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Defying Extinction Through Conservation: Benefits of Black Rhino Tracking in the #Khoadi//Hôas Conservancy, Namibia

Joram Ndlovu[1], Onward Utete[2] and Mary Ellen Kimaro[2#]

[1]University of KwaZulu Natal, School of Social Sciences, Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa
[2]University of Namibia, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Department of Geography, History and Environmental Studies, Namibia
E-mail: [1]<Ndlovuj1@ukzn.ac.za>, [2]<oonward@gmail.com>, [2#]<mekimaro@unam.na>

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ABSTRACT Direct benefits of biodiversity conservation have been a subject of debate over the past two decades. Despite the accelerated growth of CBNRM initiatives meant to redress the neglected communities and bring socio-economic development to remote areas, the challenge is to develop innovative instruments for channeling conservation investments efforts directly for individual gain and collective wealth and well-being of communities. To appreciate the value of Black rhino tracking, a case study approach was used to measure the benefits accruing to local communities in the #Khoadi //Hoas conservancy. Data was collected through participant observations and in-depth interviews with 50 purposively selected key informants. Thematic analyses of local newspapers and NACSO reports were used to interrogate the subject. The findings revealed that black rhino tracking has led to improved stewardship, recovery of the rhino population and sustainable development in the conservancy. However, a more structured approach to benefits sharing and governance is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the recognition that wildlife and other natural resources had disappeared in many parts of Namibia prior to independence and that measures to reverse the losses could enable communities to improve their livelihoods (Ashley 1999), the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, through its Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programme established in 1996, gave rights to communal area residents to form land units called conservancies (Bollig and Schwieger 2014; Jones 1995). Conservancies are common property resource management institutions used for collective management of wildlife on communal land (NACSO 2010). The formation of conservancies involves some degree of devolution of property rights (and power) from a bureaucratic state organisation to a community organisation (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2009). Communities are given rights to identify conservancy boundaries, have a well-defined membership, choose a representative committee to implement programmes and develop an acceptable constitution (Lacey and Ilcan 2014; Boudreaux 2010). As a result of local community involvement in the management of protected areas, improved bio-diversity conservation benefits, more responsible utilisation of natural resources and a change in the well-being of locals (Khumalo and Freimund 2014) have been noticed. Consequently, the growth of communal conservancies has been accelerated and the strategy has worked parallel to other government initiatives to redress the neglected communities and bring socio-economic development to remote areas (Denker 2014). Thus Namibia's conservancies have received a great deal of attention as one of the ''most successful CBNRM effort by developing nations to decentralize natural resource management and simultaneously combat poverty" (Lacey and Ilcan 2014; Hoole and Berkes 2010).

Approaches to communal natural resources management schemes in Africa are diverse in context and content (Trimble and Berkes 2013) and each scheme exhibits differences of intent, emphasis and substance (Murphree 2004). Although most approaches tend to be evaluated either through process or outcome-based factors or both (Silva and Mosimane 2012), these are very difficult to measure accurately. Despite the complexity and multiple conflicting case studies on linkages between biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods improvement (Stone and Nyaupane 2014; Mbaiwa 2011), the main aim is to achieve both conservation and poverty alleviation simultaneously (Mwakaje et

al. 2013; Silva and Mosimane 2012). Notwithstanding the available literature on the impacts of Natural Resources Management (NRM) research, empirical evidence about the impacts of NRM research is still considered limited as compared to studies that evaluate the impacts of a varietal improvement research (Rejesus et al. 2013). As a result, the prospects of community-based conservation experiments have been mixed at best and the performance of many has been reported to be well below expectations (Stone and Nyaupane 2014).

Essentially, there is an assumption that community participation can result in increased shared benefits of CBNRM. For instance, the understanding of attitudes and perceptions of residents regarding Community Based Tourism programmes is essential in measuring the effectiveness of economic incentives of CBNRM (Suich 2013). Nevertheless, some studies have argued that there is always a gap between planners and implementers of CBNRM programmes, thereby widening the rift between implementation and programme objectives (Jänis 2014). In other words, if implementers are not educated, lack skills, and have no access to final resources, developing an acceptable programme that is sufficient and appropriate for the community becomes a challenge. Hence, the way in which communities are engaged becomes one of the critical factors likely to affect whether the anticipated outcomes of an externally initiated project are realised and whether the long term aims of CBNRM are achieved (Dyer et al 2014). This paper seeks to examine the role of Black rhino tracking in the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy in Namibia.

The purpose of the research was to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the role of local community empowerment through the maximization of wildlife benefits in the tourism sector and its significance in improving rural livelihoods;
- To explore the extent to which strong incentives and benefits associated with CBRM can redirect community efforts to manage their natural resources sustainably;
- To measure the impact of Community Based Tourism in diversifying rural livelihoods away from primary traditional subsistence livelihoods forms; and
- Examine the progress made with regards to benefits sharing in the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy and provide feasible insights on tourism governance in rural communities.

The results of this study are considerably important for planning and implementation of Community Based Tourism (CBT) projects. They could be used to help equip community members with skills and knowledge needed to sustainably manage and utilise their natural resources.

METHODOLOGY

The #Khoadi //Hoas conservancy has approximately 3200 people (NACSO 2010). Based on this data, community members were divided into strata (groups) according to the role they serve in the community. During the fieldwork conducted by one of the research assistants in 2010, several research methods were employed, namely; face to face in-depth interviews, telephonic interviews, and the use of self-administered questionnaires. Individuals were purposively selected as follows, six trackers (6), three conservationists (3), five lodge employees (5), five SRT (5), thirty local residents (30) and one WWF representative (1). A participant observation and thematic analysis of local newspapers, NACSO reports, tourism association reports and conservancy management committee minutes were reviewed. Participant observation enabled the researchers to observe group dynamics and group thinking to ascertain normative behavior.

To ensure the reliability of the results, a questionnaire was developed, pilot tested and used for this study. Different types of questions were used with different methods to suit different types of interviewees and according to their level of knowledge which was determined by the participant's role in the community for example, questions related to sharing of income in the community, were not a relevant matter for trackers. Instead, in each interview, only relevant themes were discussed in depth sometimes in an unstructured manner. Unstructured, semi-structured and Likert scale questions were asked to measure success indicators on the standard of living, local community development and project viability factors. Face to face interviews were also conducted because there were some interviewees who could not write, so they were asked questions whilst the interviewer wrote the responses down. The process was carried out

in an adaptive manner and other related questions came from the pre-established questions. This added a quality dimension to the responses attained. Telephonic interviews were also conducted with the people who could not be reached individually.

SCOPE AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

#Khoadi//Hôas is composed of 223 farms $(3.364\ km)^2$ which used to be Ward 10, excluding only five farms that had been turned into a concession area (*Hobatere concession area*) for tourism use (NACSO 2010). Whilst the eastern part of the area is made up of flat, sandy highland plains with granite hills and elevations of 1,000 to 1,200 m above the sea level, the west is characterized by a rocky plain of basalt ridges with the Groot-Berg Plateau (1 645 m) as the western boundary of the conservancy (Lapeyre 2011). The area is sparsely populated with mainly Damara and Herero speaking people, however, most of the people can speak both languages. Subsistence farming is the main livelihood; particularly animal husbandry is common in the conservancy especially rearing of goats. The establishment of a community owned accommodation establishment named Groot-Berg lodge which was set up as a community based project has allowed local people to participate in and benefit from tourism. At the initial stage, the European Union provided valuable funds for the construction of the Lodge, which is situated on top of Groot-Berg Pass with stunning views over the 12,000ha conservancy. To ensure viability and sustainability, the Lodge is currently run on a joint venture basis between the community and Ecolodgistix (Lapeyre 2011).

Two environmental factors, such as shallow soils and extreme aridity, create particularly harsh living and farming conditions in #Khoadi//Hôas and limits the type of farming in the area.Groot-Berg lodge With little or no soil, rain water is often lost rapidly Klip River Conservancy office as a result of surface flow or evaporation (NACSO 2012). The shallow soils also limit vegetation growth because plants are generally unable to establish deep root systems. Nevertheless, some areas do have pockets of deeper soils, but these are relatively infertile. As a result, vegetation is sparse, and its growth is restricted to short periods when rain wets the shallow soils (Lapeyre 2011). The annual rainfall is estimated to range between 250 millimeters in the north-east and 100 millimeters in the south-west, with average potential rates of evaporation between 3,000 and 3,500millimetres per year (NACSO 2012). Due to excessive evaporation rates, extreme aridity results in a number of environmental challenges particularly the alternative viable livelihoods forms.

The agreement between #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) resulted in two black rhinos being placed under the care of local custodianship. These prehistoric beasts have been fitted with radio transmitters; tourists can participate in a 3/4 day rhino tracking activity (NACSO 2012). Not only do tourists have the chance to track black rhinos but to see other game as well, such as the Desert elephants, Lions, Leopards, Cheetahs, Spotted hyenas, Giraffes, mountain Zebras, Springboks, Oryx, Kudus and many varieties of bird species (World Wildlife Fund 2008). To support the conservation effort, the Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) which was set up in the early 1980's to protect the dwindling Black rhino populations in the arid western section of the Kunene Region from poachers has become one of the longest standing and most proactive Non-Governmental Organization in Namibia (NACSO 2012).

To date, the Black rhino (*Dicerosbicornisbicornis*) population has more than doubled in the Kunene/Erongo regions since the project started due to SRT efforts and the protection services provided by a special branch of the Namibian Police Protection Resources Unit (NACSO 2012). Subsequently, ≠Khoadi //Hoas conservancy developed a human-wildlife conflict management plan that propagates for living in harmony with wildlife and the reduction of human-wildlife conflict losses. The plan sought to maximise benefits from wildlife by establishing and implementing an active human-wildlife management and self-reliance programme. As part of these efforts, Black rhinos *(Dicerosbicornis)* have formed part of the wildlife found in the ≠Khoadi //Hoas conservancy which is one of the most popular "big five" including elephants, lions, leopards and giraffes (Clements et al. 2010). They are listed as endangered on the World Conservation Union (IUCN) red list (De Alessi 2000) and in 2011 the Western Black rhino subspecies were confirmed to be extinct (Coleman 2011). Black Rhinoceros'

horns, unlike those of other horned mammals, consist of keratin only and lack a bony core, such as in other bovine horns (Dibsie 1998). Due the demand for their horns, Rhino numbers have quickly diminished in Namibia over the past years due to poaching. Consequently, the Black rhino population is the only species that has survived and increased its numbers outside formally protected parks in Southern Africa. The study focused on the #Khoadi//Hôas community and the impact of Black rhino tracking activities. *The research was limited to Black rhino tracking, conservation of the animal and other income generating activities and services.*

RESULTS

Based on the empirical evidence provided by the respondents, #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy has been successful in Black rhino tracking activities as witnessed by the increase in the number of tourists who come to see the animals as well as the increase in the rhino population from the initial two which were given to the community to seven rhinos. An in-depth interview conducted with the SRT representative, personal communication, July 10, (2010) shows that a significant increase in Black rhinos can be realised only if the frequency of tourist visits is minimized to at least once a month to allow the Rhinos to adapt easily. One of the respondents indicated that;

Rhinos are very sensitive to noise, so the activity should be done in complete silence and very early in the morning because the rhinos sleep during the day and feed during the night. During the day they need to rest and any disturbance will increase their stress level and once they are stressed they become aggressive. Rhino tracking activities can only have impacts on the environment if vehicles are driven to the sensitive areas for example the marshy and swampy areas. Walking does not have any significant impact on the environment since visitors park their cars and then continue tracking on foot.

The SRT highlighted that rhino tracking activities have the potential to pose a risk to tourists because lions are free roaming in the area and they can attack people during the activity, however no reports of any attack have been given so far. Therefore, Trackers are fully provided with training on how to deal with animals and also understand different animal behaviors. The practice of Rhino tracking activities as indicated by SRT fulfills conservation purposes and also generates income for the lodge which is shared with the conservancy members. SRT acts as an agent for MET pertaining to rhino conservation. They play a vital role in the training of staff, keeping Rhino data and they are also a member of the advisory group, but MET have the ultimate responsibility for Black rhinos.

Responses from Lodge Managers

Respondents indicated that Rhinos were moved to the conservancy from Etosha National Park due the government's program of translocation, where MET gave the mandate to communities to take care of Black rhinos. Black rhinos reside on the Klip River area situated within the conservancy and the place is a very conducive territory for Black rhinos due to the availability of water and food. Since the place is in an exclusive area far away from the community residences, there is no noise from people and conflict between the communities and the Black rhinos is minimized.

Most respondents indicated that the area is safe in terms of poaching, however some of the limitations noted include the rockiness of the place, no clear demarcation and boundaries between the Rhino area and the trophy hunting area. There was concern that sometimes rhinos encroach into the hunting area and can be distressed by the noise from gun fire. Respondents were of the opinion that increased stress levels can force Black rhinos to move out of the area gradually. One of the respondents commented,

Black rhinos are incredible animals; they are very sensitive to noise. Conservation efforts have taught us to be more discreet and appreciate the opportunities that we have. I am sure the government will continue to support Black rhino conservation efforts.

Respondents were asked to indicate the sources of the conservancy income. The figure below summaries some of the sources of income in the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy as shown on Figure 1.

The figure clearly indicates the importance of Black rhino tracking (40%) as an income generator. Black rhino tracking activity is frequently booked twice or sometimes thrice a week. The activity is a pull factor for tourists apart from

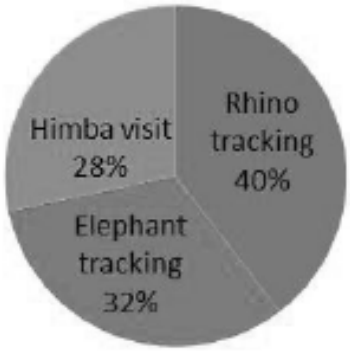

Fig. 1. The #Khoadi//Hôas Conservancy income

elephant tracking (32%) and Himba cultural village visits (28%). These activities show the potential of Groot-Berg Lodge to generate revenue through the provision of food and accommodation. The statistics show that the Lodge employs 30 people who in turn support their families through the salaries and benefits received. Residents are taught basic tracking and communication skills through experiential training. Rhino tracking fees are packed at N$1050.00 per person (US$105), whilst elephant tracking and Himba cultural village visit cost N$850.00 (US$85) and N$750.00 (US$75) respectively. The responses are in line with Denker (2014) who visited the conservancy and said,

"On our last morning in `"Khoadi//Hôas, we walked along a game path from our bush camp to a natural waterhole, less than seven kilometres from the nearest farmstead. The fresh tracks of a large male leopard overlaid the tracks of giraffes, antelopes and elephants – as well as our own. In the night, we heard the call of a spotted hyena, and the conservancy manager Hilga/Gawises had told us earlier about the lions that regularly pass through. People live with all this wildlife, as long as they are able to manage it and generate benefits from it, based on government regulations and local needs".

Respondents indicated that training and promotion of local staff to management levels is stipulated in the contract but due to staff mobility this has not been realised. Apart from the Lodge, the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy also owns a campsite called Hoada Campsite which is situated 150 kilometers from the main road making it an ideal stop over for backpacker travelers.

Matching Community Needs to Black Rhino Tracking In #Khoadi//Hôas Conservancy

Documentary evidence shows that the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy was registered under the Nature conservation Act 5 of 1996 and its main aim is to equitably distribute tourism benefits as was proposed in the benefits distribution plan. Black rhino tracking was viewed as one of biggest tourist attractions. Even though there is a contractual arrangement between the community and Ecolodgistix on the management of the Groot-Berg Lodge, the Lodge is 100% owned by the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy and the Black rhinos fall under the conservancy. Apart from monetary benefit, community members indicated that some of the benefits include:

- *Repairs to any damage caused by elephants*
- *Buying fuel for pumping water to water points*
- *Small stock loans and School renovations*
- *Soup kitchen for pensioners*

Distribution of Benefits to the Community Members

Respondents indicated that the distribution of benefits is dependent on the availability of resources. In some cases, expenses are paid once each financial year, depending on the nature of benefits (soup kitchen fundraising, meetings etc.). Some benefits which can generate third income streams can be funded once off. On request for specific events, based on the developments in the conservancy area, money is set aside for unplanned events such as cultural performances. Respondents also indicated that part of the money is also spent on operational issues such as Women's desk empowerment, funerals, hiring of chairs for the funeral and soup kitchen for the pensioners and provide support mainly to cover elephant damage compensation, and school development programmes.

An interview with a representative from World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) reinforced the notion that before independence, wildlife populations in Namibia's communal areas had decreased because of extensive poaching. He indicated that the:

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) alongside WWF kick started Namibia's communal conservancy program. Ever since, the conservancy movement

has engaged more than 220,000 community members. Namibia's rural communities have a different approach to wildlife now. They now see wildlife, as important not hazardous. Poaching is no longer socially acceptable and as a result, the animal populations have been restored. The conservancy has a clear vision that is "to partner with local communities, to empower them to manage their natural resources and ensure a future that includes healthy wildlife populations and sustainable economic growth.

Other respondents were of the opinion that black rhino conservation has led to a number of benefits and the success indicators are shown on Table 1, that is improved livelihoods (48%) and employment (26%). Responses show the need for the introduction of small business enterprises (26%) which could supplement the community's income. By introducing small businesses, respondents were hopeful that this could lead to poverty alleviation (36%) and boost cultural revitalization (36%). However, respondents were concerned about the income generation (29%). The current income generating activities were seen to be inadequate hence the standard of living (24%) has not improved significantly. With the introduction of Black rhino tracking, the community has started to appreciate and have pride in their community (28%) through increased awareness of the importance of tourism (32%). Table 1 shows success indicators on the standard of living are shown.

On benefits distribution, community members showed reservations (31%), some felt that the conservancy was not doing enough in distributing the money. Sales of local products (26%) and partnerships with other tourism enterprises (30%) were perceived to be the only way forward. Furthermore, respondents were of the opinion that the introduction of the Black rhino tracking project has made training/re-training opportunities (31%) available. More-so, the development of road infrastructure (25%) has made rural development (33%) a realisable dream. Table 2 shows the responses regarding success factors on local community development.

Overall, interviews conducted with the local community proved interesting. Community members were aware of Black rhino tracking activities in their conservancy. The community

Table 1: Success indicators on the standard of living

1-5 point Likert scale	*N=50 (100%)*				
Success Indicators on the standard of living	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Improved livelihoods	0.06	0.07	0.48	0.32	0.07
Employment	0.12	0.13	0.24	0.26	0.25
Introduction of small business enterprises	0.18	0.31	0.26	0.14	0.11
Poverty reduction	0.17	0.32	0.36	0.09	0.06
Better standards of living	0.23	0.24	0.21	0.18	0.14
Income generation	0.22	0.29	0.24	0.14	0.11
Cultural revitalisation	0.23	0.27	0.36	0.09	0.05
Appreciation of a place	0.12	0.14	0.19	0.28	0.27
Increased awareness of the importance of tourism	0.22	0.28	0.32	0.12	0.06

Where 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= indifferent, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree.

Table 2 Success indicators on local community development

1-5 point Likert scale	*N=50 (100%)*				
Success Indicators on development	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Increased economic benefits	0.18	0.31	0.26	0.16	0.09
Sales of local products	0.24	0.26	0.21	0.19	0.10
Tourism Enterprise Partnerships	0.13	0.12	0.19	0.26	0.30
Availability of training/retraining programmes	0.14	0.11	0.17	0.31	0.27
Road infrastructural development	0.15	0.24	0.21	0.25	0.15
Improved sanitation	0.19	0.26	0.20	0.19	0.16
Rural development	0.22	0.28	0.33	0.11	0.06

Where 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= indifferent, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree.

showed appreciation of Black rhino tracking as a form of conservation. The income earned from Black rhino tracking is used for different community projects such as supporting school projects like in Anker Primary School and Erwee Secondary School as well as a Kindergarten. In addition, observations by Denker (2014) indicate that

"Conservancies provide the structures that facilitate equitable benefit sharing from a variety of natural resource uses, including photographic tourism, trophy hunting and game harvesting for food. The returns finance conservancy running costs and generate funding for community projects, thus creating a sound foundation for effective management and conservation. Individual benefits are created through employment, the supply of meat, new sales and service opportunities, and the empowerment of local people to have a real say in the management of their resources".

Table 3 shows the responses regarding Black rhino tracking viability. A total of 32% respondents were satisfied with the commercial viability of the project. They indicated that the profit was used for projects such as the kindergarten, paying shepherds, paying for the damages caused by the wild animals for example cheetahs eating goats (32%). Some respondents (36%) pointed out that the sustainability of the project was inevitable due to the efforts put by all the stakeholders. Pertaining to product offering (23%) and tourist flows (37%) the project is promising. Most tourists who visit the conservancy also make use of the accommodation facility available. However there are opportunities for growth (30%). WWF has expressed interest in the future community capacity building endeavors. Sustainable utilisation of resources (33%), environmental friendliness (28%) and environmental management practices (29%) further indicate that Black rhino tracking can lead to the conservation of the animal since people become more aware of the importance of caring for the Black rhinos as their source of income. However, respondents felt that the use of sustainable technologies (23%) needs urgent attention.

DISCUSSION

The positive outcomes of the study validate the efforts made by mathematical ecologists and economists in combining cost-effectiveness and healthy ecosystem measures to produce grounded conservation outcomes aimed at preserving nature which is located in unintuitive layers of abstractions that are increasingly ungrounded (Büscher et al. 2012). Thus successful Community Based Tourism (CBT) has centred on the involvement of host communities in planning and maintaining tourism development initiatives in order to create a more sustainable tourism industry. The '"Khoadi//Hôas case demonstrates that the logic of imbuing conservation strategies with socio-economic benefits confirms the assumption that human motivation is directed primarily by personal gain, and that the aggregate effect of thus oriented individual behavior can lead to increased collective wealth and well-being (Büscher et al. 2012). Obviously, the basic hypothesis of CBNRM is that, for a community to manage its natural resource base sustainably, it must receive direct benefits arising from the use of that resource (Mbaiwa 2011).

Table 3: Project viability

1-5 point Likert scale	*N=50 (100%)*				
Project viability	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Commercial viability	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.23	0.32
Profitability	0.23	0.27	0.32	0.11	0.07
Project sustainability	0.28	0.21	0.36	0.07	0.08
Product offering	0.18	0.22	0.20	0.23	0.17
Tourist flows	0.16	0.32	0.37	0.08	0.07
Opportunities for growth	0.14	0.14	0.18	0.24	0.30
Sustainable utilisation of resources	0.24	0.26	0.33	0.12	0.05
Environmental friendliness	0.07	0.16	0.22	0.27	0.28
Environmental management practices	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.29	0.25
Use of sustainable technologies	0.20	0.23	0.22	0.18	0.17

Where 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= indifferent, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree.

Hence the acknowledgement and support of Black rhino tracking activities in the conservancy have become a driving force behind sustainable tourism development.

From a neoliberal conservation's core maxim, in order for natures to be ''saved,'' acts of ''nature saving'' must be imbued with profit potential or else there is little incentive for rational actors to pursue it (Büscher et al. 2012). In fulfilling this obligation, the evidence shows that WWF works with its partners to increase the community's influence over resource management and societal development decisions. As observed from the results, WWF is always monitoring the activities taking place in the conservancy and the community is assisted in meetings and activity planning voluntarily. The central tenet of this approach is based on the belief that knowledge acquisition and increased confidence can result in a new sense of power, potentially combating any future exploitation of the communities or the imposition of projects by development organisations which the communities do not agree with (Erskine and Meyer 2012).

In line with the findings by Sullivan (2002) and Bandyopadhyay et al. (2009), conservancies have provided significant welfare benefits ranging from employment, dividends and meat distribution. But these benefits must exceed the perceived costs of managing the resources (Mbaiwa 2011). Nevertheless, good governance should make sure that those who pay heavily benefit the most (Mwakaje et al. 2013). With a high rate of unemployment of 51% in Namibia, and inherent difficulties faced by agriculture in a semi-arid environment like the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy, Black rhino tracking is viewed as an important tool in poverty alleviation since it becomes a means of providing alternative livelihoods to rural communities. However, Namibia's conservancy programme is not without controversies considering its bias towards the conservation of large mammals, emphasis on local participation in policing and anti-poaching activities by offering people in communal areas only limited development choices where wealthier groups tend to have greater access to tourism employment, with little concern about equity in benefits distribution (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2009).

There is widespread knowledge that developing countries like Namibia face a backdrop in skills and expertise to lead the tourism development process (structural limitation), fragmented planning and in some cases funding is externally lead (operational limitation) and some projects are faced by apathy (cultural limitation) particularly if the community's needs are not met (Tosun 2000), therefore full local participation can mean different things to different people. Similarly, Erskine and Meyer (2012) observed that, in Ecuador, other livelihood outcomes were pivotal on how respondents viewed the overall success of the projects of which some aspects of social capital appeared to outweigh other outcomes, (such as financial gain or physical assets). As Torres et al. (2011) explains, an uneven tourism income distribution where richer villagers widen their existing income/wealth lead through tourism violates the ideology of CBT which aims for the sharing of benefits among villagers. Suggesting that, weak as it is in its current form, he does not expect CBT to become a major factor in alleviating true poverty and/or contributing to the development of isolated poorer communities. So, there is still a long way to go before tourism's full potential to bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is realized, and there are a number of structural and operational weaknesses which must be overcome, particularly in terms of access to start-up capital and land tenure.

In the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy, improved livelihoods, increased economic benefits and employment were seen as the most tangible benefits. By engaging local people as tour guides, game guides, and deploying them in other leadership positions has demonstrated a certain level of empowerment. The deeply rooted argument by Foucault that "power and knowledge indirectly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge" is underscored, hence, local community participation in tourism development has decentralised power to the local people (Erskine and Meyer 2012). To ensure viability and sustainability of the project, the Lodge which is currently run on a joint venture basis between the community and Ecolodgistix (Lapeyre 2011) has increased revenue streams and provided a conducive environment for tourists to view nature. In the same way, Van Wijka et al. (2014) observes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, they have developed eco-lodges in biodiversity-rich areas to offer tourists a unique nature experience, contributing to wildlife protec-

tion and improving local people's livelihoods. Considering the successes recorded on the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy project, we can expect, in the future, to see both government and the private sector working more closely with each other to promote tourism-based rural development throughout the country (Torres et al. 2011).

Although existing Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) initiatives are typically small scale, locally owned, and specialise in niche markets, the potential exists to achieve more significant poverty reduction outcomes by expanding PPT into mass tourism contexts (Torres et al. 2011). For instance Black rhino tracking activities are done very early in the morning which is commendable, however, the place where the activity is conducted is very far from the Groot-Berg Lodge which is a three hour drive and it also takes another three hours to search for the Black rhinos. Therefore, developing strong national and international linkages between governments, the private sector, NGOs and donor agencies are a necessary condition for developing more financially feasible community-corporate tourism joint ventures (Torres et al. 2011). It is also imperative that community-based tourism ventures, like any other enterprise in any other sector is profitable and based on sound business and marketing principles if it is to bring the desired long-term benefits to communities.

Unlike in Tanzania, where factors such as negative attitudes, conflicts, poor level of participation in Community-Based Tourism, inadequate pasture, lack of water, and education affect the success of community projects (Mwakaje et al. 2013), in the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy individual benefits are created through employment, the supply of meat, new sales and service opportunities, and the empowerment of local people to have a real say in the management of their resources. As Scheyvens argues that tourism projects should only be viewed as "successful" if the community is able to acknowledge the existence and potential of empowerment (Erskine and Meyer 2012). This suggests that, unless the wildlife sector generates real economic benefits for governments, the business community and the people who live in wildlife areas, it is likely to decline still further in the future (Mwakaje et al. 2013). Therefore, the poor of the poorest households should be given the opportunity to participate directly in tourism activities. The paper suggests that meetings should be done regularly to update people on the income being received and how it will be allocated. Since the community participates in the decision making process, the community should have a bigger say in the running of all operations.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Black rhino tracking has led to the conservation of the animal and improved stewardship which has a ripple effect in the recovery of the Black rhino population. However, there is growing recognition that the success of a community project is based on the public-private sector partnership which has become the best way of ensuring that rural development initiatives are commercially efficacious. Notwithstanding that CBT can lead to sustainable rural development, improved sanitation and increased sales of local products, for conservation goals to be realized, there is need to foster transformations that will incentivize people as utility maximizers to behave in certain and predictable ways in line with neoliberal conservation. Considering the position of the Klip River, in view of increasing tourist flows, the place can be a suitable location for the establishment of a camp site provided a proper feasibility study is conducted. Seeing the hype of activities as a result of black rhino tracking, an additional tourist facility could result in increased income generation, improved environmental management practices and improved standards of living for local communities. Furthermore, the introduction of viable small business enterprises can become a pull factor for tourist numbers to the #Khoadi//Hôas conservancy. Through neoliberal conservation, different actors can produce burgeoning and commercially profitable tourism products that are distinctive while ironically promising the opposite to (normally non-local) consumers in the form of closer contact and intimacy with nature. However, since there is no clear demarcation between trophy hunting and rhino tracking activities in the area, this might threaten the existence of Black rhinos in the area, thereby, discombobulating Black rhinos due to noise and gunfire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that tourism has been targeted as one of the major economic drivers of the

Namibian economy, this paper has demonstrated that through self-reliance projects, tourism can result in increased economic benefits for the rural people by diversifying their local economy. For rural communities to enjoy tourism benefits, substantial devolution of property rights or proprietorship over wildlife is a sufficient incentive for CBNRM's success. However, developing additional revenue generation streams would ensure that the community raises enough funds for other community development programmes. Although black rhino tracking activities have resulted in improved local community livelihoods, total empowerment of the locals to have a real say in the management of their resources is key to creating a satisfying quality of life. Moreover, tourism benefits distribution should be done equitably with due consideration to those who bear the cost of managing the resources. So, by encouraging the creation of community organizations that would divide roles fairly between men/women, the youth and elderly could promote cultural preservation, restoration and community pride. Nonetheless, the current level of benefits are not sufficient to sustain the project, the provision of unique tourism experiences could inspire respect for different cultures and foster cultural exchange, environmental responsibility and natural resources conservation. Subsequently, maintaining interest in participating in CBNRM and any other development strategies that respond to community needs. The implications of this research are that, maintaining participation in CBT programmes will continue to be a challenge considering the varying contexts in which these programmes are implemented; thus, complete decentralisation of power should ensure that local communities have rights over the management of their natural resources, over and above the outsiders.

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