

Assessment of community participation in protected area: A case study of Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the participatory role of community involvement in line with the achievement of the National conservation goals. This entails the use of active involvement of local people in park planning formation, executing and implementing management strategies of renewable resources and its environment. Data were collected from parks annual reports, park management plan, research and information units and environ-consult reports. The global environmental facility (GEF) through the local empowerment programme (LEEMP) provides a non-refundable grant while the World Bank, with assistant of the Internal Development Association (IDA), provides a refundable credit facility for local communities. This financial support was aimed at providing alternative means of livelihood for the rural people in the community and alleviate the poverty. The attention was diverted from wanton and illegal exploitation of natural resources within the locality. The first stage considered ten communities selected from the Borgu sector and the second stage also has ten communities selected as well for their financial assistance. Constraints observed in the implementation of the programme includes lack of project vehicle, computer system and accessories, frequent changes in programme design and directives, lack of confidence in project administration, remoteness of the communities and lateness in release of the micro-projects fund. Successful implementation of the programme requires sound management and supervision of the project time frame. Future projects need to be more encourage and should be based on re-vegetation mainly (a forestation) and not deforestation in the conservation environment.

Keywords: Assessment, Community participation, Conservation, Financial Support, Poverty.

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INTRODUCTION

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has defined protected area as an area of land or sea, especially dedicated to the protection of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and management, through legal or other effective means (IUCN, 2008). In classification, there are six types of protected areas depending on their objectives. With this, Kainji Lake National Park is in category II of protected Area (PA) managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. It also promote its ecotourism potential, which the management objectives of Kainji Lake National Park can be summarize as follows: Conservation of biodiversity, management of habitats manipulation in a unique Guinea Savannah Vegetation Zone; Support Zone Communities Conservation of culture and improve livelihood of the boundary communities, surveillance and sustainable natural resources control; Development of wildlife nature based tourism/ recreation and monitoring if the biodiversity, research and conservation education.

The landmass of the park is 5,340km² and comprises two sectors; Borgu sector (3470km²) in Borgu local Government and Zuguma sector (1,370km²) in Mairiga Local Government Area. The landmass coverage of the park extends to some part of Kwara State in Nigeria. The protected area was established along six with the five other parks as promulgated in the decree 36 of 1991.

The management challenges of the protected area namely: Uncontrolled / late burning, poaching/illegal hunting, farming, illegal grazing, and looping of floral species. The poverty level of the rural community along the park boundary made it difficult to tackle these challenges.

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) component of the local Environmental Project (LEEMP) is targeting the institutional frame work for the transfer of investment resources to the support zone communities of the park. This is to provide alternative livelihood for the rural communities dwellers and as well as reduce their dependence in illegal exploitation of the resources of the park; thereby safe guarding the integrity of the protected areas (PAS) close to them (Environ - Consult, 2006).

The Federal Government of Nigeria provides assistance to the rural community dwellers around the buffer zone of the park through the financial grants obtained from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank. This, assistance was used to implement the Leemp. The study assessed the implementation of the sustainable livelihood development plan in the support zone communities SZCS in Kainji Lake National Park.

Methodology

Information was received from parks' Annual reports, park management information and Research Unit, Environmental Consult (2006), Marguba (2002) and Kainji Lake National Park management plan (2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Your culture is the spirit in you. Hold fast to it so that you would be relevant to the world (Robinson, 2011). Culture is a nation heritage. It needs to be promoted. When people's culture is sold by outsiders in their publications, when a community's traditional land is built upon others, indeed when an ecological fragile region is promoted as an un spoilt destination, then it is only

through fair and natural settings that the local communities whose traditional way of life that sustained their resource in the first place is to be given special preference to employment and social service (Marguba, 2002). Right from the inception of the National park service initiated an articulate programme that caring the support zone communities along in the park management.

The programme is called support zone development programme aim to deem the well being of the host communities as a vital organ of successful management and sustenance of ecotourism development. In the study ten (10) communities were selected in the first phase and the second phase also had similar selection of ten (10) additional communities for proper implementation of the local empowerment and environmental management (Table 1).

Meetings were held within the communities to ascertain that financial supports were given to the projects initiated by the user groups. The strategies adopted in the selection of those beneficiaries in the communities were in (Table 2). The assessment of these support zone communities reveals that crop and livestock farming are the major occupation of the community dwellers.

Table 1: Support zone communities considered for sustainable livelihood programme along KLNP boundary.

Serial Number	New Communities	Old Communities
1	Duruma, in Baruten Local government Area; Kwara State	Dekala, in Borgu Local Government Area; Niger State
2	Kemenji, in Kaiama Local Government area; Kwara state	Gulubi, in Baruten Local Government Area; Kwara State
3	Luma, in Borgu Local government area; Niger State	Gada-Oli, in Borgu Local Government Area; Niger state.
4	Malale in Borgu Local government Area; Niger state	Kwasare, in Borgu Local Government area; Niger state
5	Sansani, in Borgu Local Government area; Niger State	Leshigbe, in Borgu Local Government Area; Niger State
6	New Kali, in Borgu local government Area; Niger state	Kuble, in Borgu Local government; Niger State
7	Wawa, in Borgu Local government Area; Niger State	Shagunu, in Borgu Local government; Niger state
8	Woro, in Borgu Local Government; Niger State	Kemenji, in Kaiama Local government; Kwara State
9	Woromakoto, in Kaiama Local government; Kwara State	Tenebo, in Kaiama Local government Area; Kwara State
10	Tungan Maje, in Kaiama Local Government; Kwara state.	Nanu, in Kaiama Local Government Area; Kwara State.

Table 2: Description of categories of indicators along park boundary. criteria

Serial Number	Description of indicators
1	Access to control of resources
2	Social and Resources Maps
3	Seasonal calendar
4	Historical Time line
5	Wealth Ranking
6	Group/Organization profile
7	HIV/AIDS Profile

Table 3: National Budgetary Allocation to Kainji Lake National Park (2004-2006).

Allocation in the Year	Personnel	Overhead	Capital
2004	78,830,508	23,649,153	-
2005	88,463,740	15,219,844	1, 568,000
2006	130,744, 696	10, 109,945	1,000,000
Total	298,208, 944	48,978942	2,568,000

Table 4: Some challenges encountered during implementation of the sustainable livelihood projects in the support zone area of the park.

Serial Number	Challenges encountered
1	Lack of awareness for the project
2	High level of poverty in the communities
3	High level of illiteracy/ignorance
4	Low level of commitment
5	Low level of communities contribution
6	Remoteness of the communities
7	Lateness to the release of fund for micro-project
8	Lack of confidence in project Administrators
9	Frequent changes in programme and directives
10	Lack of project facilities, vehicles accessories and computer system

Source: KLNP (2006).

Table 5 Women Access to control of Resources profile in the park.

Serial Number	Natural/mineral Resources	Access			
		Control		Control	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
1	Capital	+	+	+	+
2	Land	+	+	+	=
3	Water	+	+	+	+
4	Productive input	+	+	=	
5	Tools	+	+	+	
	Socio-Economic	+	+	+	+
	Household Income	+	=		=
	Education	+	=	+	=
	Training	+	=	+	=
	Park Service	+	=	+	=
	Participation	in+	=	+	=
	Decision -making				

Source: KLNP-management plan (2006).

Almost, 93% of the male members engaged in full time farming. The higher income selected group earns #10, 000-15,000 per annum and 44% of them have changed their income generation activities within the last projected years. There are other sources of income observed within the communities such as trading, blacks melting, traditional barbing; commercial transport, hunting, Saw milling, and public services. Among the illegal occupational activities that mostly carried out in the park are hunting and grazing which occasionally causes loss of life to park rangers while discharging their legitimate duties during the anti poaching patrol in the park. One other illegal activities that affected the park floral resources is logging of the merchantable economic trees in the park by the tree fellers around and inside buffer zone areas of the park. This is being observed around Kemenji and Tungan maje areas of the park boundary. This is evident to the observation made about the fourteen numbers of sawmills found in forty (40km) kilometers of the park boundary between Woromakoto and Gidan Aboki (KLNP-MP, 2006). However, there are other indirect socio-economic activities that have adverse effect on park management of its natural resources carried out by the communities dwelling along the park boundary among which are uncontrolled bush burning and illegal grazing mostly by the Fulani's herdsmen.

It was revealed in the study that married and elderly women engaged in the preparation of local snacks, such as groundnut cake, beans cake, frying yam and potatoes, while the local chise milk production (fura da nunun) are usually being hawk around in the community by their young ladies to make earns meet.

There are some women that serve as traditional birth attendants and circumcising the young children in the communities within the support zone areas of the park. Due to the facts that these support zones communities lack notable infrastructural road networks; most pertinent social needs to the communities towards improving their livelihood sustenance are improved water supply, re-forestation of degraded areas, agricultural inputs, refertilization of soil by control erosion activity, improved access road quality, and general road networking distribution into the remote distance areas.

The illegal encroachment to the parkland was noticeable due to the insufficient farmland and growth in population increases, which made the communities dwellers much forced in some areas, perpetrated their nefarious illegal activities in the park.

The educational status of the communities in the support zones areas in Borgu sector are within the primary levels. The head offices of Wawa and Zugurma sectors are where secondary education levels are seen; though the school structural buildings in the support zone areas are in dilapidated state, which make some children learning under the shade of trees.

The national grid electrification was observed in both Borgu and Zugurma areas. The rest eighteen communities were not having such facilities. Majority of the deep well and bore holes drilled in about 70% of the communities are not adequately functioning as expected; this resulted to epileptics supply of water in the area. It is observed that sources of water for drinking and domestic purposes are through streams, rivers, well and deep well with hand pumps in some few places.

The two communities sectors of the park (Borgu and Zugurma) are provided with health facility in terms of primary health care centre; recorded no drugs and health staff at the centre's for its functional activity (Environ-Consult, 2006). The communities carried out their markets activities daily in almost 70% marketing centres observed in the areas of study. These communities were not left out of religion centres where large turnout of worshippers congregate to observe their prayers after the daily business. It was noticeable that grants are made available to the communities by the Global Environmental facility (GEF) through its local empowerment programme. Also, observed that the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank made refundable credits facility to the support zone communities.

The women in the support zone communities are observe to have access to their own capital and natural resources. Due to this, they are opportune to have access to land, tools, and productive inputs but lack control over resources. This means that socio-economic facilities are not accessible to the control of women in the communities (Table 5). In lieu of this, women have limited control over their practical gender needs or no control at all over their strategic gender needs. This is not connected to their lack of employment, ignorance and religious injunctions, practiced in the communities. The intervention of Global Environmental Facility has made women user groups to receive attention in term of micro-projects within the communities. Indeed, they need more empowerment in decision making in area of supervision and control of their micro-projects (KLNP, 2006). In the communities essential associations for community development is about 76%. Out of which about 71% of the

associated community claimed that the management of their association is through the elected treasurer, financial secretary, chairman and trustees. The management of community projects are experienced through community based organization aside those that are funded by government agencies.

Most planned projects are delay and not promptly implemented as a result of inadequate allocation of budget. This inadequate release of the allocation to the park service makes it not much supportive for GEF and IDA efforts, as evident in the year 2004 (Table 3).

CONCLUSION

It is evident that there is a positive effect on the communities with the available funds provided, which allowed construction of infrastructural facilities to the targeted communities for the sustainable livelihood support at the park boundary. Among the infrastructural development facility implemented in the communities are renovation and reconstruction of new clinics, drilling of boreholes and construction of classroom blocks.

Towards effective management of wildlife in the support zone areas community development programme such as livelihood micro-projects are encouraged and funds are disbursed for their execution at the targeted communities. As a result, the concerned communities have a positive change of attitude in development and management of the park resources.

The funds were released to the few among the communities to execute these micro-projects such as Shea-butter extraction, Bee- keeping, Maize

milling, Animal fattening, barbing saloon and use of motor cycles for commercial transport services, to reduce the poverty level of the communities.

This notable community support zone development programme embarked upon in the National Park service seem to be one of the best approaches through which optimal protection of park resources and its conservation could be attained for sustainable development in the rural areas.

RECOMMENDATION

In conservation management of park, resources should be given adequate attention through disbursement of funds allocated for environmental ministries and parastatals or agencies. To have a meaningful and effective management conservation of in the support zone of the protected areas, funds made available should be released promptly to agencies or parks service for discharging their logical development. As part of tourism outlook in the support zone community, befitting guest houses should be constructed in strategic locations for tourist relationship with the local community dwellers and to get more acquainted with their traditional norms and customs in the communities.

The study reveals that the targeted twenty communities identified for support zone community development benefited the GEF micro- projects through their co-operative formation which should be sustained for their initiatives by the National Park service management. Actualization of the these support zone communities need to be a focus and bureaucratic bottlenecks in projects implementation should be reduced and flexible.

Appropriate incentives should be made available to the community leaders to fast-track their community members for the execution of the project.

The traditional and active opinion leaders should be deeply involved in management and development of the parks. The user groups in the targeted communities should be allowed to handle their money directly in executing the projects. The on-going and future sustainable livelihood projects like this should be on contractual obligation, in which the community provides the available land for the establishment of the community forest, fuel woodlots, Shea-butter tree and other allied Agro-forestry seedlings upon their choice.

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