

THE MAHENYE COMMUNITY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Best practice case study in community conservation

Thematic Area: Biodiversity and Forestry

by

The AFRICA RESOURCES TRUST (ART)

July 2002

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Locational Context

The Mahenye is a small community located in the south-eastern part of Zimbabwe. The community lives on a narrow wedge of land of about 210km² in extent lying between the Save River on the west and the Rupembi River on the east which also forms the border with Mozambique. To the south, across the Save River is the northern boundary of Gona re Zhou National Park, one of the largest protected areas in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Population for Mahenye Ward:

Year	Males	Females	Total	No. of Households
1992	1734	1962	3696	775
2002	2277	2576	4853	1017

The 2002 population has been projected based on the national growth rate of 3.13

According to the 1992 population census, the Mahenye Ward had a total population of 3 696 people constituting 775 households. Population projections indicate that the population currently stands at 4853 of which 53 % are females whilst the remaining 47% are males (Table 1). In contrast to the rest of the region, the Mahenye Ward is still relatively under populated (12 – 19 people per km²).

1.3 Background

Large-scale agriculture expanded considerably in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the 1950s, to become together with mining the main economic base for the country. Hence both these sectors wielded considerable political influence. Commercial farmers, who were all white under the colonial regime, made efforts to eradicate wildlife, particularly livestock predators, to safeguard crops and domestic stock. Cheetah, leopard and wild dogs were the principal targets. Although wildlife was *res nullius* in that it 'belonged to no-one', the State was the 'responsible authority' for it. Farmers called for rights of landowners to use and benefit from wildlife as a legitimate land use, as incentive for the landowner to conserve and invest in wildlife. This led to a review of legislation in the 1960s, which resulted in the granting of provisional rights to landowners over wildlife on their land.

The continuing decline of wildlife on privately owned land took a dramatic turn for the better following the promulgation of the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 (now Act 20:14). This entrenched the provisional rights given to farmers in the 1960s. The same privileges given to landowners in 1975 were extended to Communal Areas after political Independence in 1980, with the 1982 amendment of the Parks and Wildlife Act. The initiative to amend the Act was taken by Government. This legislative change opened the way for the CAMPFIRE programme as the vehicle to give practical effect to this amendment. But this did not take effect until the late 1980s. The Government was not clear of the type of socio-economic institutions through

which Campfire could be operationalised. The break came through the Mahenye community.

The Mahenye Community originally settled along the lower reaches of the east and west banks of the Save River adjacent to Mozambique, in the pre-colonial era. The area this community settled in was rich in biodiversity including wildlife. In the pre-colonial era, the community relied heavily on wildlife and veld products to meet many basic needs, but their rights to use wildlife were lost under colonial legislation. The proprietorship for wildlife and benefit were expropriated so that the rights no longer belonged to rural communities but to the State. Reliance on wildlife was replaced by reliance on cattle, and subsistence cropping. Pastoralism and cropping are an inappropriate land use practice in this dry and hot area, susceptible to drought.

The community was angered further by the expropriation of more land by the colonial Government in 1966. The west bank of the Save River was incorporated into the Gona reZhou National Park and the people of Mahenye were compulsorily evicted to make way for the Park expansion. The relationship between this community and the National Park authorities was strained further. And the Mahenye community increased their effort for poaching wildlife in the National Park.

2.0 INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION & INNOVATIONS

2.1 How the Mahenye Community influenced the design of the full CAMPFIRE Programme

Poaching by the Mahenye community continued into the period after the political independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. In 1982, in one fortnight alone, there were 80 convictions of poaching against the community, showing open antagonism towards the Park.

Mr. Clive Stockil a local safari operator came onto the scene. He knew the community well and could speak their language, as his father was a missionary in the community. He brokered an agreement between the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management and the Mahenye people. Mr. Stockil could shoot a small quota of elephant, buffalo and nyala crossing from the Park into the community. The people would receive the meat and the revenue in exchange for no poaching. Mr Stockil sold the quota to safari hunting clients. Overtime the hunting quota was increased and the community's earnings grew. The community reorganised their villages, moving some families away from prime hunting areas and increased the amount of land allocated to wildlife. The community used the money wisely in developing a number of community projects. This was the experience that gave the Department the confidence to take the far reaching decision to devolve the authority over wildlife to the District level in communal areas, as the institution for the operationalisation of Campfire.

The Government's positive response led to policy changes providing for:

- Devolution of state control over wildlife to the locals through District Councils,
- Devolution of decision making from the state to the local level,
- Devolution of costs and benefits from the state to the local level leading to internalisation of costs and benefits at the local level,

- Institution building at the community level, community empowerment & community participation,
- Market access for wildlife products.
-

The far-reaching decision by Government crystallised from the experience of a small community in a remote part of the country marked the beginning of the CAMPFIRE initiative in Zimbabwe. From 1996 onwards more Districts took up the Programme. There are now 37 RDCs with “appropriate authority” to manage wildlife and all these have come together under the Campfire Association.

CAMPFIRE was the first community based natural resource management initiative in Southern Africa and other countries like Botswana, Namibia and Zambia embarked on similar approaches.

2.1.1. Institutional Support

Blessing and support by Government opened the way for the coming in of NGOs, donors and continued private sector support. The donors involved were GTZ (Germany Development Assistance), the Royal Netherlands Embassy and USAID. The major NGOs involved were Zimbabwe Trust, WWF, CASS and Africa Resources Trust. These NGOs provided institutional as well as research and monitoring support.

2.1.2. Land use planning and management activities

The Department of Agritex (Agriculture and Extension Services) have produced a use plan for the area which incorporates wildlife management areas and a small irrigation scheme.

The community set aside 15000 hectares of wilderness as a wildlife conservancy. Other management activities carried out by the community include fire control, game capture and relocation, provision of game water supplies and resource monitoring. The community is responsible for setting their trophy hunting quotas. Safari hunting operations are carried out on the community land. The community also promulgates by-laws as a means of enforcing community management decisions.

The area suitable for irrigation as identified by Agritex covers 120 ha. The community plans to implement the irrigation scheme. The next stage is a detailed hydrological study to analyse all the possibilities before a determination of the options.

2.1.3 Joint venture with the private sector

The Mahenye community went into a partnership with the Zimbabwe Sun Group of Hotels (ZimSun), in forming an enterprise based on the construction of two up market lodges namely Chilo and Mahenya. The community leased the land to ZimSun and the company invested up to Z\$60 million. This enterprise alone provides some 70 jobs to the community. The agreement also stipulates that 15% of the gross revenue of the enterprise goes to the community.

The lodges conduct tours into the neighbouring Park, as well as photographic safaris on the west bank of the Save River. Marketing of wildlife products is done by the

private sector. The Rural District Council enters into lease agreements with safari operators who sell the hunts and manage the hunting clientele. Eco-tourism marketing is the responsibility of the Zimbabwe Sun Group.

2.2 Income & Usage

Income from natural resources management activities is shown in Table 2 covering the period 1990 to 2000. The total revenue generated from wildlife projects since 1990 stands at approximately Z\$5 314 731 (US\$ 96 631). Between 1990 and 1996 all revenue came from sport hunting. From 1997 onwards, eco-tourism became another key revenue earner. Ecotourism is entirely based on the community / private sector (ZimSun) partnership and investment by the Group.

Year	Sport Hunting (Z\$)	Tourism (Z\$)	Other (Z\$)*	Total (Z\$)
1990	28 000	0		28 000
1991	70 800	0		70 800
1992	179 910	0		179 910
1993	158 000	0		158 000
1994	163 736	0		163 736
1995	138 445	0	4 000	142 445
1996	200 000	0	78 979	278 979
1997	158 797	429 805		588 602
1998	389 170	545 312		934 482
1999	534 021	753 232		1 287 253
2000	1 085 544	396 980		1 482 524
Totals Z\$	3 106 423	2 125 329	82 979	5 314 731
Totals US\$	56 480	38 642	1 509	96 631
% Income Totals	58%	40%	2%	100%

*Note: Other * refers to sources of income other than sport hunting.*

Income has increased over time with the evolution of the programme. The income is allocated as reflected in Table 3. Income is disbursed to (i) wildlife management costs, (ii) infrastructure development, (iii) direct household earnings and (iv) Campfire Association membership levy.

Table 3: Allocation of Revenues for Mahenye (Source: Chipinge RDC)

Year	Household Dividends (Z\$)	Wildlife Management (Z\$)	Council Levy (Z\$)	Projects (Z\$)	Total (Z\$)
1990	28 000	0	0	0	28 000
1991	54 600	0	14 200	0	68 800
1992	87 120	10 850	30 600	51 340	179 910
1993	80 178	27 962	26 860	23 000	158 000
1994	81 229	27 380	35 367	19 760	163 736
1995	78 855	28 930	29 920	6 740	144 445
1996	140 544	36 700	49 761	51 974	278 979
1997	340 499	58 268	129 536	60 299	588 602
1998	535 369	82 500	187 424	129 189	934 482
1999	596 718	249 075	274 251	167 209	1 287 253

Mahenye Case Study

2000	782 407	295 505	311 330	93 282	1 482 524
TotalZ\$)	2 805 519	817 170	1 089 249	602 793	5 314 731
Total (US\$)	51 009	14 858	19 804	10 960	96 631

Table 4: Percentage Allocation of Revenues – (1990 – 2000 Mahenye Ward)

Year	Household Dividends	Wildlife Management	Council Levy	Projects	Total
1990	100	0	0	0	100
1991	79	0	21	0	100
1992	48	6	17	29	100
1993	51	18	17	14	100
1994	50	17	22	11	100
1995	55	20	20	5	100
1996	50	13	18	19	100
1997	58	10	22	10	100
1998	57	9	20	14	100
1999	46	20	21	13	100
2000	53	20	21	6	100
%Total	53	15	20	12	100

Source: Chipinge RDC

As is clear from Table 4, a considerable amount of money is paid out as direct income to households. Management costs, levies and allocation to projects share the remainder. Allocations between the various categories vary annually. The decision on allocations is made democratically at an annual meeting when the Rural District Council (RDC) and the community sit together. Some of the projects financed from CAMPFIRE revenues are listed below:

Box 1: A list of the projects developed with CAMPFIRE revenue

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification & piped water with the help of ZimSun • 4 classrooms & 2 teachers houses at Mahenye school • 2 grinding mills • Construction of a model Shangaan cultural village for eco-tourism purposes • Development of the 15 000 ha wilderness area • Clinic |
|---|

3. POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Before the start of Campfire, household income in the community was virtually zero. Fending was for subsistence. Household income is now realised from several sources in the community. These sources include: activities in the community projects, management activities (resource monitors, fire managers, etc), tourism activities, direct dividends from the programme, etc. The partnership with the Zimbabwe Sun Hotels employs about 70 community members.

Health sanitation and general comfort in the community are generally improved with increased earnings (Table 2), provision of better infrastructure including clinics, hospitals, clean water, electricity, telecommunication systems, schools, etc. Food and nutrition too have improved.

4. BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

The community has set aside a 15 000 ha wildlife conservancy in which trophy hunting and eco-tourism activities take place.

The community has invested (Table 3) quite well in meeting the management needs of the conservancy (fire monitoring and control, employment of game guards, employment of resource monitors, provision of water for wildlife use). A good wildlife environment is dependent on ecologically sound habitats, reflecting improved biodiversity and its sustainable use.

Table 5 shows ground based game counts from community resource monitors. The data show monitoring effort by community members. The data are not adequate for historical trend analysis, but are sufficient to show the general presence of some species. Over the period of counts in Table 4, all the species covered show healthy populations.

Table 5. Analysis of wildlife from game counts in the Mahenye wilderness area.

Species	Jun-Aug 1998	Sept-Nov 1998	Dec-Feb 98/99	Mar-May 1999	Unclassified	Total	Average	Relative Abundance
ELEPHANT	268	186	540	227	175	1396	279.26	1
BUFFALO	4	13		4	2	23	4.6	12
KUDU	37	27	145	160	32	401	80	2
NYALA	4	11	17	18	11	61	12.2	10
BUSHBUCK	51	12	22	146	23	254	50.8	6
WATERBUCK	33	28	90	56	49	256	51.2	5
WARTHOG	24		19	109		152	30.4	8
IMPALA	6	17		13		36	7.2	11
DUIKER	41	33	21	114	39	248	49.6	7
KLIPSPRINGE	52	10	216	80	30	388	77.6	3
R								
SUNI	27	5	7	68	14	121	24.2	9
GRYSBOK	8	50	26	284	19	384	77.4	4

Source: Mahenye WCC Resource Monitors

*** Unclassified forms relate to those that had no dates but were completed during the period 01 June 1988 – 31 May 1999.*

Table 6 shows population estimates of three game species from the neighbouring Park in a stratum adjacent to Mahenye which show healthy populations. This shows that the Mahenye area is potentially rich in wildlife.

Table 6: Population Estimates of selected species adjacent to the Mahenye Ward in the Gona reZhou National Park (after Gibson 1990)

Species	Estimate	Density	Population
Elephant	1335	1.61	5 175+-40.3%
Buffalo	3156	3.80	4234+-137.0%
Zebra	78	0.09	662+-50.1%

Table 2 shows that all households benefit from income from the Campfire programme in the area. Income is shared equally between households. The amounts allocated are arrived at democratically. Community decision making, planning, participation, community ownership of the process together with the benefits outlined constitute an effective incentive to conservation in the community.

The Save catchment area is one of the most deforested parts of the country. But the Mahenye area stands out as an island with good tree cover, ground and surface water. Tribute for this needs to be paid to the community.

Illegal off-take of wildlife is very low.

5. PARTNERSHIPS

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWLM) worked closely with the following organisations: the Zimbabwe Trust, The Africa Resources Trust, the World Wide Fund for Nature's Southern African Programme Office (WWF-SARPO), the University of Zimbabwe's Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) and the private sector in promoting the realisation of the Mahenye success story. DNPWLM was responsible for creating the overall policy environment, ecological research and overall scientific monitoring and setting quotas.

The Zimbabwe Trust was responsible for institutional development. CASS was responsible for socio-economic research. The Africa Resources Trust was responsible for information dissemination. WWF-SARPO was responsible for ecological research focusing on multi-species use as a landuse option and training. Safari operators were responsible for marketing and managing the hunts. The role Mr. Stockil played has been outlined. The role of the Zimbabwe Sun Group of Hotels has been outlined as well.

In terms of donor support, GTZ was the first to come on the scene in the 1992 drought. The focus of this support was on the provision of water supply to wildlife over a two year period. The Netherlands Embassy provided support under the Natural Resources Management project in 1995. The focus of this support was on building the capacity of the Zimbabwe Trust who were involved in institution building. USAID came on the scene in 1994. The focus was on building the capacity of NGOs working in the area and the Rural District Council. All donor funding ended in 2000. What is clear with regard to donor funding is that most of the funding was given through NGOs, primarily to build the capacity of these NGOs to perform. Mahenye got little direct funding.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

The Mahenye initiative has been in operation since 1987. The programme is still vibrant three years after the major donors and service providers have since left. Donor support stopped completely in 2000. The programmes initiated in Mahenye are now self-sustaining and driven by the locals through their elected representatives in the form of the Ward CAMPFIRE Committee (WCC) in conjunction with the traditional leaders. Monitoring mechanism in place include a resource monitoring system complete with game guards and resource monitors who are accountable to the WCC. Project specific sub-committees are in place and these are an appendage of the WCC mandated with day to day management of the grinding mills and other micro projects. Currently, the Mahenye Wildlife committee is able to set wildlife quotas, maintain its books of accounts, run income generating projects, and other associated tasks with minimal outside assistance. Regular meetings are held culminating in an AGM where the WCC and the PSC give feed back to the community on financial and other general matters of interest. Budgets are produced with the full participation of the community.

7. OTHER INFORMATION

The Campfire programme, which took institutional shape following the experience with a small community, is now a big and successful movement in Zimbabwe. There are now 37 Rural District Councils (RDCs) involved in the programme in the country. Tables 7 and 8 show revenue from Campfire activities in the various RDCs. Campfire is now an important driver for rural development in the country.

The Campfire programme informed the development of other community based natural resources management (CBNRM) initiatives in the southern African region.

Table 7: Annual income (ZWS) accruing to all Rural District Councils under the CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 1998.

Year	Sport Hunting	Tourism	PAC Hides & Ivory	Other	Total	% annual change
1989	694,773	60	11,256	37,610	743,699	
1990	1,120,864	7,082	105,917	141,639	1,375,502	85
1991	2,393,713	59,657	78,242	379,243	2,910,855	112
1992	5,899,669	96,878	48,199	174,913	6,219,659	114
1993	9,101,816	137,730	97,858	350,804	9,688,208	56
1994	12,757,694	328,360	22,747	380,811	13,489,612	39
1995	12,883,712	478,653	101,939	420,528	13,884,832	3
1996	16,679,327	234,381	401,479	366,842	17,682,030	27
1997	21,257,264	886,729	551,649	169,430	22,865,072	29
1998	43,580,153	996,194	614,345	919,212	46,109,904	102
Total 1989- 1998	126,368,985	3,225,724	2,033,631	3,341,033	134,969,373	

Table 8: Annual income (US\$) accruing to all Rural District Councils under the CAMPFIRE programme between 1989 & 1998 (Campfire Association, 1999).

Year	Exchange Rate	Sport Hunting	Tourism	PAC Hides & ivory	Other	Total	% annual change
1989	2.216	326,798	28	5,294	17,690	349,811	
1990	2.472	453,424	2,865	42,847	57,297	556,433	59
1991	3.751	638,153	15,904	20,859	101,105	776,021	39
1992	5.112	1,154,082	18,951	9,429	34,216	1,216,678	57
1993	6.529	1,394,060	21,095	14,988	53,730	1,483,873	22
1994	8.212	1,553,543	39,985	2,770	46,373	1,642,671	11
1995	8.724	1,476,812	54,866	11,685	48,204	1,591,567	-3
1996	10.07	1,656,338	23,275	39,869	36,429	1,755,912	10
1997	12.444	1,708,234	71,258	44,331	13,615	1,837,438	5
1998	24.374	1,787,977	40,871	25,205	37,713	1,891,766	3
Total 1989- 1998		12,149,422	289,099	217,276	446,372	13,102,170	