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# A BRIEFING NOTE: MARINE RESOURCES CO-MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN KENYA

## OCTOBER 2017

This briefing note refers to the experiences of its authoring organisations in working to develop and enhance marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods in ten southern Kenyan coastal communities.

### AUTHORING ORGANISATIONS

*Fauna & Flora International (FFI)* is a UK-based, biodiversity-focused non-governmental organisation that acts to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science, and that take into account human needs. We have been active since 1903 and work on over 140 projects, in over 40 countries, principally focussed on regional conservation interventions, species and ecosystem security, policy and behaviour, capacity building, livelihoods, and business and biodiversity.

*East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS)* is the oldest

membership-based conservation organisation in East Africa. EAWLS came into being in 1961 through a merger of Kenya and Tanzania Wild Life Societies both founded in 1956. It is the voice of conservation in East Africa Region. EAWLS seeks to enhance the conservation and wise use of the environment and natural resources in East Africa. The organisation focuses its conservation programmes in four main areas: Forests, Wildlife, Wetlands and Marine.



# CONTEXT

Since 2005, FFI and EAWLS have helped to promote, implement, and deliver a new concept of equitable and sustainable marine resource management in ten coastal communities across southern Kenya<sup>1</sup>. This new concept involves working through local marine resource user institutions, known as Beach Management Units or BMUs (established under The National Kenyan Fisheries Act regulations of 2007), in order to provide increased community participation in inshore marine management.

The ten focal coastal communities referred to in this note all utilised their local BMU to designate Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) – marine and coastal areas in which a community can direct how marine resources (in particular fisheries) are harvested, with the dual goals of delivering fairer, more profitable fish catches and increased protection for vulnerable marine species and habitats. This note will briefly outline the key successes and ongoing challenges from over ten years' experience in supporting community-led marine conservation in southern Kenya.

## SUCCESSES

### ESTABLISHED A WORKABLE MODEL FOR FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT IN KENYA AND BEYOND

Given the embryonic nature of community-led marine conservation in Africa, simply establishing several working examples of the CCA concept that are functional, representative of coastal communities, and resilient to change is a major success. In a peer-reviewed study of the progress of 19 Kenyan CCAs established in the last two decades, only four CCAs were deemed to have reached the final and most advanced phase in becoming fully established and functional. Three of these four most successful CCAs were designated by communities that FFI and EAWLS have worked with (Kuruwitu, Kibuyuni and Wasini)<sup>3</sup>.

There is some evidence that the southern Kenyan BMU/CCA model is performing comparably to similar global models. An independent project analysis of FFI and EAWLS's work concluded that the model of BMUs as local

regulating bodies, responsible for delivering CCAs as participatory, community-led areas of sustainable marine resource use is a robust example of fisheries co-management, with potential application to other nations beyond Kenya<sup>4</sup>.

### EVIDENCE OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS

There is sociological evidence to suggest that local people in these ten communities have perceived various benefits from the implementation of CCAs<sup>5</sup>. Assessments across ten CCAs suggest that communities have: greater influence over marine resource use since the designation of the CCAs; reported improved infrastructure, such as board walks<sup>6</sup>; reported reductions in the use of illegal fishing gear<sup>5</sup>; and an increase in fish biomass in one CCA (Kibuyuni)<sup>7</sup>.

### EVIDENCE OF MARINE HABITAT AND SPECIES RECOVERY

There is some biological evidence that marine species and habitats are healthier inside CCAs than outside them. Ecological analysis of the 10 CCAs has revealed that, since designation, several sites are exhibiting higher coral cover and diversity than control sites outside of CCAs and one site (Kibuyuni) is exhibiting some of the highest fish biomass measurements of any protected marine site in southern Kenya<sup>6</sup>.

*"The setting up of the CCA has been extremely beneficial as it has improved fish catch. We now get more and bigger fish. Furthermore, this CCA has enabled us to undertake other income generating activities such as tourism and in particular scuba diving whose proceeds have gone directly to the BMU, and by extension our community."*

Omari Jabiru Supi, Coordinator Kibuyuni CCA

Kenyan sea anemone. Credit: JABRUSON





# CHALLENGES

As defined in Kawaka et al. (2017)<sup>3</sup>, not all BMUs/CCAs in southern Kenya have progressed equally in becoming established and functional. Given that the relative successes and shortcomings of an individual community's BMU/CCA may be necessarily site- or context-specific, no primary evidence is available to accurately account for differences in progress. Instead, FFI and EAWLS offer several anecdotal, observed risks to the model in its present state.

## BEACH MANAGEMENT UNIT OPERATIONAL ISSUES

BMUs are the administrative vehicle for increased conservation efforts and benefit-sharing of resources. Effective, transparent administration is vital in ensuring marine conservation and social welfare goals are met. Where this is not achieved, the BMU/CCA concept can be undermined. For example:

- Some BMUs have struggled to consistently collect landing fees from fishers. This reduces capital available for increased patrolling, which is key to maintaining the theoretical benefit of BMU/sCCAs.
- BMU Executive Committees have struggled to ensure awareness of the model (in terms of its purpose, function, processes, and benefits) reaches beyond fishers into the wider community and up into levels of the government responsible for supporting BMU implementation. This can mean communities are not incentivised to participate, and that BMUs do not receive the support required from the government. This in turn makes the BMUs jobs more difficult.
- At the time of BMU formation, a lack of a clear process for establishment led to administrative delays at government level, and limited the authorities' ability to support their implementation. There is work now underway to streamline and clarify the process<sup>8</sup>.

## COMPLIANCE AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Compliance with the agreed rules and regulations in CCAs, and effective enforcement of these, is key to ensuring motivation and momentum of fishing communities support for BMUs. However, enforcement can be undermined when there are conflicts of interest (or perceived conflicts).

For example migrant fishers who are not aware of (or choose to ignore) restrictions or practices associated with a particular CCA, or commercial fisheries (e.g. ringnet, ornamental) who do not land catches at BMU landing sites and in some cases use illegal methods. Clear legislation defining where and how different commercial fisheries can operate can help minimise these conflicts. To that end FFI and EAWLS helped to draft a ring net fisheries management plan (renamed to small-scale purse seine fishery management plan), which was approved by the government and is currently awaiting gazettment.

## LEGISLATION AND RESOURCING ISSUES

Over the past ten years the shift to decentralisation of marine resource governance has been pioneering in Kenya. Yet despite there being favourable legislation for BMUs, insufficient human and financial resourcing at county level has minimised the government's ability to fulfil their role in supporting BMUs, which will always need accompanied enforcement given that site level income generation does not seem to be sufficient for covering the basic costs of operations.

Alignment of national and local level laws is needed to clarify mandate and responsibilities of different government agencies and local stakeholder groups, improve coordination between them, and ensure those responsible are held to account. This could be supported by the adoption of clear processes for establishing CCAs and approving management plans, and harmonisation of laws and management plans across different fisheries and marine protection initiatives. For example, ring net fishing expansion and new MPA development (including transboundary), so that the efforts made at this local level can be built on and not surpassed by these new approaches. A recent study found that tourism and fisheries are among the most productive components of the West Indian Ocean economy – totalling \$12.3billion annually<sup>9</sup>. Therefore the imperative for conserving marine health is of national and regional interest.

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# CONCLUSIONS

Given the emerging evidence that, in principle, the BMU/CCA model represents best practice fisheries co-management<sup>4</sup>, should Kenya wish to become a global leader in community-led marine conservation and sustainable marine livelihoods, it is recommended that the government takes steps to address the challenges highlighted and provide support to the BMU/CCA model. Reflections from the authoring organisations' programme suggest the following key priorities:

1. Ensure that the realities of CCA/BMU implementation are well understood by all relevant government agencies and that this is reflected in the steps to establishing CCAs and management plans.
2. Improve coordination among all government and non-government actors operating in marine conservation to increase efficiency and track impact (both ecological and social).
3. Increase local and national government resources allocated to delivering BMU implementation.
4. Ensure alignment of local and national legislation relating to marine and coastal resource management.
5. Improve management of commercial fisheries threats within and beyond BMU jurisdictions in a way that can maintain momentum and incentives for the participation of communities in local resource management efforts.



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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Since 2005, EAWLS has worked with one community in southern Kenya – Kuruwitu. Since 2007, FFI and EAWLS have worked together with an additional nine communities in southern Kenya – Shimoni, Wasini, Mkwiro, Kibuyuni, Majoreni, Vanga, Jimbo, Funzi, and Bodo.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Kenya, 2007. The fisheries Act (cap. 378) – the fisheries (beach management unit) regulations, 2007. Legal notice No. 402. Kenya Subsid. Legis. 2007, 2181e2213.

<sup>3</sup> Kawaka, J. A., Samoilys, M. A., Murunga, M., Church, J., Abunge, C., & Maina, G. W. (2017). Developing locally managed marine areas: Lessons learnt from Kenya. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 135, 1-10.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2013). *Darwin M&E Programme: Final Report Review – Project 17-016*. Unpublished.

<sup>5</sup> Mwambao Coastal Community Network (2013). Community Governance and Fishery Performance - Diagnostics Case Studies (Shimoni–Wasini–Kibuyuni, Kenya). Mwambao Coastal Community Network: Shangani. Commissioned by IDDRA. Retrieved from <http://www.mwambao.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Main-RB-Fisheries-Report-for-Kenya-30th-July.pdf> on 27/01/17.

<sup>6</sup> Fauna & Flora International and East African Wildlife Society (2016). *Metadata Report of Participatory Impact Assessment (PIA)*. Project Title: *Promoting the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources on the South Coast of Kenya*. Unpublished.

<sup>7</sup> McClanahan, T., Muthiga, N. A., & Abunge, C. A. (2016). Establishment of Community Managed Fisheries' Closures in Kenya: Early Evolution of the Tengefu Movement. *Coastal Management*, 44(1), 1-20.

<sup>8</sup> Odote, C., Samoilys MA., Watson R., Kamula J., Amiyo N., Omari M. and Becha H. 2015. Legislative Guidelines for the establishment and operation of Locally Managed Marine Areas in Kenya. CORDIO East Africa.

<sup>9</sup> Obura D. et al. 2017. *Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy: Actions for a Sustainable Future*. WWF International, Gland, Switzerland.

## HOW TO CITE THIS BRIEFING

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and East African Wildlife Society (October 2017) *A briefing note: marine resources co-management in southern Kenya*. FFI, Cambridge, UK.

## FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL

THE DAVID ATTENBOROUGH  
BUILDING  
PEMBROKE STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, CB2 3QZ

WEB: [www.fauna-flora.org](http://www.fauna-flora.org)  
TEL: +44 (0) 1223 747 659  
EMAIL: [sarah.rakowski@fauna-flora.org](mailto:sarah.rakowski@fauna-flora.org)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1011102

## EAST AFRICAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 20110 - 00200  
RIARA ROAD, KILIMANI  
NAIROBI, KENYA

WEB: [www.eawildlife.org](http://www.eawildlife.org)  
TEL: +254 20 3874145  
EMAIL: [info@eawildlife.org](mailto:info@eawildlife.org)