



SCENARIO PLANNING POLICY BRIEF

Planning for the future: Facilitating scenario planning to improve livelihoods in transfrontier conservation areas

By Billy Mukamuri, Chaka Chirozva and Jeanette Manjengwa

Executive Summary:

This policy brief provides decision and policy makers with an overview of the strength of using participatory scenario planning with communities in trans-frontier conservation areas to guide discussions on potential development options based on communities' needs, visions and aspirations. This is an example of scenario planning with communities in the Sengwe Communal Area, Chiredzi District, Zimbabwe, in the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA). In Sengwe the process resulted in five key development proposals which focus on changing and improving the livelihoods of the communities living within the trans-frontier conservation area. The development proposals were presented to the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee of the Chiredzi Rural District Council (RDC). Presenting the development proposals to the RDC formed a basis for promoting dialogue on the possible development pathways for the area, focusing mainly on what local people themselves feel to be important development pathways. Scenario planning therefore helped communities to be participants of development in their own area to ensure sustainable natural resource utilisation.



Introduction and background

In 2006 the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), a Department within the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Zimbabwe with embarked on a local level scenario planning research project. The project sought to introduce scenario planning as a research and development tool in Sengwe Communal Lands, Chiredzi District, an area close to the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Park (GLTP) involving South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The research project sought to assess whether:

- The Scenario Planning method can be applied by rural communities living in the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA);
- Scenario Planning can lead to rural people planning for the future so that they can benefit from the ongoing GLTP initiatives, particularly in relation to natural resources, mostly abundant wildlife and from other opportunities such as tourism and livestock marketing and development.
- There are alternative livelihood futures for local people living within the conservation areas and how these can be linked to decision and policy makers in the development of sustainable development programmes.

What is Scenario Planning?

“...a methodology which consists of a number of steps which participants go through in an interactive manner”

For our research, we followed Van den Berg and Veeneklaas’s (1995) definition of a scenario as a description of the current situation, of a possible or desirable future state as well as a series of events that could lead from the current state of affairs to this future state.

A simplified version of Scenario Planning entails asking participants to do the following in a systematic way:

- **Identify the Key Questions** – *‘What is it that they want to solve or achieve?’*
- **Visioning** – *‘What do they aspire to be in future?’*
- **List Key Drivers** – *‘What are the major factors affecting their livelihoods in relation to the key question and their vision?’* This is done through structured thinking, where the listed driving forces and their impacts and uncertainty levels are clearly discussed by participants.
- **Scoring and Ranking Drivers** - *‘Which drivers affect them most at both temporary and spatial scales?’*

Driving forces are grouped together into clusters that are internally related and separate from any other cluster, although some driving forces can sit in more than one cluster.

SWOT Analysis - Participants identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats associated with implementing the suggested strategy or strategies. Strengths relate to resources they have locally, for example, wildlife, human resources (labour), land, water, livestock, etc. Weaknesses mean challenges they have within themselves or locally for instance poverty, ignorance, culture, internal conflicts etc. Opportunities relate to positive aspects that allow them to undertake the suggested options, largely existing outside their means for example, enabling policy environment, credit facilities, willing donors, extension staff etc. Finally, threats, meaning external factors or forces that can hinder progress in pursuing a particular objective. This might include hostile government policy, politics, droughts and others.

- **Strategies Formulation** - changing perceived weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities. For example, a weakness such as poverty can be turned into an opportunity by engaging in income generating activities while a threat such as a disabling policy environment can be changed into an opportunity through lobbying local government officials and Parliamentarians.

- **Development of Plans** - marks the putting together of development plans. Participants are asked to make draft plans stating their key questions, vision, key drivers, possible scenarios, SWOT analysis, possible sites, potential beneficiaries and even budgets. Included in the plans should be resources that are available locally and those required from outside. The plans also include strategies participants may need to engage in to make their proposals accepted by officials. Such strategies include lobbying and approaching donors, parliamentarians and local government officials depending on identified weaknesses and threats.

SENARIO PLANNING IN SENGWE: A CASE STUDY

The CASS research team comprised two researchers, both social scientists, who had been trained in scenario planning methods. The CASS team further recruited and trained local facilitators living in the Sengwe Communal Area, in the basic tenets of the scenario planning approach. Training of facilitators was conducted in three steps. The first step was training on the Scenario Planning methodology. The second step involved onsite demonstrations with groups of various sizes. These were conducted in each of the three Wards participating in the research project, that is Wards 13, 14 and 15 of Chiredzi District. The third stage involved community based facilitators leading the proceedings with Scenario Planning Working Groups

comprised of between 15 and 35 participants. The community facilitators carried out the scenario planning proposal in Pahlela, Muhlekwan, Chishinya, Gwaivi, Maose and Masukwe villages. Two proposal development workshops were held and proposals with action plans and budgets were

developed. Refer to Box 1.

Examples of community development plans included a community wildlife development and management proposal in response to the question on how the community can be involved and benefit from abundant wildlife in their area.

Box 1: Community Wildlife Development and Management Proposal

Key Focal Issue/Question: *How can we be involved and benefit in future from wildlife resources in our area?*

Vision: *To be the best community in Zimbabwe in terms of providing wildlife-based tourism*

Key Drivers: *abundant wildlife, good and adequate, vegetation, rainfall, water, CAMPFIRE*

Scenarios: *built around wildlife and availability of water. The current scenario is characterized by abundance of both water points and wildlife. Here a default scenario, the status quo was preferred but with reduction of problems such as the existence of diseases, poaching (security), poor management by CAMPFIRE officials mostly RDCs, low revenues and challenges related to Problem Animal Control which is not systematic and poor responses from PAC Units, Park rangers and safari operators.*

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Wildlife; Land; Labour; Water availability; Limpopo & Mwenzezi rivers; CAMPFIRE; Vegetation</i>	<i>Lack of skilled people; Lack of security; More poaching; Lack of accommodation; Poor roads; Communication</i>	<i>CAMPFIRE; Donors; Government organisations; Big rivers; Traditional leaders</i>	<i>Drought; Poaching; Lack of capital; Diseases; CAMPFIRE; Corruption; Unstable political environment</i>

Strategies:

Changing perceived weaknesses into strengths: *Training through establishing local training centres, appointing resource monitors and armed guards, construction of chalets and camping sites, improving communication (transmission boosters and radio systems)*

Changing threats into opportunities: *Construction of small dams, windmills, establishing and training resource monitors and armed guards, improving benefits from CAMPFIRE, coordination with National Parks staff and CAMPFIRE officials in the RDC, use of traditional medicines, improving the veterinary system, more transparency and transparency with producer communities involved in CAMPFIRE processes*

Budget: *Participants produced budgets for the wildlife development and management plan. The community contribution was discussed as revenue from a well functioning CAMPFIRE process.*

Summary and Conclusions

Scenario planning provides a framework to guide discussions on the potential development options for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area. Promoting innovative development approaches such as scenario planning can greatly help local people to plan their future within the framework of the transfrontier areas. This can help to identify potential benefits as well as reduce the incidence of resource conflicts in these areas. Conflicts inhibit initiatives that are based on tourism and wildlife management. Piloting with Scenario Planning is of relevance to the whole country because it highlights ideas local people might have which are not necessarily in agreement with technical planners such as Rural District Councils (RDCs) Parks people and wildlife-related companies.

Recommended Policy Actions

While much work still needs to be done to promote development and conservation in newly established conservation areas in Southern Africa, there is evidence to show that policies and programmes that use and integrate different approaches to reach communities can be successful to bringing development to these areas. The following policy recommendations are therefore being proposed:

- Policy makers and programme managers in transfrontier conservation areas incorporate scenario planning techniques in the planning processes for transfrontier conservation areas. This allows communities and decision makers to mutually plan for the future and reduce conflicts over resources.
- Natural resources policies in transfrontier conservation areas need to promote inclusion of local people on decisions on desired future livelihoods. This can be achieved through:
 - An open and transparent negotiation that involves all concerned stakeholders
 - Providing communities living within transfrontier conservation areas a key role to play in the overall coordination of all development options for these areas
 - Providing local communities control over resources and providing them opportunity to develop innovative proposals that focus on resources obtaining in their localities.

Visioning and scenario planning are important steps towards ensuring the long term sustainability of development options for local communities. Scenario planning helps communities to move from just visioning to tangible plans that they can implement on their own.

References

Centre for Applied Social Sciences (2006) Local level scenario planning, iterative Assessment and Adaptive Management, A Grant proposal submitted to IDRC (unpublished manuscript).

Van den Berg, L.M., and Veeneklaas, F.R., 1995. Scenario building: Art, craft or just a fashionable whim? In: Schoute, J.F.T., Finke, P.A., Veeneklaas, F.R. Wolfert, H.P. (Eds.), *Scenario Studies for the Rural Environment*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, pp. 11–13.



Acknowledgements

This policy brief is part of the Local Level Scenario Planning project, implemented by CASS and funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Centre for Applied Social Science (CASS)
University of Zimbabwe, Box MP167 Harare,
Zimbabwe

