



Natural resource dependence, livelihoods and development

Synthesis of key recommendations for Kenya and Tanzania



IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office 2008



Introduction

Sustainable use of biodiversity can underpin human wellbeing and poverty reduction. However, demographic trends, over exploitation and health epidemics have strained natural resources and threatens to greatly diminish the world's collective biodiversity.

In Africa, millions of coastal dwellers depend heavily on natural resources to support their livelihoods, but also have a significant impact on them. For example, over-fishing and destructive fishing, coupled with broad-scale environmental degradation, have already reduced the productivity of coastal fisheries in East Africa, lowering catches and undermining livelihoods. This is in part due to the pressing needs of widespread poverty, and continues because poverty reduction strategies are failing in coastal communities. In Kenya and Tanzania the majority of coastal communities are categorised as living at or below national poverty lines. Coastal communities also remain disempowered in terms of ownership over the marine resources on which they depend, which remain common pool and thus particularly prone to over exploitation.

In part because of this, success of the numerous marine resource management and development initiatives implemented in East Africa over the last 15 years has been limited if poverty and natural resource health are used as indicators. The trend in harvested marine and coastal resources status is still downward, and poverty levels in rural coastal communities have changed little.



IUCN's Response

Recognizing that marine resources, while already contributing to coastal livelihoods, have the potential to support poverty alleviation efforts if managed sustainably, IUCN's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office set out to examine what constrains sustainable management and development. A programme was implemented between June 2007 and May 2008 under the projects "Building capacity and strengthening policies for coastal communities to manage their marine resources in East Africa", supported by Keidanren Nature Conservation Foundation (KNCF); and "Conservation as an Asset for Livelihoods in Eastern Africa", funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Ford Foundation, building on three interlinked strategic processes:

A. Bottom-up policy advice

Using national workshops in Kenya and Tanzania for community consultation, lesson learning and sharing knowledge and information on the marine environment, livelihoods, resource management and conservation, sets of community authored policy advisories were prepared for Kenya and Tanzania.

B. Case study analysis

Focusing on Tanga Region in northern Tanzania, and the Kiunga area in northern Kenya, the perceptions of coastal people were mapped with respect to natural resource use and dependence, changes in resource status, and what effect conservation and natural resource management have had on socioeconomic development, in order to understand the bottlenecks to good governance of common pool marine resources and poverty reduction in coastal communities.

C. Mariculture exposure and learning

Including a workshop in Kenya and site visits to aquaculture operations in Zanzibar, the process sought to expose community representatives to examples of key experiences in livelihood improvement through mariculture, and facilitate dialogue between managers, mariculture practitioners, and representatives from leading national institutions, and to discuss national policy regarding community based mariculture development.

Findings and recommendations

Detailed results and recommendations from the activities are presented in the community policy advisories and case study reports listed below. Broad findings are outlined in the following paragraphs.

1. Harmonise, disseminate and enforce marine and coastal legislation

Legislation governing coastal issues is not universally accessible, nor universally applied, as pointed out by communities both in Kenya and Tanzania. Legislation should be translated into Kiswahili and be made easily available to all concerned, in particular natural resource dependent communities. It is urgently recommended that marine-related legislation is applied in a consistent and fair manner, that it is properly enforced and offenders are prosecuted. To this end courts and responsible departments should be strengthened and need to increasingly work with local conservation committees. Laws and policies governing marine and coastal environment should also be reviewed in order to harmonise them, reduce conflicts and overlapping mandates, as well as in some cases to increase severity of penalties.

2. Establish and strengthen local management bodies such as BMUs

Many of the challenges to sustainable management of harvested marine and coastal resources remain due to the fact that it is an open access system. The Beach Management Units (BMUs) being developed in both Kenya and Tanzania should be seen as a key mechanism in addressing this. However, while a welcome development the BMU structure is not fully appropriate for coastal fisheries management, where a larger scale approach defined according to areas fished rather than landing sites is required. Lessons learned from the Collaborative Management Areas developed in Tanga Region should be incorporated in developing BMUs for coastal fisheries in both Tanzania and Kenya. It is recognized that, if defined, established and operated in appropriate ways, BMUs will serve a key function in addressing several of the priority issues listed here.

3. Empower coastal communities

Coastal communities, the primary stakeholders in coastal areas, need to be empowered to play a more prominent role in environmental policy formulation, e.g. through formally instituted networks. Currently there are few grassroots mechanisms to voice community concerns or seek redress. Similarly, communities should be given a greater responsibility in the management of MPAs,

which is still largely seen as a process driven by and for government and the tourism sector, and not clearly benefiting coastal communities, as indicated by the people of Kiunga Marine National Reserve in Kenya. This requires significant training programmes to enhance community and government capacity and competence.

4. Move away from 'handout' financing models

Financing community development needs to be broadened from 'handout' models. Marketing and trade associations need to be established and sustained to improve business prospects for both capture fisheries and mariculture, and appropriate policy frameworks developed. Public-private sector partnerships in micro-credit and finance need to grow, and entrepreneur and business training provided within the countries' poverty reduction strategies and initiatives. Economic benefits of Marine Protected Areas should be ploughed back to local communities, a requirement stressed among coastal communities both in Tanzania and Kenya.

5. Encourage livelihoods enhancement and diversification

Diversifying and enhancing coastal livelihoods is an urgent need. Mariculture presents an opportunity for community development as well as for reducing stress on natural resources. However, while village scale development should be encouraged it must be carried out within a sound policy framework that safeguards against environmentally poor practices. Markets should be open to increase competition between buyers and not be controlled by the government, but should guard against exploitation by investors and traders. Mariculture should be recognized as an important alternative income generating activity, incorporated into national economic development planning for poverty eradication and achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

6. Integrate resource management in poverty reduction strategies

Poverty reduction strategies and sectoral development plans do not presently consider sufficiently the high reliance on natural resources among coastal dwellers. Thus they do not encompass resource management as a key element to poverty reduction and sustainable development, nor do they address many of the recommendations provided above. Mainstreaming of environmental concern and cross-sectoral integration need to become keystone elements of development and poverty alleviation planning.

Outputs: Community Advisories and Case Studies

Becha H. 2008. National workshop for building capacity and strengthening policies for coastal communities to sustainably manage marine resources in Kenya; Titanic hotel, Kilifi, 17th-19th December 2007. Workshop report; IUCN/CORDIO/EAWLS

Becha H. 2008. National workshop for building the capacity of coastal communities and strengthening policy for the sustainable management of Tanzanian marine resources. Workshop, 28 – 31 January 2008, Tanga Regional Coastal Resource Centre. Workshop Report. CORDIO/IUCN.

IUCN 2008. Building capacity for coastal communities to manage marine resources in Kenya – 5 Community Policy Advisories on priority issues. IUCN ESARO 2008.

IUCN 2008. Building capacity for coastal communities to manage marine resources in Tanzania – 5 Community Policy Advisories on priority issues. IUCN ESARO 2008.

Mirera H.O.D. and Samoilys M.A. 2008. Mariculture Exchange. Community visits between Kenya and Tanzania. IUCN ESARO 2008.

Samoilys M.A. and Kanyange N.W. 2008. Natural resource dependence, livelihoods and development: Perceptions from Kiunga, Kenya. IUCN ESARO 2008.

Samoilys M.A. and Kanyange N.W. 2008. Natural resource dependence, livelihoods and development: Perceptions from Tanga, Tanzania. IUCN ESARO 2008.

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