

Case Study

Community-based tourism ventures, benefits and challenges: Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust, Central District, Botswana

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ABSTRACT

The impact of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is seen by many as a 'win-win' situation with reference to natural resources conservation and the improvement of local communities' livelihoods. However, community engagements in CBNRM and tourism have elicited many views as far as natural resources utilization is concerned. Some affirm the importance of CBNRM; others question it, while others call for its improvement. The premise of this study is to investigate the benefits and challenges of community-based tourism in one community of Botswana. Results show that although some benefits have been identified, there remain many challenges for the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust (KRST). It is evident that for community-based tourism to bring more benefits for locals, more interaction is needed between them and the Trust management. Increased local involvement and participation will help to ensure that people are empowered and the conservation of natural resources takes place. This paper asserts that community-based ventures, if properly run and managed, can promote the conservation of natural resources and increase local benefits through participation in tourism activities.

Keywords:

Community-based tourism
Community-Based Natural Resource
Management
Community participation
Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust
Botswana

1. Introduction

During the 1950s and 1960s, community development was introduced as an approach to rural development. It was made popular by the United Nations during the same period as many countries in the less developed world gained independence and were decolonized (Catley, 1999). The rationale behind community development was to educate and 'remove the stigma of charity and involve local people in decision-making' (Catley, 1999, 6). However, this approach was found to have flaws and in the late 1960s it was discovered that rural development was hindered by top-down approaches to development and hence the adoption of an approach that calls for more active involvement of locals in development issues.

Aid agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development, World Bank and the United Nations started promoting community participation as early as the late 1960s and early 1970s. This approach was promoted to involve locals in decision-making, programme implementation, sharing the benefits of development and evaluating the programmes (Catley, 1999).

Since the 1980s, tourism literature has called for the inclusion and involvement of local communities in tourism as local residents

are seen as a key resource in sustaining the product (Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002). Community participation is often regarded as one of the most essential tools, if tourism is to make a substantial contribution to the national development of a country (Lea, 1988). According to the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust (KRST) management plan, community participation is 'a planned effort to influence community opinion through good character and responsible performance, based upon mutually satisfactory two-way communication' (Grossman & Associates, n.d.). Tosun (2000, 615) asserts that it is a 'tool whose aim is to readjust the balance of power and to reassert local community views against those of the developers or the local authority'.

For some, community participation in tourism ensures that there is sustainability (Woodley, 1993), better opportunities for local people to gain benefits from tourism taking place in their locality, positive local attitudes and the conservation of local resources (Tosun, 2006). Participation is emphasised at the local level to facilitate physical development, the inclusion of community wishes in tourism planning and development and to ensure economic returns from the industry (Murphy, 1985).

The concept of sustainable development, made famous by the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), promotes community participation and calls for the protection and improvement of the quality of life of communities influenced by tourism development (Milne & Ewing,

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2004). Moreover, more emphasis is placed on issues of sustainability, social equity and environmental responsibility, thereby ensuring that development provides opportunities for people of different incomes and skills, promotes a better quality of life for all, and most importantly protects the environment (Roseland, 2005). Local participation includes the empowerment and involvement of communities in decision-making, implementation and identifying local problems (France, 1998) as well as introducing something that is adapted to local needs (Lea, 1988).

A wide held belief by most scholars is that unless local residents are empowered and participate fully in decision-making and ownership of tourism developments, tourism will not reflect their values and will be less likely to generate sustainable outcomes (Lea, 1988). Perhaps, community involvement can be seen as important due to the local knowledge that exists within communities, which can be of major importance in tourism development.

This increased participation of locals involves the inclusion of low-income people in both rural and urban areas, who are not normally involved in government processes (Lea, 1988). Citizen participation is regarded as something which is very essential and that should be encouraged because it makes the planning process more effective, equitable and legitimate, as long as those who participate are representative of the whole community and are capable of looking after collective interests as well as those of their own group (Buane, Jentoft, Maurstad, Søren, & Karlsen, 2005). Ideally, community participation should lead to community economic development which 'calls for citizens to shape their local economies by influencing the type of business, industry, and employment opportunities in their own backyards' (Roseland, 2005, 168). It, therefore, involves designing development in a way that encourages intended beneficiaries to be at the forefront and participate in their own development, by mobilising their own resources, making their own decisions and defining their own needs and how to meet those (Stone, 1989). Furthermore, community participation is seen as a useful tool for educating locals about their rights, laws and political good sense, and, therefore, it is very important for public education (Tosun, 2000).

Overall, the participation of the local community is important in ensuring that visitors get an unforgettable, pleasant tourist experience, while at the same time enabling the community to derive benefits from their visits. Residents have the ability to provide helpful input in decision-making processes and, therefore, it is essential that they are actively involved in tourism planning and developments (Murphy, 1985). The call for community participation is based on the assumption that participation lessens opposition to development, minimises negative impacts and revitalises economies (Hardy et al., 2002).

The World Tourism Organization (1997) maintains that many countries rely on tourism because it generates revenue, creates employment and promotes private sector growth as well as infrastructural development. In Botswana, tourism is the second largest economic sector, after diamonds (Mbaiwa, 2004, Mmopelwa & Blignaut, 2006) and contributes 9.7% to the country's GDP (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2007). It is also alluded that it is the second largest export sector after diamonds and provides employment for nearly 13 000 people in the country (Rabaloi, 2006).

The Botswana Tourism Policy places emphasis on the need for local communities to get a share of the profits made from the tourism sector (Government of Botswana, 1990). In addition, the Government of Botswana has a Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) policy, which has recently been approved by parliament. According to Mbaiwa (2004), CBNRM is regarded by the Government of Botswana as the country's model of ecotourism. The implementation of the programme was facilitated

by the Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 and the Tourism Policy of 1990, both of which call for communities living in resource areas to participate in natural resource management and tourism development (Mbaiwa, 2002). Estimates indicate that 47% of all households in the country cannot meet their basic needs, hence the need for rural development as a means for alleviating poverty and improving the livelihoods of rural communities, through income and employment generating activities (Government of Botswana, 2007).

The Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust, which is at the centre of this study, is one Community-Based Organisation (CBO) of many in Botswana. It was set up to promote rural development in the country, by involving communities in tourism and conservation activities.

The aim of this article is to determine the benefits and challenges of community-based tourism at KRST and to add more insight and knowledge on existing literature on community-based initiatives. The study deals with an area in Botswana where tourism research is often overlooked, as more emphasis is placed on popular tourist attracting areas around the Okavango Delta. In the country, tourism research tends to focus on the major tourist attracting areas in the northern parts, especially the Okavango Delta. Although there is some literature on KRST, it is very scanty and focuses mainly on wildlife conservation, and not on tourism. The specific research objectives of this study are: (1) to determine the benefits and challenges of community-based tourism at KRST and (2) to make suggestions on ways to address the identified shortcomings.

1.1. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

This paper is informed by the concept of Community-Based Natural Resources Management approach, otherwise known as CBNRM in Botswana. The CBNRM programme evolved because of the quest to develop rural areas, involve local communities in development issues and the conservation of natural resources, which most rural dwellers depend/rely on. CBNRM has been the focus of many developing countries in recent years.

Although CBNRM was initially set up as a conservation approach, the rural development side of it has become more prominent (Arntzen, Setlhogile, & Barnes, 2007). It is based on the common property management theory which discourages open access resource management; it, however, promotes resource ownership, control and use by local communities (Rihoy & Steiner, 1995).

The CBNRM approach owes its roots to the Southern African region (Swatuk 2005) and evolved as a regional effort, often through regional networks of key individuals (Child, 1995). It was started in the 1980s and its origins are often traced to Zimbabwe as it provided much of the early impetus to this movement (Child, 1995) when there was a realisation by natural resource managers that people living within and next to wildlife and protected areas can only conserve and use these natural resources in a sustainable manner, only when they can derive benefits from them (Swatuk, 2005). However, informal CBNRM initiatives were started in Zimbabwe and Namibia (Arntzen, Setlhogile et al., 2007). The Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) which has become a model for other CBNRM programmes that have emerged throughout the region (Swatuk, 2005), formally made CBNRM a famous initiative (Arntzen, Setlhogile et al., 2007). Zimbabwe is, therefore, regarded as the first pioneer of the CBNRM approach in Southern Africa, due to its famous CAMPFIRE projects. CBNRM then continued in Zambia (ADMADE), Namibia (LIFE program) and Botswana (NRM project) (Arntzen et al., 2003 as cited in Selebatso, 2005).

Initially, CBNRM focused mainly on wildlife and its main impetus was to ensure that people living within areas rich in wildlife derive economic benefits, more especially employment and income (Swatuk, 2005). However, CBNRM has since diversified to include other natural resources such as veld products (Gujadhur, 2000), rangelands, marine and coastal resources (Rozemeijer, 2000), resource conservation and improving livelihoods, craft production, sustainable use of natural resources, community-based tourism and environmental education for communities (Arntzen et al., 2003).

Other countries in the region which have adopted the CBNRM approach include Namibia, where communities can register with the government as conservancies and receive conditional user rights over wildlife (Ashley, 2000b). In Malawi, CBNRM focuses on natural resources within protected areas and allows the consumptive use of resources by communities adjacent to national parks and Wildlife Reserves. The wildlife, however, remains the property of the state (Arntzen et al., 2003). In South Africa, natural resource management focuses on Parks and Protected Areas. The country, however, does not have a specific CBNRM approach; with each province adopting a different approach (Arntzen et al., 2003). According to Arntzen, Setlhogile et al. (2007), CBNRM projects have mushroomed in Southern Africa due to the lack of alternative development and conservation models as well as the stimulation of donor agencies and governments.

A CBNRM project can be defined as a 'project or activity where a community (one village or a group of villages) organize themselves in such a way that they derive benefits from the utilization of local natural resources and are actively involved in their use and conservation. Often (but not always), communities will receive exclusive rights and responsibilities from government (Arntzen et al., 2003, 12).

According to Sindinga (1999, 115), community-based conservation 'is a bottom-up approach to natural resource management' and is a 'reverse of the long-held top-down conservation strategies which tended to be technocratic' and led to low local benefits and participation in conservation (www.cbnrm.bw).

The rationale behind CBNRM is that governments cannot successfully and efficiently protect natural resources outside protected areas, and, therefore, community resource management is a better development and conservation strategy (Arntzen et al., 2003, 25). Furthermore, local resource management encourages greater local participation, and the decentralization of benefits of wildlife use increase local benefits and stimulate communities' interest in resource conservation. The participation and cooperation of locals in tourism is much more important than in any other industry (Murphy, 1985, 153 as cited in Sindinga, 1999).

In Botswana, the CBNRM programme was officially started in 1989 and was initiated by the Botswana Government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through a joint Natural Resource Management Project (NRMP), housed by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) (Gujadhur, 2000; National CBNRM Forum, 2005). The programme was set up after the realisation that without the involvement of rural communities residing within and adjacent to designated conservation areas, the conservation of wildlife was not possible and sustainable. The assumption made is that once local communities fully participate and derive benefits, they can develop a sense of ownership and will use their natural resources sustainably (Mbaiva, 2007). Furthermore, the government and donor agencies were concerned that the rural poor were exerting unsustainable pressure on their natural resources (Fabricius & Koch, 2004).

In Botswana, CBNRM is seen as a development approach that supports natural resource conservation and the alleviation of poverty through community empowerment and the management

of resources for long-term social, economic and ecological benefits (Government of Botswana, 2000). It advances 'identified national engines of growth such as tourism, wildlife, forest and veld products that rely upon a healthy environment for profits' and is 'based on ideals of equality, natural resource conservation, and social development' (Government of Botswana, 2000, 1).

According to the National CBNRM Forum, in Botswana, the CBNRM programme is guided by 10 principles:

Decision-making authority must be at community level
Decision-making must be representative
The community must be as small as practical
Leadership must be accountable
Benefits must outweigh costs
Benefits must be distributed equitably
Benefits distribution must be linked to natural resources conservation
Planning and development must focus on capacity-building
Planning and development must be coordinated
The CBNRM process must be facilitated

Source: National CBNRM Forum, 2005

The country is divided into 163 Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs), with each having a designated use, e.g., community multi purpose use, commercial photographic use etc. CHAs are mostly zoned around existing villages and settlements. The use of natural resources in the CHAs has been devolved to Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) (Gujadhur, 2000), such as KRST. The CBNRM programme has been adopted across the whole country, with over 135 000 people being involved and over a 100 villages participating in the programme (Arntzen, Buzwani et al., 2007; Arntzen, Setlhogile et al., 2007). In Botswana, the majority of CBOs are located around the Okavango and Chobe/Zambezi rivers (Arntzen, Buzwani et al., 2007; Arntzen, Setlhogile et al., 2007). Community participation is a very important component in the CBNRM programme.

1.2. Study area

Set up in 1992, KRST is a community-based organisation whose main aim is to save rhinos and to bring about economic benefits for locals, through tourism and the sustainable use of the available natural resources (Sebele, 2005). It covers an area of approximately 4300 hectares and as shown in Fig. 1 below, is located 25 km north of Serowe along the Serowe–Orapa road, 7 km east of Paje and about 11 km north-east of Mabeleapudi (Grossman & Associates, n.d.; Sebele, 2005). The Sanctuary is in the Central District of Botswana, the largest district in terms of area and population (Sebele, 2005).

KRST is an initiative of three villages of Serowe, Paje and Mabeleapudi (Sebele, 2005). Serowe, the biggest village in the district, had a population of 42 444 people during the 2001 census, Paje had 2088 and Mabeleapudi had 1780 during the same period (Botswana Central Statistics Office, 2002). The sanctuary is governed by a board of Trustees which has 10 members; 8 from Serowe, 1 from Paje and 1 from Mabeleapudi (Sebele, 2005). The uneven nature of the board membership is attributed to the disparities in the population sizes of the three villages.

KRST has a number of objectives. These include amongst others; to establish, develop and manage the Khama Rhino Sanctuary on behalf of the community; to protect the environment within the Sanctuary and to protect and nurture endangered rhinoceros and all other fauna and flora; to establish, maintain and preserve the biodiversity within the Sanctuary; to generate revenue for the local community from tourism and other uses of the Sanctuary's renewable resources and to provide environmental education to

Batswana and to the general public (Chief Warden's Project Proposal, 2004; Sebele, 2005).

Besides rhinos, many other species of animals are found at KRST, some of which settled in the area naturally while others were translocated into the area. These include; zebras, blue wildebeest, giraffes, elands, springboks, impalas, gemsbok, kudu, steenbok, duiker, red hartebeest, waterbuck, warthog, leopard, ostrich, African wild cat, caracal, small spotted genet, black-backed jackal, bat-eared fox and brown hyena. The Sanctuary is also home to over 130 bird species (<http://www.khamarhinosanctuary.com/about.htm>) (Fig. 1).

2. Methodology

This paper made use of results obtained from a study conducted between July 2004 and October 2004. The study made use of both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data collection techniques used included formal interviews with key stakeholders (chiefs, VDC chairpersons, local farmers and KRST board members), the administering of questionnaires (both structured and unstructured) and focus group discussions. Interviews were used to increase the response rate,

ensure respondents understood the questions asked and to ensure that the researcher obtained the information needed. There were also used to determine the nature of community participation at KRST as well as to determine the social impacts of KRST. In addition, informal interviews were used to collect data from the Chief Warden at KRST. These informal interviews involved free discussions with the Warden to determine whether communities are effectively involved in the management of KRST.

A case study was used because it 'involves the detailed study of a few persons or items' and, therefore, provides 'in-depth, detailed analysis' (Casley & Curry, 1981, 61–63). The case study of KRST, therefore, provides a clearer picture of benefits and problems faced by the community in running its tourism enterprise.

In terms of sampling, key decision makers were targeted. The following were interviewed; the chiefs of the three villages, the board members of KRST and the chairpersons of the Village Development Committee (VDC), a village level committee responsible for the development of the village in each of the three villages. Furthermore, two focus group discussions were also held in each of the three villages. These were held to determine the perceptions of locals on KRST and to ascertain the benefits and challenges offered by the venture. A focus group discussion is 'a tool for collecting data

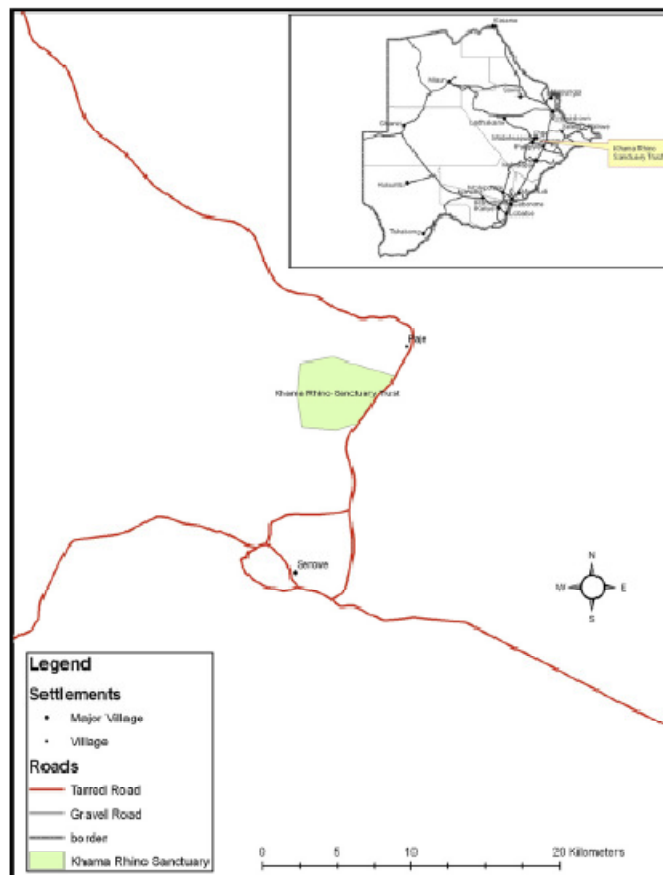


Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust (HOORC, 2007).

from group discussions' and 'follows a predetermined interview guide to direct a discussion of about five to twelve people' (Nielsen, 1997). Each group comprised of 10 people. One group comprised of the youth whilst the other was made up of the elderly.

This method of data collection was chosen because it gives more insight on the way participants think, the perceptions and ideas of a group. It also allows for more in-depth views and comments to be given by respondents as opposed to individual questioning (as in a household sample where only the household head is interviewed). More unexpected views can also be given and explored (Nielsen, 1997). This, however, does not mean that the method does not have disadvantages. The smallness of the group means that it may not be representative of the whole community and more outspoken individuals may dominate the discussions. However, it is one of the best methods to use when conducting qualitative research (Nielsen, 1997).

Secondary sources used included journals, published books, unpublished reports and newsletters, government policy documents (CBNRM policy, Tourism policy etc.) as well as the internet.

Data collected were then analysed using descriptions and classification. According to Kitchin and Tate (2000), descriptions refer to the portrayal of data in a form that can be easily interpreted. For this study, this involved a written account of what came up during focus group discussions and interviews. Descriptions generate 'a more thorough and comprehensive description of the subject matter' (Kitchin & Tate, 2000, 233). Classification on the other hand involves the breaking down of data into constituent parts and then placing them into similar categories or classes (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). For this research, data was classified into responses given and categorised into themes.

3. Results

3.1. *The benefits of community-based tourism*

KRST has several socio-economic benefits, these include the following:

3.1.1. *Employment for local communities*

Findings indicate that community-based tourism at KRST has become a very important source of employment for local communities, with the Sanctuary employing locals in a variety of jobs ranging from cleaners, drivers, guides etc. Results from interviews with the Chief Warden indicate that KRST employs 26 permanent staff members, with 23 coming from the 3 member villages of Serowe, Paje and Mabeleapudi and the remaining 3 coming from other parts of the country.

Furthermore, results indicate that casual labourers are occasionally hired when the need arises. This scenario is not only applicable to Botswana as findings in Kenya and Namibia show that 'casual earnings often match wage income and can, in principle benefit all residents' and are significant for communities 'with less options for collective income' (Ashley, 2000a, 4). Moreover, waged employment can lift a household's living standards, and casual earnings, although very low, are more widely spread (Ashley, 2000a).

The creation of employment by KRST is very important in promoting rural development in this rural community. Rural areas in developing countries are often characterised by a shortage of facilities and industries and are inhabited by the poorest people in the society; therefore, earnings from community-based tourism create an alternative means of survival for locals. CBNRM is, therefore, a means for reducing poverty in rural areas, through the provision of employment (both permanent and casual employment) for locals.

The Trust contributes to local economic development, with results indicating that people who are employed use their wages to assist family members financially, thereby improving their living conditions. Wages obtained from this CBNRM project are used for various activities, including the payment of school fees, the buying of food and clothing and the construction of traditional dwellings/huts. CBNRM has, therefore, become a livelihood strategy for rural dwellers, many of whom may not have had other alternatives in the rural areas. This is very important, especially in Botswana where unemployment is very high, especially in the rural areas and amongst women and the youth (van der Jagt, Gujadhur, & van Busse, 2000).

3.1.2. *Local development*

Results from the interview with the Village Development Committee (VDC) chairperson in Paje show that KRST has assisted the needy within the community with funds obtained from the CBNRM project. In 2004, KRST made a donation of P4000.00 (around US\$ 645) to the Paje VDC, to assist in the construction of a house for orphans in the village. This has been the only form of financial benefit the community has been able to get from KRST so far. Although this is commendable, after twelve years in operation, this may not be enough, bearing in mind the goals of CBNRM (poverty alleviation and rural development). This is, however, a very important gesture as the number of orphans has increased considerably in Botswana in recent years. A number of factors can be attributed to this; chief amongst these is the escalating HIV/AIDS pandemic. This increase in the number of orphans puts a lot of pressure on the government to provide welfare services for surviving family members. An initiative such as KRST is very important in lessening the pressure on the government as well as in promoting rural development by providing funds for community members in need.

Results from interviews with board members and the Chief Warden indicate that KRST does not have a clear cut benefits distribution plan, which is very crucial for the success of the enterprise. A question may arise as to whether the Sanctuary distributes benefits to individuals, households or institutions (such as the V.D.C. in this case). The lack of a benefits distribution plan may have harmful consequences and may affect the success and progress of KRST and other CBNRM enterprises. For CBNRM enterprises to succeed, benefits from natural resource utilisation should outweigh the costs to ensure the sustainability of CBNRM projects. For example, in Sankuyo village, in the Ngamiland District of Botswana, the Sankuyo Trust distributes funds made from CBNRM to each household in the village on an annual basis (Mbaiwa, 2007). Thakadu (2005) argues that although the distribution of benefits may differ in the type and mode of distribution, if benefits are felt at a household level, this may positively change people's attitudes towards conservation.

Results indicate that there are other indirect benefits trickling down from the KRST through rent for local house owners. Results also indicate that all workers from Serowe, rent houses in Paje, (as it is the village closest to KRST) thereby generating income for the house owners. The involvement of the community in CBNRM has, therefore, helped in diversifying rural livelihoods and creating sustainable opportunities for locals.

3.1.3. *Contribution to conservation and tourism*

Unlike other CBNRM projects where natural resources are found within the locality, the rhinos at KRST were not from the local area. Results from an interview held with the Chief Warden indicate that the sanctuary started with only four rhinos, which were translocated from the northern parts of Botswana in 1993; with the assistance of the Natal Parks Board (South Africa). In total 14 rhinos were translocated to the sanctuary between 1993 and 1999. Some

of the rhinos were donated by and translocated from Pilanesburg by the North West Parks Board (South Africa) in 1995 and in 1999. With assistance from South Africa, therefore, KRST has contributed significantly to the conservation of the species in the country (Chief Warden's Project Proposal, 2004; Sebele, 2005).

At the time of data collection, there were 56 rhinos in Botswana, with 27 of them being at KRST (personal communication with the Chief Warden). Rhinoceroses are an endangered species, in Botswana; with their numbers having been in decline for a long period of time in the country. The project has, therefore, been excellent in introducing the rhino species in an area where they did not exist before. The CBNRM project is in this regard important for conserving the few remaining species in Botswana. However, the enterprise still has the potential to become a source of pride for locals through the inclusion of locals in the planning and development process. This is, however, hampered by the failure to deliver on promises made at inception, such as the building of schools, clinics and the distribution of benefits from profits made. Results through interviews with board members indicate the project is worth millions of pula (the local currency), however, unfulfilled promises may lead to the failure of the project if locals become disillusioned (Sebele, 2005).

Wildlife tourism is synonymous with the North West District of Botswana, especially the Okavango Delta. This form of tourism is still in its infancy in the Central District and KRST has exposed the District to tourism activities (Sebele, 2005). Moreover, focus group discussions with elders in the village indicate that parents now spend less money on school trips, as children no longer have to travel longer distances to the popular Okavango Delta in the Ngamiland District (Sebele, 2005).

3.1.4. Sourcing of local goods and services

Focus group discussions as well as the interview with the Chief Warden indicate that community-based tourism (CBT) has enabled the sourcing of goods and services from the local community. Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as well as informal sector operators provide a number of services to the Sanctuary. These services include: welding, thatching grass, roofing poles, petrol and diesel from a local filling station and food. Furthermore, arts and crafts are obtained from a San project in a neighbouring village (although not part of KRST). The sourcing of locally available goods and services is very important for this community as opportunities are created for small scale, informal sector operators, who otherwise would not have access to the mainstream tourism industry, which is mostly foreign dominated.

The importance of small scale tourism operators is not unique to Botswana. In the Gambia, a number of hotels source fresh fruit and vegetables from local groups of women as it has been established that the sourcing of products and services such as food, drinks and furnishings has the potential 'to generate sustainable, long-term, reliable markets and so generate increased employment and improved local revenues' (Bah & Goodwin, 2003, 36). Entry into the tourism economy, through the provision of goods and services, is one way in which locals in developing countries can sustain their livelihoods and help in the eradication of poverty.

The importance of small scale tourism cannot be overly emphasised as according to Telfer (2002), small scale tourism brings more benefits for locals as it makes use of locally available materials and creates higher multiplier effects as most of the income generated is retained in the local economy.

3.1.5. Tourists numbers

Table 1 below shows that tourists' numbers to KRST have been increasing between the years 1996 and 2003; thereby implying an increase in the revenue generated over the years. However,

although the numbers of tourists have been increasing steadily over time, benefits (in terms of financial benefits to community members and employment creation) to the community have not. The Chief Warden attributes this to amongst other things, high operational costs and a shortage of capital.

The Environmental Education Centre (EEC), opened in 2003, may be responsible for the increase in the number of visitors for that year. The EEC provides environmental education and hosts many school children, equipping them with knowledge on environmental and conservation issues.

Although the number of tourists to KRST has been increasing, the Ngamiland District, where the world famous Okavango Delta is located, remains the most attractive area in the country, in terms of tourist numbers and marketing campaigns, by both the private and public sectors. However, attractions such as the KRST have been unleashed and the potential for them to attract tourists are being realised.

4. Challenges of community-based tourism

Interviews and focus group discussions highlighted a number of challenges at KRST. These include: lack of tangible benefits and employment creation, the loss of benefits from the land, poor management, marketing and entrepreneurial skills, lack of community involvement and participation, no sense of ownership of the project amongst the community members and the heavy reliance on foreign donors.

4.1. Employment creation

Although figures from Table 1 indicate that the numbers of tourists have increased steadily over the years, results, however, indicate that the numbers of employees have remained the same. The Chief Warden attributes this to high operational costs and a rise in inflation levels. Results also indicate that all the money made by KRST is from tourism and its related activities, however, it can only cover operational costs and staff salaries. In addition to conserving rhinos, the project aims to provide economic benefits to the local community through tourism and the sustainable use of natural resources. The question that arises then is, *is the KRST a sustainable project?* If the project can only make enough to pay its workers, it may lose the support of the community, which expects more benefits, in terms of employment and income generating activities. The community, however, does not have any information about this, with a majority never having been to KRST or having access to information about the Sanctuary.

The interview with Paje village chief revealed that KRST provides an avenue for locals to sell their produce at the main entrance; however, none have taken up this initiative. Studies in other countries, however, indicate that this is a very important initiative for rural dwellers, as shown by some parks in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, where women craft sellers are given sites within the parks and for the latter, where local communities have demanded for a market at the park entrance (Mahony & van Zyl, 2002).

4.1.1. Lost benefits

Focus group discussions with community members in the three villages indicate that residents are unhappy because they lost a number of valuable natural resources, now found and located within KRST; the most important of which is their communal land. In this regard, the community believes that it has incurred more costs than benefits; therefore, *costs far outweigh benefits*. Studies on CBNRM (Mbaiwa, 2004; Murphree, 1999; Stone, 2006) have shown that the sustainability of projects whose costs outweigh benefits is

Table 1
Tourists' numbers between 1996 and 2003 (KRST, 2004).

Year	Day visit	Campers	Chalets	EEC dormitory	EEC campsite	EEC day visitors	Total
1996	1284	523	13	0	0	0	1820
1997	3658	1755	621	0	0	0	6034
1998	2013	2009	517	0	0	0	4539
1999	3646	2514	963	0	0	0	7123
2000	4367	2513	1536	0	0	0	8156
2001	4012	3062	1679	0	0	0	8753
2002	5298	4418	1962	0	0	0	11678
2003	4797	4755	2255	112	0	215	12056

small as such projects have a higher risk of failure. This is because communities prefer to support projects with more socio-economic benefits than costs. From group discussions, it was revealed the project has impoverished locals by taking away grazing land for their livestock, thereby leading to the production of poor quality live stock, which cannot fetch good prices on the market, making it difficult for community members to generate enough income to send their children to school.

Furthermore, locals also lost the opportunity to gather and sell wild fruits, thatching grass and roofing poles. In light of this, developments which have taken place at KRST so far have had little or no benefits for the majority of locals. This loss is further exacerbated by what is perceived to be inadequate compensation for the losses (Sebele, 2005). It can be deduced that the losses further enhance the circle of poverty and defeat the goal of community-based initiatives, which is to eradicate poverty in the rural areas.

Other losses identified by residents of Paje include the loss of access to firewood. Located in a rural area, inhabited by some of the poorest people in the society, many relied on these natural resources for their livelihood (Sebele, 2005).

4.1.2. Poor management, marketing and entrepreneurial skills

The community-based initiative has been marred by poor managerial, entrepreneurial and marketing skills. Although the Trust has a web site, at the time of data collection, it had not been updated for two years. Results indicate that the lack of finance has made it difficult for the CBO to market itself internationally by exhibiting in international tourism trade fairs such as ITB-Berlin. Regionally, it has also been difficult to consistently attend regional tourism fairs, like Tourism INDABA in Durban, South Africa. However, the CBO will be exhibiting its products and services at INDABA 2007.

4.1.3. Lack of community involvement and participation

All the respondents interviewed (elderly and youth group discussions, board members, village chiefs, VDC chairpersons and the Chief Warden), stated that the community is not involved in the running of KRST. Although, at the initial stages of the project, consultations, through kgotla meetings were held to get the locals' permission to use their tribal/communal land, results indicate kgotla meetings are now held once a year to give an annual report and every two years to elect board members. A kgotla is a traditional meeting place for Tswana communities. This is a place where communities discuss issues that are of concern to them. It may also be used as a place where disputes, differences and conflicts within the community are discussed and settled. The kgotla meeting is usually led by a Kgosi (chief) with the help of his advisors. This lack of interaction means the community's voice is seldom heard. The implication is that decisions made may not represent the wishes of the community. However, two-way communication is essential for the successful running of community-based tourism ventures, such as KRST.

Interviews with board members indicate that in making decisions, the Board does not involve the community. The reason given is that newsletters are produced quarterly and the Sanctuary office

is open for everyone. However, the Sanctuary offices are located in Serowe; therefore, not everyone in the community has access to them. The locals, most of whom are very poor, may in most cases, not afford to visit the offices. The 2002/2003 Household Income and Expenditure Survey data indicates that the proportion of people living below the poverty datum line fell from 47% in the 1990s to 30% in 2003 (Central Statistics Office, 2004). In 2003, the poverty rate in rural areas was estimated to be around 36.1% while in the urban areas it was estimated at around 15.5% (Thurlow, 2007). It is evident from these figures that poverty is more dominant in rural areas such as our case study. The 2006 United Nations Human Development Report estimates that during the 1990–2004 period, 23.4% of the population lived below US\$1 per day. Furthermore, Botswana is ranked 93rd out of 102 developing countries in terms of the human poverty index (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/18/38561744.pdf>).

Newsletters produced by KRST are written in English and this further alienates those who are illiterate and do not understand English. Although the production of a newsletter is a welcome idea, only a minority of the community has access to it, while the majority is left out. If the main reason for producing the newsletters is to educate the community about the enterprise, it is essential that it is accessible to the majority and should be in a language they all understand. Perhaps, the newsletters should be printed in Setswana (national language of Botswana) and be available at each of the village kgotla, so that a majority of villagers have access to information. For illiterate locals, meetings at the kgotla are also essential to ensure that they also have access to information about their enterprise.

Access to information and the participation of the community in tourism development is of utmost importance as it creates good rapport with those directly affected by the Sanctuary and helps the Sanctuary to plan with communities and not for communities. The lack of interaction further exacerbates the lack of information about KRST and also hampers community participation.

In addition to the lack of information, income generating activities by locals and the private sector are not encouraged by board members. Although the Sanctuary did not have a lodge or a restaurant, the board had rejected a proposal by a South African company to build one (Sebele, 2005). Moreover, the local youth office in Serowe had also asked not been granted permission to run horse riding excursions for tourists at the Sanctuary. Although respondents support the tourism initiative; poorly informed decisions may hamper the progress of the project.

4.1.4. Lack of sense of communal ownership of the project

The question 'who owns KRST?' elicited a number of responses, with some respondents stating that; it is owned by the Khama family; it is a parastatal; it used to be a community project but now it is owned by one family in Serowe. The Khama family is a very well known family in the history of Botswana and Serowe. They are the ruling family in Serowe (i.e. the paramount chief is a member of the family). The first president and the current president of Botswana

are members of the family. It is interesting to note that some farmers, who were relocated from the area to pave way for the development of the tourism venture, were amongst those who did not know the owner of the venture.

Communal sense of ownership is very important as communities can only be active participants in tourism projects if they have a sense of ownership of those projects (Scheyvens, 2002). According to Grossman and Associates (n.d., 83), 'KRST can become a source of pride for locals only if they have a sense of ownership of the project'. Community-based tourism should be run in a transparent manner, be represented by all stakeholders to represent the interests of the community and reflect true ownership (Mearns, 2003, 31).

This lack of knowledge about KRST may be due to the dominance of a few individuals since the project inception. Discussions indicate that the view that KRST is community-based is not supported by some community members who believe the community name is just being used to solicit funds for the enterprise. The belief amongst some is that the enterprise continues to be dominated by individuals who were at the forefront at project inception. Locals believe they are being used, when in reality, the elites are the ones controlling and deriving benefits from the enterprise. The issue of elite dominance has also been experienced in other African countries such as Zambia, where chiefs were put in charge of wildlife management sub-committees. Problems experienced included nepotism and projects being located in and around chiefdoms (Gibson & Marking, 1995).

Studies around the world indicate that 'elites often dominate community-based development efforts and monopolise the benefits of tourism' (Scheyvens, 2002, 9). This may lead to situations where there is no sense of ownership of community-based projects amongst community members, leading to the resentment of tourism enterprises in the locality. The dominance by elites in this community coupled with the loss of livelihood resources may lead to the resentment of the tourism project, ultimately leading to a defeat in the conservation goals of the Sanctuary. For tourism to be sustainable and ecologically friendly, the participation of communities is essential in ensuring that locals accept tourism ventures (Wahab, 1997). Research indicates that people manage and conserve resources only when they perceive that the resources contribute positively to their quality of life and this in most cases happens when the resources contribute income and sustains people within a community (Dikobe & Thakadu, 1997).

This view is also supported by Walpole and Goodwin (2000, 527), who assert that 'the existence of local economic elites further constrains the distribution of benefits' and at a village level, it is mostly elites who benefit from ecotourism while at the national level, the central government gains more because it controls 'fees and revenues from national parks'. The assumption that communities can equitably share benefits from tourism, therefore, seems to be a highly romanticised but an almost impossible feat.

From all the adults interviewed, 98% had never been to KRST compared to only 25% of the youth. The remaining 75% of the youth had been to the Sanctuary on school tours. The non-visitation by adults may be attributed to the lack of involvement, information and participation. Board membership has facilitated visits by 2% of adults. It can be deduced then, that had it not been for their membership to the board, almost all adults would never have visited the Sanctuary.

The success of the venture is, however, dependent on the proactive participation of the community, not on their passive participation, as seems to be the case now. Using Pretty's (1995) typology of participation, we can deduce that the locals in this case study are passive participants. According to Scheyvens (2002), communities that are passive participants in tourism ventures receive a few low paying jobs at a tourist resort, while having no control over the

nature of development and no involvement whatsoever in the running of the tourism enterprise. This seems to be the case at KRST, where the community is not involved in any decision-making regarding the running of their supposedly owned enterprises.

The results, therefore, indicate that although on paper the community is said to own the project, their participation is minimal, hence it can be argued that the project is not theirs. This is indicated by the fact that they do not know anything about it, they are not actively involved in the day-to-day decision-making and do not reap benefits from the venture. It is interesting to note that the people who are said to be the owners of the project do not know that. Furthermore, the dominance of certain individuals in the CBNRM project indicates the abuse of such projects by some elites who use the projects for their own benefits. Hence the belief by some community members that the community name is just being used to solicit funds for a project owned by only a few elites in the community.

Although the CBNRM policy of Botswana advances the promotion of the conservation of natural resources, to increase rural participation in tourism related activities and to improve rural livelihoods, the KRST case study indicates that this is not always achievable, as indicated by results from this project. With the KRST, local involvement and participation remain almost non-existent. In fact, results indicate that the majority of the community is left out with only a minority being at the forefront and possibly benefiting from the project. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that care is taken to ensure that the whole community decides on the activities they want at KRST and more importantly, how they want their benefits to be shared, distributed and used. The questions to ask then are: *how community-based is KRST?* and *who owns KRST?*

The assumption that can be made then is that local involvement and participation has no meaning for this community, as it has no control over the running and decision-making of the project they supposedly own and control. Development economists define participation by the poor in terms of the equitable distribution of benefits from a project (Paul, 1987), however, the KRST case study indicates that this is sometimes not achievable as there are certain elites within the society who manipulate and take control of resources which are meant for the benefit of all within communities.

4.1.5. Imbalance in board representation

With 10 members, one coming from Paje, 1 from Mabeleapudi and 8 from Serowe, KRST board membership is not representative. The Chief Warden attributes this imbalance to the differences in the population sizes of the three villages. However, in determining the figures, no ratio was used; the decision was just made arbitrarily. Due to this imbalance, residents of Paje and Mabeleapudi state that Serowe residents have an unfair advantage over them and this may explain why most services are sought from Serowe. Through focus group discussions, residents highlighted that food, as well as petrol and diesel are bought from Serowe, while minor services such as welding, thatching grass and roofing poles are sought from Paje residents. Although locals acknowledge the importance of sourcing products from the community, there is a belief that Serowe villagers benefit more from the enterprise, than the other villages (Sebele, 2005). The imbalance in representation may at a later stage create problems especially when used as a criterion for financial benefit distribution.

4.1.6. Reliance on donor funding

The Sanctuary gets most of its funds from donors including the African Development Foundation, Environmental Heritage Foundation of Botswana, European Development Fund, European Union and Global Environmental Facility (UNDP) among others. Interviews with the Chief Warden at the Sanctuary revealed that

a restaurant was to be built with funds from African Development Corporation. This is a good development as the building of the restaurant, will most likely lead to an increase in the number of tourists and revenue generated. Furthermore, the opening of the restaurant may also lead to an increase in the number of permanent employees and casual labourers.

The over-reliance on external donors, however, makes the economical viability of the project questionable; *can the project survive without the intervention of donor agencies?* The over-reliance on donors creates a dependency syndrome which the Sanctuary may find difficult to get out of once the donors pull out. Organisations that depend heavily on foreign aid usually collapse in the end when aid agencies withdraw their assistance. Informal interviews with the Chief Warden also revealed the Sanctuary does not only rely on assistance from these donor agencies only; for aerial counts of wildlife, there is reliance on the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the Botswana Defence Force for security and ensuring that poaching does not take place.

5. Conclusion

Globally, there has been a call in recent years to get communities involved in tourism to ensure that they benefit from their natural resources. This case study has shown that community-based tourism can improve the lives of rural people through the creation of employment; generating income through the renting of houses for workers at KRST and the sourcing of locally available goods and services.

However, the CBO has come across many challenges. Due to these challenges, some community members view KRST as a liability as the Sanctuary has not lived up to many community members' expectations. Instead of getting benefits, results reveal that some community members feel that the costs they have incurred far outweigh the benefits. The loss of access to a number of natural resources and the lack of benefits for a majority of community members were identified as a major obstacle hindering the progress of KRST.

The community, therefore, argues that although tourism is important, they have lost a number of benefits which were very essential for their livelihoods. CBNRM assumes that if locals have more control of their natural resources, they develop a sense of ownership and can conserve those resources. Results from this case study, however, indicate that benefits are limited, with only a few people being employed and only one village getting financial assistance for community development projects.

The lack of certain skills needed in the tourism industry also hampers the progress of projects such as KRST and, therefore, the community needs to acquire managerial, entrepreneurial and marketing skills to ensure that they break through into the market and in the process gain a bigger share of benefits from the tourism industry. Community-based ventures cannot succeed if locals do not acquire these skills as they are essential for the running of any successful business/enterprise. This situation does not only apply to KRST as research shows that, CBOs in Botswana experience problems due to poor management and administrative skills, poor financial management and control and insufficient project development and management expertise (CAR, 2003; Stone, 2006). The intention of CBNRM is to help people manage natural resources in such a way that plants, people and animals benefit; this can only be achieved once the community gains the required skills.

With regards to benefits, KRST has to develop a benefits distribution plan to be used in dispersing benefits from the enterprise. This is very important, as it will outline the nature and manner in which the enterprise wishes to allocate benefits in the

three villages involved. For example, with Zimbabwe's, CAMPFIRE projects, 80% of the money raised through various activities is given directly to the communities and collectively they decide what to do with the money. A total of 20% is retained by the district councils for administrative purposes as well as to manage local CAMPFIRE projects (Arntzen et al., 2003). Initial guidelines proposed 50% of wildlife revenue should be distributed to the community, 35% be wildlife management and 15% for rural districts councils. (Gujadhur, 2000). In 1992, revised guidelines increased the community share to 80%. Results at KRST indicate that only a few individuals get benefits from the project, hence the aims of CBNRM may not be reached as benefits are not shared equally amongst members. Benefits should be for the whole community and not for a minority of individuals in the community, as is alleged at KRST.

CBNRM calls for the involvement of local communities in decision-making processes, on issues affecting their livelihoods. Results from this case study indicate that locals are rarely involved in decision-making processes. Research, however, indicates that the involvement and participation of local communities leads to local empowerment, a better quality of life for the community and allows communities to define their needs as well as the means to meet them (Lea, 1988; Roseland, 2005; Stone, 1989). According to Stone (2006), a majority of CBOs in Botswana show deficiencies in the area of involving locals in decision-making, hence many face serious problems and are unable to inform their members about the challenges that they face. However, if a CBO is to be successful, locals have to be fully involved in its running from inception to the operation stage and in the day to day decisions-making processes. If participation is minimal or non-existent, communities may not be compelled to use natural resources wisely.

This may be true for KRST, where the community has no sense of ownership and only a few individuals benefit from the project. Unlike other CBNRM, results for this case study indicate that unless drastic measures are taken to involve local communities, the project may not be a success story, in terms of improving the livelihoods of rural communities and introducing sustainable conservation measures.

A number of authors (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Ashley & Goodwin, 2001; Mahony & van Zyl, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002) have alluded to the importance of community-based initiatives in improving the poor's access to assets which improve their livelihoods and develop their communities. In South Africa, some Makuleke community members have benefited through capacity-building and training programmes, thereby empowering them to take advantage of employment opportunities that may arise. More importantly, CBNRM has ensured that the community has access to its communal land which was taken away from them during apartheid years (Ashley & Roe, 2002). In Marinduque Island, Philippines, one Village Association runs a 'rural life tour' as part of an integrated marine resource management plan, whereby a fish sanctuary enables fish stocks to recover and also uses them for recreational purposes. Income is also generated from guiding and 'sari-sari' store sales (Shah & Gupta, 2000).

This paper, therefore, supports the view that communities should be allowed to become active participants and decision makers, to allow for more benefits to accrue to the society. The researcher maintains that locals can only become active participants if they have support from the government, private sector and NGOs to enable the transfer of skills and knowledge. This can only be achieved through enabling policies and frameworks which maximise the full potential of local communities, while at the same time ensuring that the benefits of tourism outweigh the costs.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2009.01.005.

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