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Research paper

# Capacity building for inclusive growth in community-based tourism initiatives in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Capacity building for communities has become increasingly important since the 1980s as implementing agencies seek to realize sustainable impacts from development assistance to communities. The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) implements capacity building interventions among communities engaged in tourism. There is, however, a paucity of knowledge regarding community capacity building interventions. Using the Learning Organization Model, this article investigates the outcomes of AWF's capacity building interventions in two Community-based Tourism (CBT) initiatives in Kenya. Empirical data were collected between January and April 2015 through in-depth semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, literature review and document analysis. Both CBT initiatives demonstrate minimal internal and external community interactions, limited learning opportunities for members and minimal shared vision and teamwork. The analysis further reveals the complexity in delivering community capacity building. This article recommends a strategic focus on the modalities and components of capacity building interventions as a way of enhancing the outcomes of CBT initiatives.

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, CBT initiatives have been promoted as a mechanism for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and biodiversity conservation in wildlife-rich community lands in Eastern and Southern Africa (Adams, 2004; Kiss, 2004; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007; Western & Wright, 1994). CBT is believed to have the potential to not only increase local incomes and jobs, but also to develop skills, institutions, and empower local people (Ashley & Garland, 1994). In addition, benefits from tourism in communal areas are seen as an important tool for building local support for conservation and sustainable natural resource use (Ashley & Garland, 1994). This is in line with the community-based conservation discourse which propagates the idea of achieving the goals of conservation and development simultaneously (Adams, 2004; Brown, 2002; Hackel, 1999; Igoe, 2006; Mahanty, Fox, Nurse, Stephen, & McLees, 2006; Wainwright & Wehrmeyer, 1998; Western & Wright, 1994). However, for community-based initiatives to realize their potentials, community involvement and benefit sharing are fundamental (Ashley & Garland, 1994; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Nonetheless, the challenge for community involvement and participation has been that communities are faced with shortcomings related to among others limited capacities, knowledge of the market in designing products, limited access to information, skills, and capital (Ashley & Garland, 1994; Kiss, 2004; Moscardo, 2008). In order to reduce the challenges faced by communities with regard to participation in development initiatives, including tourism, the concept of capacity building has become increasingly important as governments, donors and other implementing agencies seek to realize more sustainable impacts from development assistance (ISRDS, 2000). In general, community capacity is about collective knowledge and ability within the community itself and the knowledge and ability are used to define problems and options from within the community (Moscardo, 2008). However, little attention has been given to the outcomes of capacity building interventions in CBT initiatives.

In this article, we focus on two community conservancies with CBT initiatives in Kenya – Satao Elerai and Kilitome - initiated by African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). In each of these conservancies, community land owners have set aside land for conservation on which a private investor operates an eco-lodge. In return, the community land owners receive leasehold money for setting aside land for conservation as well as bed-night fee from every guest who stays in the eco-lodges (CBT initiatives). Both conservancies are managed through a board comprising of representatives of the respective private investors, the communities and AWF (see Figs. 2 and 3). AWF engages in diverse capacity building interventions both at the initial stages of setting up the conservancies as well as in the ongoing ventures. This is in accordance with

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AWF's founding tenet which is to build the capacity of the people of Africa to steward the continent's natural assets through scholarship and capacity building of both individuals and institutions (AWF, 2009).

Although a number of studies have investigated these and similar CBT initiatives (Kiss, 2004; Lamers, Van der Duim, Nthiga, Van Wijk, & Watterreus, 2015; Manyara & Jones, 2007; Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008; Nthiga, Van der Duim, Visseren-Hamakers, & Lamers, 2015; Snyman, 2012; Spenceley, 2005; Sumba, Warinwa, Lenaiyasa, & Muruthi, 2007), there is still limited understanding of the capacity building interventions focused on communities. An understanding of the outcomes of the capacity building interventions is particularly important since the success of CBT initiatives in terms of both conservation and development depends on the involvement of the communities (Ashley & Garland, 1994; Ashley & Roe, 2001; Kruger, 2005). This article, therefore, sets out to establish the outcomes of the capacity building interventions in the CBT initiatives in Kilitome and Satao Elerai conservancies using the five dimensions of the Learning Organization Model: system thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning (Senge, 1990, 2006). The article aims to contribute to the knowledge base on the realization of more sustainable impacts from development assistance through CBT.

## 2. Conceptual framework

There are diverse definitions of the term community capacity (Moscardo, 2008). However, according to Hounslow (2002:20), 'community capacity is the ability of individuals, and communities to manage their affairs and to work collectively to foster and sustain positive change'. The various characteristics of community capacity include aspects related to: knowledge and the ability to define and suggest solutions for problems; the ability to critically evaluate proposed projects and activities; local leadership and entrepreneurship; specific technical and managerial skills in target areas; networks and community cohesiveness; equitable partnerships with external organizations; resources and infrastructure; and motivation and confidence (Balint, 2006; Goodman et al., 1998; Hounslow, 2002; Lavarack, 2005; Simpson, Wood, & Daws, 2003; Slater et al., 2005; Woodhouse, 2006).

According to UNDP the concept of capacity building for communities entails the creation, utilization and retention of capacity to achieve goals such as poverty reduction, enhancement of self-reliance and improvement of lives (UNDP, 2010). UNDP further notes that capacity building requires among others acquisition of individual skills, institutional capacities as well as the development of opportunities to put the skills and networks to productive use in the transformation of society. In addition, improving capacity in organizations usually involves changing the process by which members of the organization work together and make decisions. Though diverse development organizations, AWF included, have engaged in various capacity building programmes for communities, still little is known of the outcomes of the capacity building interventions focused on communities. One way of assessing the outcomes of capacity building interventions is the Learning Organization Model (Senge, 1990, 2006). According to Senge (1990:3), learning organizations are 'organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning to see the whole together'. Any type of organization can be a learning organization, including businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, and community groups (Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003).

### 2.1. Overview of the learning organization model

The learning organization model (see Fig. 1) has been widely applied in evaluating capacity building programmes in community development, nutrition, youth development and small businesses (Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003; Magzan, 2012; Stevens & Lodl, 1999) with limited application to CBT initiatives. To analyze the outcomes of the capacity building interventions in the two conservancies, this article focuses on the five dimensions of the Learning Organization Model (LOM): systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning (Senge, 1990, 2006).

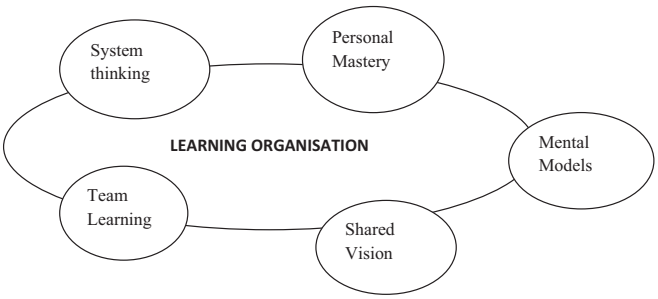


**Fig. 1.** The learning organization model.
Source: Adapted and modified from Senge (1990, 2006).

Systems' thinking is a cornerstone dimension that integrates the others (Senge, 1990, 2006; Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, & Kleiner, 1994; Stevens & Lodl, 1999). According to Senge (1990, 2006), analyzing systems' thinking in an organization includes looking at aspects such as the ability to comprehend and address the whole and to examine the interrelationships between the parts. Personal mastery involves a continuous process improving individual and communal capabilities. On the other hand, mental models encompass the assumptions, generalizations and mental pictures or images that influence behavior and understanding of the world (Senge, 1990, 2006). Shared vision dimension includes aspects such as a common identity and shared values and vision. Finally, team learning entails the practice of group interaction, coordination and mobilization of energies and actions to achieve common goals.

In this article we conceptualize the two community conservancies and the respective CBTs as organizations and analyze the outcomes of the various capacity building interventions on these conservancies based on the five dimensions of the LOM (see Table 1). Systems' thinking is conceptualized in terms of interactions between the units of the conservancies, the interactions of the conservancies with external networks and the understanding and reactions to issues confronting the conservancies. Personal mastery is conceptualized in terms of the available avenues to share rewards and learning, new knowledge and skills and avenues for improving individual and communal capabilities. On the other hand, mental models refer to the observed behavior and practices modification arising from individual and communal world views; including: turning the mirror inward to unearth individual and communal internal pictures of the world to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny; the ability to carry on 'learningful' conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others. In addition, shared vision is conceptualized in terms of shared vision, identity and values.

Finally, team learning is analyzed in terms of the coordination and flow of information within the conservancies as well as the feedback mechanisms within the conservancies. For both conservancies, diverse capacity building interventions have been initiated by AWF including setting up of local institutions, technical and financial support (AWF, 2009). This article further assesses the outcomes of the interventions in relation to the local and national context, community set-up and power relations.

## 3. Methodology

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used as the primary data collection tools. The criteria for sampling the interviewees was

**Table 1**
Conceptualization of the learning organization model dimensions.

| Learning organization model dimensions | Conceptualization |
|---|---|
| systems' thinking | • Interactions among community members.<br>• Interactions of the conservancies with external networks.<br>• Understanding and reactions to issues confronting the conservancies. |
| Personal mastery | • Available avenues to share rewards and learning.<br>• New knowledge and skills.<br>• Avenues for improving individual and communal capabilities. |
| Mental models | • Observed behavior and practices arising from individual and communal world views.<br>• Ability/willingness to learn new skills and develop new orientations. |
| Shared vision | • Shared vision.<br>• Common sense of identity.<br>• Shared values. |
| Team learning | • Flow of information within the conservancies.<br>• Feedback mechanisms.<br>• Coordination within the conservancies. |

Source: Adapted from Senge (1990, 2006); Senge et al. (1994); Stevens and Lodl (1999).

purposive sampling based on the knowledge possessed and the role played in the respective CBT initiatives. Informed consent was sought through prior contact and communication with the respondents. For those who agreed to be tape-recorded, tape recording was done during the interviews. However, majority of the respondents did not wish to be tape-recorded and therefore notes were taken and later transcribed. Interviews were conducted until no new information emerged, that is, until data saturation was reached. A total of 15 interviews were conducted and each interview lasted between 30 min and 1 h. All the respondents were male since the females felt that the males would represent them better, perhaps because culturally, among the Maasai, women are expected to speak less in public. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, codes for numbering and quoting interviews were used (see Table 2). The interviews and documents were transcribed and summarized in light of the Learning Organization Model. The analyzed information was strengthened and supported with secondary data and literature review.

**Table 2**
Interviews Coding.

| Category of respondents | Kilitome | Satao Elerai |
|---|---|---|
| Community | C-KIL-1 to C-KIL-7 | C-SE-1 to C-SE-3 |
| AWF (for both) | AWF-1 TO AWF-3 | |
| Private investors | PI-KIL-1 | PI-SE-1 |

## 4. The African wildlife foundation (AWF) capacity building initiatives

Since the 1990's, AWF has been involved in Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) interventions by supporting conservation enterprises. According to AWF, a conservation enterprise is “a commercial activity which generates economic benefits in a way that supports the attainment of a conservation objective” (Elliott & Sumba, 2010: 4). A major strategic intervention for engaging communities in these enterprises and related community-based conservation initiatives has been capacity building. AWF focuses on building capacity at the community level because ‘conservation efforts must ultimately rest in the hands of the people of Africa’ (AWF, 2009: 19). The assumption is that local communities are best placed to conserve natural resources; and that they will do so if the benefits of conserving them exceed the costs, and if those natural resources can be directly linked to their quality of life (Rozemeijer, 2001).

As explained by one of the respondents, AWF does not have an organized or systematic ‘curriculum’ for capacity building but integrates capacity building activities into its conservation work (AWF- 3). According to another respondent…. ‘AWF since the implementation of the Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas (COBRA)[1] program has engaged in various capacity building interventions with communities’. The various interventions include but are not limited to: familiarization/benchmarking trips, community meetings for awareness creation, skills development, building and strengthening of community institutions and organizing workshops on various issues. In addition, …‘AWF engages in capacity building on aspects such as training of leaders on new land laws, financial management, increasing human capacity through scouts training and indirect capacity building through education support’ and also ‘supports regular community meetings to ensure that committees are active and that there is frequent and active participation’ (AWF- 1).

## 5. Introducing the conservancies and CBT enterprises

In this section, the two community conservancies and the respective CBTs studied in this article are introduced. These conservancies are part of the Amboseli ecosystem which covers an area of approximately 5700 $km^2$ stretching from Mt. Kilimanjaro, Chyulu Hills, Tsavo West National Parks and the Kenya/Tanzania border (AEMP, 2008–2018).

### 5.1. Satao elerai conservancy and Satao-elerai ecolodge

The Satao Elerai Conservancy is located in Kajiado County near Amboseli National Park, Kenya. The conservancy is located at the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro within the Entonet Location (AEMP, 2008–2018). Within the conservancy, we have the Satao Elerai Ecolodge (see Fig. 4). The conservancy is part of an important wildlife migratory corridor between Amboseli, Mount Kilimanjaro, Chyulu Hills and Tsavo West National Parks. The conservancy came into being through a negotiation of AWF and eight offspring families of a major land owner. The total land owned by the families is 6000 ha. AWF conducted land use planning for the land and divided the land into three zones of approximately 2000 ha each: a conservation area, a settlement and cultivation area and a grazing area. Within the conservation area, which we refer to in this article as the conservancy, stands the Satao Elerai Eco-lodge. The lodge was constructed at a total cost of about USD 500,000 donor funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi, the Ford foundation and an individual donor. The lodge opened for business in 2007 and is operated by the Southern Cross Safaris, a Kenya based tour Operation Company.

[1] Project funded by USAID and implemented by AWF and KWS in 1992–1998: to increase socio-economic benefits to communities living adjacent to Kenya's National Parks and reserves from conservation and sustainable management of wildlife and natural resources (Hall, Little, & de Queiruz, 1996).

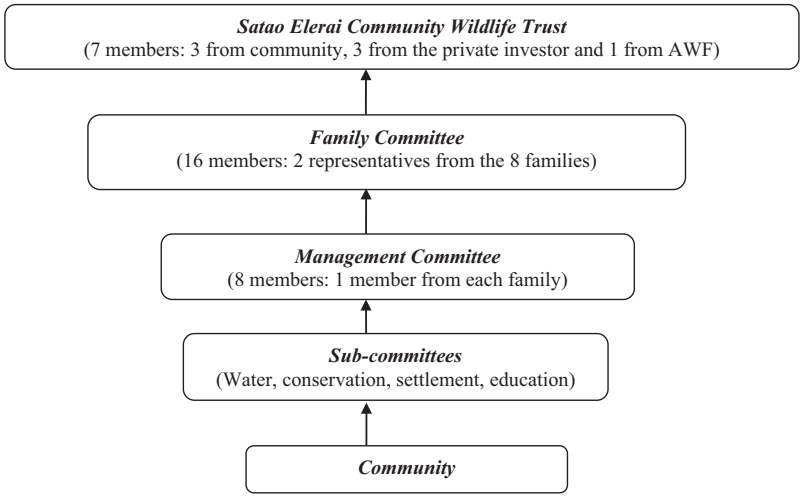


**Fig. 2.** The organization structure of the Satao Elerai Conservancy Management.
Source: Field work (2015)

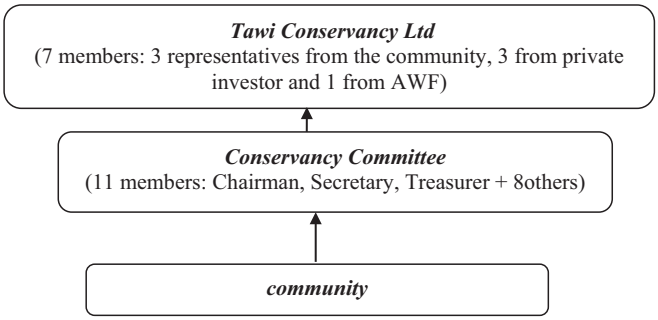


**Fig. 3.** The organization structure of the Kilitome Conservancy.
Source: Field work (2015).

The institutional arrangement for the management of the conservancy is the Satao Elerai Community Wildlife Trust Board (Fig. 2). The trust comprises of seven representatives: three from the eight families, three from the private investor and one from AWF. There is also a sixteen member family committee comprising of two representatives from each family. Eight members of the family committee form the management committee while the other eight together (with others) sit in the different sub-committees such as water, education, settlement, conservation and cultural village.

### 5.2. Kilitome conservancy and the Tawi ecolodge

The Kilitome Conservancy is owned by individuals who previously were members of Kimana group ranch near Amboseli National Park, Kenya. A Group ranch is a communal land tenure system that **allows a group of pastoralists to jointly own and manage land.** The concept of group ranches was, at first, generally popular among the Maasai pastoralists as it provided security and safeguard against land alienation by non-Maasai people, and annexation as national parks or government forests. But, the failure of the group ranch system to deliver the objectives of improved livelihoods and security of tenure has led to their dissolution and subsequent subdivision (Ntiati, 2002). Kimana group ranch was thus completely subdivided into a private land tenure system, where the communally owned land was divided into individual 60 acres parcels that were shared among its members. AWF then entered into a lease agreement with 100 of these individual land owners to put together their 60 acre parcels for conservation for a certain amount per year forming Kilitome Conservancy (See Fig. 4). The lease agreement was to prevent habitat loss and to secure land for wildlife movement while providing income for the community.

Besides Kilitome conservancy, AWF also entered into a similar arrangement with other smaller neighboring conservancies in the area including: Oltiyani, Osopuko, Nailepu, Ole Polos, Kitenden and Nalarami. Together, the total land under conservation is 3200 ha. Prior to the set up of the Kilitome Conservancy, one individual land owner within the conservancy had already entered into an agreement with an investor to construct a lodge- the Tawi Lodge and pay the individual land owner lease for the parcel of land. The lodge opened for business in 2010. Currently, all the one hundred members, each with 60-acre parcel of land have entered into an agreement with the private investor and are involved in the arrangement to set up an exclusive conservation zone. The conservation area is an exclusive use zone set aside for wildlife tourism and also to ensure that viable corridors and wildlife dispersal areas are maintained (AEMP, 2008–2018).

The main institutional arrangement for the management of the Kilitome Conservancy is the Tawi Conservancy Ltd. comprising of seven members: three from the community, three from the private investor and one from AWF (Fig. 3). There is also the conservancy committee comprising of eleven members including a chairman, a secretary and a treasurer. The conservancy, together with the other conservancies in the area has also created an umbrella body called the Amboseli Land Owners Association which has three members from each conservancy.

Despite the change of ownership from communal to individual ownership by the 100 members, the Kimana Group ranch leadership still express a strong desire to control the decisions of the Kilitome conservancy as exhibited in their wishing to be consulted on matters affecting the conservancy; benefit from the proceeds from the conservancy; have a say on who takes up the leadership positions among others. This could be as a result of the Maasai culture in which land is believed to be a communal property.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Comparative analysis of the conservancies and the CBT enterprises

A comparative analysis of the two conservancies reveals similarities with regard to the number, composition and roles of stakeholders (Table 3). Both conservancies were governed through committees and the main decision making organ was a seven (7) member board comprising three (3) representatives of the private investor, three community members and one (1) AWF representative. However, whereas Kilitome conservancy was managed by a conservancy committee comprising 11 elected members, Satao Elerai had a sixteen member

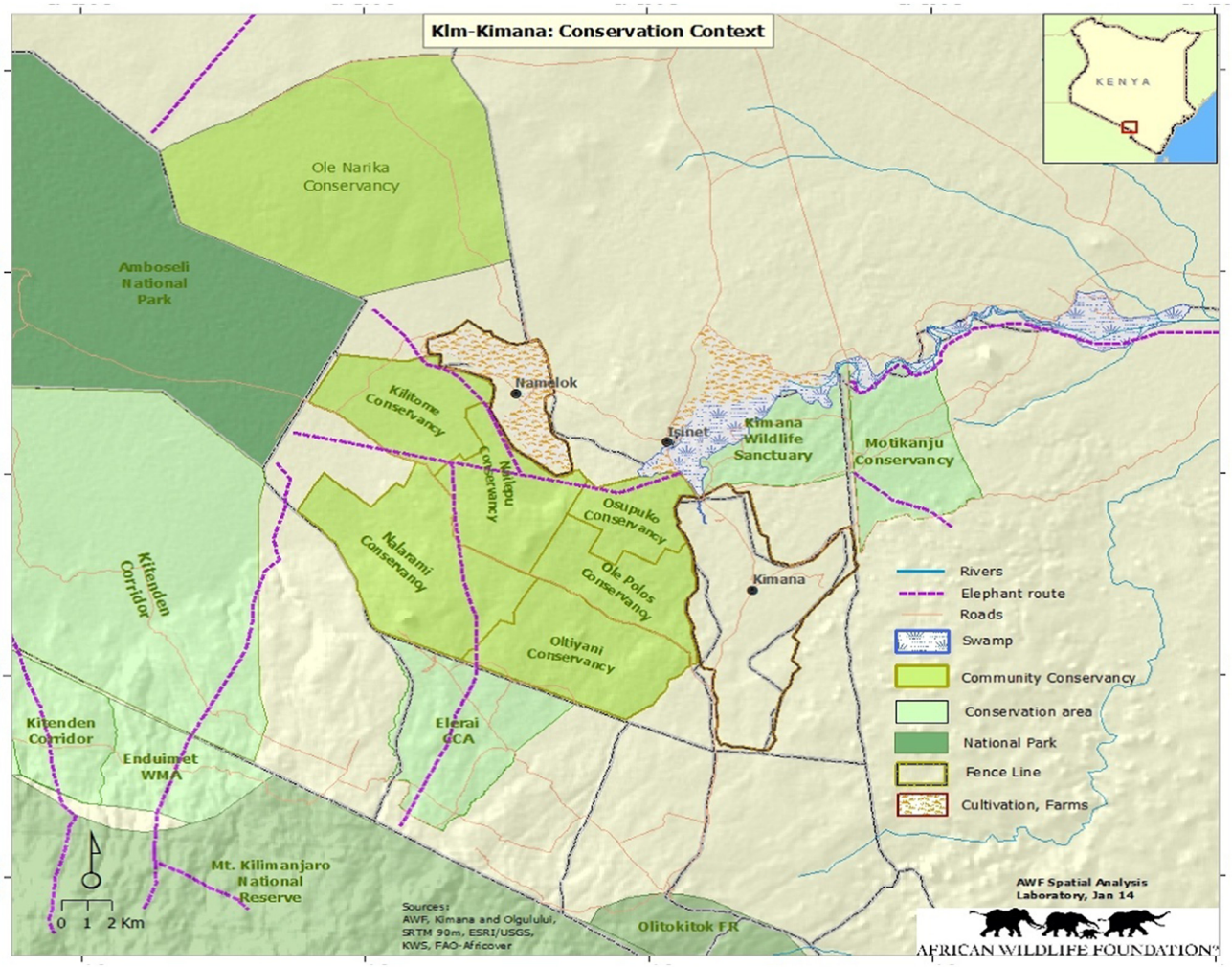


**Fig. 4.** Map showing the location of the study areas.
Source: AWF (2014).

family committee (two representatives from each family) and an eight member management committee comprising one member from each of the eight families involved. Further, there were variations in the composition of community members involved, the acreage of land under conservation, the location and ownership of the CBT, historical context, and community revenue sources (Table 3).

## 7. Capacity building outcomes of the CBT initiatives

### 7.1. Systems' thinking

Interactions between units of both conservancies exist, though in a minimal way. There are institutions and organization structures for both conservancies (see Figs. 2 and 3). For both conservancies, meetings are the main avenues for interactions within the various committees as well as between committee members and the general

**Table 3**
Comparison of the conservancies and the CBT enterprises.

| Aspect | Kilitome conservancy | Satao elerai conservancy |
|---|---|---|
| Community involved | 100 individual land owners | 8 families |
| Acreage of land under conservation | 3200 ha. | 2000 ha. |
| Location and ownership of CBT | Inside the conservancy on land Owned by a non-member | Within the conservancy, Owned by the community |
| Governance structure | Committees<br>Elected officials | Committees<br>Families representatives |
| Historical Context | Members are former Kimana Group ranch members | Members not affiliation to any group ranch. |
| Stakeholder roles | Community: provides land<br>AWF: Neutral partner and mediator<br>Private investor: Lease of facility operating the CBT, and pay bed night fee. | Community: provides land<br>AWF: Neutral partner and mediator<br>Private investor: Lease of facility, operate CBT, and pay bed night fee. |
| Community Revenue sources | Lease funds through bed-night, conservancy fee and aircraft landing fee | Lease funds from bed night and conservation fee |

Source: Research data (2015).

communities. However, meetings are rare and in most cases unplanned for as noted by one respondent at the time of the field work, the Kilitome has had no meeting with the Tawi lodge investor for one and a half years. Moreover, according to one respondent…. 'Community meetings are usually held every six months, sometimes sooner or later as need arises' (*C-Kil-5)*. In both conservancies, leaders especially at the top leadership are the major decision-makers, while the sub-committees and the community members are mainly observers or passive participants. Women and the youth are the most segregated groups of the communities and even attend meetings just to listen. This minimal interaction and participation can be partly attributed to the culture that insubordinates women, power relations between the leaders and community members and lack of knowledge of the rights and responsibilities among the community members.

Results from both conservancies revealed some interactions between the conservancy members and management with external networks, though at a limited level. Such interactions include but are not limited to NGOs, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the private investors in the respective conservancies. The interactions are limited due to, among others, lack of financial resources, and limited information on the options for responding to external forces. Especially for Kilitome conservancy, the Kimana group ranch leadership interference has made the interaction between the conservancy with other stakeholders difficult.

AWF has also on several occasions taken the leaders of each of the conservancies for visits or familiarization tours to different areas with similar CBT interventions to learn and interact. Leaders from both conservancies viewed the familiarization tours in a positive way and argued that they had exposed them. Also observed were some interventions stated by the community. The interventions were however not sustainable due to lack of funds and the dependency culture, where they want AWF to always support them. The interaction of the conservancies with the umbrella body for conservancies in Kenya (Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association) is still minimal since the communities are used to NGOs such as AWF spearheading initiatives in the area.

To enable coordination of the activities, each conservancy has prepared a conservancy management plan in line with the provisions of the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan spearheaded by the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET). However, the implementation of the plans are hindered by among others local politics, illiteracy which makes it difficult for some members to 'understand and support decisions' as well as conflicts with group ranch officials who do not recognize the mandate and authority of the conservancy officials.

### 7.2. Personal mastery

For both conservancies, apart from the benefits from the conservation and bed-night fees, there are limited avenues to share rewards and learning. In addition, both conservancies mainly depend on AWF and other NGOs such as African Conservation Centre (ACC) for training and other aspects that are geared towards personal skills development such as on livestock husbandry, beekeeping, scouts training, smart agriculture, livestock management and marketing through the establishment of the Amboseli Livestock Marketing Association (ALMA) and of MACs (Market Access Committees). The interventions are however faced with diverse challenges. For example, the Kilitome MAC was affected by lack of transparency as argued by one community leader, '…..no member of the Kilitome conservancy knew what was happening…the concerned leaders did not involve the community' *(C-KIL-4)*.

The only avenues for improving individual and communal capabilities have been started by AWF and the communities have not been able to sustain them for example the livestock marketing project at Kilitome conservancy. This lack of continuity or sustainability of projects can be attributed to the dependency culture and mismanagement of funds. The community also seems to have limited understanding of their roles in most capacity building interventions. For example the irrigation project at Kilitome faced challenges since community members were supposed to dig a water hole, pump water and buy fuel, which they initially thought were to be financed. One community member argued that '……the project has impoverished us more' (*C-KIL-3)*.

According to AWF (2014), AWF trained leaders, women groups on livestock business and enhanced clean energy technologies. However, majority of the trainings mainly target the leaders who in most cases only share with members the knowledge and issues that they feel will not compromise their positions which limit the trickle-down effect of the training to the members. In addition, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in both conservancies mainly depend on AWF and other NGOs. Furthermore, the community members wait for bursaries for secondary school, college and university students and a limited number of members are willing to sell their livestock to take children to school.

The community leaders also have come up with new ideas such as developing game viewing within conservancies. They however noted that developing and managing tourism in the conservancies cannot be implemented by the communities without assistance. One respondent pointed out to AWF that '….do not think that we do not have ideas, but please help us to follow up and implement' *(C-SE-2)*. Additional challenges confronting communities include: financial constraints, un-cooperative members, 'challenge of working with projects which have time-lines' 'managing high community expectations' and the issue of projects being 'prone to technical hitches'.

### 7.3. Mental models

In both Satao Elerai and Kilitome conservancies, despite the capacity building interventions on better animal husbandry and natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation, there are indications that majority of the community members still hold on to practices that are not favorable for conservation. These include holding onto large livestock herds as a sign of wealth and use of income to purchase more livestock as opposed to other assets. Moreover, women are not viewed as major stakeholders or decision-makers in both conservancies which limits their participation and involvement.

### 7.4. Shared vision

In both conservancies, the members have pooled land together for conservation, a clear indication of a shared vision or goal. In addition, both conservancies also have set by-laws which define the conduct of members and the 'Dos and Don'ts'. There are, however, instances of some conservancy members grazing in the conservancy land which has a de-motivating effect on the members who share the vision. During meetings, it was observed that the leaders speak most and give their opinions or decision; this clearly indicates that the majority of the members endorse the leaders' decisions.

### 7.5. Team learning

The flow of information within the conservancies is mainly top-down, that is, from the leaders to the members and teamwork is not clearly visible. In addition, the feedback mechanisms for both conservancies are in the form of meetings as the main avenues for sharing information. As noted earlier, leaders speak most and majority of the members attend to listen. There is also poor coordination within the conservancies in the absence of AWF. Conservancy members, especially at Kilitome also shift positions when they get conflicting opinions from others especially if the opinion provides an opportunity to benefit individuals.

## 8. Discussions and conclusions

In this article, we discuss the outcomes of AWF's capacity building interventions on two community conservancies in Kenya. The analysis was based on the Learning Organization Model focusing on the five dimensions of the model: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning. As argued by various scholars, the concept of capacity building for communities engaged in community-based conservation interventions is important in order to enable communities organize themselves, make decisions and take actions that strengthen their participation. AWF's interventions for capacity building in communities therefore reflect a response to a critical necessity for community-based conservation initiatives. However, as the findings suggest, majority of community-based interventions have had varied outcomes for inclusive growth.

In terms of the Learning Organization Model dimensions, the findings reveal limited internal and external interactions their systems thinking. Moreover, the limited external and internal interactions means that they are limited in exposure to new ideas, new ways of doings things which in turn inhibits/limits systems thinking within the conservancies i.e. they are unable to see the link between units due to these limitations. As argued by Morgan (2005) 'Systems thinking is a different mental model that has the potential to open up some space for thinking about issues such as capacity development.' The results further indicate that the interaction of the communities with the outside actors is mainly NGO or private investors initiated with minimal community initiatives. Community initiatives are mainly hindered by aspects related to community challenges such as local politics; limited funds and the dependency culture of communities towards outside assistance (see Ahebwa, Van der Duim, & Sandbrooke, 2012; Kiss, 2004; Nthiga, 2014; Sitati, Nthiga, & Khisa, 2008; Southgate, 2006).

The findings further indicate that the acquisition of new knowledge and the continuity of projects are hindered by governance challenges related to transparency and accountability. This scenario reflects governance challenges in similar community-based conservation-development initiatives (see Lamers et al., 2015; Nthiga, 2014; Nthiga et al., 2015). Moreover, the community culture relating to women's position in society and the value attached to livestock contributes to beliefs and assumptions that hinder inclusivity and outcomes of the capacity building interventions. Although the pooling of land together by members to form the conservancies is an indication of shared vision, power relations as a result of the hierarchy created by the leadership structure reveal that the goals of the leaders take precedence over other community members. Finally, teamwork among the community members is hindered by local politics and power relations between the different actors within the conservancies.

This article reveals that the capacity building interventions in the conservation-development interventions in community-based initiatives offer a great opportunity for inclusive growth for communities. However, for capacity building interventions to contribute to inclusive growth aspects related to power relations, politics and community set-up should be reviewed and addressed. These challenges will also affect the national initiatives of community inclusion such as the newly formed conservancies body; the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA). Therefore, studies focusing on the modalities and components of capacity building interventions for communities are both timely and relevant. This is because such studies will guide NGOs and other bodies engaged with communities on the best way of handling community capacity building interventions.

In conclusion, based on our findings and in view of the importance of community capacity-building for inclusive growth in CBT initiatives, we argue that the approach by AWF is capable of delivering tangible outcomes. Nonetheless, the outcome of capacity building interventions in CBTs is also affected by the contextual environment in which the CBT initiatives operate. Therefore, for the outcomes to be meaningful for inclusive growth, issues related to politics, power relations, funding and cultural beliefs and practices and the projects' nature of the interventions should be put in perspective during the planning and implementation.

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