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## Constraints to Community Participation in Tourism In Kenya: The Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary

**Paul M. Musila**

Department of Tourism, Kwale County Government, Kenya  
*paulmusila@yahoo.com*

**Bonface O. Kihima**

Department of Hospitality and Leisure Studies, The Technical University of Kenya  
*odiarab@yahoo.fr*

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### Abstract

*Community Based Tourism (CBT) is among several types of tourism that have been considered sustainable and beneficial to the host populations in conservation areas. The local community participation in tourism in conservation areas is supposed to be high and its members should benefit from the tourism process. However, having been presented with opportunity to improve their livelihoods, communities are constrained in various ways and generally fail to benefit from tourism development. This study was set to investigate constraints to community participation in conservation areas. It was carried out in Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary (MES) in Kwale County, Kenya, using a descriptive survey design. Data was collected using researcher administered questionnaires and oral interviews. The results indicated that lack of coordination among stakeholders; inadequate financial resources, lack of conducive environment for tourism growth, and lack of skills/knowledge were major constraints to participation. The study concludes that to address both operational and structural constraints to community participation, the national and county governments should develop policies that compel investors to honour agreements*

### Keywords

*Community, conservation, constrains, tourism, Kenya, Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary*

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**Corresponding Editor**  
Ramesh Raj Kunwar  
*kunwar.dr@gmail.com*

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*with communities, assist communities to enter into fair collaborations with investors, and provide incentives to investors in tourism.*

### **Introduction**

Community-Based Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) in Kenya came into being to secure wildlife habitats and diversify tourism. However, policy documents – for instance, the Tourism Act 2011 that provides for the development, management, marketing and regulation of sustainable tourism and tourism-related activities and services (GoK, 2011) – do not have provisions for CBTIs development. Similarly, in the Vision 2030 blueprint for Kenya, tourism is one of the components of the economic pillar (NESC, 2007) but CBTIs are not among the flagship projects. This leaves CBTIs in Kenya to develop by default with no guiding framework that could direct this critical sector. The success of CBTIs cannot therefore be guaranteed in the absence of a well-thought framework.

Although Kibicho (2008: 214) argued that community-based tourism is gaining momentum in Kenya and in the world at large, he noted that “the extent to which this theoretical idealism is met by reality in Kenya is still debatable”. Manyara and Jones (2007) have criticized this type of tourism on the consideration that it only enhances the conservation agenda and has little significant impact on poverty and on communities. In addition, Barrow and Fabricius (2002) noted that conservation linked to development is unsustainable while Worah (2002: 82) observed that “there was a weak relationship between enterprise success and conservation success”. All these critical views point to the idea that, the real effects of conservation and tourism on a country’s development are not as obvious as some may say. Consequently, they need to be critically studied and documented. In view of this, Kihima (2015) recently reflected upon the objectives of CBTIs, noting that they should revolve around informed, deliberate and collaborative management actions of: ‘thinking of the tourist, appealing to the tourist, proper execution of projects and collaboration with other stakeholders’.

To go one step further and understand the ways in which the host community could and should participate in tourism, this paper presents a study aimed to assess the extent to which social, political and economic constraints shape – and hinder – community participation in tourism projects, and which one exactly. The study was conducted in Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, located in Kwale county at the South coast of Kenya.

The Republic of Kenya is an East African country located between 4°40’ north and 4°20’ south; and between 34°0’ west and 42°0’ east. It covers a surface area of 582,648 Km<sup>2</sup> and is situated astride the equator. The country is well-known for nature-based tourism, popularly known as safaris (World Resource Institute, et al., 2007) and is

well endowed with the national park and reserve system occupying 44,562 Km<sup>2</sup> or 8% of its territory. About 70% of visitors come to Kenya to enjoy the country's natural beauty and engage in nature-based tourism activities (World Resource Institute, et al., 2007). In 2019, Kenya received 2.0 million international arrivals each staying an average of 12.1 days with 63.3% of the total arrivals coming for holiday (GoK, 2020). With a beach front of 530 Km stretching from Somalia to the Tanzanian border, the coastal beach accounted for 38% of the total bed nights in the country in the year 2019, while National parks and Reserves had a total of 2.98 million visitor entries in the same year (GoK, 2020). Among the first CBTIs to be established in Kenya and recognized for its best practice is the Mwalunganje Elephant Sanctuary (Manyara and Jones, 2007), therefore being considered a 'successful' initiative. Nevertheless, the sanctuary receives less than 3,000 visitors in a year.

The community members around this Sanctuary have been participating in CBT for a period of more than 20 years. Thus, they have had sufficient time to notice the effects of tourism development and also recall how life was before the onset of tourism in this area. The first part of this paper analyses the existing literature on constraints facing community participation in conservation areas. After presenting the Mwalunganje Elephant Sanctuary and describing the methodology used in the study, the second part provides its most salient results while the third and last part offers a discussion on the presented results by drawing upon qualitative information collected that may explain why there is, in Mwalunganje Elephant Sanctuary, lack of coordination among stakeholders, inadequate financial resources, lack of conducive environment for tourism growth, and lack of skills/knowledge at various levels. It suggests that the national and county governments should develop policies that compel investors to honour agreements with communities, assist communities to enter into fair collaborations with investors, and provide incentives to investors in tourism

### **Constraints to community participation**

Community participation is a fundamental factor in ensuring that local communities are guaranteed benefits from tourism development in conservation areas, and their way of thinking and doing are respected and not negatively impacted. Participation means that community members are part of decision making on the use of their cultural spaces. However, local communities are constrained in various ways while participating in tourism related activities (Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019; Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019, Devkant & Bagri, 2018, Mensah, 2017; Chili and Ngxongo, 2017). Tosun (2000) identified limitations to public participation in decision-making process and benefit sharing of tourism development in developing countries. He classified these limitations in three categories namely: operational, structural, and cultural.

Limitations at the operational level include the centralisation of public management of tourism development by national governments. All decisions regarding planning, implementation and monitoring of tourism development are made at a national level with minimal or no input from the local community. Consequently, only a few areas, where decision makers at the national level have interest in, experience tourism development while the other regions are neglected. For instance, Akama, Maingi and Camarco (2011) and Kihima (2015) observed that despite enormous and varied potential for wildlife tourism development in Kenya, the country's tourism is geographically limited to a few protected areas and conservancies. Oketch (2009) attributed this to the absence of appropriate land-use policy and procedures governing the location and distribution of tourism amenities and infrastructure in various parks, reserves, and conservancies. Additionally, even in areas considered developed with regard to tourism, community participation is often hindered by existing land ownership regimes. Nevertheless, there is need to broaden geographical spread of tourism and deepen the product base through CBTIs.

Moreover, lack of co-ordination amongst stakeholders (government agencies, hoteliers, tour operators, local community, and NGOs) involved in tourism development limits community participation (Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019). Each stakeholder is driven by the desire to achieve his/her objectives with little regard to the objectives of others. Kibicho (2008) noted that funding institutions were more concerned with project effectiveness/success than the fundamental and less concrete aspects of community-based tourism like stakeholders' collaboration, while the government agency emphasised conservation. He further observed a level of distrust between the local host community in Kimana Wildlife Sanctuary and the Kenya Wildlife Service, the national conservation organisation, and noted that where trust is weak participants do not achieve the desired outputs. Besides, insufficient tourism development data and poor distribution of information (Scheyvens, 2002) makes the community more vulnerable to manipulation. Under such circumstances, low public participation in the tourism development process is apparent as the community is not sufficiently informed.

Structural limitations at CBTI level include lack of appropriate legal system, especially on matters regarding land ownership (Manyara and Jones, 2007) where initiatives are registered as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), associations, trusts or limited companies with various land ownership tenures and without a definite land use policy. This makes it easy to convert land from conservation and tourism development to agriculture as happened in Kimana, Kenya. Lack of trained human resources and expertise amongst the local community limits participation in tourism. Muganda, Mgonja and Backman (2013) observed that the community in Mto wa Mbu in Tanzania did not wish elected officials or the local committee to

independently make decisions on matters tourism development because they lacked tourism skills and some of them had little education. Similar observations were made by Manyara and Jones (2007) in six CBTIs in Kenya.

High cost implication associated with community participation and inadequate financial resources (Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002; Manyara and Jones, 2007; Chili and Ngxongo, 2017) are other structural limitations hindering community participation in tourism. Communities frequently lack resources and power (Scheyvens, 2002; Akama, Maingi and Camarco, 2011), and are therefore unable to establish amenities and infrastructure required for tourism development. This makes it difficult for the community to improve on the quality of the tourism product in their locality and to access the desired markets. The local community therefore becomes reliant on other stakeholders, hence constraining its participation.

Cultural limitations include limited capacity of action by poor populations, lack of inspiration and low level of awareness in the local community (Kibicho, 2008). Manyara and Jones (2007: 410) in their study on best practice model for community capacity building in community-based enterprises in Kenya noted that “some respondents felt that majority of the local communities were not aware at all about tourism and that in such cases it was only the local elites who were”. This shows that lack of awareness and information hinders most community members from participating in tourism. Lack of inspiration and low levels of awareness in local communities has been attributed to a history of ignoring the grassroots in decision-making (Tosun, 2006; Mensah, 2017).

According to Blackstock (2005) and Kibicho (2008), the heterogeneous nature of communities is a constraint to their participation in tourism development. A community comprises of several kinds of people, often with uneven status and positions and different ambitions. Such segmentations lead to unequal opportunities for participation in tourism activities and struggles within the community.

All these deficiencies form severe predicaments to community participation in tourism and slow down the destination development process. The general outcome of such barriers is often the communities' limited eagerness towards the industry, which results in little benefits trickling down to the local community. Past researches, as enumerated above, have focused on identifying such constraints at various sites. However, little has been done to establish the extent to which such constraints hinder the involvement of the local community in CBTIs, and consequently their sustainability. Findings of such a research would be useful in identifying the priority areas and mechanisms for minimising the negative effects of these barriers to the host community.

## Research methodology

Currently, Kenya has approximately 250 CBTIs, a majority of which are located in five focal areas: Taita-Taveta, Laikipia, Samburu, Amboseli, Kwale and Maasai Mara. They are all considered as having high potential for tourism development and conservation (FECTO, 2010). These initiatives are conservation-based and bring together members from the host community, private investors, different government conservation agencies and donor NGOs from time to time. However, there are no structures both at the national and county level to oversee the coordination of the activities of these different stakeholders and monitor their adequate development. Several tourism and conservation organisation – for instance, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA), Ecotourism Kenya (EK), Federation of Community Tourism Organisations (FECTO), and Kenya Community Based Tourism (KECOBAT) network – were formed to help CBTIs realise their tourism potential in Kenya. Yet their activities and scope of action are limited due to lack of funds. Further, being membership groups, membership and annual fees are hindering some CBTIs from joining these associations, thus leaving many on their own.

The Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary (fig.1), in Kwale, was registered as a limited company in 1994 under the name; Golini-Mwaluganje Community Conservation ltd and adopted the name Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary (MES) as the trade name. In the company's Memorandum of Association, members were required to give legal right of vacant possession of their parcel of land to the company, and that they would not dispose off the parcel of land without express and written consent of the company (MES, 1994). An acre or part thereof constitutes a single share. Due to difficulties in securing funding as many organisations were unwilling to fund limited companies, MES initiated a process of registering as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) in 2013.

The study targeted 282 landowners who ceded their land to establish MES, 5 directors and 19 staff of MES. Descriptive research design was utilized to measure, classify, analyse and interpret data (Kombo and Tromp, 2009) by describing possible behaviour, attitudes, values and characteristics (Orodho, 2003). This design provides answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how, associated with a specific research problem (Kothari, 2004). Since the research intended to investigate constraints to community participation based on past and present experience of the land owners this design was considered ideal.

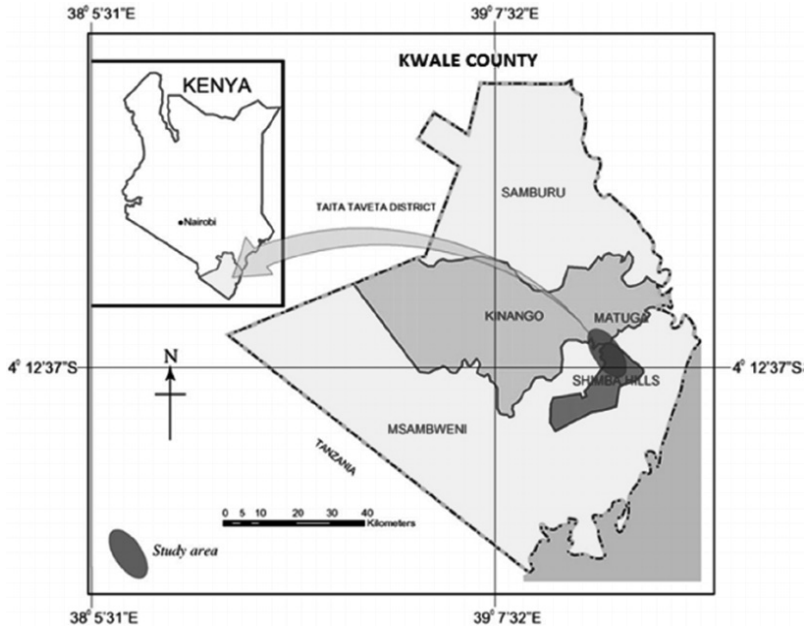
Data was collected through researcher administered questionnaires and interviews on the constraints to community participation. The questionnaire had both structured and unstructured questions, while the interview schedule had unstructured questions. The use of both categories of questions in the questionnaire

allowed for collection of in-depth information (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). Researcher administered questionnaires were used for the landowners because many of them could not read and write, while interviews were used for the key informants' i.e. staff (19) and ex-officio (5). To achieve the desired sample, stratified random sampling was used for landowners. The objective of stratified random sampling was to get the desired representation from different subgroups in the population.

MES is divided into two settlement sections; Golini adjudication section and Mwaluganje A/B adjudication section (MES, 2012), which formed the subgroups of the study among the community. In each sub-group, every community member was given a number after which the numbers were placed in a container and randomly picked. Members corresponding to the numbers picked were included in the sample. Picking numbers continued until the required sample size was achieved. Thus, no bias was noted during the sampling. This gave each member a chance to be involved in the study.

Contacts of ex-officio directors and staff were obtained from the MES office. The directors and staff were chosen because of their past and present involvement in tourism development in the community, hence deemed to have in-depth information about MES and CBTI development. A census for this category was used since the entire population is small and easily accessible (Kombo and Tromp, 2009).

The study was conducted between September 2013 and May 2016. Two research assistants and two translators (from English to the native Digo and Duruma dialects) were recruited to assist in administering the questionnaires by moving from one household to another. Data was collected in the morning and late in the afternoon. It was suspended at mid-day to allow the respondents go to mosques for midday prayers (majority were Muslims). Interviews were conducted by the researcher through visiting individual directors in their residences, offices and businesses. Staffs were interviewed at their respective work stations. The respondents were notified before commencement of the interview through a phone call.

**Figure 1: A Map of Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary**

## Findings

### Respondent characteristics

A total of 130 respondents (50 Golini and 80 Mwaluganje) participated in the study. Out of the total number of respondents 69.2% were male while 30.8% were female. The majority of the respondents 84.6% were aged 51 and above. Moreover, 54.6% of the respondents had no formal education, while 27.7% had primary level of education; 17.7% had secondary education level and mid-level college education. The results depict a community that is not formally well educated and likely to face challenges in making informed decisions on matters relating to tourism development.

Moreover, the findings indicated that 52.3% of the landowners practiced mixed farming (subsistence farming and keeping of livestock) as their means of livelihood and 32.3% practiced crop farming with the main crop being maize inter-planted with bananas, cassava and cowpeas. Only 9% depended solely on employment, 4.6% do business (but not with MES) and a mere 1.5% practiced livestock rearing only. Respondents mentioned that during the dry season (January–April) their livestock illegally graze in MES, reducing the attractiveness of the site. While during the rainy season their farms experience increased Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), sometimes leading to loss of both wildlife and humans.



### Constraints to community participation

Constraints to participation were investigated using various statements (table 1). Response to the statements were classified based on a Likert scale of 1=strongly agree, 2=agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree. Mean (M) values and Standard deviation (SD) were calculated for the various statements. Mean (M) values closer to 1 represented high level of agreement to the statement under consideration.

**Table 1: Mean (M) values and Standard deviation (SD) of the various statements on constraints to community participation in Tourism development**

| Constraints to community participation in tourism development                    | Number of respondents | Mean (M) |            | Std. Deviation (SD) |
|--|-----------------------|----------|------------|---------------------|
|  |                       | Stat     | Std. Error | Stat                |
| 1. Lack of financial resources for tourism development.                          | 130                   | 1.64     | .042       | .482                |
| 2. Lack of skills/knowledge to manage tourism development in MES.                | 130                   | 1.77     | .037       | .423                |
| 3. Lack of adequate consultations on decisions regarding the development of MES. | 130                   | 4.48     | .044       | .502                |
| 4. Lack of benefits to the community.  | 130                   | 4.35     | .050       | .567                |
| 5. Inadequate role played by the private sector                                  | 130                   | 1.62     | .043       | .486                |
| 6. Lack of conducive environment for tourism growth                              | 130                   | 1.64     | .050       | .571                |

#### Lack of financial resources for tourism development

Respondents were asked if the community lacked financial resources for tourism development in the Sanctuary. In response, 36.2% strongly agreed while 63.8% agreed, M=1.64 (second closest mean to 1), SD=0.482, (table 1) indicating that the community lacked financial resources for tourism development. Respondents mentioned that they lacked funds to procure brochures for marketing, participate in trade fairs, acquire a van to ferry clients to the Sanctuary, repair roads and construct a tented camp, among other things.

### **Lack of skills and knowledge to manage tourism**

Variable 'community lacked skills and knowledge to manage tourism development' had  $M= 1.77$  (third closest mean to 1),  $SD 0.423$ . The community lacked skills and knowledge (23.1% strongly agreed and 76.9% agreed) to fully participate in tourism development.

### **Inadequate role played by other actors**

Of the respondents, 37.7% strongly agreed with the statement that the developer in MES did not adequately play her role as per the agreement while 62.3% agreed to the statement, corresponding to  $M=1.62$  (Mean closest to 1),  $SD 0.486$ . Similarly, a majority of respondents, 98.4% (strongly agreed and agreed)  $M=1.64$  (Mean second closest to 1),  $SD=0.571$  indicated that the conservation agency (KWS) had not created a conducive environment to enable the community fully participate in their projects in MES.

The respondents mentioned that at inception, the investor (Dhanjal Investment ltd) promised to construct and manage a tented camp, market the sanctuary and maintain roads in return for a site in the Sanctuary to construct a '*lunch banda*' (an extension of the tented camp). This worked well for 5 years after which the investor neglected the camp, stopped marketing the Sanctuary and stopped maintaining the roads. According to the respondents this denied the community opportunities (employment and business) to participate in tourism development. On a similar note, respondents complained that the conservation agency failed to involve them in branding and security enhancement activities which took place in the Sanctuary despite promises to do so.

The respondents indicated that the community had not received the desired support from the Kenya Wildlife Service. This included reintroduction of animals and road maintenance, though the agency had taken up fence maintenance and enhanced security. One respondent was quoted saying: "We requested them to restock the sanctuary with more animals but now it is the third year and nothing has been done yet. We also requested them to help repair the roads, nothing has been done, yet roads are impassable".

The directors also identified land ownership system as a constraint to participation. It was explained that though under MES, the land was legally owned by individual members, this made it difficult to carry out projects or investments on the land. This was illustrated by the following statement from one respondent: "When we identified a site for the construction of a tented camp by an investor; the individual landowner insisted that he wanted to deal directly with the investor since the title was in his name. It was after lengthy discussions and persuasion that he agreed to 'lease' the land to MES who would then leased it to the investor". When MES wants to carry out a major investment in the Sanctuary, it either has to buy or lease land from the owner,

which according to the respondents is a tedious process and discourages prospective partners and therefore limiting participation.

#### **Lack of adequate consultations on decisions regarding development of MES**

Respondents were asked if they were not adequately consulted on decisions regarding development of MES. In response, 51.5% of respondents disagreed while 48.5% strongly disagreed with the statement that they were not adequately consulted  $M = 4.48$  (mean furthest from 1),  $SD = 0.502$  on decision regarding the development of MES.

#### **Lack of benefits to the community**

Finally, respondents were asked if benefits from MES trickled down to the community. To elicit more details from the respondents, the statement was negatively presented. Of the respondents 60.8% disagreed whereas 37.7% strongly disagreed to the statement that benefits from MES did not trickle down to the landowners ( $M=4.35$ ,  $SD= 0.567$ ). Respondents commented that the mechanism of sharing financial benefits (compensation) based on size of land owned was very good and objective, however complained that the amount of 5 USD per acre per year were too little. Interview results revealed that annual compensation was the only benefit enjoyed by all landowners' individually. Other benefits like employment and business linkages benefitted very few people. Initially compensation was dependent on income raised from tourism which varied depending on the number of visitors and size of land (in acres) owned. However, when tourism was too low the management had to seek for well-wishers to donate money towards the compensation kitty to just keep the landowners contented.

#### **Extent of the constraints**

To establish the extent to which these constraints hindered community participation in tourism development, data was subjected to a Chi-square test with 'involvement' as the row values and 'constraints' as the column values. In table 2,  $X^2$  represent the Chi value,  $V$  (Cramer's  $V$ ) is a measure of association between the "row variable" and "column variable"; values close to 1 indicate strong positive associations,  $P$  represents the significance levels ( $P$  value less than 0.05 indicate significant associations).

The findings (table 2), showed that lack of financial resources to manage the sanctuary ( $V=0.568$ ,  $P=0.042$ ), private investor had not adequately played her role ( $V=0.822$ ,  $P=0.020$ ), benefits from MES did not trickle down to the local landowners ( $V=0.483$ ,  $P=0.006$ ), community lacked skills/knowledge to manage tourism development in MES ( $V=0.411$ ,  $P=0.017$ ) and the conservation agency (KWS) had not created a conducive environment ( $V=0.365$ ,  $P=0.012$ ) hindered community participation significantly from a moderate to a high extent. The other

constraint; landowners were not adequately consulted ( $V=0.067$ ,  $P=0.418$ ) did not significantly hinder participation of local community. Therefore, the constraints hindered community participation from a moderate to high extent ( $0.365=V=0.822$ ;  $0.017=P=0.042$ ).

**Table 2: Chi- Square test results on the extent to which constraints hinder community participation.**

| Variable  | X <sup>2</sup> | df | V    | P    |
|---|----------------|----|------|------|
| 1. The community lacks financial capability to manage the sanctuary                         | 3.562          | 1  | .568 | .042 |
| 2. The community lacks training to manage tourism development in MES                        | 18.887         | 2  | .411 | .017 |
| 3. Landowners are not adequately consulted on any decision regarding the development of MES | .576           | 1  | .067 | .418 |
| 4. Benefits from MES do not trickle down to the local landowners                            | 10.398         | 2  | .483 | .006 |
| 5. The private investor Dhanjal Investment has not adequately played her role               | 20.051         | 2  | .822 | .020 |
| 6. KWS has not created a conducive environment  | 2.016          | 2  | .365 | .012 |

## Discussions and conclusion

### High expectations but failed promises of development

The results from this study show that operational, structural and cultural limitations to sustainable and participatory tourism exist in Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, but with varied representation. Lack of coordination was identified as a major constraint at the operational level. This was depicted by two variables: first, the private investor, Dhanjal Investment Ltd, did not adequately play its role i.e. development and management of a catering and accommodation facility, sanctuary marketing and road maintenance. The investor contracted to manage tourism sites in the sanctuary failed to honour agreements with the community. Efforts by the community in conjunction with KWS to convince the investor to honour the agreement were unsuccessful. The investor promised to improve the camp, carry out marketing and repair roads but failed to do so. Because of this, the community felt short changed and denied an opportunity to fully participate in tourism development. Further, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), who issued the investor with a 25 years lease, felt that Dhanjal Investment Ltd had not violated any of the conditions in the lease. This depicted a lack of objective coordination/collaboration among the stakeholders (Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019).

Secondly KWS did not create conducive environment to enable the community full participation in tourism development. The agency failed to fulfil promises made at inception (construction of an office), to fully involve community in their projects (construction of a new gate, security enhancement), and to timely and positively respond to community requests for improvement (road repair and reintroduction of animals) of the Sanctuary as a tourist site. According to MES community, the agency allocated very little funds for community projects in MES due to the high demand of such funds from other projects in the ecosystem. Further, obtaining funds from the agency through proposals, though an option, was not guaranteed and took too long to get responses. Although the issues raised by the community were genuine, the community seemed to have expected too much from the agency, without considering its capacity and the bureaucratic nature of decision making in government agencies. However, such views by the community were to be expected, considering that it was the conservation agency that initiated the process of sanctuary formation.

These findings portray a community unable to fully participate in tourism development due to activities of other stakeholders who influence the success and viability of tourism. The absence of a single entity with a mandate to co-ordinate and influence activities of the stakeholders worsens the situation for the community. According to Kibicho (2003), the integration of various interested parties (with equally varied interest) into the tourism industry while at the same time guarding the importance of developing a ‘workable tourism management strategy’ remains a real challenge to many tourism destinations. Other studies (Mitchell and Muckosy, 2008; Dieke, 2001, Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019), also found that lack of connexion between various stakeholders in CBT development constrains the participation of the local community. This was attributed to the current policy which gives various mandates to government agencies on tourism development and conservation with none to ensure that these agencies and stakeholders fulfil their obligations to the local community.

In MES, lack of funds was attributed to poor performance of tourism (Kihima, 2015), and lack of external support. Honey (2008) noted that even though MES had one of the highest concentrations of elephants in the country in 2002, its visibility to the beach resorts only twenty miles away was poor hence resort guests were not sent to the sanctuary. This state of affairs therefore contributed to low visitor numbers as well as low revenue for the sanctuary. Withdrawal of major support by Eden Wildlife Trust (EWT) (an NGO) exacerbated the financial woes of the Sanctuary. This was well illustrated by the following comment from one of the directors: “Financial challenges increased when Eden Wildlife Trust stopped paying the manager, fuelling our vehicle and funding major projects in MES”. Lack of financial resources has been identified by various researchers (Tosun, 2006; Zhao and Richie, 2007; Manyara

and Jones, 2007, Wondirad & Ewnetu, 2019) as a major challenge facing CBTIs and noted that this shortcoming appeared to be a key drawback to implementation of participatory tourism development in developing countries. Lack of funds due to poor performance of tourism, limited support from donors and government agencies, if not well addressed, could lead to deterioration of tourism.

Lack of skills and knowledge were identified to be a major constraint in the MES community. This was attributed to low levels of education identified in the respondents' characteristics and failure by the investor and conservation agency to provide more information to the community. Reduction of support by EWT was due to protests by a section of the community to compel the donor to dismiss a manager employed at inception (who was not a local) and engage a local one. This depicted a feeling of lack of ownership (Mensah, 2017) of the project on the part of the community. Though the donor felt that the proposed manager lacked capacity to manage the Sanctuary, he obliged owing to the community's persistence. The community welcomed the decision, as they thought that they could manage the project without donor support, an illustration of lack of awareness and information by community on matters of tourism development and conservation, which led to failure by the community to achieve the desired objectives in MES. To avert such situations, there is need for more awareness creation, capacity building and policies that guide local community members on how to engage more with the policy makers and other tourism stakeholders. Moreover, Juma and Khademi-Vidra (2019) note that only professional management can guarantee CBTIs success and that they should be managed as a business in structure and form.

The findings concur with Muganda, Mgonja, and Backman (2013) and Cole (2006) who observed that due to low levels of education, community lacked knowledge, skills and interest to participate in tourism development taking place in their locality. Similarly, Meguro and Inoue (2011) noted that in Kimana, the local people left marketing of the sanctuary to KWS, and the former manager from the community found that to be in order. This is an indication of an expertise gap in matters relating to tourism in the management. Thus, considering the lack of understanding of tourist activity by the local populations, one realizes that knowledge necessary to participate in a tourism project is more complex than the act of assembling the project itself and attracting tourists. It is necessary to train the local community on the basic concept of tourism. Generally, the fixation and refusal to change makes CBTIs unappealing to the tourism industry. This implies that such projects lack the necessary magnetic power and appeal, hence the call for right skills and knowledge on the part of the local community. Though attributed to low levels of education in majority of the rural areas, failure to involve the youth who tend to be more schooled also makes the future bleak for CBTIs.

Lack of appropriate legal system on land ownership for conservation and tourism development, made it cumbersome for the management to enter into partnership with new investors for and on behalf of the community, limiting the uptake of new partners. It also made it easy for individual members to sell their land without contacting the management, exposing the whole project to individuals (buyers) who may not be interested in maintaining current form of land use.

Finally, a single social constraint of low level of awareness was identified in MES. As much as the community wanted to be independent, its members did not acknowledge that they lacked capacity to manage the project without any external support. Their motivation for independence was inspired by the revenue generated, with no consideration for revenue sources, costs incurred and long-term sustainability. Tosun (2006) attributed low level of awareness concerning potential of tourism development, costs and benefits of tourism to the style of tourism development in developing countries. There is a need therefore amongst CBTIs for more community awareness about tourism benefits, costs, structure of the industry and how it is affected by external factors. This calls for community members to organise themselves for the purpose of sharing information and possible experiences (Thetsane, 2019).

Inadequate consultation was found not to be a barrier to community participation in MES. This was attributed to the membership scheme adopted that restricted membership to landowners only and management structure where directors were elected democratically by the community and retired by rotation after a short period of 2 years. These findings contradict those by Dogra & Gupta (2012) and Tosun (2000) who found inadequate consultation of the local community by other stakeholders in tourism development to be a major challenge in developing countries. Similarly, lack of benefits was not a constraint to community participation in MES. The results indicated that the local community was satisfied with the mechanism of sharing benefits from the Sanctuary, particularly the financial benefits. Respondents commented that the mechanism of sharing financial benefits (compensation) based on size of land owned was very good, however expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of money they earned per acre per year.

These findings reveal that the main focus in CBTIs should be on the cooperation and coordination among the stakeholders who should fulfil their obligations to the community. This will ensure that more local people get involved in tourism development. However, it should be noted that these constraints could be an extension of predominant social, political and economic models, which have hindered local communities from realizing higher levels of development in Kenya. In this regard, minimizing these barriers to community participation in tourism development will depend on the cooperation of national government, county government, the private sector, NGOs and the community.

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