

4. IMPACTS OF FAILING TO ADDRESS GENDER WITHIN ICDPS

The move to community-based conservation and ICDPs has been welcomed throughout Africa where conflicts between conservation and local communities, and competition over resources and opposing priorities, have increased. However, in the past, the gender issues and differences described in Chapters 2 and 3 have not been incorporated or accounted for within ICDPs and other conservation and development processes.

Some projects have recognised in hindsight that costly mistakes could have been avoided if gender issues had been better understood and taken into account during project design, rather than after implementation. (Larson and Nzirambi, 1996; Jacobsohn, 1993 in IIED, 1994). Gender analysis should have been applied to all project components as they were designed. Some projects plan to rectify the situation by redoing some of the initial feasibility studies to address gender issues (Larson and Nzirambi, 1996).

The negative impacts that have resulted due to a lack of consideration of gender differences are explained below.

4.1 DIFFERENT NEEDS, PREFERENCES AND PRIORITIES

Because of the failure to recognise that men and women may have different needs, preferences and priorities, ICDPs have tended to be biased towards men, who are more able to articulate and promote issues relevant to them. In many cases this has directly compromised project success.

For example in Kenya, local men involved in planning a fuelwood tree planting project assumed that women would fulfil their traditional role of providing water for seedlings. After the seedlings were distributed, the men discovered that the women were unwilling to invest the extra hours of water-collection required by the project. Furthermore, the women were not particularly interested in the species being planted. The failure to consult the women in the planning phase of the project meant that their concerns and preferences had been ignored. Not surprisingly, they were indifferent to its success, and the seedlings died for lack of water. Realising this, the second phase of the project incorporated women's interests by providing the tree species they preferred. The women then agreed to help, and this time the project was successful (USAID Office for WID Website, 2001).

In Uganda, a CARE-supported ICDP set up in the Queen Elizabeth NP shows that because tree planting and species selection was presumed to be a predominantly male activity, women were marginalised from activities. Commercial species were chosen over those providing subsistence benefits (Blomley, 2001).

Making assumptions about the needs, roles and priorities of men can be equally detrimental to a project. This was found through an evaluation of environmental projects in five African countries, which showed that projects tended to target a greater number of environmental strategies towards women because they appeared a more willing or reliable audience. There was a tacit assumption that men were less willing and/or able to change their environmental behaviours and this meant that no effort was made to include them in community action or other interventions. This compromised the success of the strategies (USAID Office of WID Website, 2001).

4.2 LACK OF PARTICIPATION, LACK OF BENEFITS

Inaccurate assumptions have been made about the involvement of women in ICDPs, which has been presumed to be of an equal level to men. Often, however, it has been realised after project initiation

that this is not the case. Continually staff have failed to achieve a common understanding of gender issues or agree on an approach to address them (Larson and Nzirambi, 1996; Matiza, 1993:5).

It remains the case that many ICDPs in the region have failed to benefit women to any great degree. This is particularly true where projects have focussed on wildlife and wildlife management. For example, as described in Box 4.1, the USAID funded COBRA (Conservation of Biodiverse Resources Areas) Project has not increased women's incomes or employment substantially and projects remain biased in favour of male-dominated activities.

Box 4.1 Inequities in COBRA, Kenya

An evaluation of the COBRA Project found that although 35% of WDF (Wildlife for Development Fund) funds should directly benefit women's incomes and employment, in practise this was not the case. Indeed, while there had been some targeted investments for women's groups - especially the cultural *bomas* and curio shops - the majority of activities remained skewed toward financing male-dominated activities. An examination of funded activities in the four focal areas during 1995 showed that less than 15% of funds were disbursed for projects that directly benefited women's incomes and employment.

Occasionally, the largest activities excluded strong participation by women. In the case of bursary disbursements in Kajiado District (totalling more than Ksh 5 million in 1995), for example, it was estimated that only 20% of funds were allocated to females. The disbursement of about Ksh 5 million to fishermen and boat operator groups in Shimoni was solely for use by men. This represented more than 75% of WDF funds allocated to Kwale District during 1995. There seemed to be little knowledge amongst staff that a certain percentage of WDF funds should be directed to women; nor was there much stated concern that women were not included in many of the WDF activities. It was concluded that an immediate action should include gender as a priority in defining and developing social investments and activities, and if necessary a WID consultant be employed.

(Hall *et al.* 1996 - evaluation team of USAID-funded COBRA project).

In Tanzania, within the Selous Conservation Project (formulated to promote the sustainable use of resources by local communities in the buffer zone) women failed to benefit or become involved. The projects were supported on the precondition that the beneficiaries contribute 50% of the cost, and many villagers, especially women, failed to raise the required amount. As a result the programme favoured those who already had a considerable amount of income: the well-off or local elites (Songorwa, 1999).

In addition, the project involved the use of local communities as village scouts, who were male and generally aged between 25 and 35 years old. The majority were married with large families. They went on patrol for at least 10 days per month, attended a 40-day training and numerous committee meetings. Their participation in the programme deprived them of the opportunity to look after their families and in their absence the responsibility was left to their wives (*ibid*).