlier, a vital part of the Kenyan economy is derived from tourism revenues. The loss of Western tourists to Kenya harms the people economically, which is a negative impact on all local communities involved with ecotourism. Ironically, the terrorists target Westerners; however, their activity in Kenya has harmed Africans far more than the people they aim to hurt.

Conclusion

This literature review demonstrates the complexity of local community benefits and costs involved in ecotourism in Kenya. Kenya’s imperial past left a legacy of political corruption and deceit of the local people. This problem contributed to the human-wildlife conflict and continues to limit local community benefits today. The local people have sought tourism benefits by creating their own cultural projects to gain revenue. However, their commodification brings to question their authenticity, which conflicts with the ecotourism ideals of respecting and preserving local culture. Finally, their dependency on tourism from a very narrow market base creates an economy that is threatened by political unrest and terrorism.

Chapter 4 – Findings

This Findings section begins with primary information gathered in Kenya about ecotourism and its positive and negative impacts on local communities. Through the use of interviews with representatives of public and private organizations as well as scholars, I was able to assess three different perceptions of all of Kenyan ecotourism and local community benefits, and also three perceptions of the possibility of ecotourism and its relationship to the surrounding communities of one specific area of Kenya, Kerio Valley. I have incorporated my personal observations relevant to Kenyan ecotourism and local communities as well as Kerio Valley into these Findings. In addition, I have included information from secondary sources about Australian ecotourism and its relationship to local communities as well as a case example of an indigenous ecotourism operation in Australia called Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours.

Kenyan Ecotourism and Local Community Benefits

The following paragraphs consist of public, private, and expert analyses of ecotourism and local community benefits in Kenya. These discussions are offered by Sammy Towett of the Kenya Wildlife Service Tourism Section (public organization), Joseph Kathiw'a from the Ecotourism Society of Kenya (a private, non-governmental organization), and Dr. Muusya Mwinzi, a professor in the Department of Wildlife Management at Moi University (scholar).

KWS Tourism Section

Sammy Towett (personal communication, May 15, 2003) is a representative of the Tourism Section of the Kenya Wildlife Service headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The Tourism Section of the KWS deals with any issues involving visitors to protected areas, such as tourism trends and visitor entry fees. Towett sees competition with other African nations as a problem for Kenyan tourism benefits. He says that Kenya holds only two percent of Africa's tourism and competes with places like Egypt, South Africa, and Tunisia. According to Towett the lack of domestic tourism also decreases Kenyan benefits of tourism. He expresses concern over the trend decline of residents visiting the parks. He feels that conservation is a duty of the people of Kenya because the animals are part of their cultural heritage. In order to increase domestic tourism, the KWS reduces visitor entry fees for citizens of Kenya. Local community benefit from tourism is not a responsibility of the KWS, says Towett, because there are too many political issues involved in creating KWS policies that concern people. The KWS's only concern is conservation, according to Towett. Towett claims the KWS cannot create policies that make sure that the income of protected areas is given in part to local communities. Such policies would interfere with the politics of county councils, and the KWS wants to avoid political confrontations. The county councils govern the areas, and the KWS leaves this job alone and manages wildlife only. The KWS shows a general concern for the people by sponsoring the building of schools and hospitals.

The Ecotourism Society of Kenya

Joseph Kathiw'a (personal communication, May 13, 2003) works as the Projects Officer of the Ecotourism Society of Kenya (ESOK), located in Nairobi, Kenya. ESOK is a private, non-governmental

organization composed of members ranging from individuals to corporations who wish to come together to lift the standards of the tourism industry in Kenya. Kathiw'a says that the organization wishes to ensure that people abide by the principles of ecotourism, environmental conservation, and benefit sharing of various stakeholders, who are the private investors and local communities.

According to Kathiw'a, local community benefit is the priority of ESOK, ranking above conservation and private investor benefit. This priority is due to the poor treatment of local communities by conservationist policies of the government and also economic leakage as a result of foreign, private investment. Historically, Kathiw'a says, conservation policies seemed to favor only the animals, causing the people to resent the wildlife. Competition for resources and conflicts with animals contributed greatly to this discontent. Conservation policies, therefore, require local community benefits or else conservation will no longer exist. Private investors and local communities make up the two partners of ecotourism projects, according to Kathiw'a. The local people own the natural resources and also have the most knowledge about them. The private investors have the management education and money to run a tourism project. Usually, investors attempt to take more money than the community because they are in control of the financial knowledge. ESOK aims to ensure that the local community will get the optimal amount of benefit. Kathiw'a wants to increase fees to enter parks and take tours in order to raise more revenue for communities and also to lower ecological impacts in protected areas. Although this rise in price would deter local people from traveling around Kenya to see protected areas, Kathiw'a does not see this effect as a conflict with local community benefits. He says that the locals are not interested in being tourists, and they will be happier if they generate more profits instead. The problem with gaining revenue in reserves is their management, and county councils are notorious for taking more money than they are earning.

Moi University Department of Wildlife Management

Dr. Muusya Mwinzi (personal communication May 23, 2003) works as a professor in the Department of Wildlife Management at Moi University in Kenya. Mwinzi finds that a major challenge of local community benefit in Kenya is the minimal linkage between revenues from the tourism industry and

local communities, especially indigenous people. Mwinzi feels that foreign investment contributes to this problem. He says local people should be able to travel all over Kenya to see the parks, but they do not get enough money to do so. However, people from the US and Western Europe pay a lot of money to visit Kenya, and this money could help the indigenous people, but travel agencies take too large of a portion of the money.

According to Mwinzi, the tourism operations within Kenya are large companies run by foreign people. These companies employ Kenyans, but the workers receive extremely low wages while the owners collect large profits. Hotels use local materials, but the money they generate from these materials does not go back to the local area. People also have trouble selling vegetables and other food to hotels because the companies import these items from South Africa and French speaking African countries. The hotels import the products because they are cheaper than the local products. The government has no restriction on economic leakages. Local people do not have enough knowledge to run hotels themselves, and the government does not have enough money to finance or educate these people. The government relies on gate fees only to manage itself. This money is then spread over paying for jobs, conservation, and the compensation of wildlife damages to local communities. Mwinzi explains that because the funds are so low, benefit sharing acts as the only possible compensation. For example, the government builds hospitals in areas damaged by wildlife.

Mwinzi describes the formation of protected areas as the root of the resentment that people feel towards wildlife, and the human-wildlife conflict reinforces this resentment. To the people of Kenya, the creation of protected areas meant the taking of ancestral lands and resources that they feel are naturally theirs. This bitterness is fueled by the lack of compensation people receive from suffering damages caused by wildlife. If animals, for example, eat all of a man's crops, kill his sheep, and murder his child, the "compensation" of the building of a school and a legal opportunity to sell handcrafts to tourists will not truly return the losses the man has suffered. Mwinzi says that there are various mechanisms to mobilize the locals to make use of the wildlife, rather than conflict with the animals, but it is difficult for the local communities to exploit the natural resources. The people sell curios and handcrafts, but some

local leaders want to exploit this market by acting as middlemen between the producers and tourists.

With a direct market, the people generate profits for themselves. However, people currently stand outside of the gates of parks to sell beaded jewelry and small carvings for very cheap prices. With little buying power, the locals need more incentive to sell things to the tourists. According to Mwinzi, people talk of group projects where the community can set up tourism by themselves, and as the government protects wildlife areas, it protects these projects. This way, the people will learn conservation due to the large percentage of animals that live outside of the parks.

Mwinzi laments the insufficient international marketing of Kenyan tourism, but feels positive about Kenya's political stability as an attraction for outsiders to travel to the country. The scholar speaks of international tour exhibitions around the world in places like Atlanta and Berlin, but no one from Kenya goes to these exhibitions and advertises. More advertising would help draw in larger numbers of tourists, which would increase local community benefits in tourism. According to Mwinzi, recent fears of terrorism threaten tourism numbers, but people who come to Kenya see that there is no strife and the people lead very peaceful lives. He observes that they tell other people to come to Kenya when they return to their country.

Personal Observation of Kenyan Ecotourism and Local Communities

On the University of Georgia Kenya Study Abroad Program (KSAP) led by Dr. Norm Thomson and Dr. Rose Jepkorir Chepyator-Thomson during Maymester 2003, we visited a Maasai homestead (boma) within Amboseli National Park on May 17, 2003. The boma contains one large extended family from the Loitokitok clan, and the head elder's name is Olonguyana. We paid US\$10 to receive cultural information, tour the boma, and buy jewelry and crafts from the people. Our tour guide was Wilson, the son of the chief. The people gave us a traditional Maasai greeting dance and song to welcome us into their boma. As we entered, the guide explained to us that their buildings were made of cow dung. He said they are pastoralist people, who herd goats and cattle for a living. The men herd and the women make jewelry for sale. Wilson led us into one of the huts and showed us the room where the husband and

wife sleep and the room where the children sleep. Outside, some members of the boma created fire for us, and showed us some medicinal plants.

Case Study: Kerio Valley Ecotourism and Relationship to Local Communities

This section includes public, private, and expert opinions of the Kerio Valley region, which contains Rimoi NR and Lake Kamnarock NR. The interviewed people offer their perceptions of the possibility of tourism to the region and the impacts it would have upon the people who live within the valley. These discussions are offered by Joseph Nyongesa, a KWS Warden of Rimoi NR (public organization representative), John Williams, hotel operator (a private operator), and Tricia Colagiovanni, academic expert of Lake Kamnarock NR (scholar).

KWS Management of a National Reserve

The Rimoi National Reserve is situated in the western half of the Kerio Valley, on the side of the Keiyo District in Kenya. The Kerio River divides the Rimoi NR and the Lake Kamnarock NR. People inhabit both reserves. Joseph M. Nyongesa, (personal communication, May 27, 2003) the Warden of Rimoi NR, represents the Kenya Wildlife Service as a wildlife manager and administrator of the Uasin Gishu, Keiyo, and West Pokot districts, but focuses most of his time on managing the natural resources found in Rimoi NR. Nyongesa operates from Iten, Kenya, overlooking the Kerio Valley and Rimoi Reserve below and to the East.

As a KWS representative, Nyongesa says that his sole purpose is to provide maximum security to the animals and plants of the reserve. He manages animals, and maintains that he has no tie to the people of the area because that is the management job of the Keiyo County Council. However, if the people hurt the animals, then he will send the people to jail. Nyongesa believes that the human-wildlife conflict is the fault of humans. He says that there are 500 elephants in the reserve, and they do not bother the people. Elephants will trample people, however, when the people stab the animals with spears. Nyongesa says that the people poach elephants for meat and also kill them due to a competition for resources.

Nyongesa wants tourism to come to Rimoi NR, and the warden has several ideas about ways to exploit the area for tourism. However, according to Nyongesa, tourism to the reserve has been prevented

by a lack of marketing, problems with government's inaction, and the current community way of life.

However, once marketing and the government allow for tourism to arrive to Rimoi, the KWS will educate the people about conservation and the benefits of tourism.

In order to initiate tourism to Rimoi NR, the region must attract investors who wish to develop the area and include the area in an established tourism circuit, according to Nyongesa. Hotels will only be possible by outside investors, the Warden claims. The Warden says he blames former leaders for not exploiting the area's natural resources. He claims that it is the County Council's responsibility to develop, advertise, and promote tourism. He is waiting for the Council to act, and once this occurs, the KWS will step in and work with the Council to bring in tourism. However, the County Council must decide first when to market tourism, because that is not the KWS's job. Right now the KWS's job is only to enforce the security of the animals, according to Nyongesa.

Where progress is concerned, the people who inhabit Rimoi NR fall behind, explains Nyongesa. He says that if they are not burning charcoal, they are just sitting idle. Although they struggle to survive and a new tarmac road allows access to other places, these people will still insist on living the way that they do. However, if you go to Maasai Mara or Samburu, the people live quite differently because of tourism. They have uplifted their lives, Nyongesa observes. Nyongesa says if the County Council starts building, then the KWS education of the local people will start too. The KWS will go to schools, go to homes, talk to students, talk to chiefs, and show people what others in Maasai Mara and Samburu are doing. Nyongesa wants to market the culture of the people in the reserve as in Amboseli NP. He says their villages are marketed so the people perform for tourists and collect money from them.

For now, Nyongesa hopes that tourism will come to the area. The local leaders have recently been gathering in Eldoret, a large town about an hour west from the valley, to discuss the issues of tourism and how to exploit the area. The only people from the valley who attend the meetings are those who have had schooling, but organizers leave out the non-schooled people. The educated people are positive about tourism, because they have seen it outside of this region, observes the Warden. But those

who have not seen it are the people who start problems with the wildlife, and these people are why the warden has to enforce conservation laws to protect the wildlife.

Kerio View Restaurant and Hotel

John Williams (personal communication, May 22, 2003) is a native from the United Kingdom; however, he is a businessman who lives in Kenya. Williams runs a hotel, bar, and restaurant called Kerio View, which overlooks the Kerio Valley on the Keiyo side. Kerio View works mostly as a place where local business people and leaders can come to talk and relax; however, Williams is interested in bringing tourism to Kerio View by marketing the resources of the valley. John Williams and his Belgian friend Jean Paul created the idea of Kerio Valley. They had a deliberate policy to use people in the area for employment, because there could be a negative reaction from the population about white people drawing outside attention to the area. Williams always uses the locals so that they feel involved. Williams has hosted meetings at Kerio View with people from the Baringo district, Nairobi, and European investors to discuss proposals for preservation in the valley. Preservation and tourism need money, he claims, and he hopes that funds could come from the Europeans.

Williams spoke of how the people down in Kerio Valley feel about tourism, and suggested that their way of life at this time is not compatible with the business of tourism. However, he thinks that this attitude will change with the advent of tourism. He says that the educated people want tourism, but the people by the lake who have been asked to move out are very negative about it. He says these people were told long ago that they were losing their lands to reserves and tourism would compensate them, but they have not seen any advantages. Williams insists that the people have to see tourism as positive. According to Williams, local people in the valley will supply the materials and employment that are necessary for visitor demands. They will provide vegetables and meat to hotel operators, and they will be employed as tour guides. For now, however, the people do not have a business mindset.

Academic Scholar of the Area

Tricia Colagiovanni (personal communication, May 14, 2003) works for the United Nations' Environment Program (UNEP) in the UN headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. As mentioned in the literature

review, she wrote her master's thesis about the relationships among the people, environment, and government in Lake Kamnarock NR in Kerio Valley.

After spending three months living with the local communities of Lake Kamnarock NR in 2001, Colagiovanni mentions that tourism changes the dynamics of a community. For example, in Maasai Mara, everyone tries to sell curios to tourists. In Kerio Valley, the people simply try to take care of visitors and do not see them as a way to make money. The scholar says that the people in the valley suffer greatly from the human-wildlife conflict. Four people were killed while she was there because the elephants were under environmental stress. They would come in the night and rip off people's roofs, ruining their homes and property. The KWS does not do anything about this problem because it says that the people are not their responsibility. However, the Baringo District County Council has no contact with the local people, and Colagiovanni refers to them as politicians who are only concerned about money. They get all of their funding from revenues generated by other protected areas in their district such as Lake Bogoria NR. The people of the valley seek compensation for the government taking the lands in 1982 without their consent, but the County Council neglects that responsibility.

Personal Observation of Kerio Valley

On the KSAP program, the students hiked to the bottom of Kerio Valley on the Keiyo side and visited Kaptubei Primary School. Here the entire school came out to greet us, and we gave them books for their library and pens and pencils for their classrooms. The administration informed us that these children were working on their Keiyo tribe's indigenous performances for a competition with other schools. The students performed their cultural dances and songs for us. The people thanked us for coming, and we informed them that we were very grateful for them to let us visit and also watch their performance.

Australian Ecotourism and Local Community Benefits

A look at ecotourism in Australia and its relationship to local community benefits forms the final component of the Findings section. This information includes a summary of government ecotourism policies that aim to benefit local communities, an illustration of the range of ecotourism opportunities for

indigenous people, and a case example of an indigenous operated tour company named Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours.

Government Ecotourism Policy Involving Local Communities

Australia's national and regional governments have been considered as having a history of excellent ecotourism planning and policy, which include a concern for local community benefit from ecotourism. Dowling (2001) says this ecotourism development began when the federal government implemented a National Ecotourism Program from 1994 to 1996. The program's goals included a request for tourists' appreciation of indigenous culture. The program incorporated the National Ecotourism Strategy, which serves as a guide for planners and managers to develop ecotourism in Australia. In addition, the Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA) and the Australian Tourism Operators Association (ATOA) created the National Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP). NEAP certifies ecotourism products according to principles, including "contribution to local communities and sensitivity to different cultures" (Dowling, 2001, p. 143). According to Fennell, Buckley, and Weaver (2001), The *Queensland Ecotourism Plan*, created by the Queensland Department of Tourism, Sport and Youth, is an example of a local government policy for ecotourism that includes the ideal of local community benefit. The state plan contains an aim to compensate the local community appropriately for the use of their resources.

Range of Local Community Participation in Australian Ecotourism

Indigenous Australians, the Aborigines, benefit from seeking employment from and investment in ecotourism, and also insulating themselves against negative impacts of ecotourism. According to Wearing (2001), the people in Uluru and Ayers Rock take advantage of the employment opportunities of ecotourism. They guide tours, interpret their tracking skills, and show how they process food. The Gagudju people have decided not to seek employment on the basis of their cultural knowledge and invested in the tourism infrastructure and own two hotels in Kakadu National Park (Wearing, 2001). In addition to gaining benefits, the Aborigines are able to protect themselves against the negative impacts of ecotourism. For example, the people of the Umorrdjuk area in North Western Arnhem Land maintain

their cultural integrity by controlling tourism access to certain areas and activities. Aboriginal tour guides regulate the tourists' entrance and photographs of sacred sites and also limit the tourists' knowledge of traditional activity.

Case Example of Aborigine Ecotourism Operation

The Kuku Yalanji people of the Wet Tropics Rainforest of Queensland, Australia run their own tour operation called Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours (Sofield, 2002). These Aborigines guide tourists through the rainforest lands that they originally occupied. The rainforest acts as a vital component of their cultural heritage. Sofield (2002) observes,

Over the centuries, the people followed seasonal cycles as they camped, hunted, and gathered food, medicines, and other materials for daily use. They traveled along a complex of interconnecting walking tracks that led to campsites, places of cultural significance and social and economic importance, and resource-rich areas (p. 121).

Tourists travel upon some of these walking tracks and also around the bottom of Mount Demi to learn about the ancestor myths derived from these places. According to Sofield (2002), the "interpretation of the landscape is as much a cultural and spiritual as an environmental experience because the stories and songs related by the guides emphasize their belief that nature and culture cannot be divided or viewed separately" (p. 122). All of the people's language, myths, songs, and dances relate to their reality and understanding of the environment. Before outside influences, the people used these cultural expressions as ways to survive their harsh environment. These vehicles of knowledge created a respect for elders in society, who passed on this information to the youth, binding the two generations together. Traditional customs usually find it difficult to remain relevant in today's capitalist world. However, ecotourism allows these cultural traditions to maintain their relevancy in the passing of indigenous knowledge onto younger generations. Sofield (2002) says,

It is assisting in the adaptation by the Kuku Yalanji to contemporary wider Australian society by creating employment, by the generation of indigenous entrepreneurship and small business development, and by providing an economic base to revive indigenous communities (p. 122).

With the tool of ecotourism, the Kuku Yalanji are able to revive and maintain their cultural identity based on the landscape in order to empower their society.

Chapter 5 – Discussion of Findings

This Discussion section analyzes the interviews and observations of the Findings section in order to understand the forces that create positive and negative ecotourism impacts on local communities in Kenya. The section also compares the Findings section's description of Australian ecotourism to Kenyan ecotourism in order to explore the possible local community benefits that Kenya can achieve with its ecotourism industry. The Discussion illustrates the lack of Kenyan ecotourism policy that seeks to benefit local communities and the successful ecotourism program in Australia. Australia's program demonstrates the need for Kenya to adopt and develop policies that are directed towards local community benefit.

Analysis of Ecotourism Organizations in Kenya

The interviews in the Findings section show the direct and indirect impacts of ecotourism that are outlined in the Literature Review. Again, the direct impacts listed in the review are the human-wildlife conflict, local community ecotourism projects and socio-cultural changes, and political corruption. Economic leakage, domestic tourism, international tourism marketing, and political unrest and terrorism comprise the indirect impacts. The public, private and academic organizations of Kenya generally have different perceptions that determine how concerned or well informed they are about these direct and indirect impacts of ecotourism, which can be positive or negative. Their attitudes towards these impacts affect their relationships to local communities and therefore local community benefits.

Analysis of KWS Tourism Section

Sammy Towett demonstrates that although some of the KWS's goals assist in the indirect positive benefits of communities in Kenya, the KWS's lack of action concerning direct positive benefits hinders the KWS's ability to benefit local communities. Towett's attitudes towards international tourism marketing and domestic tourism are positive for local community benefits. Towett suggests that the KWS sees competition with other African nations for tourist revenue as a problem, showing the government's need for better international tourism marketing. As stated in the Literature Review, the strength of international tourists to Kenya and the well being of the country's economy is indirectly

related to local community benefits of tourism. Therefore, the KWS helps local community benefit by moving in a direction towards better marketing. Another attitude that helps local community benefits is Towett's suggestion to increase domestic tourism. The KWS rewards people for domestic travel by reducing citizens' visitor fees into protected areas.

The KWS's priority for conservation yet refusal for local community benefits policies is contradictory. Towett shows that the KWS fails to realize the importance of the direct relationship between local community benefits of ecotourism and conservation. For the KWS to completely accomplish its priority of conservation, it needs to join forces with the county councils and legally ensure that communities receive benefits from ecotourism. The KWS's unwillingness to confront the county councils results in an inability to resolve the issue of improving local community benefits from conservation. The KWS does express some concern for local community benefits by building schools and hospitals; however, this contribution does not compare to the creation of benefit enforcement policies. Overall, the KWS is concerned with indirect impacts on local communities such as international tourism, marketing, and domestic tourism. However, its failure to recognize problems such as the weak linkage between local community benefits and conservation threatens the possibility of local community benefits from ecotourism in Kenya.

Analysis of the Ecotourism Society of Kenya

Joseph Kathiw'a demonstrates that ESOK's primary goals are different than KWS's priorities. ESOK's priority is local community benefit, whereas the KWS's priority is conservation without a strong feeling towards local community benefit. ESOK feels strongly about conservation and private investor benefit from ecotourism; however, the two are less important than local community benefits. ESOK's logical explanation for this hierarchy of concerns is because local community benefits have usually been pushed aside by conservation (creation of protected areas without recognition of indigenous land ownership) and investment (disproportionate distribution of profits that favored usually non-local investors). ESOK thinks that because of this past and present ignorance of the importance of local community benefits, problems with conservation and ethical tourism development continue today. ESOK

feels that Kenya can overcome these problems with policies that guarantee local community benefits from ecotourism and control economic leakage.

ESOK fails to see domestic tourism as an indirect positive tourism impact upon local communities, whereas Towett demonstrated that the KWS recognizes this benefit. Kathiw'a's claim that local communities do not need to visit other regions' protected areas of Kenya shows ESOK's ignorance of the benefits of domestic tourism that the KWS understands. ESOK has limited the definition of local community benefit to just economic benefits. However, people have a right to visit their public lands and understand the wildlife and landscape's roles in Kenya's cultural heritage, as Towett explains. This socio-cultural benefit is just as important for communities as economic benefit is. Kathiw'a's concern of the direct impact of political corruption shows that ESOK's non-affiliation with the government gives the organization more of a realistic idea of the problems related to ecotourism and local community benefits than the KWS's analysis of the situation. Kathiw'a openly mentions the county councils' reputation for stealing funds, whereas the KWS washes over the political issues of county councils by simply saying it wants to avoid political confrontations.

Analysis of Moi University Department of Wildlife Management Expert Opinion

Professor Mwinzi's expert analysis of ecotourism and local communities in Kenya includes all of the indirect impacts listed in the Literature Review: domestic tourism, economic leakage, international tourism marketing, and political unrest and terrorism. Mwinzi refers to domestic tourism as a right for local communities; therefore, he laments the expensive travel and admission fees that limit indigenous peoples' access to protected areas as they watch international tourists spend large amounts of money while traveling to and enjoying the parks. Mwinzi mentions this money could go to the indigenous people, which would allow them to travel easily; however, the money is lost on foreign operators. Because of this economic leakage, the people are unable to exercise their right to enjoy their cultural heritage within the protected areas and also their right to receive compensation for the use of their lands. In their place, foreign travelers benefit from visiting the parks and foreign operators profit off of these travelers. As ESOK also suggests, Mwinzi looks to the government to place controls on economic

leakage. Mwinzi also criticizes the government's meager compensation of benefit sharing for human-wildlife conflicts.

The selling of crafts is a commonly stated economic benefit of ecotourism for local communities, which Mwinzi acknowledges, but he also brings to our attention the setbacks of middlemen in the market as well as the crafts' cheap prices allowing little buying power. He finds this limited economic benefit and benefit sharing as insufficient rewards for the negative impacts of tourism upon local communities. Mwinzi's call for group-owned indigenous ecotourism projects operates as a solution to some of the listed problems. If the people own these projects themselves, then they will have the power to eliminate economic leakage as much as possible and also the power to control their curio economic market. This unlimited access to profits from tourism will allow the people to tour domestically and revitalize their cultural identity and heritage, creating a positive socio-cultural impact for themselves.

Mwinzi's analysis of terrorism's threat to tourism is slightly short sighted. He feels that the political stability demonstrated in the latest general elections will overcome fears of terrorist violence; however, he underestimates the effects of September 11th, 2001 had upon Americans' feelings of safety. The Literature Review explains, in October 2003, five months after my meeting with Dr. Mwinzi, President Kibaki pleaded with President Bush to lift the travel advisory indicating its damaging effects upon tourism numbers to Kenya.

Analysis of Personal Observation of Kenyan Ecotourism and Local Communities

My personal observation of the Maasai boma serves as an example of a direct impact of ecotourism: a local community ecotourism project and socio-cultural changes for this community. The Maasai were able to show us some of their distinct traditions such as their pastoralist livelihood, fire-building, and medicinal techniques.

However, there was one indication that one of their explanations to us about their way of life was not true. Inside of the hut, Wilson showed us two rooms and explained that the husband and wife sleep in one room, and the children of the parents sleep in the other room. Through personal communication with Dr. Rose Jepkorir Chepyator-Thomson (May 22, 2003), co-director of UGA KSAP and Keiyo

tribeswoman, she informed me that in her culture, men can have multiple wives. Each wife sleeps in her own house and the man sleeps in another house. She says she has previously asked the guide if the Maasai are different than the Keiyo in this particular sense. The guide replied that the tribe alters the explanation for the tourists to reflect a Judeo-Christian tradition in order to avoid being considered primitive. This inauthentic teaching demonstrates the commodification of culture outlined in the Literature Review. This observation shows a blurred line between authentic teachings and telling the tourists what they want to hear in order to receive their money. The tourists then have the ability to control what sort of culture they would like to see, without a basis in reality. This commodification threatens the ecotourism principle of respecting local culture and preserving local culture. The problem is a negative socio-cultural impact of ecotourism on local community benefits.

Analysis of Kerio Valley Ecotourism

The three perspectives (public, private, and expert) of the case study of the Kerio Valley region also demonstrate different concerns about the direct and indirect impacts that ecotourism has on local communities. Their varying degrees of concern for these impacts affect these organizations' ability to benefit local communities.

Analysis of KWS Management of a National Reserve

The KWS Warden Joseph Nyongesa demonstrates that the KWS's way of governing at the regional level is the same as the KWS headquarters's mindset of governance. As Towett also explains, Nyongesa says that the Warden and the KWS have no tie to the local people because that is the responsibility of the County Council and also because their priority is conservation. Nyongesa's interview, however, allows us to see the actual relationship that the KWS Warden *does* have with the people, although he does not call this contact a relationship. The Warden demonstrates that because the KWS enforces conservation, it must have contact with the people in order to enforce these laws, and this enforcement constitutes as the basis of the relationship between the KWS and the people. This link between conservation and enforcement means that the management of wildlife and the management of people are inseparable. Because the management of wildlife and management of people are intertwined,

it is impossible for one administration (KWS) to claim that it only manages the wildlife, while another administration (County Council) only governs the people. This ignorance that the management of protected areas is a human issue directly decreases the possible benefits that local communities can derive from these protected areas.

Nyongesa's description of his duty of enforcement shows that the majority of the contact the KWS has with the people is the act of arresting. The KWS desires that people conserve, but the only way it teaches them conservation is by arresting them when they violate conservation laws. This way of teaching based upon fear is counteractive to the people's understanding of the importance of conservation. Arrests will only lead to resentment of the KWS and also of the animals. Resentment of the animals is also evident in Nyongesa's statement that the people sometimes kill wildlife due to the competition of resources. He says this human-wildlife conflict is the fault of the humans. However, this competition is the fault of the government for poorly allocating the resources of the area. The Warden's ignorance of the human-wildlife conflict intensifies this direct negative impact of protected areas.

When expressing the KWS's interests in bringing tourism to the valley, Nyongesa shows that the public organization is unconcerned of the economic and cultural well being of the people. He says that only outside investors will make tourism development to the area possible, but he does not lament the economic leakages normally associated with such investments. He assumes that with some lessons on conservation and knowledge of other local communities' involvement in ecotourism activities, the people will embrace ecotourism and prepare traditional dances and jewelry for the entertainment of the visitors. However, as Mwinzi states, the selling of these items amounts to little buying power for the people and a small incentive for getting involved in tourism and conservation. Also, this sudden interest in local culture as soon as tourism arrives yet non-interest in conservation education or cultural practices indicate that the KWS is only concerned with its own benefits gained from the exploitation of the people's way of life. This point is made further by the fact that the people of the valley are not included in the meetings about the potential for tourism to the area. This involvement in the decision-making process of

developing tourism is necessary for local community benefits from tourism, which will lead to the people's vital understanding and appreciation of conservation.

This analysis of Nyongesa's interview reveals that the KWS has destructive policies when local community benefits from protected areas and ecotourism are concerned. The public organization's reasoning for these policies are to absolve the KWS of any blame associated with: the unhappiness and conflict caused by the people's competition with wildlife over resources, the lack of government policies to regulate economic leakage associated with foreign investments in tourism development, the lack of concern for the economic and cultural well being of local communities with the arrival of tourism, and the lack of initiative taken towards joining the County Council in managing wildlife and people together in order to compensate for the governments' mistakes of separating the two realms of governance. The damaging results of these policies are: the domination of local communities facilitated by fears of arrest, the allowance of economic leakage, the exploitation and commodification of the culture of the local people without comparable rewards, and the disempowerment of the local people.

Analysis of Private Operator of Kerio View

Williams shares some of the KWS's views that create negative impacts upon local people when speaking of the possibility of tourism to Kerio Valley. Williams and his business partner Jean Paul represent the foreign investment and ownership of a tourism operation in Kenya that leads to economic leakage. However, due to the small scale of Kerio View, Williams and Paul do not make enormous profits that would be taken out of the area on a debilitating scale. Williams's conscious effort to involve the local communities in the employment of the hotel shows his concern for their economic well being.

However, Williams's expressed desire for tourism development funding to come from Europe demonstrates that the local leaders of the valley will try their best to ensure maximum profits for the investors in order to get their business. This situation is the root of economic leakage because the maximization of profits of investors means the minimization of returns to the local community. Since not many people from the valley are included in these decision-making meetings that solicit the European investors, the potential indigenous losses from tourism are not considered. Nyongesa and Williams

probably share the same goals in this sense because they both attend the meetings that discuss foreign investment's role in tourism development. Williams's knowledge of the people's tradition shows that he has more of a positive contact with people from the area, which is probably derived from his relationship to his employees. In contrast, Nyongesa's law enforcement-based contact with the people causes him to more easily criticize their way of life and not show a great understanding for their traditional culture. Williams's understanding of the culture of the people puts him in a better position to ensure positive benefits from ecotourism than Nyongesa's lack of understanding. However, Williams's attitudes towards foreign investment and exclusion of the people from decision-making meetings sets the stage for negative impacts upon local communities with the arrival of ecotourism to the area.

Analysis of Scholarly Opinion and Personal Observation of the Area

Colagiovanni's assessment of tourism's impact on the local communities of Kerio Valley is strikingly different than Nyongesa's and Williams's analyses because she has lived with people in the valley. She notes the direct impact of socio-cultural changes that communities undergo when they market themselves for tourism in her comparison between the profit-seeking locals of Maasai Mara and the Kerio Valley's legitimate concern for the well being of outsiders. Colagiovanni finds this difference to be negative; however, if the economic benefits are high enough, then this socio-cultural change will be a minor cost. If this is the case, then over time the people can gain enough economic benefit to insulate the negative socio-cultural impacts on their culture. They can limit the time they spend gaining profits from tourists and spend more time revitalizing their traditions that they may have lost during the socio-cultural transition from a primarily subsistence-based economy to a commodity-based economy. Colagiovanni finds fault with the both the KWS and the County Council for the human-wildlife conflict and lack of compensation for the taking of indigenous lands.

My personal observation of the visit to the Kaptubei Primary School demonstrates the authentic, non-commodified culture of the people of the valley. The students performed their traditional dance and song without the incentive of money and therefore had no reason to alter the authenticity of their

performances for our viewing. This performance contrasts with the local community ecotourism projects' cultural performances and explanations that may be altered in order to please tourists' expectations.

Comparison of Kenyan and Australian Ecotourism Benefits of Local Communities

Australia's ecotourism industry creates several benefits for the local indigenous communities of Australia that are not as easily realized in Kenya. The indigenous communities of Australia are able to choose among a variety of ecotourism economic benefits, to maintain their cultural heritage, and to empower themselves with the opportunity to make decisions about tourism development. These benefits are made possible with the governmental policies toward ecotourism in Australia and demonstrate the potential benefits that Kenya's indigenous communities could enjoy from ecotourism.

Australia's governmental ecotourism policies that included local community benefits, The National Ecotourism Program and the National Ecotourism Accreditation Program, set the stage for a political demand for local community benefits that is linked to the demand for a conservation of resources. The Kenya Wildlife Service and County Councils' decision to keep the two realms separate causes harm for both areas. The local communities do not feel as important as the resources and also do not feel a need to conserve them at the government's request. Joseph Kathiw'a of ESOK, Dr. Muusya Mwinzi from Moi University's Department of Wildlife Management, and Tricia Colagiovanni, a scholar on local communities in protected areas, all state the government's management problems with tourism and protected areas are the major reason for a lack of maximum local community benefits from the areas. If the government of Kenya linked local community benefit with conservation, then the local cultures of Kenya would be able to achieve the wide range of benefits that indigenous Australians enjoy. Aborigines and Kenyans alike enjoy the economic benefit of employment from tourism. However, what the Kenyans lack is the Aborigines' opportunity to invest in the tourism infrastructure and also the power to run their own tour operations. The Aborigines insulate themselves against negative impacts by limiting visitation and photography of sacred sites. Due to insufficient contact with local communities, such as the Maasai boma, I do not know if the people of local ecotourism projects make a point not to take people to sacred areas or limit tourists' traditional knowledge.

The Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours company illustrates an empowered society of indigenous people who have the resources to market their tours on an international level. They are in charge of decisions made about tourism and can also provide tourists with an explanation of their spiritual relationship to the resources, which allows the tourists to respect and appreciate the essence of their culture. The resentment that Kenyans feel towards their resources due to the disempowerment they feel from being left out of decisions, the human-wildlife conflict they face, and the difficulty of domestic tourism due to expensive travel costs prevent them from easily conveying this authentic and enriching cultural experience for tourists.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

A comparison between Kenyan ecotourism and Australian ecotourism allows for an assessment of the possible benefits that the local communities of Kenya can derive from ecotourism. This assessment can be made due to the strong ecotourism industry and political support for Australian local community benefits from ecotourism that are absent in Kenya's industry. Kenya's government has no ecotourism policy because it does not realize that the management of people and the management of protected areas are intertwined. Without policies concerning local community benefit, efforts to promote ecotourism are diminished. However, with the evidence from Australia, Kenya can learn how to benefit communities more and achieve conservation goals.

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