

6. Making solutions work for CBNRM: A synthesis

Many variables operating at different levels of influence affect the success of a CBNRM program. Controlling these variables to enhance CBNRM success is not easy and undoubtedly there will be many disappointments along the way. Yet, the possibility that communities can live sustainably with their natural resources is a vision that Zambia and all of humanity must keep in focus, especially as global resources continue to diminish worldwide.

Like many sciences, important insights come about from tinkering around, trying different recipes to a problem and closely observing their results to ultimately improve the final product. In many ways, ADMADE has been similar and indeed many lessons have been learned. But ADMADE is much more than a collection of adaptive research results. It represents a fundamental trust between communities who live communally on their traditional lands and the people who reside far away in Government offices where policies and laws regulating resource use on these lands are written and enacted.

The Zambian Government has been extremely progressive in its thinking about CBNRM and supportive of it. Without this commitment, all else would certainly fail, regardless of how technically correct CBNRM lessons and methodologies might be. What may threaten this commitment are the variables that all Governments undoubtedly face: conflicts of interest, mismanagement, lack of funding, and so forth.

Pressures to resist such declines in commitment must be made in good faith by all the concerned partners who work with Government: NGOs, private sector, community leaders, and traditional rulers. This is not easy, no bureaucracy is. It often seems like a random walk, forging opportunities as they arise; but over the long-term, Government must remain clear and steadfast to the critical need for communal landowners to shoulder the responsibilities for their natural resources and be rewarded for producing the resources the national economy requires. And in the end, it is hoped, a sovereign state will emerge with a land policy that will protect its natural resources and the benefits that they can provide for generations to come.

The ADMADE process is well designed for this very purpose because of its broad and growing acceptance by the very people who once represented such a serious threat to natural resource conservation in Zambia. Within this paradox is the very reason why the CBNRM approach should be at the very core of Zambia Wildlife Authority future mission to conserve and develop wildlife resources in this country.

What this study has shown perhaps more than anything else is that the CBNRM process is working, with many indicators showing this, but its results are far below the full potential it holds. Part of the problem may be time, time for communities to develop and grow with the level of skills they need, and no doubt bottlenecks in program administration have hindered these results and lowered expectations while fueling criticism among the skeptics. What is also very clear from this study is the rich foundation of experience Zambia has acquired from the ADMADE program. It is on this foundation that Government, communities, donors and all parties involved

should recognize for its strengths to build from rather than dismantle in search of an alternative approach because of its weaknesses.

Perhaps more reassuring than any other fact about ADMADE progress is its single, most impressive achievement. Nine of the 10 units that were recipients of USAID seven years ago are now supporting their CBNRM running cost entirely with their own wildlife generated revenues. This represents more than a third of the entire GMA land area in Zambia, and the future of wildlife in these areas is relatively secure for the foreseeable future as continued improvements to ADMADE are made through its on-going efforts to adapt management to monitoring results. In each area trained CBNRM facilitators have taken up residence with the local communities and continue to transfer appropriate skills and knowledge for enhancing CBNRM success, and a nationally supported training institute promotes the on-going development of new skills and methodologies for strengthening the ADMADE process over the long-term. Building on these strengths should form the basis for a strategic plan that will enable more communities that recognize the economic value of their wildlife to invest land and resources into a CBNRM enterprise for their communitys' development.