

**Evaluating Capacity Development for Local Participation:
The #Khoadi ||Hôas Conservancy Experience**



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Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGC	Agricultural Extension Center
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (Zimbabwe)
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCF	Cheetah Conservation Fund
CD	Capacity Development
CMC	Conservancy Management Committee
DLG	Democratic Local Governance
DRFN	Deseret Research Foundation of Namibia
EU	European Union
FIRM	Forum for Integrated Resource Management
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development
NACOBTA	Namibian Community Based Tourism Association
NACSO	The Namibia Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Support Organizations
NGO	Non Government Organizations
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
NAPCOD	Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification
RF	Rossing Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNAM	University of Namibia
WWF-LIFE	World Wildlife Fund-Living in a Finite Environment

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Introduction

This report is on CBNRM program of Namibia that aims to link biodiversity conservation and rural development simultaneously. Namibia has decentralized its natural resource management program since 1996 because of the following national and international factors.

National factors:

- the need to reverse the inequities of the classical bullets-and-barbed-wire conservation approaches implemented by excluding or forcefully removing people;
- the need to amend racially discriminatory NR use policies of the apartheid regime; and
- to bring about economic benefits and alleviate poverty of rural communal people.

International factors:

- popularity of common property management design theories and principles as depicted by Ostrom¹ and others in the 1990s and the valuable experiences gained from the CAMPFIRE model of neighboring Zimbabwe²; and
- The popularity of decentralization and local participation as global phenomena to achieve people centered and participatory development

The research's particular focus is on the decentralization and participatory development factor of the CBNRM program. The purpose is to evaluate the role that capacity development plays for enhancing local participation in decentralization of natural resource management from the state to local governance structures.

The study examines

- 1, the CD mechanisms particularly the tools and processes that the Namibian government and NGOs use to develop capacities of communal conservancies; and
- 2, indicators of the new capacities developed at individual, conservancy, and community levels and their effects in terms of behavioral changes, skills building, and establishment of effective and efficient local-level organizational and institutional structures for natural resource management.

The three questions below were used to guide the research:

- 1, How do government and NGOs build the capacity of communal conservancies to enhance local participation?
- 2, What are the new capacities developed as a result of the CD efforts and how are they affecting local participation?
- 3, What are the overall lessons derived from this particular case study for enhancing local participation in managing sustainable community based resource development projects?

The first section of the paper gives a general historical background of natural resource management before and after independence of Namibia. The second section outlines the

¹ Ostrom, E., 1990

² Murphree, M. W. 1993

theoretical framework that this study is based on. The third section indicates a general overview of the research methodology used. The fourth and last section has some of the preliminary findings and the lessons learned.

Background on Namibia's Natural Resource Management and Conservation

The history of natural resource management and conservation prior to the independence of Namibia is characterized by major imbalances and inequities. The main aim was to protect European settlers' interest by partitioning the land in a race-based system. The disease-free, fertile savannas were distributed to white commercial farmers; the marginal lands were given to black farmers; and the rest were set aside as parks or left as undesignated state land. The protected areas were used as buffer zones between the settlers and the black farmers to prevent veterinary diseases³. The designation of protected areas and the *Bantustan system*⁴ of the South African Apartheid Regime has led to the forceful removal of many indigenous communal land tribes from their traditional lands and practices. In addition, the 1968 and 1975 land policies gave full proprietorship and right to commercial farmers to retain all income from wildlife consumption which helped to create multi-million dollar tourism and sport hunting industry on commercial lands. But these policies did not allow the same rights to black farmers who live on communal lands.

The post independence era in Namibia is one that has integrated social justice, rural development, and biodiversity conservation. The government enacted a new legislation in 1996 called the Nature Conservation Amendment Act to reverse the previous discriminatory rules on natural resource management. The new legislation gave equal rights to communal residents to manage and benefit from consumptive and non-consumptive use of their natural resources within defined boundaries called *Communal Conservancies*⁵. The communal conservancy program in Namibia is considered as one of the most innovative and advanced CBNRM models in Africa⁶. The neo-populist principles of participatory development and democracy that have been implemented through the 1996 policy have allowed devolution of rights from the state to local conservancies that have legal constitution and elected management committee. The government has also pursued neo-liberal economic principles in conservancy formations designed to promote commercial development and job creation to disadvantaged Namibians. The neo-liberal approach uses the above economic principles to use the tourism industry as income generating mechanism that would in turn support the long-term sustainability of conservancies⁷.

³ Barnard, P. et. al. 1998.

⁴ It is a system of apartheid which separated the land allocations by race where blacks were organized by their ethnic affiliations into designated homeland or reserve areas. This system was implemented in both Namibia and South Africa through the Odendaal Commission in the 1960s.

Communal Conservancies are legally defined areas in which communities have the rights to use, manage, and benefit from wildlife and other natural resources.

⁶ Jones, B. 1998.

⁷ Nott C. and M. Jacobsohn. 2004.

The Theoretical Framework

A. The Rise of Participatory Development

Participatory development was founded from two ideologies: the alternative development discourse and Paulo Freire's philosophy of "humanization through *conscientization*"⁸.

Alternative development is an ideology originated in academic institutions in the 1960s and has gone through various iterations of modifications and got its prominence in development organizations in the 1990s. Its main objective is to alter mainstream development discourse from capitalist enterprise and free markets⁹ to one that is people centered. The neo-liberal development theory of the 1980s recommended that government institutions need to respond to market needs as a mechanism for fast tracking development. Accordingly, privatization, export production, reduction of tariff for imports, increase of export production, and devaluation of national currencies were prescribed for fast tracking development in poor countries¹⁰. The results have not only exasperated poverty; they have also brought further destruction to natural resources and the environment in general by maximizing self-interest utilization¹¹. The basic premise of alternative development is to reverse the harmful consequences of neo-liberal development by a neo-populist one that can fulfill the needs of humans and sustain growth based on what the people aspire for themselves instead of what policy makers or the state envisions for its peoples.

*"Development is lived by people, where they are, where they live, learn, work, love play and die. The primary community is the immediate space...it's the school, the village the neighbor"*¹²

The main aim of alternative development is to start development from the local level by creating a bottom up and participatory approaches. Thus "local-level" solutions derived from the local people who are directly and indirectly affected by development issues were believed to be sustainable.

The second ideology that influenced the emergence of participatory development discourse is the radical philosophy of Paulo Freire. According to Freire, development is a result of raised consciousness of those who are oppressed or disempowered as they gain their ability to explore and recognize their situation and have the desire for transformation¹³. Through a process of "humanization", those who are marginalized can become *subjects*¹⁴ and attain the capacity to critically observe and analyze their own realities in order to act and transform themselves which in turn "*creates the possibilities*

⁸ Francis, P. 2002.

⁹ Pieterse, J. 1998 and Friedmann J., 1992

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, Parpart et. al. 2004

¹² Michael Novak 1980 as quoted by Friedman 1992.

¹³ Freire, P. 2006.

¹⁴ According to Freire, subjects are those who know and act.

for fuller and richer life individually or collectively”¹⁵. Freire teaches us that all human beings, however “submerged” they are in their situations have the ability to see their reality if they are engaged in true and liberating dialogues, actions, and reflections with others. He states this in the following manner: “.....*For development to occur it is necessary that 1, there be a movement of search and creativity having its seat of decision in the searcher; 2, this movement occurs not only in space, but in the existential time of the conscious searcher.*”¹⁶”

B. Decentralization and Local Participation as Development Mechanisms:

Decentralization of management responsibilities from state to local level administrative units became popular mechanism of participatory development interventions since the 1980s¹⁷. Larson and Ribot define decentralization as

“the transfer of power from central government to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy”.

Decentralization is assumed to bring democratization, efficiency, equity and inclusion resulting to better and sustainable management through the increase of local democracy and people’s participation¹⁸. Thus governments from at least 60 countries have decentralized some aspect of their natural resource management often with the support and pressure of aid agencies¹⁹. According to Larson et. al. there are two types of decentralization processes: *administrative and political or democratic*. Administrative decentralization is the power transfer of public services to lower level units in order to support central governing bodies understand and assess local people’s interests and preferences. While democratic decentralization which Blair also calls Democratic Local Governance (DLG) allows local people to have autonomous power to make their own decisions through institutions they have established themselves²⁰. Although implementing the concept of democratic decentralization fully has found to be complex and difficult to attain as shown by various studies, it is believed to be the most effective form of establishing strong local governance structures²¹. Successful decentralization needs “legitimate²²” local **participation and accountability** in terms of service delivery, resource allocation, and power devolution²³.

As one of the most important components of decentralization, local participation is defined in this research as the policy environment that enables local people to mobilize,

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Cheru, F.2002, Parpart, J. et. al. 2004, J. Ribot and A. Larson. 2005.

¹⁸ Blair, H. 2000, P. 21, J. Ribot and A. Larson. 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² The word “legitimate” is used in this case to indicate that there is a need for implementation of devolution in its true sense without any conditions or pre-determined goals by those who have power such as government, NGOs, and donors.

²³ Ibid

influence, and control the establishment of their own community based *organizations* and *institutions*²⁴ as well as oversee the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CBO led initiatives. Participation is seen as an efficient and effective mechanism to bring local knowledge into planning and decision-making processes, which in turn helps to create better-targeted policies, reduce transaction costs, and gives a sense of ownership and buy-in by local people²⁵.

According to Pretty, there are seven typologies of how people participate in development programs²⁶. The list begins with those processes that are strongly influenced by external agents and ends with those that can be considered as “legitimate” where people have the autonomous power to take part on their own. Manipulative, passive, consultative, with material incentives, and functional participations are those used as instruments to achieve external agent’s predetermined project goals and are considered unsustainable. Interactive participation and self-mobilization are considered to be effective and sustainable because participation is considered as participants’ right and not a means to meet predetermined goals. Self-mobilization is considered as the “legitimate” participation type where people participate by initiating their own activities independently of external institutions but where government and NGOs provide the enabling framework to give resource and technical support when needed. But as many studies indicate, local participation in rural development initiatives is often driven by incentives or donor influenced participatory agenda and coercion²⁷. This approach as shown above is assumed to distort the concept and goals of participatory development and creates dependency on aid, thus threatening program sustainability once the subsidies or donor-funding stop.

Participation within the broader development framework and the Namibian CBNRM context is expected to ensure equitable **representation, empowerment, and distribution of benefits** at the local level²⁸. Participation of marginalized groups such as the poor, women and ethnic-minorities is expected to help them get better representation in the political arena and empower them to have access and significant voice to influence public processes. The 2002 World Bank Hand Book on Empowerment defines the term as “*the expansion of individual and collective assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.* Empowerment results in societal or community level development by strengthening good governance, equitable benefit distribution, and thus inducing pro-poor economic growth²⁹. According to Friedman, the ideal form of empowerment envisioned by the alternative participatory development discourse begins from the household level,

²⁴ Institutions are “the existing and traditional codes of conduct” and locally accepted “dos and don’ts, laws, regulations, management plans and policies” (Fabricius C., 2004) of local governance that are adaptable and flexible to various local livelihood strategies. These codes of conduct are also the framework for creating the organizational structures of conservancies.

²⁵ Pretty, 1995, Chambers 1997, Narayan, D., 2002, Narayan, D. 2005, Mosse D. 2002, Ribot and Larson 2005

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid, and Harrison, E. 2002.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

which is considered as the smallest unit of civil society³⁰. Empowerment is a process by which society³¹'s three essential powers: social, political and psychological are restructured and redefined. As a result of the restructuring of the three powers, *“the state becomes accountable; the power of civil society starting from the household level is strengthened in decision making and managing its own affairs; and corporate businesses are more socially responsible³²”*.

In addition to empowering communities by giving them decision-making power, participatory democracy in community based and local governance settings has been instrumental in reducing corruption, increasing productivity, and service efficiency³³. Research has also shown that the success of CBNRM led initiatives such as tourism depend on the structures inherent in the mode of participation, which in turn maximizes local development potentials by reducing income leakages³⁴.

C. Local Participation and Capacity Development

Participation can be effective and legitimate when complemented by developing the capacity of those who will take ownership of the local governing process. Thus policy makers are expected to create the enabling environment and policy framework to build local skills, interests, and capacity to enhance the ability of communities to self mobilize. This new capacity of self-mobilization is assumed to empower the locals to become primary owners of the new or improved organizations and its institutional framework so they participate at their own will. Locals are also supposed to have full control over the use and management of their resources and acquire the ability to establish contacts with external entities for any additional resource and technical support.

The definition of **Capacity** according to UNDP which is also used by this research is

“the ability of individuals, organizations, institutions, and societies to perform functions effectively and efficiently, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner³⁵”.

Peter Morgan defines **Capacity Development**³⁶ as

“the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions strengthen their ability to carry out their functions and achieve desired results over time³⁷”

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Society is comprised of state, civil society, and private enterprises.

³² Ibid

³³ Dalal-Clayton, B. et. al. 2001 and Abers, R. 2000.

³⁴ Wunder, S. 2000 and Fabricius, C. et. al. 2004.

³⁵ UNDP, 1998

³⁶ The term capacity building is nowadays replaced by capacity development because capacity building connotes that the capacity is being built from scratch while capacity development acknowledges the knowledge and capacity that already exists.

³⁷ Morgan (1998: iii) as quoted by Horton et. al. 2003

The end of the cold war era, global popularity of decentralization, and the perceived failure of infrastructure and technically focused aid strategies have led to give capacity development a new prominence starting from the late 80s and 1990s³⁸. With the

Box 1: What Type of Capacities Do Local-level Administrative Units Need?

Hard Capacities: are the resources and assets that are necessary for local administrative units to function properly. For instance, availability of skillful human resource, finances, infrastructure, and technology are considered as key hard capacities¹.

Soft capacities: are the management processes that support the local administrative body to achieve its mission. These would be the abilities of the local administrative body

- to set its objectives and plans and execute and evaluate them according to the needs and aspirations of its constituents;
 - create the appropriate organizational and institutional structures with strategic leadership as well as skillful and motivated personnel that can manage and perform day to day activities which are also called as *operating capacities*¹ and respond to changes or problems that arise by internal or external factors which are also known as *adaptive capacities*; and
 - establish and maintain the appropriate network and linkages with external entities.
- (Adopted from Horton et. al. 2003)

devolution of administration from state to local level institutions, developing hard and soft capacities of state, civil society, and private enterprises became a priority.

In the case of the CBNRM program in Namibia, communal residents need two phases of capacity development: pre-conservancy formation and post-conservancy formation.

Pre-Conservancy Formation Capacities: This is the capacity of communal residents to fulfill the six requirements of MET to establish legally recognized conservancies. These requirements are complex and time consuming needing the intervention of capacity developers from the start. Various consultations and negotiations need to be carried out by those who are interested to form conservancies with community members and outside stakeholders such as neighboring communities. This involves a process of mobilizing community members and raising their awareness about the conservancy so they will have the interest to participate. Mobilization and awareness-raising are mostly done by visiting each of the farm posts within the designated area to explain the purposes of the conservancy and establish membership through registration³⁹. Once community members are consulted, democratic elections are held to establish representative conservancy

³⁸ Ibid and Horton, 2000.

³⁹ [www.met.gov.na/programmes/wild/finalreport/Ch.%204/Chapter%204\(p41-44\).pdf](http://www.met.gov.na/programmes/wild/finalreport/Ch.%204/Chapter%204(p41-44).pdf)

Box 2: MET Requirements to Establish Communal Conservancies

The six requirements created by the 1996 Conservation Amendment Act in order for conservancies to be legally recognized entities are as the following:

- The community applying for conservancy status has to elect and submit the names of the conservancy management committee representatives;
- The community has to adopt a legal constitution that provides sustainable management and utilization of wildlife in the conservancy;
- The conservancy committee has the ability to manage funds;
- The conservancy committee has an approved method for equitable distribution of benefits to members of the community derived from consumptive and non-consumptive utilization of wildlife;
- The community has to define its boundaries of the geographic area of the conservancy and agree with neighbouring communities on boundaries; and
- The area concerned is not subject to any lease or is not a proclaimed game reserve or nature reserve.

(Taken from Jones 1999)

management committee. The CMC members have the responsibility to oversee the management of hard resources (finances, infrastructure, equipment, staff) of the conservancy and the sound utilization of natural resources. A constitution that articulates the mission, objectives, and boundaries of the conservancy; and defined roles and responsibilities for the management committee and conservancy members has to be adopted by all members. Management plans should also be in place for how to manage wildlife and natural resources.

Post-Conservancy Formation Capacities: Once the conservancy is established, it should have the necessary hard and soft capacities to achieve its goals and objectives. In addition to financial transparency, the conservancy should

- 1, have the necessary skilled human resource to run the financial and administrative issues of the conservancy as well as monitor and regulate the status of natural resources;
- 2, have a benefit distribution plan to make sure that conservancy members are getting their fair share of benefits from natural resources;

3, have financial sustainability through strategic enterprise development through contracts with trophy hunters, joint venture agreements with private enterprises, or its own tourism enterprises.

4, have effective communication mechanisms to ensure that the members are updated and consulted with the various conservancy issues regularly.

Capacity development in this research is divided by three scales: individual, institutional or conservancy level, and the community level⁴⁰ as elaborated below.

Individual level capacity development: is a process of gaining new skills and knowledge resulting to attitudinal and behavioral changes to enable individuals perform their duties successfully.

Community level capacity development: is a process of creating awareness and knowledge within a community⁴¹ so they can use their rights, responsibilities, and power effectively in order to influence, control, and benefit from their local organizations and institutions.

Institutional or conservancy level capacity development: is a process to develop an organization with adequate hard and soft capacities enabling it to meet its goals and objectives.

Research Methodology

This research is carried out through a case study methodology which allows the in-depth exploration of phenomenon from the experiences of a specific place, time, or issues in order to draw out information that would give a perspective of the bigger picture.

I chose the research site in consultation with Mr. Alfons Mosimane, the CBNRM Research Program Leader at the Multidisciplinary Research and Consulting Center (MRCC) located at University of Namibia (UNAM). The criteria for choosing the site were the following.

- 1, conservancies that are willing to participate in evaluation research;
- 2, have had a longer history of involvement in tourism-related CBNRM to provide some basis for conducting evaluation research; and
- 3, those that have not experienced research fatigue from dealing with outside researchers.

My original plan was to look at capacity development issues in two study sites. However, I decided to concentrate on one conservancy that has moderate amount of information in order to study the CD tools and processes and their effects in detail given the time that I have in Namibia is only six months. I have realized that I needed more time if I wanted to do a comparison analysis of two conservancies. I chose #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy for

⁴⁰ Horton et. al. 2003.

⁴¹ Community is defined here as a network of people who share the resources (human, financial, material, and natural) in their areas for their livelihoods through formal and informal institutions.

this study because it has had nine years of history which provides my research a wealth of information. It is also a conservancy that has received adequate amount of capacity development trainings, technical assistance, and donor funding and is considered as one of the fully “capacitated” and “self-sufficient” conservancies. It is also used as showcase CBNRM model of Namibia for it has strong organizational and institutional structures; a well established benefit sharing plan and tourism enterprises such as its own lodge and campsite.

A, Background of #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy:

#Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy is one of the first four communal conservancies established in Namibia in 1998. It is located in NW Namibia comprised of Ward 10 of Khorixas District which is located in the Kunene Region. Members of the Grootberg Farmers Association (GFA), a well organized and established CBO that has been operating in the area since the 1970s created the conservancy. #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy has taken a different approach of natural resource management than other conservancies because it has integrated programs of livestock and wildlife management.

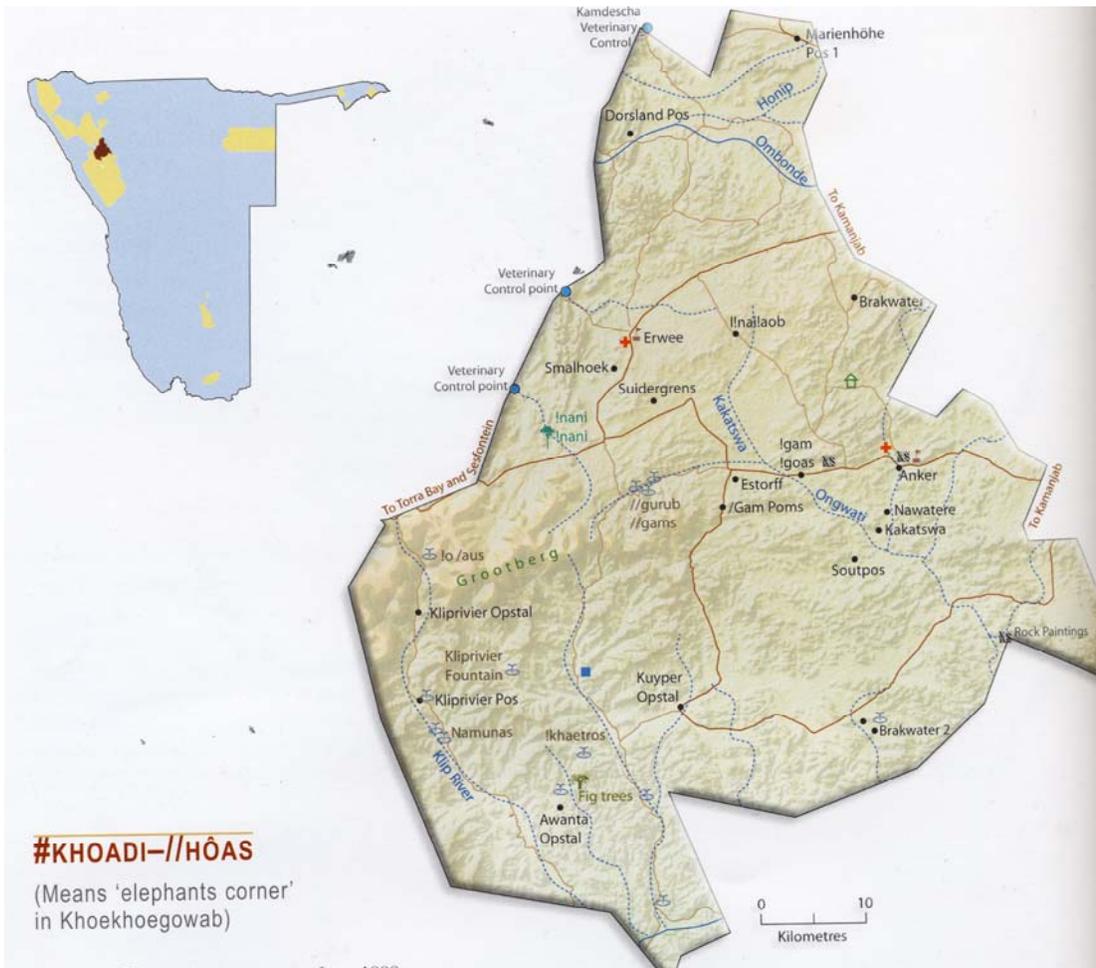


Figure 1: Map of #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy
(Source: NACSO CBNRM Report 2004)

Biophysical Features:

The #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy consists of some 362, 000 hectares of semi-arid rangeland. The topography of the area is characterized with flat sandy highland plains, granite hills, and the Grootberg Plateau. Its' extreme aridity influences the variation of rainfall which is between 240 and 300 mm where drought is a common occurrence⁴². The Hoanib and Huab ephemeral (seasonal) Rivers cross the conservancy area. Majority of the vegetation are mopane savannah and acacia grass. The area has rich diversity in wildlife consisting of some 200 elephants which is also why the conservancy is given the name #Khoadi //Hôas meaning Elephants Corner in Damara language. Other wildlife include rhinos, springbok, gemsbok, kudu, zebra, giraffe and various birds and reptiles. The extreme aridity makes the area totally unsuitable for crop farming and even large-scale livestock farming is difficult. There is severe water shortage and the water points are shared among people, livestock and wildlife population increasing the human-wildlife conflict at an alarming rate⁴³.

Socio-Economic Features:

The area was once held by European settlers under commercial land tenure but the South African government bought the land and redistributed it as a Damaraland Native Reserve using the Bantustan system⁴⁴. The conservancy has 3,000-3,500 people with majority of them from the Damara tribe, followed by the Hererro, and few Ovambos. There are two semi-urban settlement areas in the conservancy called Anker and Erwee where the majority of the population are concentrated in. Each town has a clinic and primary school and small shops; and Erwee has the Agricultural Extension Center which is a department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The AGC gives various training and material assistance to the area farmers on livestock and farming techniques and is also instrumental in forming the Grootberg Farmers Union. Majority of the population live off of livestock farming mainly goats, sheep and few cattle. The employment opportunities for young people are slim to none, and those who are employed are middle-aged working as government employees and teachers. There are also people who do receive wage remittances from family members living in big cities or pensioners who get financial support from the government.

#Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy Structure:

The conservancy is considered as fully self-sufficient financially and has not received donor support since 2003. Majority of its revenue comes from trophy hunting and small proportion comes from wildlife capture and sell or shoot and sale agreements. The conservancy has two full time staff (the Conservancy Manager and the Information Liaison Officer). It has a CMC that has 17 members. It has the first community owned lodge called Grootberg Lodge financed by EU and has 16-20 employees. The lodge has been operational since last year and currently operated by a private company that would run and manage it while building the capacity of the locals to take full ownership in five years. The conservancy also has a campsite with two staff members.

⁴² Vaughn, C. et. al. 2002.

⁴³ Jones, B. 1999

⁴⁴ Kamawi, J. 1997.

B. Research Methods:

Qualitative methods were used in this research consisting of interviews, focus groups, and reviewing of primary and secondary documents. The research was done in phases with four groups of research participants. I was not able to observe a training session or attend conservancy functions as originally planned because most of trainings have been provided to the conservancy and there has not been any training given to the conservancy while I was in Namibia. The conservancy AGM that was supposed to take place at the beginning of October was postponed to end of November.

Preliminary Interviews with Beneficiaries of Capacity Development:

This is the first phase of the research to find out the capacities developed through the various trainings and their impacts at individual levels. I also used this phase to determine if an evaluation has been done in the conservancy before and assess the needs and logistical details for carrying out a self-assessment evaluation. The following individuals were the first group of interviewees.

- 1, 2 conservancy staff
- 2, 4 former and current conservancy management committee members
- 3, 1 environmental shepherd
- 4, 1 lodge staff
- 5, 1 camp site staff
- 6, 1 traditional authority

Participatory Self-Assessment Exercise in a Focus Group Setting:

This is the second phase where we have carried out a self-assessment exercise with various stakeholders of the conservancy. The conservancy staff members, former and current CMC members, conservancy registered farmers, traditional authority representatives, and a women's desk representative were able to attend. The focus group was carried out in men's and women's focus groups. The purpose of the focus group was to evaluate the change of capacities in the conservancy and their effects in achieving its goals and meet the needs of its members. The focus of the discussions was on two particular points: governance and benefit sharing capacity of the conservancy. The participants discussed the various capacity issues by analyzing how they were implemented in the past, present, and future. They have also identified the challenges they have faced and established the mitigation strategies. This in turn has helped to create action plans and locally derived indicators. The full report of the focus group is available.

Single and Group Interviews with Registered Conservancy Members:

The conservancy is divided up into eight farmers' association by the Grootberg Farmers' Association. This phase of the interview was carried out with eight farmers from each of the associations. The purpose of this interview was to find out the awareness and participation level of community members in the conservancy. It is also to find out if the farmers are able to use their rights and responsibilities so they can benefit from the conservancy.

Single and Group Interviews with CD Experts and Trainers:

The following government and NGO service providers have been working with #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy in its capacity development from its initiation. Most are also still engaged with the conservancy at various levels. The purpose of these interviews was to find out what type of tools and processes were used for developing capacity in the conservancy.

- 1, Namibian Nature Foundation
- 2, Ministry of Environment and Tourism
- 3, Deseret Research Foundation of Namibia
- 4, Grootberg Lodge Managers
- 5, Tim Abbott and Vivian Laberg (they are a couple who currently live in the US and have worked in the conservancy for two years during its formation. Many of the interviewees have indicated that Tim and Vivian have given invaluable skills, knowledge and support to the conservancy staff during the conservancy formation. I was able to send them my interview questions by e-mail and get their responses.

Reviewing Relevant Documents:

I am reviewing primary documents such as conservancy constitution, benefit sharing plan, draft wildlife management plan, agreement with lodge management, and copies of the annual financial reports. I have also gathered various training manuals and policy documents from the various NGOs and government sectors. I am also building my information with relevant secondary documents on capacity development and natural resource management

Preliminary Findings

1. How do government and NGOs build the capacity of local people's participation in managing community based natural resource conservancies?

CBNRM capacity development program is a joint effort between government, local and international NGOs, private enterprises, and communal land communities. The main focus of CBNRM capacity development has been on the following areas so far⁴⁵:

- 1, help communities to fulfill government requirements so they can have legally recognized conservancy status;
- 2, provide trainings on how to run a conservancy as an organization with adequate hard capacities of employed staff and resources, transparent democratic process, and financial accountability;
- 3, provide basic skills and knowledge training on natural resource monitoring and law enforcement; and
- 4, provide facilitative and advisory technical support for development of various plans such as land use zoning, wildlife management or benefit sharing; and
- 5, provide advisory support to conservancies when they are negotiating contractual agreements with private enterprises for joint ventures of tourism and trophy hunting.

⁴⁵ Ibid

When communities intend to establish a conservancy, they contact MET. The Ministry along with various NGOs within the NACSO (The Namibia Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) umbrella would provide the assistance in the above areas. Once adequate capacity is developed and the conservancy is able to run on its own, each conservancy is linked with one or more *service providers*⁴⁶ to be able to access continual support whenever necessary.

A. The Institutional Framework of Capacity Development for CBNRM in Namibia

Ministry of Environment and Tourism⁴⁷ is primarily responsible for establishing the legal and policy frameworks of CBNRM, overseeing their implementation, and giving the necessary guidance to communities in forming conservancies. MET along with NGOs provides CD support to conservancies in the forms of information, facilitation, and skills building trainings. Once the conservancy is formed and is operational, MET continues its support especially in wildlife management⁴⁸ areas such as the annual quota setting of wildlife consumption for trophy hunting and community use. Conservancies also collaborate with other ministries such as Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural development (MAWRD) in various capacity and community development efforts whenever they have similar interests.

Although MET is the leading agency, NGOs have a major role in providing support in areas where the government doesn't have the capacity. These include

- 1, filling in the gap in regions where the government doesn't have the man power where a specific NGO is active;
- 2, provide expertise especially in areas of community development; and
- 3, provide financial and resource support in forms of small grants, vehicles, and office equipments to establish the conservancy.

WWF-LIFE, an international NGO overseeing the management of USAID⁴⁹ funding for CBNRM projects, was carrying out the bulk of the support associated with the policy implementation in the earlier years of the conservancy movement⁵⁰. However, a need for "Namibization⁵¹" of the process was recognized so a strategy for local organizations to take over the responsibilities of LIFE became a priority. CBNRM stakeholders were able to create a partnership through an independent secretariat called NACSO.

NACSO was founded in 1999 from 11 non government organizations and UNAM. NACSO's objectives are to bring together skills, resources, and capacities from various institutions to coordinate support to conservancies; advocate for policy and

⁴⁶ Service Providers are the government, NGO and private partners that are giving various capacity development support to communal conservancies.

⁴⁷ The CBNRM unit is located within the Directorate of Resource Management of MET and is partnered with the Directorate of Tourism, the Directorate of Environmental Affairs and Director of Forestry in providing support to conservancies for implementation of the policy.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Environment and Tourism. 1996.

⁴⁹ USAID has given funding support for the CBNRM program in Namibia in two phases since 1992 under the LIFE- Living in a Finite Environment program. The total amount given is \$28 Million dollars and the implementer is WWFUS.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Jones et. al. 2001.

⁵¹ Ibid

legislative change; and monitor the effectiveness and impacts of conservancy development⁵². Although MET was a member of the association when NACSO was created, it withdrew itself because of political and bureaucratic concerns associated with the appropriateness of the ministry's partnership with NGOs⁵³. MET continues to sit on NACSO's quarterly meetings as an observer and collaborates closely with NACSO partners in implementing the CBNRM program nationally.

NACSO coordinates its services to conservancies through various working groups structured parallel to the three pillars of the Namibian CBNRM program (i.e.) natural resource management, institutional development, and enterprise development. Initially, NACSO has had ten working groups which are now consolidated to four to avoid overlaps and enhance efficiency. The working groups include the Institutional Development Working group, the Business and Enterprise Development Working Group, The Natural Resources Management Working Group, and the Monitoring and Evaluation Working group. Each of the working groups has a chairperson and individual members of NGOs whose specialty matches the type of support that is provided by the specific working group. The working groups work closely with the conservancies and NGO field staff to explore the support needs and respond to them accordingly. For instance each of the working groups has produced training materials and manuals on various institutional development and natural resource management issues based on the needs assessment done with the conservancies and implementing agencies. In addition to the working groups, NGOs within the NACSO structure work in specific geographical areas in order to avoid overlap of services.

B. Capacity Development in #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy

#Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy is one of the first conservancies to be established, so it has benefited from generous financial and material support as well as several trainings and technical assistance⁵⁴. The institutions that have supported the conservancy during and after its formation include WWF-LIFE, MET, NNF, NACOBTA, DRFN, CCF and RF. The conservancy is self sufficient and has stopped receiving donor funding since 2003. It is also considered as fully capacitated so most of the service providers have completed their CD support in the area. The primary service providers to the conservancy at the current time are NNF and MET.

The Capacity Development Process:

#Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy has benefited from a uniquely organized service-providing process created by Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD). NAPCOD is a partnership between government, NGOs, CBOs, and individuals that have been closely collaborating with the Grootberg Farmers Association

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ The level of funding and technical support to the first few group of conservancies established right after the legislation was enacted is higher compared to those that are emerging at the current time. This might be because of the increasing number of emerging conservancies affecting the level and quality of support that service providers can offer.

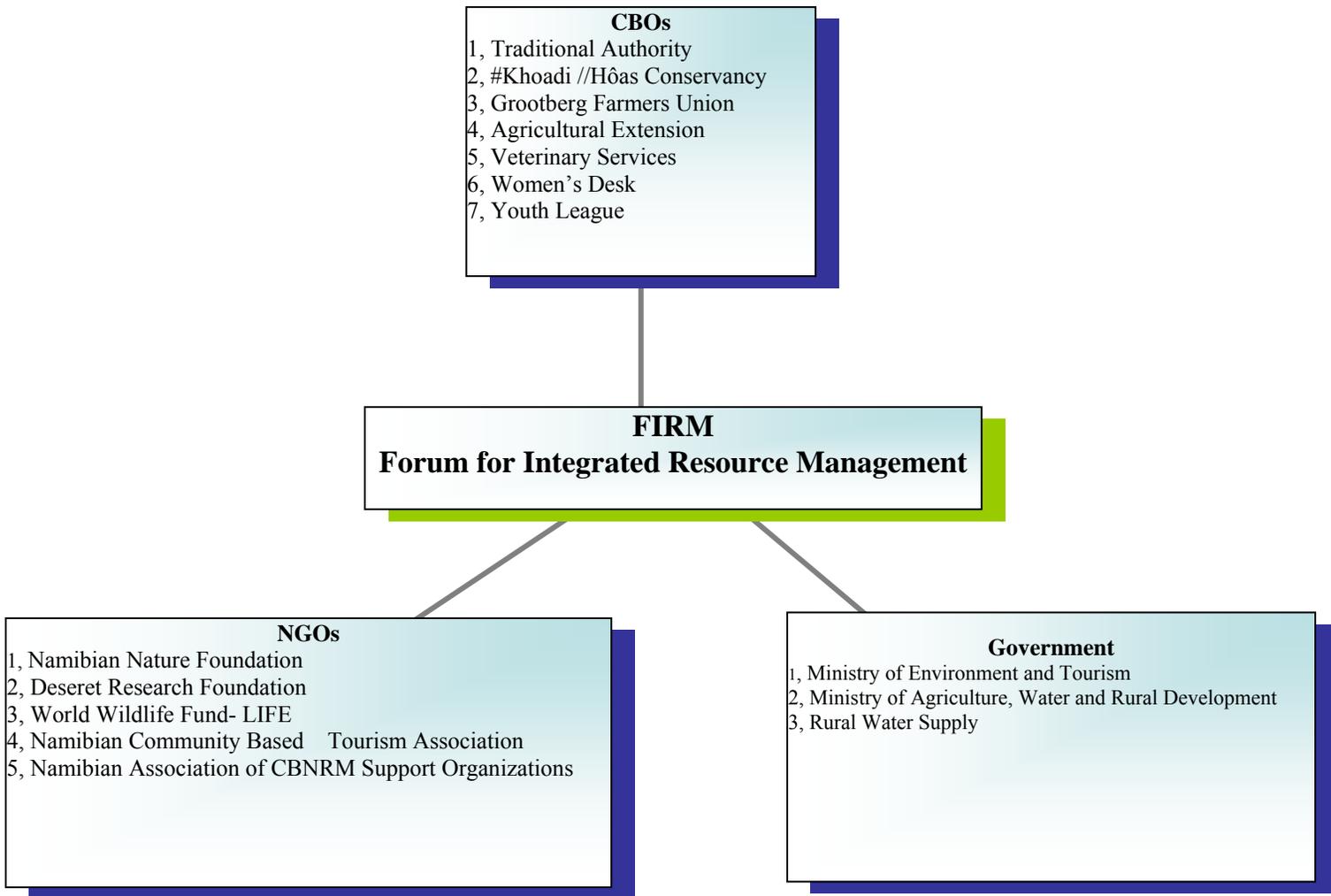
since 1996. NAPCOD has been instrumental in developing and testing a model of integrated livestock and wildlife resource management called FIRM (Forum for Integrated Resource Management) to better coordinate trainings and technical assistance services provided by government and NGOs to the community-based organizations operating in the area⁵⁵.

According to an expert interviewee, through the FIRM platform, all of the CBOs within the conservancy which are the traditional authority, GFA, #Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy, the women's desk, and the youth league were able to establish integrated annual work plans with the support of the service providers. Once the annual work plans were established, training and technical assistance needs are identified and prioritized in order to avoid duplication of efforts and utilize resources effectively. The *service-providers*⁵⁶ use the integrated work plans drawn out by the CBOs to assess their own capacities and human resource skills in order to facilitate effective and efficient capacity development. Quarterly meetings are held with all FIRM stakeholders to do regular reporting as well as monitoring and evaluation on the various training and technical assistance activities. Within the FIRM approach, trainings have been provided to the area CBOs on livestock and range management issues, such as improved goat husbandry, integrating wildlife and tourism into community livelihoods, improved water supply management, and more efficient information exchange and networking⁵⁷. The conservancy in particular has also benefited from additional trainings on issues of financial management, office administration, record keeping, hospitality and tour guiding, roles and responsibilities of CMC members, and proposal writing.

⁵⁵ Schachtschneider et. al., 2002 as cited by FIRM, 2003.

⁵⁶ Service Providers are the government, NGO and private partners that are giving various capacity development support to communal conservancies.

⁵⁷ FIRM, 2003.



**Figure 2. FIRM Stakeholders Structure
Adopted from FIRM 2003**

In addition to the resource management trainings, baseline surveys of the biophysical features and status of the natural resources of the area were carried out with the help of the FIRM service providers and the communities themselves in order to create adaptive resource management plans. Environmental shepherds have also been trained to do regular monitoring and recording of the status of wildlife, rangeland, livestock and any other relevant resource related conditions in the conservancy through the Event Book⁵⁸ and the annual game count systems. The data that came from the regular NR monitoring

⁵⁸ The Event Book system is a local level wildlife monitoring system that has been created within the Namibian Conservancies. They are various colored data forms where local game guards or environmental shepherds report various issues such as wildlife sightings, human-wildlife conflict events, veld fires, temperature, rainfall etc. in a daily and monthly basis.

is supposed to be used for determining hunt able quota, updating the community members on annual general meetings, and revise the management plans regularly.

According to the FIRM report, the approach of bringing the service providers and receivers together in one platform has given complete ownership and independence to the CBOs for establishing their own development goals and objectives based on their own aspirations and visions⁵⁹. Capacity development is often viewed as an external intervention with already defined objectives, resources and deadlines that are often confused or in conflict with the objectives of the organizations’ to be developed⁶⁰. In the case of this study, the FIRM approach seems it has changed the power dynamics. The service providers instead of their usual role as external interventionists of processes in rural areas, they were the “catalysts” providing the support that the community organizations actually needed. The self-assessment exercise that I have carried out with the conservancy members have also shown that the members were able to identify the specific areas of where they need technical support and trainings without outsider’s interventions. Currently, most of the service providers except MET have withdrawn from the FIRM platform since most of the CBOs are satisfactorily capacitated and need limited amount of support. But the CBOs themselves with the local MET staff have kept the FIRM structure to carry out their own activities according to their work plans.

Capacity development interventions in Khoadi Hoas conservancy are mostly provided to the conservancy staff and CMC members and need to expand to the larger number of registered conservancy members in the future for sustainable results

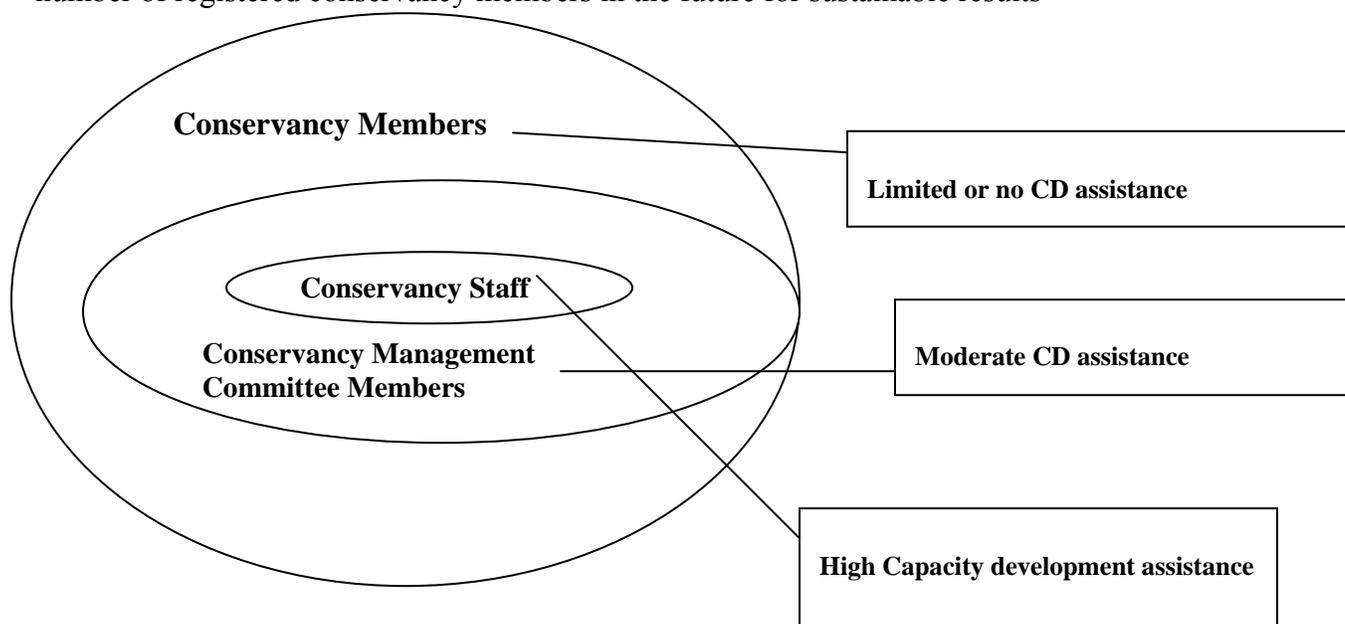


Figure 3: The Capacity Development Scales of #Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy (Figure as adopted from Horton et. al. 2003)

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

Those who are directly employed by the conservancy or conservancy based enterprises such as the conservancy office staff, environmental shepherds, lodge and campsite staff have received majority of the trainings. While the Conservancy Management Committee Members have benefited from moderate number of trainings; selected farmers from the eight farmers' associations have benefited from one or two trainings.

Trainings and technical support are carried out by the experts as the following.

- The conservancy approaches the experts when they have a need for training or technical support. The need comes from the community and the experts follow the steps below to ensure that the CD efforts meet the expectations of the conservancies.
- Experts do **preliminary consultations** with the conservancy to find out what their objectives are and what they are trying to accomplish with the specific support they have requested;
- They do **prepare training materials** based on the consultation with the conservancy members and any additional information they think is relevant;
- They provide the **basic trainings** on the requested issue;
- They do **follow ups** by visiting the conservancy and making sure that the trainings and support are implemented properly and giving support for any problems encountered in the implementation of the training;
- They also do **regular monitoring** to make sure that the system is institutionalized within the conservancy's operating environment, and until the conservancy can perform the specific task independently. Depending on the issue, this process might take from few months to years.

The Capacity Development Tools:

Manuals, handouts, field guides, pictures, maps, information posters, flip charts, various natural resource related data gathering forms, food and drink menus, and cooking instructions have been used as tools for training. Most of the tools are designed to give basic information on how to accomplish different tasks. They also give general overview of policy and legislation related information using simple terms and pictorial representations.

Representatives from the various organizations and MET sit in the different working groups and collaborate in designing the training materials for various conservancy related issues based on what the government policy requires and the type of services and trainings that the conservancies request. The NGO experts have indicated that they use the training materials for institutional development, financial administration, and natural resource management prepared by the three NACSO working groups as a basis along with other additional materials as needed. In addition to the training manuals prepared by the working groups, MET also has a communal area conservancy tool box for conservancies and facilitators that gives step by step guidance and information on how to form conservancies. It also provides details of the legislation and policy of the Nature Conservation Amendment Act.

NGO and government institutions have used interactive and participatory processes such as participatory rural appraisal, small group discussions, question and answer sessions, dialogues, role plays and various games to bring about the necessary changes. One expert said “the tools and processes we use to teach mobilization of communities have been helpful not only to develop technical skills of planning and administration but also to hone leadership, facilitation and negotiation skills that are necessary to capture local knowledge and understanding, hopes and aspirations, constraints and resources in ways that drive the work of the conservancy, not just inform someone else’s plan for its conservation work.” (Expert Interviewee #4)

Many of the challenges that service providers are facing are associated with their own capacities:

1, The human and financial resources of NGOs and MET are not compatible to the number of emerging conservancies that need support.

2, The NGOs exist with donor funding so whenever donors change their interests in funding their projects, the NGOs will also divert their directions which limits them from giving quality support to conservancies. For this reason, many mature conservancies such as #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy get very limited support, and when they do require assistance, they have to either pay the expenses of the NGO service provider to come to their area and give them the necessary support or come to Windhoek covering their own expenses creating more pressure on their already tight budget.

3, An expert interviewee mentioned that the biggest problem they are regularly encountering is that people abandon their responsibilities for more lucrative opportunities once they have received their trainings.

“ We give certificates after the completion of our trainings and people, especially young ones use them as their ticket to leave their rural lives and come to the city so they can get a more paying job.....which means that all our resources have been wasted”.
(Expert Interviewee #3)

II, What are the new capacities developed as a result of the CD efforts and how are they affecting local participation?

A. Individual Level:

The first phase of my interviews with former and current conservancy management committee members and the conservancy staff is used for this preliminary analysis. These individuals have received various trainings to help them fulfill their responsibilities in the conservancy. Various indicators of the new capacities they have developed and how these new capacities are utilized are shown below.

One of the biggest achievements of the capacity development efforts at individual levels is empowerment which is manifested in its various forms. Below are some of the initial indicators of empowerment and how the new capacities developed were utilized at personal levels.

Social Power: Friedman defined it as “...having the access to information, knowledge and skill; participation in social organizations and financial resources⁶¹”

- **Gaining Power of knowledge to Improve One’s Livelihood:**

“The financial training I received from the Conservancy has helped me to prepare my own personal budget and I am able to save money and buy things that I never thought I could afford” (Conservancy Interviewee #1)

“The training I have received has given me a chance to open up my eyes to new things and information; I am now lifted up from the ground and my standard of living has improved through learning” (Conservancy Interviewee #8)

- **Power of Information for Establishing Pre-Cautionary Measures:**

“I have learned about elephant behavior, so I tell my kids and neighbors the time when they are active so they don’t go outside.” (Conservancy Interviewee #4)

“ I know how to vaccinate my own livestock, and people ask me to check on their livestock for them so I can tell them of any sickness”. (Conservancy Interviewee #4)

Psychological Power: is defined by Friedman as “one’s potency expressed as self-confidence”⁶². Psychological power is a result of successfully secured social and political power.

- **Having Self Confidence in One’s Knowledge:**

“ I know how the finances work in detail and where each of the numbers came from so I respond to any questions from community members on AGMs with confidence” (Conservancy Interviewee # 12)

- **Having Self Confidence for Public Engagement:** This was mostly expressed by women.

“The trainings have helped me to gain my self confidence because you have to stand up and talk in front of people” (Conservancy Interviewee #2)

“The confidence and courage I have gained from my trainings have empowered me to know how to negotiate with people so I now have a job as a community counselor” (Conservancy Interviewee #3)

The new capacities may also have negative effects and become a challenge by giving more power and knowledge to individuals.

- **Manipulation Using New Gained Capacity:**

“.....few people have tried to hijack the conservancy process using what they have learned in the training and their power for their own personal gain.” (Conservancy Interviewee # 7)

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

B. Conservancy Level:

The self-assessment exercise carried out through the two focus groups reveals indicators of how the new capacities developed were implemented within the conservancy's framework. These are also associated with the opportunities and challenges that the conservancy is experiencing in terms of achieving its objectives and meeting the needs of its constituents. The discussions were on governance and service delivery capacities of the conservancy. Governance capacities are those related to the conservancy's democratic and accountability processes to its constituents including election processes, performance of elected members, and communication with conservancy members. The service delivery capacities are those related to meeting the needs of conservancy members such as benefit sharing, community wide trainings and awareness, as well as the conservancy office operations. We will look at four of these issues in detail below.

- Participatory but Not Representative Elections:

The focus group discussions indicated that the conservancy carries out its elections in a participatory and democratic manner every five years at its AGM as indicated on its constitution. The process is transparent and fair but those elected represent only two (Anker and Erwee Associations) of the eight farmers' associations. This is mainly because the two associations which cover the semi-urban areas of the conservancy are relatively closer to the conservancy office where the meeting is held. The residents from these areas are able to come to the AGM in large numbers and elect their own representatives to fill in most of the positions. However, members from associations further away from the office do not have the transportation means to get to the meeting place and thus can not take part in the election processes. This has caused dissatisfaction particularly amongst members who live further away from the conservancy office which is also indicated by the personal interviews I have carried out with individual farmers from the eight farmers' associations. The focus group participants decided that the constitution should be amended to make sure that the next election can be held at each of the farmers' associations instead of at the AGM. They believe that this process will help to have representative CMC members and increase the accountability of the conservancy.

- The Need for Incentive Driven Participation:

Only few of the current CMC members are active in the conservancy. There is lack of interest and frequent absenteeism. Those who are holding the executive positions are teachers and their jobs conflict with their CMC duties.

“Initially, teachers were elected to be in the CMC because there was a need to have people with working experience; who can volunteer their time and resources and didn't need to be paid; and who have their own transportation to come to meetings. But it turned out that teachers are overloaded with their daytime jobs and other commitments that are conflicting with their CMC roles and responsibilities. After serving for many years mostly for free or limited amount of allowances, they seemed to also want appropriate incentives as those who are not employed.”⁶³

⁶³ Aebes, S. et. al. 2006.

The rest of the members are unemployed and do not have the interest to volunteer their time and resources for five years without any proper compensation. This was discussed in detail and the participants decided to create an incentive structure for CMC members to motivate them to fulfill their duties. It is decided that they will get cash remittance for attending the three official conservancy meetings.

- Communication Gap with Conservancy Members:

Although the conservancy uses various means to communicate with its members, most of the information about the conservancy's activities doesn't reach the members in a timely manner. This is because of various reasons:

- 1, The conservancy has only one vehicle which hinders it from doing regular area visits to update its members.
- 2, The number of people attending the AGM and area meetings is reduced in recent years because people have lost interest in the conservancy. One of the reasons given for this is that members are hesitant to actively participate as before because some of the benefits promised by the conservancy have not materialized yet, while the costs of living with wildlife is higher and affecting the members regularly.

The participants have decided to create sub-information centers in various areas of the conservancy to reach the members in a more effective way. They have also discussed about establishing a communicator's role for future CMC members to ensure that they held regular meetings with their respective farmers' association constituents.

- The Need for Equitable and Sustainable Benefits Distribution:

The conservancy has a benefit distribution plan created through surveys and consultations with the community. Once the members' preferences were identified, the conservancy distributed various benefits successfully. Some of the benefits such as wildlife meat have been distributed at a household level. 5 Kgs of meat is distributed to each household every two years from the community hunting. The participants realized that giving each household wildlife meat is not equitable because the amount is not determined by the number of people in the household or their socio-economic status because such information is not available. In addition, the large number of kill to fulfill the community needs will reduce the number of wildlife in the long run. Other benefits that were requested by the conservancy member included soup kitchen for pensioners, elephant damage compensation, and diesel oil sale for subsidized prices to conservancy members. Almost all of these benefits have been stopped because the financial capacity of the conservancy and the amount of money allocated for benefits is limited. Participants discussed the issue and decided that the conservancy should move away from benefits that depend on wildlife or drain out the finances of the conservancy to the ones that are financially sustainable.

C. Community Level:

The second phase of interviews was carried out with farmers from the eight farmers' associations in the conservancy. Although community wide capacity development has not taken place in the conservancy, the interviews from the farmers revealed indicators of farmer's awareness levels about the conservancy and benefits that they have gained from their participation with the conservancy.

- **Positive Attitude towards Wildlife:**

“Elephants came and destroyed my garden awhile back but I didn’t do anything to them because I knew that I can benefit from the elephants when the trophy hunter comes and kills the elephant.” (Farmer from Erwee Farmers’ Association)

“It was difficult when we started the conservancy because people didn’t want to live with wildlife but it is easier to work with community members now because they now understand the value of wildlife and natural resources better because they are seeing the benefits from them” (Conservancy Interviewee #7)

- **Empowerment through Political Power:** Friedman calls this the means to decision-making processes and it is a result of social empowerment.

This is also the type of empowerment that Narayan described as”Capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.⁶⁴”

“.....things get done when people ask for them at the AGM..... Two years ago, people asked that the finance books get audited. The next year, the finance books were audited and the reports were distributed to the members. People can also ask questions about the financial books or budget and most of the responses from the CMC are satisfactory.” (Farmer from Anker Association)

“If a farmer has reported about wildlife damage to a CMC member and if the CMC member doesn’t report to the office, the farmers will complain about him on the AGM” (Focus group Participant)

This proves Friedman’s definition that political power is not only to vote individually but to secure power of voice and collective action.

- **Ownership and Pride:**

All of the 7 farmers that I have interviewed know that the conservancy and its assets belong to them. This is in contrary to the responses I have got from the CMC and staff members of the conservancy who believe that many members think that the conservancy belongs to the CMC or the staff. All of the 7 farmers feel proud about the construction of the lodge and campsite in their community and they know that they are going to benefit from it in the future.

“New things are coming to our area and even if we are not benefiting from them now, may be our children might get something.” (Farmers from Hobatere Association)

- **Less Interest and Lack of Trust Further out from the Conservancy Office**

The attitude of farmers towards the conservancy becomes negative in areas away from the office and the two semi-urban areas, Anker and Erwee. This is because the

⁶⁴ ibid

conservancy has limited contact with them and the benefits they have received are also sporadic compared to areas closer to the office.

“The people were pretty active in the beginning but their interest is lesser now. I know this because I attend the AGM every year and I see that there are lesser number of people attending the AGM now.” (Farmer from Erwee) When I asked the farmer why there is a decrease in participation now, the response was that”*the benefits of the conservancy are taking a long time to come while the costs are increasing.”*

Group of interviewees think that the less number of people attending the AGM is not because people are not interested about the conservancy but because most people can't get to Grootberg (Conservancy Office area) because it is too far to get to by foot or donkey cart.

Another interviewee mentioned that lack of the conservancy in managing human-wildlife conflict is another reason why members have lost interest in the conservancy.

“People are reluctant to attend meetings because promises were not kept especially when it comes to benefits and the conservancy is also not communicating with the farmers” (Farmer from Condor Association)

“We are not interested in the conservancy anymore because if I kill a wildlife, the conservancy and MET become owners, but if the wildlife kills my livestock, no one claims responsibility.” (Farmer from Condor Association)

- Favoritism

Almost all the farmer interviewees said that the Anker farmers' association is most favored by the conservancy because majority of the CMC members are from Anker and the conservancy vehicle only goes to that area to pick people up at the AGM.

“The election process is free and fair but the people in Anker are closer to Grootberg so they go in bunch while we send few people and can't win during elections.” (Farmers from Hobatere Association)

Five out of seven interviewees think that priorities for job opportunities are given to Conservancy CMC members, as well as the family and friends of the conservancy staff and CMC members.

- Limited Knowledge about the Conservancy

All of the farmers I have interviewed knew that they can't hunt according to the constitution of the conservancy but most of them did not know what rights they have as conservancy members. Few of them didn't know that the conservancy has a constitution.

III. What are the overall lessons derived from this particular case study for enhancing local participation in managing sustainable community based resource development projects?

- A. The cooperation between government, NGOs and communities in a platform where they can coordinate their skills, capacities, and resources is essential to facilitate capacity development effectively in decentralization efforts. This will also empower communities to establish their own capacity needs and aspirations based on what they envision for their organization and community without external pressures.
- B. Participatory Democracy is not necessarily equitable/fair for community members unless it is complemented by strategies to create Representative Democracy. In the case of #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy, the process of elections is considered as free and fair and those who participate in it are satisfied. But the technique of carrying out elections from one central location is marginalizing community members who are not able to reach to the election area to vote for their representatives.
- C. Self mobilization of communities without appropriate incentives as suggested by Pretty might not be a reality in #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy and many other communal conservancies of Namibia. This is because most people in the rural areas do not have jobs and will not be interested to take volunteer positions for long as shown from the focus group discussion on CMC performance. They do need incentives to motivate them to participate in community based projects.
- D. Having adequate soft and hard capacities is essential to enhance local participation. For instance, the conservancy has limited hard (financial and equipment capacities) compared to soft capacities. For instance there is only one vehicle which is preventing the staff from carrying out its consultations and area meetings regularly. This has created a communication gap and loss of interest amongst conservancy members. The staffs are well trained and have various skills and knowledge but the lack of resources deters their potential to run the conservancy in an accountable manner.
- E. Developing capacity of individuals has to be complemented with raising the consciousness of the community in order to bring the necessary behavioral changes and increase accountability and trust towards the conservancy. #Khoadi Hôas Conservancy involves the local community members in most decisions. However involving the locals without informing them the various options, impacts, and outcomes of their actions might bring results that are far away from the primary objectives of the organization. For instance, the benefit sharing plan of the conservancy has been created in consultation with the public and through various iterations of surveys and workshops. However, once the community benefits and their priorities were identified and the implementation of the plan was well underway, it was realized that many of the benefits identified by the people (meat distribution) are either harmful to the natural resource base in the long run or are not financially sustainable (subsidized diesel sale, livestock vaccination).

F. Developing the capacity of the community at large is also important to strengthen the accountability and transparency of the conservancy. If individual capacities are developed without community level capacities, it would open up the opportunity for the individuals to use their new capacity and power to manipulate the masses. Paulo Friere puts this articulately as the following:

“.....a prime example is the so called “Leadership training” that is carried out with few members of the community, as soon as the leaders finish their training, they will use their skills to control the submerged people of their society by domination or they become strangers in their own communities.....but in order for them not to lose their leadership position, they will continue to manipulate the community with an efficient manner.”

G. One of the assumptions of participatory development is that local participation will make people have a sense of ownership of decisions made at the local level including on the rules of resource use⁶⁵. The ownership is supposed to engage the communities in implementing, monitoring and enforcing the rules. In the case of #Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy, the ownership of decision making is influenced by the ability of the residents to reach the conservancy office. Residents’ proximity to the conservancy office influences the ownership of decisions or the attitude of the people towards the conservancy. Those leagues that are closer to the conservancy office have the ability to attend meetings or outreach programs, gain household level or community wide benefits regularly, and elect their representatives. While those who are further out and can not reach to the conservancy office and do not have ownership to decisions made on their behalf.

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⁶⁵ Ibid

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