

In western Serengeti institutions have been put in place and many efforts are made to create community support for wildlife conservation, but the intended objectives have yet to be met. Tourism-derived support for local communities often distorts rather than supports sustainable development.

These are the key findings from a reconnaissance visit of a multi-disciplinary team of SNV Tanzania and partners to examine community – wildlife relations in western Serengeti. The team visited the area in Serengeti District adjacent to the western extension of Serengeti National Park in early August, 2009. The team talked to a broad range of key stakeholders in wildlife conservation, tourism, government, civil society and at community level. A detailed report has been prepared for internal use and limited circulation. This briefing shares some of the findings and reasons in order to contribute to a public debate.

WILDLIFE, TOURISM AND COMMUNITIES: VICIOUS OR VIRTUOUS CIRCLE?

There is broad appreciation that wildlife conservation should not be at the expense of local communities, but should be both in its short- as well as long-term interest. If wildlife is conserved, develops unhindered, and is available in abundance, wildlife-based tourism can flourish. Such tourism, if well managed, will create national economic benefits (contribution to GDP, employment, government taxation, etc), but can also benefit local communities, through inclusive business practices and community outreach programmes. Communities will gain access to alternative incomes and will be both appreciative and have an interest in sustaining the wildlife resource at the heart of this virtuous circle.



There are some strong elements in place in western Serengeti for making this circle work. There is support at the highest political level for this approach. Wildlife in Serengeti National Park is relatively well protected and in abundance (for example, the Serengeti eco-system is home to over 2 million wildebeest and zebra). There are a series of well designed buffer-zones in between the communities and the Park. Tourism is closely managed, aiming for the higher end of the market, and is generating big economic and financial benefits for both investors and the country (tourism provides 17 % of GDP with 700,000 international arrivals; international visitors to Serengeti National Park were over

135,000 in 2006/7). A portion of these benefits, presenting a substantive amount on an annual basis, is spend on community development by various tourism actors and in various ways (for example, SENAPA has supported projects worth TZS 1.7 billion in the 7 districts surrounding the Park; Grumeti spends approx. TZS 30-40 million per month on local produce), yet little of this can be seen on the ground.



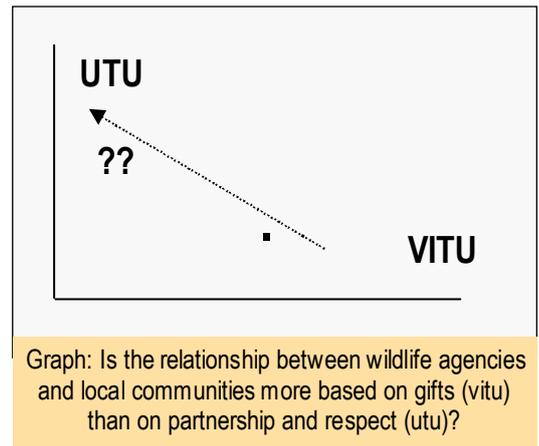
A tree nursery supported by Grumeti

Yet all is not well in western Serengeti. The buffer-zones are not functioning as designed. Whereas the Ikorongo and Grumeti Game Reserves are under close management, the Wildlife Management Area and the nearby Open Areas face challenges. The WMA is at the risk of falling apart, as the five villages making up the WMA do not receive equal benefits. The recent influx of cattle from neighbouring Shinyanga Region into the WMA and Open Areas exposed management limitations: the official system for allowing pastoralists with their animals access to grazing was clearly not working and was replaced by village leaders deploying local (corrupt) practices. Also the wildlife protection and policing by both the National Park and Grumeti Game Reserves could be improved. These practices are seen by communities as erratic (not always understood), subject to corruption and confusion (no consistent and uniform policy and practice by the different agencies).

The weakest link within the above described cycle is at the community level. Communities certainly do receive benefits from wildlife conservation and tourism. But the benefits are:

- selective: some villages generate TZS 300 million (i.e. Makundusi) from wildlife-tourism per year, while others a few kilometers down the road and equally affected by wildlife (i.e. Kyadege), receive TZS 1.8 million per year; another example of selectivity is where one village (Robanda) was denied benefits by Grumeti Fund as relationships were poor;
- exclusive: many of the benefits do not reach communities, but come in a form that can be appropriated by individuals in influential positions;
- not packaged: even when communities benefit, the relationship with wildlife conservation and tourism is not always clear;
- paternalistic: many of the benefits come in the form of hand-outs and create dependence rather than contributing to a transformative change process;
- social rather than economic: while investments in social services are laudable, there have been no effective interventions yet to link local production to the tourism market (beef is exported to the Comores by local traders and imported from Nairobi by tourist lodges; fish from Lake Victoria is transported through the Park to Arusha, to be bought there by tourist enterprises; there are no successful local community tourism enterprises yet).
- inappropriate: substantive funding is used for meetings, trips and allowances, with dubious benefits for development processes and more aimed at purchasing political support.

As a result of these practices, the SNV team found individuals and communities which did not have any appreciation for the effect of the wildlife-tourism nexus on their development. We found widespread resentment (some people were seen to benefit greatly, others not at all) and wildlife-tourism benefits contributing to divisions within and between communities. Too much of the underlying approach appears to be that development is brought about by *kuwaletea watu 'vitu' badala ya 'utu' kwanza*.



Buying or supporting development?

We found poverty and service levels in communities incommensurate with the wildlife-tourism proceeds available, and there is an urgent need to ensure that such proceeds do indeed contribute to sustainable development. One crucial indicator of the functioning of the wildlife – tourism – communities circle underscores this urgency: poaching is on the increase (provisional figures from Serengeti National Park indicate a 100 % increase over the last one year).

ACTORS & FACTORS

Based on our visit, we collected some impressions and stories on the different actors and factors, influencing how the wildlife – tourism – community circle operates in practice.

National policy and implementation

The national policies are clear and supportive: wildlife is protected, and there is a favourable tourism investment climate. There is a clear policy for creating community benefits and the President is known for his supportive stand.

There are occasional events, which create tensions between wildlife authorities and tourism actors on the one hand, and communities on the other hand (e.g. evictions, policing). Large scale corruption in the wildlife sector, e.g. protected poaching, appears limited (though there have been some critical stories in the press lately on TANAPA). There are traces of both (poor policing practices and corruption) in the western Serengeti area, but they appear not to have led yet to a large-scale breakdown of trust between authorities/industry and communities.

Local Government

The role of the District Councils of both Serengeti and (to a lesser extent) Bunda is not always positive in creating community benefits for wildlife conservation. The impression was created that some of the benefits were captured, rather than used to catalyse development. The District Council particularly fails in its role of supervising and supporting village government. The DC's office plays an important role in the creation of harmonious relations between the various agencies and government levels, and is seen as an effective arbiter. Nevertheless, there are also examples of the office engaging in inefficient or corrupt practices in the past. Just one example cited to the team: a few years ago the former DC convened a meeting of tourism hotels in the area, and convinced them to make seeds and

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other inputs available to local production groups. At harvest time, the DC's office was provided with funds by the hotels to purchase the produce, which had been grown by the groups, yet nothing (or little) was bought and delivered to the hotels. The initiative collapsed herewith.

While the functioning of village governments in Tanzania can vary quite a bit, it is poignant if village governments actually possess the resources to function (different than in most situations), yet fail to do so. On two indicators of performance (effectivity and transparency) the village governments in the western Serengeti area appear to dismally fail. From a sample of two villages, we noted that:

Transparency: there are no notice boards, displaying budgets and expenditures, as per requirement. In one village, the village leadership when questioned refused to disclose to the team sources of funds, budgets and expenditures.

Effectivity: despite substantive annual budgets (in one case TZS 300 million and in another case TZS 200 million per year) for village governments, derived mostly from wildlife-tourism, we could find hardly any substantive development in those villages.

The team was struck by an encounter with a class 5 school boy in the village, which earned TZS 300 million that year. It was lunch-time, and the boy was standing outside the school compound. On being questioned, he explained that his home was too far to go to lunch. So he finds himself in the situation, that he has to wake early (before breakfast) to walk the three hours to school, then goes without lunch, and finds his only meal of the day at home, after walking another 3 hours home at the end of the school day. With all those funds, yet there is no school lunch for that boy?

Wildlife conservation: Grumeti Foundation (GF), Serengeti National Park (SNP) and Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS)

The three local giants in wildlife conservation make substantive investments in policing, wildlife conservation and community outreach in the western Serengeti area. Their image and profile differs, i.e. in most communities SNP and FZS has a positive image, while GF has a negative image. In some sections of local government, that is the reverse. Overall, while some paint them with the same brush, there is a perception of competition and enmity between them. There is also a perceptible difference in approach: SNP exploiting its government mandate, FZS focusing on community dynamics and GF using its financial muscle. The impression created is that each of them is seeking individual appreciation and recognition, thus limiting the opportunities for collaboration between them.

Tourism Enterprises

Tourism enterprises in the Park, but especially the ones outside the Park, create substantive community benefits in terms of employment and direct income. However, the corporate social responsibility practices, and tourist philanthropy, remain too incidental with little sustained benefits.

What is clearly lacking are inclusive business practices: (1) Treating communities as partners in development, rather than beneficiaries, and (2) A common and accepted practice of channelling CSR and philanthropy.

There is a significant absence of involvement of local NGOs in the wildlife – tourism – community circle. Very few NGOs, if any, receive funding from wildlife-tourism sources to provide services



or undertake community development activities. There is an equally significant absence of international development NGOs, contributing their expertise, knowledge and funding.

Communities

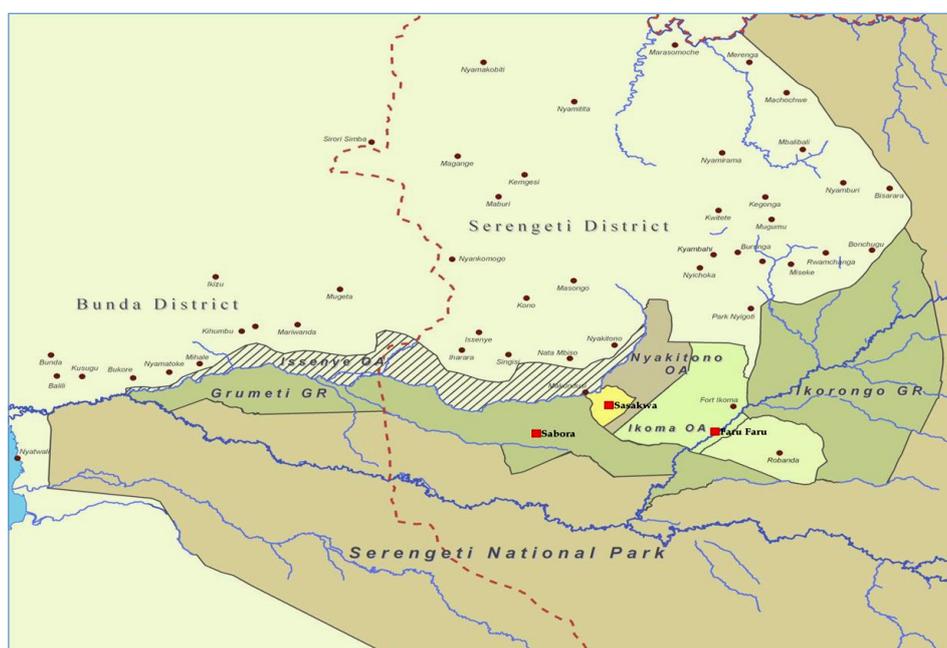
A broad and generalised impression is of a community, with little interest in wildlife conservation or tourism. If anything, there is envy about unequal distribution. A contentious issue is hunting, which is a traditional practice for most of the communities adjacent to the game areas and also serves social (food) and economic (trade in bush meat) purposes. One government initiative (SRCP) provided game meat under controlled conditions to the communities, and was broadly appreciated for that. Apparently it was discontinued, as it could not be proven that providing game meat did reduce poaching by local communities.

The urgency of reconciling genuine community cultural concerns on hunting with wildlife conservation interest is underscored by the recent increase in poaching. Community hunting is not just going to go away by banning and policing it, and can also not be bought away.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESERVES, WMA AND OPEN AREAS

Ikorongo-Grumeti Reserve: These are two hunting concessions on the north western boundary of the Serengeti. These reserves are of critical biodiversity importance and form an essential component of the Serengeti ecosystem. In 2002 Grumeti Reserves took over the lease for these concessions with the primary aim being the protection of wildlife and its habitat in the area and securing this in the long term.



Sasakwa Hill (2,250 ha); The area over the hill which is leased to Grumeti Reserves for 99 years in which Sasakwa lodge is built. The area is surrounded by Ikorongo-Grumeti reserved area and WMA.

Ikoma/Grumeti Wildlife Management Areas (24,300 ha): These are 2 WMAs in which some investment are allowed. The establishment of Ikoma/Grumeti WMA include 5 villages and is one of 16 pilot WMAs in Tanzania and Ikoma/Grumeti is leading WMA in terms of revenues and organisation.

Faru Faru and Nyakitono Open Area:

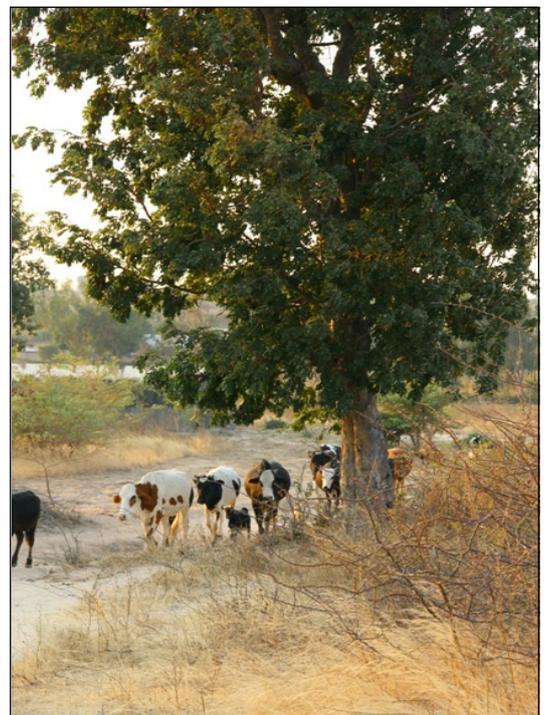
Are areas within WMA in some activities such as hunting, photographing etc. are allowed. Both Game Controlled Areas and Game Reserves allow for consumptive forms of utilization. Consumptive use (hunting) is only permitted during the Open Season and requires a valid permit issued by Wildlife Division.

LIVESTOCK PERSPECTIVE ON GRUMETI

Shinyanga region is a drought prone area lying adjacent to Serengeti district and Grumeti Game Reserve. Shinyanga is home to about 16% of the country's 18 million livestock. Historically severe droughts have forced livestock to migrate from Shinyanga to Serengeti in search of pasture and water. Climatic conditions determined seasonal migration of livestock between the two areas. The recent influx of livestock into communities surrounding Grumeti reserve in Serengeti district was a result of the drought condition which hit the area. However, given imposed government restrictions on the movement of livestock from one area to the other there are two major ways in which livestock could move and settle in Serengeti. One way is by being "invited" by village leaders who see an opportunity to benefit from distressed livestock keepers facing a dire life or death situation for their livestock. The village leaders demand payments in cash and cows as a condition for allowing livestock to settle and graze in their communities land.

The other way is through cultural and traditional practices of the local people in both areas. During times of drought livestock keepers divide their main herds into smaller groups and loan those to their relatives inhabiting climatically better areas such as Serengeti. This way the livestock will be able to access available grazing lands and water while their relatives access milk from the loaned cattle. This year the drought was more severe than usual, leading to huge numbers of livestock migrated into Serengeti from Shinyanga. As a result of the presence of huge numbers, local people termed it as 'livestock invasion' of their communities. The invasion created stiff competition for access to pasture and water.

Under these competitive conditions, bad relations between the invasion owners and local communities began to emerge. However there are also socio-economic reasons for bad relations between the two groups. The livestock herders from Shinyanga are viewed as people, who just drove their huge herds of cattle into the surrounding communities, utilise and deplete vital resources and depart immediately after the resources have been depleted without leaving behind anything substantial.



In addition the invasion caused oversupply hence the crush of cattle prices in the market. However the huge presence of livestock in the open areas also made illegal hunting of wild animals more difficult for the local communities. Livestock presence in the open areas forced wildlife to move further inside the reserve making it harder for illegal hunters to access them.

There are also socio economic benefits derived from the livestock presence in the area such as availability of milk and meat at affordable prices to the local communities. The presence of cattle also increased the cattle trade between the two groups involved. The local communities bought cattle at affordable prices, fattened them and then sold them at better prices.

Therefore from the combination of climatic, social and economic causes it will be difficult to predict if livestock invasion of the area will end. The corruption levels amongst village leaders are high, promote and encourage the practices and make it difficult for the communities to have full control of their land. However climatic condition exacerbates the situation and no livestock keeper will let his herd perish while places with better pasture and water exists next door.

WAY FORWARD

The SNV study team, which carried out the reconnaissance, was initiated to 'create the bigger picture', both for our collaboration with Grumeti, but also with other tourism actors in Mara Region.

Based on the discussions, initiated through this briefing and the related discussions, we intend to make the following services available to interested parties:

- **Brokering:** due to our neutral position, we will make our services available to create collaboration between key stakeholders (e.g. SENAPA, RS Mara, Grumeti, FZS) as well as between individual stakeholders and communities (community dialogue platforms); we will also investigate linking to the Serengeti Eco-System Community Conservation Forum, being established.
- **Accountability:** a crucial element in improving the wildlife – tourism – community circle is the role of village governments and District Councils. They receive substantive funding, but have difficulties in creating tangible benefits at community level, due to weak accountability relations. We will propose a programme for strengthening their capacities.
- **Linkages:** we will continue and deepen our present support to FZS and GF on the establishment of economic groups, supplying produce to the tourism market. We will also seek client relationships with tourism companies, using the concept of Inclusive Business, as well as stimulate the establishment of community-based tourism.
- **School milk:** We will actively advocate for the introduction of a school-milk programme, linking local communities (as milk producers) to schools (buying milk from tourism proceeds), through local processors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This briefing is prepared by a survey team of 8 members, which visited the area 10-12 August. From SNV: Jan de Witte (Country Director, Dar es Salaam), Rinus van Klinken (Portfolio Coordinator, Mwanza), Heriel Mtui (Sector Leader Tourism, Arusha), Josephine Lemoyan (Governance adviser, Mwanza), Donald Liya (Tourism adviser, Mwanza) and Tom Ole Sikar (Livestock adviser, Mwanza).



The study team at work

From partners in Musoma Hassan Ally (IBDI) and Benedict Chacha (Foundation Help) participated.

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The team met the following resource people:

<p>From Grumeti: Acting Managing Director Financial accountant Communication officer Community Liaison officer</p>	<p>From SENAPA: Tourism warden, Community Outreach Coordinator Rhino project coordinator, Chief ecologist</p>
<p>Regional Commissioner, Mara Region</p>	<p>Frankfurt Zoological Society Project Coordinator</p>
<p>Serengeti District Council Ag. District Executive Director District Game Officer Tourism Coordinator (proposed)</p>	<p>Village officials WEO, Isenye Ward Divisional Officer, Chamriho division VEO, Kyandegge village Chairman and VEO, Mwakundusi</p>
<p>Others: Secretary, Ikona/Grumeti WMA Secretary, Robanda village SACCO Executive secretary, SEPDA (Serengeti Environmental Protection Association)</p>	<p>Villagers: Taturu elder, evicted livestock herders, affected women, school teacher</p>



**SNV Tanzania
and its focus on
Mara and
Serengeti
Regions**

Worldwide, SNV dedicates its work to societies where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development. SNV started working in Tanzania during the 1970s as a Dutch volunteer agency. In the three decades since then, SNV Tanzania has grown into a multi-faceted international development organization that utilizes the experience of professional advisors from throughout Africa and the world. Its core mission is to provide professional thematic and change management advice to meso-level clients.

One of the offices of SNV Tanzania is in Mwanza and covers the Lake Zone. It works in Education, WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Livestock (red meat and milk) and Tourism. As part of its tourism activities, SNV Lake Zone conducted a study in 2008 on "Pro-poor Tourism in western Serengeti". The study used the seven mechanisms developed by the World Tourism Organisation (UN-WTO) to assess benefits to the poor from mainstream tourism and revealed how limited linkages were between communities and Serengeti National Park.

Based on the study, SNV entered into a number of client relationships in Mara Region, including the Regional Secretariat (tourism master plan), Frankfurt Zoological Society (Support to Community Conservation Banks – CoCoBa), TCCIA Mara and Grumeti Reserves. Grumeti requested SNV to assist the Community Outreach Department to improve the performance of its economic projects (supported to supply produce to its enterprises) for the purpose of increasing benefits to the communities. An assessment is on-going by an LCB (IBDI), with SNV monitoring.