

Transforming CBNRM Education in Southern Africa

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The objective of this project is to bring together scholars and practitioners into a community of practice to develop curricular materials to support community based natural resource management (CBNRM). This will enable southern African education institutions to provide training at several levels: undergraduate, graduate, and short courses for practitioners and policy-makers.

Southern Africa is leading a new conservation paradigm called the “Sustainable Use Approach.” Moving away from fortress preservation, the essence of this approach is that if wild resources are valuable and if local people own and can benefit from them, then there is a high likelihood that these resources will create jobs and economic growth and will therefore be conserved by the people living with them. There has been a considerable investment in this approach by national governments, donor agencies and local people and, interestingly, wildlife in southern Africa has increased since the 1970s whereas it has declined steeply or precipitously in West and East Africa respectively.

However, the intellectual logic and practical implementation tools behind this approach remain largely in a knowledge network of committed scholar practitioners and in the form of oral and grey literature. The project brings this knowledge network together with scholars, and particularly young scholars from African institutions, to document this knowledge and set it out in a format that can be used for educating students at many levels.

The first step was to hold two workshops in Pretoria and Kruger to strengthen and broaden this community of practice, to ascertain educational needs



in the region, and outline the materials needed to match these needs. Our priority is now to write four text books that each form the basis of a separate course, with the intention that each course can be used for participants ranging from field practitioners to university students and high level officials. The first book “Foundations of CBNRM” will be a general text. The second book will bring together principles and lessons relating to the economic management of wild resources, tourism, and livelihoods. The third book introduces the complexities of governance and management, ranging from national distributional political economy and policy to the micro-governance of local communities. The fourth book emphasizes pedagogical approaches, including participatory learning, action research and collaborative adaptive management and technology development.

In Spring 2011, we are planning to bring young faculty from our key partners – University of Botswana, Sokoine Agricultural University in Tanzania, the

Polytechnic of Namibia, and at least two other partners – to UF to co-teach “foundations of CBNRM.” These visiting faculty members will test the draft textbook, adapt it to local circumstances by developing teaching manuals, and will provide a 2-week summer course for practitioners in southern Africa as part of their training. This project is a natural outcome of the interdisciplinary research that a number of our students, many of whom are featured in this report, conduct on CBNRM in Africa.

Brian Child is associate professor in the Department of Geography and the Center for African Studies. This project is managed through Higher Education for Development (HED) with a three-year funding award of \$600,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).