

**AN ACTOR CENTRED APPROACH TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF
ECOTOURISM – THE CASE OF MAASAI MARA**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis which I hereby submit for the award of MHSC in Heritage and Cultural Tourism in the University of Pretoria is my own original work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree or examination at any other University.



Irene Chebet Chepkwony.

DEDICATION

To my dear mother Mrs. Hellen Chepkwony, who has been very supportive and toiled to make sure I completed this Masters degree successfully.

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ABSTRACT

This study falls within the field of ecotourism. Ecotourism brings together natural resource conservation, community participation and sustainable development. To achieve this, there is a need for cooperation between the different actors. Generally the actors involved are government agencies, Non-governmental organizations, tourists, tourism firms and the local community. Cooperation can only be successful when each of the actors involved has to have clear interests and benefits.

Hence, the aim of this study was to understand ecotourism by identifying and examining the actors in the ecotourism industry in terms of their values, expectations, and role fulfillment so as to contribute towards the equitable and transparent management of ecotourism destinations. The Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya was selected as the study area. Data was collected by key informant interviews, group discussions and observations. Secondary data was obtained from literature reviews. The main actors identified in the study area were the government, private sector, local community and Non-Governmental Organizations. The study revealed that a lack of communication amongst actors, lack of knowledge and illiteracy among the local community, differences in values, perceptions, expectations and interests among various actors, were major hindrances to sustainable ecotourism.

Land tenure in the Maasai Mara is either private or communal. The reserve is communally owned by the local people and managed on their behalf by Narok County Council. The local people live on the fringes of the reserve called buffer zones. The pieces of land in the buffer zones have been amalgamated to form conservancies. The lease of these conservancies provides the local people with an income. The down side of this is the restriction of the locals from accessing certain culturally important areas, such as shrines where they traditionally used to bring sacrifices.

Community involvement is an important principle for sustainable tourism. This study found that although there were attempts to involve the local community in the various activities, illiteracy was a major impediment. Women were also side lined largely due to cultural factors. However, it was established that some women earned a living by selling curios whereas

some were in managerial positions. There is, however, a general need to empower more women in this community.

Despite all the problems regarding the formation of effective partnerships, it is also true that a few significant partnerships and collaborations do exist between actors who have the same interests coming together to promote sustainable tourism. The collaborations have helped in the improvement of infrastructure and livelihoods of the local community.

Keywords: Maasai Mara, ecotourism, actors, partnerships, collaboration, sustainable tourism, land tenure, community involvement, perceptions, community involvement, values.

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ACRONYMS

ACC	African Conservation Centre
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
BMB	Basecamp Maasai Brand
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
EAWS	East Africa Wildlife Society
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EK	Ecotourism Kenya
EU	European Union
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KECOBAT	Kenya Community Based Trust
KTB	Kenya Tourism Board
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
MMNR	Maasai Mara National Reserve
NCC	Narok County Council
NEMA	National Environmental Authority
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PAR	Participatory Action Research
TIES	International Ecotourism Society
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
USAID	United States of America International Development

Chapter One

1 Laying the foundation for the study

1.1 Introduction

The year 2002 was celebrated as the ‘International year of Ecotourism’ although it was questioned by some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that argued that ecotourism allowed exploitation of local communities and the destruction of pristine natural areas due to a lack of proper coordination among the various actors (World Ecotourism Summit, 2002; Björk, 2007). This might be ascribed to a difference in perceptions of ecotourism by actors in ecotourism. Literature does not provide a comprehensive description of ecotourism that can serve as a framework for those involved in the planning and management of ecotourism. The numerous definitions of ecotourism that do exist are generally too fragmented and too narrow for this purpose as they tend to only focus on variables such as location or natural setting, conservation, culture, benefits to locals, or satisfaction of participating actors from ecotourism (Fennel, 2001 & 2003; Björk, 2000; Blamey, 2001).

For the purpose of this study the definition of ecotourism of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) will be used:

Environmentally responsible enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996).

This definition captures most of the variables that appear in most of ecotourism definitions and is also supported by Telfer’s (2002:75) definition of alternative tourism. Ecotourism brings together natural resource conservation, community participation, and

development which form the main concepts of sustainable ecotourism development (Telfer, 2002; Wall, 1993; World Ecotourism Summit, 2002).

Sustainable development is the use of natural resources for socioeconomic purposes without undermining the ecological and social operations of the society (Gunn, 1994:6, Rees, 1989:13). It has been realized that it is very difficult if not impossible to achieve sustainable ecotourism development without the cooperation of all actors and without identifying clear tangible benefits in the process (Nowaczek *et al.*; 2007). Considering the descriptions of actors found in literature, actors may be defined as those with an interest or stake in a common problem or issue and include all individuals groups or organizations ‘directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem’ (Jamal & Stronza 2009: 173; cf. Mitchel *et al.*, 1997 and Starik, 1994). Actors generally involved in ecotourism include government, organizations, NGOs, tourists, tourism firms, and the local community (Björk, 2007; Long, 1993; Weinberg *et al.*, 2002). As a result Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has become a well-established and accepted concept within the field of ecotourism as it allows various actors which include the local community, to be involved and manage ecotourism projects (Berardi, 2010; Swatuk, 2005; Tapela, 2001). The CBNRM approach has attempted to combine tourism management, rural development and natural resource conservation (Rozemeijer & Van der Jagt, 2000; Armitage, 2005). The recognition of communities’ right to manage their own natural resources empowers actors from the central government to those at community level to act as equal partners. It should, however, be realized that local involvement and interaction among actors are influenced by the existing distribution of power and incentives within and outside a given social group (Rozemeijer & Van der Jagt, 2000). Wearing and McDonald (2002) suggest that equal distribution of power and incentives will provide a unique opportunity for rural actors to manage ecotourism by establishing networks of different service providers, organized in such a way as to maximize opportunities and to offer a diverse range of activities geared towards environmental conservation and community development.

Another major issue reported in literature which complicates ecotourism management is the system of land tenure. In many instances communal land ownership has been replaced by individual land ownership characterised by farming on arable land surrounding protected areas. It affects the movement of wildlife and revenue collected from wildlife viewing. Furthermore, areas high in tourism value are utilised in ways that do not necessarily serve the purposes of ecotourism and wildlife conservation. These practices affect ecotourism as communities adjacent to these protected areas receive very little benefit. This situation also applies to Maasai Mara National Reserve in south-western Kenya (detailed location under sub-heading Maasai Mara Game Reserve). Although the land adjacent to the reserve has been registered as a trust for the Maasai community living on it and is administered by the local authorities, it has been subdivided into smaller portions which not only affect the economic activities but also wildlife management. Due to pressure from increased population and scarce grazing areas some of the Maasai in the area adjacent to the reserve combine cattle keeping and other economic activities such as ecotourism ventures on their lands by leasing the tourism potential areas for lodges which do not necessarily practise ecotourism or wildlife conservation. On the other hand, the management of the southwestern section of Maasai Mara, known as the Mara Triangle, was contracted out by the Transmara County in 2001 to a non-profit private firm, known as the Mara Conservancy. This arrangement has improved the infrastructure, security and anti-poaching system to such an extent that it is now the best reserve (Wishitemi & Okello, 2003; Karanja, 2001; Smith, 2001; Lamphrey & Reid, 2004; Okello *et al.*, 2003; Honey, 2008:321).

Research has however shown that there is a lack of proper communication, a difference of beliefs, values, and perceptions regarding nature conservation between actors in ecotourism which result in misunderstanding and mistrust and the exclusion of local people in policy and decision making, implementation, monitoring and eventually lack of control and management of natural resources (Han & Ren, 2001; Araujo & Bramwell, 1999; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Hence, sustainable ecotourism requires that the different actors be identified and that their perceptions, goals and activities be

studied, analyzed, understood and taken into account and co-ordinated in any ecotourism project.

No attempt has as yet been made from a human science perspective to examine the various actors in ecotourism in terms of their perceptions, goals and responsibilities/functions. Only the multiplicity of actors and interests in ecotourism and the importance of cooperation have been acknowledged and emphasized (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Swatuk, 2005; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). To understand ecotourism this study will make use of an actor centred approach to analyze and understand ecotourism. This approach focuses on institutions and individuals involved in decision making and planning in a project/industry as well as those influenced by such activities (Markusen, 2003; Geppert & Clack, 2003).

Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of ecotourism by identifying and examining the actors in an ecotourism project in terms of their values, expectations, and role fulfillment in anticipation that it will contribute towards the equitable and transparent management of ecotourism destinations. In view of this, the following objectives have been formulated for this study in Maasai Mara National Reserve in south-western Kenya:

- To identify different actors in the local ecotourism industry and determine their perceptions, values, expectations and responsibilities with regard to ecotourism
- To determine the diverse local views with regard to landownership
- To examine the extent of community involvement in ecotourism in Maasai Mara
- To assess the challenges of collaboration which the relevant actors in the field of ecotourism face

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 History of Ecotourism

The concept of ecotourism was introduced in the 1960's and was accepted by tourism researchers in the 1980's. It became popular in the 1990's and is considered the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry, globally (Weaver, 2001:2; WTTC, 1992; Fennel, 2002 & 2003; WTTC, 2004). Ecotourism started both as a concept and a practice (Weaver, 2001:3-4). Ecotourism was used to mean conservation of natural resources and local development. It led to environmental awareness and it also fostered the involvement of local communities in tourism. However, ecotourism in practice has been going through problems as it has not been well implemented due to poor management and poor coordination among actors in ecotourism (Bjork, 2007:25, Buckley, 2009:295).

Ecotourism has become very popular since it has the potential of promoting sustainable development. It promotes small scale businesses which involves the local community and makes use of the locally produced goods and services, it does not attract mass tourism, hence reducing high leakages of money, and it is nature based which makes it environmental friendly (Telfer, 2002:75; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008:163; Cater, 1994). In developing countries such as Costa Rica, Tanzania, and Kenya which are the most popular ecotourism destinations in the world, ecotourism is the number one earner of foreign currency (Manyara & Eleri, 2007; Honey, 2009:296; Honey, 2008:116). Ecotourism has widely been used to mean sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987) as it calls for economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the tourism industry. Hence, it has been seen as the *golden egg* of conservation and development (Hunt & Stronza, 2008).

Ecotourism has often been seen as a form of sustainable development and an alternative to mass tourism as it is nature and culture based (Fennel, 2002). However, it has been plagued by problems due to a lack of one agreed definition. Much has been written on the definition of ecotourism since the popularization of the concept in the late 1980's.

Commonly cited elements include references to the need to conserve the physical attributes of the destination environment, the provision of economic opportunities for local communities, avoiding adverse socio-cultural impacts through visitor presence on host communities, ensuring an educational experience for the visitor, or some combination of the above (Koikai, 1992; Bonner, 1994: 229; Christ, 1998: 2). However, the inherent subjectivity of these definitions has generated concern that the term is prone to overuse, misuse or has limited practical relevance (Cater, 1995). Björk (2007:26-33) discusses most of the common definitions found in the ecotourism literature and in his conclusion he discusses the importance of involving all the actors in ecotourism. He emphasizes the importance of the input and support from the local community for sustainable ecotourism development. The aforementioned definitions are of particular value but they fall short in terms of their provision of a holistic understanding of ecotourism. This void was also identified by Björk (2007) by indicating his particular contribution to the understanding of the concept of ecotourism. The lack of communication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation is symptomatic of this void of a holistic approach to the study and practice of ecotourism. This justifies an actor-centred approach to the study of ecotourism.

1.2.2 Community Participation

Ecotourism relies on the goodwill and the cooperation of local people because they are part of its product. Community participation is a tricky concept to define or accomplish (Tosun, 2000). Just like ecotourism, there is also no one agreed definition of community participation. For the purpose of this study, Timothy's (1999) definition is going to be used as it encompasses involvement of community members who have common interests and goals. He defines '*community participation*' as a form of voluntary action in which individuals confront opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship. These opportunities include joining in the process of self-governance, responding to authoritative decisions that impact on one's life, and working cooperatively with others in issues of mutual concern.

This implies that there should be collaboration of local community members at all levels of planning, decision making and management for sustainable development of ecotourism. Many researchers have emphasized the benefits of including community participation in tourism and ecotourism planning and management (Murphy, 1985; Gunn, 1988; Simmons, 1994; Beeton, 1998; Timothy, 1999). Some authors suggest that members of the host community should be involved in ecotourism development and management because they (a) have an historical understanding of how the region adapts to change; (b) will be the ones most closely affected by tourism; and (c) will be expected to become an integral part of the tourism product (Scheyvens, 1999; Simmons, 1994).

Where development and planning does not fit with the local aspirations and capacities, resistance and hostility can raise the cost of business and destroy the industry's potential altogether (Murphy, 1985). It is for this reason that their involvement is crucial at all stages for sustainable ecotourism development. Simmons (1994) argues that involvement of a community in ecotourism development process is vital, if any region wishes to deliver tourism experiences which ensure both visitors' satisfaction and ongoing benefit for the residents of a destination area. Telfer (2002) identifies levels of participation in tourism and he suggests that community participation ranges from an exploitative position to one of self mobilisation which are characterised by independent initiatives where local people are strengthened politically, socially and economically by their involvement. Beeton (1998) emphasizes the need for local participation for sustainable development of ecotourism as it is the only way for a successful ecotourism venture. This view is supported by Drake (1991:132) who emphasizes the need for community participation and nature conservation in ecotourism if sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present and future generation. Jamal and Stronza (2009) and Tosun (2000) emphasize the need for collaboration and involvement by all the actors, mostly the local community, in ecotourism as it helps in addressing issues and problems in ecotourism.

Collaborations and partnerships provide a platform for all the actors involved to raise issues and problems that are affecting ecotourism as well as addressing the interests of

the actors involved (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Collaborations may also provide potential benefits such as sharing of ideas, learning from the process of partnering. With combined ideas actors can come up with more innovative ideas and actors can learn how to prioritize on more important issues in ecotourism rather than their own individual interests (Bramwell & Lane, 2000:4-5).

Although there is a lot of emphasis on community involvement and participation in partnerships and collaboration, little attempt has been made to determine how these can be achieved (Robert & Simpson, 2000:231). Most definitions of collaboration which have described it as a way of operation are less practical as they are not flexible enough to allow for internal manipulating forces or changes that will suit a situation or problem. For instance, actors who feel that they are more influential in the collaboration process tend to abuse their positions and neglect their responsibilities by looking down upon actors who are less powerful. Such actors even threaten to quit when they experience resistance from the so-called less powerful actors in the decision making and planning process (Bramwell & Lane, 2000:8-9). These problems affect collaborations hence there is need for actors in ecotourism to be identified and their roles and responsibilities be clearly defined. Collaboration should take into account the local community, private/public sector organizations, the environment and any other actors who have a share in the project. Partnerships among actors such as park management and the local community have helped to bridge the gap between governance and resource use in ecotourism destinations (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has attempted to combine tourism and natural resource actors hence forming strong collaborations in ecotourism (Rozemeijer & Van der Jagt, 2000; Wells *et al.* 1992; Armitage, 2005).

1.2.3 Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

From the 1980s, community based tourism and natural resource management and conservation have been intertwined. The literature provides many accounts of

successful community-based ecotourism projects such as in South America (Foucat, 2002: 512), Asia (Timothy, 1999: 376), Europe (Caffyn & Lutz, 1999: 214) and Africa (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004: 74). The CBNRM approach is a reform of the conventional ‘protectionist conservation philosophy’ and ‘top down’ approaches to development. It is based on the common property theory which discourages open access resource management and promotes resourceful use rights of the communities where the voices and concerns of women or other marginalized sub-groups are repressed or ignored (Rihoy, 1995:33; Leach *et al.*, 1999). Thus, CBNRM recognizes the right of communities to decide over their natural resources in order to encourage conservation and eventually benefit the community (Rozemeijer & Van der Jagt, 2000: 41). To realize the essential principles of ecotourism in developing countries requires a holistic participation and responsibility of all the actors in ecotourism (Cater, 1994). Practice has, however, shown that actors do not necessarily share goals for the conservation of natural resources and are also not equally powerful. Under such conditions institutions of governance are significant for two reasons: denoting the power relations that define the interactions among actors who created the institutions and helping to structure the interactions that take place around resources. Leach *et al.* (1999) point out that the behaviour of individuals in respect of conservation goals has the potential to reshape institutions. Institutions can also be adapted when explicitly renegotiated by actors. Furthermore, local interactions can only be understood within the context of larger social forces and institutions of authority. Attempts by governments to implement community-based conservation and specific projects of NGOs that seek to involve communities are examples of directed influence on local level conservation (Murphree, 2004; Bramwell & Bernard, 1996). In conservation levels of community involvement and government control in planning and management of tourism and ecotourism, most destinations in developing regions fall into community-based or state-controlled groups (Gartner, 1996; Snowdon *et al.*, 2000).

CBNRM is composed of many actors at different levels of management. Some actors are in government service and some are not. Most actors view the local community as a homogeneous unit which is not really true. This situation has made the implementation

of policies concerning community resources hard as different actors have different values and interests in respect of their respective levels of participation (Madzudzo *et al.* 2006). Twyman (2000: 3) notes that in the present era, participatory and community based approaches are heralded as the panacea to natural resource management initiatives world-wide.

There are several CBNRM projects in Africa that have successfully managed to help the local communities' sustainable use of their local natural resources. These projects have fully involved the communities in their day to day running of the projects as well as during decision making and planning as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: CBNRM projects in Africa

Country	Accomplishment/Project
1.Namibia	There is the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) programme (Mbaiwa, 2003).
2.Mozambique	Tchuma Tchato 'Our Wealth' (Cruz, 1995: 205-208).
3. Botswana	The involvement of communities in tourism management is carried out through the Community-Based Natural Resource Management programme (Mbaiwa, 2003).
4. Zimbabwe	It is accomplished through the Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) (Mbanefo and de Boerr, 1993: 13).
5.Zambia	Ecotourism development has been used to restore the right of the local community to use natural resources in their traditional institutions and leaders (Mwenya <i>et al.</i> , 1990: 33-41).
6. Tanzania	Through the Ujirani Mwema 'Good Neighbourliness'

	(Masika, 1995: 66-89).
7. Kenya	Through the Conservation of Biodiversity Resource Areas Programme (COBRA) (Masika, 1995: 66-89).

Most of the projects listed in the table above are located in communal lands. The projects show the possibility of communities benefiting from the natural resources in their areas.

1.2.4 Land Tenure and Ownership

Ecotourism has widely been used as a tool that has a potential for community development and nature conservation. In most cases ecotourism enterprises have contributed to the conservation of lands and have contributed to the well-being of the local community (Garrod, 2003; Buckley, 2004; Stronza, 2007).

Buckley (2003) classifies land tenure in ecotourism into four groups: private land which is owned by an individual or a group of investors who have full control of the land and they make all the decisions concerning it. Consequently the community adjacent to privately owned land has little or no say at all in respect of any natural resources in such privately owned land. Public land is owned and managed by the government. Its major challenge is when there is mismanagement of public lands; the public get little or no benefit out of the land. Communal land is owned by the community normally under the control of a management committee/trust. The community has all the control over the resources though in most cases there have been problems when the community members do not understand the importance of conserving the natural resources in their land. Public protected areas are managed by a government body but the public through the management can access the resources. The major challenge is when the community around is left out of decision making and planning, and the community ends up encroaching the land and destroying the natural resources in the land. This study focuses on communal land which has been the

accepted local system. The land is located outside but adjacent to Maasai Mara. However, the community owns the Maasai Mara reserve too as part of the trust land.

Most ecotourism ventures in developing countries such as Costa Rica, Tanzania and Kenya are located on community owned land (Smith, 2001). In the case of Kenya, the land is registered as a trust for the Maasai community living adjacent to Maasai Mara national reserve and it is administered by the local authorities. This kind of ownership has faced many challenges specifically in Kenya and Tanzania as most of the land has been subdivided into smaller portions which have been fenced for cultivation. This situation affects the movement of wildlife and increases human wildlife conflict (Zeppel, 2006:120).

In this respect Jenkins and Wearing (2003:213) state that most private owners or leasers (who form part of the actors in ecotourism) are more interested in the short term rather than long term profits. In the process they ignore the long term cultural and environmental damage that can be caused by tourism as a whole.

Despite the problems facing communal lands there is extensive literature on the benefits of communal lands that have been leased out to ecotourism enterprises. Jenkins and Wearing (2003:214) have listed the environmental, economic and socio-cultural benefits associated with ecotourism. Other authors who have written on the benefits of ecotourism are Zeppel (2006:118); Okello and Wishitemi (2003); Weaver (2001:96-124); Buckley (2009:218); Zambrano *et al.* (2010).

1.2.5 Collaboration

Tosun (2000) emphasizes the need for the involvement of all actors in the ecotourism industry, especially the local community, as it helps in addressing issues and problems in ecotourism developments. Collaborations occur when several actors in one industry engage in an interactive process using shared structures, rules and regulations to make decisions and act on issues affecting the industry they are involved in (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Collaboration and partnership has been seen to provide a platform for actors in the tourism industry to air issues and interests of the various actors and the provision of a working agreement among the actors involved in the ecotourism

industry. Collaboration also leads to the sharing of ideas among actors to help in the development of sustainable ecotourism (Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Bramwell & Lane, 2010). Collaboration among actors seems to be one of the boosters for sustainable ecotourism development. This is because collaboration provides a pool area for all actors to participate and ideas and resources are brought together in the same pool (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Collaboration brings together all actors involved. Members like the local community who are often exempted in decision making and management are brought on board. Moreover, collaboration improves the understanding of the actors involved in the project and sustainable development (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999).

Despite the positive aspects of collaboration there are also challenges facing collaboration (Simmons 1994; Marien and Pizam, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1999). Jamal & Stronza (2009) have discussed the challenges facing collaboration in tourism destinations such as governance and resources utilization in tourism destinations. These challenges have been due to lack of understanding of ecotourism and vices such as corruption, dominance and exclusion of some actors, mismanagement of resources and unequal sharing of benefits in tourism destinations have become a menace to collaboration hence affecting sustainable development of ecotourism.

1.3 RESEARCH AREA

1.3.1 Maasai Mara Game Reserve

The Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) covers some 1530 km² in south-western Kenya. It is the northern-most section of the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, covering some 25,000 km². It is bounded by the Serengeti Park to the south, the Siria escarpment to the west and Maasai pastoral ranches to the north, east and west. Rainfall in the ecosystem increases markedly along a south-east-north-west gradient, varies in space and time, and is markedly bimodal. The Sand, Talek and Mara are the major rivers draining the reserve. Shrubs and tree fringes form the vegetation on most drainage lines and cover hill slopes and hilltops. The reserve is primarily open grassland, with seasonal rivers

and water streams. In the south-eastern region are clumps of the distinctive acacia tree. The western border is the Esoit Ooloolo Escarpment of the Rift Valley, and wildlife tends to be concentrated here, as the swampy ground provides good access to water and tourist disruption is minimal. The easternmost border is 224 km from Nairobi, and hence it is the eastern regions which are most visited by tourists as it is the nearer from Nairobi, Kenya's capital city.

The Maasai Mara supports Kenya's greatest animal diversity, including most of the savanna species. The Maasai's tolerance has allowed wildlife to persist and in some cases to increase. In the Mara you will also find 'the big five' which attracts many tourists from different parts of the world. It is one of the places where one can easily see all these animals as well as the spectacular wildebeest migration during July and August. Cultural-historical events include feasts and a festival such as circumcision and traditional wedding ceremonies which bring to life the folk culture of the Maasai and has also become a source of income as they form part of the tourist attractions in Maasai Mara (Wishitemi & Okello, 2003). Despite changes due to modernization, most Maasai still practise their traditional culture, for example most of the Maasai put on their traditional attire and ornaments and perform traditional dances both during their ceremonies as well as for the tourists. However the use of tradition and culture to attract tourists has led to staged authenticity as they are performed for the sake of satisfying the expectations of tourists. In fact this culture has been used by the Kenyan national tourism body, Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), in marketing Kenya as a cultural tourism destination. The Maasai have 'domesticated tourism' by managing the Maasai Mara Game Reserve which is the most popular of Kenya's game parks. The Maasai people own and manage Maasai Mara and their culture is a major tourist attraction in the reserve and its surroundings (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Maasai.html> accessed on 13th October 2009).

Today, Maasai Mara receives more visitors than any other wildlife area in East Africa, and about 50 % of tourists visiting Kenya go to this reserve (Koikai, 1999; Ottichilo, 2000). Maasai Mara is twelve times smaller than the adjacent Serengeti National Park but receives more visitors than Serengeti National Park. Maasai Mara game reserve is

unique amongst other national reserves in Africa as it is owned and run by the local community through their elected county council members as a trust land instead of the central government (Honey, 2008:315). Just as anywhere else in Africa, Maasai Mara reveals how struggles over land, wildlife, and tourism revenues can undermine ecotourism's underlying aspirations (Drummond, 1995). Back in 1961, under a plan proposed by Maasai Mara's longtime colonial-era game warden, management of the reserve was granted to the Narok County Council (NCC), with the central portion of the game reserve set aside solely for wildlife viewing tourism. The NCC is made up of members of the community who are elected by the community. These members represent the three different Maasai subgroups (*il-oshon*) and all the *manyatta* and they work closely with the MMNR warden. The warden is in charge of the reserve and he is appointed by the minister of tourism. The NCC was responsible for developing tourism facilities, establishing and maintaining roads, appointing the game wardens, rangers and other staff, and collecting entrance and other lodge fees (Honey: 2008:315). Most of the Maasai living around the reserve are members of group ranches that hold land communally and share the profits from the ranch, with elected committees responsible for group ranch management. The aim for the establishment of group ranches was to control livestock numbers to avoid overstocking of cattle in one area (Nge'the, 2000). There are four group ranches around Maasai Mara National Reserve though now they have been converted into private wildlife conservancies, namely Lemek Conservancy, Olkinyei Conservancy, Koiyaki Conservancy, and Siana Conservancy (Reid *et al.*, 2003). The conservancies have plenty of wildlife and the Maasai live in the conservancies grazing their cattle side by side with the wild animals (http://www.zambezi.co.uk/safari/Kenya/destinations_mara.html accessed 23rd August 2010).

In the 1990's Maasai Mara was perceived as "a complete success" by the tourism industry and conservationists in terms of both conservation and community involvement as Maasai Mara was managed by the local community and the local community was coexisting with wildlife without major challenges such as human wildlife conflict. This was achieved through good management of the reserve and the

involvement of the community surrounding the reserve (Thompson and Homewood, 2002). Today there are several challenges facing MMNR. Like any other Maasai community in Kenya and Tanzania, most Maasai in Maasai Mara have settled along tourist routes so that they can sell curios, perform traditional dances, sell their handicrafts to tourists, and have their photographs taken with tourists. The problem is that the community receives minimal visits from the tourists and tour guides/drivers (Okello *et al.*, 2003).

On the conservancies around Maasai Mara, as throughout southern Kenya, communal land has increasingly given way to individualized landholdings. Elite Maasai control most of the resources including tourism in Maasai Mara which is ruling out most of the community members in decision making and planning (Reid *et al.*, 1999:70, Zeppel, 2006:119). As the scramble for land continues in Kenya amid rising human populations, communal land ownership has been replaced by individual parcels and farming on arable lands (Karanja, 2001) which affects the movement of wildlife and revenue collected from wildlife tourism. This situation is now affecting ecotourism as very little benefit is given back to the community (Smith, 2001; Lamphrey & Reid, 2004). Due to pressure from increased population and limited grazing areas, some of the Maasai are combining cattle keeping and other economic activities such as ecotourism ventures on their lands by leasing the tourism potential areas to lodges which do not necessarily practise ecotourism or wildlife conservation (Wishitemi and Okello, 2003). All these problems slow down sustainable development of tourism.

Base camp Explorer located in Maasai Mara is one of only three “Gold” eco-rated facilities in Kenya according to Ecotourism Kenya’s rating scheme. While a facility like Base camp Explorer pioneer new environmentally and local community sensitive forms of tourism development, an even more profound experiment has been undertaken within the reserve itself (Honey, 2008:320): In 1994, the southwestern section of the reserve, to the west of the Mara River (this area is known as the Mara Triangle), was included in the territory of the newly formed Transmara County when it broke away from Narok County. In 2001, Transmara County contracted out the management of the Mara Triangle to a nonprofit private firm known as the Mara Conservancy. As a result

of resorting to professional private-sector management, this part of the Mara now has the best infrastructure, security, and anti-poaching system in the reserve. Some of these recent developments provide reason for guarded optimism about the future. The Mara remains emblematic of the challenges facing community ecotourism ventures in rural Africa (Honey, 2008:321; Zeppel, 2006:118). As suggested by Zeppel (2006:120) sustainable development of wildlife management will help in increasing community involvement and equality in sharing of profits, increase arrangements with Maasai community over compatible land uses and the ownership of joint tourism ventures.

The actors in MMNR are not well linked to each other. For example, Narok county council can only get to EK or KECOBAT through the ministry of tourism. This bureaucracy leads to misunderstandings, miscommunication, mistrust, exclusion of the community in decision making and eventual lack of control in the management of their resources. The problem in the Mara, as in most of the other national reserves in Africa, is finding ways to equitably and transparently manage the reserve and its environs. The situation in and surrounding Maasai Mara National Reserve makes it the appropriate target area to obtain an understanding of ecotourism practices.



Figure 1: Map of Maasai Mara Game reserve and group ranches

Source:

<http://www.kenyabrussels.com/ckfinder/userfiles/images/about%20Kenya/tourist%20brochures/Masai%20Mara%20&%20adjoining%20group%20ranches.jpg> (accessed 10th February 2015).

1.3.2 The Population

Pastoral Maasai communities predominantly inhabit the rangeland surrounding the MMNR. Population densities in the group ranches around the park are low. Although Narok District has a high population growth of 6.39% per annum, most in-migrants establish themselves in the district capital Narok or the "high potential areas" - these are areas that receive a lot of tourists and areas that are farmable. Population density around the park increased from 6.3 people/km² in 1999 to 9.6 people/km² in 2004 (Government of Kenya 2006).

1.3.3 The People

Maasai Mara is a traditional homeland for the Maasai. Maasai is derived from the word 'Maa', which is used to describe their language *Maasai*. *Maa* means 'togetherness' and indicates that Maasai people live in groups (Craat, 2005:12). The origins of this ancient warrior tribe are shrouded in mystery. It is thought that their ancestors came from North Africa and migrated along the Nile Valley and finally into Kenya. By conquering other tribes, they were able to spread from Northern Kenya through the Great Rift Valley into Tanzania. The *il-Maasai* is composed of loose associations of sub- groups (*il-Oshon*) but united in one language, Maasai. The three sub groups are *il-Siria*, *il -Purko* and the *il-Loita*. *IL* is a Maasai word for 'the'. The Mara region is shared by three Maasai sub-groups. They are only distinguished by their dialectical differences but have the same social system, customs and traditions (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Maasai.html> accessed 20 October 2010).

Traditionally Maasai people are livestock farmers. Cattle provide most of their daily needs - dairy products and blood is their staple food, hides for leather and meat for ceremonial occasions. Sheep and goats are also kept but are of less importance as they are used for food rather than prestige or capital investments. In more recent times they combine livestock farming with agricultural practices. The Maasai live in settlements known as *manyatta*. These settlements are built of a strong thorn enclosure to protect livestock against predators. In the *manyatta*, women build low oval huts of branches

and grass, plastered with a thick layer of cow dung. Women make the bead work and men the carvings to be sold to the tourists. Members of respective *manyatta* choose an elder who represents them in the local chief's council and becomes a link between the *manyatta* and the chief. The chief is a provincial administrator in a location who handles all location administration and he is appointed by the provincial commissioner. A chief has to be a member of the community where he is based and he also has to be qualified according to the government credentials for a chief. (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Maasai.html> accessed 13th October 2009; <http://www.malaikaecotourism.com/maasai.html> accessed 26th November 2010; Craat 2005:18).

1.4 RESEARCH METHODS

For the purpose of this study selected Participatory Action Research (PAR) techniques were used. PAR is a research approach that consists of a holistic understanding of a situation and tries to find solutions by means of dialogue between participants. Grassroots groups, communities or social classes and their organizations and institutions. (Jupp, 2006; Reason & Bradbury, 2001:1; Prozesky & Mouton, 2001). Reason and Bradbury (2001:1) quote Robin McTaggart's definition of participatory action research as a process through which members of a community identify a problem, collect and analyse information, and act upon the problem in order to find solutions, and promote social, economic and political transformation. They further state that it is only possible with, for and by persons and communities, ideally involving all actors, both in the questioning and sense-making that informs the research and in the action which is its focus. In this study the researcher was able to collect data from all the actors in ecotourism, identify the problems and also analyse their roles in ecotourism and issues in ecotourism. PAR is more appropriate in ethnographic research as it allows the researcher to stay with the community which will help the researcher to get a better understanding of the way of life of the particular community. In this case it helped in the understanding and identifying the various actors, their roles,

perceptions, and problems as well as the perceptions of the participants in ecotourism, existing collaborations among actors and the problems facing ecotourism in Maasai Mara.

Selected data gathering PAR techniques such as in-depth semi-structured interviews, open ended questions, participatory observation and group interviews were used as they are important in explaining and understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour (Greeff, 2005:292; Strydom, 2005:41 pg. 9). In-depth semi-structured interviews were used for individual interviewees. This allowed participants to divert from the set questions and give additional information that might help in achieving the objective of the study. Interviews were also be conducted with individuals from institutions such as Ecotourism Kenya (EK), Kenya Community Based Tourism (KECOBAT), wardens from the county council (represents government), lodge managers, community based organization's (CBO's) leaders, local community elders. The individuals interviewed were selected according to their roles and involvement in ecotourism. The individual interviews were designed to help provide information on their individual involvement in ecotourism and the challenges they face in collaborations that exist in ecotourism. Specific individuals like CBO's leaders, wardens and local community elders will give extra information on the issues concerning land tenure and ownership in Maasai Mara, land distribution, and the criteria they use in dividing the benefits they get from communal lands.

The interviews were supplemented by group interviews with community members. This produced a combination of ideas from the different members of the group and also gave the researcher an opportunity to compare the perceptions, expectations, values, goals and challenges they face from the collaborations they have with other actors in ecotourism in Maasai Mara - unlike individual interviews where the views obtained from an individual which can be biased. Group interviews also helped to understand and interpret individuals and situations as this method has been reported to be working well with people in rural areas where most of the people live in group setups and share benefits from communal projects (Trollip, 1991:77; Viljoen *et al.*, 2005; Rabiee, 2004:656). The group interviews were conducted according to gender and age, for

example, a group of men, women, youths and children distinctively. Group interviews helped in collecting data on the participating community and provided an understanding on how the community is involved in ecotourism, the role that the community plays in ecotourism, community members' perceptions and expectations in ecotourism, their views on land ownership and the problems they face in collaborating with other actors in ecotourism.

During data collection in the field key informants were used to give detailed information on the community and area under study. Key informants such as the village elders helped in giving information about the history of the Maasai community and their coexistence with wildlife, issues concerning land ownership, their perceptions, and their responsibilities in ecotourism. It also helped the researcher to penetrate social groups such as traditional dance groups as they performed traditional dances to tourist for a fee. The dancers are from the community in study and they also come in direct contact with tourists (Shurink, 1998:284). The researcher also requested for all the documents that had been used in the past that contain any data on the tourism in MMNR, which were synthesized and included in this thesis as supplementary data source.

During the pilot study key actors in ecotourism in Kenya were identified. Ecotourism Kenya (EK) and Kenya Community Based Tourism (KECOBAT) are the Kenya ecotourism organizations that are in charge of ecotourism activities and initiatives in Kenya and are answerable to the tourism ministry. The reserve warden who is resident within the game reserve is appointed by the tourism minister and represents the government in Maasai Mara. Lodge and eco lodge managers are in charge of the lodges. Most lodges are members of EK or KECOBAT. Community based organizations are small groups of community members who have come together and they have eco friendly businesses such as making traditional artefacts to sell to the tourists. They are also members of either EK or KECOBAT. The local elders are the community representatives in the council of elders and they also sit in the chief's council and a few of them who are elected by the community form part of Narok

county council. Community members are the people living around MMNR and are directly affected by tourism.

1.4.1 Ethical considerations

Participation in the research was voluntary once the nature of the research has been explained, the reasons for the research and the use of the results. For any children under the age of eighteen, verbal consent of parents was sought. In the latter's absence guardians were requested to fill in the consent form on the children's behalf. Verbal consent was sought from adult participants since most of the Maasai in the research area are illiterate.

Throughout the study, the human sciences research council code of conduct in South Africa (http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Corporate_Information-8.phtml accessed 3rd November 2010) was adhered to.

Chapter Two

2 Actors in the ecotourism industry

2.1 Introduction

Timothy (2009) has emphasized the need to involve the various actors in ecotourism as it increases efficiency, equity and harmony in planning and management. It also increases the degree of decision making and ownership. For successful ecotourism planning and development, the integration of non-financial objectives and implementation of planning processes that encourages participation of all the actors are required (Gunn, 1994:94). Tipa and Weltch (2006) support the idea of actors working together and say that it further allows discussion on power sharing and acknowledges the importance and value of agreed policies. Various actors do not necessarily have equitable balanced relationships. The lack of balance is caused by the differences in interests, expectations, values, access to resources and knowledge. Collaboration among actors promotes discussions and agreeable proposals among actors. Collaboration and partnerships also provide a pool of sharing knowledge, resources, skills, developing and implementation of policies and a better understanding of resulting policies (Araujo and Bramwell, 2002; Hall, 2000; Healey, 1997; Pretty, 1995).

Telfer and Sharpley (2007:122) also encouraged partnerships among different organizations and individuals in developing countries where inadequacy of finance hampers cooperation in the planning and promotion of products they have to offer to the tourism industry. Puppim de Oliveira (2003) talked about the different levels of inequity among the different actors such as the government, developers, environmentalists, local community and other external actors. This author found that policy making, decision making, planning and management are usually made in favor of the interests of the more influential actors. Buckley (2003) argues that as much as actors want to use the environment for ecological reasons and conservation, some also use it for development. Hence, there are always different values among the different

actors involved. Differences in interest and lack of consultations with all the actors involved have hindered development of sustainable development of ecotourism (Craik, 1995 and Timothy 1999).

These examples illustrate that every actor has an aim or agenda for promoting ecotourism without much consideration of the other actors' interests, expectations, values, perceptions, access to resources and knowledge in respect of ecotourism. These differences are responsible for a lack of communication and cooperation, misinterpretation in projects and the eventual failure thereof. No deliberate effort has been made to compare the differences between actors in a specific project in terms of interests, expectations, values, perceptions, access to resources and knowledge. For the purposes of this study it is important that these six variables be taken into account when examining the various actors.

2.2 Identification of actors

Various authors have emphasized the importance of identifying the key actors in ecotourism and their involvement for sustainable development (Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Telfer & Sharpley, 2007; Björk, 2007). These authors have pointed out that key actors are those actors that are involved in decision making, planning and management of tourism.

Telfer & Sharpley (2007) and Jamal and Stronza (2009) state that for successful ecotourism the views, roles, values, interests as well as the diverse and possible conflicting needs of all ecotourism actors should be taken into consideration. From the ecotourism definition (chapter one) it is evident that ecotourism requires integration of various actors as well as issues to achieve sustainable development. But who are the actors and how are they identified? According to Gray (1989:5) actors are those with an interest or stake in a common problem or issue and include all individuals, groups or organizations 'directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem' (cf. Jamal & Stronza 2009: 173). Mitchell *et al.*, (1997) refined this definition by ascribing three attributes namely: power, legitimacy and urgency to the notion of actors while

Driscoll and Starik (2004) added a fourth attribute, proximity. Within the context of these four attributes Driscoll and Starik (2004) not only identified but also emphasised the natural environment as the primary and primordial actor. Hence, an actor can be defined as anything human or non-human, alive or not, that can affect or be affected by a person and his/her organization or society (Starik 1994: 94; cf. Jamal & Stronza 2009: 173).

Paloniemi and Tikka (2008) identify government as an actor as it addresses issues affecting conservation and sustainable development in national proceedings and in governance procedures managed by other actors. The local/indigenous community is another identified actor as it observes and has relationships with the environment and the people visiting the area. This can be seen in situations where a community is socially/culturally attached to an environment because of cultural activities and values attached to the environment. At the same time the local/indigenous community is affected by the people/tourists visiting the area as they impact on the community who have to satisfy their needs and expectations based on western practices and standards in terms of accommodation, catering and comfort. Chapin (2004) and Agrawal (2005) qualify Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as key stakeholders as NGOs represent the interest of the environment and the local community. Tourists form part of the actors as they are the consumers of tourism products. Hence, decisions made by other actors in the tourism industry either directly or indirectly affect tourists.

However, this study will not focus on tourists but on actors who are responsible for decision making in respect to ecotourism development. Some authors indicate and explain that nature/environment forms part of the actors in ecotourism (Holden, 2003; Jamal and Stronza, 2008). Nature/ environment will be represented by the warden of the reserve. Actors generally involved in ecotourism include government, organizations, NGOs, tourists, tourism firms, and the local community (Long, 1993; Weinberg *et al.*, 2002; Björk, 2007; Jamal and Stronza, 2009). Key actors operating in Maasai Mara are: government, private sector, local community and NGOs. This study will focus on the above identified actors in Maasai Mara in accordance with the various variables mentioned, where applicable.

2.2.1 Government

Government is a key player in ecotourism as it is in charge of the national policy and planning in tourism. Governments provide funds and other forms of assistance towards the development of ecotourism as well as lobbying for sustainable development. This study looked into Narok County Council (NCC) which is the government representative in Maasai Mara. (Honey, 2008:315; Kareithi, 2003; Weaver, 2001:220). The findings are from interviews with the chief warden and five officials in the tourism office of NCC.

Role and interest: Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) is not directly managed by the government but by NCC that is answerable to the government. In this study, NCC represents the government. MMNR is owned by the local community but is managed by NCC. The land is managed as a trust land. The local community appointed NCC as a trustee to manage their land. NCC is in charge of collecting revenues from the reserve entry points and the business enterprises inside the reserve and in the reserve's buffer zone. NCC is also the general manager of the whole of Maasai Mara wildlife and all that happens in Maasai Mara with the help of other actors such as NGOs and the local community. The major role of NCC in Maasai Mara is to manage Maasai Mara on behalf of the government in terms of collecting revenue, the protection of wildlife through patrols and projects like rhino surveillance, garbage control through the provision of dustbins at tourist stop points, planting of trees, provision of a code of ethics to everyone entering the reserve and the employment of local community members.

As mentioned above, the interviews were conducted with the chief warden of MMNR and personnel in the office of tourism in NCC. During the interviews it was evident that the NCC tourism personnel had very little knowledge of ecotourism. Over 80% of them could not define ecotourism or explain any understanding of ecotourism. Neither could they describe the role of NCC in MMNR in clear terms. The lack of knowledge in ecotourism might be a major contributor to poor management in Maasai Mara. However, NCC is currently working on measures to promote ecotourism by increasing

awareness among its personnel about ecotourism through education. The interviewees did not disclose the measures.

In the 1980's the government reached an agreement of allocating 19% of the total revenue collected to the local community. This was to assist the community on issues such as compensation when attacked by wild animals, payment of hospital bills, provision of bursaries to school going children and improvement of infrastructure. NCC became the sole revenue collector in Maasai Mara and in charge of Maasai Mara as well (Honey, 2008:315). The 19% agreement is still in place and NCC is still the sole revenue collector in Maasai Mara.

Access to resources: NCC is in charge of managing Maasai Mara. This involves managing of all the resources in Maasai Mara. NCC has set aside Maasai Mara National Reserve for tourism and conservation. The local community assigned NCC to manage Maasai Mara because of mismanagement of revenue collected and corruption that was taking toll of Maasai Mara. Initially, revenue collection in Maasai Mara was done by individual actors. The individuals who used to collect revenue did not remit all revenue collected to be shared among the involved stakeholders. Hence other actors did not benefit from tourism in Maasai Mara. NCC consults with the local community on the projects to be started and any other changes that need to be effected in the national reserve and its adjacent areas.

NCC has also signed a memorandum of understanding with all the lodges and camps in the area to employ the local community. The memorandum states that 80% of the staff should be from the local community. Moreover, 19% of the total revenue collected every month is given back to the local community (Walpole and Leader-Williams, 2001; Wachira, 2008).

Knowledge: From general observation and interviews conducted, it was clear that NCC personnel in charge of Maasai Mara have very little knowledge with regard to ecotourism and the management thereof. The head office in Narok had only two personnel out of a staff of ten with a tourism background and only one tourism officer in Maasai Mara Sekenani office. The interviewed personnel had very little or no

tourism back ground at all. The lack of formal education in ecotourism management practices could be ascribed to the many problems encountered in Maasai Mara in respect of policies regarding management and sustainable development. However, most of the officials interviewed had, or were in the process of enrolling for formal or higher education in tourism management.

Expectation: NCC expects cooperation from other actors in the ecotourism industry to achieve sustainable ecotourism development. NCC identified other actors such as managers of conservancies, managers of accommodation facilities, the local community, local leaders such as politicians and NGOs. The chief warden said that if all the actors in Maasai Mara could cooperate, NCC would have an easy time in managing Maasai Mara. NCC hopes that NGOs will increase their effort to promote wildlife conservation in Maasai Mara. It expects the accommodation facilities owners to adhere to sustainable development principles in there running and management of their lodges to promote sustainable development in Maasai Mara. It also expects the local community to embrace ecotourism as it has economically empowered the local community.

2.2.2 Private Sector

The private sector is majorly made up of the managers of accommodation facilities and tour operators. These two actors are the key players in the private sector in the ecotourism industry. They play a major role in marketing ecotourism destinations, preparing tour packages and itineraries, provision of accommodation and transport. There are also other private sector actors such as individual investors. These are the owners of tourism ventures in tourism destinations. The private sector injects a lot of money to the local economy and provides employment opportunities in the ecotourism destination. Not only do tour operators prepare itineraries and provide transportation for tourists, they are also the major suppliers of clients to accommodation facilities (Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Weaver, 2001:144-148). However, this study focuses on the managers of accommodation facilities because it was impossible to interview private

sector actors such as the owners of accommodation facilities and tour operators due to their lack of cooperation.

Role: In Maasai Mara several accommodation facilities were identified such as campsites, lodges, tented lodges, eco-lodges and mobile tented camps. This research did not look into the difference among the various accommodation facilities in the area in study. Ten managers of different facilities were interviewed. Apart from providing accommodation, some tourists rely on accommodation facilities to provide them with itineraries. This was particularly the case in Mara Sarova tented lodge, Keekorok, Basecamp eco-lodge and Sekenani eco-lodge. All personnel of the accommodation facilities who were interviewed said they work closely with the local community, conservancy managers and Ecotourism Kenya (EK). Other ecotourism initiatives from the lodge would include the promotion of ecotourism through environmental awareness to actors such as local community, government and private sector in Maasai Mara, erection of more toilet facilities at the tourist stop points, support of schools in the area, and the planting of trees inside as well as outside the reserve.

Butcher (2003) and Fennel (2003) state that networking among actors has in many instances helped in promoting sustainable development and ecotourism. According to these authors networking is achieved through the managers of accommodation facilities coming together and agreeing to promote sustainable development through the inclusion of the local community in the management of the facilities, use of eco-friendly sources of power, sustainable utilization of natural resources and teaching the locals and tourists about the principles of sustainable development. They are further of the opinion that managers of accommodation facilities managers are actors that have a significant impact on ecotourism in the sense that networking and partnership among these actors can do a lot in promoting sustainable ecotourism.

In MMNR, Archipelago one of the ecotourism destinations, has in fact taken the initiative to develop networking among some owners of accommodation facilities. By doing so, they have contributed to the promotion of ecotourism in MMNR. This has been achieved by means of an agreement by the managers of accommodation facilities

to work with the local community and to help the local community through education and economic support to promote the sustainable utilization of renewable natural resources.

Interest: The interviewed managers were all in agreement that, just like any other business, the main objective of accommodation facilities is to make profit. However, this is at times achieved without considering the principles of sustainable ecotourism and development. Ecolodges visited by the researcher adhered to sustainable development principles but other accommodation facilities (e.g. tented camps and lodges, campsites and lodges) did not adhere to sustainable development principles. For instance, there was evidence of the use of big generators that emitted a lot of smoke and noise causing air and noise pollution, the erection of structures on breeding zones, the use of high voltage bulbs, and the erection of permanent buildings which scar the natural environment.

Moreover, it was evident that there was misunderstanding and lack of fair collaboration from the private sector with the other actors. Actors such as the local community, government and EK are some of the actors that the private sector ignores to cooperate with in decision making and planning. Lodge managers interviewed agreed that they do not necessarily always consult or network with other actors because of lack of know how. This ignorance has led to mistrust because the local community and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) are, for instance, not always consulted when new buildings are erected. During the field work there was a scandal about a lodge that was built along Mara River and on the Rhino breeding zone. NEMA and the local community were suing the owner of the lodge for not consulting the other actors and a lack of environmental impact assessment.

Failure to consult with all actors in the ecotourism industry has led to the private sector enjoying more profits coming from tourism at the expense of other players. They also prefer using the term ‘ecotourism’ to market their businesses without meeting ecotourism minimum standards (http://www.apo-tokyo.org/gp/e_publi/gplinkeco/34chapter32.pdf Accessed 8th September 2012) (Buckley, 2009:71; Beeton, 1998:84).

Expectations: Ecolodge managers interviewed expressed a couple of expectations from ecotourism such as an increase in business due to an increased demand for natural pristine tourism destinations, a better understanding of sustainable tourism development by other tourism actors such as government and private investors (such as ecolodge owners and tour operators), a hope that in future the local community will benefit more from ecotourism by including them in the management of ecotourism which does not only include the conservation of natural resources but also their culture in the face of increasing commercialisation and commoditisation thereof. They were also hoping for more cooperation from the local community with regard to nature conservation, cooperation in activities such as waste management, tree planting and sustainable use of water. Challenges in collaboration facing actors are discussed in chapter 5.

Knowledge: Eighty percent of the staff of accommodations, interviewed, could not define ecotourism, neither did they know any principles of ecotourism or sustainable development or could they define what an ecotourist is - a clear indication of their lack of knowledge about ecotourism. However, every accommodation facility had implemented a few 'green' practices in accordance with eco-principles. For example Keekorok, Mara Simba and Mara Sarova all used and understood the need for using energy saving bulbs but all three used big generators that caused air and noise pollution. An eco-lodge such as Basecamp which has a Gold eco-rating received from ecotourism Kenya has won several awards for being ecotourism friendly. Mara Porini has a silver eco-rating for its eco-friendly tourist activities practised at the lodge.

In Kenya, South Africa and Thailand there has been a great concern from the private sector in terms of sustainable development through the submission of proposals linking tourism and environment protection, the provision of economic incentives to the local community and the inclusion of the local community in the management and planning of the intended projects in general (Diamantis, 2004). Such initiatives show that the private sector is aware of the need for sustainable development. Basecamp and Mara Porini eco-lodges have written proposals in support of the local community and have got funding. The women project in Basecamp and Koiyaki guiding school is funded by Basecamp Foundation with the help of funds from proposals that attracted funding.

Mara Porini and Basecamp eco-lodges work together, writing proposals to seek funds from donor organizations to support community projects.

2.2.3 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Research has shown that NGOs in developing countries play a major role in tourism development in bringing together community based tourism organisations through funding, providing a bridge between government and communities, and coordinating volunteer tourism. Other roles of NGOs are helping the community with capacity building, providing assistance in project management creating awareness on environment conservation just to mention a few (Baker, 2006; Barkin and Bouchez, 2002; Burns, 1999b).

While the private sector in the tourism industry is concerned with the promotion and implementation of ecotourism initiatives at grassroots level, the aim of NGOs is to conserve the natural resources that can benefit from ecotourism's education and economic potential. NGOs have played a key role in the implementation of projects through full involvement of the local community. The world's biggest ecotourism society is The International Ecotourism Society (TIES). TIES brings together all ecotourism actors with an aim of promoting sustainable development in the tourism industry (Tosun, 2000; Agrawal, 2005; Araujo and Bramwell, 2002; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Weaver, 2001:207). TIES is not directly involved in Maasai Mara but EK works closely with TIES. EK and Kenya Community Based Trust (KECOBAT) are the two NGOs that this study will look into.

Ecotourism Kenya

Role: The researcher managed to interview four people from EK. Their responses were basically the same. The major role of EK is to provide and strengthen the link between the environment, tourism and local communities through flagship programmes such as ecorating facilities, membership to EK, community outreach programmes, involvement in research and consultancy, standards and best practices in ecotourism as well as

leadership and mentorship programmes. Maasai Mara has the highest number of eco-rated facilities in Kenya, a clear indication of investors embracing sustainable development as it is the main principle of eco-rating. Sustainable development is promoted through complying with the criteria used in eco-rating. The criteria require that applicants adhere to certain principles of sustainable development depending on the rating level an applicant is applying for. The main aim of eco-rating is to promote achievement of highest levels of environmental, economic and social practices for sustainable growth in the tourism industry sector.

Another important role of EK is the reviewing and creation of policies in the tourism industry pertaining mainly on the environment and the people affected by tourism. At the time of data collection, EK was lobbying Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) to support fair trade in the tourism industry. This would be achieved by KTB marketing and funding tourism ventures that support sustainable development.

With the help of the government and other donors, EK has been able to promote conservation and socio-economic development in the tourism industry. Its main concern has been the communities living in protected areas. This has been done through encouraging tourism investors to invest in developing eco-lodges as eco-lodges promote local community involvement through using local produce, hence providing employment to the local community as well as respecting the culture of the local community. This has been achieved through eco-rating and eco-warrior awards. An eco-warrior award is awarded to an individual or organisation that has shown efforts, initiatives and exceptional achievements in promoting responsible tourism (Honey, 2008:320; Reid *et al.*, 2003; <http://www.ecotourismkenya.org> Accessed 20 June 2012). Eco-rating refers to a systematic approach for verifying a tourism organization's environmental, economic and socio-cultural performance when evaluated against an agreed set of criteria. The evaluation is meant to determine how responsible the operations of the facility are (<http://www.ecotourismkenya.org/news.php?newsid=102> Accessed 28 June 2012). The main aim of eco-rating is to promote achievement of highest levels of environmental, economic and social practices for sustainable growth in the tourism industry sector.

Interest and values: EK is interested in the promotion of values of practicing sustainable ecotourism development and the development of responsible tourism by empowering the community through workshops, seminars and seeking funds for community tourism ventures. EK seeks funds from funding donors through writing proposals to request funding from traditional donors such as World Bank, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism organization (UNWTO). EK encourages tourism actors to promote sustainable development through the eco-rating programme and membership to EK and attending ecotourism workshops and the biannual EK conference. The workshops and biannual conference provide a platform for discussing the current issues affecting ecotourism.

Expectations: The interviewed EK personnel expressed several expectations from ecotourism. EK is expecting that the number of eco-rated facilities will increase due to the increasing demand for eco-friendly facilities and the awareness of the importance of responsible tourism. EK has facilitated a lot of training and responsible tourism awareness forums. There has also been a remarkable increase of accommodation facilities in Maasai Mara applying for ecotourism certification. This shows that the managers of accommodation facilities realise the importance of ecotourism and want to be part of responsible tourism.

EK expects collaborations among actors in the ecotourism industry to increase the understanding of responsible tourism. Collaboration will reduce problems facing the ecotourism industry such as the duplication of efforts and viewing each other as competitors. For example Kenya Community Based Trust (KECOBAT) and EK both support local communities and promote certification of accommodation facilities in tourism destinations. EK is hoping that the government will inject more resources to help in the promotion of responsible tourism. EK is expecting the understanding of responsible tourism by local community to increase due to EK's effort to educate local communities on tourism destinations. EK expects tour operators to market eco-rated facilities and eco-friendly destinations. There has been an increase in the number of tour operators registering as members of EK.

Access to resources: EK gets its funding through grants from major fund donors such as the European Union (EU) and UNEP through writing development proposals for community projects. However, the funding is unreliable and at times EK has to work with minimal budgets. This has been a major challenge to EK since its inception and has slowed its growth.

Knowledge: EK defines ecotourism as ‘nature and culture based tourism that invests in and supports the protection of the environment, respects local cultures and involves local communities to ensure equity amongst all stakeholders (<http://www.ecotourismkenya.org/news.php?newsid=101> Accessed 25 July 2012). According to interviewees EK prefers using the term responsible tourism instead of ecotourism due to the many definitions of ecotourism and different understandings of what ecotourism entails. However, EK uses the same definition of ecotourism as used in this study. EK puts more emphasis on responsible tourism and local culture conservation. They emphasized that many of the tourism actors that they work with have different understandings of the concept of ecotourism and that they were hoping that someday there will be one definition of ecotourism to boost understanding of ecotourism/sustainable tourism development.

Kenya Community Based Trust (KECOBAT)

Role: Only the Chief Executive Manager was interviewed. At the time of this research, KECOBAT was going through a financial crisis leading to other staff being laid off except the manager. KECOBAT is an umbrella body for community based tourism organizations/enterprises. Its main role is to empower the community living in/around protected areas to benefit from tourism and conservation. This is achieved through KECOBAT advocating for fair partnerships between the community and the investors - for example, ensuring that when an investor is leasing land from the community it is based on a market related price. KECOBAT links local communities with other actors such as government, private sector, donor organizations and training institutions. It does linking through information sharing and lobbying community interests to

government and other actors hence integrating the local community issues into national tourism. Moreover, KECOBAT helps community based tourism organisations to write proposals to seek funds from donor organisations.

Interest: KECOBAT provides a platform and educates the public about the rights and interests of the informal sector, communities and local people in respect of tourism by promoting their participation and involvement with a goal to improving their livelihoods. KECOBAT is a non-profit organisation. According to the Chief Executive Manager its major interests are the involvement of the community in tourism and the improvement of community livelihoods.

Access to resources: KECOBAT depends highly on donors to support tourism community initiatives. Support has been received from donors such as the Danish Development Agency, Tourism Trust Fund, Commonwealth, Community Development Trust Fund, European Union, and David Sheldric Foundation. However, the Chief Executive Manager emphasized that they have always been underfunded. The reason for this condition is ascribed to the fact that the majority of their members, who belong to the local community, are illiterate which prevents them from writing applications for funds. The community based enterprises depend highly on KECOBAT to write proposals on their behalf for funding. According to the Chief Executive Manager, this lack of funds is the main reason why some community organizations have collapsed.

Mowforth and Munt (1998) as well as Telfer and Sharpley (2008:135) shed some light on how NGOs can provide links to the World Bank and international NGOs. These links have helped in increasing funding to community based tourism projects. KECOBAT has managed to provide links between donors and the local community through motivating donors to support local community projects.

Knowledge: Illiteracy among the community that KECOBAT works with is a major problem. There is need for training and capacity building. KECOBAT however is empowering its members through workshops, seminars and regional trainings. This is mostly done in collaboration with the government and NGOs such as Kenya

Agricultural Federation, Kenya Wildlife Service, Africa Wildlife Foundation, and Utalii training college which train trainers who facilitate seminars and workshops.

Expectations: KECOBAT have similar expectations as EK. KECOBAT expects the Kenyan government to inject more resources to support ecotourism development as ecotourism promotes sustainable development. The various collaborations KECOBAT has with various actors in the tourism industry such as local community, private sector, NGOs and government are expected to improve the understanding of ecotourism and finally foster sustainable development of ecotourism.

2.2.4 Local community

The implementation of ecotourism projects must have the local community's interests and values at heart and have to include the local community in decision making and central planning of projects (Honey, 2008; Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Tosun, 2000). Globally, communities' ways of life have become significant tourist attractions. Eco destinations such as Costa Rica, East Africa, Australia and South Africa have used local community cultures to market the countries as eco-friendly destinations. Local communities are involved in ecotourism through ownership, partnerships, service provision, and joint ventures (Honey, 2008; Zeppel, 2006; Mann, 2002).

Role: The local community forms part of the major attraction in Maasai Mara and is the sole owner of the land (Maasai Mara). The local community consists of Maasai who play an inherent role in ecotourism in Maasai Mara. The local community's culture is a big tourist attraction after wildlife. The Maasai culture attracts millions of tourists to Maasai Mara and it has also been used by KTB to market Kenya overseas. The local community has maintained its culture since time immemorial. However, the field research shows that the local community is very poor despite being part of a tourism product that earns Kenya foreign exchange. According to the senior warden, the local community is expected to reflect and promote the image of tourism in Maasai Mara. Jake Grievees-Cook (pioneer founder of the first conservancy in Maasai Mara) emphasized the need for tourism ventures to support the local community as one of the

key tourist attractions in Maasai Mara. The local community is a key actor in ecotourism development. It was observed that some local community members embrace tourism by performing dances and the selling of art and craft despite the little profit that they gain from tourism. The local community also helps tourists to understand the local community's culture through interacting with tourists.

Interest: The local community was aware of the way in which tourism has benefited them economically when pastoralism had been hit by drought and expressed their acknowledgement in this regard. However, they wished that they could be allowed to graze their cattle freely as they used to when the whole land in Maasai Mara was solely owned by the local community. Everything has been commercialized to such an extent that the Maasai have become so focused on profit making that they do not consider the effect on their culture. Furthermore, the local community felt that they had not been involved in the planning during the inception of most of the tourism ventures in Maasai Mara. The interviewees felt that if they could get involved and own a tourism venture together with an investor, it could possibly increase understanding of ecotourism and reduce conflicts between the local community and other actors. Approximately 80% of tourism ventures in Maasai Mara are owned by the few elites from the local community and non-locals. This means that in general locals do not benefit much from tourism. The little collaboration that exists in Maasai Mara has shown that if the local community could work harmoniously with investors it could eventually promote sustainable tourism development.

Expectations: The local community expressed discontent in terms of their expectations from ecotourism. The local community expected ecotourism to provide employment to everyone in one way or the other, equal profit sharing among all the community members and co-owning of tourism ventures with ecotourism investors. This study found that local community members expected ecotourism to be a solution to all financial problems. Hence, many local community members gave up on traditional activities such as livestock and wheat farming. In the 1990's strategies were even implemented by NCC so that the local community would benefit progressively from ecotourism and nature conservation. However, these promising initiatives were

jeopardized by corruption and exploitation of the local community by local leaders and tour operators. Local leaders misused public funds and tour operators took advantage of the illiteracy of local community members to avoid paying for the services offered by the local community.

These practices have led to general discontent among community members in terms of their expectations of ecotourism. In fact, the situation has compelled local community members to embrace other economic activities such as large scale wheat farming and livestock keeping. The change in land-use patterns has increased human encroachment leading to competition for land and eventually causing human wildlife conflict. These findings are supported by Zeppel (2006:119) who has also found that high expectations of ecotourism by actors such as the local community have the potential to affect sustainable ecotourism development. When the expectations are not satisfied, local communities retreat to other economic activities such as large scale farming which do not necessarily enhance ecotourism, as is the case in Maasai Mara. Some actors such as NGOs have been involved in educating the local community about ecotourism. This has helped in improving the local community's understanding of ecotourism and reduced negative perceptions towards ecotourism. As it has been found in similar situations elsewhere (Zeppel, 2006:119; Driver, 1996; Lee *et al.*, 2002), the local community in Maasai Mara perceives ecotourism as a form of tourism that supports the local community and improves their livelihoods. This perception has caused misunderstanding between the local community in Maasai Mara and other actors when the local community's expectations are not satisfied.

Perceptions: Local community members interviewed expressed mixed feelings about ecotourism. Some said that ecotourism is benefiting them while others said that ecotourism was aimed at those who owned large tracts of land and could contribute parts of their land to conservancies for the erection of eco-lodges from which they could benefit. In this regard it has to be noted that ecolodges, which are the big promoters of ecotourism, are situated in conservancies. They also felt that there was no hope for them to benefit from eco-tourism since the money made by it goes back to the investors and the local community remains poor. The local community members who

have benefited from ecotourism are those who are employed in eco-lodges, those whose children have benefited from ecotourism through school sponsorships, those who can easily access social amenities and those who have leased land to conservancies - expressed a lot of satisfaction with tourism and a lot of hope in ecotourism to improve their livelihoods. Such local community members expressed a positive attitude towards sustainable tourism development.

Access to resources: The local community members interviewed said that for a long time they had been counting their wealth in terms of the number of livestock a family had. The more the livestock the wealthier a family was. This has changed since tourism became a big economic activity in Maasai Mara. Ecotourism has, however, encouraged the reduction of the number of livestock and, according to one of the elders of Kelong manyatta, promises benefits. Kelong manyatta is among five other manyattas visited that have reduced their number of livestock and embraced ecotourism with great support from eco-lodges in Maasai Mara. Moreover, they have contributed their land to conservancies, hence supporting natural resource conservation. However, not all local communities interviewed expressed satisfaction of tourism. An estimated 60% of the local community interviewed said that only those who are employed or who have leased land to conservancies benefit directly and accordingly have a reliable income. The rest of the community depends on selling art and crafts and are being exploited by middlemen. There were also several complaints about the NCC's bias in the distribution of the 19% revenue collected from Maasai Mara. Community representatives and politicians seem to share the portion of revenue allocated to the local community. The local community also gets funding and donations from several NGOs such as Friends of Conservation, WWF, Virgin Atlantic airline, Travel Foundation and Basecamp Foundation. Such funds have been used to pay school fees, purchase books for schools and help in equipping health facilities. However, the local community is not allowed to enter the reserve to collect water or fire wood or to access pastures for their livestock.

Research has also shown that local communities in tourism destinations who have economic incentives are more willing to embrace sustainable development compared to

those who do not have. Sustainable development is embraced when benefits and costs are shared equally according to contribution made by each member (Oketch and Bob, 2009; Sindiga, 1990).

The local community has no access to land set aside for wildlife conservation such as conservancies and the reserve. Some of these lands have sacred areas inside and the fact that they have been barred from accessing these areas is a source of conflict between the local community and actors like NCC and conservancy management. More on this is discussed in Chapter three.

Knowledge: It was very evident that the local community interviewed did not have much information on ecotourism. Most of them understood ecotourism as a form of tourism that employs people from Maasai community and builds social amenities such as schools and hospitals for the local community. More than 80% of the interviewed local community members have not gone through formal education so language barrier seems to be the biggest challenge to other actors interested in investing in Maasai Mara according to Jake Grievees (the founder and manager of Ol Kinyei Conservancy). Findings from this study show that the language barrier is a major challenge to actors who want to invest in Maasai Mara. However, despite a lack of formal education there was significant collaboration between the local community and the managers of ecotourism enterprises such as Basecamp eco-lodge, Sarova Mara, Ol Kinyei conservancy, Sekenani ecolodge, Siana Springs lodge and Naibosho conservancy. The collaboration is a sign of a better realisation by the local community of the need to collaborate with investors in order to promote sustainable tourism. More about collaborations in Maasai Mara are discussed in Chapter five.

2.2.5 Women

Role: Research has shown that women as part of the local community are key actors in ecotourism. Women have been reported to be the key players in community based tourism development projects (Wall & Mathieson 2006, Hashimoto 2002 and Torres and Momsen 2004). Women have proved to have the potential of promoting community based ecotourism through their interaction with tourists and the natural

environment. However, in many tourism destinations women have been ignored by other actors (Scheyvens, 2000). Gender equality is a major problem in community based ecotourism development as it has been characterised by little or no involvement of women at all (Hitcock & Brandenburgh, 1990:22). In Maasai Mara no woman sits in any local community committee. Neither does any woman represent the community at the NCC. During interviews it was made clear that in the Maasai culture, women have to stay at home and take care of their homes and they are not allowed to speak in front of elders (men) in public. This culturally determined status of women is responsible for the scanty representation of women in planning and management of tourism in Maasai Mara. In both ecotourism as well as conventional tourism projects, managerial positions were male dominated a situation which is quite common in patriarchal societies. Hence, one agrees with Mulolani (1997: 12) when he says that:

... in order to translate the rhetoric of sustainable management of natural resources into reality, local people, including women, children, the elderly, and indigenous minorities, must be allowed to actively participate in the decision-making process. We have tended to vest too much power in our Traditional Leaders through traditional and cultural belief systems.

Knowledge: Ninety percent of the women interviewed did not have formal education. Apart from the culturally determined position of women this lack of formal education should be regarded as the most important reason for women in Maasai Mara not being involved in planning and management of tourism ventures. This statement is based on the fact that educated women from the local community were employed in managerial positions at Basecamp Explorer, Ol Seki, Mara Sarova Tented Camp, Mara Porini and Mara Porini Lion. The other lodge managers interviewed said that the very few educated Maasai women were in fact the reason for the absence of women in managerial positions at their lodges. None of the women interviewed in the manyattas understood the concept of ecotourism although they could relate to eco-lodges that employed women from the local community. However, most of the women in Maasai Mara who are employed in tourism ventures occupy low paying jobs because of illiteracy and the language barrier. The women could not speak English fluently and

couldn't write at all. Despite these limitations, the women make use of the handcraft skills to make handcrafts which they sell to lodges and tourists.

Access to resources: In Maasai Mara, women have problems in accessing resources such as firewood and water in areas where it has been set aside for tourism and conservation. Hence, women have negative perceptions of ecotourism. Women have to walk long distances to look for water and firewood. This has caused conflict between the local community and reserve management (Akama, 1996; Sindiga, 1995). However, some lodges like Siana Springs and Mara Porini allow women to fetch clean drinking water for household use from the lodge.

Expectations: The women interviewed expressed a lot of expectation from ecotourism. They hope that the handcrafts they make will get a ready market now that ecotourism promises to support the local economy. This would improve their livelihoods. Through the training and education presented by schools such as Koiyaki guiding school, the women expect that in future they will also be able to take up roles such as project management that have been occupied by men for ages. Ecotourism actors such as conservancy managers and eco-lodge managers have promised the local community, in particular women, a lot of benefits causing women's expectations of ecotourism to be high. However, it is also true that the many promises from ecotourism actors lead to discontent if the expectations raised in this way are not met.

Perceptions: The women interviewed who were involved with ecotourism ventures had a positive attitude towards ecotourism. The positive attitude was a result of the benefits they have got from ecotourism such as bursaries for their school going children, health facilities, as a source of employment and a ready market for their handcrafts. The women who had not benefited from ecotourism had a negative attitude. Lodge managers said that the negative attitude posed a big challenge to ecotourism because the few actors who support ecotourism do not have enough resources to support all the women in the local community. However, the managers interviewed said they are still looking for ways to ensure that every member of the local community benefit from tourism.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the various actors in the ecotourism in Maasai Mara. To understand ecotourism development, the various actors in ecotourism needed to be examined under the various variables. This research found that attainment of sustainable ecotourism development is being hindered by the actors in Maasai Mara. The hindrance is caused by lack of communication among actors, lack of knowledge, difference in values, perceptions, expectations and interests as well as a high level of illiteracy making it difficult for actors to communicate and participate in management of tourism effectively. The high level of illiteracy has caused a lot of misinterpretation in ecotourism hence hindering development of sustainable of sustainable ecotourism development. Access to resources is also an issue that is majorly affecting ecotourism. Key actors such as the local community and women have limited access to resources such as firewood, water and land for grazing their cattle in Maasai Mara. This is caused by the fact that the conservancies bar them from accessing the protected areas set aside for tourism and conservation despite the fact these areas used to be their utility areas.

This research found that actors in the ecotourism industry that were studied do not always consult each other and hence some actors are left out in decision making and planning. It established that the actors such as the local community have been left out in major decision making and planning in ecotourism. This makes the implementation of ecotourism policies difficult since they do not feel part and parcel of the initiatives. Some hospitality facilities have failed to comply with regulatory body requirements that demand that an EIA is performed before any facility is set up. With this kind of exclusion of other actors in planning and management of ecotourism, a gap in ecotourism is developed and hence making it difficult to achieve sustainable ecotourism development.

Collaboration among actors seems to be one of the boosters for sustainable ecotourism development. This is because collaboration provides a pool area for all actors to participate and ideas and resources are brought together in the same pool. This study

has shown that with the difference in every actor's agenda/aim, communication among actors in ecotourism could be a solution to bring together all actors ideas and interests. It has identified various success stories in the Maasai Mara such as the local community working with Basecamp and EK and KECOBAT working with hotel facilities as well as the local community to promote ecotourism. This has shown that success in ecotourism is achievable if the various actors collaborate. More of collaboration is discussed in chapter five.

Chapter Three

3 Local views with regard to land ownership

3.1 Introduction

Land tenure has been defined as ownership of land either by state, public or communally binds by set rules on how to use, control and procedures for land transfer (Gluckman, 1945). According to Margeot (1987: 532) “land tenure represents a set of relationships that exist between categories of individuals (or groups of individuals) in reference to land, water and other products”. Over centuries land tenure systems have changed due to changing circumstances, such as climate change and population growth, which put pressure on the land.

Colonization by European countries is the single most important force for changes in the general traditional communal system of land tenure (Harrison, 1993; Margeot, 1987). For example, one of the most significant impacts on the traditional communal system of land tenure in Africa was the introduction of freehold tenure based on the western concept of individual ownership rights. In western cultures land is regarded as a negotiable commodity as it can be acquired by means of legal agreements and purchases, giving security to the owner. However, this concept was introduced in African colonies and would, amongst others, eventually also affect the traditional land tenure systems in respect of nature reserves in Africa (Margeot, 1987).

Just like Kenya, other countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were also colonized. In these countries white settlers displaced natives and took over their land. The displaced communities were mainly on areas where the settlers were more interested in such as areas with wildlife where they could hunt for trophies, land that had minerals, fertile lands and along the beaches (De Villiers, 2003; Hitcock and Vinding, 2004 and Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). With particular reference to Kenya, Oliver and Fage (1979:200-201) state that: “peoples as numerous as the Luo and the Baluyi were virtually untouched by European settlement, not even among the

Kikuyu, who later came to nurse a special grievance on this score. Most of the land alienated in Kenya was taken from pastoral tribes – the Maasai, the Nandi, and the Kipsigis. All the white settlement did to the agricultural peoples was to block their natural expansion into the land previously held at the spear’s point by the pastoralists”. Hence, it follows logically that the development of land ownership in Maasai Mara can only be clearly understood if it is discussed in terms of the land tenure systems applied by the Kenyan government during and since the times of colonization. In this regard the classification of land tenure by Buckley (2003) in respect of nature reserves will be applied in order to determine its effects on the management of ecotourism and wildlife conservation in Maasai Mara.

3.2 The history of landownership in Kenya

Land ownership is a major issue that has really complicated ecotourism management and has often impacted negatively on sustainable development. Most protected areas in Africa were initially owned by local communities and some are still owned by local communities. In many instances in Africa, communal land ownership has been replaced by individual land ownership characterized by farming on the arable land surrounding protected areas. It affects the movement of wildlife and revenue collected from wildlife viewing. Furthermore, areas that used to be high in tourism value are currently being utilized in ways that do not necessarily serve the purposes of ecotourism and wildlife conservation; for example wheat farming and cattle keeping (Wishitemi & Okello, 2003; Karanja, 2001; Smith, 2001).

Long before Kenya was colonized, land had been the basis for livelihoods for Kenyans. During the colonial area, most fertile lands in Kenya were taken over by white settlers. Some natives were displaced from their ancestral lands to pave way for white settlers who were majorly farmers. Kenya got independence in 1963. In mid-1960s, the Kenyan government, with the support of the World Bank took over land held by white settlers and redistributed some to individuals and communities while the rest was left under the government tenure (Shipton, 1988; Seno and Shaw, 2002).

The Kenyan constitution (chapter 5 sections 60 – 68) classifies land into three categories namely public, private and community land. Public land is land set aside by the Kenya government used or occupied by state property. Examples of such areas are land that has minerals, government forests, lakes, rivers, water catchment areas, government animal sanctuaries and territorial sea. Public land is administered by the Kenya National Land Commission. Community/ communal land consist of areas that were occupied by natives during colonial area and after independence it was not taken over by the government. Communal land in Kenya is held by communities on the basis of culture and/or ethnicity. Communal land is registered under group/ community representatives on behalf of a specific community. This land includes land used or managed as community grazing areas, shrines and community forest. Private land in Kenya is land held by an individual under leasehold tenure or freehold tenure (www.khrc.or.ke/resources/.../doc.../12-the-constitution-of-kenya.html. Accessed 15 may 2014).

In the 1970s, the government introduced group ranches adjacent to the nature reserves which have now been merged to form conservancies. In Kenya, ranches are majorly found in Samburu, Amboseli and Narok. Conservancies are made up of parcels of land owned by individuals put together for conservation purposes. Group ranches were used to control the number of livestock in an area. The increase in livestock and human population created competition among them for natural resources such as land, firewood, and water in the group ranches. The group ranches fall in the buffer zones adjacent to the nature reserves and form the dispersal areas for wildlife as well as the migratory routes for wild animals. In the 1980s and 1990s the Maasai people living in the buffer zones started venturing into tourism, farming and leasing of land to commercial farmers. In the process the land was leased from a group of the local community. Over time, pressure developed in communal land owning in the group ranches due to increase of group ranch human population which led to land individualization. As a result the current land tenure system in the natural reserves of Kenya is characterized by communal and individual land ownership (Zeppel, 2008:129; Wishitemi & Okello, 2003; Karanja, 2001; Smith, 2001).

3.3 Various types of land ownership in Maasai Mara

Buckley (2003) classifies land tenure in ecotourism into four groups: *private land* which is owned by an individual or a group of investors, *public land* is owned and managed by the government, *communal land* is owned by the community normally under the control of a management committee/trust and *public protected land* which is managed by a government body but owned by the government. The system of land tenure in Maasai Mara is investigated in accordance with this classification.

Since time in memorial Maasai Mara land has been communally owned by the local community. Maasai Mara and other national reserves such as Amboseli were put under the management of the local county council by the government and it started receiving revenues from gate entrance, hotels, and other tourism facilities located within the reserve. In the 1980's after the government mapped out Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) from the buffer zone, it was around the same time when ecotourism became established in Eastern and Southern Africa, the stakeholder theory that actors will only protect what they value and benefit from was expanded to include other ecotourism requirements such as respect to the culture of the local community and the conservation of natural resources (Honey, 2008:14). The expansion led to the need for local community to be included in the development of ecotourism in the buffer zones.

Currently the local community (Maasai people) lives in the buffer zone. On the global level, studies have shown that international conservation groups and governments have a tendency of using political power when they want to integrate development and conservation in remote and rural areas. Actors such as international groups have power over the local community in terms of money, knowledge and the level of influence they have in the society (Luke, 1994; Hitchcock, 1995). In Maasai Mara, ecotourism is primarily practised in the conservancies which are managed mostly by international foreigners and white settlers. This subordinated position of the local community can be

ascribed to the fact that it lacks education and that poverty has forced the local community to lease land in the area in study (Honey, 2008; Zeppel, 2006).

The second level at which land politics is felt is at the intra-community level. This level is concerned with land tenure and registration in buffer zones and how they are legally acquired. Research shows that land conflicts in Africa have been aggravated by issues such as the adoption of conservation by governments and conservation groups by means of land tenure reforms and land registration. These two actors have considered land conservation when registering and redistributing land in protected areas by promoting the termination of further division of land (URT, 1992; Basset and Crummey, 1993). The difference between the two levels is because in the first level there are issues such as power, money, and level of influence in the society and level of education. These issues are affecting land redistribution. This has led to corruption and favouritism in land redistribution. While in the second level the conservation groups and the government have taken charge of land redistribution and conservation is a very important issue to the two actors. As indicated in 3.2 above, in Kenya, communities living around national reserves and all other protected areas, live in communally owned buffer zones. In some cases, such as Maasai Mara, land has been redistributed and some land has been merged into conservancies while some community members have opted to manage their own land and not join conservancies. (The geographical positioning of the buffer zone can be seen in the Maasai Mara map in section 1.6).

The co-existence of a protected zone and a buffer zone complicates land tenure in Maasai Mara. As indicated in 3.4 above, Zeppel (2006) and Honey (2008) have clearly stated that land tenure and ownership in Kenya is either communally or privately owned. This is also the case in Maasai Mara. The reserve is communally owned by the local community while the buffer zone is under subdivision so that each household receives ten acres of land. NCC is in charge of the land subdivision in order to counteract the increased land grabbing in Maasai Mara. In addition, NCC is in favour of conservancy creation to support ecotourism and conservation. The land tenure system that exists in Maasai Mara is: land leased to farmers, land leased to form conservancies, land leased to the owners of accommodation facilities and the land the

local community is living on under individual land ownership. Accommodation facilities are found both in the reserve and on buffer zone while farmers, conservancies and local community are all in the buffer zone.

This study found that MMNR is still owned by the local community and that the local community receives 19% of the total revenue collected from the reserve. The buffer zone is partially communally owned by the local community and individually (privately) by members of the Maasai local community. Individual land ownership has worked for and against ecotourism. It has worked in favor of ecotourism as individuals (who are local community members or people who bought land from the local community) have contributed their land to form conservancies for conservation reasons and ecotourism. However, on the opposite side individual land ownership has worked against ecotourism as some individuals have leased out land to farmers. Hence, there is a lot of farming activities such as wheat farming which is encroaching in Maasai Mara. When land is owned individually, decisions are made individually without consulting with other actors (such as conservancy owners, other local community members, and NCC as the government representative) who might be affected by the decisions. This might not necessarily support ecotourism like when an individual decides to lease out land for farming. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some pieces of land in Maasai Mara do not have clear ownership either by the community or private landowners. This is because of the corruption that has taken toll of Maasai Mara as some land has been grabbed by individuals despite the fact that they are not registered with the department of lands.

The land under individual/private land ownership has mainly been used for conservation and ecotourism purposes. Private investors and developers have successfully managed to form either short term or long term partnerships with local communities living in protected areas (includes both the reserve and the buffer zone) with the focus on benefiting from nature conservation and ecotourism. Tourism means business of some form and land in areas with a potential for tourism is always a target as it is a key supplier of a marketable tourism product (Buckley, 2004:10). The interest in land by actors in the ecotourism industry has led to the creation of conservancies to

conserve natural resources on the land in order to benefit the local community. In this study, the people from the local community residing around conservancies and who also benefit from the conservancies are quite happy with the concept of conservancies. The good working relationship is aided by the fact that at the inception of every conservancy, each member of the conservancy was consulted and rules and regulations were set to govern the use and partnership between the community and the land leaser. Every land owner was consulted individually and persuaded to lease out land which contributed to the formation of the conservancy. “Benefits that were to be accrued from the conservancy were all spelt out and the local community felt there was more benefit than loss from leasing land to developers” says elder Ole Ntatai who is one of the land owners in Ol Kinyei Conservancy. The interests of the lease were put into consideration in terms of provision of monthly income, employment and provision of amenities such as roads and hospitals among others. The benefits vary from one conservancy to another. For example, some conservancies such as Naibosho and Siana have health facilities while the other conservancies do not. However, the local communities individuals who are not part of the conservancies do not benefit from the conservancies keep rubbing shoulders with the authorities in charge of the conservancies adjacent to the areas in which they reside.

3.4 The management of different types of land tenure

Tourism International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as the mother organization for ecotourism, links conservation of natural resources with sustainable ecotourism development. TIES did a research on indigenous people living in protected areas in Ecuador and Kenya on how the two communities live and benefit from ecotourism. It disclosed a need to come up with standard guidelines for planners and managers in traditional community lands (Zeppel, 2006:321). A tourism code of conduct for local and indigenous communities was compiled by Lindberg and Hawkins 1993 (Christ, 1998, Honey, 2008; Honey and Thullen 2003). These resources could help developers and planners in ensuring that the development on communal owned land (mainly buffer zone areas) is sustainable and the welfare of the local community well taken care of.

The mismanagement of resources in Maasai Mara by NCC, the lack of trust among actors and the corruption in communal land management by NCC, compelled the government to enter into an agreement with NCC to subdivide communal land outside MMNR. The local community had for a very long time been excluded from the management of their own land. The representatives chosen by the community to represent the community at the NCC have all turned against the local community and become very greedy. The community representatives do not share the money allocated by NCC to the local community fairly and also grab land for personal use. Some of the interviewees mentioned scenarios where they had been asked to move out of the buffer zone because it had been sold or the land that they were living on fenced without communicating the reasons for this step to them. Money allocated to the maintenance of infrastructure such as roads seems to be going into individual pockets. The roads in Maasai Mara are in a bad state. The local community interviewed does not trust their representatives anymore because they feel their representatives do not represent the community interests. Instead they are only looking after their own interests. Furthermore, according to the respondents, the elites (educated members of the local community) and local community representatives have bigger portions of land compared to the rest of the local community.

In regards to land, it was not clear on how it was subdivided a few years ago before the current land subdivision commenced. The surveyors reported that in the 1980's every family in Maasai Mara was being allocated ten acres of land by NCC. However, there were still families that had been allocated over ten acres and they were not prepared to reveal why they had got bigger portions of land than others. These irregularities pose particular challenges to the government in trying to fairly subdivide the buffer zone around MMNR.

Responsible private land owners have opened their land for conservation turning it into conservancies. Conservancies are the major way by which investors have managed to save Maasai Mara's natural resources from depletion. This is thanks to private land owners who have consolidated land for conservation. Responsible tourism practices, such as the building of ecofriendly accommodation facilities, the planting of trees,

controlled human activities and the protection of wildlife are primarily practised in the conservancies. Figure 1 is a map indicating the conservancies around MMNR. The conservancies have helped to increase land for wildlife outside the reserve. Private lands not under conservancies are mostly used for agricultural purposes such as wheat farming. Such farming has taken over thousands of acres around MMNR.

Table 1 indicates a study conducted by Norton-Griffiths (1995) in respect of the income that the local Maasai receive from tourism, agriculture and livestock in relation to the size of land each economic activity use.

Table 2: Economic activities in Maasai Mara in 1994

Land Use	Revenues to Maasai Local community (\$)	
	Over the Total Area	Per Hectare
Tourism	0.2 million	0.35
Agriculture	0.2 million	6.25
Livestock	0.9 million	1.99
Totals	1.3 million	Not applicable

Table 1 show that there is more profit that accrues from other economic activities compared to tourism. The low revenue trickling to the local community is because most tourism ventures in Maasai Mara are owned by outsiders and not by the local community. Hence there is a leakage of profits from Maasai Mara and even from Kenya. This low income from tourism has a negative impact on the traditional lifestyle of Maasai community and subsequently on ecotourism. When they earn little income from tourism compared to their traditional economic practices it discourages the local community from embracing tourism as an economic alternative and compels people to practise other economic activities such as crop farming and large scale livestock keeping. According to Zeppel (2006:131), it can be expected that agriculture and livestock farming will increase in future on group ranches as their income is 300% more than the income from tourism.

It is evident that the communities living far away from the reserve are changing to other economic activities similar to those in Table 1. The Maasai community in the buffer zone at MMNR now prefers alternative land use for economic activities such as wheat farming and bee keeping rather than tourism as they are more profitable. This does not mean Maasai people have stopped embracing tourism rather tourism forms a very low priority among those Maasai's living further away from the national reserve. This has consequently increased land division which has led to tourism not being the major socio-economic activity. Smith (2001) as well as Lamphrey and Reid (2004) are in agreement that a subdivision of land and developments in the buffer zone area has caused a decline in the numbers and movement of wildlife as well as a general degradation of the environment. The original form of land ownership and socio-economic activities which were characterised by communal and nomadic pastoralism were more compatible to nature conservation and ecotourism as deforestation was not practised as in the case of agronomy.

In conclusion, this research found that sustainable ecotourism is largely practised on private land owned in conservancies rather than on private land outside conservancies. The chief warden who is the government and reserve representative said that with the assistance of his team, they are encouraging the local community to put together their lands to form conservancies. He reported that the local community seem to be responding to the conservancy idea well although slowly. Profit sharing and policy making has been easy and reliable for the local community benefiting from conservancies. This is because the local community benefiting from conservancies is fully involved in decision making, management and planning. Almost similar efforts by governments to help local communities to use land in more sustainable tourism economic activities have also been applied in Namibia and South Africa (Ashley & Roe 2002:67).

3.5 Cultural relationship of the community with the land

Jenkins and Wearing (2003:213) state that most private owners or leasers (who form part of the actors in ecotourism) are more interested in the short term rather than long term profits. In the process they ignore the long term cultural and environmental damage that can be caused by tourism as a whole. With a better understanding of ecotourism and implementation of ecotourism best practices, tourism in buffer zones could still support the community as well as the wildlife.

Land division has changed land use through the formation of ranches for keeping livestock, tourism and crop farming. These are new economic activities that emerged in Maasai Mara after pastoralism which was the main economic activity of the Maasai community. However, currently over 75% of the land in Maasai Mara has been put under conservancies hence taking over ranching which was primarily focused on livestock keeping. The land was owned communally which signified kinship and ties (togetherness) in the Maasai community. The kinship was based on blood relation among the Maasai people. Their way of life is living in *manyatta* which brings them together. All the people who live in one *manyatta* are related by blood and marriage. Despite the fact that there is presence of wildlife in Maasai land, the Maasai people graze their livestock freely together with wild animals. The practice has however been interfered with by the introduction of conservancies, the fencing of lodges and land division. Maasai land is found in the southern part of Kenya in Rift valley province. The interviewed local people, mainly older people over 45 years of age, complained a lot about change in land use because they feel that it is taking over their land and that their traditional practices are being eroded.

3.5.1 Religious values and practices

This study found out that the Maasai people have religious attachment to their land. These are areas such as hills where they conduct their prayers and sacred areas set aside for performing traditional rituals and appeasing ancestors. The sacred areas are mostly

found on top of the hills, water springs and in the forests. Religious practices often take place at such land marks to invoke the ancestral spirits. The elders interviewed complained that most of the sacred places they had for so many years have now been taken over by conservancies and private land owners and that the locals cannot access them anymore. Local community members being blocked from accessing their sacred areas has led to conflicts between the private land owners and the local community. The respondents were of the opinion that if they had not allowed the outsiders into their lands they would still have had access to the sacred areas and may be the local community members would embrace new ideas like ecotourism development easily. This calls for need for the local community and private investors to work together.

The Africa national parks and reserves were established mainly for scientific use, hunting, wildlife and nature conservation or tourism with little or no regard for the local communities. In most cases the local community would be forcefully evicted from their traditional lands. This would be followed by little or no benefit trickling to them and being forced to keep off their lands to which they attached religious and economic values (Honey, 2008:14; Gibson and Marks, 1995). Hence, local communities have been locked out of areas such as burial grounds for their ancestors making it impossible for some religious practices such as invoking the ancestral spirits which can only be done at certain sacred areas (Gibson and Marks, 1995).

3.5.2 Social values and practices

In recent decades the influence of nation-states, monetization of the traditional economy, formal education, land tenure changes, and demographic factors have all played a part in shaping the current socio-economic situation of the Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania (Honey, 2008).

In Maasai Mara the Maasai's social life and other cultural practices are a big attraction to tourists. According to the hotel managers interviewed, the Maasai way of life (culture) forms part of the tourist product sold to tourists as it is a well-known fact that the Maasai are known for being strongly attached to their cultural practices. Most of

these practices take place in special land areas set aside for such practices. One of these cultural practices, known as *Eunototo* is a social ceremony that brings together all the warriors signifying the end to warrior hood and the beginning of junior elderly status. In Maasai Mara the *Loita* plains is one of the areas where such ceremonies were conducted. However, the *Loita* plains has been subdivided and now the land forms part of the northern conservancy.

The Maasai people have since time immemorial lived together in both nuclear and extended family context on communal land. The Maasai people are used to living communally in *manyattas*. A *manyatta* is made up of several families living together in a homestead. A clan is made up of people with blood relations. A family is made up of father, mother and children. The father is the head of a family and hence makes decisions on behalf of the family while a council of elders forms the head of the clan and the whole *manyatta* and clan and they make decisions on behalf of the *manyatta* and clan. However, the subdivision of land has led to family divisions. Families now own land individually and each family makes decisions on what to do with the land. For instance, individual land owning has fractured the original social setup of the Maasai community and it has led to some families living individually not communally in *manyattas* as before. According to Jakes Grieves the founder of Ol Kinyei conservancy, individual land owning has led to families leasing most of their land to wheat farmers because it pays more to lease land to wheat famers compared to leasing land for conservation purposes.

Similar cases of indigenous communities that have been deprived of their living on communal land are found all over the world. Examples include the Maori in New Zealand, Maasai in Tanzania, Ogiek in Kenya, San and Khoe in South Africa and Botswana (Tarayia, 2004; http://www.chr.up.ac.za/chrold/indigenous/country_reports/Countryreports_SouthAfrica.pdf Accessed 20 July 2010). Individual land ownership has brought division in their social lives and now each family is independent and the social ties have become weakened in these communities. These weakened communal ties manifest themselves in the form of family decisions that have replaced communal decisions. This means that

initially when all the Maasai lived communally, decisions were made by council of elders but now some family live individually and decisions are made by the head of the family who is the father.

Cultural activities such as traditional dances support community cohesion. Because of living together the warriors would always practice their dances together but separately from the girls. With the subdivision of land the people have been spread into individual lands. Hence, people do not spend much time together as a community, says Ol Rukwo, one of the elders interviewed. Initially several families used to live in family groups in *manyattas*. A *manyatta* had an average of ten families. However, the *manyatta* system of living together is disappearing now that each family is being allocated land. Families have had to leave the *manyattas* and move to their allocated piece of land. This family separation is causing damage to the social cohesion of the Maasai people as they are used to living together.

3.5.3 Political values and practices

Despite the many challenges buffer zone areas are facing, there is still considerable effort being made by different ecotourism actors to restore the lost beauty of buffer zone areas. Potentially, the most significant positive impact would occur on community owned land if all the actors involved in ecotourism would reserve the buffer zone areas primarily for conservation and ecotourism. For various reasons - mostly political and personal interest - this rarely happens, not even in areas where ecotourism is more profitable in comparison to farming and related activities (Buckley, 2004:9, Buckley: 2000).

Maasai families are headed by a father and a clans head is the head of a clan. A council of elders heads a *manyatta* which is composed of a cluster of approximately 10 - 20 huts grouped together in a circular pattern. Each family occupies one hut. In the Maasai culture one person does not make a decision on behalf of the community because they are communally oriented hence decisions are always made by the council of elders. Men are allowed to consult with their wives but women are not allowed in the council

of elders' meetings. All the power is vested in the men leaving the women powerless. Any decisions pertaining to the utilization of land are taken by the family heads that constitute the council of elders of the *manyatta*.

Although women do not participate in decision-making in the traditional African context, women can influence the decision-making process since their husbands do consult them despite the fact that it is not obligatory. The reason why women are not involved in decision making is because the traditional African society regards them as minors who are subject to male dominance and never acquire legal status. Hence women can never enter into any agreement and can also not own any land (<http://povertynewsblog.blogspot.com/2011/07/women-struggle-for-land-ownership-in.html> Accessed 10 October 2010; <http://www.ngocc.org.zm/WomensLandRightsConsolidatedBaselineFindingsReportFinal.pdf> Accessed 18 August 2010; Wanyeki, 2003).

This study found that there are elites (educated) and some elders who have collaborated with outsiders to sell communal land without the knowledge of the community. Moreover, the local politicians such as councilors and a particular member of parliament and his supporters have also grabbed land and acquired title deeds. More than 90% of the interviewees expressed a negative attitude towards the particular Member of Parliament for not representing the community. Instead, he is the one in the front line of corruption and land grabbing in Maasai Mara. As one among a few educated Maasai in Maasai Mara it has enabled him to retain his position of power for over 20 years. Over 90% of the elders cannot speak or write Kiswahili which is the national language with the result that all administration and agreements that require writing and signatures are left to the educated people on behalf of the others. It was found that there were instances where community representatives signed land documents agreeing to land to be sold. Since community members cannot read nor write they believe what they are told by community representatives and gave consent for the sale to proceed.

Revenue sharing among the local community has left majority of local community members being excluded from benefiting from revenue collected from tourism. Individual land owning has however come in more like a rescue from illegal land owning/grabbing. Individual land ownership means that individual landowners have authority over their land which has reduced the influences and powers of the NCC and the council of elders. On the other hand, conservancies have brought several landowners together and given the local community several benefits as mentioned before. The land owners have leased out land to conservancy owners and hence the conservancy owner(s) have power on what to do with the conservancy. Conservancies are primarily used for natural resource conservation and tourism. Leasing land to conservancies has protected local community members from totally being exploited by elites, politicians and local community representatives. Conservancies have become a major way of embracing ecotourism and showing the local community how sustainable tourism can be achieved says Mara Porini, ecolodge Manager (Mara Porini ecolodge is located in Ol Kinyei Conservancy).

Due to the high level of illiteracy in the community, the conservancy management educates the local community on the importance of conservancy and encourages the local community to set aside part of their lands for conservation and ecotourism purposes. No one is forced into joining a conservancy says Jakes Grieves. The conservancy management has good relations with the local community because of the symbiotic relationship between the two actors. NCC tourism representative said that NCC does not have education programs/initiatives to educate the local community and the Maasai Mara residents at large on the importance of conservancies and ecotourism. However, the NCC representatives interviewed said that NCC is in the process of coming up with a sustainable tourism development guide book for Maasai Mara.

3.5.4 Economic values and practices

Actors in government and international bodies do support ecotourism and conservation in communally owned lands. For instance, East Africa Wildlife Society (EAWS),

African Conservation Centre (ACC) and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) provide training to the local community, give financial assistance, and act as middlemen between investors, and market local communities practicing and implementing ecotourism projects on their lands. International donors such as the United States of America International Development (USAID), the European Union and other European and American donors provide funds for local communities who are implementing ecotourism projects. The funds are managed by the specific projects management teams (Zeppel, 2006:118-119). Limitation of finances has been seen as a major hindrance to sustainable land use practices (Moskwa, 2010).



Figure 2: Participants at a workshop held at Koiyaki guiding school.

Figure 2 is from a workshop held at Koiyaki guiding school funded by Olkejuado County Council (OCC), Ol Kinyei Conservancy and Basecamp Explorer. The workshop was used to train women from the local community (from Ol Kinyei and

Koiyaki conservancies) on the importance the ecotourism and how they can become involved. The investors are major actors in the conservancies in Maasai Mara.

Most community owned ecotourism ventures are located on community owned land. The local community has developed tourism businesses such as restaurants, curio shops, cultural villages, game drives, tour guiding on their lands, and leasing land to private developers to build tourist camps. Some ecotourism actors such as tour operators are prepared to pay local communities living on communal land to stop subdividing the land. Some actors have even increased the land lease. This has a positive economic impact on the community because from the payments for the usage and lease of their land the community is assured of a continuous income. However it was noted that tour operators do not make much effort in raising awareness of ecotourism and related elements such as conservation.

The members of the Maasai community interviewed in Maasai Mara reported that land sub division has influenced the benefit gained from their land. Those who have leased land to conservancies receive benefits such as a monthly income from the conservancy. The members of the conservancies are allowed to sell handcrafts to the ecolodges in conservancies hence a ready market for their products exists. Members of conservancies who have tourism projects receive both financial and management support from the conservancy management. In addition, the members of a conservancy get first priority when employment vacancies arise in the ecolodges in the conservancy. The locals who have not leased land to conservancies struggle to get a market for their products and they do not have a reliable income like the ones who have leased land to a conservancy. However, every family is supposed to receive a monthly income from NCC from the 19% allocated to the local community. That was not the case with all the community members interviewed. This is because NCC and the local community representatives divert the funds and they do not give all the local community members the revenue share allocated to them.

The benefit from ecotourism such as the creation of conservancies has encouraged the local community to embrace ecotourism. Unlike local community members who have

leased land to farmers, the only benefit they get from leasing out land to farmers is a monthly income. However, the local community members interviewed who have leased land to wheat farmers reported that the monthly income was more compared to leasing land to conservancies. This difference in monthly lease seems to be challenging ecotourism actors by encouraging community members to lease out land for farming and not conservation and ecotourism purposes. However, ecotourism actors have tried to educate the local community on other benefits from ecotourism such as conservation of natural resources, benefit from funds from donors, improved infrastructure by tourism stakeholders and other benefits such as schools and hospitals that are built by ecotourism investors.

In Maasai Mara ecotourism has economically empowered local community members. The communal funds have been reinvested back to the community by building public amenities. Local community members have free access to all the public amenities such as schools, health centers, bore holes, educational centers and infrastructure developed on communal land. Tourism businesses that operate on community land always employ local community members. Employment of the local community in the tourism ventures in Maasai Mara has been highly promoted by ecolodges, NCC and conservancies.

Ecotourism emphasizes the inclusion of the local community in tourism business that operates in areas resided by local communities such as protected areas (Zeppel, 2006:280; Lash, 1998). This has helped in reducing the number of unemployed community members on communal land and has led to more land being provided by the local community for ecotourism in exchange for benefits such as employment and a reliable income. Moreover, in Maasai Mara the local community members on communal land use the natural resources available on their land for economic purposes. For example, the local community provides guided nature walks to tourists in conservancies at a fee.

3.6 Conclusion

To understand the issues facing land tenure and ownership in the area in study, the researcher looked into the various forms of land ownership in Maasai Mara area. The different types of land tenures in Kenya are public, communal and private. Within the study area, the predominant land tenures identified were communal and private land ownership. MMNR is owned communally by the local community and is managed by NCC on behalf of the local community.

The local community lives in the buffer zone and this is where the private land tenure is found. The land in the buffer zones has been subdivided and individuals own these pieces separately. This allows them all rights and control of the land and they determine the activities that take place there. The local community has to come to a consensus through NCC that any community development should be done on the communally owned land. The land tenure type in an area has great influence on the development of ecotourism. This study found out that ecotourism development is majorly on the buffer zone. This is where private investors have either bought or leased lands from individuals to create conservancies.

However, ecotourism is facing great challenge from farmers who are buying or leasing land for wheat farming, since this pays more than ecotourism. It was evident that there was large scale wheat farming practiced in the buffer zone leading to human wildlife conflict. The conflict is caused by farmers clearing land which has for a long time been occupied by wildlife. The wild animals such as elephants end up attacking farms destroying crops and often the wild cats such as lions, cheetahs and leopards attack the livestock. After the attack the local community members often kill the wild animals. When the wild animals are killed, conflict between KWS and local community arise because KWS is in charge of protecting wildlife. Despite the competition of land from farmers, ecotourism actors have been able to secure land from individual owners and put them together to form conservancies. The conservancies have become home for wild animals chased away from land that has been converted to farms. Conservancies

have also been able to protect migratory routes that animals use during migration to move from one side of the reserve to the other.

Despite the fact that ecotourism has positively impacted on the livelihoods of the local community it has equally had a negative effect on the way of living of the local community. Initially, the local community used to live together in community land which brought them close together. Currently, land has been fragmented and most families live individually. The local community had sacred areas where they could perform religious practices to appease their ancestors. Most of such areas are now not accessible to the local community as they have been set aside for conservation or owned by an individual. The local community lived in a *manyatta* which consisted of several families and were head by a clan elder. The clan elders made decisions on behalf of the community. After most of the families moved out of the *manyattas* to live independently, the traditional community style of living changed. Currently, the area has been divided into locations headed by a chief who is a government representative.

Lastly, the economic activity of the local community has changed from pastoralism to other economic activity such as tourism and farming. Land subdivision gave individual land owners freedom to choose what economic activity to practice on the land unlike initially when all the land was used for livestock grazing. The freedom to choose the economic activity to practice has had both positive and negative effect on ecotourism development. The positive impact is in the fact that the private land owners have been able to join up/ lease out their parcels of land for conservation purposes which supports sustainable development of ecotourism. The negative impact is when they chose to lease the lands for large scale wheat farming precipitating a human wild life conflict.

Chapter Four

4 Community involvement in ecotourism

4.1 Introduction

Sustainable ecotourism development emphasizes the need for community involvement in planning and management of ecotourism destinations and ventures. This principle has been captured in ecotourism definitions. Ecotourism has been defined as a sustainable form of tourism that respects the culture of the local community and environment, educates visitors on destination they are visiting and improves the livelihood of the local communities in a tourism destination (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996; Wall, 1993; World Ecotourism Summit, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the definition by Ceballos-Lascurain (1996) will be used:

Environmentally responsible enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

International organizations have played a major role in encouraging community involvement in ecotourism such as United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (The Earth Summit as it became known), the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999 (in New York), Agenda 21 for Tourism (1996) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002). These conferences emphasized respect of the environment and economic sustainability by all the actors involved in any economic activity. Each conference encouraged governments/nations to pay more attention to the local community as part of sustainable development initiatives. Women participation in development was another

issue of concern at these conferences (WTTC *et al.*, 1996; UNEP, 2002). This led to the Beijing conference in 1995. The main aim of conference was to look into the role of women in the society and their education on their rights without going against society's ethical and religious practices. It also emphasized the need for the amendment of laws that discriminate against women preventing them from full participation in development (<http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/women3.html> accessed 3rd March 2013). The international year of ecotourism (2002) was an international conference that brought all ecotourism stakeholders together. The conference focused on the involvement and participation of communities, hospitality operators and indigenous peoples to investigate what was working or not in the planning and management of ecotourism in order to ensure the sustainable development of ecotourism. It was argued that ecotourism allows exploitation of local communities and the destruction of pristine natural areas due to a lack of proper communication and coordination among the various actors in the tourism industry (Maclaren, 2002; World Ecotourism Summit, 2002; Björk, 2007).

Sustainability can only be achieved through sustainable utilisation of natural resources and the economic contribution of ecotourism. Conflicts in ecotourism arise when the local communities in tourist destinations are denied any direct benefits and when the community is excluded from the natural resources that they depend on for their living (Sherman & Dixon, 1991; Raybourn, 1995). The involvement of the local community in ecotourism has to go beyond economic benefits, environmental conservation and social-cultural appreciation to allow the local community to appreciate their own natural resources. With all these factors in place it is expected that the local community will have a better understanding and appreciation of ecotourism and will contribute to its sustainable development. Community involvement increases participation, ownership and it can translate to conservation in a tourism destination (Cater, 1994: 84; Songorwa, 1999).

4.2 Community participation in planning and management

There is need for a responsible holistic approach by including all the actors in ecotourism during the planning and implementation of tourism policies to achieve sustainable ecotourism development. Local community (s) is a key actor in the development of sustainable ecotourism (Timothy, 2002). Hence, there is need to involve the local community in the development of ecotourism to achieve sustainability. The local community's active involvement in all stages of development helps with the integration of their interests in the planning, implementation and management of the tourism industry (Cater, 1994: 85; Blackstock, 2005; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Li *et al.*, 2006). Sustainable development calls for community involvement in planning and management of tourism (Timothy, 2002).

Local community cooperation in ecotourism helps in ensuring that the local communities integrate sustainable tourism development in their development plans. Mitchell and Reid (2001) as well as Jamal and Getz (1995) agree that the local community should be incorporated in the planning and management of ecotourism in a destination. The local community is thus part of the actors in ecotourism that influence the development of ecotourism (Murphy, 1985 & 1988). It is expected that when the local community is engaged in the development of ecotourism it will enable them to prioritize their interests in ecotourism (Bramwell & Lane, 2000: 4-5).

The involvement of local community in planning, implementation and management of the tourism industry supports community cohesiveness in the management of natural resources in their area. These parameters also support conservation and increased involvement of the local community and equitable sharing of the socio-economic benefits (Okech, 2007; Ryan, 2002). If the local community is deprived of the opportunity to participate in the management of the destination it is highly unlikely that they will support conservation on which ecotourism is based (Mitchell & Eagles, 2001; Go, 1997). This applies particularly to communities where gender roles place women in a close connection with the environment yet they are the minority to be included in

respect of issues such as decision making and management (Scheyvens, 2000; Fairburn-Dunlop, 1994).

In this study it was found that ecotourism development projects in tourism destinations have tried to involve the local community in every development taking place. It starts with land ownership where the local community leases the land to developers/investors. The landowners, as explained in the previous chapter, receive an agreed amount of money every month from Narok County Council (NCC). Local community members are represented in the management of the ecotourism facilities by their members working in the ecotourism facilities. This has helped the Maasai community to work directly with investors and also to submit their grievances if any. The community representatives (a few people chosen from the local community by the local community themselves) attend all the board meetings of the facility each community are involved in. The local community involvement in management has been successful in conservancies and ecolodges in Maasai Mara. Olkinyei, Siana, Koiyaki and Olare Orok conservancies have included the local community in management, planning and policy making. The local community members benefiting from the conservancies are satisfied with the arrangement.

However the local community members that are not part of the conservancies have been left out completely. They are not consulted when any projects are initiated and they are exempted from decision making. This has caused discontent among community members towards ecotourism and consequently they embark on practises that jeopardize ecotourism such as the selling or leasing of land to wheat farmers, the keeping of large numbers of livestock, grazing of livestock in conservation areas, and the felling of trees for charcoal and fire wood. Farming has become a greater challenge to tourism (Seno & Shaw, 2002) as the income from farming exceeds tourism income by over 300% (Sindiga, 1995). These figures reflect the situation in Maasai mara in particular. The support for ecotourism is highly dependent on income distribution between the leaders and land owners (Lamphrey and Reid, 2004; Thompson and Homewood, 2002). This study found out that the community leaders are in charge of income distribution. However, the transparency in income distribution was

questionable as the local community members interviewed complained of corruption and unfairness in the income distribution.

In Maasai Mara the local community form part of the tourism product and they are also the sole owners of the land. Local community participation has been changed to an economic activity other than part of the lifestyle of the community. Cultural ceremonies have been disrespected and are now losing value due to tourism. However, the local community seems not to have an option as it is the only reliable source of income that they are left with. This is a negative impact of tourism. Ecotourism emphasizes on respect of local community culture, beliefs and values (Telfer, 2002; Wall, 1993; World Ecotourism Summit, 2002). As initially discussed, farming has become a major challenge as an economic activity because the income from farming is way higher than tourism. This applies to the local community members who have land for farming and can use the land for farming instead of tourism development. Members of the community who do not have or have not opted for farming depend on tourism as a source of income. The high income from farming has lured a lot of community members to change from tourism as an economic activity and shifted to farming.

4.3 Women involvement in ecotourism

In this study it was found out that women in the Maasai community are helpers to their husbands or to men. This means women are not entirely involved in decision making and planning either at home or in business. Women stay at home to do domestic chores. This has been the case since time in memorial. However, there are a few women who have gone against this tradition and have actually been educated and are occupying senior positions in the ecotourism industry. For example the lodge manager at Maasai Mara Base Camp is a Maasai woman from the local community. She has gone against all the odds and believes of the Maasai community and now she is a role model to many Maasai women. With the help of Base Camp, she has been able to bring together

a few women and formed a business which has economically, psychologically and socially empowered the women involved (see section 4.3.1).

In the preceding section it has been mentioned that despite the fact that women are the people in a community most closely involved with the environment, they are in the minority in respect of decision making and planning in ecotourism (Schyevens, 2000; Fairburn-Dunlop, 1994). This study found out that very few women are in management positions. In NCC there was no single woman in the management position. It is only in Basecamp lodge where a woman is a manager and another one is at Keekorok lodge as guest relation manager. This is an example of how women are not well represented in management. However, there were several women in other positions such as waitress, cooks, curio shop attendants and receptionists. The percentage of tourism jobs occupied by women varies from over 60% in some countries such as Bolivia, to under 10% in some Muslim countries (UNEP, 1999). The service nature of the project and high proportion of low-skill domestic-type jobs increase accessibility to women. Often, women are most involved in informal sector activities, particularly hawking. For instance, Nepalese women have small businesses in the mountainous areas as these areas attract many tourists (Dalem and Astarini, 2000; Schyevens, 2000).

In the case of Maasai Mara, women are more involved with tourism related businesses. The well-known economic activity women benefit from is the selling of Maasai arts made from wood and Maasai ornaments made from beads, as shown in Picture 2. The ornaments are called ‘ushanga’ in Maasai, a word borrowed from Swahili language. In Orbama manyatta women are not so much involved in tourism other than the selling of bead work to tourists. Out of 300 people in the manyatta 80 are women. Every woman contributes Kshs 100 (approximately ZAR 10) from the sales she has made every month. The money is given to the appointed elder of the manyatta and is used to pay school fees, to help the sick and to buy food during the dry season. This applies to most of the manyattas visited such as Nauneri manyatta, Koitany manyatta, Sumbua manyatta, and Lomorian manyatta. Some women have formed business groups and are registered as Community Based Organisation’s (CBOs). A good example is Basecamp Maasai Brand which is supported by base camp explorer. Many of the women do not

belong to women groups although they sell their hand made products at the gate entrance to the reserve. Such women are exposed to many obstacles such as a language barrier, lack of price control, middlemen, lack of a reliable market and the exploitation by tourists. Other actors such as tourists exploit the challenges faced by the women through bargaining in order to buy curios at much reduced prices. This is evident in Kenya, Tanzania and Thailand (Kareithi, 2003; Björk, 2007; Johansson & Diamantis, 2004:299). Such problems are major reasons why local communities get very little economic benefit from tourism.



Figure 3: Women making and selling curios at Maasai Mara Sekenani gate

4.3.1 Community empowerment activities in Maasai Mara

The empowering of women through training and finally ensuring they are involved in the management positions in community projects has been a successful way of involving women in sustainable tourism development. Basecamp Maasai Brand (BMB) and Basecamp ecolodges are both managed by women. Both women went through training with the help of the lodge and now they are team leaders of women groups. The women groups have a treasurer and secretary chosen from the group. These

involvements in projects have had a positive impact on women towards ecotourism development. The two women are in the senior most positions among all the women that were interviewed. All ecolodges do community mobilisation during the inception of the community projects. For example before building the social amenities such as schools and hospitals, the local community are consulted and involved in the whole process. In most of the community projects that the researcher visited, the project chairman, treasurer, and secretary had been trained by the owners of the tourism facility on the specific local community group land. The most common community project was handcrafts making and selling them to hotels and exporting some overseas with the help of the accommodation facilities such as Base camp. The trainings helped them to write their own proposals requesting for funds and to keep contact with the internal and external donor(s). This was the case of two CBOs, one based on the eastern side of the reserve and the other on the western side. The two projects cater for the two sides of the reserve while the Ol Kinyei conservancy groups are on the northern side. Women who are interested in joining ecotourism projects join a project that is close to their residential area. This helps in reducing the distance the women have to walk to get to the project and also be able to get back home on time as they still do have domestic chores to do.

During an interview with some BMB members who were on duty on the day of the interview, the researcher found that BMB is a community based organisation initiated by the Basecamp Foundation to economically empower disadvantaged women's groups in the Talek area which is in the western side of Maasai Mara. This research will use this BMB as an example of an ecotourism project that has been able to empower women socially, economically, psychologically and even politically as these women have full control of the project and it is a very successful project. The project helps to improve the Maasai women's handcraft skills, knowledge and famous Maasai bead and leather work as shown in Picture 3. BMB is a fair trade project and the crafts person receives seventy five percent of the selling price, less the production amount. Twenty five percent of the selling price is diverted for covering the cost and maintenance of the project. The big markets for BMB products are Norway, the United Kingdom and

Sweden. BMB is a corporate responsibility from basecamp to support sustainable development for the Talek women and the Maasai community at large (<http://www.Maasaibrand.com/project.html> accessed 4th October 2011).



Figure 4: BMB members busy making crafts

4.4 Limitations to community involvement

4.4.1 Absence of democracy

In most tourism destinations community projects are characterised by political dominance in the sense that the general governing of the area is done by a political leader. This has led to the local community depending highly on support from political leaders to implement policies (Okech, 2007:55; Diamantis, 2004:10-11). Local community's involvement in ecotourism depends very much on the activities in place and who sets the agenda. The benefit of the local communities is at times so little that

compared to other ecotourism actors the local community gets the lowest share. The local community thus needs to be educated to understand ecotourism (Okech, 2007:36; Diamantis, 2004:12-13). Understanding of ecotourism will help in making all ecotourism stakeholders know the role each stakeholder plays in ecotourism and the importance of involving all stakeholders of ecotourism in order to achieve sustainable ecotourism development and to understand their roles and rights. Educating ecotourism stakeholders will also help in understanding of ecotourism as the stakeholders will have knowledge of importance of sustainable development in the tourism industry.

In this study, it was found that there are a few people who set the agenda and have a bigger say than others when it comes to decision making with regard to tourism development. These decision makers are mainly community elders (men), educated people and investors who are also mainly men. Other ordinary members of the local community have little say or no say at all. This study found that prominent Maasai political leaders exercise a significant degree of influence over the management of tourism in Maasai Mara. This situation has led to decisions being made in favour of a few people while the rest of the community is ignored. The educated local community members are not of much to help the rest of the community members because they team up with politicians in grabbing of land and in the unequal distribution of the revenue collected allocated from Maasai Mara for the local community.

4.4.2 Cultural limitations

In the Maasai community, women speak to the public through their husbands. The cultural beliefs that women cannot speak in public puts women in an inferior position as they cannot speak for themselves. The community development meetings that the researcher attended were mainly composed of men with minimal representation of women. This study found out that women have very little say in the Maasai community hence they have to depend highly on the decisions made by their husbands in development committees. However, a few women have overcome this practice and

occupy important positions in ecotourism enterprises. For instance, the manager of Base camp ecolodge is a woman.

Moreover, animal husbandry forms the major economic activity of the Maasai people. Maasai people to date still keep cattle. Not only is it a sign of wealth but it also serves as a source of food as the milk and blood which forms their staple diet (Ondicho, 2010). However, animal husbandry and ecotourism development do not go hand in hand because it utilises land ideal for ecotourism development. In addition it causes human wildlife conflict in Maasai Mara as there were a number of reported cases of wild animals attacking livestock at night. These are the challenges ecotourism development is facing and an understanding of ecotourism development by all stakeholders will help in addressing such a challenge.

4.4.3 Lack of communication and co-ordination

As discussed in chapters one and three, there is evidence of a lack of communication and coordination between actors in ecotourism development in Maasai Mara. Research shows that lack of communication and co-ordination is a major problem in sustainable ecotourism development (Araujo & Bramwell, 1999; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). This research found that differences in language play a major role in hindering free flow of information. There is a high level of illiteracy in the study area. Over 70% of interviewed people cannot read nor write hence depend on verbal communication of information or in most occasions missing out on the communication if there is no one to communicate to the local community in *Maa* language. However, there was also evidence of information not being passed on to all actors involved in ecotourism in Maasai Mara. For example, there are several occasions when leaders selected by the local community to be in charge of tourism development in Maasai Mara often having meetings but they do not give feedback of what was discussed to the other community members. This has led to decisions being made excluding some actors such as local community members who are not part of the selected leaders. For example when the local leaders decide to set out land for ecotourism development and such information

does not reach all the community members, there will eventually be a conflict of interest on the land as the local community will not understand why their land has to be set out for ecotourism purposes. This lack of communication has led to conflicts where the locals still want to utilize their land for traditional purposes such as grazing and firewood collection when it has already been set aside for ecotourism purposes.

4.4.4 Lack of financial resources to support ecotourism

This research found that members of the local community in the study area are poor, with over 80% living on less than a dollar a day. The researcher often found members of the local community just idling at home without work and most of them said that they did not have the finances to start a business or to send their children to school. For a long time the Maasai people have been known for subsistence livestock keeping (Sindiga, 1984; Ashley and Roe, 1998). Those interviewed said that they had leased out most of their land in order to secure a reliable monthly income. However, according to the chief at Sekenani shopping centre the income from the land is very little (the amount for leasing out land was not disclosed). On the other hand, issues such as human wildlife conflict, poaching and subdivision of land into smaller pieces have decreased since the community has been educated on its impacts on the environment and wildlife conservation and in addition have been provided with a source of income through involvement in ecotourism. The latter has changed the economic practices of the local community to eco-friendly economic activities. For instance the use of old fallen trees to build ecolodges, not using animal products such as ivory to make curios, the provision of a direct market for the handicrafts and arts, employment opportunities at the ecolodges and availability of income for land owners. Over 70% of the members interviewed expressed their satisfaction on how their land is used for conservation and the socio-economic development ecotourism has brought to the community.

Those local community members who sell artifacts at the gates and at the lodges do not make much profit from their sales due to a lack of fixed prices and the fact that the

prices for the artifacts can be so low that the seller barely makes any profit. This situation prevents people who sell artifacts from being able to expand their businesses as they are always dependant on daily sales.

If community based tourism is developed sustainably it has the power to reduce resentments from the local community towards ecotourism through empowering the local people, by generating employment opportunities thereby improving incomes and developing their skills and institutions (Ashley 1995; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Jamal & Gertz, 2000). Consequently, it must be noted that local communities must be actively involved in tourism projects from the initial planning stages and should eventually share in the benefits and costs of projects in their areas (Naguran, 1999, Weaver 1998). By focusing on their own community development the local community realizes the importance of the protected areas to their welfare and thus become more committed to bio- diversity conservation (Finn, 1996; Reed 1997).

In this study it was found that the local community appreciates ecotourism developments in comparison to the traditional tourism developments where the investors were more interested in tourists' satisfaction to the negligence of the local community. An interview with members of five manyattas located next to the conservancies strongly agreed that it has taken into consideration the local community interests. The major issue that the community had been facing was the lack of transparency in the sharing of profits with tour operators, but since the ecolodges took over, profit sharing has been very transparent.

4.5 Conclusion

Local community involvement in an ecotourism destination is a very vital element for sustainable ecotourism development. A lot of emphasis has been made in previous ecotourism conferences on the need for local community and indigenous community's involvement in ecotourism development. The climax of these conferences was at the 2002 ecotourism conference which led to the year being named as the 'Ecotourism year'. This conference looked into what was working and not working in the

development of ecotourism with emphasis on the need of involvement of all actors in the ecotourism industry and mainly the involvement of the local community. The outcome of the conference was that there was lack of coordination and communication among ecotourism actors which has led to local community exploitation and destruction of the pristine natural environment. For sustainability to be achieved in ecotourism there is a need to go beyond environmental conservation and cultural appreciation to actually making the local community appreciate the natural resources found within their localities. Local community involvement increases participation and a sense of ownership which can contribute to conservation and sustainable development of ecotourism.

For sustainability to be achieved, the local community has to be involved in planning, implementation and finally management of a project. This is because sustainable development calls for holistic involvement of the local community during planning and implementation of tourism policies. Involvement of the local community during planning and implementation helps in integration and prioritization of their interest in development plans. When the local community are deprived the chance to be part of planning and management, there will be high chance that they will not embrace conservation which form a basis of ecotourism. This applies mainly to situations where gender is involved. For example resistance to sustainable development of ecotourism can be seen where women are exempted from decision making and management despite the fact that their roles place them close to the environment.

In Maasai Mara, the local community is involved in ecotourism projects although women have not been placed in leadership positions. Sustainable ecotourism development was seen to be successful in the areas where the local community has been involved in planning and management of ecotourism projects in the various conservancies in Maasai Mara area. Local community involvement has also empowered the local community economically, socially and psychologically as the local community is fully involved in ecotourism projects. However, lack of community involvement has caused challenges and conflicts in Maasai Mara such as human wildlife conflict in areas set aside for conservation, displacement of the local

community from their ancestral lands, commoditization of their culture and lack of access to natural resources such as water and fire wood from areas set aside for ecotourism. Moreover, there are several limitations that hinder community participation and involvement in ecotourism development such as lack of finances, lack of communication and proper coordination, cultural limitations and absence of democracy in the implementation of policies in the development of ecotourism. These limitations are a major hindrance to sustainable development as well as presenting challenges on the level at which the local community involvement in ecotourism development hence there is need to look into them. Sustainable development empowers the local community hence they can be independent without necessarily having to depend on other actors. They are also capable of safeguarding their culture from the abuses of commoditization in regards to decision making in project management.

Chapter Five

5 Problems faced by actors in collaboration

5.1 Introduction

Collaborations occur when several actors in one industry engage in an interactive process using shared structures, rules and regulations to make decisions and act on issues affecting the industry they are involved in (Jamal and Stronza, 2009). This statement is useful in that it entails the various types and/or forms of collaborations that are likely to be found in the ecotourism industry. It also does not make assumptions on the number of actors involved, power sharing and which actor is exempted from participation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000).

Sustainable ecotourism development has had problems because of lack of coordination among actors involved in ecotourism, dominance of some actors in the ecotourism industry and difference in structures in tourism destinations (Cater, 1995; Healey, 1998; Stolton and Dudley 1999; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Bjork, 2007:25, 27). Collaboration or involvement of actors in ecotourism helps in involving all actors in the decision making process, taking responsibility and enhance actors' own awareness on the issues involved which translates to actors enjoying shared ownership and consensus (Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 1999). Despite the positive aspects of collaboration there are also challenges facing collaboration (Simmons 1994; Marien and Pizam, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1999). Bramwell and Sharman (1999), Reed (1999) and Tosun (2000) discuss the identification of legitimate actors in the ecotourism industry and the ability of all the actors to participate in ecotourism (more on this has been discussed in chapter two). Some actors dominate the industry.

Wood and Gray (1991:146) define collaboration as:

a process where “a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain.

This definition has been supported by several authors as a definition that brings together autonomous and key actors with interest in one industry/organization. These actors work together to manage issues or solve problems in the same domain (Gray, 1989; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Berkes, 1995; Reed, 2000). The autonomy of the actors is because each actor retains its independent powers of making decisions as much they are working within the same framework. Selin *et al.*, (1998) differentiates other forms of participation from collaboration in the sense that actors in collaboration must have a mutual understanding when addressing an issue.

Collaborations are often seen as a formal process which allows regular face-to face dialogue. The face-to face meetings among actors encourage discussions, negotiations and building of mutual proposal that give guidelines on how sustainable tourism should be developed. These features distinguish collaboration from participation. Collaboration brings together several actors hence providing a pool of ideas, resources, shared interests and a sense of shared ownership (Susskind and Elliott 1983; Robert and Bradley, 1991; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 1999). In collaboration all actors are involved in decision-making, planning and management. This has helped in bringing on board actors such as local community who have often been exempted in management and planning of projects. Moreover, collaboration improves the understanding of the actors involved in the project and sustainable development (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 1999).

Collaboration has the potential of assisting government to know and take into consideration the potentials, needs and characteristics of actors hence reducing tension among actors working together. This can increase coordination of the various actors working together to reduce friction more so when they have common interest on same resources. Collaborations also make use of the available local knowledge in decision making and planning. This ensures that the interests of the local community are catered for and it also gives a voice to those most affected by tourism development (Healey, 1997; Yuksel *et al.* 1999; Bramwell and Lane, 1999).

5.2 Collaborations in Maasai Mara

There are several collaborations in Maasai Mara that the researcher found out. These collaborations have been used to develop sustainable ecotourism development. Various actors interested with ecotourism have come together to work together towards promoting ecotourism. However, these collaborations also face challenges. Despite the challenges, there has been considerable successful collaboration that Maasai Mara can boast of.

Collaboration between NCC and the local community

In this study the local community is in collaboration with NCC. NCC manages Maasai Mara on behalf of the local community. The local community has leased out land to investors (private developers/investors and tour firms) who run and manage conservancies. Every conservancy has a committee composed of community representatives plus the investors. The local community representatives are elected by the local community members. Every conservancy has leased out land for different lengths of time varying from 15-59 years. In return, the community should get financial benefits from the collaboration.

This study found that all the collaborations and partnerships in Maasai Mara are aimed at improving the livelihood of the Maasai people and promoting sustainable development. From different interviewees, it was established that the aim of the partnerships and collaborations was to be achieved through using the revenue collected from tourism to develop and improve infrastructure in Maasai Mara, social amenities such as hospitals and schools, employment to the local community, improve and promote conservation of natural resources and the environment, sponsor and/or support and promote education among the Maasai people. However, corruption and dominance by elites and politicians have become a menace to the collaboration. There is no proper system for accountancy for revenue collected from MMNR. Hence the politicians and elites have been able to squander the revenue collected and remit very little to NCC. Moreover, the selected representatives of the local community do not always consult the local community before making decisions in regards to MMNR.

Collaboration between Koiyaki group ranch, Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Mara Porini and Basecamp Explorer foundation

The members of this collaboration have managed to build and still support Koiyaki Guiding School. This collaboration has provided an opportunity for all the actors involved to bring together finances to support Koiyaki guiding school and community project. All the actors in the collaboration are represented in the collaboration committee. The main aim of this collaboration was to support local community projects in terms of training the local community and providing/sourcing for resources for the local community sustainable tourism projects. This has been achieved as some community members have been trained on how to support sustainable tourism projects and they are already putting the skills in practice. This has helped in improving the livelihoods and also improved their understanding of sustainable development. The challenge facing this collaboration is lack of enough finances to support all the community projects they would like to support. Due to lack of enough funds, the conservancy management has not been able to enrol all the local community members who wish to train in the guiding school.

Collaboration between community land owners that have put small parcels of land to form conservancies' and the private investors/developers such as ecolodges/lodges owners

Conservancies and land ownership have been discussed in detail in chapter four. The main aim of this collaboration is to promote conservation in Maasai Mara at the same providing the local community land owners with reliable income. The local community are fully involved in the management of conservancies and interviewees expressed great satisfaction from this collaboration. This collaboration has also brought together actors with interests that support sustainable tourism development. However, the local community land owners have often been deceived by private investors who want to use the land for farming purposes thus causing a reduction in the size of the land available for sustainable tourism development. The higher lease rates offered by wheat farmers compared to the conservancies are a major challenge to this collaboration. The attractive high rates have managed to sway some local community members to shift from tourism to wheat farming. However, the ecotourism actors are still

trying to educate the local community on the benefits of embracing ecotourism compared to wheat farming.

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in collaboration with NCC and the local community to take custody of wildlife in Maasai Mara (KWS is the custodian of wildlife in Kenya)

The interviewed personnel of NCC said that KWS had partnered with NCC to conserve and protect wildlife in Maasai Mara. KWS provides trained personnel and NCC provides resources to support wildlife management. NCC also trains scouts from the local community to help boost harmonious living and co-existence between the local community and wildlife. Potential scouts are selected from every village and trained at Koiyaki guiding school. For a long time, the Maasai people have lived with wildlife without major conflicts. However, due to change in economic activities, developments and increase in population, there has been increase in human wildlife conflict hence there is need for intervention to reduce the conflict and promote harmonious living between human and wildlife. This collaboration has helped in reducing human wildlife conflict. The local community through trainings provided by NCC to the local community have been educated on the importance of wildlife in Maasai Mara. However, Maasai Mara chief warden said that the community members who kill wild animals are mostly those who are not involved in any tourism business hence they do not benefit from tourism. The major challenge facing this collaboration is lack of enough resources to employ enough personnel from KWS to help in protecting the wildlife in Maasai mara.

Collaborations among local community women groups and lodges/Eco lodges to support the women in selling their handcraft

Several accommodation facilities support local women community projects. The support is through training and funding. This has translated to stable income for the women involved and more knowledge in project management through the training they get from the supporting actors. Mara Sarova Tented lodge and Sekenani women group is a good example of such collaboration. They have provided space for the women to run their project in the compound of the lodge. The lodge buys the hand crafts from the women and also charges the tourists who visit the women's project. The proceeds from the sales and the fee charged are all deposited in the women's project account. Another success story is Basecamp Maasai Brand

(BMB) women's project which is collaboration between the local community women groups and Basecamp Explorer. According to the manager of Basecamp Ecolodge, this collaboration has been a great success. This is because the project has empowered the women with project management skills as well as financially and are now fully running the project on their own. The women who did not join the project during inception sometimes are a problem to the Base Camp as the unemployed women stream to the camp everyday requesting to join BMB women project. This collaboration has one major challenge which is the high profit expectation from the local community. During low season when the tourists visiting the reserve are few the sales equally go down. The local community women depend on these projects so much that the lodges sometimes have to provide extra cash or support for them until the high seasons starts. Some women at times also fail to go to work due to cultural issues. This is because their husbands sometimes can refuse to give them permission to go to work instead they stay home to do domestic chores.

All the collaborations in Maasai Mara have for sure seen the light of day. However, the researcher was not able to access the collaboration agreements. Lack of details of the collaborations might affect the findings of this study as there will not be detail descriptions of the agreements of the area in study.

5.3 Problems in collaborations

Collaborations among different actors can bring together actors representing interests at different levels i.e. national, regional and local levels (Araujo and Bramwell, 2002). In this study, it was found that in all the collaborations that exist in Maasai Mara, committee meetings were held on an average of a quarterly basis (the frequency of meetings varies in different collaborations). The local community interviewed complained of too many meetings by the NCC. A lot of money is spent on paying committee sittings every time the committee has a meeting. The aim of the frequent meetings is to benefit the community through frequent consultation of all actors to help in improving planning and policy making. It was also found out that not all actors cooperate in collaborations. For example very wealthy actors such as those who own large tracts of land are not very cooperative because they use money as power

to influence other actors such as the local community. This has been witnessed when the educated and wealthy members of the Maasai community discouraged the local community from accepting the electronic system of collecting revenue from Maasai Mara. The local community was instead promised better infrastructure and more benefits from tourism. The reason for the rejection of the electronic system was because revenue collected would be accounted for should the system have been installed. This would have minimized corruption which is the biggest ‘honey pot’ for the majority of the educated and wealthy people among the Maasai people in the area of study.

Every interviewee and group interviewed had different complaints against other actors. Complaints on participation and expectations not being met seemed to be the major problems in the area of study. The educated in the society occupy all the decision making positions such as management positions in all projects. Initially the Maasai people were happy to elect the educated to represent them in collaborations. However, they betrayed the local community by putting their own interests above those of the Maasai people. One of the prominent politicians among others has become very corrupt. Many governments however encourage collaborations in planning for ecotourism development. This is done through frequent face-to-face meetings among various actors that are interested or affected by ecotourism development. According to Hall, 2000 and Healey, 1997 such collaboration meetings have the potential to promote discussions, negotiations and initiate mutually agreed development proposals about how ecotourism should be developed.

Among other reasons for growing interests in inter-organizational collaborations is the belief that it may lead to the pooling of knowledge, expertise, capital and other resources, greater coordination of relevant policies, increased acceptance of the resulting policies and more effective implementation (Bramwell and de Araujo, 2002).

In such situations, destinations and organizational groups have a better chance of benefiting more from the collaboration.

5.3.1 Dominance of some actors in ecotourism industry

Collaboration plays a major role in an ecotourism destination; it has a core role in sustainable policy making, planning and management of an ecotourism destination to attain sustainable ecotourism projects. This helps in the formation of governance structure that has ecotourism's best interest at heart (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Vernon *et al.*, 2005; Yuksel *et al.*, 2005). In this context it is evident that there are several collaborations among various actors in the ecotourism destinations. These actors have to find at least a common platform to manage the various projects in place (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Dredge, 2006). However, Hall (2000:150) points out those different actors occupy different positions of power in collaborations. The various actors will tend to make decisions favoring their interest. When that happens, actors that are less influential or powerful their interests tend not to be looked at hence they become least beneficial of the collaboration. Some actors occupy positions that are very influential hence they have more power when it comes to decision making.

In this study several factors that made it difficult to identify legitimate actors were identified:

- i. NCC issuing license to private developers without consulting with directly affected /concerned actors such as local community, KWS or NEMA. This is a sign of actor's such as NCC having different interests. The interviewed personnel from NCC said that NCC did not have any reason why they did not involve other actors as they opted to do things on their own without consulting other actors. NCC generates revenue from Maasai Mara without considering the environmental impact that might be caused by such kind of development.
- ii. The level of poverty in Maasai Mara is very high. Consequently, this has led to the local community taking part in any economic activity to earn a living. Some economic activities such as farming and charcoal burning are not compatible with sustainable development criteria neither is it to ecotourism, hence the local community ends up being exploited by developers. This is ironical as tourism is the biggest economic activity in Kenya with Maasai Mara as a key tourism destination. (Macleod *et al.*, 2010:65).

iii. Over 90% of the tourism facilities visited by the researcher used either the word ‘ecotourism’ or ‘sustainable tourism’ in their brochures. During the interview sessions it was noticed that most of the employees did not understand the meaning of the two terms. This is because the lodge management does not educate their employees on sustainable tourism and also a general lack of knowledge of ecotourism which might have been caused by illiteracy among the Maasai people. In other lodges practices such as releasing raw sewage to Sand River and Mara River (the two major rivers in Maasai Mara), use of high voltage bulbs instead of energy saving bulbs and use of generators as a source of power with a lot of smoke being released to the air were identified. Such practices are against sustainable development and ecotourism practices.

In developed nations such as Australia it has been shown that collaborations in the tourism industry are only effective if the members of the collaboration have a tourism background. This is evident in Australia in the case of private public collaboration. Such an approach excludes other actors such as environmentalists, local community and public interest actors. This leads to a very narrow representation of the environment tourism operates in terms of policy advice and options which can eventually lead to tourism organizations not being in a capacity to manage tourism sustainably (Mandel, 1994; Hall, 2000:153).

5.3.2 Exclusion of actor(s) in decision making

The recognition of communities’ right to manage their own natural resources empowers actors from the central government to those at community level to act as equal partners. It should however be realized that local involvement and interaction among actors is influenced by the existing distribution of power and incentives within and outside a given social group (Rozemeijer & van der Jagt, 2000). Wearing and McDonald (2002) suggest that equal distribution of power and incentives will provide a unique opportunity for rural actors to manage ecotourism by establishing networks of different service providers, organized in such a way as to maximize opportunities and to offer a diverse range of activities geared towards environmental conservation and community development in ecotourism destinations. Castro and Nielsen, 2001 and Johnson *et al.*, 1994 look into how top management such as the

government in the tourism industry has tried to impose solutions for sustainable development but it has been evident that the solutions cannot be long term. The main reason for the failure of sustainable development is because actors such as the local community who are the key players in a tourism destination are given less or none of all the opportunities and incentives to understand sustainable development.

In this study it was found that not all the actors in Maasai Mara were fully involved in ecotourism development and management. As discussed in the previous chapters, participating of very vital actors such as the local community and organizations such as Ecotourism Kenya (EK) and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has not been fully explored, with minimal roles in decision making being witnessed. NEMA only does environmental impact assessment for new developers in Maasai Mara. NEMA is a Kenya government agency that has a mandate to make environment policy and manage the environment. EK works closely with NEMA in terms of environmental issues for facilities that have applied for EK certification. The local community is part of ecotourism according to EK. EK is concerned with eco-labeling and certification of tourism accommodation facilities as explained in chapter three. From research, EK and the local community expressed concerns on how the two actors have not always been consulted before decisions are made. For example there are new accommodation facilities built on breeding areas for wildlife or on migratory routes such as along Mara River. These facilities did not get approval from NEMA before construction but were approved by NCC. Ignorance and corruption are the major causes of some actors such as NEMA being exempted from ecotourism development. Investors bribe licensing personnel at NCC head office. The license is issued without any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) being done, yet the EIA is meant assess if the intended development can damage the ecosystem. For example NEMA does not allow any development on water catchment areas and along wildlife migration routes. EK works with NEMA so when NEMA is not involved then even EK is equally exempted. The local community interviewed agreed that so many lodges and campsites have sprawled in Maasai Mara in the past few years. However, no consultation with the local community had been done before any developments. This shows that the NCC management has ignored the local

community and environment concerned organizations. This has led the local community not embracing ecotourism hence hindrance to sustainable tourism development.

5.3.3 Blurredness of accountability in collaborations

Total lack of accountability or blurredness in accountability in national reserves run by local or indigenous communities has been a major problem and a challenge too. All the actors involved in ecotourism in a destination should foster accountability in the various collaborations that they are in. This study identified several actors who should be accountable for the management of ecotourism in a sustainable way. The actors identified were Ecotourism Kenya (EK), local community, lodge managers, government and conservancy managers. EK is in charge of eco-rating in Maasai Mara. Eco-rating promotes sustainable ecotourism development through promoting tourism that respects the culture of the local community, conservation of the environment and improving the livelihood of the local communities. This is done by awarding accommodation facilities different levels of the eco-rating scheme (gold, silver and bronze) (<http://www.ecotourismkenya.org/> accessed 20th June 2012). The local community plays a major role as it is the sole owner of Maasai Mara National Reserve and individuals from the local community own land outside the reserve. Moreover, it is the local community that have leased out their land for conservation purposes. The local community culture also forms a major attraction in the area in study. Lodge managers are very important in ecotourism development in terms of the choice of sustainable development principles implementation. This actor works also closely with the local community as they employ local community and sometimes lease the accommodation facility from the local community for example Keekorok and Siana Springs lodges. Finally in this study NCC represents the government arm. NCC is the manager of Maasai Mara national reserve on behalf of the local community.

In an interview with the chief executive officer for Ecotourism, he explained how several ecotourism ventures have branded themselves as ‘community-based’ or ‘joint venture’. These ventures are located on community owned land though very little is known about their real economic benefits from the projects they run. Generally tourism ventures in Kenya have

failed to improve the livelihoods of the local communities and the rural communities in particular despite the many claim on the contrary (Honey, 2008:343).

As mentioned in the problem statement, there is no systematic accountability of money collected from the cultural Centers in Maasai Mara. Every cultural center collects its own money and shares it among the few participants in the traditional dance. That is not always the case but over 90% of income in joint community ventures is not accounted for. This study found out that lack of accountability is because there is no proof of payments such as receipts for payments made and no fixed price for activities such as traditional dances performed to tourists at the *manyatta*, home visits and tours around the villages.

Education, language barrier and general lack of knowledge of ecotourism are also issues which affect collaborations in Maasai Mara. Local communities in protected areas have very little knowledge of ecotourism and tourism in general. This is a major disadvantage to the community in terms of business development. This is also the case with a study done in Lombok Indonesia where the local community is not in full control of what is happening in the business of tourism because of illiteracy (Schellhorn, 2010; Schellhorn 2007). Hence the local community is excluded from major decision making and management of the protected area with an excuse of the local community being illiterate. The few educated members of the community do not necessarily represent the community. Thus there is lack of participation or lack of proper representation of the local community at the management levels (Sofield, 1993; Zeppel, 2006; Scheyvens, 2002). In this study it was found that over 90% of the local community members have no or only primary school education. The only language they understand is the local language (Maa). Consequently, this leads to the local community depending highly on the elites from the local community both in terms of communication and business operations.

In this study it was evident that gender equality is still a problem in the study area. No woman sits in any community committee representing the local community at the NCC. During the interview it was revealed that in the Maasai community, women are meant to stay at home and take care of homes and not allowed to speak in front of elders (men). This has led to minimal representation of women in planning and management of tourism in Maasai Mara.

Male dominance in managerial positions in both ecotourism projects and conventional tourism projects was very evident in Maasai Mara. Eco- friendly lodges such those with eco-labels were leading in women involvement and empowerment. In such facilities women had managerial positions. Examples of such lodges are Basecamp Explorer, Mara Sarova Tented Camp, Mara Porini and Mara Porini Lion. Gender equality is a major problem in ecotourism management. Research has shown that men have managed to dominate community-based development initiatives and finally monopolizing the benefit form tourism. For example Bushmen people in the Kalahari Desert and the Maasai people both in Tanzania and Kenya are an example of male dominated communities. In these countries, women are looked down upon and they do not have a say when it comes to decision making. Men make all the decisions without considering the effects such decisions might have on women (Stonich *et al.*, 1995: 8; Rudkin & Hall, 1996; Akama, 1996: 573; Hitcock and Brandenburgh 1990: 22; Sindiga, 1995: 53). Tourism development has gone on with little or no regard to gender changes and involvement (Hitcock and Brandenburgh, 1990:22).

Among the Maasai people in Tanzania women do not have either income or possessions of their own. Retour, a Dutch non-governmental organization wanted to work with the Maasai people to promote small scale tourism ventures. The staff managed to convince the people to allow women to be part of the project for pragmatic reasons. They advised the local community that allowing women to be part of the tourism industry will make it easy to attract funding. Moreover, responsible tourists will not be attracted to a village where women are looked down upon (Schyevens, 2000). Recently, a report for United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has reported examples of ‘good practice’ which indicate that generally in most tourism destinations, women have been equally participating in sustainable ecotourism development (Hemmati, 1999). In a case like in Belize, women have been very successful in ecotourism development and they now own and run an eco-friendly lodge (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996). This led to women earning their own income through bead work business:

Maasai women don't want to radically change their culture. But they do want to create incomes of their own and to put more pressure on men if necessary, to cope with growing needs for income, health-care and education for their children.

Empowerment is a process to enable them to achieve these goals ... (Van der Cammen, 1997: 163).

Such similar situations were noticed during research. The researcher found out that some women were not allowed to work in any tourism facility by the men. “The men believed that other men prey on their women when out working” says Nasieku, Naisenya and Siatamei women from the local community interviewed. In a group interview with a group of women from Talek village and Ololoimutia they all complained about the same issue. Culture and tradition is still a major hindrance to women empowerment. This has prevented women from getting formal employment and the type of economic activity women can engage in. In Indonesia and Himalaya for example, women took over guiding and boat riding as an economic activity. The community was against it hence the women could not get any support from the community in terms of social roles. The villagers thought of the women as prostitutes interested in contacting tourists (Schyevens, 2000; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995: 293).

Corruption is the other issue that has caused blurredness in collaboration and this has been discussed by Honey (2008:317). She sheds light on how corruption has taken toll of tourism in Maasai Mara. The local community has been short changed by powerful politicians within Narok County Council (NCC) or from the central government. Interviewed officials working at the Sekenani, Ololoimutia and Talek gate reported that powerful politicians take a portion of the money collected at the gates, hotels and lodges and other concessions. An example of companies paying hefty fees to NCC is balloon safaris in Maasai Mara. A ride costs approximately 300 dollars per hour and a third of that amount is paid to local officials as ‘administrative fees’. Some politician who has been in leadership for a long period was mentioned as being most corrupt, owning two luxurious hotels inside Maasai Mara national reserve. The interviewees said that the politician and other local officials such of the NCC were behind the land grabbing that took place in Maasai Mara for wheat farming and tourism ventures. Such members of the Maasai community have made the unity among the local community to weaken and there is lack of trust in NCC.

5.4 Conclusion

Collaboration brings together several actors with same interest. Collaboration provides a pool of resources, ideas, a sense of shared ownership and shared interest. The various actors in ecotourism come together with their various ideas and interests to promote ecotourism. Collaboration has helped in pulling up actors like the local community who have often been left out of decision making. Ecotourism calls for all actors to work together in the conservation of natural resources and protection of the local culture with an aim of sustaining the livelihoods of the local community present and future generation. If ecotourism is well understood, collaboration could be the best tool to promote ecotourism. From this study, it is evident that collaborations and partnerships in Maasai Mara have played a major role in the development of sustainable ecotourism. Actors with same interest have come together to promote sustainable development in the tourism industry. Moreover, collaboration in Maasai Mara has helped in the improvement of infrastructure, livelihoods of the local community have improved too and conservation of natural resources has been given great attention by all the actors in the area in Maasai Mara.

There are several successful collaboration stories in the study area. This is good evidence that collaboration is in practice. The collaborations in Maasai Mara have successfully managed to bring together actors and increased understanding of ecotourism among the various actors in ecotourism. For a long time, NCC has been working with the local community due to the collaborations they have. Unfortunately there is not much contribution this collaboration has brought to sustainable ecotourism development due to corruption and lack of transparency in NCC.

After collaboration had been embraced by the various actors working in Maasai Mara, these actors came together to promote ecotourism. At the moment Maasai Mara is boasting of several successful collaborations as discussed in section 5.2. The collaboration that has brought together investors and the local community to put together land for conservation has for sure promoted ecotourism development. The lands that were put together are now under conservation while ecofriendly lodges have also been built in the conservancies. Moreover, collaboration has empowered the local community through trainings and provision of ready market to sell their local produce such as honey and handcrafts. Collaborations have also

significantly helped to reduce human wildlife conflict. This is because KWS and NCC have collaborated together to work towards curbing hum wildlife conflict by training the local community on how to live harmoniously with wildlife and the importance of conservation of natural resources.

However, collaboration has also faced several problems such as farming as a competing economic activity, corruption and dominance of elites and politicians in collaborations. Lack of accountability and transparency has also been a major hindrance to the success of collaboration in Maasai Mara. For example, lack of measures and ways of accounting for revenue collected and unfairness in the distribution. The politicians and elites have refused to embrace the electronic system of revenue collection. This is because the politicians know that once the electronic system has been put in place they will not have a leeway in accessing the revenue collected from the reserve. The elites and politicians also managed to convince the local community to reject the use of electronic system to collect revenue. Due to their influence on the community they were able to convince them that it is not to their best interest to have the electronic system. These challenges have contributed enormously to slugging of ecotourism development in tourism destinations.

Other problems are the lack of knowledge by some actors such as the local community and dominance of elites in the management of Maasai Mara. Politicians are among the elites in Maasai Mara. Politicians have been seen to use their power to influence other actors in regards to decision making. This is because in the area in study, politicians are often respected or rather ‘worshipped’ by the local community. The politicians have been seen to make many promises to the local community which they do not fulfill. The same politicians and other elites have grabbed the local communal owned land without sharing the benefits got from the land with the local community. A lot of respondents interviewed were illiterate. Illiteracy is a major hindrance to understanding ecotourism in the area in study. Illiteracy has led to the elites who are more often educated to dominate the illiterate actors. Illiteracy and dominance of elites has caused unfairness in collaboration and total omission of some actors in ecotourism hence slugging development of sustainable ecotourism development.

Chapter Six

6 Conclusion, recommendations and limitations

6.1 Introduction

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has become a well-established and accepted concept within the field of ecotourism. As indicated in Chapter 1, it allows various actors including the local community, to be involved and manage ecotourism projects. The recognition of communities' right to manage their own natural resources empowers actors from the central government and those at community level to work as equal partners.

However, research has shown that there is a lack of proper communication, a difference of beliefs, values, and perceptions regarding nature conservation between actors in ecotourism which result in misunderstanding and mistrust and the exclusion of local people in policy and decision making, implementation, monitoring and eventually poor control and management of natural resources (Chapter 1). This situation required that the different actors be identified and that their perceptions, goals and activities be studied, analyzed, understood and taken into account and coordinated in all ecotourism projects. Since, little attempts had been made from a human science perspective to examine the various actors in ecotourism in terms of their perceptions, goals and responsibilities/functions this study undertook to do so by making use of an actor centered approach to analyze and understand ecotourism (Chapter 1).

6.2 Different actors

The need to understand the development of sustainable ecotourism development has been tied to the identification of ecotourism actors and the need for collaboration among actors in the tourism industry. Actors have been defined as individuals or organizations that directly influence actions in terms of problem solving. The major actors that are involved in ecotourism are governments, organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), tourists, tourism firms, and the local community.

The different actors were studied in respect of their roles, knowledge, and access to resources, expectations and perceptions. A comparison of these variables reveals that considerable differences exist between authors with regard to these variables which hinders sustainable ecotourism management and development in Maasai Mara. This study looked into actors such as government, private sector, NGOs and the local community in Maasai Mara.

Role: The government is represented by Narok County Council (NCC) in this study. NCC manages Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) on behalf of the community. The major role of NCC in Maasai Mara is to manage Maasai Mara on behalf of the government in terms of collecting revenue, the protection of wildlife through patrols and projects like rhino surveillance, garbage control through the provision of dustbins at tourist stop points, planting of trees, provision of a code of ethics to everyone entering the reserve and the employment of local community members.

The private sector was represented by accommodation facilities. The major role of the accommodation facilities is to provide accommodation for tourists as well as some times itineraries. Also, accommodation facilities promote ecotourism initiatives such as environmental awareness to the local community, government and private sector in Maasai Mara. They also erect toilet facilities at the tourist stop points, support schools in the area, besides planting trees inside as well as outside the reserve.

Ecotourism Kenya (EK) and Kenya Community Based Trust (KECOBAT) are the two NGOs that were investigated. The major role of EK is to provide and strengthen the link between the environment, tourism and local communities through flagship programmes such as ecorating facilities, membership to EK, community outreach programmes, involvement in research and consultancy, standards and best practices in ecotourism as well as leadership and mentorship programmes. Another important role of EK is the reviewing and creation of policies in the tourism industry pertaining mainly to environment and the people affected by tourism.

The main role of KECOBAT is to empower the community living in/around protected areas to benefit from tourism and conservation. This is achieved through KECOBAT advocating for fair partnerships between the community and the investors. The local community in Maasai Mara form part of the tourist attraction in Maasai Mara. The local community promotes

ecotourism by interacting with tourists to help the tourists understand and interpret the local community culture. The local community members perform dances, make and sell handcraft and also take tourists out on walks and safaris in order to earn a living.

The preceding paragraphs have pinpointed the roles of the various actors in Maasai Mara. It is obvious that all the actors in Maasai Mara have a role in promoting sustainable development of ecotourism. The actors have promoted development of sustainable ecotourism through different ways as seen above. However, there is duplication of roles for instance EK and KECOBAT. Duplication of roles has sometimes caused the two actors to work as rivals which shouldn't be the case. The local community being part of the attraction has also faced challenges of exploitation and exemption from decision making by other actors. This has led to the local community rebelling to embrace sustainable development of ecotourism. There is need for all actors in the ecotourism industry to work well with each other in order to achieve their objectives.

Access to resources: The local community assigned NCC to collect revenue on their behalf due to lack of transparency and corruption among the various actors operating in Maasai Mara. The previous actors collecting revenue from MMNR did not remit all the revenue to NCC. And as a result, the local community did not fully benefit from tourism in the area. NCC has signed a memorandum of understanding with all the lodges and camps in the area to employ the local community in order for the local community to be incorporated in tourism development. The memorandum states that 80% of the staff should be from the local community. Moreover, 19% of the total revenue collected every month is given back to the local community. EK and KECOBAT both depend on donors and well-wishers to support tourism community initiatives. The local community depends on revenue by NCC, well-wishers and donors, livestock keeping, selling of handcrafts and wages for those who are employed by tourism firms.

However, access to resources has not been very easy for ecotourism actors as the availability of resources is not consistent hence barring or slowing development of ecotourism. For example during the time that interviews were conducted at KECOBAT, the organization was

at the verge of closing down due to a lack of funding. EK equally complained on how often they have to lay off some of their staff in order to manage the little funds they have.

The local community members do not have access to enough resources to support their day to day needs. This situation is attributed to the tourism firms which do not remunerate the community members employed by them properly as well as to ecotourism development since the local community had to abandon their traditional economic activity which was cattle keeping in order to accommodate ecotourism. Compared to pastoralism, ecotourism is giving them little income. Moreover, women are not allowed to access resources such as water and firewood as most of the land in Maasai Mara has been set aside for conservation and as such, human movement in the conservation areas is restricted.

Expectations: The various actors working in Maasai Mara have one expectation in common, namely an increased income to be created by ecotourism. This expectation has been boosted thanks to a lot of training and empowerment of the community. As a result of these activities there is increased understanding of ecotourism and involvement of most actors. Apart from the overall expectation of an increased income by ecotourism, there are also specific expectations of how it can be achieved. The private sector expects that the provision of accommodation facilities will increase the number of guests since tourists normally expect pristine natural tourism destinations. NGOs expect a lot of collaboration among actors as collaboration brings a pool of ideas, finances and interests which would help in promoting sustainable development of ecotourism. NCC expects cooperation from all actors to make management of Maasai Mara easier. With all that said, it is evident that actors' expectations favour the development of ecotourism.

Knowledge: Different actors have different perceptions of ecotourism. These perceptions find expression in the definitions of ecotourism by the different actors. This was evident with EK and KECOBAT having different definitions of ecotourism. Where KECOBAT's definition emphasised community involvement, EK's definition was more inclusive of most of the principles of ecotourism. On the other hand, NCC and local community members could barely explain what ecotourism is. This lack of understanding of ecotourism was aggravated by

illiteracy among local community members since it also impeded effective communication with other actors.

Interest and values: Motivation behind every actor working in the tourism industry varies. Actors such as the private sector are merely interested in profit making while other actors, such as accommodation facilities, government and local community, have interests in and value both profit making and sustainable development. The NGOs are the only actors whose main aim is to promote the sustainable development of ecotourism. There is a need to educate all ecotourism actors on the importance of sustainable ecotourism development.

6.3 Land ownership

In Maasai Mara, local community members with the help of ecotourism developers have put land together for conservation and sustainable ecotourism development. Chapter four has the discussion on landownership in the study area and how the various forms of land ownership have affected sustainable ecotourism development. Buckley (2003) outlines land tenure into four groups that is private, communal, public and public protected land. The land ownership in the study area was identified as either communal or private tenure. This kind of land ownership has been seen to be common in tourism destinations as discussed in chapter four. In communal land ownership, NCC makes decisions on behalf of the local community. Decision making in communal owned land might take long as NCC has to consult the local community before implementing any change. In privately owned land, individual owners of the land have a final say on their land. Because individuals have a right to decide what to do with their land, it has worked for and against ecotourism development. Some private land owners have converted their land into conservancies while others have used their land for farming.

The reserve is still communally owned while the buffer zone has been divided by government and given to individual families of the local community. The reason for subdivision of communally owned land in the buffer zone is because of mismanagement of resources in Maasai Mara by NCC, the lack of trust among actors and the corruption in communal land management by NCC which compelled the government to subdivide the land. Land

subdivision was initially intended to help in dividing the resources in the buffer zone equally among the local community members but it is not the case currently.

Communally owned land has often been used for conservation and hence promoting ecotourism. The local community benefits from their land by receiving monthly income from the actors leasing their land. It was established that the private land neighboring the reserve that is privately owned has been leased to private developers who have established conservancies. The initiative of leasing land from the local community has tremendously boosted sustainable ecotourism development in Maasai Mara. Investors leasing land from the local community have improved the relationship between investors and the local community.

Land subdivision has faced challenges as some local community members are bribing their way to getting bigger pieces of land compared to other members of the local community. Moreover, land subdivision has majorly affected development of sustainable ecotourism as the economic activities being carried out in privately owned land is not controlled, hence the fear of the depletion of natural resources in privately owned land. Conservation has come in to save the buffer zone from being turned into farm land. Instead it has been set aside for wildlife conservation and ecotourism purposes. The privately owned pieces of land is facing major competition between ecotourism development and farming. Actors in ecotourism have been able to convince some land owners to lease their land to ecotourism developers. These pieces of land have been put together to form conservancies. However, due to the competition from farming, ecotourism as an economic activity has had a difficult time since farming gives higher returns than ecotourism. This has led to several land owners preferring farming to leasing out land for ecotourism development and conservation purposes.

Land subdivision has also affected the local community culture. This is because the local community members are not able to access the sacred areas as some of the areas have been fenced and no one can enter the fenced area. The sacred areas were majorly areas where the local community conducted their prayers and performed traditional rituals. These are areas like the forests, rivers and hills. The social values and practices have also been affected by land subdivision. Certain cultural practices were conducted on certain parts of the area like the Loita plains where the *Eunoto* cultural practice, which marked the end of warriorhood among

the youth of the local community, was performed. The land where this practice was performed has been subdivided and now forms part of the Northern conservancy. As a result the local community does not have a place for conducting this practice or ceremonies of a similar nature anymore. Due to land division, the Maasai way of living has been majorly affected. The *manyatta* style of living is deteriorating, hence affecting the traditional political leadership of the local community. A considerable number of families have left the *manyattas* for private pieces of land. Currently there are very few *manyattas* left in Maasai Mara.

The economic values of the local community have equally been affected by the changes in land ownership and tenure in Maasai Mara. Ecotourism development does not support pastoralism as an economic activity as it puts pressure on the natural resources in an area which may lead to the depletion of natural resources. The Maasai community has been pastoralists for a very long time. Their major economic activity, pastoralism, was practised in vast land that was communally owned. The pastoralists would move freely across the land as there were no fences. The introduction of land subdivision and fencing has majorly affected the local community's traditional economic activity as there is now little land for pastoralism. Large pieces of land have been used for either crop farming or conservation and consequently the local community has had to change their economic activities. This change of economic activities has in a way favored ecotourism development since the local community members have been integrated into ecotourism development as it provides a source of income in the area.

The private land owners who are part of the conservancies have better relations with the local community than the private land owners that are not part of conservancies. This is because conservancies support ecotourism which calls for community involvement and integration of the community in planning and management of all projects. The private investors are more interested in the short term benefits than long term profit making. As a result they do not work closely with the local community. The investors that have worked closely with the local community have managed and are still in the process of convincing more private land owners to lease their lands for conservation. For sustainable development to be achieved there is need for actors to work together by considering every actor's interests, expectations, perceptions and values as discussed in Chapter two. Conservation areas are majorly reserved for

sustainable ecotourism development. This kind of development gives the local community long term benefits as the local community is integrated in the planning and management of all the projects which increase their sense of ownership and leads to cooperation from the local community due to the benefits they get from conservancies. This study recommends the development of a mechanism to make ecotourism more enticing to the local community and thus be supportive of the conservation ventures.

6.4 Community involvement

This study also investigated how the local community in the study area is involved in ecotourism and the effects ecotourism has on members' lifestyles. Chapter four focused on the involvement of the local community in ecotourism. Several ecotourism conferences have been held and the outcomes have always emphasized the need for community involvement in ecotourism. The need for women involvement in planning and decision making in ecotourism has also been emphasized as women have often been left out of decision making and management. The involvement of the local community in all stages of development is important as it helps in the integration of their interests in the planning, implementation and management of the tourism industry. The involvement of the local community in ecotourism has to go beyond economic benefits, environmental conservation and social-cultural appreciation to allow the local community to appreciate their own natural resources. When all these factors have been considered the chances are very good that the local community will have a better understanding and appreciation of ecotourism which could translate into an increased sense of ownership, conservation and eventually sustainable ecotourism development.

In Maasai Mara, a high number of the local community members have been involved in ecotourism. The local community participates in the development of ecotourism through leasing of land to ecotourism developers, working in eco-friendly lodges to support ecotourism and embracing eco-friendly economic activities. Eco-friendly lodges such as Basecamp Explorer, Porini group of camps and Mara Sarova Tented Camp are among the successful lodges which have involved the local community in their management. This has improved the livelihoods of the local community as well as the conservation of the local culture. However, in some areas the local community members who are not involved in any

way in ecotourism are posing many challenges to ecotourism as they are practising economic activities that are not eco-friendly, such as large scale wheat farming, cutting trees for charcoal and large scale cattle farming.

Local community involvement in ecotourism have been majorly hindered by lack of knowledge, resources, cultural barriers and lack of communication among the various actors in the tourism industry. Lack of knowledge in ecotourism is due to the high level of illiteracy among the local community members. This has made it difficult for actors like NGOs and NCC to train the local community in matters regarding to ecotourism. The level of education is so low with over 80% illiteracy in all the respondents that were interviewed. This has made it difficult for the local community to be involved in planning and management in ecotourism projects. However, most actors are putting effort to train the local community on the importance of embracing ecotourism from the traditional tourism. Koiyaki Guiding school has really come in handy in regards to giving the local community formal education specifically in sustainable ecotourism development. From the private sector's side, the accommodation facilities have also made an attempt to educate their staff on the importance of ecotourism and have even introduced eco-friendly measures and policies in their facilities to ensure environmental friendly practices. Furthermore, training and education programmes in Maasai Mara have helped in improving communication and coordination among actors. This is because a lot of local community members could not communicate in any other language other than *Maa*, making it very difficult for the local community to work with non *Maa* speakers. With the language barrier being dealt with, coordination among actors has significantly improved.

For a long time women have often been left out of decision making and management in tourism destinations with men dominating management positions. However, in recent times ecotourism projects and facilities have involved women at all levels of planning and implementation of ecotourism policies and projects. This has not only led to the economic empowerment of women but it has also raised their self-esteem. In this regard, Basecamp Explorer is a good example of actors who have fully involved the local community from the lowest level of management to the top. The facility also has a women group that is used to empower other women from the local community. Mara Porini, Sarova Mara Tented Camp

among other ecofriendly accommodation facilities in Maasai Mara also have community projects empowering the local community, including women. In Maasai Mara women are rarely involved in management, which means that they are exempted from decision making. However, a few lodges have women in management positions.

For successful sustainable ecotourism development, there is therefore need to ensure that the local community is fully involved so that they do not antagonize the gains made. It is therefore recommended that other actors should reach out to those local community members who are engaging in other economic activities and woo them to embrace ecotourism ventures. There is also need to include more women in managerial positions as they seem to be sidelined in Maasai Mara.

6.5 Collaboration challenges

Collaboration has been perceived as various actors with different values, perceptions and beliefs, working together in the same framework. When actors work together, they provide a pool of ideas, resources, shared interests and a sense of shared ownership. Hence, collaboration implies that the available local knowledge in decision making and planning is applied. Ideally, in collaboration all actors are involved in decision-making, planning and management and hence, ensure sustainable ecotourism development.

In Maasai Mara collaboration has helped in bringing on board actors like the local community who had often been left out of management. In Maasai Mara there are several collaborations that are in existence such as collaboration between NCC and the local community, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in collaboration with NCC and the local community, collaboration between women groups in Maasai Mara with accommodation facilities, collaboration among group ranches and collaboration between private land owners with private investors. The various collaborations have brought together various actors all with a shared aim, namely to promote ecotourism.

There are several success stories in collaboration as discussed in Chapter five. Collaboration among conservancies has helped to raise finance to support a guiding school, training the local community in how to develop and support ecotourism and improving the livelihoods of the local community. Collaboration between NCC and Kenya Wildlife Service has helped in

the reduction of human wildlife conflict through educating the local community on the importance of wildlife conservation. Collaboration among women groups and ecolodges has helped in empowering women and improving their livelihoods through training, employment and providing a ready market of their handcrafts. Collaboration between NCC and the local community has empowered some local community through job creation and a source of income through the revenue collected from MMNR which is distributed to the local community. It is evident that collaboration has played a major role in bringing together actors with the same objectives which is to promote sustainable ecotourism development. The history of ecotourism in Maasai Mara was characterised by a lot of dominance by elites and politicians in the tourism industry. With the development of ecotourism and collaborations in Maasai Mara, there has been a significant improvement in terms of the inclusion of all actors in the planning and management of ecotourism. The local community needs to be given opportunities and incentives to understand sustainable development instead of being excluded from the management of projects. The local community who is the actor who has been looked down upon for a long time has recently become more involved in decision making in respect of the development of ecotourism.

Collaboration in the ecotourism industry has faced various challenges, such as the dominance of some actors in the management, the exclusion of actors in decision making and blurredness of accountability. The various actors in MMNR have not yet fully successfully managed to work together. All these have slowed or hindered the development of sustainable ecotourism. There is therefore a dire need for a balanced approach from all actors so that no group dominates or appears to dominate the other in collaboration. In Maasai Mara, the collaboration between the local community and NCC is dominated by elites and politicians. For sustainable development to be achieved there has to be involvement of all actors in management and planning of a project. However, involving diverse actors in a project can make decision making time consuming should some actors feel that collaboration reduces their power or influence or when there is distrust among actors. For example, in the case of MMNR, NCC often makes decisions without consulting the local community and other actors within the jurisdiction.

When some actors are left out of decision making, sustainability cannot be achieved as the actors who were not involved in the initial planning could easily sabotage a project. Moreover, exclusion of some actors in decision making might be caused by a tradition that has existed for a long time where some actors have always been left out of planning and management. Corruption is also a challenge in collaboration. Corruption has caused mismanagement of funds and favouritism in distribution of revenue especially to the local community members. Actors have to look out for honesty and transparency among members in order to be able to be accountable to all actors in collaboration. Lack of resources has hindered development of ecotourism as a lack of resources reduces the contribution of an actor in a collaboration hence an actor can be left out of collaboration. Resource(s) interdependency can work against collaboration. Actors who have interest in certain resources can work together as far as they are all benefiting. However, as much as they are working together, these actors can be malicious and go to an extent of exploiting other actors to obtain resources at the expense of other players.

Collaborative working in developing countries may face a lot of difficulties which are both internal and external and at times these challenges are difficult to overcome. The challenges can either be governance or cultural limitations. Such problems are a menace to collaboration in ecotourism destinations. Cultural limitations can affect local community participation in collaboration. For example in the Maasai community, women are not allowed to participate in meetings and even when present cannot contribute ideas unless they channel them through their husbands. This is because in the Maasai community traditionally men are leaders while women are their subordinates. Because of this kind of arrangement women are easily left out in the decision making process. In terms of governance, the local government has suffered from bureaucracies and jealousy issues which fragment planning and decision making processes and become an obstruction to coordinated policy making. The actors in management can easily use their power to influence other actors' decision making in management. In Maasai Mara, NCC is the local government in-charge of the area. However, due to power issues in governance, there have been problems affecting the management of Maasai Mara due to powerful elites in NCC looking down upon other officials working for NCC. This practice of politicians and elites has led to delayed decision making, delayed

policy making, and arrested development. This is because the politicians and elites want to make decisions favouring their own interests without caring much about the negative effect their decisions might have on other actors. Collaboration is an important tool in the development of sustainable ecotourism and hence there is need to look deeply into the challenges of collaboration in ecotourism destinations.

6.6 Limitations and recommendations

Language proved to be a barrier. Since the local community is predominantly Maasai speaking, most of them were not well conversant with English or Kiswahili although these are the two official languages in Kenya. This was an impediment to communication with the local community. This necessitated the use of an interpreter which implied that special caution had to be taken to prevent misunderstanding and consequent distortion of information.

Secondly, the Maasai culture appeared to be an obstacle as far as it concerned the interviewing of women. The Maasai culture is patriarchal and as such revolves around male leadership which allows very little room for women to be interviewed, let alone to sit on committees that affect their lives and to which they would be able to add particular value, due to their field of knowledge and experience.

Thirdly, the high illiteracy level of the local community made it difficult for the local community to understand what the purpose of the research was. Due to illiteracy, the data collected from the local community could never be submitted in written form to members for discussion and triangulation. This implied that for control purposes all obtained data had to be conveyed orally which required that discussion topics often had to be repeated and explained in order to ensure that they were understood properly.

The limitation caused by illiteracy reveals itself also in respect of all the other facets of ecotourism, namely policy and decision making, planning, implementation and management. In this regard the words of Jamal and Stronza (2009: 171) are of significance when they remark that an informed local community ‘is a valuable ally for protected area administrators with respect to gathering support for policy, appreciating the purpose and mandate of the protected area as visitors, and assuming stewardship roles’. It follows logically that illiteracy has to be addressed in order to involve the local community to participate in decision-making,

planning and management of ecotourism as an able-bodied actor. This should reduce the lack of understanding of ecotourism as well as the conflicts between the local community and other actors.

The impact that ecotourism has had on community members in so far as many have given up their traditional economic activities of livestock and wheat farming in anticipation of the prosperity that ecotourism would bring, should be researched. Such research should be extended to include the effect of corruption and the exploitation of local community members by local leaders and other actors in ecotourism on people's lives. Tourism clearly does not only benefit people but can also detrimentally affect local communities.

This study found that human-wildlife conflicts exist because of the disappointment in ecotourism by the local community. However, this phenomenon requires more profound research before it can be addressed appropriately. Research on community members' perceptions of wildlife and nature conservation should be regarded as a first important step in order to find a solution to this problem since relative limited research (cf. De Beer, 1999; Eckbert *et al.*, 2001; Phuthego, 2004; Boonzaaier, 2010), has been done in this regard.

Discontent among the local community is also caused by the fact that there is no access to the reserve although there are sacred places inside the reserve. Landscape research on the cultural meanings attached to the natural phenomena should be undertaken in order to create an understanding among other actors, in particular the NCC and conservation management, of the local community's perceptions and expectations of natural phenomena in the reserve.

Research should also be done on the representation of nature's interests as an actor. This need falls in the 'discourse of ecological modernisation' with its accent on a zero sum game (Jamal & Stronza, 2009:174). In the case of Maasai Mara the power is in the hands of the NCC and there is little reason to believe that the NCC is the right actor to represent nature's interests since 'ecological modernisation' normally requires the intersection of the ecological and socio-cultural domains. In the case of Maasai Mara it also requires a linkage with the tourism domain. It is the judgement that these required intersections exceed the capabilities of the NCC. Furthermore, such research should also include the role of indigenous knowledge in

nature conservation and the role that human-nature relations play in collaboration initiatives addressing conservation and utilisation issues (cf. Jamal & Stronza 2009:176).

To conclude, this study found that an actor centred approach was the appropriate one to follow since it is not only concerned about the institutional arrangements and who the actors are, but specifically how they work. Hence, this approach not only enabled the researcher to identify the different stakeholders, but also to come to an understanding of the differences in respect of their interests, knowledge, perceptions, expectations of ecotourism and of one another in terms of role fulfilment as well as their access to resources. Through studying the actors as they create networks with one another, this study also enabled the researcher to achieve a better understanding of the relation between tourism, conservation and development. Hence, it is the conclusion that any future research, indicated in the preceding paragraphs, can use this approach fruitfully since it provides not only for nature-society, but also for actor-structure, endogenous-exogenous, global-local and organisation-substance, as in policy arrangements (Van der Duim, 2010:28).

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