Intangibles matter: non-financial dividends of Community Based Natural Resource Management in Namibia

by

Caroline Ashley

for

World Wildlife Fund
Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Program

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Executive Summary

Namibia’s experience of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) highlights the variety and importance of non-financial benefits generated. In particular, there are several indicators of community empowerment due to CBNRM, and of the significance this has to rural households. While communities are the main beneficiaries, non-financial benefits also include improvements in the natural resource base, and contributions to Namibian societal objectives.

Namibia’s experience contrasts with other southern African countries where CBNRM programmes have focussed more on financial returns. The non-financial benefits of CBNRM are less tangible and harder to measure, therefore are easily ignored. However, even if they cannot be quantified, it is essential to document them and explore their significance to Namibians. Otherwise judgements by communities, NGOs, Government and donors on CBNRM investments (financial and other) will be made on incomplete information. As this report shows, the intangibles are substantial, and from a social development perspective, can far exceed financial benefits in significance.

Benefits to communities from CBNRM are of three kinds:

i  capacity building and empowerment
ii  more secure livelihoods
iii  cultural and aesthetic values of wildlife and local traditions.

Empowerment is perhaps the most important benefit, because rural communities, disempowered by colonialism and apartheid, have had few opportunities to gain rights and responsibilities, or develop skills and status. Empowerment is multifaceted, deriving from the many ways in which CBNRM activities and the gradual development of common property resource management strengthen communities’ social organisation.

For example, over time and despite setbacks, CBNRM communities are developing:
•  adaptable institutions,
•  defined and committed membership
•  accountable leaders and participatory processes for making decisions, sharing information, and including women
•  cohesive social units with a common purpose
•  new skills
•  mechanisms for managing natural resources
•  experience and confidence in dealing with outsiders
•  recognition from neighbours and outside authorities
•  pride and a sense of control.

These changes empower communities to manage their natural resources, and, more broadly, to take control of decisions and developments around them. This can be seen in their greater ability to voice their needs to others and take on broader land-use planning. CBNRM institutions are pro-actively pursuing community interests and provide building blocks for local development that go well beyond the initial scope of CBNRM.

CBNRM enhances the livelihood security of rural households. It provides invaluable opportunities for rural diversification to families who are cash-strapped, hit by periodic drought, and dependent on marginal agricultural land and multiple livelihood activities. CBNRM activities enhance food security and drought-coping by improving local
management of veld foods, stimulating wildlife/tourism enterprises which generate income during drought, and addressing wildlife damage to agriculture.

Cash earned from CBNRM enterprises is a critical gap-filler because much of it is earned by poor families for whom a few hundred Namibian dollars can be vital for making ends meet. It is not the amount of cash earnings relative to programme costs, that matters to communities or is discussed here, but the fact it is earned by poor people, particularly women, spent on food, and is available during dry years, and hence is significant to livelihood security.

*Cultural benefits* of CBNRM derive from the spiritual and cultural values of wildlife, which are present in most rural Namibian communities. Wildlife populations and cultural traditions associated with natural resources, have fallen away in recent years, but are being revitalised by CBNRM. For some, particularly elder people, restoring wildlife so the children can see it is the main expected benefit from establishing wildlife conservancies (community institutions with legal conditional rights to manage wildlife).

CBNRM enhances the natural resource base. An indicator of indirect impact, evident in most CBNRM areas, is improved management of natural resources by communities (a necessary though not sufficient condition for long-term environmental sustainability). The most tangible direct changes in the resource base are evident in Kunene, where CBNRM has been operating since the early eighties. Wildlife populations have increased significantly, and there is consensus that a particularly important contributing factor has been CBNRM, and specifically the Community Game Guard Programme.

CBNRM generates political, social, economic and environmental benefits at national level. Empowerment of communities strengthens the national democratisation process, and builds accountability between decision-makers and grassroots institutions (conservancies are anticipated to be representing 200,000 citizens in 5 years). The recognition and status given to CBNRM communities enhances social cohesion and helps to overcome Namibia’s geographic and ethnic fragmentation. Improvements in rural drought-coping and livelihood security contribute to national objectives of reduced poverty, greater equity, and drought-proofing. The national goal of sustainable development is enhanced by the changes in policy and practice to which CBNRM has contributed at national level: greater recognition that development and conservation go together, that resource rights should be devolved to local level, and that different sectors need to coordinate to avoid fragmented, unsustainable development.

Overall, CBNRM in Namibia has generated much more than financial returns. It is benefiting communities, particularly poor members, the natural resource base, and Namibian society. The benefits change over time. For example, empowerment has been important from the start, as communities’ regained responsibility for wildlife, while livelihood benefits flourished more recently, with the establishment of community tourism and natural resource enterprises. CBNRM is currently at a take-off point, as the first conservancies are being registered. The legal rights and institutional strength of conservancies will further increase communities’ sense of empowerment, their ability to use wild resources to support their livelihoods, and their NRM capacity, hence intensifying the benefits noted here. The nature of benefits is likely to continue evolving, but the need to document and value them will remain the same.
I. INTRODUCTION

Promotion of community based natural resource management (CBNRM) began in Namibia in the early eighties. Although the impacts of such work are ever changing, and many will remain unknown to outsiders, there is now substantial evidence of the diverse range of benefits generated by CBNRM. It is also clear that the Namibian case provides a contrast with other countries’ experience of CNBRM, many of which have focused mainly on financial returns. The Namibian programme has focused more on social empowerment, institutional development, and devolution of rights and responsibilities to manage renewable natural resources (RNRs). The purpose of this paper is to highlight the non-financial benefits of CBNRM in the Namibian context.

Non-financial benefits are more difficult to measure than dollars or kilos of meat generated by wildlife use. Traditional valuation methodologies, such as cost-benefit analysis are not appropriate. But it is essential to document these benefits, even if only through indicators and anecdotes, because otherwise only a mere fraction of CBNRM’s impact will be recognised. Communities, NGOs and donors all want to know the cost-effectiveness of their effort and investment – whether the benefits are worth the effort – and therefore need to consider the full range of benefits, even if they cannot all be measured in a common currency.

There is a wide range non-financial benefits, affecting several stakeholders. The main types of benefits and beneficiaries are outlined in Figure 1. At the centre is the programme’s aim of improving community management of RNR. This is to benefit both the communities and the natural resource base. As the diagram illustrates, community and environmental benefits in turn contribute to national objectives.

Figure 1: Objectives / Impacts of CBNRM

- **Benefits to communities**
  - Improved livelihoods
  - Social empowerment
  - Cultural value

- **Improved local management of natural resources**
  - through appropriate institutions, skills & legal framework

- **Benefits to the Natural Resource Base**

- **National/societal benefits**
  - Political, social, & environmental

→ shows direction of impact
→ indicates feedback, as achievement of one objective reinforces another
The non-financial benefits to communities have three aspects:

i. **capacity building and social empowerment** (assessed in Section II)
   This covers everything that enables communities to manage their own natural resources and take control of the development process. It includes impacts of CBNRM on how communities work internally (such as enhanced decision-making processes and organisational strength) and how they deal with the outside world.

ii. **more secure livelihoods** (Section III)
   This goes well beyond financial benefits, because livelihood security is a matter of much more than just earning cash. This paper explores some of these other ways in which CBNRM boosts livelihoods, through, for example, the distribution, timing, and use of earnings, and through CBNRM’s impact on other subsistence activities.

iii. **cultural and aesthetic values** (Section IV)
   Existence values of wildlife are assessed as benefits to communities – values held by foreigners are not considered here.

Section V looks at the impacts of CBNRM on the natural resource base, and finally Section VI assesses the significance of CBNRM’s impacts to Namibian society, in terms of social and economic objectives, and long-term pursuit of sustainable development.

The scope of ‘CBNRM’ is not tightly defined. It includes pioneering community work of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) in the eighties before the CBNRM acronym and National Programme were established, as well as a wide range of activities that today fall under the Ministry of Environment’s National CBNRM programme, including that of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the WWF Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Program, funded by USAID, and many communities and rural households which are establishing conservancies, promoting community tourism, monitoring wildlife, or involved in other activities to improve local management of wild resources.

In identifying CBNRM as the cause of changes described here, some caveats should be borne in mind. Firstly, many benefits are due to how CBNRM has been applied in Namibia, thanks to the philosophy and practice of the main players. This paper does not analyse how impacts have been achieved but in many cases it is the adaptive, bottom-up strategy, rather than a specific CBNRM task, that has generated change. Description and assessment of programme strategy can be found in Jones 1997, Jones 1998, and Durbin et al 1997. Secondly, impacts ascribed to CBNRM will also have other causal factors. These other forces are not generally documented here, but nonetheless credit should often be shared. Thirdly, CBNRM inevitably creates negative as well as positive impacts. Some of these are mentioned here, but, as examples in this paper show, many negatives become positives (and vice versa) as a set-back becomes a challenge and hence an opportunity for a community to make further progress.

CBNRM is at a take-off point in Namibia, as the first conservancies with legal wildlife-use rights have been registered, and several more are underway. This paper therefore provides no more than a snapshot, at a time when benefits are changing fast and, in all probability, about to multiply.
II. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

1. BACKGROUND: PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY
The heart of CBNRM in Namibia is an attempt to help communities to develop institutions which can manage common property resources successfully (Jones 1997). This has been pursued through grass-roots capacity building by NGOs, more recently complemented by devolution of legal resource rights by government. The aim is not to force them into sustainable management through imposition of rules, nor to bribe them with economic incentives, but to empower them to manage resources, by enhancing their rights, responsibilities, institutions and capacity and revitalising their conservation ethic. Empowerment can be seen as a means to an end – common property resource management (CPRM) – but also as an end in itself. As the following sections show, CBNRM communities are not only managing their natural resources, but are increasingly taking control of the development process.

There is no single indicator or ingredient of empowerment. Strong communities capable of managing common property resources need grass-roots institutions with legitimacy and capacity to mobilise members, agree and enforce collective rules, and represent the community to others. This, in turn, requires a defined and committed membership, accountable leaders, shared objectives, participatory decision-making processes, new skills, and recognition from outside authorities. The following sections therefore illustrate how CBNRM has helped communities to develop these various aspects of social organisation. In combination, these ingredients enable a community to define and pursue its goals, and take more control of its own development. This is particularly true in the Namibian context, where colonialism disrupted social units and denied communities rights, opportunities, and recognition.

2. INSTITUTIONS: DEVELOPMENT AND ADAPATION
Community-based organisations (CBOs) are the means by which groups of rural residents can collectively identify and pursue their interests. Institutional development is therefore the pre-requisite for common property resource management, and for bottom-up development. However, there is a weak institutional base in rural Namibia with few grass-roots CBOs, an erosion of traditional authority, slow emergence of new local government structures, territorial disputes between institutions, and a lack of local experience in commercial or wildlife-related activities. Therefore the challenges of CBNRM have required new institutions, with appropriate scale, legitimacy and skills for managing resources.

Despite some inevitable conflicts and set-backs, the pace of institutional development within CBNRM has been striking. When IRDNC began CBNRM work in Kunene in the early-eighties, a network of Community Game Guards (CGGs) was the first institutional innovation to be developed (Durbin et al, 1997). Since then, a wide variety of institutions have adapted or emerged according to differing needs, including wildlife committees, veld committees, Community Resource Monitors (CRMs), Community

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1 Empowerment is both of marginalised people within communities (eg increased voice of women) and of isolated communities as a collective body. As these two are closely linked (as community members become stronger and communities function more democratically, so the community as a whole is stronger to take on development challenges) they are not analysed separately below.

2 Changes in how communities work internally can be regarded as ingredients of empowerment, while changes in how they deal with the external world as its manifestation.
Development Activators (CDAs), and Bed Night Levy Committees. The formation of conservancies and conservancy committees is the current focus of much institution-building, as conservancies are the legally-recognised bodies to which government will devolve conditional wildlife-management rights. So far, six communities have applied for, or obtained, conservancy status while 12 others are at various stages of conservancy formation (Chris Weaver, pers. comm.).

It is not the proliferation of new CBOs that, in itself, indicates progress, but the fact that communities appear able to develop institutions appropriate to the task in hand, and to adapt and develop them to meet new challenges or overcome problems:

- the new institutions vary in scale as needed: Bed-night Levy Committees each managed revenue distribution in a single community, to maximise participation and consensus; the Veld Committee in Sesfontein area brings together 5 neighbouring communities who need to cooperate for effective RNR management in the area;
  - while the Namibian Community Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA) is a national body established by community representatives from several regions to coordinate and represent them at national level.

- institutions have been restructured to deal with problems. For example, in the Nyae Nyae area (far eastern Olozoondjupa, former Bushmanland) the structure and role of the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Co-operative (NNFC) has been successfully adapted by its members to overcome problems of legitimacy and conflicts with outsiders (Jones 1997).

- in many instances, CBNRM institutions have adapted and reaffirmed traditional leadership structures, while at the same time gaining recognition as autonomous institutions. For example, traditional leaders are represented on the committees establishing Mayumi, Salamba, and Sesfontein conservancies (Piek, 1995, Jacobsohn, pers. comm.) The (NNFC) in Nyae Nyae area, brings together the indigenous land management institutions (Inoresi and RADA) for further planning and development (SSD 1995). Development of grassroots institutions is necessary but not sufficient for empowerment. It is the effectiveness of CBOs that matters. Their mechanisms for effective functioning are therefore considered in the following sections.

3. COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

In much of rural Namibia, colonial rule and relocations have resulted in disrupted social networks and ‘communities’ which are weakly-defined. Without a clear identity, collective action for a common purpose is constrained. CBNRM enhances community identity and social cohesion by:

- requiring communities to self-define their membership and boundaries (and helping them to do this through facilitation);

- providing opportunities for residents to identify a common purpose and strive collectively to realise it (eg: establishing a conservancy, changing land use, expanding tourism in their area), while creating a shared belief that change is possible;

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1 Considerable institutional development is involved, because to apply for conservancy status they must have defined their boundaries and objectives, formulated a constitution, registered members, and elected a conservancy committee.

2 Registered, proto- and emerging conservancies are all referred to as ‘conservancies’.
enhancing recognition of each member of the community through the process of member registration, which is a necessary part of establishing a conservancy;

- creating new ways to participate in community life (eg: attending meetings, taking up positions on a committee or project team, carrying out surveys or hunts) and to gain status through successful contributions (particularly for those who lack traditional status indicators, such as ownership of livestock, or family position);

- establishing new mechanisms for information flow among community members (eg: CGGs, CDAs and CRMs, workshops, AGMs);

- stimulating recognition of communities by outside authorities, through the requirement that conservancies have to be accepted by their neighbours, endorsed by local government, and registered by central government.

Building consensus on conservancy membership, boundaries, and plans, and gaining acceptance from outsiders, has been difficult in many cases. However, the consensus-building process is invaluable for establishing more cohesive social units. While strengthening community capacity for collective action, this can also particularly boost marginalised members within a community. Given that poverty is not only about inadequate consumption, but also relates to the extent to which those with few resources feel excluded from society around them and separated into an ‘underclass’ (Eyben 1998), a more inclusive society reduces the social (rather than economic) inequity that the poor suffer.

4. COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING: PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

Involvement in CBNRM activities has enhanced participation and equity in community decision-making. Practical support and facilitation by NGOs and the WWF-LIFE Program have helped communities devise and implement consultative approaches and resolve conflicts, while the legal requirements of the Government’s conservancy legislation have forced them to apply concepts such as ‘equity’ to their own social norms.

Although final decisions on RNR often rest with traditional leaders or committees, mechanisms have been established that increase the voice of other community members and ensure decision-makers cannot take decisions in isolation. Members’ views are gathered through participatory activities, public meetings, and through networks of CGGs, CRMs and CDAs. Listening mechanisms become institutionalised; for example, the Salambala Management Committee starts each meeting with a report-back by each member from their locality. Participatory decision-making on use of collective income is particularly important to achieve equitable distribution. This has been achieved by helping communities to establish intensive consultative processes involving new committees and household surveys (see Box 1 below).

Leaders are not only listening to the results of consultation, but are increasingly adopting and repeating participatory methods, or asking for further assistance to do so. For example, when local communities were invited to contribute to the Sesfontein Land Use Plan in 1997, they decided to combine household surveys with public meetings, as methods to solicit residents’ views.
Box 1: Participation and equity in distribution of bed night levies

In 1996, Etendeka Lodge decided to distribute a bed night levy to 5 neighbouring communities. The use of the money was not simply decided by traditional chiefs or development committees. With IRDNC’s support, each community selected a Bed Night Levy Committee to survey households on how the money should be used, and which community structure should receive it on their behalf (Durbin et al., 1997). This was particularly impressive in an area where earnings from wildlife and tourism (such as sales income generated by the first Community hunt) have been appropriated by a few in the past. Trust in the committees was such that most people selected the survey team to act as recipient. This consultative approach has now set a precedent for future equitable distribution of benefits by the communities as they establish conservancies (Durbin et al., 1997). Neighbouring Torra Conservancy have already adopted a similar household survey approach to decide how to spend the revenue they are earning from a joint venture lodge. Household surveys were also used for distribution of the Lianshulu bed night levy in Caprivi in 1995. Each community decided differently on how to use the money, and also decided whether or not to pay a proportion to the Khuta (chief's council) (Wyckoff-Baird 1995).

Inevitably, not every voice will count equally in community decisions, and not every decision will seem fair to all. But these new approaches reduce the risks of the most powerful keeping control and benefits to themselves, amplify the voice of the less powerful on resource management and benefit distribution, and provide communities with more consultative methods of decision-making which can be broadly applied.

5. LEADERS: REPRESENTATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE

In the past, traditional leaders have been selected through customary procedures, and there have been few other opportunities to select, remove, or change the role of leaders. However, democratic ways of selecting committee members, leaders, and job applicants are being explored and adopted by communities in the CBNRM programme.

Communities are implementing the principle of democratic representation, and not just a pro forma procedure. This is illustrated in several ways:

- the principles of fairness are applied to local needs and circumstances, rather than following a uniform model of representation. For example, communities in Kunene have adopted different systems according to their geographic and customary differences (see Box 2 below).

- communities change their representation system over time, to deal with problems. For example, in 1995, participants at an institutional development workshop in Nyae Nyae, including members of the then-NNFC Management Committee, identified the structure of the committee as a constraint to development. The Committee was expanded to a larger Board, with two representatives from each district (NNFC 1995).

- leaders are not simply elected and then left to themselves. In some cases, their performance has been challenged, tasks redefined, and some members replaced. In one of the longest-standing committees, Ward 11 Residents Trust (evolving into Torra Conservancy Committee) there has already been a natural turnover of members, with election of a mainly new Committee at the second Annual General Meeting. At Salambala, inactive members have been removed, and others given more explicit instructions to follow (also in Box 2).

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As with equitable revenue-sharing, improved representation has been facilitated by NGOs and LIFE, and is further boosted by the legal requirement that all adult residents of an area be allowed to register as conservancy members and that they elect a representative conservancy committee.
Box 2: Implementing democratic principles of representation

Applying fair principles to local contexts in Kunene

- In Torra Conservancy, containing many widely dispersed farms, the Committee (formerly Ward 11 Residents Trust) was elected by votes from one representative from each farm (household cluster).
- In Sesfontein, the existing Veld Committee allocated membership quotas for each village, then within each village, registered members elected village representatives.
- Members of the Purros Development Committee were chosen according to their perceived suitability for the post following lengthy discussion at a public meeting - a system that gave influence to traditional leadership (Durbin et al, 1997).

Improving representation and ensuring accountability at Salambala

The Salambala Conservancy Committee was initially selected by the Khuta. But as conservancy development got underway, 19 of the least active members were removed, and elections held to replace them. In fact, there have been at least three stages of adjustment to improve representation. Firstly to replace inactive members; secondly to refine representation based upon population of villages being represented; and thirdly to fill gaps where it was found communities were not represented. The Committee expanded from 32 to 41 in the process.

Conservancy members have demanded accountability from their traditional leaders as well as their committee members. In 1997, research among members on attitudes towards their Management Committee identified that representatives from three communities were not performing their tasks. It transpired that they were being thwarted by village indunas (chiefs), who were not calling meetings, or were simply inactive. As a result, the Bukalo Khuta was requested to intervene with the inactive Indunas, while committee members were given more explicit instructions on how to carry out their assignments actively and effectively (C Weaver, pers. comm).

Experience at Salambala indicates that those communities with poor representatives also lacked knowledge and support for conservancies. As representation has improved, so has community understanding and involvement in the entire conservancy process. Good representation therefore enhances information flow from leaders to members, as well as vice versa.

The fact that leaders can be challenged and replaced is a critical part of democratisation. It means that leaders are not only chosen by their constituents, but have to remain accountable to them. This can make the difference between a benign but floundering committee, and one that is pro-active in promoting members’ interests and has the legitimacy that is essential for land-use planning. Accountability gives ongoing life to the principle of ‘representation,’ and ensures that democracy is not only practised at selection time.

6. WOMEN: PARTICIPATION AND POWER

As in many societies, Namibian women carry much of the responsibility for family welfare and natural resource management, but are often excluded from community decisions that affect them. By enhancing women’s participation and power, the CBNRM programme is both empowering women, and strengthening communities’ capacity through more informed decision-making and more pro-active membership.

Inclusion of women in decision-making

In most project areas, the role of women as resource managers who need to be involved in community level decision-making over RNR and distribution of benefits is increasingly recognised (Jones 1997) and several mechanisms have been established. For example, in Caprivi, Community Resource Monitors (all women) ensure flows of information and views between women and decision-makers, while focusing CBNRM activities on plant resources important to women (see Box 3 below). In Kunene, women
Community Development Activators were initially appointed to focus on issues of particular importance to women, but ‘with the priority given to the creation of conservancies they became part of the team that undertook household surveys and provided a vector for the integration of women into the entire process of CBNRM’ (Durbin et al 1997) This is not only particularly appreciated by women, but also welcomed by men (ibid).

As the number of women holding leadership positions increases, the risk of women’s priorities being excluded diminishes. Initially, virtually all local residents involved in CBNRM -- Game Guards, chiefs, committee members, project assistants -- were men, but there are now a significant number of women in posts as Resource Monitors, Community Activators, and Committee members (see Box 3).

Box 3: Women in position

Community Resource Monitors in Caprivi: empowering women

CRMs disseminate information to women, and channel women’s views to decision-makers through report-backs to Khuas and presentation of information to other authorities (IRDNC 1997). While preventing women’s exclusion from decisions, they also lead CBNRM activities on palm, thatching grass, and other resources important to women. A gender analysis of CBNRM in East Caprivi found substantial women’s participation in several CBNRM decisions, such as elections of CCGs and use of bed night levy income (Nabane 1993). It concluded that ‘CRMs have assumed leadership roles and have become role models for other women in the village. This may encourage the participation of other women in decision-making in CBNRM’ (ibid).

Women in CBNRM positions

At the end of 1996 there were a total of 21 Caprivian women employed in the CBNRM programme (IRDNC 1997). The number of women on community committees has grown substantially, as communities recognise the need to incorporate women, and as women grow in confidence. For example, both Salambala and Nyaee Nyaee began with all-male committees, but amended membership specifically to include women (C Weaver, pers. comm.). In Torra conservancy, about half the conservancy committee are women (Durbin et al, 1997) and in Uukwaluudhi, about one third (C Weaver, pers. comm.).

Although women are not fully represented in, or happy with, all decisions, the participation of women in general is undoubtedly greater than it would have been without the concerted efforts of CRMs and CDAs. Furthermore, the fact that communities have taken specific steps to increase women’s involvement (eg: bringing women onto committees) and recognise that further action to enhance women’s participation is needed (eg NNFC 1994, Uukwaluudhi Management Committee 1997), indicate grass-roots progress in addressing gender problems.

Women’s economic power: avoiding disempowerment

Concerted efforts have been made to avoid the mistakes of many RNR-development programmes, in which once a resource gains financial value, control is taken from women by men. For example, IRDNC have carefully emphasised that the Caprivi thatching grass project is targeted for women and as a result around seven hundred thousand dollars have been earned by women so far, without appropriation of the resource by men.

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6 For example, in community decisions on the Lianshulu Lodge bed night levy, women of Lizaudi were not happy with a male-dominated decision to use the money for a vegetable garden. This contrasts with Lianshulu and Sauchona communities where women participated in, and were happy with, decisions to use funds for food and water pipes (respectively) (Nabane, 1995).

7 In fact, some women would like more inclusion of men in income-generating projects, because now that the grass is such a success, women are doing all the earning, while opportunities for men to work and earn are minimal (Nabane 1995).
7. PEOPLE: SKILLS, CONFIDENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Community members involved in the CBNRM programme are constantly gaining skills through exposure to new activities and approaches, supplemented by organised workshops and courses, exchange visits, counterparts, and one-to-one assistance. The wide array of skills gained includes:

- natural resource management skills, such as mapping, and identifying resources;
- organisational skills, such as planning, record-keeping, staff management, monitoring;
- leadership skills: building consensus, holding and chairing meetings, mobilising people and organising events;
- enterprise skills, such as marketing, accounting, craft production, negotiation, serving tourists;
- communication skills, such as making presentations, writing reports;
- social assessment skills, such as social mapping, gender analysis;
- technical skills: budgeting, dealing with lawyers and legal requirements, getting and using financial advice; fencing, game water development and maintenance;
- practical skills, such as driving, speaking English.

In most communities, there is a wide range of residents who have gained different skills, according to the nature of their involvement as Community Game Guards, Community Resource Monitors, Community Development Activators, members of Conservancy Committees and other community institutions, locally-recruited staff of NGOs, and/or employees of tourism/wildlife enterprises. There are often one or two individuals who have particularly flourished and emerged as community leaders, including women who began with little experience outside the home and now organise other members of the community, host exchange visits from elsewhere, and make presentations at national and international conferences.

<table>
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<th>Box 4: New skills applied and adapted</th>
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As skills develop, CBNRM is being managed by local people:

- In East Capriv, one of the CRMs has been appointed Trainee Project Manager of all CRMs, and will receive one more year of technical support and capacity building before assuming post of Project Manager (IRDNC 1997).

- In Kunene, the first chair of the Ward 11 Residents Trust (now Treasurer of Torra Conservancy) has moved from Project Assistant to Project Manager, taking over full administrative and financial management for the Ward 11 component of IRDNC’s work. A similar process has begun in Sesfontein and Warmquelle, where the communities have each chosen a Trainee Project Manager (IRDNC 1996).

- In Nyae Nyae area, the NNFC decided in mid-1996 that they no longer need a full-time natural resources advisor based at Baraka, and applied for institutional support on only a limited part-time basis (NNFC 1996).

Local CBNRM leaders are applying their new skills outside their locality:

- Leaders from several different community tourism enterprises drew on their experience in institutional development to form NACOBTA, which involved registering members, writing a constitution, organising technical assistance, seeking funding, setting up an office, holding annual general meetings, and now holding training courses and other events for members around the country.

- Dynamic conservancy leaders are helping to facilitate conservancy development in other communities. For example, in East Capriv, the Chair of Salambala conservancy is working closely with nearby Impalilla community to explain conservancy opportunities and assist committee formation.
Increased local management of CBNRM provides evidence that new skills are being developed and applied (see Box 4). This is not only useful for the individuals, but also enhances the community's human resource base and their collective ability to cope with change and take initiatives. This is particularly important in Namibian rural areas, given the tendency for skilled family members to migrate to urban areas for work. In view of the few other sources of adult training, development of skills has been emphasised by several communities. For example, in negotiating a joint venture agreement, Torra conservancy were more concerned to increase the private operator's commitment to training, than to haggle over an extra percentage of revenue (Davis 1998). The community knew that in the long-term, managerial skills within the community will make more of a difference to their capacity to run the lodge -- and other activities -- themselves.

8. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL

8.1 Responsibility for wildlife

The Namibian CBNRM programme has put a strong emphasis on building local responsibility for managing wildlife and other natural resources as well as building capacity. This has not only proved effective in enhancing local management of resources, but has also contributed to social empowerment by giving communities a sense of control.

Return of responsibility for wildlife to communities began with the Community Game Guard Programme in Kunene in 1982. The Game Guards (CGGs) monitored wildlife and poaching on behalf of the community. As Jones points out:

‘When Owen-Smith and Eyre first discussed conservation and poaching with community leaders, there was nothing on offer in return except the knowledge and satisfaction that the community was doing something for itself to halt the decline in wildlife’ (Jones 1998, emphasis added).

The fact that the CGGs had a swift impact on the level of poaching indicates the significance to communities of the opportunity to take responsibility. Since then, years of grass-roots CBNRM work have further enhanced local commitment to RNR management, well before the current conservancy legislation made significant cash benefits from, or legal rights over, wildlife a genuine possibility*. For example, in Kunene, wildlife numbers have been allowed to grow to the extent that game are competing with wildlife, and in West Caprivi, CGGs effectively deal with insider and outsider poaching, both without significant cash benefits (Jones 1997). With the advent of conservancies, a further shift is occurring, in which responsibility deepens to control, and gamekeepers become proprietors (Jones 1998).

*When there have been financial benefits, such as distribution of bed night levies from a lodge, the link between cash and resource conservation has been explicit and emphasised.
It can be well-argued that the opportunity to take responsibility and control is the most important benefit from CBNRM to many community members. Before and since Independence, decision-making has been generally top-down and centralised. CBNRM has provided one of the few opportunities to reverse this both before Independence (in Kunene) and in the first years afterwards.

Practical aspects of community NRM have not been ignored, however, and the capacity of community members, to translate responsibility into improved management has been increased. For example, Conservancy Committee members are learning land-use planning skills. CGGs and Community Rangers have improved their tracking and identification of wildlife. Their new monitoring systems, using GPS, will build a data base on wildlife numbers and distribution which can be used both by conservancies and MET (Jones 1997). CRMs in Caprivi have developed a monitoring system for grass. using GPS to locate various test sites of cut grass, uncut grass, burnt grass and unburnt grass (IRDNC 1997). They have learnt techniques for more sustainable harvesting of natural resources, such as harvesting palms with knives instead of axes, and are now teaching these to other women (Wyckoff-Baird and Matota 1995).

8.2 From wildlife management to land-use planning

Activities within the CBNRM programme have generally focussed on wildlife, some specific plant resources in Caprivi (such as palms) and conservancy formation. However, CBNRM communities are increasingly engaging in broader common property resource management (CPRM) and land-use planning, thereby strengthening their control over their environment and futures.

This shift is partly because decisions about hunting, wildlife habitat, tourism development, and all aspects of a conservancy management plan cannot be made in isolation from decisions about other land uses. Conservancy development forces communities to assess trade-offs between various land-uses. For example, to create a core wildlife area for reintroduction of game, Salambala decided to exclude farming from 14,000 hectares. To make best use of the Salambala forest, they are also addressing forestry issues. Another reason behind the expansion from wildlife to other CPRM is that the institutional development that has occurred gives communities greater capacity in CPRM. Although conservancies do not have legal rights over land or non-wildlife resources, their new skills, combined with legitimacy in the eyes of their members and neighbours, gives them more power to negotiate and implement collective management practices. If secure collective land tenure is introduced, the conservancy approach will provide the springboard for strong common property resource management institutions covering the full range of natural resources.

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9 However, participatory research would be needed to substantiate this. Jones (1998) emphasises that intrinsic incentives – such as social and cultural benefits – have been more influential than instrumental (financial) incentives, in Kunene and West Caprivi, particularly in the early years of CBNRM, although economic incentives have been useful to sustain commitment since. However, in more densely populated East Caprivi, the CGC programme has proved less successful in encouraging communities to take responsibility for wildlife (Jones 1997). Development of significant economic benefits through conservancies may well be needed to firmly establish community conservation.

10 Some CBNRM institutions (such as the NNFC and the =Khoi !Haus Conservancy Committee (which emerged from the Groebig Farmers Association) were already addressing livestock and other issues. As CBNRM strengthens these institutions, it enhances their non-wildlife activities.

11 Wildlife is perhaps the most difficult of RNR to be managed collectively, because of the mismatch in scale between small cohesive social units, and the large geographic areas that are generally needed to contain economically viable wildlife resources (Durbin et al 1997). If communities can meet this challenge, they should be well prepared to take on other challenges with more localised and less mobile natural resources.
9. STRENGTH IN DEALING WITH OUTSIDERS

9.1 Assertiveness and success
CBNRM communities are increasingly pro-active in voicing their demands to others. This can be attributed to three impacts of CBNRM: firstly their stronger internal organisation which enhances the confidence they have and the respect they are given. Secondly, they have gained wide experience in dealing with outsiders through CBNRM activities such as meetings with government officials, advice from social, legal, environmental, and economic advisors, negotiations with the private sector, exchange visits to and from other regions and countries, and participation in national and international workshops. Thirdly, communities are better informed about national and commercial issues that affect them, because CBNRM staff and institutions act as a channel for information.

Box 5: Persuading the President to deal with the Governor

In March, 1997 the Salambala Management Committee submitted its conservancy registration application to the Caprivi Regional Governor for approval of the boundaries. At the time, 2,400 adults had joined the conservancy; a participatory process had formulated a land-use plan, and 14 families had voluntarily moved out of the proposed core wildlife area (CWA). However, four families still used the CWA and opposed conservancy formation. Due to political and tribal allegiances, the Regional Governor supported the four against the wishes of the vast majority and successfully blocked registration of the Salambala Conservancy for the next 11 months. Finally, in February, 1998, representatives of the Bukalo Khuta and Salambala Management Committee traveled to Windhoek. They held successful meetings with three key ministers (Lands, Local/Regional Government, and MET). The three ministers then joined them in a two-hour visit with Namibia’s State President, at which the governor’s actions and the overall conservancy development effort in Salambala were discussed. Following the meeting, the Minister of Local and Regional Government wrote to the Caprivi Governor condemning his actions related to the Salambala Conservancy. The Minister of Lands wrote to the Governor and offending individuals in the CWA urging them to vacate the CWA by April 30th. The Minister of MET informed the Conservancy Approval Committee to approve the Salambala Conservancy application without the Governor’s signature.

This is an instance in which grassroots people have successfully demanded and received accountability from a regional government representative who was misusing the power of his office.

Enhanced capacity to request assistance, make a case, or object to a decision is difficult to measure, but is evident from the ease with which communities are now being pro-active in dealing with outsiders and, in some cases, achieving success in getting their needs addressed. Examples include:

- the Kxoe community of West Caprivi, having faced obstacles from Government for years in their attempt to set up a campsite, are now taking the Government to court with the assistance of the Legal Assistance Centre.
- the Ju/Hoansi community in Nyae Nyae lobbied government successfully to remove invading Herero settlers in July 1997, after more than 10 years’ frustration.
- both Salambala and Torra Conservancy Committees negotiated contracts with tourism investors. This involved protracted and complex discussions, and required strong negotiating skills to reach a fair deal with well-established and experienced private operators. Torra rejected one proposal – the ability to reject a deal worth potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars (but also involving substantial costs) is in itself a sign of empowerment.
• several committees have engaged proactively with local government councillors and
governors in their region in order to obtain support for the emerging conservancies
(see Salambala case in Box 5).
• community tourism operators established NACOBTA to channel their views on
tourism policy to government and the private sector, and conservancy representatives
have participated in national workshops on land reform.

These communities now know who to contact and how, have the motivation to do so,
and are being taken seriously by those in power.

9.2 Improved relations with neighbours

Many CBNRM initiatives have required communities to reach consensus with their
neighbours. Although the process is slow, and can cause some initiatives to flounder,
success has been achieved in places with long-standing tensions (see Box 6). By
providing new incentives to work together, CBNRM is helping to overcome long-
standing barriers to regional development. In the arid areas, mobility (of people as well
as animals) is essential, and there are often multiple spheres of over-lapping resource-use
rights. Therefore enhanced capacity to negotiate natural resource use with neighbours
can, in turn, improve several aspects of land-use and livelihoods.

Box 6: Rivals working together in Kunene

• Five communities receiving the Etendeka Lodge bed-night levy, including different ethnic groups, had
to reach consensus on which communities should be included and how the money should be split
between the five (IRDNC 1996). On distribution day, the old rivals celebrated together.
• In Sesfontein district, after years of difficult negotiation and conflict, a joint veld committee was
established by Purros, Ojindakwe, Sesfontein, WarmQuelle and Khovarib (IRDNC 96). It is now
supervising local game guards, vehicle use, and the trainee project manager.

10. PRIDE, DIGNITY AND OPTIMISM

Pride felt by community members is impossible to measure, but is encapsulated in
comments such as one made by a Grootberg farmer who stood up during participatory
conservancy planning in Kholadi !!Hoas conservancy to say

‘we’ve never made decisions like this before’ (Ashley 1997b).

Pride at communities’ new-found control over decisions is enhanced by the recognition
that CBNRM communities gain from outside authorities. Conservancies have received
attention, public acknowledgement and/or visits from neighbouring communities, local
councillors, donors, NGOs, land-use planners, researchers, ministries, and even the
President. The significance of recognition and decision-making power to rural
communities is all the greater given their historic and geographical context. Not only
were communities disenfranchised under colonialism, but even today, political attention
is generally biased towards urban areas (where economic development is faster) and
northern areas (where the majority of the population live). Areas such as Kunene, Nyae
Nyae, and Caprivi have felt socially, politically, economically and geographically
marginalised.

Optimism in the future is rarely the prevalent mood in these areas, as reflected in the
migration of the most skilled members. Yet in conservancy discussions, with the growth
of new enterprises, community capacity, and outside recognition, optimism emerges. For example, at Khoadi Hoss, members argued that even the smallest tourism enterprise was worth investing in because it will lead to further development in future (Ashley 1997b).

11. CONCLUSION: TAKING CONTROL OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Social impacts of CBNRM are harder to define and measure than economic impacts. Empowerment is a process, not a sudden state. Each single CBNRM activity focuses on getting a task done -- whether registering conservancy members, deciding how to distribute a bed night levy, or reporting to the Khuta on palm resources. But with each task done in a flexible participatory way, the combined effect is a change in social processes in rural communities. Over time and despite setbacks, CBNRM communities are developing:

- adaptable institutions
- defined and committed membership
- accountable leaders
- transparent participatory processes for making decisions, sharing information and involving women
- cohesive social units and common purpose
- new skills
- mechanisms for managing natural resources
- experience and confidence in dealing with outsiders
- recognition from neighbours and outside authorities
- pride and a sense of control.

The more they have these, the more they are able manage common property resources and to formulate and pursue their common interests, taking control of development processes; ie: the more they are 'empowered.' The most tangible signs of this so far are:

- their increased capacity to engage with institutions outside their area and challenge other authorities
- their growing involvement in broader land-use planning in their areas:
- their expression of, and satisfaction at, gaining control over decisions and resources.
- the shift from reacting to new problems or opportunities to proactively defining and pursuing their long-term goals.

In summary, CBNRM communities are forming social units and institutions with grassroots legitimacy and capacity for engaging in a range of development activities and proactively pursuing community objectives. These institutions appear set to provide the building blocks for a long-term bottom-up development process that goes well beyond the initial scope of CBNRM.
III. MORE SECURE LIVELIHOODS

1. BACKGROUND
The majority of Namibians live in rural areas, on communal land. Most are dependent on a combination of agriculture (livestock and, in many areas, crops), other natural resources (trees, wild plants, etc) and external income sources (such as employment, pensions and remittances from family workers). In virtually all communal rural areas, daunting constraints faced by households include: low and unreliable rainfall, lack of non-agricultural options, absence of secure land tenure, and inadequate educational and employment opportunities. In this context, improving livelihoods is not just about earning more cash, but coping with drought, securing food supplies, building up assets and diversifying risk. CBNRM contributes to many of these strategies, through activities that improve management of veld foods, generate cash for cash-strapped families, reduce wildlife damage to agriculture, provide game meat, and complement other livelihood activities.

2. FOOD SECURITY AND Drought COPING
Households rely on a combination of crops, livestock, veld products, purchases, and drought relief, for their food, with the balance varying greatly between regions. Food insecurity arises from limited agricultural potential, reductions in herds and harvests in drought years, difficulties in collecting veld foods, wildlife damage to crops and livestock, and insufficient cash income to fill food deficits. In dry years, households will reduce other cash expenditures in order to buy food. But those without regular cash income have to maximise food-gathering and exchanging, in order to minimise reliance on selling off reserves or going without.

CBNRM initiatives boosts food security and drought-coping in several ways:

(i) cash to purchase food, particularly during drought. Community Game Guards (men), Community Resource Monitors (women) and grass-sellers (women) in Caprivi all report that food is the main use of their income (Nabane 1995). The fact that income from wildlife, tourism, grass or veld products is more robust during drought than agriculture, is an important advantage to rural households (see Box 7).

Box 7: CBRNM income used for food in drought
“Usually my husband and I both provide the food eaten by my family: I provide vegetables from my garden, we both harvest the crops, and my husband buys the meat. With the drought this year, I have no garden, my husband has no money, and we have no crops. The only reason my children have anything to eat is because I sell the thatching grass and can buy mealie meal with the money I get.”
East Caprivi thatching-grass seller (Nabane 1995)

From May to December 1994, East Caprivian women selling thatching grass earned over N$60,000, which they used to buy maize meal, as the 1994 harvest was less than 20% of the average yield (Wyckoff-Baird and Matata, 1995).

The poor harvest also led Lianshulu and Saucuo communities to use their bed night levy income for household dividends, rather than start a community project. The $35 dollars given to each household was roughly the price of a 25kg bag of mealie meal (Wyckoff Baird 1995).

13 There is relatively more reliance on livestock and purchased food in Kunene, on gathered food in Ojozonjupa and West Caprivi, and on crops in northern regions and East Caprivi.
12 CBNRM can also constrain drought-coping strategies if, for example, livestock and veld-food gatherers lose access to exclusive wildlife/tourism areas. This was an issue for Tuma conservancy in their negotiation (and ultimate rejection) of a luxury joint venture lodge, as a spring used in drought would have been in the exclusive tourism area.
(ii) Maintaining access to veld foods. Veld foods are most important during the lean season and in dry years, particularly to those with small agricultural holdings/herds and lacking regular wage income. For example, in Caprivi, water lilies are called ‘hunger foods’ because they are harvested between July and October when field crops are late and there is little else to eat (Wyckoff Baird 1995). However, many veld foods are declining (see Box 8). CBNRM activities help to maintain current access to veld foods by enhancing recruitment rates, managing harvesting patterns, and/or preventing reduced access.

Box 8: Veld foods: growing scarcity but essential for food security

Collecting veld products is time-consuming and, in some cases, is becoming increasingly difficult.

- In Nyae Nyae area, food gathered by women used to provide 75-80% of the diet by weight (N NFC 1994) and veld foods are still reported to be the most important food source in both wet and dry seasons (SSD 1995). Their importance is easy to understand given that a bad year’s harvest, like that of 1993, is only 20-30kg per household (SSD 1998). However, in recent years wildlife, bush foods, and other veld products have declined significantly, threatening food security (N NFC 1995).

- In West Caprivi, mangetti nuts provide critical food stores from December to February, when the previous harvest is finished and new supplies not yet available. But collecting mangetti nuts can involve trips away from home taking one or several days (van Rhy 1995).

As veld food supplies become scarcer, households have to spend more time gathering, travel longer distances, use transport, or adjust consumption. However, CBNRM activities are helping maintain these vital food sources through monitoring and improved management. For example, the NNFC decided in 1995 to plant marula, mongongo, and wild orange trees, to prevent scarcity later.

(iii) Limiting wildlife damage to agriculture. For households dependent on their herds and harvests for food security, elephant damage to crops (in Caprivi) and water sources (in Kunene and Nyae Nyae), and predation of livestock by lions and hyenas (mainly Caprivi and also Nyae Nyae) are major problems (von Rohr 1997, O’Connel 1995, Brown and Jones 1994, Jones 1992). The CBNRM programme, and specifically Community Game Guards try to minimise wildlife damage by scaring away elephants and giving advise on protecting livestock from predators. For example, Game Guards from Lianshulu community maintain a 12km electric fence which prevents elephants entering crop fields to the south of Mudumu National Park in East Caprivi (IRDNC 1997). If wildlife damage could be significantly reduced more broadly, this would be as positive a contribution to food security of those households as a major expansion of cash earnings.

(iv) Boosting agricultural investment. CBNRM earnings are invested in livestock or agricultural labour, both of which can increase food production. For example, game guards report spending wages on ploughing, and grass-sellers reported that in good years they would want to invest earning in livestock (Nabane 1995).

(v) Game meat. Meat from community hunts (in Kunene) and subsistence hunting (in Nyae Nyae) is a small but useful supplement to the diet. For example, in 1993, the quota for Kunene hunts of 500 animals, ranging from giraffe to ostrich, provided meat worth around N$150,000 (at prevailing local prices per kg) (Jones 1997).

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14 The spread of wildlife as a land-use (a likely outcome of successful CBNRM) may also increase wildlife damage to farms. However, conservancies are trying to address this in their land-use planning, for example by developing exclusive areas for wildlife, and minimising disturbance by tourists, which is said to be scaring wildlife onto the farms (Ashley 1997a and b).

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Non-financial dividends of CBNRM in Namibia
3. CASH: A CRITICAL GAP FILLER FOR THE POOREST

Total local earnings generated by CBNRM activities are currently small relative to programme running costs, but are nevertheless highly significant because much is earned by cash-strapped households for whom a few hundred dollars can make a substantial difference. This paper does not aim to refine estimates of the amount of local earnings\(^\text{15}\), but to identify how they contribute to livelihood security of the poorest.

All rural households need cash, in order to pay for food, school fees, clothes, foodstuffs, transport, and agricultural inputs\(^\text{16}\). However, only a minority have regular waged jobs\(^\text{17}\). For meeting cash needs, the majority have to rely on pensions, casual labour (such as house-building, tending cattle or crops, and domestic work) and sale of home-produced products (home-brewed beer, veld foods, crops, livestock, and household utensils). For those without regular jobs, these options can be critical to making ends meet, but they are generally constrained by low pay and limited market demand (Ashley and LaFranchi 1997) leaving the majority of households short of cash.

CBNRM expands cash-earning opportunities for three different groups of rural residents:

- A relatively well-skilled minority gain new jobs and regular wages (eg: in new tourism enterprises, as Game Guards);
- Sellers of home-produced/gathered products and casual labourers can earn more from expansion of markets (eg: for crafts, thatching grass, food and fuel for tourists), development of new products (eg: processed veld products), maintenance of raw material supplies (eg: palms for weaving) and increased demand for casual labour (eg: from lodges, newly-employed neighbours). This group particularly includes poor households and women, as these are the activities on which they generally rely.
- All members of a community can share in benefits from collective income (earned by conservancies and community institutions from concession fees, leases, levies profits from community enterprises). The income may be divided for household dividends or used for a single community investment or project. In theory, at least, the benefits can be shared by all.

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**Box 9: Craft and thatching-grass sales boost Caprivian women’s income.**

CBNRM activities to improve craft production, expand craft sales, and develop a market for local thatching grass are significantly increasing the cash-earning power of some of the poorest households:

- On the east bank of the Kwando River (East Caprivi), Mashi craft group provides advice, training, and a sales outlet for women to sell crafts made mainly from local reeds, seeds, woods, and grasses. As such it enables the most marginalised sections of the community — women and particularly the elderly — to earn cash from natural resource-based activities (IRDNC 1997).
- Further south on the Kwando, ranking of income sources by women participating in a craft group shows that craft-making has replaced beer-brewing as the top income generator. For neighbouring women who have started selling thatching grass to national companies, a similar change has occurred (Nabane 1995, IRDNC 1996). Grass thatching is now a highly participatory and lucrative enterprise, involving more than 600 women over an increasingly large area (Barnes 1998).
- Craft activities are particularly important in the Nyae Nyae area, where ‘craftwork in the principal way that most men and almost all women earn cash income to supplement their subsistence activities. Ninety percent of the craft production is estimated to be undertaken by women’ (Terry et al. 1994, quoted in SSD 1995).

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\(^{15}\) These are covered elsewhere. See, for example, Ashley and LaFranchi 1997, and Ashley 1995.

\(^{16}\) Although virtually all rural households engage in subsistence production, virtually none depend on it alone. Cash is essential, given the constraints on the natural resource base and the current level of rural integration into commercial markets.

\(^{17}\) For example, among the poorest half of Caprivian households, only 13% can rely on wages as their main source of income (SIAFAC 1997).
Many households could earn an additional few hundred dollars per year from increased sales of goods or labour, and almost as much again from a household dividend\(^\text{18}\) (Ashley and LaFranchi 1997). Given that poor households in East Caprivi are likely to earn around N$1,000, and poor households in West Caprivi, Nyae Nyae and parts of Kunene even less, this is a major cash boost. Such households would normally face a cash shortage of several hundred dollars just to meet basic needs, therefore this extra income can be critical for making ends meet. It could cover school fees if paid at Christmas, or one to three months of grain in a deficit year. In emergencies, it could limit the need to sell off reserves, take children out of school, or simply go without. It does not change their livelihood strategy, but provides a vital expansion to their basket of cash opportunities\(^\text{19}\).

4. SUPPORT TO MULTIPLE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

In order to diversify risk and gather together sufficient income, virtually all rural households have to combine multiple livelihood activities, using different resources and skills at different times. Therefore the impact of any new economic activity on other activities is critical. Conflicts between wildlife utilisation and agriculture are often apparent, because they compete for land, water and time. However, as communities develop their conservancy activities, they are working on minimising these land-use trade-offs, while several more positive links are emerging.

**Maintaining livestock**

Farmers in Torra Conservancy strongly emphasised that tourism is easier to integrate with current livelihoods than other types of employment because the jobs are near home so ‘farmers can continue as farmers’ and keep an eye on their herd. Farming is such a critical part of ‘who we are’ that the proximity of tourism to home makes it better than urban jobs, even if the latter are better paid (Ashley 1997a). As noted above, CBNRM can also enhance farming by generating funds for investment.

**A foundation for development**

Another indirect benefit of tourism, emphasised by farmers in =Khoadi !!!Hoas Conservancy in 1997, is that tourism is a ‘foundation for development’ (Ashley 1997b): those with new jobs will spend their money locally; skills gained through CBNRM will increase households’ productive capacity and resilience; and the tourism development will bring other enterprises – whether a tyre-mending station as some suggest, or other currently-unimagined enterprises. Some communities are already choosing to invest their collective income in productive infra-structure, such as a water pump or gardening venture, and in local enterprises, such as coffin-production and a bakery ((Durbin et al 1997, IRDNC pers. comm.).

\(^{18}\) These are rough averages. In some cases, skilled craft-makers can earn substantially more (over N$1,000 per year). But for others, the increase in income from, for example, selling vegetables to a tourism lodge, is much less. Similarly, in some prime wildlife areas, collective income from tourism and hunting could amount to more than a few hundred dollars per household, but in other areas it will be less.

\(^{19}\) For the smaller percentage of residents who gain new jobs from CBNRM, the lift is even greater, possibly from being economically insecure to secure.
5. OVERVIEW: MORE DIVERSE, SECURE LIVELIHOODS

Diversification of risk and versatility are absolutely essential for rural households, given the unreliability of rainfall and hence agriculture, and lack of industry in rural areas. The details of who earns how much from CBNRM, and how trade-offs are balanced with other land uses, will vary between places and over time. But the importance of CBNRM to household security remains that it provides new opportunities for diversification: it provides new sources of income and investment, additional strategies for food security, and can support households in pursuing their multiple activities. In particular, it provide opportunities for different types of households: not only those in a good position to secure full-time jobs, but also for women and poor households, for whom enhanced management of veld products, expansion of natural resource markets, and distribution of collective income, can make a critical difference.

Finally, changes in community capacity for taking collective decisions, managing common property resources, and dealing with outsiders – outlined above in Section II -- can also boost the livelihood security of community members. Rural households depend on a range of natural resources, and will benefit from their wise management by the community, and from effective negotiation of resource use with neighbours. More broadly, enhanced community capacity to deal with a myriad of development challenges and promote their collective interests can have deep, if intangible, impacts on rural livelihoods.
IV. CULTURAL BENEFITS

Communities gain cultural benefits from CBNRM as wildlife return and local traditions are revitalised. These benefits are poorly documented, because they often go unspoken within communities, and are rarely included in specific measurable objectives of NGOs or donors. However, to communities, particularly older members, they are significant.

1. CULTURAL VALUE OF WILDLIFE

In most Namibian rural communities, wildlife have, or traditionally had, a cultural or religious value. Therefore restoration of wildlife populations is seen as a benefit, irrespective of its use. During the post-Independence socio-ecological surveys, many participants expressed positive feelings about wildlife, despite their hostility to Nature Conservation as a Ministry. For example, participants in West Caprivi explained that wildlife was an integral part of their lives, as well as a valuable economic resource (Brown and Jones 1994). Among the Topnaars, resident in (and hostile to) the Namib-Naukluft National Park, there was consensus that wildlife should not be eliminated from the area. Their forefathers had always lived side by side with wildlife, and they wanted future generations to do the same (MET undated).

Many different Namibian communities have expressed the wish to restore wildlife, and particularly for their children to see wildlife, as a major reason for their involvement in CBNRM. This cultural benefit is one of the major “intrinsic incentives” (along with a sense of control) that drove the programme for several years before economic returns became an additional benefit (Jones 1998). Today it is still a driving force of conservancy formation. For example, in Salambala and Uukwaliudhi, wildlife populations are a fraction of their previous levels and hence economic benefits are currently limited. In both, particularly among older community members, the reason for starting a conservancy is simply so that people can enjoy having wildlife around them again (Jones 1997) (see Box 10).

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<th>Box 10: Conservancy formation so the children will see wildlife</th>
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<td>When Salambala residents were asked their expectations of the new conservancy, ‘return of wildlife’ was the most commonly mentioned benefit, identified by 132 respondents (out of 200), compared to 101 mentioning job creation and 65 mentioning improvement of livelihood (Mosimane, 1996).</td>
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<td>In Uukwaliudhi, wildlife occupied a significant niche in the culture and folklore of the Oshiwambo according to the elderly. But today, cultural links with wildlife are lost, resulting in inadequate knowledge about wildlife and hence about conservation. Therefore it is proposed to restore the traditional hunting area for Kings as a core wildlife area. Reintroduction will make wildlife accessible for cultural, educational and recreational needs, at an affordable price, for the residents of the area (Uukwaliudhi Management Committee 1997).</td>
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Non-financial dividends of CBNRM in Namibia
2. STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL SKILLS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

CBNRM activities have revitalised some traditional practices relating to celebration or use of the natural environment, such as craft-making, wildlife tracking, dancing, and Chief’s game. As such practices gain recognition from outsiders (e.g., tourists) and/or economic value, this can increase interest among the younger generation and enhance community pride in their culture and traditions.

Box II: Revitalisation of traditional skills in Nyae Nyae

The younger generation of Ju’hoansi have not developed the tracking and hunting skills that their grandparents needed to survive in the harsh Kalahari. Older Ju’hoansi were recently involved in a predator research study which combined their knowledge and tracking skills with scientific census methods. After the research, they decided to combine their enhanced knowledge of the leopard population with natural bushlore skills and create a unique tourism venture. Though this is not yet firmly established, it is already clear that there is a renewed respect and incentive for younger generations to learn from their parents the remarkable skills and knowledge (Wyckoff-Baird 1993).

Interest in cultural and recreational activities is also being stimulated. For example, the Caprivi Arts Festival has occurred every October for the past three years, organised by the Caprivi Arts and Crafts Association (an active member of the CBNRM programme, receiving support from LIFE). Competitions to find the best dancers and basket-makers highlight these traditional skills. Hundreds of people attend each year.

Stimulation of interest in cultural events and traditional skills is also evident in Caprivi. The tradition of celebrating chiefs’ birthdays with buffalo has faded in Caprivi, but was one of the first uses of game mentioned in Salambala when members were assessing potential benefits of forming a conservancy and gaining hunting rights. Around Mudumo National Park in East Caprivi, children are participating in cultural dance performances for tourists. In West Caprivi, there are plans to tempt tourists with veiled food snacks at roadside picnic stops, and introduce them to local knowledge. The interest of foreign tourists in cultural practices brings risks of commercial exploitation, but at present is providing a useful counterbalance to prevailing modernisation trends which value urban commercial commodities rather than ‘old-fashioned’ traditional practices.
V. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

The impact of CBNRM on natural resources can be seen in two different ways. The first is the changes in how resources are managed by communities. Improved local management of RNR cannot alone ensure conservation of the resource base, given the influence of rainfall and external interventions, but it is an essential component. It is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for environmental sustainability in the communal areas. The second type of impact is observable improvements in the natural resource base, such as expanded wildlife populations, although these can be difficult to ascribe to CBNRM given the many and complex causes of such changes.

1. IMPROVED MANAGEMENT BY COMMUNITIES

Communities in the CBNRM programme not only have greater skills and responsibility for NRM (see Section II,8) but are demonstrating improved RNR management through their activities. In Kunene, for example, active management includes CGG monitoring and mapping of game, problem animal control measures, periodic sustainable cropping of selected species, and setting aside areas of land for wildlife and tourism (Jones 1997). In Caprivi, game monitoring by CGGs is complemented by CRM activity to monitor and promote improved management of palms, papyrus, grass, water lilies and other veld resources (eg: palm gardens, better harvesting techniques) (Wyckoff-Baird and Matota 1995). Similarly in the Nyaue Nyaue area. Community Rangers monitor wildlife, and action is being taken to ensure sustainability of veld foods (NNFC 1995).

Community action against poaching is another clear indicator of conservation activity, in both Kunene and Caprivi. According to an MET Ranger in Opuwo (Kunene Region), around 95% of poaching cases investigated by MET staff are as a result of information provided by CGGs. Traditional authorities also take their own measures against local poachers where necessary (Durbin et al 1997). CGGs in West Caprivi have also been very successful in anti-poaching activities and confiscation of illegal weapons. Between June 1995 and December 1996, the unarmed game guards confiscated more than 120 illegal weapons. Their activities have led to a number of convictions for poaching, and with support from their own headmen and communities they have been able to take action against local people suspected of poaching, as well as against outsiders (IRDNC 1997).

The resource base also benefits from the influence of CBNRM on national approaches to sustainable development, which are covered in Section VI on societal impacts.

2. INCREASED WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

In Kunene, Caprivi and Nyaue Nyaue, wildlife numbers had slumped dramatically in the decades before the CBNRM programme. Increases in wildlife numbers since the start of CBNRM cannot be automatically attributed to the programme, because many other

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20 For example, in Kunene between 1970 and 1982, it is estimated that elephant numbers fell from 12000 to 250, rhino from 300 to 65, and other large mammals by 60 to 90 percent (WWF 1995 quoted in Jones 1993). This was due to a number of factors including both external and local poaching.
factors, particularly rainfall and land use changes, affect wildlife populations. However, the impressive rise in wildlife numbers in Kunene since the start of the game guard programme is probably the clearest example of CBNRM’s conservation impact. The wildlife statistics presented in Table 1 show that between 1982 and 1995, elephant and rhino populations roughly doubled, while mountain zebra, oryx and springbok populations increased several fold in the project area (Durbin et al 1997). Wildlife are seen moving into new areas (IRDNC 1996) and Kunene is the only area in Africa where black rhino are increasing on communal land outside game reserves (Jones 1997).

Table 1: Wildlife statistics by year and species in Kunene Project Area

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>-115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhino</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giraffe</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain zebra</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oryx</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springbok</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td>*</td>
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Source: Durbin et al, 1997, compiled from MET, WWF and IRDNC data.

The extent to which this was due to the CBNRM programme cannot be scientifically measured, but as Jones (1997) concludes:

'A number of factors have contributed to this increase, but there is consensus in Namibian conservation circles that the game guard programme was particularly important.'

In particular, support from game guards and their local communities assisted the recovery in wildlife numbers during the critical recovery period at the end of the 1981 drought.²¹

A similar trend may well be emerging in Caprivi, where field officers and CGGs report a general upswing in the status of different species over the past 6 years. Game is being sighted by CGGs on a more regular basis, and in some areas, such as between Mudumu and Mamili National Parks, there is evidence of wildlife moving out of the parks and into neighbouring communal areas. Buffalo have returned to Mudumo, and zebra and impala appear to be increasing there. Giraffe were sighted for the first time since 1989 in East Caprivi at Salambala in 1996 (IRDNC 1997).

The importance of these trends is not just in terms of wildlife numbers but improved mobility of migratory animals as habitats and diversity of land-uses are maintained. For example, the project areas in Kunene, and the core wildlife area in Uukwaluudhi where a reintroduction is proposed, used to be important on the migratory route of elephants and other animals from Etosha park westwards and northwards, respectively. Project areas in Caprivi are important for maintaining elephants’ range beyond the relatively small Protected Areas.

²¹This is an example of CBNRM creating conditions at community level that are necessary, though not sufficient, for wildlife conservation. The more positive attitude among residents towards wildlife was a necessary condition for the end of the drought to be effective in restoring wildlife populations.

Non-financial dividends of CBNRM in Namibia
VI. BENEFITS TO NAMIBIAN SOCIETY

This paper has considered the range of CBNRM benefits mainly from the perspective of local residents and communities on communal land. However, virtually all of these impacts also serve national objectives: empowered communities with strong institutions strengthen the country’s democracy, as well as laying foundations for decentralised rural development. Improved food security, human resource development and drought-proofing, all contribute to national economic objectives. Maintenance of the natural resource base is of national importance, as well as local benefit. Furthermore, CBNRM has encouraged changes in attitude towards sustainable development at national level, which complement improved management at community level.

1. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

While the principles of democratic governance have been well-established since Independence, the practical mechanisms and habits are still in the formative stages. Governance is still top-down and centralised, and apart from periodic elections, there are few mechanisms for people to demand accountability for actions and decisions of Cabinet and parliamentarians. The conservancy development effort is promoting a bottom-up approach to democracy, whereby elected representatives can advocate and speak on behalf of their constituents. Examples of CBNRM communities making their voice heard among decision-makers were outlined in Section II(9). With the establishment of each additional conservancy, the ability of rural area residents to voice their needs and demands will be strengthened. Within five years the conservancy programme could be representing the needs of more than 200,000 citizens (IRDNC pers. comm.). This could have major macro-level impacts on the democratisation process. The formation of national-level CBNRM institutions that represent local communities, such as NACOBTA and a possible future CBNRM association, further increases the voice of rural communities in central decision-making.

2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: AN INCLUSIVE, COHESIVE SOCIETY

CBNRM strengthens the social inclusion of disadvantaged communities in relation to broader Namibian society. Successful registration of a conservancy is an unequivocal recognition that a community has legitimacy and status in the eyes of the nation and is part of a national development programme. To create a more cohesive and inclusive Namibian society it is particularly important to integrate communities who have not been part of the mainstream in post-Independence Namibia, such as the Ju/hoansi in former Bushmanland, the Kxoe in West Caprivi, and the Himba and others in northern Kunene, all of whom are involved in CBNRM.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: POVERTY, EQUITY AND DROUGHT-PROOFING

National development objectives, as outlined in Namibia’s first National Development Plan, include the reduction of absolute poverty and economic inequity (National Planning Commission, 1997). Residents of the more arid and isolated rural areas, with least infra-structure and services, are among the poorest Namibians, and have few opportunities for economic diversification. However, they include communities with the
most valuable wildlife resources and scenic attractions, as well as those with greatest reliance on a diverse natural resource base for food and materials. CBNRM activities that strengthen these communities' productive base and human resources, therefore contribute to national poverty and equity objectives.

Drought-preparedness and drought-coping strategies have been identified as essential by the Namibian government, given that droughts (or prolonged dry periods) are inevitable. On-farm and off-farm diversification in rural areas are key drought-proofing strategies, but in practice there are few such options. CBNRM provides such an option in several regions, including the most arid areas.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

4.1 Integrating development and conservation

There is increasing recognition in both the development and conservation professions that development and conservation can — and must — go together. Among government agencies and NGOs, CBNRM is gaining credibility as a development approach (Jones 1997). For example, the consortium of all Namibian indigenous NGOs (NANGO) which focuses mainly on economic and political development, is increasingly interested in CBNRM (Jones 1997). It now has Natural Resource Management as one of its four main pillars of work, and has requested to be a member of LIFE Steering Committee. A number of other communities in Namibia, outside the areas where CBNRM promoters have been active, are showing keen interest in forming conservancies (Jones 1997). Successful CBNRM initiatives, publicity drives, and environmental education have helped to create this new awareness of how sustainable use of natural resources contributes to development.

Conservationists, who have generally emerged from the 'protect the parks from the people' mode, are also seeing the need to link conservation and development. For example, support for CGGs among Caprivi MET staff, which was minimal at first, is now gradually increasing, reflecting attitude change within MET. A number of MET local staff now rely on CGGs to assist with the overall conservation effort in Caprivi (IRDNC 1997).

4.2 Devolution of resource rights

Devolution of resource rights to community level is new in Namibia and its growing accept ance can be partly attributed to the CBNRM programme. In the early nineties, IRDNC's involvement in the national programme ensured that years of CBNRM experience at grass-roots level fed into — and influenced — the development of the conservancy approach to devolving conditional wildlife rights to communities (Jones 1997). Currently, with the establishment of conservancies, the overall strategy of devolving tenure and resource rights to local communities has gained credibility among those making and influencing policy. The conservancy approach has gained such support such that it is now often recommended as a model for parallel initiatives in other sectors. For example, at the inter-sectoral conference on Communities managing resources in rural Namibia at the University of Namibia in January 1996 (Turner 1996b) the conservancy approach was recommended for application to range management and forestry. The overall policy debate on national communal land reform
has been positively influenced towards government providing secure and exclusive group land tenure to rural communities (Jones 1997).

4.3 Inter-sectoral co-operation

Sound management of natural resources in Namibia has been hampered by a lack of cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary planning. Isolation and competition between sectors has led to confusion and piecemeal unsustainable development (Jones 1992). In contrast, the CBNRM programme, and the supporting LIFE Program have long been built upon close co-operation between government, NGOs and donors in Namibia (particularly MET, IRDNC, NNFC, WWF and USAID) and has brought together different disciplines, starting with conservationists and social scientists, then bringing in economists, and lawyers. It is now focusing on building bridges with other sectors, such as rangeland, water and forestry. This inter-sectoral approach has proved valuable and is increasingly being adopted by other initiatives, such as the Desertification Programme.
VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that there are substantial non-financial benefits from CBNRM accruing to communities, the natural resource base, and Namibian society. Though progress and key indicators can be mapped, the sum of benefits cannot be quantified. Nevertheless, the importance of evaluating CBNRM by more than the financial benefits is clear. Certainly for Namibian communities the non-financial benefits so far easily outweigh financial benefits. They are all the more significant given rural residents’ lack of other opportunities for improving livelihoods, controlling resources, participating in local decisions and rebuilding traditional culture.

The significance of benefits varies between stakeholders. For example, cultural benefits seem to be most important to the elderly, and employment opportunities to the youth. For poorer households, support to food-security and drought-coping may be critical, while the more secure might prioritise enhanced community status and power, or integration of wildlife with livestock management. In practice, the three types of community benefits from CBNRM are inter-related and reinforce each other: strong community institutions are in a better position to secure livelihood benefits from RNR management; generation of tangible returns and cultural revitalisation can both enhance the sense of empowerment gained by communities from CBNRM.

The benefits of CBNRM have evolved over time, and will continue to change. Jones identifies 3 distinct phases of the programme, and the impacts on communities can be similarly mapped:

1. 1980-1992: from poachers to gamekeepers. Communities developed responsibility for wildlife through the game guard programme and other local initiatives. The corresponding benefits to communities were mainly social empowerment, from the fact they were doing something for themselves, enhanced by cultural values of wildlife;

2. 1992-97: from gamekeepers to proprietors. Communities prepared for conservancy formation and started enterprises. In this phase the first financial and livelihood benefits emerged, helping to sustain commitment, while social benefits from capacity-building continued to grow; and

3. 1998 onward: self-sustaining community institutions. Once conservancies are operational and actively managing their natural resources, all three types of benefits will be enhanced: greater empowerment due to the institutional strength, NRM skills, and legal rights of conservancies; stronger livelihood support due to their enhanced capacity to develop enterprises, plan natural resource use to maximise livelihood impact, and ensure equitable distribution; enhanced cultural benefits from restoration of wildlife.

In this new phase, the development impact of CBNRM (economic and social) becomes more difficult to monitor because conservancies are becoming building blocks for a wide range of development activities.

The impact on the resource base has grown throughout, with reduction in poaching as an immediate benefit in Kunene and Caprivi, while improvements in wildlife habitat and broad NRM occur over the long term. The establishment of conservancies marks a new
phase of more intensive development of community knowledge, skills, and capacity in pro-active and sustainable natural resource management.

Benefits to Namibian society are becoming relevant in the current phase, as the number of rural people involved in CBNRM increases, and the scale of impacts -- whether on accountability, drought-coping, or sustainable development approaches -- intensifies.

From the start, CBNRM has been about much more than a few communities managing wildlife. It has always provided communities with social and cultural benefits. It has now emerged as a programme that empowers communities and provides building blocks for long-term development that is both bottom-up and sustainable, and goes well beyond the initial scope of CBNRM.
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List of acronyms

AGM  Annual General Meeting
CBNRM  Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBO  community based organisation
CDA  Community Development Activator
CGG  Community Game Guard
CPRM  Common Property Resource Management
CRM  Community Resource Monitor
CWA  core wildlife area
GPS  global positioning system
IRDNC  Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
LIFE  Living in a Finite Environment (Program)
MET  Ministry of Environment and Tourism
NACOBTA  Namibian Community Based Tourism Association
NANGOF  Namibian NGO Forum
NGO  non-governmental organisation
NNFC  Nyae Nyae Farmers’ Cooperative
PRA  participatory rural appraisal
RNR  renewable natural resources

One Namibian dollar (NS1) = one South African Rand (SAR 1)
Approximately NS4.5 = US$1