

The Impacts of Tourism on Rural Livelihoods: Namibia's Experience

Caroline Ashley

Working Paper 128

Results of research presented in preliminary form for discussion and critical comment



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The Sustainable Livelihoods Working Paper Series

This working paper is one of a series that cover practical applications of Sustainable Livelihood (SL) approaches within natural resources management. The papers provide substantial case study material of varied practical experiences, combined with reflection on the emerging findings concerning uses of SL. Some focus on specific types of application of SL approaches (e.g. project design, impact assessment) and some on their application to specific sectors (e.g. water, tourism).

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Tourism, the Poor, and Other Stakeholders: Asian Experience, *Kishore Shah and Vasanti Gupta*, ODI-Fair Trade in Tourism Paper.

These are all being printed in February and March 2000. Copies can be ordered by contacting publications@odi.org.uk. The full papers and their summaries are also being placed on the ODI livelihoods website (www.oneworld.org/odi/rpeg/srls.html). Summaries of lessons learnt on uses of SL approaches are being placed on DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Learning Platform (www.livelihoods.org). Several Natural Resource Perspectives on aspects of sustainable livelihoods are also available from ODI.

This set of Working Papers on livelihoods is co-ordinated by Caroline Ashley (ODI) and funded by the Department for International Development's Rural Livelihoods Department. Comments or enquiries should be sent to Caroline Ashley (c.ashley@odi.org.uk) or Kate Burke (k.burke@odi.org.uk).

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Acronyms

CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management programme
CBT	Community-based tourism
NACOBTA	Namibian Community Based Tourism Association
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RNR	Renewable natural resources
WILD	Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification

Summary

This paper assesses the wide range of impacts that tourism has on the livelihoods of rural residents in parts of Namibia. It aims to serve two purposes. First it illustrates that a focus on livelihoods offers a useful perspective on tourism for enhancing local benefits. It contrasts with conventional tourism perspectives which tend to focus exclusively on either economic, commercial or environmental impacts. It also contrasts with narrow assessment of local benefits focusing only on job creation and cash income. Taking a livelihoods perspective helps identify the wide range of impacts – direct and indirect, positive and negative – that matter to local people.

Second, the paper aims to show how tourism's contribution to livelihoods can be enhanced by adjusting decisions on what is developed and how, in ways that reflect people's livelihood priorities. This has implications for how tourism planners, other policy-makers, communities, businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) work. While some implications are context-specific, others have more general relevance to tourism practitioners elsewhere.

The approach outlined here also provides an example of how livelihood analysis can be applied to a sector. In this case the focus is tourism in rural areas. But the principle of assessing a range of livelihood impacts, and identifying how sectoral policies can be adjusted to enhance impacts, could be applied in other sectors.

The paper uses the 'Sustainable Livelihoods' framework for assessing the diverse positive and negative impacts that different types of tourism can have on people's asset base, portfolio of diverse activities, specific outcomes which they seek, and their influence over external organisations. It then identifies the implications of this analysis, which include:

- The development impact of tourism will not be uniform: it will vary widely within and between communities;
- Enhancing the livelihood impacts of tourism does not mean simply maximising the number of tourism developments, or maximising wage income;
- A wide range of costs and benefits need to be taken into account. In particular, it is as important to address negative impacts as to maximise positive ones. And to address impacts on people's assets and existing activities, not just direct contributions to household income and security;
- Careful planning and design, based on an understanding of local livelihoods, can greatly enhance the positive impacts of tourism;
- Maximising livelihood benefits needs a good understanding of what people most need and want (their livelihood priorities) and of the complex ways in which tourism options affect livelihoods (direct and indirect livelihood impacts). Therefore it requires a *considerable role* for local people in decision-making. This can be done either by devolving tourism rights to community level, and helping communities with participatory planning; or by ensuring that government planning processes are participatory and responsive to local needs; or by ensuring, through government incentives, that planning by private entrepreneurs is responsive to local needs.

The *details* of how to enhance livelihood impacts are location-specific. The *principles* of recognising that a range of livelihood concerns are important, and supporting systems that enable local people's priorities to be incorporated into tourism decisions, can be generally applied.

1. Introduction

This paper assesses the wide range of impacts that tourism has on the livelihoods of rural residents in parts of Namibia. The review serves as the basis for two conclusions: firstly, that a focus on livelihoods offers a useful perspective on tourism for enhancing local benefits. It contrasts with conventional tourism perspectives which tend to focus exclusively on economic, commercial or environmental impacts. It also contrasts with narrow assessment of local benefits focusing only on job creation and cash income. Second, tourism's contribution to livelihoods can be enhanced by adjusting decisions on what is developed and how, in ways that reflect people's livelihood priorities. This has implications for how tourism planners, other policy-makers, communities, businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) work.

The approach outlined here also provides an example of how livelihood analysis can be applied to a sector. In this case the focus is tourism in rural areas, and often on an unusual type of tourism which is managed by communities. But the principle of assessing a range of livelihood impacts, and identifying how sectoral policies can be adjusted to enhance impacts, could be applied in other sectors.

Section 2 starts with some background on three contextual issues: conventional approaches to analysing tourism, development of tourism in rural Namibia; and patterns of rural livelihoods in the two main study areas, north-west and north-east Namibia. Section 3 then analyses the wide range of impacts on livelihoods that local people, NGOs, researchers and extension workers have identified. It uses the 'Sustainable Livelihoods' framework to analyse these. Section 4 considers the implications of the analysis of impacts. It demonstrates how some tourism initiatives by both communities and government have been adapted to reflect livelihood priorities. It concludes that understanding the wide range of livelihood impacts of tourism – and adapting to them – is essential if the local development impacts of this growing sector are to be enhanced.

The examples used in this paper come mainly from Kunene and Caprivi Regions (north-west and north-east) of Namibia, where there are many local level tourism initiatives. While 'community tourism' is just one small segment of the tourism market, the initiatives that closely involve local residents are particularly useful for understanding the wide range of livelihood impacts, and how plans are adapted by people according to livelihood concerns. The analysis and examples are drawn from several years' experience of Namibia's Community Based Natural Resource Management programme (CBNRM), a wide range of (grey) literature, plans and activities of communities who are establishing wildlife conservancies¹, including participatory planning of tourism/wildlife that was done with two Kunene communities in 1997², and recent (1999) tourism negotiations.

¹ Participatory planning was done with Bergsig community, now registered as Torra Conservancy, and the neighbouring Grootberg community now registered as Khoadi !!Hoas Conservancy, both in southern Kunene Region (former Damaraland). This was done as part of the development phase of the Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification (WILD) project in 1997, and is documented further in Ashley (1997) and Croxton (1997). The examples and analysis from Caprivi build on a 1997 paper assessing interactions between livelihood strategies and wildlife options in Caprivi, which summarised several years' field work and documentation by a range of governmental and non-governmental agencies (see Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997) and contains more details of the livelihood strategies summarised here.

² A conservancy is an institution formed by a community, with a constitution, registered members, committee, and locally-agreed boundaries, to which the Namibian Government devolves conditional consumptive and non-consumptive use rights over wildlife.

2. Background

2.1 Conventional approaches to tourism

In many developing countries, including Namibia, four different perspectives on tourism can be distinguished:

- Economists generally see tourism as route to *macro-economic growth*, and particularly a means of generating foreign exchange;
- For the private sector, tourism is a commercial activity, so the main concerns are product development, competitiveness and commercial returns;
- Many conservationists now see tourism as a form of sustainable use of wild resources, and hence as a way to enhance incentives for conservation;
- For rural people, and the development NGOs that support them, tourism is one component of rural development.

Each of the first three incorporate some recognition of the role of tourism in local development, because local development contributes to growth, protects the product, and generates conservation incentives. But none places the interests of the poor at the centre, as the livelihoods approach does. The livelihoods approach is used to help develop the fourth perspective, to explore how development impacts can be expanded – while recognising the continuing prevalence of the other three perspectives. Development impacts are too often equated with ‘jobs and cash’ – particularly by planners, donors or conservationists coming from the other perspectives. A livelihoods approach helps broaden the scope of analysis to a wide range of livelihood impacts. In doing so it seeks to reflect better the more complex reality of poor people’s concerns and aspirations.

2.2 Tourism development in rural Namibia

Tourism has grown rapidly in Namibia since the country gained independence from South Africa in 1990. The bulk of tourists visit the country’s national parks (13.6% of the land). A distinct minority, mainly sport hunters and trophy hunters, focus on farms in the commercial (freehold) areas (43% of the land). But a growing minority visit some of the more scenic communal areas, particularly Kunene Region in the arid and dramatic north-west, and Caprivi Region which is in the wetter north-east and en route to Victoria Falls and other regional sites. The communal areas (40.8% of the country) are largely rural and are home to the majority of the black population and majority of Namibia’s poor.

The main tourism product in Kunene and Caprivi is wildlife and wilderness in dramatic scenery and lightly populated areas. Tourism enterprises are generally lodges, up-market safari camps, campsites, and the associated service enterprises. Tourism in communal areas, and particularly community involvement in tourism, have been actively promoted during the 1990s, both by Government and NGOs. The interests of the Namibian government embrace all four perspectives above, with central ministries focusing on macro-economic objectives, the conservation and environment directorates on conservation incentives, and the tourism directorate on development of the industry in conjunction with the private sector. However, there has been growing interest in tourism’s contribution to *local development*, which is now seen as a key element to each of the other perspectives. Several NGOs, working in both conservation and development, include tourism development in their work with

communities. NGOs, government and donors work together on community tourism³ as one component of a well-established CBNRM programme.

A new and critical development in rural areas is the establishment of ‘wildlife conservancies’ which have been promoted by the CBNRM programme. Wildlife is the property of the state, but under a 1996 legal amendment, communities that form defined management units can register with government as a ‘conservancy’ and receive conditional use right over wildlife. Nearly all the four registered conservancies and more than a dozen emerging conservancies are actively developing tourism plans and have become key actors in rural tourism development.

2.3 Livelihood strategies in rural areas

Agriculture (livestock keeping and/or crop production) is a core activity for virtually all rural households, but the sole activity for virtually none. The livelihood strategies of rural households vary enormously, but a common strategy is for household members to undertake a range of activities which each in some way contributes to one or more of household needs. Most households rely on a range of natural resource uses, and on off-farm income from employment or remittances. Diversified strategies are essential in Namibia because of the semi-arid to arid conditions in which even the highest rainfall areas are marginal for rain-fed crop growing and drought is a common occurrence. Table 1 provides a simplified summary of the diversity of household needs and activities in Caprivi, showing which activities are most important for contributing to which needs. As evident from the table, each activity contributes to several needs, to varying degrees. Livestock, in particular, contributes in some way to most households’ needs, and is indeed a primary land-use in the area. A similar pattern would be evident for Kunene, except that the lack of perennial water means greater dependence on livestock, natural resource harvesting and migration, and no access to fishing or riverine resources. Tourism is a new activity, adopted by only a minority of rural households so far. The types of contribution it makes to household needs are shown in the final column, and explained further in Section 3.

³ Community tourism embraces all forms of local involvement in tourism. Within that, there is a strong but not exclusive focus on *community-based* tourism which involves some collective action and a community institutional base for managing tourism.

Table 1 Contribution of different activities to household needs in Caprivi Region

<i>ACTIVITIES</i>	CROPS	LIVESTOCK	EMPLOY- MENT	HARVESTING TREES/PLANTS				FISHING	WILDLIFE & TOURISM
<i>BASIC NEEDS</i>				Wood	Veld products	Carving, weaving	Thatching grass		
<i>Immediate needs</i>									
Food	***	*	**		**			**	*
Water, energy		*		***			**		
<i>Indirect needs/assets</i>									
Cash	*	*	***		*	**	**	*	***
Goods for barter, exchange	*	*		*	**		*	*	
Reserves & investment		***	**			*	*		
Drought buffer		**	***		**	**	*	**	**
Inputs to production		***	*						*
Cultural and intangible assets	*	***							**
Social capital/ community organisation									**

* indicates a minor or indirect contribution

*** Indicates that the activity makes a major contribution to a need.

Source: Adapted from Ashley and LaFranchi (1997)

3. Impacts of tourism on sustainable livelihoods

3.1 Learning which impacts matter to local residents

One approach to assessing impacts of tourism would be to study how rural people live before and during development of tourism in their area, then describe the change from an outside perspective. Very little such research fed into this paper. Instead it draws on what local residents have themselves chosen to do in tourism, chosen not to do, the reasons they have given for their decisions, what they have welcomed and objected to, and their own reflections on the impacts brought about. This means the results are more subjective, but the benefit is that it enables outsiders to identify the livelihood impacts that seem to be of most importance to local people themselves. Two examples help explain this approach⁴, and set the context for the disaggregated livelihood analysis that follows.

3.1.1 Negotiation of a joint venture lodge by Torra Conservancy

Between 1994 and 1996, residents of Bergsig area (now Torra Conservancy) were involved in negotiations with two different tourism investors. The investors were interested in setting up luxury lodges in this area, which fringes the Namib Desert in Kunene Region (north west Namibia), is home to desert-dwelling elephants, black rhino, giraffe, springbok, oryx and other species, and offers tourists spectacular landscapes. The negotiation process and the decisions made illustrate the range of livelihood concerns of the residents.

The Residents Committee negotiated two joint ventures but decided to proceed with only one, for a 16-bed tented ‘Damaraland Camp’ with Wilderness Safaris. Both deals could have been implemented. The other offer, for a small exclusive lodge at ‘Poachers Camp’ was discussed for three years, but reached the point where the company said it must be yes or no, and the community decided not to go ahead. The prospect of high cash returns was outweighed by other disadvantages. Table 2 contrasts the two proposals.

Table 2 Comparison of Wilderness Safaris proposal and Poachers Camp proposal

The offer from Wilderness Safaris	The offer for Poachers Camp
Likely community income of N\$ 50–70,000 per year	Possible community income of N\$100–200,000 per year
Exclusive use of a small tourism-only area. Access to a larger mixed-use area. No other lodges/camps in larger area.	Exclusive use of large area: no livestock or people, nor other tourism developments. Area included a spring useful in droughts
Low risk – well established company	High risk – no tourism track record
Clear on what was wanted	Plans changed, goal posts moved
10 year contract with 5 year renewal	Wanted 30 year contract
Community free to develop trophy hunting if areas agreed with WS	Wanted rights to both tourism and trophy hunting, but plans for the latter unclear.
Community gains ownership in years 11-15	Unclear ownership at end of contract
<i>Contract negotiated, signed and implemented</i>	<i>Draft contracts negotiated but did not proceed</i>

Source: Ashley and Jones (1999) adapted from Davis (1998)

⁴ These two examples are based on Ashley and Jones (1999), which describes the issues surrounding joint ventures in more detail.

In essence, the community was happy to go ahead with the Wilderness Safaris offer because they saw tangible benefits, with relatively low trade-offs in terms of loss of land for other current uses. Poachers Camp offered significantly more money but had three major disadvantages: it was a high *risk*, involved keeping people and livestock out of a much *larger area*, and involved a much *longer commitment*. By affecting their assets and pastoral activities, it would have impinged on their livelihoods. In addition, the negotiation was more difficult because proposals kept changing, making it difficult for the community to assess and discuss the deal. These disadvantages outweighed the potential benefits in the eyes of the community.

3.1.2 Negotiations with Lerato

Other negotiations in Namibia also indicates that impacts significant to communities cover a wide range of livelihood issues, though the specific concerns vary from place to place. In 1999, Lerato company started negotiations with a number of Namibian conservancies to develop several 10-bed lodges in Namibia, as well as elsewhere in Southern Africa. Conservancy representatives and advisors came together to assess the proposals. They identified many problems, such as lack of clarity on the size and exclusivity of proposed areas, risk, no proposals for joint management or local training, risk of environmental damage, and Lerato's 'domineering attitude'. They made a counter-proposal of the kind of issues they would like to see reflected in a contract, which offers insights into the benefits the communities seek from tourism on their land, and the disadvantages they seek to minimise. The issues, summarised in Table 3, indicates major community concerns about issues on control, partnership, land-use, environmental management, and securing their future.

Table 3 Elements of the communities' response and proposals to Lerato

Issue	Community proposal
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring tourists, earn money from natural resources, use wildlife sustainably, protect yourself, and have legal recourse
Land-use & environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site, not the whole conservancy area should be rented • The area must fit with a land-use plan for the conservancy, and the site rehabilitated after the contract • Areas sensitive for wildlife should not be used. Consultation is needed to ensure sustainable land use
Nature of the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint management structures, including a Joint Management Committee • The Permission to Occupy (legal planning approval) must be in the name of the community • Relationships should be based on co-operation, respect of people and of local culture • A process for dispute resolution • The contract must be transparent to the community.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and preferential employment for local people
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservancy should have access to financial information and a monthly update • A minimum financial performance clause

Source: Ashley and Jones (1999)

There are several other examples, some mentioned in this paper, of rural residents choosing or calling for tourism development to be adapted to meet their livelihood priorities. The remaining sections seek to assess the different issues involved in a more structured way to identify key *types* of impacts and key implications for decision-making.

3.2 Analysing impacts using the SL framework

An assessment of tourism's impact on local people depends not only on its *direct costs and benefits*, such as profits and jobs generated, but on a range of indirect, positive and negative impacts. A simplified 'livelihoods framework' (Figure 1) can be used to disentangle various components of livelihoods. Using this approach, the impacts of tourism can be considered in terms of:

- Impacts on household assets (reviewed in section 3.3)
- Impacts on other household activities and strategies (3.4)
- Contribution to a variety of household goals (3.5)
- Influence on the external policy environment, and people's capacity to influence external forces. (3.6)

The following sections review each of these in turn – though as illustrated, the neat divisions blur into overlap in practice. 'Tourism' in this context covers the main types of rural enterprises – lodges, wildlife/wilderness areas, campsites, and craft centres, operated by private investors, local individuals, or conservancies (or other community bodies).

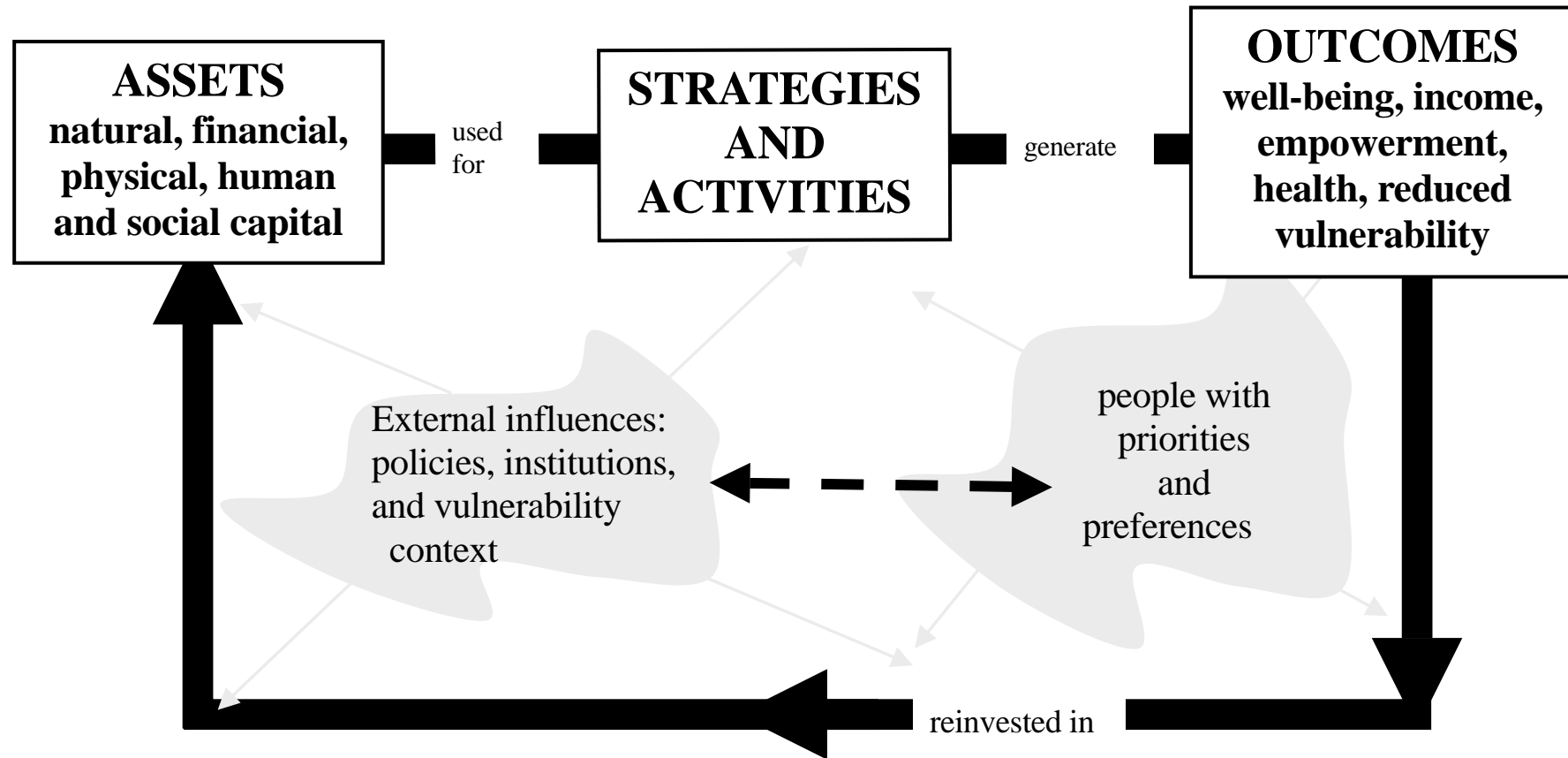
3.3 Impact on assets

Poverty assessments and participatory work with poor people highlight the great importance of people's assets and not just their income, in securing their livelihoods. This importance has been reflected in rural residents' attitudes to tourism. Assets are the building blocks on which people develop their activities. Table 4 summarises the main impacts on five different types of capital, and the following sections describe how impacts on human capital, natural resources, and social capital have all emerged as very important.

Table 4 Impacts of tourism on people's assets

	Negatives	Positives
<i>Financial assets</i>		Long term: equity
<i>Physical assets</i>		Tourism earnings invested (livestock, agriculture)
<i>Human resources</i>		Training, skill development
<i>Natural resources</i>	Increased competition Lost access to exclusive tourism areas Conflicts with neighbours	Enhanced collective management Incentive to work together
<i>Social capital</i>	Local conflicts over tourism	Stronger social organisation for tourism management

Figure 1 A livelihoods framework (simplified version)



Source: C. Ashley, adapted from DFID 1999 Guidance Sheets

3.3.1 *Human capital*

There are few sources of adult training in rural areas, and development of skills through tourism has been emphasised by several communities. For example, in negotiating with Wilderness Safaris, Torra Conservancy were more concerned to increase their commitment to training, than to haggle over an extra percentage of revenue (Davis, 1998).

3.3.2 *Natural capital*

Tourism affects people's access to natural capital both directly – by using or damaging natural resources – and indirectly by affecting how they are managed.

Resource competition takes many forms. When areas are set aside for exclusive tourism/wildlife use, residents may lose access to key resources including grazing for livestock and plant resources for harvesting. In one Caprivi case, women of the Lianshulu community were very concerned when they heard (eventually) about the men's plans for a community campsite, because the proposed site was an important area for harvesting water lilies (a drought food), reeds (for weaving), and other riverine resources (Nabane, 1995). A major disadvantage of the 'Poachers Camp' proposal rejected by Torra members was that the exclusive area was large and included a spring that is rarely used but is important for livestock in drought. Tourists also cause damage directly to resources by polluting water sources or driving off-track over grazing and veld foods – complaints commonly heard in both Kunene and Nyae Nyae (former Bushmanland in eastern Namibia) areas.

A particular feature of *community-based tourism* (as distinct from general tourism development) is that it can strengthen community management of a range of natural resources. This is far from inevitable, but can happen where community tourism develops within a context of a broader institution-building and natural resource development programme. For example, in Caprivi, the community-based NR management (CBNRM) programme has for some time addressed issues of veld food gathering and grass cutting as well as wildlife and tourism. In Kunene, the CBNRM programme is credited with encouraging local conservation of wildlife and an increase in wildlife numbers. The new conservancies are all developing 'management plans' and several are exploring forestry, water, and livestock issues, as well as tourism, wildlife and wild plants. Tourism, and its tangible potential benefits, helps provide impetus to this process. How improved community management capacity in turn affects the resource base, people's access and their livelihoods will be highly variable but can certainly be significant.

3.3.3 *Social capital*

Social capital refers to the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods, such as relationships of trust, social norms, networks, and membership of groups. Engagement in tourism can affect social networks and community organisation in a number of ways, positively and negatively. Again, some of the strongest and most positive impacts have occurred where tourism is developed *by* communities *within* the CBNRM programme, and clear negative impacts where tourism development by individuals has disrupted communities, but the distinction is by no means black and white.

Enhancing social capital

Many of the positive social impacts are better ascribed to CBNRM in general, than to the tourism component in particular (and are documented in Ashley, 1998a). However, the desire to develop tourism provides momentum for the broader process, and poses some specific challenges for community organisation. Managing community tourism enterprises, negotiating a joint venture or

deciding how to spend bed-night levy income, all require development and change of community institutions. Changes in social capital are difficult to define or assess, but there are examples of change at three levels:⁵

- i. Increased social capital of *households within their community*. Communities have had to become more defined to undertake joint action in tourism, so enhancing social cohesion for all members (see Bergsig example in Box 1). In addition, several individuals have gained status and a sense of belonging within their community through their own participation as leaders or entrepreneurs in tourism.
- ii. Organisational strength and management capacity of *community organisations*. With considerable help of NGOs, such as Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, tourism opportunities have been used to build more consultative decision-making procedures, enhance leadership skills, define shared objectives, and develop new management mechanisms (see Etendeka example in Box 1).
- iii. Increase in communities' recognition from, and *links with, the external world*. Communities engaged in tourism have gained substantial experience of liaising with government officials and tourism entrepreneurs. This experience, combined with their greater organisational capacity, has increased confidence to pro-actively engage with outsiders. In turn, community tourism enterprises and wildlife conservancies are gaining greater recognition from policy-makers and the formal tourism sector (see discussion of empowerment in Section 3.5.5). In some cases, collaboration on tourism is also leading to improved relations between neighbouring communities (see last example in Box 1).

Box 1 Enhancing social capital

Defined membership and community cohesion

When the Bergsig community were offered the prospect of negotiating a joint venture with Wilderness Safaris, it was clear that the first pre-requisite was to form a legal body or Residents' Association with all households as registered members. This resulted in a long process of consultation and registration to define, more precisely than ever before, community 'members'. The Residents Association has now become Torra Conservancy. All the other emerging conservancies are now going through the same process of defining members.

Greater consultation among community members

Five Kunene communities received a bed-night levy from a private tented camp, Etendeka, in 1996. Each community selected a committee to survey all residents on how the money should be used, and to oversee expenditure. This has now set a precedent for consultative and equitable benefit sharing within conservancies in future (Durbin et al., 1997).

Improving co-operation between neighbours

The Etendeka bed night levy process also improved relations between the neighbouring communities, which have traditionally been very tense, covering both ethnic and political divisions.

As community organisation strengthens it can create new tensions, such as the tension between individual rights and collective rights. For example in Sesfontein (in Kunene Region), many local individuals are now trying to get started in tourism, initiating new campsites and traditional villages. They say they can set up an enterprise where they want and how they want. The conservancy believes

⁵ Narayan and Pritchett (1997) identify two types of social capital. They distinguish between social capital of households based on their personal networks (correlating with number (i) above) and of communities, in terms of the recognition and links they have with the outside world (correlating mainly with (iii) above). In assessing the Namibian data it proved useful to add the middle category of community organisation. This links the other two: it enhances the quality and value of households' membership of community networks, and it is the basis for communities to strengthen their links with the outside world.

it should be planning, and to some extent regulating tourism development to stop saturation of the product, control environmental impacts, and promote the greater collective interest.

Exacerbating conflict, undermining social capital

Social change forced by challenges of tourism can be negative as well as positive. Indeed the positive examples described above went through set-backs and conflicts as part of the process. However, in several cases, increased conflict is more than a temporary blip. Conflict has arisen both within and between communities. Box 2 describes two examples where attempts to develop community tourism exacerbated deep conflicts. There are other cases where tourism developments have been initiated by an individual resident, or an outsider has sought to form an alliance with one or two locals, so stimulating internal community conflict. Finally, where outside investors have independently and intrusively set up their own enterprise on communal land, it has not necessarily diminished the communities' links with the external world but has certainly highlighted their lack of rights and influence over externally-driven decisions.

Box 2 Exacerbating conflict

Conflict within communities

In Salambala Conservancy in eastern Caprivi, four families refused to move out of the area to be designated for wildlife and tourism, leading to great tension with other two and a half thousand conservancy members.

Conflict between communities

Also in East Caprivi, Lianshulu community was offered a tourism concession inside Mudumo National Park, in recognition that they were displaced from the land when the park was gazetted. This immediately caused conflict with neighbouring Sauzuo, on whose land Lianshulu residents have lived since displacement.

The impact of changes in social capital on sustainable livelihoods is hard to assess. But there is no doubt that, particularly in such arid and relatively isolated areas, a household's membership of the community, and the organisational strength of that community, influence their livelihoods. Rural households need effectively functioning community institutions to manage and mediate relations between households, and the land, natural resources, social networks and informal markets on which they all depend (particularly in times of drought when mobility and social networks are critical), and to represent the community's interests to others. Therefore, despite problems in definition and measurement, such changes are important to acknowledge.

3.4 Impact on activities and strategies

Tourism is a new rural activity for local people, and correctly perceived as risky. So it is seen as a chance for an *additional* activity to combine with existing livelihood activities, not as a substitute. Therefore, the way in which tourism complements or conflicts with existing activities has emerged as a key theme in community and household discussions. The impact on assets, described above, in turn influences the other activities people do, but there are also more direct impacts on other activities to assess, as described here.

3.4.1 *Complementing other activities*

One of the most important ways in which tourism supports other activities is that it strengthens households' productive capacity by increasing skills and providing cash for investment (i.e. by boosting their asset base, as discussed above). The new skills gained by employees or committee members involved in tourism can be transferred to other activities. Investment of tourism earnings in agriculture is evident in Caprivi, where workers employ neighbours to work the fields or buy livestock with their earnings. These benefits of enhanced skills and investment potential are likely to be of most benefit to the relatively better-off households, who are more likely to get jobs and to have a surplus for investment.

In participatory Conservancy Planning in 1997, farmers in Torra Conservancy strongly emphasised that tourism is easier to integrate with current livelihoods than other types of employment because the jobs are near home so 'farmers can continue as farmers'. This is of great value because farming is a critical part of 'who we are'. By contrast, most other jobs require migration to the coast or town, which means leaving a relative or employee in charge of the herd. Another indirect benefit of tourism that was emphasised at neighbouring Khoadi !!Hoas Conservancy is that it is a 'foundation for development'. In this arid fairly inaccessible area, there was a sense that the first tourism enterprises will lead to other things – whether a tyre-mending station as some suggest, or other currently-unimagined enterprises (Ashley, 1997).

3.4.2 *Conflicting with other activities*

Three key ways in which tourism can conflict with existing activities are through reducing access to natural resources, creating conflicting demands on time, and exacerbating wildlife damage. In particular it conflicts with livestock and crop production, which are the staple activities in rural areas.

As outlined under assets above, tourism that involves setting aside a large exclusive area for wildlife and tourists, *reduces access to natural resources for other activities*. Loss of grazing is likely to be a major concern for men whose core activity is livestock-keeping, and particularly for richer large-herd owners. Loss of access to plant resources is more of a concern for poor households, and particularly women, who are more dependent on harvesting a range of natural resources for food, medicine, building, weaving materials, and making items for sale (Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997).

The amount of *time* taken up by tourism is significant enough to conflict with agriculture for community leaders or individuals seeking to get a new enterprise started. It is generally not an issue for tourism developments established by outside investors (except for their employees, who clearly choose to switch time from other activities). For example, very rough estimates suggest that committee members and the Chief of Lianshulu community (Caprivi) would need to spend 360–720 days between them, on negotiating with their own members, the Park authorities and the private sector in order to establish a joint venture lodge in their tourism concession in Mudumo National Park (Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997).

Tourism is blamed for increasing the number of wildlife and/or their proximity and aggressiveness, and hence for exacerbating *wildlife damage* to crops and infra-structure. In Kunene, the increasing number of ungulates (antelopes) and elephants is part of a longer-term trend, perhaps enhanced by tourism, but members of Torra Conservancy feel that disturbance by tourists is making elephants more aggressive and driving them closer to the farms. This affects livestock husbandry, because elephants damage water points used by livestock, and farmers are afraid to herd their livestock when elephants are close. In Caprivi, elephants, hippos, kudus, and baboons eat crops and predators, particularly lions, kill

livestock. Villages near National Parks and tourism areas suffer much greater damage than others. Detailed estimates for the mid 1990s showed that farmers on the east bank of the River Kwando, neighbouring Caprivi's three protected areas, were losing around N\$20,000 worth of crops to elephants and N\$85,000 of livestock to lions in a single year (equivalent to approximately £4000 and £16,000 at that time) (O'Connell, 1995). Although the livestock losses have a higher monetary value, the crop losses are more of a threat to livelihoods as crops are central to food security and one farmer can lose an entire harvest of ripening maize overnight. There are few shops to buy food, and even where shops exist, there is little cash available to spend in them. The imputed monetary value of the losses is less than *aggregate* local earnings from tourism, but they are suffered by many more people, are much more visible, strike at the heart of household security, and clearly affect attitudes towards wildlife, parks and tourists.

Table 5 How tourism supports and conflicts with other livelihood activities in Namibia

	Negative effects of tourism Conflicts	Positive effects of tourism Complementarities
<i>Livelihood activities</i>		
Livestock	Competition for water and grazing Exclusion of livestock from core wildlife areas Litter & environmental damage Elephant danger disrupts herd tending Loss of livestock to predators	Cash for investment Jobs near farm so tourism worker can continue as farmer Cash in dry years limits de-stocking
Agriculture (crops)	Competition for time Crop damage by wildlife	Cash for investment
RNR harvesting	Competition for time Lost access for harvesting in exclusive tourism areas	Improved community management of RNR
Employment		Transferable skills
Small enterprise		Market expansion
<i>Livelihood strategies</i>		
Cope with drought	Loss of grazing and veld foods	Income continues in drought
Diversify		Additional livelihood opportunity
Minimise risk	Risky investment	
Maintain liquidity & flexibility	Earnings lagged High initial investment	

Table 5 summarises several ways in which tourism can negatively and positively affect a range of rural activities. It does not show the differential impacts between types of enterprises, regions, and groups of residents, but there is of course high variability.

3.4.3 *Fit with livelihood strategies*

It is important to consider how tourism fits with underlying household strategies and not just with specific activities. A number of strategies can be identified that guide household decisions on how to

combine different activities into diversified livelihood portfolios. Often these strategies are not articulated, but emerge implicitly when the pros and cons of different activities are discussed. Tourism fits well with two key strategies – to develop coping mechanisms for times of drought, and to diversify livelihoods. But investing in tourism enterprises conflicts with two others – to minimise risk and maintain liquidity. Tourism requires investment up front, income is earned when tourists come not when the seller chooses, and the market is dependent on local, national and international trends. Even craft production is risky if time is invested in the low agricultural season in the hope of income in the next busy tourism season. Entering a joint venture for a lodge involves much greater risk: communities need to commit their land for up to 20 years and invest a year or more in negotiation for future, potentially large, but not guaranteed returns. Negotiations often reflect community members' concerns to reduce the time period and increase the minimum guaranteed income, rather than maximise income.

3.5 Contribution to livelihood needs and priorities

In the SL framework, assets are used and activities pursued to generate a range of livelihood 'outcomes' – alternatively thought of as needs or goals. Drawing on the preceding analysis, this section summarises how tourism affects some of the main household needs. For those active in tourism, the clearest and most direct contribution to household needs is cash. Despite the importance of all the other impacts reviewed here, there is no doubt that earning cash is a prime motivation for rural residents to develop tourism. Nevertheless, tourism also contributes to less tangible needs as following sections show.

3.5.1 Cash income

Tourism generally generates three types of cash income for rural households, and community tourism can generate a fourth additional type for the community. Each type needs to be considered separately as they are earned by different people, in very different amounts, so have different implications for livelihoods:⁶

- *Regular wages for those with jobs.* A tourism venture rarely generates permanent jobs for more than a small proportion (1–5% in prime areas) of households in a community. However, these are important as a large cash boost to those families, (thousands of Namibian dollars per year⁷), which can lift them from insecure to secure status socio-economically. These earnings, in turn, are partially recycled within the local economy creating a multiplier effect.
- *Casual earnings opportunities from selling grass, food, wood, crafts, etc.* Grass-sellers, craft-makers, fisherfolk, casual labourers and others sell their products or labour to tourists and tourism enterprises (and to neighbours earning wages from tourism jobs). They each earn much smaller amounts from these casual sales than is earned by those in waged employment (tens or hundreds of Namibian dollars each per year). But these additional earning opportunities are likely to benefit a higher percentage of local households than the full-time jobs and are most important for the poorer people who have few other options for earning cash (Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997).
- *Profits from ownership of a tourism enterprise.* Locally-owned enterprises are likely to be small-scale (e.g. a craft outlet), so in practice most are similar to the category above of casual earnings. Those owned by the community (such as joint venture lodges) fall into the following category of collective income.

⁶ Estimates of the amount of each type of income that can be earned from different tourism ventures, by each conservancy, are in Ashley and LaFranchi (1997).

⁷ N\$1 = SA Rand 1. Currently N\$9.6 = £1.

- *Collective income earned by the community.* Collective income is earned by a conservancy or community trust when it leases tourism or hunting rights, or earns profits or a bed-levy from a tourism enterprise in the area. The value of this income for local households depends on how it is spent, which in turn depends on the local institutions and processes for managing joint expenditure. In prime areas with tourism concessions, annual collective income of a few hundred thousand Namibian dollars per year could be a substantial boost to a community because there are few (if any) other sources of this type of income. If divided between households it would be a few hundred dollars a year – not enough to change livelihood strategies but enough to cover, for example, school fees and a couple of bags of grain (Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997).

3.5.2 *Decreased vulnerability*

Poor households are, by definition insecure, and in Namibia all rural households are vulnerable to drought, as rainfall is highly variable (particularly low and unreliable in the west). Therefore drought-proofing is an important way of reducing vulnerability. The cash income generated by tourism can be particularly useful for this for two reasons: first, timing: it does not slump when drought comes (although it likely to slump according to market cycles rather than rainfall). Second: who earns it. Tourism can be one of the few sources of collective income, which can be usefully spent on helping members cope with drought.

Box 3 Using tourism income as a buffer against drought

One Caprivian community receiving a bed-night levy from a lodge in 1995 said they would normally invest the money in a community project. But as the 1994 harvest had been only 15% of previous years' average, they decided instead to give out household dividends so that families could buy food (Wyckoff-Baird, 1995).

In Kunene, a benefit of tourism emphasised by livestock-owners in both Torra and neighbouring Khoadi !!Hoas conservancies is that collective tourism income can be used to assist in drought-coping, such as transporting livestock.

Several of the previously identified impacts on natural assets, social capital, livestock keeping and resource harvesting also affect vulnerability to drought. Loss of access to emergency grazing/water and veld-food harvesting areas are probably the most significant, and are impacts that communities have clearly tried to avoid (e.g. Torra's rejection of Poachers' Camp).

3.5.3 *Food security*

The cash income earned from tourism is often used for purchasing food, particularly in dry years, as indicated in Box 3. From a food security perspective, it is the *small amounts of casual income* earned by many poor people that are particularly important – rather than the full-time wages of the more skilled. For example, Caprivian women selling grass to tourism lodges use their earnings to buy food in poor agricultural years (Nabane, 1995). However, increased wildlife damage to crops (see 3.4.2 above) undermines food security.

3.5.4 *Cultural benefits*

Many Namibian communities have said that the cultural and aesthetic value of wildlife is a prime motivation for developing community-based wildlife management, including tourism. Specifically,

several of those involved in setting up conservancies have said they ‘want their children to see wildlife’ (e.g. at Salambala Conservancy in Caprivi (Mosimane, 1996), and Uukwaluudi emerging conservancy in northern Namibia (Uukwaluudi Management Committee, 1997).

Some tourism activities focused around local culture can help strengthen pride in traditions, though there is also a risk of devaluing culture through commodifying it. There is no evidence either way that the development of local dancing and traditional villages for tourists has affected local culture in Caprivi and Kunene. But production of crafts for tourists in Caprivi is associated with revitalisation of tradition, through the Caprivi Arts and Crafts Association, which not only provides practical support to craftsmen but links this to a celebration of cultural skills and organises festivals for local people. In the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (former Bushmanland), taking tourists leopard tracking or collecting veld food, is one way of putting a different value on traditional skills of the San people

3.5.5 *Pride and empowerment*

The common gloomy picture from tourism case studies around the world is of local people disempowered by alien tourism developments and disenfranchised from their resources. There certainly are plenty of such examples in Namibia, where white tourism operators have simply established camps or lodges in communal areas, often near a key water resource (spring or river). But there are also several contrasting and positive examples.

‘We’ve never made decisions like this before’

Comment by a member of Khoadi !!Hoas emerging conservancy during the first participatory planning of their conservancy, (Ashley, 1997).

Box 4 Manifestations of empowerment: increasing influence over external decisions

Taking on powerful outsiders

Both Salambala and Torra Conservancy committees have successfully negotiated with tourism investors and recently engaged proactively with local government councillors and governors in their region.

After years of struggling to set up a community campsite in West Caprivi, the San community (‘bushmen’) finally resorted to legal action against the government in 1998, with NGO and legal support.

Gaining recognition from others

In contrast to the early nineties, community tourism enterprises, rural residents, and the emerging conservancies are recognised by government as a significant player in tourism. For example, the current government strategy for tourism planning focuses on Regional Tourism Plans. The first, in Caprivi in 1997, contained a considerable element of community consultation, while the second, nearing completion for Kunene, has been heavily dependent on local consultation.

Community tourism enterprises across Namibia have joined forces to form the Namibian Community Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA), which is recognised by government and consulted on many matters.

The *means* of empowerment is largely through strengthening social and human capital, which have already been outlined above (as has the question of how much can be attributed specifically to tourism). This *manifestation* of empowerment is most easily seen in the greater capacity of some communities to influence external organisations, as examples in Box 4 show.⁸ The outcome is that communities have more control over their lives and development in their areas.

⁸ In terms of the SL framework, this ability to influence others may be defined by people as one of their desired ‘outcomes’ or can also be seen as local people enhancing their influence over the ‘transforming structures and processes.’

3.5.6 Physical security

In Kunene, elephants sometimes kill people. Although this happens much more rarely than elephant damage to infrastructure, personal danger was prioritised as more important than physical damage by Khoadi !!Hoas Conservancy members when ranking the pros and cons of tourism (Ashley, 1997).

3.5.7 A variety of livelihood outcomes

There are clearly a range of livelihood ‘outcomes’ (in the terminology of the SL framework) that rural residents seek, and which can be affected by tourism, positively and negatively. Table 6 lists some of the main ones affected by different tourism enterprises in Namibia.

Table 6 Potential impacts on livelihood ‘outcomes’

	Negative effects	Positive effects
Food security	Wildlife damage to agriculture Lost access to veld foods	Cash (particularly earnings of poor) Better collective resource management
Cash needs	Requires start-up funds	New earning opportunities from employment, casual sales enterprises, and community contracts
Empowerment	Conflict within and between communities undermines social capital Imposition of developments by outsiders	Stronger social and human capital leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence to challenge government/outside • recognition of the community from others (e.g. govt planners). • and hence influence over external organisations and events
Decreased vulnerability	Competition for drought resources (for livestock, veld foods)	Income continues in drought Collective income earned for drought-coping
Cultural values	Risk of commercialising culture	Community pride Cultural value of increasing wildlife & reviving local traditions
Physical security	People in danger from aggressive elephants aggravated by tourists	

3.6 Overview of livelihood impacts and key issues

The preceding sections have outlined an array of positive and negative impacts on rural livelihoods. For any specific tourism initiative, the positives and negatives need to be compared, and the balance assessed. The overall effect will depend on the local situation; on *whose* livelihood is being considered; and, on *which* tourism options are chosen and how they are designed. So to ask whether tourism in the aggregate is good or bad for livelihoods in rural Namibia is meaningless. However, putting the pieces

of the jigsaw together does highlight some important points about the extent to which impacts vary, and some common themes that emerge.

Differences between areas

Regional differences emerge clearly, based on their different agro-ecological conditions and livelihood strategies. In arid and relatively isolated Kunene (Torra and Khoadi !Hoas conservancies) access to drought resources for livestock, and the value of tourism in bringing *local* development, are key issues. In Caprivi, which has more water, wildlife, tourists, and economic activity, priority issues are wildlife damage to crops and livestock, expansion of craft sales and other product markets, and access to veld/riverine resources.

Differences between rich and poor, men and women

Poor Caprivian households are more affected by tourism's impacts on crop production, veld foods, and opportunities for earning money from sales of products or casual labour, whereas for better-off households with large livestock herds and more skills, the key issues are likely to be the number of new full-time jobs created, exclusion of livestock from tourism areas, and growing presence of lions near grazing areas.

Differences between types of enterprise

It is evident that a luxury lodge with a large exclusive area brings different costs and benefits than would a craft centre. The former offers more jobs, training, and secondary enterprises but involves loss of access over the long term. A craft centre brings less of each benefit but possibly easier earning opportunities to more people. There is also a big difference between a lodge set up through a partnership between a community and investor, on conservancy land, and a lodge established independently by an outsider. As a tourism establishment they may appear identical, but the livelihood impacts are quite different. The partnership offers much greater potential for collective income, maximising training, employment and sales opportunities, strengthening community organisational capacity, and adapting implementation so that trade-offs with livelihoods are minimised. On the other hand, it involves much greater investment of time and effort by local residents and can exacerbate conflicts within the community resulting in no development at all. The costs and benefits of a given type of enterprise are not entirely fixed. A change in management and design can adjust the extent of some benefits.

The importance of assets and activities

The impacts of tourism on people's asset base, and its 'fit' with existing activities emerge as critically important in almost all situations. In many cases people have to trade-off cash benefits against opportunity costs to their assets or other activities. In others, it is the opportunity to enhance, for example, human capital or social organisation, which is pursued most actively by residents.

3.7 Influence of policies and institutions on impacts

The impact of tourism development *on* the policies and institutions that shape rural livelihoods is relatively small, except for the impacts on local-level institutions that have already been discussed.⁹ So it is not particularly revealing to question the impacts of tourism *on* this component of the SL

⁹ Though tourism development is also encouraging expansion of private sector activities in communal areas, and encouraging local councils to undertake land-use planning to resolve competing demands.

framework. However, it is important to question the impact *of* the policy and institutional context. How does this context shape the type and scale of the livelihood impacts of tourism?

The CBNRM programme strongly influences both the policy environment and institutional context within which tourism is developing in communal areas. The policy and legislative changes that have occurred give communities the rights to form conservancies, and hence rights over consumptive use of wildlife and recognised, if less defined, rights over non-consumptive tourism activities. The CBNRM programme has also set the context for a great deal of grassroots capacity and institution-building work by NGOs. The combination of legal rights, policy support and institutional capacity have greatly increased the decision-making role of local residents over tourism developments, and their capacity to make decisions that fit with their livelihoods.

There are several other policy and institutional factors which enhance or constrain residents' capacity to influence tourism decisions in line with their livelihood. Other key influences include:

- On-going uncertainty over land tenure reform in communal areas. The use-rights of farmers over agricultural land, and conditional wildlife rights of conservancies, still amount to insecure tenure and often an inability to influence commercial developments (including tourism).
- Gradual development of a tourism policy including support for 'community tourism'. The ad hoc nature of tourism planning has allowed outside investors to seize opportunities on communal land. On the other hand, it has also enabled opportunities to promote community interests to be seized within government, building on policy commitments to support community tourism. For example, even where residents have few legal rights, tourism planners have requested private operators to seek local leaders' approval before granting government planning approval (called 'Permission to Occupy').
- Trends in the tourism market, such as growing interest in 'adventure' and 'wilderness' travel, and use of fly-in safaris to remote areas, have increased the popularity and competitiveness of destinations in communal areas.
- The historical legacy of apartheid. Many attitudes and ways of working were entrenched in pre-Independence years which still can influence rural residents' engagement in tourism. These include practices of disempowerment, changes in traditional leadership and governance, and low investment in rural skills.

Finally, the historical and agro-ecological context affects the *significance* of tourism impacts to residents. The lack of alternative off-farm industries, few training opportunities, and in some areas, remoteness and lack of infrastructure, can increase the significance of small benefits from tourism.

4. Implications

The details of livelihood impacts in Kunene and Caprivi are only relevant to those Regions. So what implications can be drawn of wider relevance to communities, governments, and other players in tourism development elsewhere? Assuming these players want to enhance the impacts of tourism on poor people's livelihoods, there are a number of useful lessons to be drawn.

4.1 Addressing a full range of costs and benefits

The evidence from Caprivi and Kunene illustrates that simply developing as many tourism enterprises options as possible, or seeking to maximise local cash earnings, is not the way to maximise livelihood impact for local residents.

A wide range of indirect impacts on livelihoods need to be considered, in addition to direct contributions to cash income. In particular impacts on assets and on existing activities can have significant affects on livelihoods.

Discussions with farmers have highlighted that *constraints* are just as important to address as the benefits of tourism. For example:

- Minimise the trade-offs with livestock/farming by avoiding the creation of exclusive areas, setting up systems for regulated multiple use, or ensuring alternatives are available to reduce opportunity costs;
- Explore ways to reduce wildlife damage near tourism areas, possibly by using tourism income for electric fencing or compensation;
- Bring in conflict-avoidance and conflict-resolution skills;
- Explore ways to reduce time and risk faced by residents, for example through outside facilitation that reduces transaction costs without taking away ownership from the community;
- Minimise tourist damage to natural resources by assessing the need for rules, guides, zones, tourist education, etc.

A wide range of *benefits* which are important to optimise have also emerged. For example:

- Maximise local sales (crafts) and linkages to the local economy by, for example, encouraging use of local products in lodges, helping local producers with marketing, supporting spin-off businesses;
- Maximise concession fees earned by communities by building up their concessionary rights, negotiation skills and capacity to use collective income well, and promoting competitive tender processes;
- Increase local employment in tourism through training, and exploring with managers how labour-intensity can be increased;
- Use improvements in tourism infrastructure to simultaneously improve local infrastructure
- If there are 'hand-outs' or dividends to be shared, enhance their value by timing distribution for the start of the lean season;
- Invest in intangible benefits – as these are very variable, the first step is to find out which are important locally.

The priority constraints and benefits will vary from place to place and time to time, but the principles of exploring and addressing them are of wide relevance.

4.2 Matching tourism options to livelihood priorities

Tourism options can be chosen and developed to enhance those benefits that are of most importance locally, and to minimise those costs that are of most concern. For example, in Caprivi, tourism development that assists the poor should be planned with issues of veld food access and maximising sales opportunities in mind. So if a lodge concession is being developed in negotiation with either a community or government body, negotiations should include local peoples' access to the wildlife area for collecting veld products, provision of a sales centre for local crafts, and design of buildings with local construction materials. In Kunene, given the concern over tourism damage and elephant aggression among Torra Conservancy members, a priority in future planning could be to ensure tourists are accompanied by guides, and receive local information.

But who should do this? Some private entrepreneurs may be willing to embrace social objectives, and there are several southern African tourism companies increasing their emphasis on social responsibility. But it is unrealistic to expect any to *prioritise* the objective of enhancing livelihoods. Therefore much depends on who has influence over the development process, due to regulations or market power. In some cases this is the government, and others the community – and others no one.

4.2.1 Strategies at community level

Where communities have power, for example inside conservancies and on land where they have de facto rights, *they are already adapting their tourism initiatives to their livelihood priorities*. This is best illustrated by Torra Conservancy choosing to proceed with Damaraland Camp but not Poachers Camp, and negotiating harder on training than on revenue. Some community enterprises, such as Lizauli Traditional Village in East Caprivi, maximise the number of local part-time jobs (around 13 at Lizauli) rather than having a few full-time high-paid jobs. They are assessing the costs, benefits and trade-offs, and trying to get the best 'fit' with local needs.

Matching tourism plans to local livelihoods requires a good understanding of people's livelihood strategies and needs. Local people know these without the intervention of researchers and reports. Individual farmers instinctively, albeit informally, make decisions by weighing up complex pros and cons, and choosing what fits their needs best. For example, in Torra and Khoadi !!Hoas conservancies farmers' decisions on the ratio of goats to cattle take into account asset value, liquidity, drought resistance, cultural value, risk diversification, estimated resource availability, and budget constraints – although not expressed in these terms (Ashley, 1997). Nevertheless, it can be difficult for a community to *collectively* assess livelihood priorities and how to accommodate them through tourism. Three different problems can be identified:

- If an enterprise is developed by an independent local entrepreneur, whether s/he takes other people's livelihood priorities into account will depend on the social situation and norms.
- If the initiative is to be a collective community one, trade-offs and decision-making need to be opened up and formalised (e.g. assessed visually or verbally) so that everyone can participate, and the perspectives of different stake-holders reconciled. Most economic decisions are currently made at the household level so communities are not used to doing this. Several have found it useful to have their participatory planning facilitated.

- As livelihood strategies vary enormously between people, there is no single answer to what will maximise livelihood impact in a community. Inevitably some will lose and gain more than others. Special mechanisms or NGO support may be needed if the least powerful are to be the gainers rather than the losers.

4.2.2 *Strategies at government level*

How can governments influence tourism development to enhance livelihood impacts? There are two pre-requisites for positive influence:

- That governments have some influence over tourism development by the private sector, e.g. through planning controls, allocation of licences/concessions, enforcement of regulations, control over 'sweeteners' or public ownership of land in tourism areas, with ability to devolve land/wildlife/tourism rights.
- That there is some commitment to enhancing livelihood impacts, and not solely any of the three other perspectives outlined above: stimulating macro-economic growth, conserving the environment, and supporting the private sector.

It would be impossible for any government to prescribe exactly how each tourism enterprise should develop in ways that best fit with livelihoods. Governments cannot have sufficient understanding of the complexities of livelihoods in each place, nor can they govern effectively through immersion in detail. *The most important principle therefore is to establish **systems** that allow local livelihood priorities to influence tourism development.* In Namibia, three clear ways of doing this have emerged¹⁰:

- Devolving tenure rights to community level, so that communities have market power and a strong say over development (as is gradually occurring through establishment of conservancies).
- Developing more participatory planning mechanisms to ensure local concerns are reflected in local, regional and national strategies (e.g. involving community tourism representatives in revision of regulations governing accommodation and guiding, involvement of residents in Regional tourism plans).
- Using planning processes to encourage private investors to enhance local benefits (e.g. requiring private developers to consult with communities before allocating planning approval or leases), and ensuring the Environmental Impact Assessments incorporate social issues.

It is also important to note that some of the major livelihood impacts of tourism arise from their *inter-linkages* with other activities. Therefore, planning tourism will often require that the plans of other sectors (e.g. agricultural land use, water use) are addressed. Conversely, changes in other sectors, such as agricultural expansion, will affect the development potential of tourism. Therefore tourism planners need good co-ordination with other sectors to be effective.

4.2.3 *Implications for NGOs and donors*

The implications for NGOs and donors emerge directly from the implications at community and government level, because NGO and donor interventions are generally at either of these levels, or seeking to bridge the gap between them. NGOs working at community level can facilitate the process of local decision-making and implementation in ways that enable residents to adapt their own plans to their priorities or to voice their priorities to others. NGOs should be wary of assuming that new economic opportunities will automatically bring positive impacts. They should help communities

¹⁰ Ashley (1998b) provides more detail on the practical actions and policies used to enhance local involvement in tourism.

explore the potential negative impacts as well. Those working at national level can help in feeding local views up from micro to macro level. Donors can support community and NGO initiatives while directly encouraging more participatory planning processes within government.

4.2.4 Implications for the private sector

Private entrepreneurs cannot be expected to undertake livelihood analysis themselves, but they need an understanding of why local residents have particular concerns and recognition of the value of systems that incorporate local views into planning decisions. Lack of understanding of each others' perspective is a common problem: just as local residents are unfamiliar with the commercial pressures of a tourism company, residents' own concerns can appear irrational to an outsider whose livelihood depends on a single paid employment. The livelihoods approach helps illustrate why a range of local concerns can be expected. Although private operators cannot be expected to change their philosophy, they often can enhance their operation's fit with livelihoods by adapting the detail. A focus on understanding and supporting livelihoods could also be incorporated into the social responsibility initiatives of those companies that have them.

5. Summary and conclusion

Experience in Namibia highlights the importance of three facts which sound obvious but have challenging implications. Firstly, that summarising the development impact of tourism as ‘jobs and cash’ is an over-simplification. Local people have complex livelihood strategies, based on multiple land-uses, and diversification of risk across several activities. These are affected by tourism in many different ways, positively and negatively, directly and indirectly. Secondly, different types of community tourism ventures have different types of livelihood impacts. And thirdly, different people have different livelihood priorities.

The main implications are that:

- The development impact of tourism will not be uniform: it will vary widely within and between communities;
- Enhancing the livelihood impacts of tourism does not mean simply maximising the number of tourism developments, or maximising wage income;
- A wide range of costs and benefits need to be taken into account. In particular, it is as important to address negative impacts as to maximise positive ones. And to address impacts on people’s assets and existing activities, not just direct contributions to household income and security;
- Careful planning and design, based on an understanding of local livelihoods, can greatly enhance the positive impacts of tourism;
- Maximising livelihood benefits needs a good understanding of what people most need and want (their livelihood priorities) and of the complex ways in which tourism options affect livelihoods (direct and indirect livelihood impacts). Therefore it requires a *considerable role* for local people in decision-making. This can be done either by devolving tourism rights to community level, and helping communities with participatory planning; or by ensuring that government planning processes are participatory and responsive to local needs; or by ensuring, through government incentives, that planning by private entrepreneurs is responsive to local needs.

The *details* of how to enhance livelihood impacts are location-specific. The *principles* of recognising that a range of livelihood concerns are important, and supporting systems that enable local people’s priorities to be incorporated into tourism decisions, can be generally applied.

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