

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE MAKULEKE COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of the Republic of South Africa as a result of the 1994 democratic elections included fundamental changes in a number of areas. One such area is the restitution of land rights which, is part of government's attempt on land reform. Restitution of land rights is a process meant to restore land to persons and communities which were forcefully removed from their land after 19 June 1913. The Makuleke Community is one of the first communities in South Africa to regain their ancestral land. The significance of the successful land claim is not only about ownership, it is more about the management and the sustainable use of natural resource found on such land for the benefit of the community.

INTRODUCTION

Natural resources are important for current and future generations in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The conservation of natural resources has been the function of government in contemporary states. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, serves as a primary policy document followed by government in the management of natural resources in South Africa.

Rural communities in South Africa have often been perceived as a threat to efforts to conserve natural resources. This perception, coupled with former discriminatory laws, has resulted in the forceful removal of communities in areas identified as potential conservation areas to protect particular fauna and/or flora. The possibility of forceful removal of communities on land earmarked for conservation has changed since 1994 with the

implementation of laws such as the *Restitution of Land Rights Act*, 1994 (Act 22 of 1994) and the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. An essential paradigm shift has led to an emphasis on community-based natural resource management. The Makuleke Community has institutionalised community-based natural resource management with the establishment of structures for managing resources on land which, formerly belonged to them and which had now been returned to their control. Partnerships had been entered into between the community and the private companies to improve the possibilities of development benefiting the community.

CONSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVES

South Africa is characterised by extensive areas prone to drought, limited arable land and a population that is unevenly spread across the country. It has been the policies of various governments since the earliest times to utilise land as effectively as possible. However, as a result of politically motivated policies, land had not been distributed equitably amongst the different racial groups in South Africa. This resulted *inter alia* in minority racial groups being allocated land for agricultural and other purposes out of proportion to their numbers. With the democratising of the Republic of South Africa in 1994 the new Government was faced with a formidable task of rectifying the unjustifiable policies of the past. This entailed a total political, economic, social and even geographical restructuring of the South African society. To achieve its goals Government had to reconsider all existing policies; organisational structures; budget allocations; utilisation of human resources; and the provision of services on an equitable basis to all the inhabitants of the country.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, clearly states in the *Preamble inter alia* that:

we the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past;...believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity...lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.

The abovementioned quote unequivocally guarantees every citizen protection under the Constitution as the supreme law (section 2). Thus, any realignment of policies or reallocation of land has to be undertaken within constitutional guidelines. Section 24 of the Constitution, 1996, affords every one the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable legislative measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation and promote conservation. The constitutional framework, clearly requires of Government to consider simultaneously the social, political economic and physical needs of all inhabitants and to address any inequitable policies within a reasonable time frame.

It should also be noted that the governmental system of South Africa provides for three spheres of government, viz national, provincial and local. These spheres are distinctive, yet interdependent and interrelated (Constitution, 1996 section 40(1)).

Functions are assigned in accordance with schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, 1996. Nature conservation (excluding national parks, national botanical gardens and marine resources) is classified as a function to be performed concurrently by the national and provincial governments. Similarly the environment, traditional leadership and regional planning and development are concurrent functions in schedule 4 of the Constitution. This clearly indicates that intergovernmental relations exist as far as the development and management of parks are concerned. It also implies that the effects of the development of nature conservation areas require the involvement of various governmental institutions. Even the local sphere of government is involved as the whole of South Africa has been divided into municipalities and nature conservation areas, identified as management areas, form part of a district municipality.

POLICY IMPERATIVES

Policies serve as guidelines for actions (Robbins 1980:73) intended to provide a particular service or resolve a particular dilemma. Fox and Meyer (1995: 96) concur with this definition and further add that policy is about steps which are taken to address a specific dysfunctional situation. Public policy is an end product of the policy formulation process. Dye (1995:298) argue that the policy formulation process occurs in identifiable phases which include the identification of problems, agenda setting, formulation of proposals by officials and legitimisation through political actions taken by the legislature and the executive. The legitimisation of policy is followed by policy implementation and evaluation.

In the case of a democratic state, such as the Republic of South Africa, the making of policies requires the involvement of citizens or communities that could be affected by such policies to be consulted and their concerns noted. Policies relating to the environment do not have an effect on only the *flora* and the *fauna* in a particular area. Communities often reside in an area that is identified as a future nature conservation area. This creates a policy dilemma of acknowledging the need to defining the boundaries of the area in a meaningful manner to establish a specific biosphere. Simultaneously the existence of a particular community residing in the area should also be recognised. Thus the governmental institutions involved in nature conservation, the environment, traditional affairs and related matters need to act with restraint when delimiting such areas. The previous, pre-1994 government did not heed the values and traditions of communities affected by policy changes. This resulted in various communities adversely affected being left without recourse for their grievances. These anomalies are currently being addressed and form the focus of this discussion on the Makuleke Community.

The *Restitution of Land Rights Act*, 1994 as amended by the *Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act*, 2000 (Act 48 of 2003) is a policy document aimed at addressing the injustices of the past relating to land seizures. This policy document outlines the actions which need to be followed, the financial implications of land restitutions and organisational arrangements. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Department of Land Affairs and the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MAKULEKE COMMUNITY

The Makuleke land is located in the Limpopo Province of South Africa in the northern part of the Kruger National Park. It is an area on the border of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The Makuleke land is located between the Luvubu and Limpopo rivers. The area is of high conservation value and has tourism potential. The area's game includes the big-five (that is, Lion, Elephant, Leopard, Rhino and Buffalo). The Makuleke Community settled in the Pafuri area in the year 1800. The Makuleke Community was self-sufficient, natural resources were in abundance hence the Community could feed itself. In 1939 the Makuleke Community suffered a setback as a result of the food and mouth disease, which killed most of its livestock. Numerous attempts were also made to remove the Community from its land. The chief of the Makuleke Community resisted all such attempts. In 1967, the father to the current chief died. The death of the chief created a void in the leadership to resist translocation. That opportunity was used by the former government to expropriate land from the community (Maluleke 2006: Personal interview).

The Makuleke community of approximately 3000 was eventually forcefully removed from the Pafuri area in 1969. After removal, the Makuleke Community was resettled in an area called Ntlaveni near Punda Maria gate of the Kruger National Park in the Limpopo Province (Koch and Collins [s.a]: 3). The removal of the Makuleke Community from its ancestral land represented a loss of identity as the Community no longer had a sense of belonging. The Makuleke Community was removed from its land in order to accommodate the expansion of the Kruger National Park. The removal of the Makuleke Community reduced it to poverty and dependency through cheap labour. Currently, the Makuleke Community consist of three villages with a population of approximately 10000. (Poonan. The displaced Makulekes recover community land and wildlife assets. Available at: http://www.fordfound.org/publications/recent_article. 10/01/2006).

LAND RESTITUTION

Section 25 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* provides that no one may be deprived of property except in terms of law approved by Parliament and no law may arbitrarily deprive a person of property. Furthermore, the aforementioned section of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* makes provision for the expropriation of land coupled with payment of compensation. The expropriation of land must be in the public interest and in accordance with South Africa's commitment to a fair land reform process. Section 25(7) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* lays the foundation for land restitution. This section provides that a person or community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws can claim restitution of property or equitable redress. The 19th of June 1913 is the date on which the Black Land Act, 1913 took effect. The Act effectively deprived Blacks of the rights to own land. In effect 80% of the land was passed into the hands of White people who constituted 20% of the population (Black Land Act,

1913, available at: <http://www.sahistory.org/pages/chronology/thisday/1913-06-19.htm>.
(05/06/2007)

The *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994* as amended by the *Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act, 2003* (Act 48 of 2003) gives effect to the provisions of section 25 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. The *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994*'s main objective is to restore land rights to persons or communities which were dispossessed for purposes of furthering the objects of racially based discriminatory laws. The *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994* similarly makes provision for the restitution of land that was unfairly taken from original owners on or after 19 June 1913. The Makuleke Community, by virtue of having settled in the Pafuri area in 1800 and subsequently being removed in 1969, qualified for the restitution of their land.

Section 4 of the *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994* establishes a Commission on Restitution of Land Rights. The Commission consists of a Chief Land Claims Commissioner and regional land claims commissioners. The Commission receives land claims and ensures that claimants are assisted in the preparation and submission of claims. The Commission also advises claimants about the progress of their claims. Furthermore, the Commission makes recommendations to the Minister of Land Affairs regarding the appropriate form of alternative relief. The *Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act, 2003* provides that the Minister of Land Affairs can acquire or expropriate land for purposes of compensating a claimant.

The Makuleke Community took advantage of the *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994* and claimed their land back. The Makuleke Community attempts to claim its ancestral land started in 1990 with negotiations with the South African National Parks Board (SANParks). The land claim was subsequently settled in 1998 whereupon the Makuleke community regained the title to 24 000 ha of land in the northern part of the Kruger National Park. The Makuleke Community could have settled inside the Kruger National Park and engaged in their traditional agricultural practices which could have resulted in the destruction of wildlife (Koro 2005:2). The land was de-proclaimed and subsequently re-proclaimed as a contractual park in 1999. In exchange for full ownership, the Makuleke Community agreed to let the land remain part of the Kruger National Park, under the joint SANParks/Makuleke management control for a period of 50 years. Furthermore, the Makuleke Community committed themselves to maintain the land for conservation use and not use it for either residential or agricultural purposes (Mahony and Van Zyl 2001:28). The Makuleke people added another 5000 ha of the communal land to the Park (Koch and Collins [s.a]: 2).

The successful land claim and subsequent land use plan in the form of a contractual park owned by the Makuleke and jointly managed with SANParks is ground breaking because it joins conservation and community development. These concepts were, according to Poonan, antithetical. (The displaced Makulekes recover community land and wildlife assets. Available at: http://www.fordfound.org/publications/recent_article. 10/01/2006). The restitution of land in South Africa is crucial to avoid *land grabs* similar to the situation which, unfolded in Zimbabwe in recent years.

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

There are two paradigms that are worth mentioning in nature conservation. The first one is the fortress conservation approach, which is in favour of protectionist and coercive conservation policies. This first view was more prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s. The core elements of the fortress conservation consisted, according to Buscher and Dietz (2005:2) of conservation excluding local communities, communities forfeiting their rights for consumptive use, and the strict enforcement of rules governing the particular area through fences and fines for any transgressions. This approach included the removal of communities such as Makuleke from their ancestral land.

A new paradigm emerged in the 1970s. This paradigm puts emphasis on community-based natural resource management. Buscher and Dietz (2005:3) argue that the exclusion of people from the resources they depended on for a major part of their livelihoods had proved unattainable and even counterproductive. Involving local communities in conservation management would not only correct the social wrongs of the past, but will also lead to improved conservation of natural resources. From a governance perspective, this implies decentralisation of authority, decision-making and the empowerment of the local communities such as Makuleke.

Community-based natural resource management is a grassroots initiative, a bottom-up approach to understanding how best to achieve results by involving people in attending to specific problems. Developmental tasks are also assigned along both horizontal and vertical channels of communication, promoting an integrated approach to conservation. Community-based natural resource management is an approach which, attempts to build upon existing systems at local sphere as well as at other societal levels and integrating such knowledge. Community-based natural resource management concerns taking local communities as a point of departure and empowering them to create a social movement to manage local natural resources (CBNRM Net, 2001. Community-Based Natural Resource Management: Knowledge management and knowledge sharing in the age of globalization. Prepared by Lars T. Stoefftestad. www.cbnrm.net. 7/11/2005).

Communities such as Makuleke are the key beneficiaries and partners in community-based conservation initiatives in the area under discussion. Community-based, implies that activities or interventions should be located in the community for the benefit of the community and conservation within this context refers to the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity for the benefit of the communities involved as well as future generations.

The objectives of the community-based conservation are to (Conservation: Strengthening community relations and economic empowerment, available at: <http://www.sanparks.org/people/community> 3/1/2005):

- build constituencies for parks and promote biodiversity conservation;
- improve access for communities to sustainable resources in the parks which can be used for cultural, spiritual and recreational purposes;
- facilitate the establishment of park forums, providing a platform for effective collaboration, co-management initiatives and information sharing between communities, stakeholders and parks;

- assist communities to use their natural resources wisely;
- build capacity and skills that promote sustainable lifestyles within communities; and
- enable communities to gain access to sustainable resources in parks to generate employment and income generating opportunities.

One of the areas that were previously overlooked within the conservation agenda was the identification, management and development of cultural resources and heritage sites in and around protected areas. Coupled with this is the growing need to mobilise associated oral histories and indigenous knowledge and practices which are fast disappearing from South Africa's diverse indigenous communities (Conservation: Strengthening community relations and economic empowerment, available at: <http://www.sanparks.org/people/community/3/1/2005>).

Community-based natural resource management has positive spin-offs. The Makuluke Community's commitment to conservation has significantly reduced game poaching in its section of the Kruger National Park. The Community's Anti-poaching Unit, including 15 young people trained with the financial backing of *Wilderness Safaris*, has collected a number of snares and arrested poachers (In South Africa, relocated community chooses jobs over lost land, available at: http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/10/10/1019_051019_makuleke_2.html. 24/11/2005).

Knowledge management and sharing

Knowledge management is a new branch of management, which focuses on achieving performance through synergy of people, processes and technology. Knowledge management caters for critical issues of organizational adaptation, survival and competence in an increasingly changing environment. The goal of knowledge management is sustained individual and institutional performance through ongoing learning, unlearning and adaptation (Knowledge management network, available at: <http://www.brint.com/km>. 7/3/2006). Government institutions such as the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, SANParks, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations could benefit by managing existing knowledge and disseminating it to communities.

Van Dijk (2004: 517) argues that the creation, integration and dissemination of knowledge are the key elements of knowledge management. These three elements constitute knowledge conversion which, can be divided into four distinct types, namely:

- socialisation which points to the sharing of implicit knowledge between individuals either through formal and informal communication channels;
- externalisation which refers to the conversion of implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge through a process of codification to ensure formal conversion and widespread dissemination;
- combination refers to the spread of explicit knowledge to all individuals and groups through the use of information systems; and
- internalisation indicates the reinforcement of explicit knowledge

Knowledge management and conversion are necessary for survival in any sphere of life in the 21st century. The management of knowledge, therefore, becomes imperative for effective community-based natural resource management. A structured approach to identifying, collecting, managing, producing, disseminating and using appropriate knowledge about development is necessary for the success of community-based natural resource management. In Southern Africa, there is an increasing amount of experimentation with knowledge management strategies applied to community-based natural resource management. These strategies include print, audio, and World Wide Web media. These efforts are the results of collaboration among civil society, the public sector, training and research institutions as well as donors.

The multipurpose community centre established in the Makuleke village can be used for purposes of managing and sharing knowledge on conservation management. Schools in the area are also central to the dissemination of knowledge to build a future community that is knowledgeable about and respect the conservation of natural resources. For knowledge management and sharing to succeed, it is important for a community to be committed to the stated goals of conservation.

Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that is confined to a specific group of people. It is unique to every culture. Indigenous knowledge forms the basis for local level decision making in areas such as agriculture, education and natural resource management (Indigenous knowledge program, available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/what.htm>. 2/2/2006). Indigenous knowledge is held by communities rather than families or individuals. Indigenous knowledge is tacit knowledge and not easy to codify as it is embedded in the communal practices, institutions, relationships and rituals.

Semali and Kincheloe (as quoted in Hesse and Wissink 2004: 49-50) argue that “indigenous knowledge reflects the dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relation to their natural environment and how they organize the folk knowledge of flora and fauna, cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives”.

Indigenous knowledge is important for a variety of reasons, including that (Indigenous knowledge program, available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/what.htm>. 2/2/2006):

- indigenous knowledge provides problem solving strategies for local communities, especially those that are poor and/ or illiterate;
- indigenous knowledge represents an important contribution to global development knowledge;
- indigenous knowledge systems are at the risk of becoming extinct;
- indigenous knowledge is relevant for the development process; and
- indigenous knowledge is an underutilised resource in the development process.

Learning from indigenous knowledge by investigating first what local communities know and provide a productive context for activities designed to help the communities, should be a first step in managing indigenous knowledge. Tshikwatamba (2004: 256-257) argues that it is important to recognize indigenous knowledge culture and values of Africans as colonialism devastated originality and imposed foreign cultures. Indigenous knowledge is in most cases not documented and it becomes difficult to transfer it from one generation to another.

Hesse and Wissink (2004:47) state that development theories are to be blamed for the extent to which indigenous knowledge has been undermined and ignored. Two theories, namely, modernisation and dependency theories are at the centre of ignorance. *Modernisation theory* contends that development can only occur if African societies abandon their traditional, social, institutional structures, attitudes as well as behavioural patterns. *Dependency theory* is based on the dependence of the South on the North. This theory depicts the South as helpless and powerless. This implies that the knowledge of the South is regarded as insignificant in development.

Previously, indigenous knowledge was associated with being *primitive* or barbaric (Hesse and Wissink 2004: 49). Negative and subjective perceptions such as viewing indigenous knowledge as being primitive or barbaric, create psychological barriers which serve as stumbling blocks in learning and unearthing new indigenous knowledge. These perceptions are counter-developmental as only limited knowledge, which is not adaptable to local conditions, serve as a point of departure for development.

Indigenous knowledge should be the starting point for any attempt to promote conservation awareness in areas in which indigenous communities are involved. It may be assumed that communities such as Makuleke have little or no knowledge regarding conservation management. However, it is essential for conservation agencies to ascertain from communities what knowledge they possess regarding conservation. There will be positive spin-offs to such an endeavour. Firstly, awareness programmes will be more appealing to communities if they believe that their indigenous knowledge about nature is acknowledged. The second benefit is psychological in nature. The fact that a community has been consulted, implies that the knowledge is being recognized and valued. Such recognition can earn nature conservation agencies such as SANParks greater compliance with sustainable ways of using natural resources and in changing attitudes of communities towards nature conservation.

Oral tradition is an important prerequisite for the dissemination of information concerning the conservation of natural resources. Oral tradition manifests itself in the historical consciousness of pre-literate societies and has a functional character. It is an effective method to relate social and community history and addresses the needs of the most disadvantaged and illiterate communities and individuals. African communities engage individual members in memorisation, recitation and the passing of oral history from one generation to another. In some African communities recitations are often accompanied by music. Proverbs, praises, riddles, poems and songs are effective mediums of knowledge sharing (Tshikwatamba 2004: 256).

The beauty of the melody of songs sang by Makuleke Community disguises the sadness while they recall how 3000 people were compelled in 1969, to destroy their own

homes, the ruins of which still litter parts of what is now the Pafuri section of the Kruger National Park. One of the songs says “don’t be deceived, our hearts are sore because of poverty. Don’t be deceived because many of us are dying, even if you take us back only few will be able to return, because the rest will be dead” (Koch and Collins [s.a]: 1).

Today in the Makuleke villages, the old songs about forced removals are mixed with new and happier melodies. At the clan’s cultural centre, for example, visitors may hear a choir singing about the way villagers are developing their own game lodges and tourism projects in what is currently known as the Makuleke region of the Kruger National Park (Koch and Collins [s.a]: 1). Songs are important in oral tradition. They inform the youth about the past while also celebrating current achievements by the community.

Ownership of resources

Ownership of natural resources is important for natural resources situated in areas in which particular communities have an interest. It is unlikely for individuals and communities to destroy what they intrinsically consider to be theirs. It is necessary for community leaders to play an educational role by inculcating a sense of ownership and attachment to their natural resources.

Against the prevalent Western concept of individual or private property rights to natural resources, a broader conceptualisation is emerging. This conceptualisation relates to communal ownership of natural resources. This ownership relates in particular to communities which, were removed against their will to establish so called fortress conservation areas and subsequently denied access to such resources. This broader and more complex picture of how local natural resources are owned, utilised, accessed and managed are increasingly becoming an important issue for investment in protected areas such as the Kruger National Park.

There are two forms of ownership, which need to be understood for purposes of community-based natural resource management. The first type of ownership refers to the legal ownership based on a title deed and the second one is communal ownership, which is not always based on the possession of a title deed. This type of ownership relates to communities such as Makuleke. Communal ownership is managed jointly through consensus in decision-making.

Communal ownership, by its nature, may lead to conflicts which necessitate that the Makuleke Community should acquire conflict management skills. Communal ownership within the African communities such as Makuleke is made easy by the adherence to the principles of *Ubuntu*. The expressions “A man(woman) is only a man through others” and “I am because we are” as quoted in Tshikwatamba (2004: 261) argues that collectivism is more important than individualism within the African communities. In the African communities, life revolves around a collective body. A collective body can be a tribe, a village and in some cases the extended family. In the case of the Makuleke, a collective body is made-up of three villages. Tshikwatamba (2004: 263) defines collective management as “an African value-laden practice of decision-making by the collective body for the benefit of all within the spirit of ubuntu”. Collective management differs from

participative management in its conceptual and fundamental application. The former is more African while the latter is more Western.

For the Makuleke to access their land as a result of the successful land claim, the Community was required to set up a Communal Property Association. The Communal Property Association holds title deed to the land.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

For the Makuleke Community to manage its land successfully, a democratic system of local governance had to be established. The system consists of structures, which are elaborated below.

Joint Management Board

The Joint Management Board is a structure, which has been created by the Makuleke Community and the SANParks to assist the Makuleke Community in managing their land. This structure is required to prepare the Community for the eventual management of the land under their control. The Joint Management Board consists of three representatives of the Makuleke community and three representatives of the SANParks. The chair of the Joint Management Board rotates. The Board meets every three months. In between these meetings, the Joint Management Committee deals with issues on a monthly basis.

Makuleke Communal Property Association

The Communal Property Association (CPA) is established and registered in terms of section 18 of the *Communal Property Associations Act*, 1996. CPA members are elected democratically by the community at an annual general meeting. The implementation agency is based at the Makuleke Tribal Authority office and is responsible for daily administrative and managerial matters of the CPA.

The CPA derives its mandate from a written constitution adopted at a general meeting of all members. The Constitution defines the objectives of the CPA, the criteria for membership and the responsibilities and entitlements of members. According to the Constitution, the 15 000 beneficiaries of the restitution agreement are divided into two classes. Class A beneficiaries are direct descendants of those who lived in the restored land and class B beneficiaries are those who joined and contributed to the Community after the expropriation of their land by the former government. The Makuleke CPA has been successful in combining traditional as well as more modern forms of governance. (Mahony and Van Zyl 2001: 4).

Executive Committee

The CPA's Executive Committee consists of nine members. Four members are village representatives. The other four are general representatives. The Chief is an *ex-officio*

member of the Executive Committee and also serves as the chairperson. The eight members of the Communal Property Association's Executive Committee, with the exception of the chief, are elected democratically every five years. The Executive Committee reports back to the CPA members every year and publish a newsletter, which regularly provides information to the community (Koch and Collins [s.a]: 4-5).

Makuleke Development Trust

The Makuleke Development Trust has an account into which money received by the Community from grants, concessions and hunting is deposited. The Trust is managed by representatives of the Community and the Department of Land Affairs. The Community trustees are elected from the Executive Committee. Their main responsibility is to ensure that the Community's money is well invested and spent wisely. Trust funds have been used for amongst others, for the Multipurpose Community Centre (including a bed and breakfast facility, crafts production unit and an amphitheatre), the construction of a school, and electrification of the village. (National geographic, available at: http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/10/1019_051019_makuleke_2.html. 15/06/2006).

PARTNERSHIPS AND INCOME GENERATION

Various tourism projects have been initiated by the Makuleke Community. Partnerships entered into by the Community are *Build Operate and Transfer* (BOT). These partnerships are primarily aimed at the development of game lodges. BOT partnerships are developed as a joint venture between the Community and the private sector aimed at upper income foreign and domestic tourists. It is envisaged that the tourism carrying capacity of the area will be approximately 200 beds. The CPA is entitled to 10% of income generated by lodges. Other attempts to generate income include the development of a rustic camp, owned and managed by the Makuleke CPA, limited trophy hunting, village based tourism opportunities such as Makuleke Bed and Breakfast and game breeding (Mahony and Van Zyl 2001: 5). Over 200 jobs had been created in 2006. The future of the Community, regarding income generation, appears to be brighter. However, it is important to balance the need to generate income with the need to conserve natural resources. The over-commercialisation of the area could disturb the ecosystem and have undesirable consequences for nature conservation and the community's economic development.

CONCLUSION

The provisions of the Constitution, 1996 cannot be ignored for policy formulation and implementation in the area of nature conservation. The Constitution, 1996 endeavours to establish equality among all South African citizens, hence subordinate legislation such as the *Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994* has been promulgated with a view to redress the injustices of the past. Most South African communities have historically been self-sufficient and depended on natural resources for survival. The loss

of arable land has brought about poverty. Land restitution has restored hope, identity and brought economic emancipation. Community-based natural resource management has put control and responsibility for conserving natural resource back in the hands of rural communities. A combination of Western and indigenous systems as well as partnership between communities and SANParks are necessary for successful knowledge transfer and sustainable natural resource management.

The establishment of local and democratic management structures, which include traditional leaders dispels the myth that democracy and traditional leadership cannot coexist and that rural communities are more likely to destroy natural resources. The ability to enter into partnerships and generate income, which is used to develop the socio-economic spheres of the Makuleke Community should encourage government to involve more communities in harmonious co-existence with nature, aimed at improvement of the quality of life and thereby progressively eliminating poverty.

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