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Simelane, Londziwe

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Environmental Justice and Development Projects: A Case Study of a Landscape Approach to Biodiversity Conservation in the Eco-Lubombo Programme - Swaziland.

Londziwe Simelane

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ABSTRACT

Environmental justice has emerged as one of the core concepts in environmental and nature conservation discourse in recent years, prompted by the growing focus on human development and the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. Numerous indigenous groups were displaced and marginalised with the advent of protected area declarations and establishment of nature reserves and wildlife parks throughout the world, and especially in Africa. These groups, who previously achieved their livelihood provisions from these areas rich in biodiversity, found themselves having to find alternative means of living, which were often unsustainable. The injustice of these historical actions, which are perpetuated even today, have led to a focus on adopting social justice tenets into the environmental space, and making strides to redress the situation and reintegrate indigenous groups into protected areas, providing an opportunity to continue nurturing biodiversity but without compromising the ability of local communities to sustainably utilise natural resources.

The environmental justice framework is explored in this research using a protected landscape approach lens within the context of a biodiversity conservation development project in Swaziland. Environmental justice principles of inclusion and exclusion, equitable access and distribution of resource, as well as the unanticipated impact of power relations upon such justice issues, constitute the bulk of my findings in my empirical chapters. The results from the research revealed that the role of power was so entrenched in the rural societies used as cases in this study, and was a representation of the general experience of all rural, traditional communities in Swaziland, indicative of the manner in which power, as possessed and exercised by the elite, permeates most thinking and action by the masses, who are subject to that power. This kind of power held by traditional leaders in the rural areas ultimately hinders the fulfilment of environmental justice, and only partially satisfies the conditions of the landscape approach, wherein, although significant time and money is spent by development agents towards people-integration into a primarily conservation-based programme, the preservation of nature - under protectionist modes – prevails.

Within the Eco-Lubombo Programme in the Lubombo region of Swaziland, interviews were conducted with a plethora of stakeholders, using interview guides that focused these interactions on environmental justice themes, without restricting the participants' general experience with conservation development projects. Project documents were made available to me, and these were tremendously in assisting me to acquire a sense of the complexity of such community development projects. Whilst the project planning and guides for implementation appear to be impeccable on paper, the contextual conditions continue to highlight the simmering tensions amongst such traditional spaces, which often prove to undermine the many hours of planning put in by project proponents. These tensions are generally divorced from the actual project, and precede the introduction of the project, but if unattended, they are often disruptive to the achievement of project goals. These potentially explosive community dynamics remain contained due to the reach of traditional powers, but people exercise covert resistance by remaining passive in development projects and excluding themselves from development activities.

The power of the rule of law in Swaziland, and its numerous devolved traditional institutions ensures that the individuals living and depending on these traditional systems remain subjects. Indeed, it fosters dependence on the ruling elite, as people's livelihoods at the most basic level are directly dependent on the prevailing traditional tenure system. My research found most community members to be very aware of their tenuous position as citizens and were either unable or reticent to speak up openly against their traditional leaders for fear of compromising their status within the community, as well as their potential to access and benefit from resources in in their many forms. The majority of the community is primarily dependent on subsistence farming, which is dependent on having good quality land, and access to sufficient grazing lands, as well as access to natural resources; the lack of secure tenure therefore may serve to incapacitate many members of a community, and provide surety that they will continue to support the traditional institutions.

It is important to note that since this research report was compiled and submitted for examination, the country name 'Swaziland' was changed to 'Eswatini' (officially confirmed through a National Gazette: 'Legal Notice No. 80 of 2018' published on the 11th of May 2018 and signed by His Majesty King Mwati III). 'Eswatini' is the vernacular translation of Swaziland, and has been used informally in the country for several years, as well as when speaking in the local SiSwati language. A number of national institutions have also changed their company names to reflect this name change.

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The Eco-Lubombo Programme community liasion officer was inavluable during my time conducting fieldwork. She introduced me to the relevant traditional authorities and advised me of all protocol that I needed to observe in order to gain access to the communities. She also furnished me with important insights into the community conservation development process.

My family have been incredible during this year away from home – they have supported me throughout the entire process without any complaints about my lengthy absence – Steve, dad, bro, thank you.

I dedicate this body of work to my mum, no longer with us, but still the wind beneath my wings.

DECLARATION

I, Londziwe Simelane, hereby declare that this research report is my own original work and that where I have made use of others' ideas, I have referenced accordingly.

Londziwe Simelane University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 19 March 20

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBNRM …… Community Based Natural Resource Management
CDC …….. Community Development Committee
CEPF ……. Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
COSPE …….. Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries
ELP ……Eco-Lubombo Programme
GDP ……...Gross Domestic Product
ICDPs …… Integrated Conservation Development Projects
(I)NGOs …… (International) Non-Governmental Organisations
IUCN ……. International Union for Conservation of Nature
LTFCA …….. Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area
MPAH ……Maputaland – Pondoland – Albany Hotspot
NAMBoard …… Swaziland National Agricultural Marketing Board
RSSC ……. Royal Swaziland Sugar Company
SNL ……... Swaziland National Land
SNTC ……. Swaziland National Trust Commission
TDL ……... Title Deed Land
TFCA …… Transfrontier Conservation Area
UNEP …… United Nations Environment Programme
WCED ……United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background and Research Problem

In this research, I explore the contentious milieu surrounding conservation projects and community development through an environmental justice lens, wherein communities habitually bear the brunt of biodiversity conservation efforts. The unfortunate reality of decreasing biodiversity and unchecked environmental degradation is indisputable, however, protecting biodiversity should not occur at the expense of human sustenance and development. African rural societies are often maligned for their "destructive" indigenous and cultural practices, which are seen as exacerbating the problem. Traditional activities, ranging from farming, livestock rearing and natural resource extraction for subsistence and medicinal purposes are quoted as some of the negative contributing factors. On the other hand, these natural goods and services are also the very source for sustained rural livelihoods – a point that is emphasized by Muhumuza (2014:3) who claims, "A range of components that constitute biodiversity are vital to people because they underpin a variety of ecosystem services on which human societies depend."

With this in mind, it follows that the preservation of these natural resources and biodiversity in general, is not only a requirement, but is essential for continued human existence, and in particular, for rural communities, who are in most cases directly dependent on these resources to thrive. This then begs the question: how do we conserve without alienating the communities that are intertwined with those resources? In the previous century, strategies to prevent biodiversity loss were largely dominated by the need to protect the physical environment; creating areas that were free from human interference, leading to the proliferation of national parks and game or nature reserves. These protected areas established a distinct separation of animals, nature and their human counterparts. These strategies idealised nature as a pristine entity needing preservation.

Towards the end of the 20th century however, there has been growing concern over this "preservation"-led approach, and a shift has been made towards more inclusive means of conservation led by development theory (Muhumuza, 2014) – this was the advent of conservation with a human face. Since then, a myriad of research has been done, and various projects implemented in Africa to test this new wave of thinking. Most conservation efforts, especially those driven by the United Nations have focused on the inclusion of communities in conservation and community development efforts. Despite this turn in the conservation agenda, many protected areas and communities living within or neighbouring protected areas still face a plethora of challenges. This research therefore focused on the nature and extent of community integration in such conservation development efforts, through an environmental justice lens. The formation of new protected areas and extension of existing ones, with communities central to the process, is very new in Swaziland, and has hardly been studied.

The environment, or nature, may be understood and perceived in a myriad of ways. It can, for example, be understood as a resource to be exploited, a heritage to be curated, an aesthetic quality to be enjoyed, a natural world worth conserving and enhancing, a fundamental necessity for the continued thriving of biodiversity and survival of the human species, or a lived cultural and social experience. Particular ways of thinking about and acting in relation to nature have materialised in policy and practice, and in the 'solutions' that are devised in the continued struggle to define and frame that environment. To this end, and to reiterate the point, the conservation agenda has been dominated in the past by a protectionist approach. In more recent decades, this has shifted toward a more inclusive methodology, which attempts to merge conservation and community development. The 'protected landscape approach' purports to take on a very broad perspective of the terms 'nature' and 'environment', treating them as a landscape that is made up of biological diversity, natural resources, ecosystems, habitats, animals, human beings, communities, agriculture, livestock-rearing, and income-generating enterprises. This way of looking at the environment may therefore be considered 'environmentally just' in theory, but often the way in which conservation development projects are implemented practically is far removed from the theoretical utopia.

Definition of Key Concepts

Protected Area

In its revised categorization of protected areas, the IUCN defines a protected area as:

> A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (Dudley 2008, p.8)

The protected area within this definition may be understood in a generic sense as encompassing several types of geographical spaces, and may be further divided into different categories. Historically, the definition of the protected area was mainly limited to the first three categories (Table 1), but has now been extended to include a landscape approach, which is defined in the next section below.

Table 1: Types of protected areas and categorization criterion (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 1994 cited in Dudley 2008)

Category	**Description**
I	Strict nature reserve, wilderness protection area or wilderness area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection.
II	National park, managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.
III	National monument, managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features.
IV	Habitat/species management area, managed mainly for conservation through management intervention.
V	Protected landscape/seascape, managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation or recreation.
VI	Managed resource protected area, managed for sustainable use of natural resources.

Protected Landscape Approach

The protected landscape approach (also referred to as protected landscape, which may be used synonymously) is an extension of the more generic 'protected area' definition, and mainly relates to Category V of the protected area criteria above. The protected landscape may therefore be seen as:

> A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value, and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values. (Dudley 2008, p. 20)

The protected landscape approach is variously also referred to in 'broader-scale conservation strategies' as a 'landscape-scale approach', 'bioregional approach' or 'ecosystem approach' (Dudley 2008, p. 10) – all these are seen as integrated frameworks that are appropriate to diverse settings, and according to Brown, Mitchell and Beresford (2004, p. 9), are especially relevant in developing countries for the following reasons:

- The protected landscape approach creates linkages between people's needs (development and livelihoods) and biodiversity conservation;
- It typically encompasses a number of varying land ownership or land tenure systems, from private to communally owned property;
- It can accommodate diverse management structures, including customary laws and traditional practices governing resource management;
- It has objectives relating to the preservation of cultural heritage;
- It aims to provide benefits to local communities and contribute to their well-being, through the enhancement of environmental goods and services; and
- It has proven to work in certain indigenous regions where strict protected areas have failed.

Protected landscapes therefore represent an integrated and holistic approach to conservation, and emphasize the need to link nature conservation with landscapes that have been altered by humans through long-term interaction and utilisation of the environment. These landscapes, which are defined under Category V of the IUCN's

categorizations, are considered to be less 'pristine' and less 'natural' than the environments in other protected areas as defined by the IUCN, and may incorporate more intensive land uses such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, and then at times livestock grazing (Dudley 2008). The focus of this research is on these Category V protected landscapes – and the Eco-Lubombo project has been implemented within this framework.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has been framed in numerous ways, and for different purposes under varying contexts. From its inception it has morphed and has shown immense dynamism in its ability to be applicable and relevant in diverse conditions. It is defined for the purposes of this research, and in contemporary scholarship, as encompassing a 'tripartite typology of concerns: distribution, procedure and recognition' (Martin et al. 2016, p. 254, Schlosberg 2004, 2013). In this context, **distribution** refers to the differences between environmental benefits and rights enjoyed by different stakeholders. According to Ali (2001, p.1) 'A sense of (*in*)justice arises out of a situation of competing, often rights-based, claims.' The issue of rights and distribution is closely tied to the issue of equity and access to resources. Cock (2004b, p. 6) states that 'the core of the notion of environmental justice…lies in this notion of rights – rights of access to natural resources and to decision making.' **Procedure** refers to decision-making processes and who participates and on what terms, whilst **recognition** is typically concerned with respecting identities and cultural differences (Martin 2016). Environmental justice can therefore be understood within the broader conceptualisation of social justice as a realisation of basic human needs and rights, centred on the integration of people in environmental (and in this case, Conservation) issues (Cock and Fig 2002). The concept of Environmental Justice is defined and discussed further in the literature review.

Research Questions

The main research question guiding this project is: *How are environmental justice issues of access and exclusion, ownership and dispossession, connection and disconnection manifested in conservation development debates?*

To unpack this question, I use a number of sub questions:

1. How has the landscape approach facilitated access to natural resources within the conservation area, and how have these resources been distributed to the community?

2. What is the role of support and consent of local communities in conservation development programmes? To what extent are they involved in the decision-making process?

3. To what extent, and in what ways, was the community engaged and integrated during the implementation of the conservation development programme? How did the community participate?

4. Has the implementation of the protected landscape approach to conservation changed or influenced the community's understanding of their immediate environment, behaviour towards environmental resources and protection, and their positioning within that environment?

5. How has the protected landscape approach been manifested in the Eco-Lubombo programme?

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualising Nature

Nature has been widely contested in both theoretical and practical terms. Its contestation has had more implications within the harsh reality of the marginal lives of rural communities, who traditionally and in most cases still depend, either solely or in part, on natural resources for sustenance. From a holistic perspective, nature can be understood to be socially constructed, and transcending the physical, tangible sphere towards a more symbiotic relationship and interaction, (Cock 2007). Different peoples define and view natures from varying perspectives, influenced by context and individual experiences. Humans have always been part of nature, and it can therefore be considered unreasonable to exclude them, particularly indigenous communities, from protected areas. Because of the seemingly imperceptible nature of these human-nature interactions, their importance is often ignored or unseen, and conservation efforts are directed towards the protection of a physical nature (Cock 2007; Ali 2001).

Our understanding and conceptualisation of nature is therefore varied, with an 'increasing number of people viewing nature as a form of wilderness and wild animals, and perceiving themselves in alienation, and nature as existing outside human interaction', (Cock 2007, p. 9). Hulme and Murphree (2001), present a telling perspective from a villager in Uganda, who laments:

> It is not fair. If their animals [the National Park] come on our land and do a lot of damage we get no compensation. If our cattle stray onto their land [the National Park] we are punished (A villager interviewed at Rwenjeru in Uganda in January 1997 cited in Hulme and Murphree 2001, p. 1).

In this instance, an evocative image is presented of the way local communities have often come to perceive nature, framing it as "other", and positioning themselves as outsiders, whose presence is unwelcome in that "nature". There is evidently no consensus on how nature should be defined and valued – it has a myriad of connotations for different peoples and under varying contexts. Cock (2007) further expresses natures as:

> A dense social concept, a sort of keyword whose meanings are always unstable and contested. Nature can be an amalgamation of complex beliefs and values embedded in cultural and social systems, but can also be understood in terms of the historical context of indigenous communities and their physical relationship with land, as well as the rights they feel entitled to with regard to that land. Purists, such as biologists, have argued that framing nature as a social construct is problematic, and presents a real affront to the preservation of species integrity. Michael Soulé, popular scholar and advocate of the Conservation Biology discipline, asserts that the presentation of nature as socially constructed is 'ideological and only serves to justify the physical assault on nature carried out by increasing multitudes of human beings equipped and accompanied by bulldozers, chainsaws, plows and livestock. (Soulé 1995, p. 137 in Cock 2007, p. 24).

In conventional definitions, the environment or nature can be understood in terms of its biodiversity and ecosystem services. Drawing from several scholars (Anne 2004; McCann 2007; Noss 1990; UNEP 2006) Muhumuza (2014) presents a physical perspective in which biodiversity can be seen, based on the concept representing a range of life forms, including all things that have "life"[1] These life forms, also called species, are found in ecosystems that interact with each other, as well as with human societies. Environmental degradation therefore is described in terms of the diminishing of species within those ecosystems, and therefore the gradual erosion of their integrity. Conservation is ultimately an attempt to preserve that biodiversity and those ecosystems.

Biodiversity conservation has therefore been framed in all manner of ways over the last half century, with the promotion of a protectionist model in the forefront signified by a reliance on national parks largely controlled by central governments. This conservation model, according to Berkes (2007), has been adopted by most nations as the only way of conserving biodiversity. Berkes (2007) poses the question of whether this in the only route that can be taken, or whether conservation programmes can be executed at various levels – facilitated by international organization, conducted at the community level or privatised. Finding a relevant answer to this question and to the contradictions that exist within conservation thinking is fundamental to establishing such programmes in developing communities and to ensuring their success.

[1] "Life" distinguishes between living and non-living organisms, and therefore 'the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur', (Anne 2004 cited in Muhumuza 2014, p. 2).

The Relationship between Conservation Projects and Development Discourse

Conservation programmes in developing countries can hardly be delinked from broader development theories and discourse. Historically, economic development was measured in terms of economic indicators in the form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Gini Coefficient (Ray 1998; Todaro 2003), which were based on income and income inequality. 'Economists of the Political Economy tradition (including Beckman 1977 and Bernstein 1977) have worked on the premise that a development project is primarily a device for bringing about a particular sort of economic transformation' (Ferguson 1994, p. 14). This is in keeping with neo-liberal thinking that has dominated the late twentieth century, in that markets should play the primary role in moulding the structures of incentives for conservation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Burawoy 2013; Hulme and Murphree 2001; Igoe and Brockman 2007; Levine 2007). The promise of neoliberal conservation, as conceptualised by Igoe and Brockington is therefore:

> …to protect rural communities by guaranteeing their property rights and helping them enter into conservation-oriented business ventures…to promote green business practices, by demonstrating to corporations that green is also profitable…through ecotourism…it [neoliberal conservation] promises to promote environmental consciousness for western [or privileged] consumers by encouraging them to fall in love with the environment through direct connections to it. (Igoe and Brockington 2007, p. 434)

Burawoy (2013, p. 36, 39) in particular maintains that the Marxist critique of the capitalist tradition continues to provide efforts towards alternative means of commodification, with one of these means being neoliberalism, which incorporates the commodification of nature. This commodification, Burawoy explains by drawing from Karl Polanyi's (1944) fictitious commodities, leads to the destruction of the commodity's use value (1944, p. 37). Nature, as a commodity may be seen in this light, wherein its commercialisation has caused immeasurable degradation, and in Burawoy's words '…the expansion of capitalism has given rise to environmental degradation, moving toward ecological catastrophe' (1944, p. 39). The promise of greener pastures by Neoliberalism where it is possible to 'eat one's conservation cake and have development dessert too' is therefore a fallacy, (Grandia 2007 cited in Igoe and Brockington 2007). Eco-tourism

efforts that promote communities as primary stakeholders often fail in practice and they essentially fall short of providing meaningful, sustainable economic means for individuals or communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

The question raised by Ferguson as a result is whether development should be seen as progression towards a modern economy, or an alleviation of poverty (Ferguson 1994, p. 55). In recent decades there has been a growing recognition of the need to reframe the development discourse, particularly as it relates to developing countries. The linking of biodiversity and livelihoods has gradually 'displaced the old narrative of "fortress conservation" replacing it with by the counter narrative of development through community conservation and sustainable use' (Berkes 2007, p. 15189). Non-economic social indicators, such as the improvement of human livelihoods, especially for the rural poor, empowerment of women, improvements in the education and health sectors, increasing employment opportunities, and overall poverty reduction, have made an appearance on the table, and are now becoming synonymous with the development of the global South. In essence, the emergence of this new development agenda with a human face is seen as more sustainable for the livelihoods and rights of those previously marginalised and restricted by traditional conservation strategies (Mahanty 2002). So whilst the issues of biodiversity integrity remain paramount, it is becoming increasingly apparent that 'environmental quality is inextricably linked to human equality' (Agyeman et. al 2003, p. 1; Barreitt and Arcese 1995, p. 1075). The Brundtland Report (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987) has been especially prominent in the promotion of the interconnectedness of environmental degradation and the ability of, especially, the poor of the 'Third World' to meet and sustain livelihoods[2].

Coupled with the growing appreciation for social issues in development, there was a parallel recognition of the shortcomings of protectionist conservation policies and

[2] 'Many parts of the world are caught in a vicious downward spiral: Poor people are forced to overuse environmental resources to survive from day to day, and their impoverishment of their environment further impoverishes them, making their survival ever more difficult and uncertain', (WCED 1987, p. 28). This conceptualization can often seem simplistic and dated however, for although factual, it presents the poor's utilization of natural resources in the first instance as problematic.

practices, which were in direct conflict with this new trajectory that development efforts were on (Mahanty 2002). Whereas, conservation initiatives, in the form of national parks and protected areas in general, had previously focused on biodiversity protection and management, at the expense of local peoples, the new approach attempted to redress this scenario by consideration of local community needs and emphasizing on local participation (Wells and Brandon 1992). This was to be done through an integration of conservation and development and led to the emergence of 'integrated conservation development projects' (ICDPs). Abbot et. al (2001) and Mahanty (2002) argue that framing development in this manner presents it as a solution to the problems of the poor – conservation projects may be seen in a new light in which they offer a means to compensate for the losses and injustices suffered by local communities as a result of the historical manner in which protected/conservation areas were formed.

ICDP strategies may be defined within two pathways. Firstly by increasing the value of livelihoods derived from land outside the conservation or protected area; this could be done by promoting agricultural activities or alternative economies in those adjacent lands. And secondly, development initiatives can focus on increasing the value of the resources themselves within the protected area where the ICDP is established. For instance markets for previously under exploited indigenous products could be developed, creating low-impact sporting activities, such as marathons, hiking and cycling, organised by local communities within those protected areas, or through the development of eco-tourism industries (Abbot et. al 2001). The supporting assumption provided by Abbot et. al (2001, p. 1116) is that development activities will in some way influence local attitudes and facilitate behaviour change towards conservation measures that regulate resource use, whether self-imposed or introduced by outside agencies – in other words, an incentives-led approach.

The use of integrated conservation and development initiatives can therefore effectively achieve both conservation and community development aspirations if communities are integrated in the conceptualisation of such projects, and the particular context is also taken into account. Strategies that will establish partnerships and link biodiversity

conservation objectives with local objectives need to be formulated. The concept of "integration" has been driven by the advent and popularisation of the 'World Society Theory' (Frank, Hironaka and Schofer 2000; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Lemos and Agrawal 2006; Meyer 2010), which is very relevant to this research in respect of the manner in which the Eco-Lubombo programme has been framed and implemented by non-governmental agencies within the affected Lubombo communities. This theory is furthermore interlinked to the concept of 'neoliberal conservation' (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Büscher and Whande 2007) , which has already been highlighted above.

The 'World Society Theory' places the engagement of environmental issues, state policy decisions and the biodiversity agenda on a global society platform, on which, mostly, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) are the key players. Such organizations influence state action towards prioritising biodiversity conservation through the participation in international conventions and passing policies that favour conservation practices. They furthermore foster a sense of shared responsibility for the environment amongst business, communities and local organizations (Igoe and Brockington 2007). The activities of INGO's are presumed to be usually lacking in 'petty self-interests' and are steeped in 'collective and putatively universal goods as the environment as well as generalised human rights' (Meyer 2010, p. 7). It has to be acknowledged that NGOs, on a number of levels of influence, have played a crucial role in in magnifying 'the voices of local, indigenous, and community groups' (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, p. 632). It is, nevertheless, important to interrogate the effectiveness of NGOs and other agencies that have a role in bridging the gap between conservation efforts and community development, as things are not always what they seem in practice, especially when interventions involve the lives and livelihoods of communities. The imperative question to ask in this regard is: do development and conservation agencies work together toward unified goals or are their goals contradictory? (Ashley, Russel and Swallow 2006). If INGOs are also to be seen in the light of World Society, then they too have and may act in their own interests or at the very least act upon the interests of those that fund them, and in this way promote external global principles. The international NGO, World Vision, for instance, is well known for its religious culture; this culture is in

turn translated into the work they do across the world, with its principles infused into the communities they work with. Putzel et al (2015) raise a similar argument regarding the gulf that seems to exist between institutions (including NGOs) and individuals at grass-roots levels, wherein a lack of local participation and a representation of the interests of the poor by NGOs and research agents (or other selected representatives) results in the imposition of one-size-fits-all policies. Putzel et al go on to state:

> Formalization stands at the intersection of the two perspectives. On the one hand, it is often deployed by global institutions to promulgate social and environmental norms through the political and legal, state and non-state governance systems that operate in national and, increasingly transnational space. On the other hand, it can arise as a response to collective action at the grass-roots level, when individuals acting together understand a need to develop…in their own interests, for example, to protect a common pool or private resource… (Putzel et al 2015, p. 455)

Meyer (2010) however insists that this "grass-roots" agency is often lacking if not absent at all in many local contexts, and that it is usually a top-down approach (be it the State of supranational actors) that effects change; that the systems of environmental protection adopted within countries are an iteration of world society principles and diffused to individual countries and to local communities (Meyer 2010; Frank, Hironaka and Schofer 2000). It becomes apparent, as will be seen in Chapter 5, that despite the planning and strategic placement of institutions, development of policies and frameworks with the aim of facilitating the implementation of development activities especially within a traditional context, the tendency for project failure remains high. In these traditional societies, collective action is very rare, and where there is a grassroots response to pressure from above, it is normally aided by external institutions, such as NGOs or by other factions that may have interest in the community. It remains that international norms are more often than not promulgated in community development efforts, and even when concerted attempts are made to avoid the "one-size-fits-all" phenomenon, the complexity and internal dynamics of these communities and the historical lay of the land may prove too challenging to overcome particularly in time frames imposed by many donors in development projects. Furthermore, the lack of success, as surmised by Putzel et al (2015), is strongly affected by challenges in the form of elite capture and barriers to the

participation of women, the poor and marginalised groups – this again is a theme that emerges clearly in the empirical discussion.

As alluded to above, the World Society Theory, which underpins the world of NGOs and BINGOS (Big Non-Governmental Organizations, as Igoe and Brockington (2007, p. 439) defines them), cannot be delinked from the 'neoliberalisation' of nature, or the concepts around neoliberal conservation. When neoliberalism is discussed in traditional economic development circles, it refers to a freeing of markets and restructuring of global systems to facilitate the efficient distribution of those free markets. In traditional conservation circles, such concepts are seen as a barrier to the goals and principles of nature conservation due to their promotion of 'free market capitalism', 'private for-profit companies' and 'conservation-business partnerships' (Igoe and Brockinton 2007). In essence therefore, neoliberalisation is considered to be at odds with biodiversity conservation particularly within the community development space. In this context, the immense influx of NGOs into the community/conservation development space is seen not as a mere altruistic act, but rather as a re-articulation of neoliberal principles within a slightly different sphere; the NGOs are seen as agents of neoliberalism, promulgating free market capitalism into the world of conservation, where the proverbial pie is always growing bigger and everyone can have a slice of it. Compounding the issue of course is the growing involvement of big business in the conservation agenda; the world's largest NGO's, which are more and more being funded or increasingly building alliances by corporate multinational environmental offenders, have become the leaders in the funding of conservation efforts, and are therefore driving the environmental protection agenda, (Igoe and Brockigton 2007). World Society though stipulates that the greater the linkages between nation states and the global society, the greater the influence of global norms is within that state. Meyer (2010, p. 12) states, "Nation-states adopt the expanded economic, political, social, and cultural forms specified in the global environment." In the context of nature conservation, global principles and formulaic systems have been developed on the manner in which conservation development projects are to be implemented, and there is very little wiggle room on the part of local entities and actors in terms of shaping their own development which takes into account local conditions.

Protected Areas and Protectionism

Protected Areas are historically a major component of conservation efforts and play an important role in the sustainability context, whereby resources are protected for the benefit of both present and future generations. Since the establishment of the first protected area, Yellowstone National Park in 1872[3], the exclusionary 'protectionist' approach has been adopted in the creation of protected areas worldwide. The number of declared, formal Protected Areas in the world had reached 144,296, covering 12.9% of the Earth's surface (Chape et al (2008) in Andrade and Rhodes (2012)). This is a major feat and appears to be an impressive human achievement with regard to biodiversity preservation. Admittedly, important and vital environmental protection has been attained, but at what cost?

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as:

> An area of land…especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural **and associated cultural resources**, and managed through legal or other effective means [emphasis added]. (IUCN 1994a cited in Beltran 2000, p. 3)

This definition does not reflect the historical understanding or process in which protected areas were identified and formed, but the more inclusive perspective that took root in the mid/late 80s and 90s. The planning around protected areas therefore shifted towards accommodating 'social, economic and cultural interests, values, rights and responsibilities of local communities living in and around protected areas' (Beltran 2000, p. 3). Cock (2007) points to the apparent need for protected areas[4], but emphasises that they can also be problematic in that they promote the dangerous idea that nature is separate from society, and can be contained within boundaries, with people living outside those demarcations. This problem of externalising nature has created broader issues of

[3] Yellowstone National Park was established as a response to extensive and unchecked biodiversity degradation and for the protection of ecosystem services (Lane 2001, Pretty and Smith 2004, Chape et al. 2008 cited in Andrade and Rhodes 2012)

[4] Cock (2007) states, "The importance of protected areas cannot be overstated" and cites the essential work that was done to reinstitute elephant populations in the Addo Elephant National park (South Africa). Game reserves in Africa have also been imperative in the protection of a number of rare and threatened species (particularly the rhino) from extinction.

social injustice. The irony is, of course, the fact that the fight to safeguard animal life and natural environments in parks such as Yellowstone was in fact one of the significant markers of the beginnings of environmental movements (Taylor 2000).

Protected Areas have been traditionally established using top-down approaches, which tend to exclude important factors such as social, cultural and even political issues (Hulme and Murphree 2001; Andrade and Rhodes 2012; Büscher and Whande 2007). In most cases local communities, which are usually disempowered, are stripped of any existing rights they have to the land, and are expected to relinquish any traditional or cultural practices that utilise the land. Conservation efforts in this context then become very prescriptive and can often lead to dissent and disgruntlement among the local people. A concept that is intrinsically 'good' and 'beneficial' then becomes a source of discontent and triggers the disruption and sometimes loss of traditional ways of living, (Andrade & Rhodes 2012). Büscher and Whande summarise the nature of this protectionist (or fortress conservation) approach succinctly:

> As the reserves were implemented after the exclusionary model, this impacted greatly on the local people. They were often forcibly removed from the land they had lived on or used for generation. Colonial imperialism thus made fortress conservation possible; in policy and in practice, nature conservation became a matter of strict law enforcement through a 'fences and fines' approach, whereby interests of local people often had to make way for the interests of conservation'. (Büscher and Whande 2007, p. 26-27).

The point made by Büscher and Whande is at the very heart of the issues currently experienced by communities living in and around protected areas. Compounding the matter in communities such as those in rural Swaziland is the tenuous land tenure scenario, wherein communities don't even have the formal legal paperwork to indicate title to the land and thus award them the evidence required in formal legal systems to prove historical occupation of these lands. With only oral history and dependence on the memories of elders, land tenure debates are often a long drawn out process, which hardly ever results in mutually acceptable conclusions. The argument to go back to the "fences and fines" or retain the status quo (most protected areas in Africa are still managed and operated under this structure) cannot and should not be reduced to matters of poaching,

for this term is also problematic. Poaching as an illegal activity needs to be framed in terms of a broader understanding of the historical relationship that indigenous communities had with nature and with natural resources, indigenous cultural and livelihood practices regarding natural resource extraction should also come into play, and the illegality of community activities needs to be interrogated to a greater depth, rather than defining them in a limited manner. This is not to take away from the very real problem of animals being killed for their commercial value, such as in rhino poaching (commercial poaching); there are however some rural, poor communities that hunt for subsistence purposes, and this factor should not be ignored. There should be a differentiation between "poaching" and commercial poaching, whereby organised groups of commercial hunters who undermine conservation efforts are lumped into the same basket as indigenous groups hunting as a source of sustenance for their hungry families. Empirical evidence of the effects of traditional protectionist approaches to nature conservation is seen in Chapter Five, especially with regard to the growing concerns around illegal resource extraction and the enormous problems around commercial poaching.

The lack of well defined property rights is certainly one of the greatest concerns in this regard, firstly, due to the problems around the management of common pool resources, and secondly, due to the restriction of access to resources on privately owned land. Hallowell (1943) in Feder and Feeney (1991, p. 136) defines "property" as 'a social institution that implies a system of relations between individuals' involving 'rights, duties, powers, privileges, forbearance, etc., of certain kinds'. Feder and Feeney (1991, p. 136) continue to state that property rights are 'a bundle of characteristics: exclusivity, inheritability, transferability, and enforcement mechanisms,' which are all important factors that affect the manner in which people relate to the land, and the choices they make regarding what they do on that land. It furthermore impacts people's perceptions of development activities that take place on that land. If land is communal for instance, that means that all individuals in that community have equal access to that piece of land and all resources contained therein, be it flora or fauna, mining, passage routes, grazing and cultivation of that land. Unfortunately, this also means that since responsibility for the

care of that land is communal, in which case no one takes responsibility, and therefore those very resources of which many are dependent on are inevitably destroyed.

Exclusivity in terms of property rights, land ownership and security of tenure is therefore important in the healthy management of natural resources, and contribute to individuals garnering more concern for their lands. Feder and Feeney consolidate this point by arguing that 'the lack of any exclusivity implies the lack of an incentive to conserve, and therefore often results in degradation of scarce resources'. What can be deduced from this is that whereas indigenous peoples utilised natural resources sustainably as these were (and still are) vital to the subsistence livelihoods, over time, the lack of property rights for locals, and greater security of property rights awarded to protected areas, has contributed to a scenario where people extract and utilise resources indiscriminately. Due to their actions being rendered illegal, as in the case of poaching, when opportunities are found to gain access to these protected areas, local groups will often use those opportunities to their advantage and do the most damage possible, such as over hunting for commercial purposes.

Creating platforms in which to better understand the complex relationship and interaction between local communities and biodiversity is paramount to improving conservation efforts, (Holmes 2013). Landscape approaches therefore provide solutions for the reconciliation of conservation and development trade-offs, as well as bridge the gap between social, economic and environmental objectives, (Wells and Brandon 1992; Sayer et al 2013). Protected **landscapes** are differentiated from traditional protected areas by the IUCN in that protected landscapes are often 'located adjacent to, or within, other categories of protected areas, as part of a mosaic of protection' (Brown, Mitchell and Beresford 2004, p. 8). This understanding of protected landscape, according to Brown et. al (2005) explicitly acknowledges that the primary aim of this approach is to sustain people's relationship and traditional interaction with the landscape. It seems that the concept of a landscape approach integrates different and often competing perspectives and uses of resources and the environment. The landscape approach to biodiversity conservation involves 'working both within and beyond the boundaries of protected

areas, to manage a mosaic of land uses including protection, restoration, production and subsistence use, in order to deliver ecological, economic and social benefits' (Ashley, Russel and Swallow 2006). A protected landscape could for instance be an amalgamation of different land uses, such as agricultural production, private and communally owned land, game and nature reserves (protected areas), and can 'accommodate diverse management regimes including customary laws and traditional practices' (Ashley, Russel and Swallow 2006; Brown et. al 2004).

The Protected Landscape Approach is gaining ground in the conservation arena, with its promotion of the stewardship concept - linking conservation ideals with cultural elements and communities living in those landscapes earmarked for protection – it is seen as a means to potentially resolve many conservation challenges (Brown, Mitchell and Beresford 2004). The approach emerged in a workshop held at the Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa in 2003, and it may be understood in terms of the broader framework of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and Integrated Conservation Development Projects (ICDPs). It, however, goes a step further towards placing conservation areas and community lands within a broader landscape, sometimes even within a regional context, and therefore moves away from the previous models which still maintained a level of segregation.

This approach has not gone unchallenged however, as there has been a latent re-emergence of the protectionist perspective, ironically fuelled by the concept of sustainable development coined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987. This formulates linkages between social justice and unsustainability, wherein the poor are also seen as the main perpetrators of environmental degradation[5] (Ali, 2001) – rural communities in most African societies, and certainly in Swaziland, often live under some type of poverty. This in essence would then mean that these rural groups are considered as having negative and detrimental relations with their

[5] The WCED (1987, p. 28) in Ali (2001, p. 5) stresses that '…poverty itself pollutes the environment, creating environmental stress... Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their…environment in order to survive'. This creates a sense of ambiguity when then attempting to articulate a stance that favours harmonisation of communities and their environments as in some cases they may be perceived as threats.

immediate environs. This thinking has mainly been realised around matters of "illegal" resource extraction and commoditisation by local communities, and the increase in poaching activities. The apparent failure of Community Based Conservation has also not helped the favourability of the concept, as critics have perceived the move from a protectionist approach as only a matter of semantics without any real evidence of its success on the ground (Büscher and Whande 2007). This lack of progress in creating the balance between community development and biodiversity conservation has provided the opportunity for "protectionists" to push the agenda to revert to the fortress model of nature conservation. Others have in fact suggested that the focus needs to shift from communities and move towards institutions if any success is to be achieved in the sphere of community based conservation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999).

The Protected Landscape Approach presents some opportunities to move beyond this rhetoric of seeing indigenous communities only as destroyers of nature and the primary cause of environmental degradation, in that its core ideology is a shift 'beyond protected area boundaries to integrate conservation into a matrix of multiple land-use systems' conceptualising people and institutions as 'core components of ecosystems and landscapes' and understanding that 'ecosystems provide critical goods and services to a variety of actors engaged in subsistence and commercial activities' (Ashley, Russel and Swallow 2006, pp. 663-664). Further to that, conservation development projects can hardly be delinked from the human face, seeing as 'conservation' in its essence is a concept designed by humans, as is emphasised by Brechin et. al, who stress:

> Conservation is primarily a human organizational process, we do not mean to indicate that the nonhuman or ecological dimension is inconsequential but rather wish to emphasize that nature protection or resource management is entirely a product of social action.' (Brechin et. al 2002, p.45)

The contradiction in the nature – society nexus therefore fundamentally lies in the core relational argument between the two. On the one hand, we have what Ali (2001, p. 9) terms 'critical natural capital', on which humanity is dependent. But the very state of its precariousness on the other hand, speaks to its scarcity and limited nature, which means it is imperative to protect or conserve it. How then can we reconcile environmental justice

obligations without compromising the depletion of this finite natural capital[6]? Understanding the intricate relationship between society and nature, and particularly between indigenous communities and their immediate environments, is therefore vital if environmental justice is to be attained. The Protected Landscape Approach purports to being primarily concerned with protecting the environment whilst 'sustaining people's relationship to the land,' (Brown, Mitchell and Beresford 2004; Cadman et al 2010). It would then be very interesting to interrogate the actualization of this approach within communities in Swaziland where it has been implemented, especially in a rural setting, where people live in very close proximity to the land.

Environmental Justice and the Protected Landscape Approach

The concept of Environmental Justice is embedded in the Protected Landscape Approach. One of the age-old arguments in environmental protection/conservation dialogues is that environmental conservation is divisive, as it fails to prioritise communities and their intrinsic relationships with the environments in which they live (Sandler and Pezzullo (Eds) 2007), thereby creating a divide between communities and nature. This has been especially directed towards the exclusion of communities that were in some way marginalised or disadvantaged, such as Third World communities. Other claims relate to the belief that the voices of these communities are further disregarded in environmental decision-making processes (Sandler and Pezzullo (Eds) 2007). The principles of the Protected Landscape Approach purport to resolve these historical exclusionary processes. To interrogate the veracity of this claim, it will be useful to employ the environmental justice theory and principles, which speak to an inclusive, integrated approach that considers issues of equity, rights, decision-making, benefits, distribution, issues that will all be treated in this research.

[6] Ali (2001), however, points to the further contestation of the 'critical' nature of natural resources, highlighting the works of such scholars as Owen (1994), Sagoff (1995) and Bookchin (1996), who all maintain that the notion of scarcity is challengeable in the first instance, and poses additional questions around the determination of criticality, both in terms of who decides what is critical and why. The former questions the concept of "limits to growth" in its entirety, challenging the need to conserve, and the latter brings about the questions of distribution and fairness found in environmental justice dialogues.

A new era of environmentalism emerged in the 60s, preceded by Rachel Carson's seminal work, *Silent Spring*, published in 1962. This "post-Carson" era espoused a New Environmental Paradigm that critiqued the development of large, heavily polluting industry, pollution prevention and risk reduction (Taylor 2000). The entire environmental agenda was broadened, and this paved the way for Environmental Justice, which materialised with three distinct components that set it apart from the previous ways environmentalism had been framed – autonomy or self-determination, land rights, and civil/human rights.

The Environmental Justice Paradigm recognised that land was appropriated from people of colour (especially indigenous people) and turned into Protected Areas, and other capitalist uses. This stripped the people of their identity and their connection to the land, and so the Environmental Justice Paradigm explored ways in which people can reinstate their rights to land, access to resources, and indigenous skills and knowledge systems. The Environmental Justice Paradigm was also concerned with equity, dignity, accessibility, ownership, participation and decision-making power. The concepts presented by the Environmental Justice Paradigm, had not been found in mainstream environmental discourse before[7], mainly because 'environmental discourse was primarily developed by privileged, white males, who had access to wealth' (Taylor 2000, p. 534; Ali 2001). From their perspective, social issues had no bearing on environmental concerns – they could not see the linkages, thus they developed discourses around resource depletion, degradation, and resource management and control (Taylor 2000). The Landscape Approach to conservation may be seen as incorporating the key Environmental Justice principles.

[7] Taylor (2000, p. 523) 'Because of environmental justice, it is no longer considered appropriate for mainstream environmentalists to define and analyse environmental issues without considering the social justice of the problem'. This theme is echoed in Ali (2001) in a broader discussion on sustainability of resources, wherein environmental sustainability discourse has become synonymous with the concepts of equity and social justice.

The environmental justice movement initially emerged in the United States out of the struggle of lower classes, usually black communities against polluting industries, and therefore became a matter of racial injustices, thus the term 'environmental racism' was used interchangeably with 'environmental justice'. In its progression, however, this way of understanding justice was seen as too restrictive, and was subsequently expanded beyond racism to 'include others (regardless of race or ethnicity) who are deprived of their environmental rights, such as women, children and the poor' (Cutter 1995, p. 113 cited in Ali 2001, p. 15). In South Africa, the justice movement was also framed in this way, so as to incorporate the previously disadvantaged. It was recognised therefore that the environment had 'radically different meanings and implications' in different contexts. In the global South, 'forests are not wilderness areas but habitats for the poorest of the poor' (CSE 1992, p. 265 cited in Ali 2001, p. 17). Ali continues to assert:

> The issues are complex with a highly social and political content than just aesthetic or technical matters of protecting and preserving the wild flora and fauna. At the core of these conflicts are the historical, as well as, contemporary issues of equity, access and distributional justice at all levels from the local to the global'. (Ali 2001, p. 17)

Robert Bullard (1993, 1996, 2000), as one of the eminent activists and theorists of the environmental justice movement, identifies social equity as one of the underpinning elements of environmental justice. Grass (1995 cited in Ali 2001, p. 14) similarly argues that 'the environmental justice movement emphasizes that 'social justice and environmental issues are inseparable, both conceptually and politically'. We therefore ultimately cannot talk of environmental sustainability and the conservation of nature without talking about equity and social justice. Bullard writes predominantly about the justice movement as it applies to people of colour residing in areas of high environmental risk created historically by polluting industries, and how it is these disadvantaged groups that are either placed in marginal areas where these industries are located, or that the industries are allowed to erect their business in areas populated by poor, black groups. His arguments are important for this research's purpose in so far as the issue of fairness (justice) is concerned, and since, the environmental justice has been expanded to incorporate other forms of environmental injustices that affect poor, marginalised groups and people of colour – this is especially true in the African context. Scholsberg (2013, p.

37) asserts that 'recent extensions of the environmental justice frame move the discourse into a new realm – where environment and nature are understood to create the conditions for social justice'.

The concept of justice as it relates to theories of power, access and rights, participation and equity is discussed further in the following section of the literature review.

Environmental Justice: Theorizing Power, Access and Rights

Michel Foucault theorizes extensively on power – in his 1982 paper, he leads with an avowal that the paper is not an attempt to put neither a theory forward nor a methodology on power relations, but what he successfully does is provide an in depth discussion of the nature of power and power relations, what power is, how it is exercised and the conditions that must be present for power to thrive. In his examination of the subject, Foucault (1982) rejects the notion that individuals within a society are rational and free beings, favouring the view that society is determined by a system of power relations. The implication here is that the individuals have to be free, have to possess the ability to resist or act in order to actually institute change or achieve agency. In Swaziland, this view is questionable. Although citizens/subjects have the potential to act and resist, and have indeed resisted and produced forms of violence in the past, people's level of agency is still very negligible, and its effectiveness within any given situation even more limited. The power relations in the Swazi context are so far entrenched that individuals find it hard to even conceive of resistance – the status quo is so much a part of who they are that resistance becomes somewhat of a foreign concept to them.

Power in these traditional communities seems to be fairly entrenched, and perhaps points to its covert nature, as described by Lukes (1974) and Foucault (1982). There is no apparent coercion that can be observed in these instances, and indeed, it does at first seem that community members are either impartial to or supportive of the development agenda and other matters that impact the community, when in fact upon deeper understanding of the factors at play, it becomes quite clear that there is extensive discontent and displeasure. Due to the lack of empowerment amongst these rural groups, and fear of

negative repercussions, most suffer in silence. Where there should be justice, social or environmental, there is repression, inequality, and a constant threat of marginalisation or loss of property.

Rawls (1999) presents the ultimate utopian perspective of how "Justice" would look like in the ideal society:

> Among individuals with disparate aims and purposes a shared conception of justice establishes the bonds of civic friendship; the general desire for justice limits the pursuit of other ends. One may think of a public conception of justice as continuing the fundamental charter of a well-ordered human association. (Rawls 1999, p. 5)

The question to ponder again is whether this conceptualisation of human relations (a 'well-ordered' society) applies in the context of traditional societies, where there is still a concern over the very status of individuals – this becomes problematic then when thinking about the seeming rationality of justice as a concept. The rights and behaviour of subjects varies to a large degree to that of citizens, for there may indeed be a shared understanding of justice, but only at the scholarly level rather than the practical. This is because in a world of citizenry, people do have practical, fair and implementable recourse to perceived injustices, whereas those in more traditional, subject-type conditions the people are usually at the mercy of the elite that governs them, and may not have the assurance of equitable treatment if conflict arises. Rawls (1999, p. 5) does in fact admit to the rarity of a well-ordered society, stating that 'what is just and unjust is usually in dispute' even when individuals do understand the principles of justice.

Gaventa (1980), another preeminent scholar on theories of power, researched the phenomenon of quiescence, which refers to 'silent agreement in conditions of glaring inequality'. Gaventa bases his argument on theories of power expounded by Anthony Giddens (1982, 1984) and Steven Lukes (1974), who themselves were important figures in 'establishing the importance of the concept of power in contemporary sociological discourse'; Gaventa attempts to understand 'why, in difficult conditions of oppressions and discrimination, no resistance arises against the rule of the social elite', (Sadan 1997, p. 38-39). And in Gaventa's view the social elites utilize their power in such a manner as

to prevent any voices of dissent amongst those who are subject to their sphere of influence, and in this way, they are therefore able to attain and maintain social quiescence. This phenomenon of what appears to be a form of consent (if the old adage "silence gives consent" is to be taken literally), is debilitating to local peoples and creates a society of jaundiced sceptics, who are resigned to their fate, whilst further setting a precedent for neutral or negative disassociated local response and behaviour in future projects. Locals become resigned to the whims of the social elite, forcing them into a perpetual vicious cycle of inaction, disenfranchisement and formulating a lack of agency.

In rural communities the seeming absence of conflict does not mean that conflict does not exist, but is indicative of the power dynamics, which favour the social elite in rule. Sadan (1997) continues to explicate:

> The purpose of power is to prevent groups from participating in the decision-making processes and also to obtain the passive agreement of these groups to the status quo. A silent agreement, then, is not an expression of a desire not to participate, but evidence of a mute compliance with the situation. Hence, a violation of this quiescence is a rebellion, whether it be an explicit demand to participate in the decision-making, or a more minor response, such as non-acceptance. (Sadan 1997, p. 39)

Gaventa (1980) certainly makes the distinction between the lack of participation or non-action by citizens who are likely to be comfortable with the status quo or not particularly affected one way or another by their inertia, and the quiescence of deprived groups. The silence therefore of the rural poor, who are subject to the conditions prescribed by those who rule them is not, in the majority of cases, indicative of a lack of interest or the absence of agency, but more so evidence of the prevailing forces of power. In Gaventa's view, 'the empirical relationship of low socio-economic status to low participation' cannot simply be explained away by the apathy of the poor, as scholars such as Dahl and Polsby surmise (Gaventa 1980, p. 7). So even in newly created spaces, as development agents purport to do with community participation in recent years, the answers to the questions of who participates, under what conditions and to what extent remain absent. Results from my field research provide some insight within the context of a rural traditional society that possesses many of the elements defined by Gaventa. NGOs make

many attempts to ensure that individual members of communities are included and provided with the opportunity to participate in development projects – various tools and methodologies are undertaken and communities go through rigorous training sessions to guarantee their effective participation, however, without consideration and understanding of the power dynamics at play, most of these efforts are futile. Furthermore, context plays an important role in understanding why one methodology will work in one society and not in the next. Some practices may be applicable in a plethora of scenarios throughout the developed world for instance, but when dealing with societies that have deep-seated cultural traditions, development practitioners need to take pause. The behaviour displayed by free citizens with equal rights in a developed world setting is markedly different to that found in subjects of traditional society in the developing world.

The word "subject" is defined by Foucault (1983) in two ways, the most relevant to my research's purpose being, 'subject to someone else by control and dependence. This is in essence the nature of relation between rural individuals in Swaziland and their chiefs or leaders. This then qualifies Mamdani's (1996) position that individuals living under customary rule of law may be perceived not as citizens but rather subjects for all intents and purposes. The urban population is seen as the civilised, whilst those in rural areas are parochial; citizenship seems to be reserved for the civilised (the urbanites) pointing to a glaring separation between citizens and subjects. The latter may have a modicum of "civility", but do not have the same rights as citizens. For instance, they do not have property rights, their activities on the lands they occupy are subject to the control and approval of the chiefs, and also have limited powers of resistance. In development agendas, they have a minimal voice and are unable to participate freely. In the 1996 paper, Choguill (1996) amends Arnstein's (1969) conceptualisation of participation, which although ground breaking, was inherently fallible in the context of developing or underdeveloped countries. Arnstein rightly speaks of "citizen" participation, expressing that it is 'participation of the governed in their government' and mentions "citizen" power, as 'the redistribution of power that enables have-not citizens, presently excluded…to be deliberately included in the future,' (Arnstein 1969, p. 216). Whilst this notion is indeed the goal for many NGOs working in underprivileged communities, the

concept of citizenry becomes problematic within some of the traditional societies of developing countries, and particularly in Swaziland, where the monarchy and the system of chiefdoms is predominant, and the western government system secondary to this.

Linked to this survey on power and power relations is the related concept of access, as theorised by Ribot and Peluso (2003). In their theory of access, Ribot and Peluso (2003) focus on natural resources as the 'things in question' when it comes to the various barriers, processes and social/power relations that may influence individual's abilities to gain access and benefit from resources. They refer to 'bundles of power' that may include cultural, political or economic constraints, which people may utilize in different ways, either to facilitate or restrict access to resources. This kind of power is an extension, or even the same power that is at play is most community matters in traditional rural societies. In as much as covert power, as posited by Lukes (1974 in Sadan 1997), plays a vital role in the way people in underdeveloped societies perceive themselves and as a result, relate to the elite, the same power either allows or disallows members of a community the privileges of access to the natural resources, which are in most cases their sole source of livelihood, and should be accessible to all.

Historically, people of colour have tried to redefine how they relate to the environment – as environmental utilization was formally defined by colonialists, and these definitions became the legacy they left behind, and which still persists in post-colonial times. According to Taylor (2000),

> Throughout history, Whites have accumulated and controlled resources by appropriating land and labour and by controlling the movement of people of colour. In addition, the period of conquest was characterised by destruction of indigenous cultural systems. Whites, however, were free to express themselves and develop the kind of relations with the land as they saw fit. Although some exploited the land, others sought alternative ways of relating to the land. (Taylor 2000, pp. 533-534)

The alternative land-use practises that the white colonialists adopted were not necessarily detrimental to the environment, on the contrary, many took the form of the establishment of protected areas, as we see in countries such as South Africa (particularly with the

Kruger National Park) and in Swaziland, as well as throughout Africa. The crux of the matter is the fact that they allowed themselves the opportunity to create their own paradigm and relationship towards nature and masterminded a framework that would exclude black indigenous people from accessing and utilising those resources, disallowing them from maintaining their existing framing of their environments. In Taylor's (2000, p. 534) words: 'People of colour did not have this choice'. It has been important to extend the Environmental Justice paradigm therefore to consider redressing these injustices suffered during the colonial times, which have become increasingly apparent in recent times, and in the South African case, historical environmental injustices are strongly contested by Jacklyn Cock, as presented earlier in this Literature Review, and by scholars such as Roderick Neumann. With Tanzania as an exemplar, Neumann (2000) explores the milieu of diminished customary rights of access, compromised social justice, and protected area conservation created by the colonialists. The assertion is that the inherent nature of environmental protection does not make up for the insidious accompanying problems of disrupted indigenous land use practises. The resolution of such injustices is the mainstay of most modern conservation efforts, which hope to find means in which to retain the value of protected areas and biodiversity conservation while promoting inclusionary frameworks that will realize justice for communities and indigenous peoples.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this methodological chapter I lay out the detailed plan that I used as a guide to conduct this research study, in particular, the fieldwork aspect of the study. In the ensuing sections therefore I discuss the type of research design best suited to my research and to answering the primary questions of this study. I follow this by presenting the specific methodology and data collection procedure, further highlighting the research process and the way in which the data was analysed. The chapter culminates in a discussion of the ethical aspects that were taken into consideration during this research exercise.

Research Design

A Case Study research design was utilised for the purposes of this research, focusing on reviewing relevant documents from the project, as well as policies relating to conservation and community based resource management. Fieldwork was conducted in the communities of Mhlumeni and Shewula, which are both proximate to Mlawula Nature Reserve and Mbuluzi Game Reserve in the Lubombo region of Swaziland. De Vaus (2001, p. 9) explains that 'the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible'. The question in this instance is: 'How environmental justice issues of access and exclusion, ownership and dispossession, connection and disconnection are manifested in conservation development projects'. The case study of the two communities in Swaziland, within the context of the Eco-Lubombo programme will help in providing some answers for this broad question.

According to De Vaus (2001, p. 10), 'case studies…are often seen as prime examples of qualitative research – which adopts an interpretive approach to data, studies "things" within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation'. My research study aimed to achieve this very factor, of ascertaining perspectives and opinions of rural communities on conservation development projects and their implementation, as well establish if such projects fulfil environmental justice principles. The findings are of course contextual, but may be generalizable to other rural

communities in Swaziland, which tend to have very similar characteristics, and meanings derived from participants are subjective. Subjectivity could not be avoided, and even though I constrained my own bias to a large extent as the researcher, I could not completely admit to a lack of bias, particularly as I have my own pre-existing experience as a Swazi, with rural roots. The findings and subsequent discussion are therefore, as much as practicable, free of any bias on my part. Bowen (2008) ascribes this type of research to the field of 'natural inquiry', and describes as being:

> 'Characterised by research in natural settings (rather than in laboratories), qualitative methods, purposive sampling, inductive analysis, a grounded theory approach, a case study reporting mode, the tentative application of findings, and special criteria of trustworthiness'. (Bowen 2008, p. 138)

Qualitative research is typically complex, and unearths a myriad of perspectives, weaving them together to create a particular worldview (Bowen 2008; Creswell 2007). The case study is one design that is utilised to reveal and interrogate these worldviews.

The case study research design allowed me to conduct in depth interviews and spend a significant amount of time with participants observing their day-to-day activities. This further gave me the opportunity to interact and have conversations with them without too much formality. Although this research is both descriptive and explanatory, it does not attempt to assign strict causal relationships in the manner in which De Vaus (2001) defines explanatory research. The limitation of time did not allow for a large enough sample size, and enough time spent with the participant to confidently allow for the establishment of direct cause. That in fact was not the intent of the research. It did however present associations amongst different phenomenon and assign cause to explain observed relations from the perspective of participants. In this way, the research questions were answered. Bowen (2008, p. 138) emphasizes the fact that in this type of research, 'the researcher recognises the existence of multiple constructed realities'.

Research Process

The research methodology for this study followed a qualitative methodology, guided by a series of interviews and document analysis. The project selected as a basis for my case

study is currently very topical in Swaziland, whilst at the same time presents a certain level of complexity due to the impact it has on rural communities in Swaziland. As will be seen in Chapter 4 below, it is a large, cross-country and cross-border programme, encompassing Swaziland, South Africa and Mozambique. In Swaziland, it again constitutes several protected areas across the country, with the largest of these being the biodiversity-rich Lubombo. The programme in Swaziland has also shown the most maturity in this region, which was another reason for the selection of this particular case for my research. The programme aims to utilize a landscape approach to its implementation process, which provided me with the ideal subject to utilize in the exploration of the environmental justice framework. Rural communities often continue to bear the brunt of integrated conservation development projects, so the claims of the landscape approach undertaken in this programme presented the ideal opportunity to determine if it was achieving different results and to investigate primarily through an inquiry of stakeholder perceptions.

My initial foray into the field was facilitated by the project managers and the project's community liaison officer, which in retrospect may not have served me well, as I had to spend a longer period establishing trust and explaining the purpose of the independent academic study I was undertaking, assuring participants, particularly community members, that I was not affiliated with the project and project authorities. However, having said that, it would have also been very difficult, within the given time frame, to gain acceptance and access to the community without the assistance of the project managers, particularly the community liaison officer, who was instrumental in making introductions with the traditional leaders, and inviting me to several community meetings and workshops. These meetings afforded me the opportunity to observe and participate in the proceedings, as well as availing a large number of traditional leaders gathered in one space. I was able to listen, record, and take note of the various presentations and contributions from traditional leaders and make follow up interviews during breaks and after the day's proceedings. These kind of settings also helped me to develop a rapport with the leaders and expedited the process of information gathering, further ensuring that protocol restrictions would be minimised at later dates when conducting the interviews

with community members. Because I stayed at Mhlumeni community on a few occasions, I had the opportunity to conduct participant observation in the newly constructed Mhlumeni Lodge, which is one of the eco-tourism products of the Eco-Lubombo programme, aimed at community integration in conservation development.

Data Collection

Data collection for this research followed a qualitative process, which utilised methods such as document analysis, interviews and participant observation, which are purported to be the most suitable methods for the Case study research design (De Vaus 2001, p. 10), and as Bowen (2008, p. 139); in qualitative research, 'sampling, data collection and data analysis occur concurrently', and there is a constant back and forth interaction between your participants, the method of data collection, assessment and reflection of your data. This helps facilitating a more exhaustive data collection process, ensuring that your research questions are answered in the most natural way possible. Time constraints are therefore always a deterrent in this kind of interview-based inquiry – to get the most comprehensive answers from your participants, particularly community members and traditional leaders, you require a significant amount of time to assimilate as much as possible into the community and gain the trust of your participants.

To aid the data collection process, the researcher may utilise a number of processes, including field notes or diaries, interviews, conservations, photographs, recordings, and personal memos (Creswell 2007). Most, if not all, of these, in one form or another, were adopted for the purposes of this research, I found that it was near impossible to utilise just one technique, as different situations called for different means, and there was constant adaptation on my part. In come cases for instance, conversations were ideal because we were travelling from one community to another and being in the driver's seat did not put me in the best position to start jotting down notes or fiddling around with a recorder. It has to be emphasised however, that participants knew the purpose of my presence at all times, and all were asked for their consent prior to any conversations that specifically related to my research. Some participants would put a caveat not to reveal certain pieces of information revealed during these conversations, and indeed during other occasions,

they would occasionally specify the same in the context of formal interviews. The primary data collection methods were the analysis of documents and interviews, although participant observation was also incorporated as explained briefly above.

Document Analysis

My data collection process began long before I actually set foot at Mhlumeni or Shewula for the purposes of this research. I had however been to Mhlumeni, Mlawula Nature Reserve and numerous times to Mbuluzi game Reserve prior to this research study, which meant that I had a fair level of familiarity with the areas and their particular characteristics. I, as a result, also had an idea of the relevant stakeholders to talk to in terms of the project managers, community liaison officers, NGOs and protected area authorities. The project managers and various implementers of the programme therefore provided the bulk of the documentation utilised in the study – information provided in this documentation is mainly discussed in Chapter 4 of this research report. The documents that I had access to ranged from project background information, biodiversity and terrestrial assessment reports, donor application briefs, an array of project progress and completion reports, regional development plans and policy/legislative documentation. Relevant information was extracted from these documents for the purposes of my research.

Interviews

Non-probability, purposive sampling is one of the procedures that are best suited for qualitative research (see Bowen 2008 quoted above); in this research, in addition to purposive sampling, snowballing was also very helpful in identifying the relevant participants, who were best suited to provide the information that best answers my research questions. Initial community members identified as participants in the research were selected due to their active participation in the development project and were therefore the most visible and accessible – these were mostly purposively selected. The further into the field exercise I got, I relied on snowballing, especially in the identification of community members who were not as supportive of the project. Other participants were purposively selected due to their geographic location within the

community in respect of distance to where most of the development activities were taking place. I also attempted to secure interviews with varied age groups, including both the elderly and the youth.

The research was mostly interviews – based, with semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the respondents to comprehensively engage with the questions, as well as enabled me to modify the questions during the interview to facilitate conversation, to request detailed explanation and clarification, and to construct more follow up questions, therefore facilitating in-depth interrogation of the issues and eliciting additional information from respondents. Participant observation was also undertaken, with time spent in the various communities. Field notes were kept to document observations made and interviews were either recorded using a recording device or in writing – most participants were reluctant to have their interviews recorded to tape.

The Interview guide was developed with a focus on utilising three themes within the Environmental Justice theoretical framework as a vehicle for interrogating the implementation of the protected landscape approach in practice. The themes that were tackled include:

- Rights, Ownership and Access
- Equity, Distribution and Benefits
- Decision-making, Inclusion and Participation

The primary target population for the study included the communities of Mhlumeni and Shewula. The prospective participants were selected due to their potential relevance to the study and in the expectation that they were best suited to provide the information required to answer the research questions. Most of the participants were happy to participate in the research study, especially once anonymity was guaranteed, only a few were reluctant to participate, whilst others specified that parts of the interview should stay off-record – information provided under this disclaimer was left out of this research report. The final list of individual participants interviewed was as follows:

- Community Members (21) – 14 from Mhlumeni and 7 from Shewula
- Community Leaders (6)
- Reserve Authorities (3) from Mbuluzi Game Reserve and from Mlawula Nature Reserve
- Project Leaders (2)
- NGO Representatives (2)
- Consultant (1)

Whereas the adequacy of a sample size is easily calculated in probability-based studies, it may not be as effortlessly applicable in non-probabilistic research. Guest, et. al (2006) point out that in the case of non-probability research, purposive sampling may be the best suited sampling method. The challenge with this method, Guest, et. al (2006) assert, is that if often requires the researcher to state upfront how many people will be involved in study. For me, this was problematic because by the time I had interviewed the entirety of my pre-established sample, I did not feel overly confident about the data and themes that were emerging. I could not say with a high level of confidence that the information was indeed representative, to any significant level, of what was indeed happening in the community. As a result, I had to increase my sample size, return to the field and conduct more interviews until I reached a saturation point (the number of community members interviewed was more than doubled and the number of traditional leaders interviewed tripled).

Data Analysis

Since qualitative research begins with an inquiry into the meanings that individuals assign to social or human problems, it tends to produce large data sets of extended writing, which in their raw form appear to be meaningless and are frankly quite intimidating. The data analysis process serves to make sense of this data through an inductive process that assists the researcher to establish patterns and themes (Creswell 2007). The findings and discussion chapter, according to Creswell (2007), will be riddled with anecdotes from the participants, accompanied by the researcher's reflections, and an attempt to place the finding within the broader body of literature. Meanings drawn from

the data, just like the perceptions of the participants, are subjective and developed from the assessment of the emerging themes and similarities or differences in the data set. A keen understanding of the social context (or natural environment) in which the data was produced is also important in ascribing certain interpretations to particular data. In this study, this is the general process that I followed to analyse the collected data. Having kept a combination of field notes and hand-written answers from interviews (this made up the bulk of my data set), recorded interviews and notes made from documentation, it was necessary to draw out themes from the data, identify some of the points of departure, and develop a mature picture from the available data. Inductive data analysis 'involves researchers working back and forth between the themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes' (Creswell, 2007, p. 39); some of this process involved returning to the field for follow up interviews to clarify certain points or to ensure that the themes I was developing were indeed indicative of what was happening on the ground and that I was not missing any imperative meanings.

Throughout the interview and fieldwork process, I returned time and again to the research questions and to the environmental justice framework, which I was using as the lens or basis for my interrogation. The interview guide (Appendix 4) focused on the principles of environmental justice; it is important to note however that this was not a questionnaire and most participants went beyond the specific areas of discussion that I introduced, preferring to either provide more or less details, including those that they felt were of priority to them. I did not deter them from doing this, as that is where key or unexpected information is sometimes discovered. Although participants presented multiple perspectives, a point was reached whereby most were reiterating information and opinions that had been provided by other participants. Due to the homogeneity of the population, this was not completely unexpected. What was surprising was the contrasting story that was emerging from the different sample groups – community members had a different perspective from project authorities and from traditional leaders (this will be seen in Chapter 5). At this point saturation may have been reached - a point that scholars in this field agree (Bowen 2008; Fusch and Ness 2015: Guest et. al 2006) is difficult to

establish, as there are very limited guidelines, if any, on how to recognise that saturation has been achieved.

Bowen (2008, p. 40) defines 'saturation' as 'the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added'. At this point, the researcher feels that the data set is complete and any new participants to the study will not bring any new information. Although rooted more in grounded theory research (Bowen 2008), saturation may be reached in many qualitative studies, particularly in studies that utilise in depth interviews as a primary data collection method.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics were taken into consideration when conducting the research, particularly in the field, to ensure that research participants were not harmed in the research process, and that the integrity of the study was maintained. The purpose of the research was made clear to all respondents through comprehensive participant information sheets, which I translated into SiSwati particularly for the community members (Appendix 5). Informed written consent was sought where participants signed consent forms (also translated into SiSwati); I was fortunately able to record the consent of those who could not write. The consent form and participant information sheet were very clear that names of participants will be kept anonymous and that all information provided would only be used for the sole purpose of academic research and possible future publication. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the report to ensure confidentiality. Raw data, both hard and soft, has and will continue to be kept in secure storage.

CHAPTER 4
THE STATE OF CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SWAZILAND

Spatial and Demographic Trends

Located in the South Eastern part of Africa, Swaziland (Fig. 1) is a small land-locked country of about 17 363 square kilometres. It lies between 26o30'South of the Equator and 31o30'east of the Greenwich Line and shares borders with the Republic of South Africa on the North, West and South, and the Republic of Mozambique on the East.

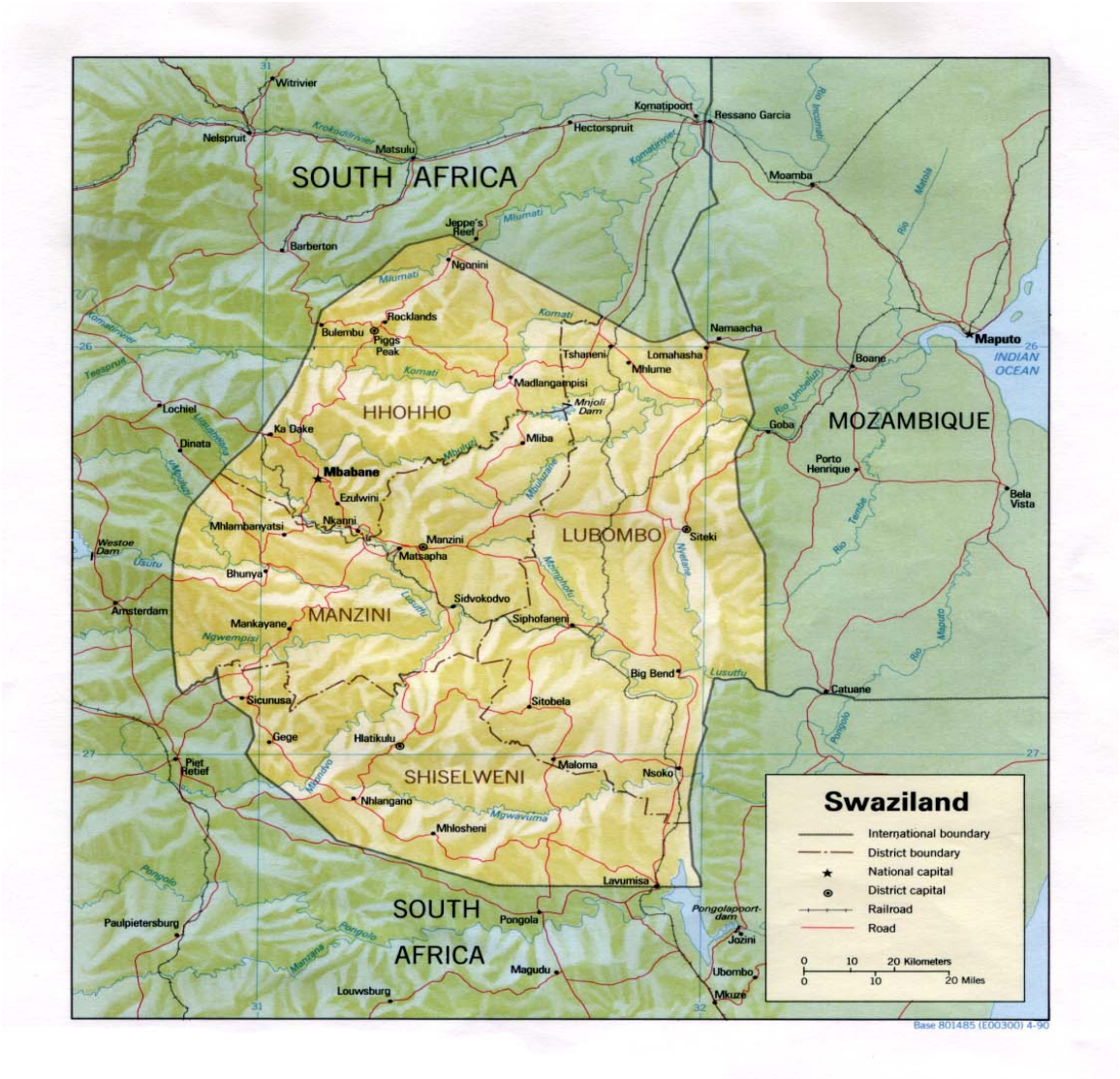


Figure 1: Locality Map

(Source: Google Maps)

Swaziland lies between 150m and 1800m above sea level, and is divided into six agro-ecological regions, each with its own specific biodiversity; these are namely: The Highveld, Upper Middleveld, Lower Middleveld, Western Lowveld, Eastern Lowveld and the Lubombo Range.

The Kingdom has a relatively small population of just over a million people – 1,018,449[8] (Swaziland Central Statistics Office 2007) – of which well over 70% is rural (Table 2), with a population density of 57 persons per square kilometre.

Table 2: Population Distribution by Residence (Source: Central Statistics Office, 2007 Census)

Residence	1986		1987		2007	
	Population	**%**	**Population**	**%**	**Population**	**%**
Swaziland	681,959	100	929718	100	1,018,449	100
Urban	154,979	22.7	214,428	23.1	225,293	22.1
Rural	526,080	77.1	715,290	76.9	793,156	77.9

Table 3 below presents population trends and growth from 1904 to 2007 censuses. It can be seen in the table that the population of the country has been growing with increasing annual growth rates up to the 1966 census and then declined in the 1976 population census. The decline in the 1976 census is said to be significant (Central Statistics Office 2007) and this was followed with a higher growth rate in 1986. Subsequently the growth rates declined again resulting in a sharp decline for the 2007 census[9]. The reasons for decline may be due to a number of factors, including migration, but more importantly due to an increase in mortality as a result of HIV/AIDS. The extent to which Swaziland has been hit by HIV/AIDS is tremendous, with an estimated 170,000 people living with HIV in 2009, and about 69,000 children orphaned by AIDS in the same year (UNICEF 2009),

[8] Swaziland's Deputy Prime Minister released the latest 2017 population figure of 1, 093, 238 people on the 9th of November 2017, indicating an increase of 74, 789 persons from the 2007 census results. In this latest population census, the Lubombo region has moved from being the least populated region to being second from last, ahead of the Shiselweni region.

[9] The 2017 census results have not been formally published yet, so 2007 statistics are still in use.

making it the country with the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world (per capita).

Table 3: Population, Intercensal Growth Rates 1904 – 2007 (Source: CSO, 2007)

Census Year	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Growth Rate
1904	37,471	48,020	85,491	_
1911	44,085	55,154	99,959	2.2
1921	48,422	56,539	106,961	0.7
1936	66,534	80,620	147,154	2.1
1946	84,182	95,138	179,320	2.0
1956	106,052	122,731	228,783	2.4
1966	178,891	195,806	374,697	4.8
1976	231,861	262,673	494,533	2.8
1986	321,579	359,480	681,059	3.2
1997	440,154	489,564	929,718	2.9
2007	481,428	537,021	1,018,449	0.9

Vulnerability of Rural Areas in Swaziland

Swaziland is more populous in its rural areas (Table 2) with a 77.9% rural population (2007 Population Census, Central Statistics Office). Coupled with high unemployment rates in the rural areas, these high population figures in marginal areas create significant uncertainty and threats to livelihoods. Historically Swazi's were able to practice subsistence farming, which was the basis of their livelihood; nowadays, farming is still being practised albeit with limited success due to a number of factors. Many rural households have stopped farming altogether due to drought conditions, and are now dependent on alternative social interventions such as food aid (better known as *Mshab'ndane* in the rural areas of Swaziland), (Gamedze, 2006). This has in turn exacerbated the developing dependency culture, stripping rural people, especially the younger generation, of the skills and means to make a living independently. Due to the lack of alternative gainful employment, the youth immigrate to the urban areas in search of jobs, leaving elderly parents and children behind – these groups are the least able to

tend to extensive fields and engage in the strenuous hard labour required for traditional farming methods. Employment opportunities are hard to come by in Swaziland's rural areas, which experience a high unemployment rate of 54% compared to the 21% rate in urban areas (Swaziland Central Statistics 2012). The unemployed and self-employed have proved to be the poorest of the total population in the Lubombo region.

The Lubombo region was historically the second poorest region of the four physiological regions in Swaziland (Lubombo Regional Physical Development Plan, Volume 1, n.d.). However, due to a significant decline in the Shiselweni region poverty levels in recent years, Lubombo has become the poorest region (Fig. 2). The population distribution in the Lubombo follows a similar trend as the national distribution, with 74% of the regional population living in a rural setting. Of the 194, 323 people found in the Lubombo region, '48% live below the food poverty line (that is they do not have an adequate income level to purchase minimum food requirements). The incidence of food poverty tends to be higher in rural areas,' (Lubombo Regional Development Plan, Volume 1, n.d, Swaziland Central Statistics Office 2010).

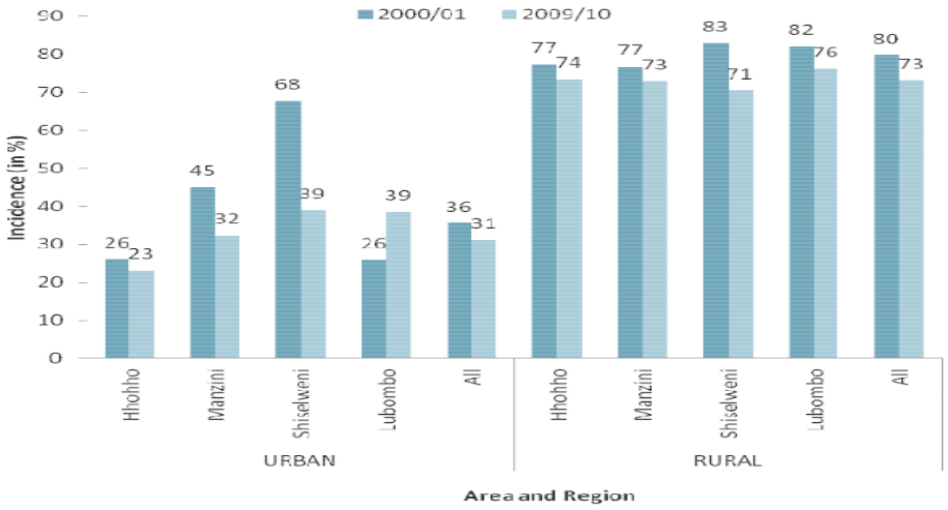


Figure 2: Poverty incidence by area/region, 2000/2001 and 2009/2010

(Source: Swaziland Central Statistics Office, 2010)

> Poverty in Swaziland has remained a disproportionately rural phenomenon since poverty headcount was estimated at 73 per cent in rural areas in 2010 while at only 31 per cent in urban area. Given that difference in poverty headcount between urban and rural areas and

> that around 75 per cent of the Swazi population lives in rural areas, it is not surprising that 89 per cent of poor individuals are living in rural areas. Poverty in Swaziland is essentially a rural phenomenon. (Swaziland Central Statistics Office, 2010)

It follows therefore that development and aid efforts are focused mainly on rural areas, as these are the regions in most need in order to facilitate poverty eradication and strengthening of livelihoods. Mhlumeni and Shewula are two such areas, located in the rural Lubombo. The following section provides an insight into the two areas, which are the principal cases in this study, along with the nature reserves they share boundaries with. Due to the high incidence of poverty in the Lubombo region, development and poverty alleviation efforts have tended to be concentrated there.

Communities and Protected Areas: Mhlumeni and Shewula

Mhlumeni is a Swazi community of about 1,500 inhabitants bordering Mozambique and surrounded by Mlawula Nature Reserve on the Swazi side. The community is made up by dispersed homesteads, all located on Swazi Nation Land (SNL), which is held by the King of Swaziland in trust for the nation. *De facto*, SNL belongs to the community and the chiefs have the right to allocate land in their respective areas to all members. It is the responsibility of the chief to ensure availability of land for cultivation to heads of all homesteads (Mushala et. al 1998). The Shewula community is also located in the Lubombo region of Swaziland, in the north-eastern part of the country; at its highest point, Shewula is at an elevation of 500 metres above sea level, and is categorised as a dry, sub-humid climate, with frequent drought conditions – this affects the capability of the people attaining sustainable livelihoods. About 10,000 people inhabit Shewula, of which 80% rely on subsistence farming (Mlipha 2015) – this makes Shewula community significantly larger than Mhlumeni.

The political structure of both Mhlumeni and Shewula is based on the traditional Swazi system. Mhlumeni is one of several communities under the Ka-Langa chieftaincy with the Langa council and the Langa chief being the most important institutions; these are located a fair distance away from Mhlumeni. In the absence of a proximate chief, day-to-day activities at Mhlumeni are run by an inner council (*bandlancane*) and the chief's

deputy (*indvuna*) on behalf of the Langa chief. Shewula on the other hand has been under the leadership of Chief Mbandzamane Sifundza, who passed away in 2017. Chief Mbandzamane was a stalwart conservation activist, and oversaw the implementation of several community conservation projects, and was also at the helm of these projects when the Shewula community won the 2014 Equator Prize (UNDP's Equator Initiative). The initiative celebrates examples of 'local ingenuity, innovation, and leadership in sustainable land management in Sub-Saharan dry lands (UNDP 2015).

The inner council is the institution to be firstly contacted when planning any activity or project within any rural community in Swaziland. Yet, for all major decisions, for example, the initiation of any economic activity, investment or development project, the chief has to be consulted. The communities are divided by sub-areas, overseen by headmen, who report to the main chief's deputy (*indvuna*) – representatives from each area are usually required to make up a quorum in decisions that will affect the entire community. Long-term members of the community make up another council (*imisumphe*), which primarily deals with land and land conflicts within the community. Community meetings open to all its members are held regularly (COSPE u.d.).

Livelihoods in the region, like many other rural areas in Swaziland, are mainly dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, and Shewula in particular has also relied on food aid in the past (Mlipha 2015 and COSPE u.d.). Development projects are therefore one means in which poverty alleviation is facilitated in this community. These communities are also reliant on natural resources for food sources, medicinal purposes, fuel wood and construction materials, and for other cultural and traditional uses. The main crops cultivated are maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, beans and other vegetables. Community members proclaimed that they have seen a noticeable shift in the farming season over the years, as well as decreasing productivity due to poor soil fertility in combination with low rainfall. One community member in particular lamented on the poor soil conditions in Mhlumeni, stating that the soils were not ideal for agricultural production in the first place as they were very rocky and hard, but now with the lack of rainfall, the situation has worsened in recent years. The only cash crop grown in this

region is cotton, which is cultivated only by few people. Some community members in Mhlumeni are attempting to grow sunflowers and sorghum - The Ministry of Agriculture, through the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) and donor organisations, support some of these activities (COSPE, u.d.).

Animal husbandry also plays an important role in Mhlumeni and Shewula, and most families own animals for both domestic as well as small-scale commercial purposes. Such activities include poultry production, cattle herding and goat keeping. Cattle are not only a source of livelihood but also a symbol of wealth and influence. Nearly 50% of all households own cattle (COSPE 2014, 9 in COSPE u.d.). According to COSPE (u.d.), 'even though the number of households increases, the number of cattle within Mhlumeni has been decreasing in the last eight years by about 14% due to changes in climate and deterioration in the quality of grazing lands'. The recent drought (2015-2017) has been detrimental to the health of livestock in the region and many have failed to survive the harsh conditions that prevailed during this time. Pressure on local communal land has also been intensified due to the fencing of Mlawula Nature Reserve, which served as healthy grazing land for the Mhlumeni community in the past. Community members indicated that this fencing did not do much to ease already existing tensions with the nature reserve. Community Member 17 was very agitated about this turn of events, and said that the fences had infringed on community land, and not only prevented access to previous rangelands, but imposed travelling restrictions for pedestrians to shopping services, as this was a short-cut that was utilised extensively by the Mhlumeni residents, particularly those who could not afford the cost of public transport. This issue therefore remains one of the main bones of contention between the community and the nature reserve. Historically, there has been antagonism between the Mhlumeni community and conservation authorities as a result of fatal poaching incidents and suspicions of land grabbing of community land by the Swaziland National Trust Commission (a National Parks Agency), who manage Mlawula Nature Reserve (de Vletter 2014; COSPE u.d). The Swaziland National Trust Commission is the same organisation that administers and oversees the overall implementation of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area

programme, and is also supposed to serve the interest of local communities, ensuring that integration with protected areas is successful.

Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, some people make their living through small business in the informal sector and others are employed outside the community by the sugarcane company Royal Swaziland Sugar Company (RSSC), the Swazi Railway Company, or by the government (as teachers, police officers or by the military), however, formal employment is very scarce. All community members interviewed came back to this point time and again, lamenting the lack of employment and admitting that they often had to do everything that was in their power (including engaging in illegal activity at times) to ensure that the family did not sleep on an empty stomach. The Eco-Lubombo Programme is geared towards the establishment of more income generating activities, and the Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge is one such project. The Shewula Mountain Camp provides a good example for Mhlumeni to follow, as it has grown from its humble beginnings in 2000, and now generates in the region of 400,000 rand per year, and provides employment for six permanent staff, as well as benefiting bout 13,000 people (UNDP 2015)

Mhlumeni has one primary school for approximately 200 children. Only a small number of Mhlumeni children manage to graduate (Community Member 21). No basic health care facility exists apart from a mobile clinic, which comes to the community once a month. The next hospital is based in Siteki, about 25km away – this is a large, government referral hospital for the Lubombo Region. There is a rural electrification scheme although only few people can afford electricity, and most still rely on candles and paraffin lamps, and firewood for heat and cooking. Water comes from a single borehole serving the entire community (the only sustainable water source at present); other wells and rivers run dry during the dry, winter season. The newly constructed Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge also suffers from water problems, and relies on government to deliver water to onsite water tanks. There are on going plans to install a mains water pipeline that will serve the community; I was fortunate enough to be privy to some of the discussions on this matter during some of the community meetings. Further infrastructure entails gravel

roads through the village and a small grocery shop. Transport within and outside the community is a general problem and might become an issue in the context of tourism development. Even access to the newly constructed Mountain camp requires the use of a high clearance vehicle. Other critical problems in Mhlumeni include low education and school completion rate, high pregnancy rate amongst the youth, and high HIV/AIDS infection rates.

According to statements of community representatives, before the pilot project started, the people of Mhlumeni had a negative attitude towards biodiversity conservation. They did not recognize the value of their ecosystem and due to the conflicts with neighbouring Mlawula Nature Reserve; they shared a hostile attitude towards conservation. Reasons for the conflicts were disputes over boundaries, as the community accused the park of grabbing communal land by incrementally moving the fences. In turn, the community conducted illegal activities inside the park, such as poaching, grazing cattle, collecting firewood, plants and grass and setting fires to reserve lands. There are also cross-border hostilities with Goba in Mozambique (which is also an area under the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area) regarding the stealing of cattle from Mhlumeni.

The Shewula Community Nature Reserve (SCNR) has been in existence for over a decade having been set up by the Shewula Community Trust under the Patronage of Chief Mbandzamane, himself a strong promoter of nature conservation and community development, who served as a Board Member of the SNTC Board at the time of the establishment of the Shewula Community Nature Reserve. He garnered respect throughout the Lubombo area, and most participants interviewed in this study, including game reserve authorities attested to his exemplary leadership skills and pioneering character in nature conservation and community development. Through Chief Mbandazamane's guidance, the community managed to set aside about 2500 ha of grazing land for the purpose of establishing the SCNR with both strict preservation and sustainable use objectives. The Community established the Shewula Mountain Camp, which is registered under the Swaziland Tourism Authority as a community ecotourism venture offering accommodation, walking trails and community experience. The camp is

situated on a piece of land at the very edge of the community and adjacent to the Nature Reserve. Both legal (the Trust is registered through a Deeds Office) and customary laws and institutions (through the Traditional leader) are responsible for decision making about the Nature Reserve, which is however not yet registered or gazetted as a protected area The Camp acts as the central focus and as an exemplar in community eco-tourism products and community members from the other Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Areas (including Mozambique and South Africa) are often hosted for workshops and training sessions at the camp to provide them with a working example of the possibilities that they can reach in their own communities. However, de Vletter (2014) states that for the Camp to become fully sustainable and attractive to evolving market conditions, the conservation area needs to become operational and the tourism facility upgraded. The business plan for these improvements has been initiated as part of the Eco Lubombo Programme.

Shewula has been one of the leaders in Swaziland in the introduction of Conservation Agriculture, which is one of the activities that is promoted by the Eco Lubombo Programme and falls under the landscape approach principles. Mlipha (2015, p. 2) defines conservation agriculture as 'a mix of agronomic practices all essential for soil and moisture conservation as well as building maintenance of stable soil structure and sustainable crop production'. This farming methodology falls under the broader paradigm of sustainable agriculture, which acknowledges the need for participation and empowerment of rural communities in the development of livelihood capabilities (Mlipha 2015). Conservation agriculture is one of the main sustainability activities that have also been introduced in Mhlumeni community as part of the Eco-Lubombo Programme. In Shewula, there were several training activities for local farmers on a plethora of sustainable farming techniques and establishment of educational programmes on dietary diversification, all culminating in the creation of a community indigenous plant nursery, focusing on endangered and rare species.

Shewula and Mhlumeni fall under the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) and have, as a result, benefited from a myriad of conservation development

programmes. The LTFCA and the Eco Lubombo programmes are discussed in the next section.

The Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) and The Eco-Lubombo Programme

The Lubombo Conservancy in Swaziland (Fig. 3 and 4) comprises five protected areas, including Mlawula Nature Reserve, Mbuluzi Game Reserve (the two being the focus of this research), Shewula Nature Reserve, Hlane Royal National Park, and Inyoni Yami Swaziland Irrigation Scheme (IYSIS). These five conservation areas, according to the Programme for Ecosystem Management of the Swaziland Lubombo (u.d.), constitute the most extensive and historical conservation areas within Swaziland, with about 60 000 hectares of a contiguous land parcel that has conservation potential. The Lubombo Conservancy was formalised on the 29th of April 1999, through support and guidance from the Peace Parks Foundation, and brought together the aforementioned private protected areas and national parks. The objectives of the Lubombo Conservancy are aligned to the Swazi government's Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Areas (LTFCA) programme, and are presented below (Program for Ecosystem Management of the Swaziland Lubombo (u.d.)):

1. To establish one reserve among the core conservancy members where animals can freely roam between the reserves without any hindrances from fences that separate the different conservation areas;
2. To create a mosaic of protected areas in the Swaziland Lubombo capitalizing on the opportunities presented in the Swaziland Government's proposed legislation for more participatory types of protected areas, such as protected landscapes and resource management areas;
3. To identify and develop ecotourism and other sustainable development opportunities for local communities in the Swaziland Lubombo
4. To establish a landscape approach through participatory integrated planning for the ecosystem management of the Swaziland Lubombo

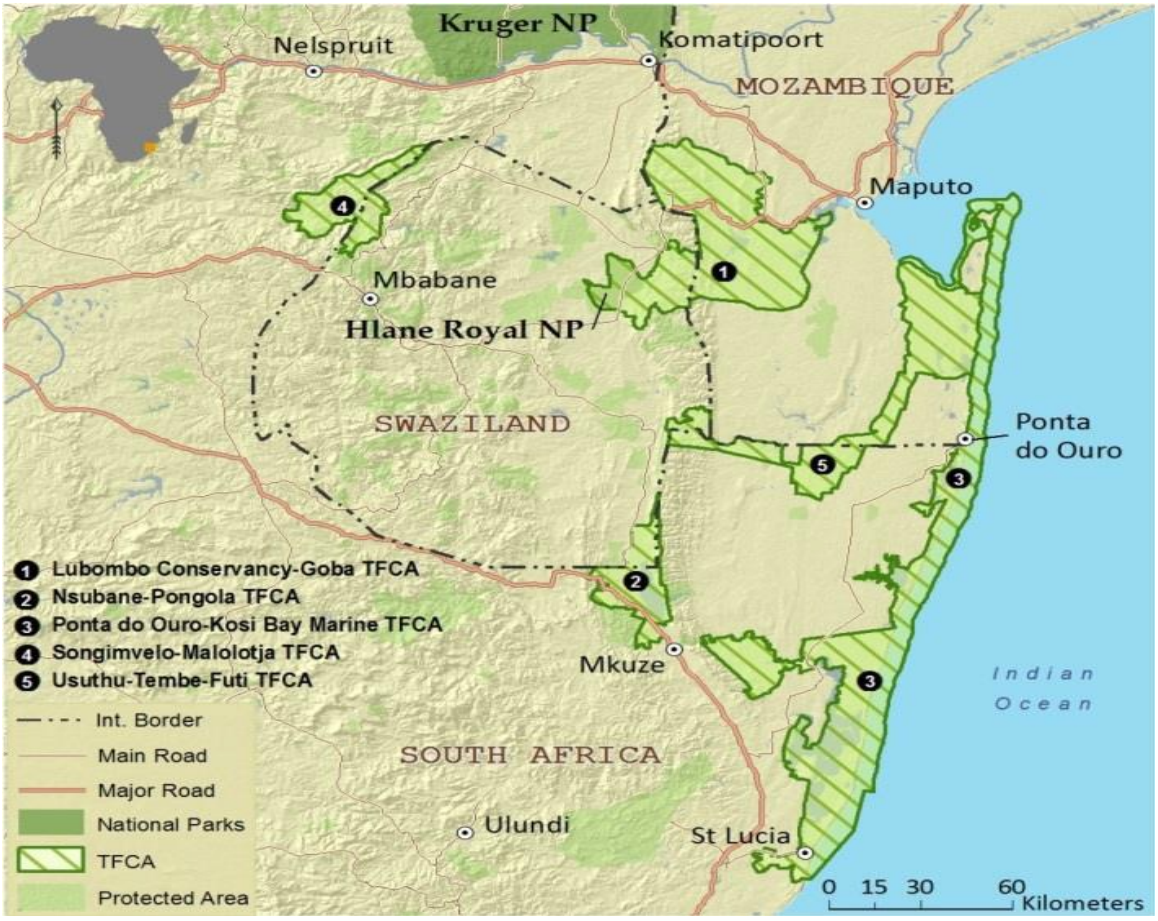


Figure 3: Map of the Lubombo Conservancy Core Area

(Source: http://www.peaceparks.org)

The Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (together with the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative) has established the institutional, policy and regulatory framework for transfrontier conservation and tourism development in Swaziland's Lubombo region. The entirety of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) spans an area of 10,029km^2, bordering Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa (Fig. 4), and showcases an immense richness in biodiversity. The area lies within the Maputaland Centre of Endemism that includes five Ramsar sites, namely: Ndumo Game Reserve, Kosi Bay, Lake Sibaya, the turtle beaches and coral reefs of Tongaland and lake St. Lucia (Africa's largest estuary). The Lubombo region boasts the first marine TFCA in Africa – the Ponta do Ouro-Kosi Bay TFCA – which has played an important role towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization of natural and cultural

resources, whilst promoting regional peace (through Peace Parks), co-operation and socio-economic development.

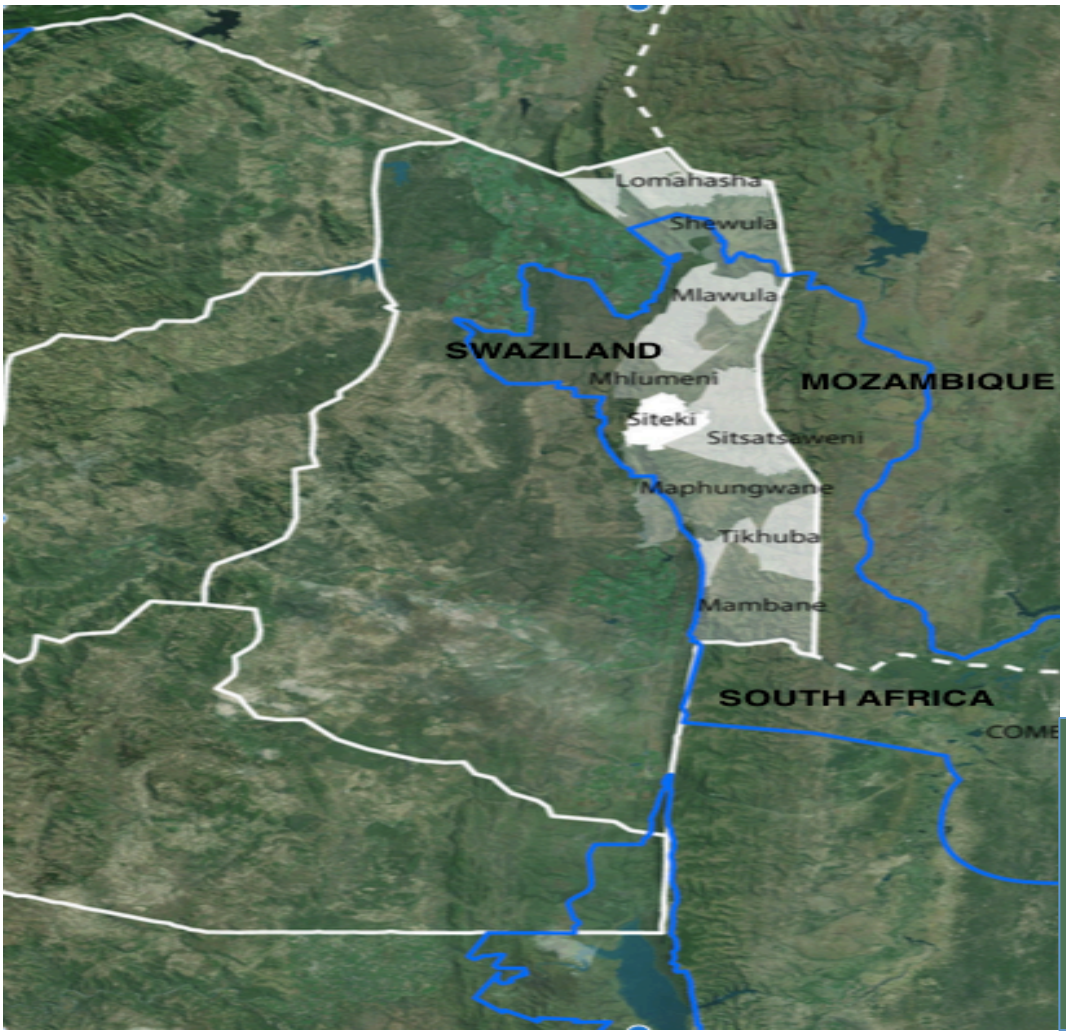


Figure 4: The Combined Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area, spanning three countries

Transfrontier Conservation Areas are also known as Peace Parks, and the notion of Peace Parks is not a novel one; it describes a conservation area that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries, with the management of these areas shared in varying degrees by the concerned countries. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has promoted them since the 1980s, and in about a decade, the number and geographical range of Peace Parks worldwide expanded (van Amerom and Buscher 2005, p. 2). In Southern Africa, the full extent of existing and emerging TFCA may be seen in the map below (Fig 5). The

Lubombo TFCA is (labelled Number '5' in Fig. 5) and is one of such Peace Parks implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa under the broader African Transfrontier Conservation Areas.

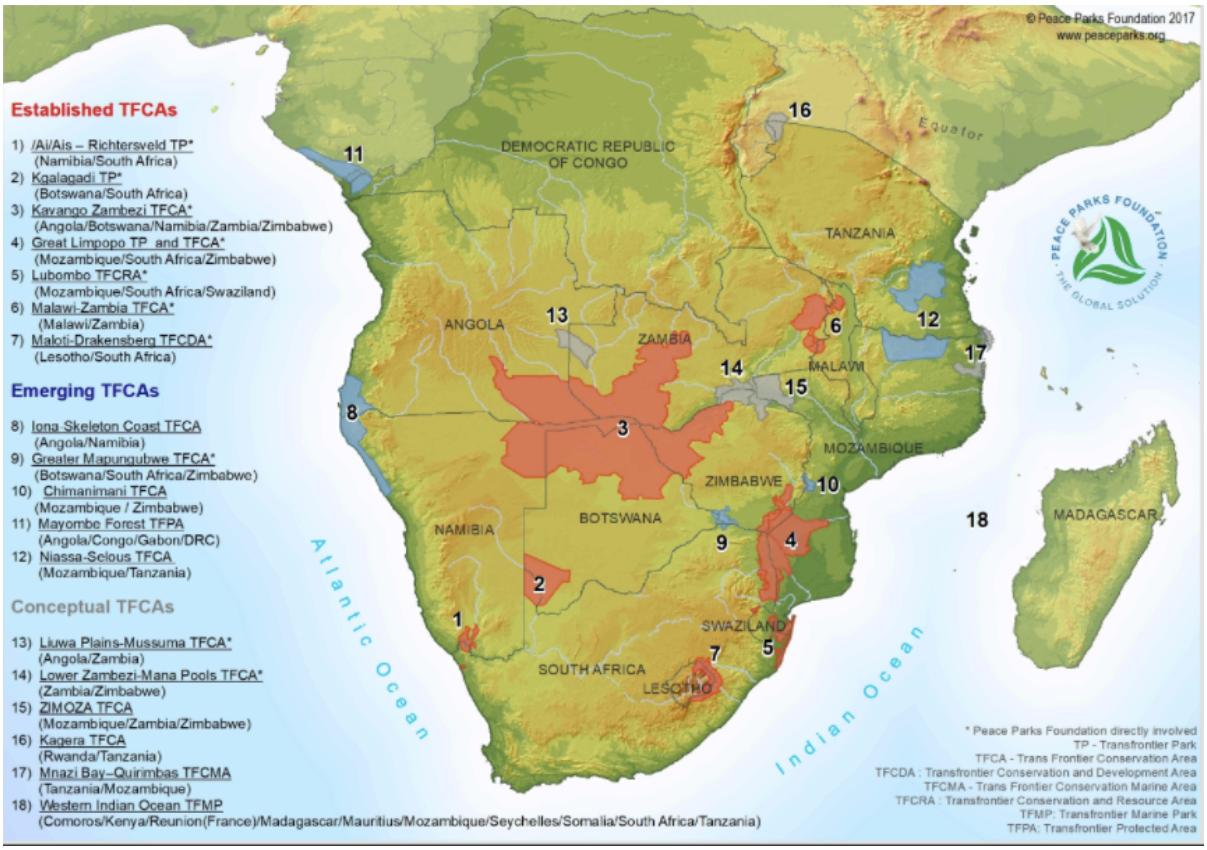


Figure 5: Map of Established and Existing TFCAs in Southern Africa

(Source: Peace Parks Foundation (2017))

Swaziland has long been considered rich in biodiversity and as a result, its eastern region (Lubombo) has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area under the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot (MPAH). The existing, formalized Protected Areas in Swaziland are considered inadequate in representing the potential that the country could rise to. These relatively small and vulnerable Protected Areas only cover 3.9% of the country, and do not represent the range of ecosystems that Swaziland has to offer.

Amongst the existing Protected Areas in Swaziland, some are classified as informal, and are therefore not managed in a meaningful manner – this then means that they are

vulnerable to any number of threats. To fulfil the tenets of the Protected Landscape Approach, the declaration of these informal Protected Areas, and expansion of the Protected Area estate, the full involvement of multiple stakeholders will be required, both in establishing the Protected Areas and in ensuring their sustainable and successful management. The majority of the Protected Areas in Swaziland are located within existing communities, with most of these communities being rural. In most rural, indigenous and developing areas, the community practices and activities are so closely linked with the surrounding natural environment that they are almost inseparable.

The Eco-Lubombo Programme (ELP) was approved by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in 2012, and commenced in 2014, involving several communities and protected areas within Swaziland's Lubombo region. The Eco-Lubombo Programme exists within a broader protected landscape programme, the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA), which links up landscapes and protected areas across three neighbouring countries – Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa. The programme was formalised in December 2015 as an official LTFCA project, and was endorsed by the LTFCA Trilateral Commission; it was subsequently granted financial support from GIZ-SADC and received technical assistance from the Peace Parks Foundation (Background to the Eco Lubombo Programme 2016).

The project objectives may be summarised as follows: To ensure that civil society is engaged in Biodiversity conservation, particularly strengthening the involvement and effectiveness of civil society in conservation and management of globally important biodiversity; that there is a focus on community, incorporating participatory planning through ECO-Business Plans for implementation of an ecosystem and sustainable livelihoods approach at the local level and a broader landscape level approach to eco-tourism, conservation and sustainable management of natural resources of the Lubombo Landscape; and finally, the development of a programme strategy that would be implemented through the ecosystem/landscape approach, focusing on two phases: 1) Eastern Swaziland Lubombo (ESL); and 2) Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area. This research focuses only on the first phase of the programme.

The Eco-Lubombo Programme incorporated several tourism and livelihood products, one of the most successful at this point being the Lubombo Eco Trails. The Lubombo Eco Trails (LET) is a large scale and long-term program falling under the framework of the Eco Lubombo Programme, and is aimed at the conservation of the biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystems of the LTFCA as well as the empowerment and economic development of local communities. The specific goals of the LET are the establishment of a number of community-based enterprises, such as eco lodges, campsites and cultural attractions – the Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge is one such endeavour. To ensure the maximum opportunities in terms of ecotourism, the Eco Trails will develop within an integrated landscape and business planning/zonation framework defined as Eco Business Planning (EBP) (de Vletter 2014). The LET incorporates promotional events, such as the Magadzavane-Mlawula Challenge Walk, the 3 Reserves Mountain Bike Race, and the 3 Corner TFCA Mountain Bike event which are designed to incorporate the three participating LTFCA countries where they meet on the Usuthu River.

Participatory Mapping Process

The participatory mapping process (Appendix 2) implemented in Mhlumeni community intended to lay sound foundations for community-based natural resources management by implementing capacity building at grassroots level to facilitate the collection of data and analysis, which would make the basis of the development of management tools. The participatory mapping process was particularly aimed at strengthening community knowledge on biodiversity, sharing information amongst community members in community assets in order to develop a common knowledge base, and then coding those assets by priority or by the level of biodiversity importance. Other objectives of the participatory process was to ensure that community members assign value to ecosystem services, realising the current condition of the environment, and how it can be improved by applying a series of management systems.

Various NGOs, Consultants and Project authorities undertook the participatory mapping plan, with COSPE taking the lead. The full plan is summarised in an adapted table

(Appendix 2) and provides information on the various activities that were introduced to the community in various stages. Information in the table has been adapted from the 'Eco-Lubombo Programme: Guidelines for Participatory Mapping and Planning' report written by COSPE.

As with all new projects and ideas brought to rural communities, the project team had to first engage the traditional leaders, the project was introduced to them and then they were further educated on the concepts of biodiversity conservation and on the participatory mapping methodology. Only after the leaders had given consent were they then asked to call a community meeting. Another factor to consider is that although all community members were invited to meetings and educated, the bulk of the participatory process only involved key informants, who are community representatives selected by community members during the first meeting – they then become the community representatives during the entirety of the participatory process. Their responsibilities include providing the project team with information about the main features of the community land, community livelihood, natural resource distribution and values, as well as main ecosystem changes during the last 50 years (COSPE u.d). According to COSPE (u.d), the number of key informants should be representative of the main stakeholders of the community, but without compromising the project budget and available resources. This manner of participation presents several issues, the more concerning one being the confidence to which project authorities can then claim full community participation, when only several individuals represented the community. So, although all community members are invited to the meetings, all the other fundamental mapping processes are reserved for these key informants. This not only means that other community members have to rely on secondary information provided by the representatives, but it also means that they have to have enough trust in the representatives to be confident that they are indeed well represented. There is also no real guarantee that the key informants adequately and accurately relay the material that they engaged in during the mapping process back to the rest of their community cohort. The participatory mapping process does mention that the key informants are usually selected on the basis of their depth of knowledge on the area and its natural resources, but this still excludes a large group of

people who could also have important information to contribute.

Eco Business Planning

Eco Business Planning is a participatory, community-based process integrating ecosystem management with natural resource based enterprise development (de Vletter 2014). The planning process involves the creation of appropriate local governance structures, ecosystem assessment, valuation and zoning, and business planning based on the identification of sustainable natural resource based enterprises and value chains consistent with the ecosystem management plan. The aim of this process is to ensure the sharing of knowledge and skills amongst community members in order to enhance their livelihood options through the development of ecotourism and associated eco-enterprises. The business planning further promotes the interaction of all the communities participating in the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area, and so includes cross-border activities; this is done with the aim of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of biodiversity and landscape assets in the region (Eco Lubombo Organisation Work Programme 2017-2022 u.d)

The Community Level Eco Business Plans, according to de Vletter (2014), represent an innovative approach to community engagement and empowerment. The Eco Business Plans are the result of the intensive process of participatory mapping and assessment of ecosystem services and natural resource assets (this is the mapping process defined above, and depicted in Appendix 2). . By the end of the process, the aim is that the community should have an integrated ecosystem management and business plan and holistic investment framework, supported by the appropriate capacity in terms of governance structures and skills training. This process has already been piloted in the Mhlumeni Community and although some community members display a wealth of knowledge, it is mostly those that are actively involved in the process and have been assigned certain responsibilities, such a the community leaders, the members of the community trust and those employed at the Mhlumeni Lodge that show the most knowledge and skills. Most of the community members interviewed in this study did not demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of these plans, or a significantly improved

knowledge on biodiversity conservation as a result of the introduction of the planning process in particular or the Eco-Lubombo Programme in general. It is important to note however that as I had not interacted with community members prior to the introduction of the Eco Business Plans and Participatory Mapping Process, I cannot say with any level of confidence whether their knowledge had been improved. Deductions made in this study are based on views expressed by participants and observations made whilst in the field. De Vletter (2014) is of the opinion that there has been a major shift in community attitudes towards biodiversity conservation, and the improved management of resources and awareness has been exemplified by the return and replanting of stolen protected and rare cycads, an action that was motivated by the community itself (de Vletter 2014, p. 8).

Although this study is limited in scope only to Swaziland, and only to the Eco-Lubombo programme, in South Africa the University of Pretoria is facilitating the Transfrontier Conservation Programme within the locality of the Usuthu Gorge, and focusing on specifically integrating the Mathenjwa Tribal Community into conservation efforts. The area is located in the very North of KwaZulu Natal and covers about 547km^2 (Chitakira & Torquebiau 2010). A portion of the Mathenjwa community land is under the management of the Ndumo Game Reserve and another portion under the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservancy Area managed by the community. The community is located right in the middle of the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany-Hotspot, and is recognised as an ecological region of floristic endemism (Chitakira & Torquebiau 2010). The Mathenjwa Tribal Authority area was declared as part of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area in the trilateral protocol signed by Swaziland, South Africa and Mozambique in June 2000. Its main aims are as follows:

- Finding solutions for local communities to develop livelihoods that take into account their biodiversity resources;
- Using the periphery of protected areas to design generic solutions which best combine poverty reduction with biodiversity conservation;
- The possible labelling of eco-agricultural landscapes and any associated commodities and produce coming out of that landscape, as a means of promoting both socially and ecologically responsible enterprise; and

- Securing the engagement of communities towards pilot projects for innovative landscape management.

The most apparent similarity between the project objectives of the Usuthu Gorge Project and the Eco-Lubombo programme in Swaziland is the primary focus. Both the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority project and the Eco-Lubombo programme have as their main preoccupation the development of community livelihoods, locally sustainable economic solutions and overall poverty reduction. These efforts are concurrently aligned with a landscape approach to biodiversity conservation. The field research however revealed that the community and economic development aspects of the Eco-Lubombo programme have lagged behind, particularly at Mhlumeni community, and completed eco-tourism products are of minimal benefit to the community at present. Other activities, such as the sustainable or eco agriculture, have also benefited a few at Mhlumeni Community. At the same time, the protected areas (Mlawula Nature Reserve and Mbuluzi Game Reserve) retain the upper hand and continue to restrict all community access to resources located within the protected areas. Where the South African case was superior was in the promotion of and actual continued utilisation of natural resources within the protected areas, albeit within the context of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and the Landscape Approach. The CBNRM approach adopted allowed community members to continue engaging in hunting activities within the protected area, and it was found that controlled hunting practices are economically, socially and ecologically sustainable (Hanekom u.d). Research conducted by Chitakira & Torquebiau (2010) suggests an overall above average performance in the eco-agricultural activities within the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority landscape. Conservation goals were also rated highly within this area, which, according to Chitakira and Torquebiau (2010), 'reflects the influence of effective conservation programmes on going in the area'.

Project Proponents and Donors

The Eco-Lubombo Programme and Lubombo Conservancy is spearheaded and managed by the Swaziland National Trust Commission, who currently act as both project managers and community liaison officers. A depiction of the governance and operational structure

is provided in Appendix 1 of this document – this structure shows the SNTC as the foremost management body overseeing the entire Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) and Eco-Lubombo programmes (ELP). They provide coordination and guidance to the ELP at both national and LTFCA level, providing financial and human resources, and ensuring that there is adequate support at national level to achieve the aims and objectives of the ELP. They also write proposals and approach international donors for funding.

From its inception, the Eco-Lubombo Programme emphasized a collective methodology to achieving the protected landscape approach and established partnerships with key stakeholders in the region, including COSPE, Kingsley Holgate Foundation and other NGOs. The landscape approach, which has been promoted internationally in recent years as the way forward in community conservation and development projects, attracted international donors such as the Netherlands Government and GIZ-SADC, who have made significant financial contributions to the programme, allowing a number of milestones to be reached; this was revealed by project authorities during interviews, and was also very clear in the project reports analysed as part of the study. Funding from these international organisations for instance, largely supported the construction of the Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge. Sustainable livelihood projects, such as the sustainable agriculture, in Mhlumeni, and other Lubombo communities, were established with support from the Netherlands and facilitated locally by COSPE. COSPE is an Italian non-profit organisation active in about 30 developing countries, with a special focus on supporting emerging economies in long-term economic and social development programmes. Its principle is to incorporate local stakeholders in participatory processes during project implementation. COSPE values education of local communities and imparting practical knowledge so that communities can sustain development projects in the long-term. This NGO has been active in Swaziland since the late 1990s, and working primarily in the Lubombo region of Swaziland. Although the Lubombo region has maintained the lowest population figures of all the regions in Swaziland (at 194 323, 1999 Annual Statistical Bulletin) its poverty levels have surged, and it is currently the poorest region in Swaziland, which is why organisations such as COSPE concentrate

their poverty alleviation efforts there. At the same time, it has one of the most biodiversity rich unadulterated landscapes in the country, which presents a multitude of development, conservation and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Applicable Policy Environment

There are a number of global agreements to which Swaziland is party to, including a number United Nations conventions and initiatives. Relevant to biodiversity, Swaziland is party to the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) governing international trade in wildlife, which Swaziland acceded to in 1997 and is being implemented by the King's Office through Big Game Parks. The country further signed and ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1994, which is an international legally binding treaty, whose objectives include the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable utilisation of biodiversity, as well as fair and equitable benefit sharing of resources. Both the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) programme and the Eco-Lubombo programme are aimed at similar goals, with sustainability of both nature and communities at the heart of each programme.

Swaziland has also entered into a number of regional environmental conventions and agreements related to biodiversity, including: The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968); The Cooperation Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora (the Lusaka Agreement) (1994); The General Transfrontier Conservation and Resource Area Protocol (2000); and The Lubombo Conservancy-Goba Transfrontier Conservation Area Protocol (2000).

Nationally, Swaziland has actively participated in the promotion of sound and sustainable environmental management and biodiversity conservation, as well as supporting development projects that have a bearing on conservation through the continued formulation and implementation of exhaustive policy frameworks. Some of the local policies and legal frameworks relevant to the environment, conservation and to biodiversity are described below.

The **Environment Management Act No. 5/2002** is the overarching environmental

legislation in Swaziland and provides for the enhancement, protection and conservation of the environment and where appropriate, the sustainable management of natural resources. It is observed by all government structures and provides for the establishment of the Swaziland Environment Authority (SEA), which then has the mandate to enforce all environmental regulations, particularly in urban areas. The Act further provides for a comprehensive public participation process, as well as stringent penalties, including legal procedure, if any persons are found to be contravening its tenets. As dynamic as the Act is, in practice it is often not applied especially in the rural context. The Environmental Management Act is supported by the **Environmental Audit, Assessment and Review Regulations,** which have the main objective of providing for the undertaking of an environmental assessment prior to the commencement of any developmental activities in the country, so as to institute mitigation measures to any adverse impacts on the environment during their implementation. The aim is to ensure, as much as possible, that biodiversity is protected, or that provisions for the minimization of potential environmental impacts are made. They further put into effect the public participation process, providing guidelines and a practical framework.

One of the most important pieces of legislation where biodiversity and protected areas are concerned is the **Swaziland National Trust Commission Act No. 9/1972.** The Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC) is a body corporate established by the SNTC Act of 1972 and is given the powers to, amongst other things, proclaim and manage the countries national parks. The King is actively involved, and is often consulted on matters relating to lands under conservation or those to be incorporated into the protected area network. The objectives of the National Parks and Nature Reserves are outlined in Section 15 of the Act and include the promotion and conservation of indigenous animals and plants and the protection of the natural ecology and environment of the park or reserve. Activities that are destructive to the existence of these parks and reserves (as set out in the Objectives in Section 15), and to biodiversity are prohibited. Prohibited activities are listed in Section 20 and include, among many others, the killing (poaching) or injuring of plants and animals, and the removal of any object from within the park or reserve. The objectives of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Areas (LTFCA) are aligned with the SNTC revised protected area legislation.

The **Game (Amendment) Act No. 51/1953** (amended in 1991 and 1993) provides for the preservation of game and any other types of wildlife in Swaziland. It allows for hunting, but specifies a set hunting season, and further classifies game as royal, specially protected, and common, and then regulates their protection through a permit system. The Act controls the trafficking of game through the imposition of stringent sentences. It also provides for sustainable exploitation of game and wildlife by providing for hunting methods and devices.

In terms of the local policy framework, there are a number of policies that are applicable to nature conservation and development, however the one that is most relevant to biodiversity is the **2001 Draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP),** which is primarily aimed at the conservation of biodiversity without compromising the potential natural resource utilisation. This again shows that this policy is aligned with the Biodiversity Convention, as well as local goals and objectives of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area and Eco-Lubombo programmes. This policy however provides for the protection of natural ecosystems, without allowing for sustainable utilisation of natural resource within protected areas – this aspect of the policy therefore fails to make provisions for a landscape type of approaches that would allow integration of communities and protected areas, as well as allowing for communities to access and utilise protected area resources in a sustainable manner. The focus of the policy is on biodiversity conservation, which remains the main objective of many development projects, whilst actual community development and poverty alleviation lags behind within a conservation context.

The **2002 Tourism Policy and Strategy** is also relevant to biodiversity and community development as tourism in Swaziland is heavily reliant of environmental assets, particularly the diversity of the landscape and thriving natural resources. The draw card for many visitors to Swaziland is the beautiful countryside and different alternatives for natural landscapes, including wildlife parks and nature reserves. Eco-tourism has increasingly become popular, and falls within the scope of topical global concerns such as climate change and energy issues. The products of the Eco-Lubombo Programme in Mhlumeni are therefore tourism-related, with the development of an eco-trail that

traverses Swaziland, South Africa and Mozambique, and the establishment of the Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge. Shewula Mountain Camp has been long operational, and attracts many visitors each year, who contribute to the economic development of the community, as well as to the continued sustainable management of natural resources, particularly of the Shewula Community Nature Reserve. The policy further deals with natural resource mismanagement and unsustainable extraction of forest resources for the purposes of handicrafts – these remain prevalent in tourist hotspots even though they are especially damaging to the environment. In Swaziland, 'the development of the tourism industry is one of the more promising areas for enhancing income generation for the poor', (UNDP 2016, p. 87). It is therefore very difficult to dissuade local communities from engaging in such economically viable small businesses, and it is common to find stalls selling such handicraft products peppered along Swaziland's roadsides. In the Lubombo region, community members often illegally access protected areas to cut down trees for the fashioning of wooden bowls and platters, as well as wooden animal sculptures. Without the provision of alternatives, community members continue to extract these resources, which is why projects such as the Eco-Lubombo are important for both the protection of the environment as well as presenting rural communities with the option to engage in other income generating activities.

CHAPTER 5

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: POWER, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

This chapter explores some of the issues that emerged from an interrogation of the primary question of this research. Interviews were conducted in the Mhlumeni and Shewula communities of Swaziland's Lubombo region. Greater focus was awarded to the Mhlumeni community, as it is an on-going project and most of the project activities are fairly new; this afforded me the opportunity to observe the process of implementation, as well as speak to the community and project participants whilst the project was still foremost in their minds. Some of the project activities have been completed, which means that I was able to ascertain the community's perspective on various aspects of the project, eco-tourism products and the implementation process.

The principal research question was concerned with environmental justice as an overarching concept and how it plays out in community conservation development projects. Within this question, I wanted to look into the issues of access and exclusion, ownership and dispossession, connection and disconnection – these are issues that regularly make an appearance in community conservation development debates. Whereas conservation projects and community development projects are intrinsically good and beneficial, it is the nexus of the two that presents conflict – it is within this interface that the interrogation of this study finds itself.

The ensuing discussion will therefore delve into the findings of the study during the fieldwork exercise in the two communities; it will provide a discussion on issues of participation and inclusion within the community, matters of resource use and distribution both prior and post project implementation, as well as consider the roles of different players within the community and how these impact project implementation and sustainability. The crucial thread tying the entire discussion is the unanticipated importance of the role of power dynamics as they play out in community matters and in the implementation of projects. Supporting the discussion is evidence from interviews, community meeting and workshops, as well as observation.

Power Dynamics in Conservation Development Projects

The powerlessness of rural societies does not result from an inherent lack of power or a characteristic erosion of power to make decisions, participate or voice out contrasting perspectives to those in power, but presents as a social situation that has its roots in conditions of social inequality and in disempowering social solutions – it is in essence a social construct. In the case of the rural communities of Mhlumeni and Shewula, and consistent with the general context of all Swaziland's rural communities, it is the historical, traditional social norms and environment that creates fertile conditions for the individual's state of disempowerment and laissez faire attitude.

Power struggles within, as opposed to external influences, are stronger when it comes to environmental justice. Historically, it has been outside forces that have fostered injustices but in this instance, under the guise of tradition, community leaders have such immense power that their actions are at times self-serving, and undermine some of the interests of community members. In terms of environmental justice issues of power and inclusion/exclusion therefore, community members are included in as far as they support the decisions made by community leaders. With regard to decision-making (another environmental justice principle), there is very limited "real" decision-making that is devolved to community members. So although their support is crucial to the success of development projects, it is the nature and quality of this support that is questionable. It is the power dynamics within the community that will influence the decision making process – who makes decisions, motivations behind the decisions made, who those decisions are made for. This takes us back to Sadan (1997, p. 39) who stipulates, 'The purpose of power is to prevent groups from participating in the decision-making processes and also to obtain the passive agreement of these groups to this situation'. In essence therefore, the powerful elites favour conditions that will discourage people from participating fully in decision-making. Their silence (passive agreement), as will also be seen later in the discussion, is taken to mean that they in fact support the development activity. If community members only support the project superficially, either to please or to be acknowledged by community leaders, or because they are incentivised by the potential project benefits, rather than because they wholeheartedly believe in the project,

then the sustainability of the project is compromised. Community Member 9 for instance, who had portrayed herself as a staunch supporter of the project initially, eventually admitted to some reservations on secondary interviews. She stated that her grievances did not lie with the project itself or with the project authorities, but rather with the community leaders. She further lamented about the general deplorable socio-economic state of the village and unresolved challenges faced by the community as a whole. The preeminent view therefore, held by NGOs and their international funders, that the community within these rural traditional settings is a homogenous, well-articulated and cohesive unit, whilst attractive, is far from the reality. The empirical evidence gathered in this research indicates that placing the community at the centre of conservation and resource management ignores the 'critical interests and processes within the community and other social actors' (Agrawal and Gibson 1999), which ultimately contributes to the failure of these conservation development projects.

The project, therefore, while in itself satisfactory, did serve to highlight some of these dissatisfactions that were present prior to its commencement. It is a trying space in which project authorities find themselves because although they may be aware of the community dynamics and challenges, they do not have the latitude not authority to tackle internal community matters. The project authorities explained that even though they had worked with these communities for years, and built strong relationships, they were still largely perceived as outsiders and therefore not privy to most of the internal issues that concerned the members of the community, particularly when it comes to the handling of disputes. In this regard, the project authorities could offer advice when the community leaders seek it, but they will usually excuse themselves when the matter under discussion is sensitive or concerns more extensive community matters that are not directly related to the development activity. Some community members have disclosed their sentiments privately to the project authorities, but in those cases they request anonymity; even then, the project authorities may not necessarily be in a position to offer any significant resolutions, or to act on their behalf. This again is a testament of how deep the power held by the leading elite goes. There is no freedom of speech amongst the members of the community due to fear of losing face within the community, losing their leader's respect

or fear of being ostracised (Community Members 11, 15 and 16. Indeed community members that show any dissent are seen as troublemakers (Community Member 11) and are simply excluded from project activities rather than engaged to figure out the source of their frustrations. As a result, such community members refrain from further participation and maintain a negative attitude towards these development projects and the community leaders that endorse them. The passivity that external project proponents, researchers, NGOs, etc. may find in some of these communities may be mistakenly identified as 'indifference, political incapacity [or apathy], cynicism… The causes…are sought in the circumstances of their life or in their culture' (Sadan 1997, p. 40). This is truly a fallacy in the majority of cases, as the answers to such behaviour usually lie in the context of power relations within that community – the nuances of which can only be understood through a lengthy period immersed and integrated in that community.

The project leaders reiterated, on a number of occasions, the importance of having the community leaders on board prior to the implementation of these projects (Interviews: Project Leader 1, Project Leader 2, NGO Representative 2). Without their consent and continued support, successful implementation would be near impossible; 'Our foremost objective when we first arrive in any community is to get the community leaders on our side since they determine whether the project will be accepted. It is important to develop and sustain strong bonds with the community leaders, as they not only help us achieve better chances of successful project implementation, but also allow and facilitate access to the community as a whole' (Project Leader 1). With community leaders playing such a fundamental role in such matters, it makes it even more challenging for project leaders to question their actions and to make suggestions that contradict a particular or favoured approach.

Having spoken to the project leaders, it is evident that they have spent a significant amount of time interacting with the community, educating them and holding consultation meetings. It has also been beneficial that the community liaison officer (Project Leader 1) is from the Shewula/Mhlumeni area, and is both well liked and trusted by the community.

The presence of a local resident[10] in the managerial echelons of the project team may be a positive aspect in that there is personal relevance in the successful outcome of the project, and vested interest in improving the quality of life of the community, and there is furthermore the contribution of more in-depth knowledge about the internal conditions of the community that an outsider may not be immediately privy to. In such traditional societies, having a pre-existing relationship with not only the leaders of the community, but with the community as a whole can aid in increasing the chances of success for that particular project.

The specific role of community leaders and the implications for development projects and for the inclusion of ordinary community members is discussed in greater depth in the following sections.

The Role of Traditional Community Leaders

The dual system of land rights, ownership and utilisation in Swaziland cannot be divorced from conservation efforts in the context of development projects. The tensions that exist within the traditional land tenure system are glaringly visible when such projects are implemented, whereby the various stakeholders in land debates cannot be excluded if the projects are to enjoy any semblance of success. The power awarded to Community Leaders, and Chiefs in particular, within the context of Swazi Nation Land (SNL), of which almost 50% is allocated to customary land under chiefs, impacts the manner in which development and conservation projects are implemented in traditional, rural societies. It goes beyond that to affecting, in a substantial way, the lives of those subjects who call these SNL areas home; the Chiefs may determine who has access to natural resources and communal resources, who benefits from development efforts, which areas will be set aside for conservation or grazing, and even who can "own" land, or at worst, who cannot. This tenuous tenure system has become problematic where conservation and development projects are concerned; when residents do not have secure tenure it presents complex implications in the manner in which they will respond to the introduction of anything new, and which has the potential to affect their lives and

[10] The project's community liaison officer is also a member of Shewula community

livelihoods. Below is a table that summarises the various land tenure arrangements in Swaziland:

Table 4: Land Tenure Types in Swaziland (Swaziland Environment Authority (2002) in Mabuza et. al. (2012, p. 73)

Land Tenure	**Percentage of Total Land**	
SNL		
Leased to private companies and estates	6.5	
Under Ministry of Agriculture	6.8	
Under National Trust Commission	2.6	
Under Tibiyo/Tisuka TakaNgwane	2.9	
Customary land under chiefs	49.6	74.2
TDL		
Urban area	0.7	
Rural area	24.4	25.1
Crown Land	0.4	0.4
Water Reservoirs	0.2	0.2
Total	100	100

All Swazi Nation Land is registered in the King's name and held in trust for the Swazi people, and is overseen by hereditary Chiefs, who bequeath land to subjects through a practice called *kukhonta* – whereby an individual pledges allegiance to the chief, and is awarded a parcel of land in acknowledgement and acceptance (Rose 1987; Dlamini and Masuku 2011; Mabuza et. al. 2012). The implications of tenure will be discussed in greater depth in the next section, but bear mention here in order to highlight the far-reaching power of the Chiefs in these rural settings, and consequently the significant role that they play in matters of both development and conservation.

From the very onset of this fieldwork exercise, as a researcher seeking to gain access to the rural communities of Shewula and Mhlumeni, I was advised that the first port of call was the traditional leadership of each of the communities, which comprised of a number of structures, including the Chiefs (the highest echelon in the traditional community leadership structures) and the *Indvuna* (Chief's deputy), as well as other supportive structures, such as *bandlancane* (Chief's inner council). These traditional structures are supported by the more 'western'[11] form of governance, including the Rural Development Officer, the Regional Administrative Officer, and the *Tinkhundla* system (a local government administrative structure in Swaziland) - all equally important in Swaziland's dual system of governance. The power relations that exist however in this dual system (customary law Vs. western laws) are often riddled with tension that emanates from a lack of clarity on which system (traditional Swazi or western) takes precedence at the different levels of governance. Amidst a hierarchy of Chiefdoms and *Tinkhundla* (regional administrative areas), there is a tenuous understanding of the roles and powers that are held under each offices; an understanding that needs to be clearly grasped by project proponents intending to introduce projects within these rural community spheres – gaining clarity on such matters in Swaziland can be an exercise in patience as they tend to be sensitive, contested and governed by sometimes murky protocols. It is therefore paramount for foreign organisations to create strong partnerships with local groups that have a better understanding of these intricate traditional structures so that the correct procedures may be followed and proper structures consulted when introducing and implementing projects in communities. These complexities are explored further in the section on 'The Land Issue'.

In Swaziland, at the local level is the chiefdom (*umphakatsi*), which is led by a chief (*sikhulu*) who is supported by a deputy (*indvuna*) and an inner council (*bandlancane*). The chief, together with his council, is responsible for all the members of that community or chiefdom, and makes all the important decisions relating to land rights, access to resources and the general well being of the people within that community. The chief and

[11] Western, as these governance structures are the legacy of the colonial government and follow democratic processes, as opposed to the Swazi Common Law system of governance

the council are also responsible for administering justice and maintaining peaceful relations within the community. Land is allocated to members of the community through the *khonta* system, as explained above, in which tracts of land are sub-divided and through a 'tying of the knot' (*kubopha lifindvo*), the equivalent of which would be the signing of the title deed in freehold land – in this way, the patch of land will be assigned to the family for an unspecified period of time (a notional 99 years, however there is no formal written record). Interviews conducted in both Mhlumeni and Shewula indicated that community members shared this similar understanding of land allocation, and administration within the context of Swazi Nation Land. The land tenure system in Swaziland remains one of the key barriers to individual 'ownership' of land, which then puts limits to what people can do and achieve on their designated pieces of land, especially when it comes to long term security. The term 'ownership' in the traditional Swazi context has very different connotations to the way the word is legally understood within a western context. The land is held indefinitely by the family to which it is awarded, but may revert to the Crown or to the King at any period should it be required for a higher priority use. The affected family will always be given another piece of land should this occur, but the process does not necessarily take into account the ties that people have built with the land and with their neighbours. Compensation may be awarded for the investments that the family have made on the land, particularly with regard to any structures that are on that piece of land. However, it is not only buildings that people get attached to, it could be the particular aspect of the area, the quality of the fields and rangelands or proximity to water sources, or the significance may lie with ancestral beliefs, traditional rituals performed on that piece of land, and even the presence of family burial grounds. The period of use in the assignation of land parcels is not predetermined and therefore the family will most like retain perpetual use of the land, albeit with certain application of restriction on some activities. The head of the home may have to report and get approval from the community leaders should they want to make significant structural, and other, changes to the land.

This system of land ownership has important connotations when it comes to development projects, and the long-term implications for those projects. For instance, it raises the

question of whether community members will feel that they truly own a project and whether they will put all their efforts towards the success of a project if they know that their future land rights are uncertain. The conservation development projects are usually dependent on the community working together in a highly organised fashion to set aside community land that will go towards conservation and eco-tourism efforts. The landscape approach to conservation in fact promotes the dedication of more community lands towards conservation initiatives. Without any title or surety to future rights and ownership to the land, it becomes a greater challenge to ensure communal interest in the protection and preservation of that land, as well as the sustainability of these development projects. This, according to community members, is exacerbated by the rampant allocation (or "selling" as pronounced by some community members) of virgin lands to new families or individuals that desire to settle in their area (Community Members 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18) – they predicted that this would cause big problems in the future when their children would also seek to start their own homesteads in the community only to find that the chiefs have handed over all the land (Community Member 9, Community Member 17).

In an interview with Community Member 4, a resident of Mhlumeni community, I raised the issue of the tenuous tenure scenario. His view was that the situation was not as problematic as one would envisage, as there have been historically very few incidents where land has been completely repossessed and people in rural communities resettled. Land disputes are known to happen in a rural setting, especially when there is a vacancy in the chieftaincy position, either due to the death of a chief or because the existing chief is still too young to know the history of the land under his management and the history of the families who live in his community. Some of the more intricate cases have been well publicised in Swaziland. Since there is no paperwork in the apportioning and awarding of land parcels, historical knowledge of land ownership is oral-dependent, and may at times be lost. That is why the existence and active participation of groups such as *bandlancane*, *bandlankhulu* (council of community members), *imisumphe* (long-term residents of an area), and even *lusendvo* (individual family council) are crucial in community and community development matters as these groups remain even when there is no chief in

the community (Community Member 4, Project Leader 1, Community Leader 4). The council of community members and long-term residents of the community play an important role is the settling of disputes relating to land, as well as in land use planning within the community. During my time in the field, I was fortunate enough to observe these councils perform a reconnaissance of the area adjacent to the Mhlumeni Lodge with the purpose of demarcating additional lands and marking out a proposed fence line for the Lodge. The *Indvuna* insisted that all members of the council be present so that they could all share their knowledge regarding the ownership of the lands that would be affected, and how the affected families would be compensated or whether the lands would simply be appropriated for communal good. Such decisions are usually made in consultation with members of the family (through their *lincusa* (representative) or the family council). Within both Mlawula and Mbuluzi conservation areas for instance, some community members are able to point to sections of land where their ancestors used to live and point to where the boundaries of their community areas used to be before the land was taken over by the game reserves. The Chief (who is hereditary is Swazi custom) usually has the ability to shed light on such matters and resolve land dispute claims, although where central government and the King have a vested interest, they may assume the responsibility of settling these disputes.

Due to the perspectives that some community members hold towards community land ownership and boundaries, there is often some level of dissent amongst these members whereby certain factions resist conservation development projects. These members put forward the argument that the intention of conservationists and development projects is to take away even more of their communal lands and give them to animals – and as a result view such projects with negativity. Community Member 4 pointed out a few households in the Mhlumeni community who had been against the very notion of allowing the Eco-Lubombo project to be implemented, citing that the conservationists gave more value to animals than they did to people. Community Member 4 was of the view that the lack of a chief within the community, and having to rely on the *indvuna*, was part of the problem, as a chief would have had the power to give direction and lead by example, thus silencing some of these voices of dissent. When asked about the resistance from the community,

the project leaders indicated that in their extensive experience with community development work, they preferred to have some resistance from the very early stages of introducing the project to the community. This allowed them to get to the bottom of the issues and iron them out well before the project was implemented. Problems that arise at a more mature stage of project implementation may at times become insurmountable and may even lead to the team halting the implementation process.

The importance of involving the Chief and his support council was also observed in the successful implementation of the conservation development project in Shewula community. The project leaders, the management staff of both reserves, as well as the Shewula community members sung the late Chief Mbandzamane Sifundza's accolades. In a conversation with one of the reserve authorities at Mbuluzi Game Reserve, he mourned the loss of the inspirational leader, who took an active part in conservation matters; he went as far as to label the late Chief a conservationist. Although he was a traditional leader, who did not have extensive formal schooling, he embraced the idea of conservation, environmental protection and sustainability. He was also a visionary, "who foresaw the future benefits of implementing development projects within the community", the reserve authority explained. He believed that if environmental education was instilled in the younger generation, then they would grow up to appreciate and behave in an environmentally responsible manner. The forward thinking attitude of the community leader therefore assisted in fostering a strong relationship with development project managers, with the game reserves, and with the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC).

The late Chief Mbandzamane was, according to all the stakeholders (project leaders, community leaders, community members and reserve authorities), instrumental in enforcing a strong united community spirit in the Shewula community, and most residents that you meet from Shewula are very proud of their successful Mountain Camp (the first community Eco-tourism project in Swaziland), which came through the Lubombo Conservancy efforts, and was designed as a community conservation development effort. In his campaigns to develop his community whilst protecting the

environment, the chief facilitated and environmental education programme with Mbuluzi Game Reserve, whereby young students would visit the reserve and go through a day's educational programme, which included a tour of the reserve, visual educational material and presentations by the reserve staff. In addition to this, Chief Mbandzamane was also interested in promoting the protected landscape approach to conservation, and pushing the boat further by introducing wild animals into the community lands (thus the establishment of the Shewula Community Nature Reserve). The project team, including the Swaziland National Trust Commission, were excited by such a proposal, as they perceived it as indicative of the fact that the community had taken ownership of the project and felt confident enough that they could manage game within their lands without significant fear of illegal resource utilisation. This was also testament of the behaviour change and level of environmental awareness within the community; the success of their projects, especially the Mountain Camp, has also been responsible for boosting the community confidence as they now have the knowledge and experience of running a successful community initiative.

Evidence of the interest held by community leaders was also seen at a Lubombo Traditional Authorities meeting which was held at Magadzavane Lodge in Mlawula Game Reserve on the 2nd and 3rd of August 2017. I was able to be a participating observer in the meeting, and conducted a few interviews with the participants as well. The concerned Lubombo communities were well represented by their leaders, including chiefs, chief's deputies, members of community councils and some of the members of the community trust boards that manage some of the conservation development projects, such as the eco-tourism initiatives. The overriding sense in the meeting was the excitement that the leaders had regarding the conservation development projects and a keen interest in gaining knowledge both about conservation and natural resource management in general, but also interest in learning from Shewula and Mhlumeni communities who have already successfully implemented community development projects. The community leaders participated actively during this workshop and did not shy away from making contributions and presentations about what they had learned. The bulk of the time was given towards active participation from the leaders, whereby they

were given the opportunity to share their views and make suggestions towards the nature of the development projects they wanted for each of their communities and how they wanted to manage these initiatives.

The role of the community leaders is therefore incredibly important in rural communities. The success of development projects is to a large extent dependent on whether the chief and supporting leadership clearly understand and accept the project's goals and outcomes. Without their active participation in project implementation and without their consent and buy in, as well as a deep understanding of the purpose and importance of these conservation development projects, the projects' success is greatly compromised. In most cases, project proponents will succeed in implementing the projects, but they are rarely sustainable beyond the first few years. The approach that has been taken by the Eco-Lubombo Project, acting within the broader Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area programme, with a tremendous emphasis on the inclusion of traditional leaders, is a positive step.

Most community residents hold their leaders in high esteem and will therefore comply with any directive that comes from them – their leaders' support of a project is usually enough to sway the majority of community members. It is however important to note that this is not indicative of a dictatorship process with regard to decision-making within the community. The process of project acceptance and ensuring community ownership still entails a series of community meetings, which may be initially called by the chief at the *umphakatsi*, and extensive workshops facilitated by the project team. All community members, whether male or female, young or old, are given an opportunity to participate and air their views. The fact of the matter though is that in some cases community leaders may go behind the backs of community members and make autonomous decisions, usually for personal gain. In an interview with one of the Chiefs (who is also a member of the Swazi royal family), he lamented that it was unfortunate that in some Swazi communities corruption has been known to take place where the leaders mismanage community project funds, or allow projects to go ahead without involving the community simply because they have been given material or financial incentive. He stressed that if

the chief has the interest of the community at heart this is usually not an issue, and that it is vital for project proponents to first approach the community leaders should they want to introduce a project that will have a bearing on the community. He concluded by saying that after having been through such educational workshops, the leaders will subsequently call a series of meetings in their respective communities to disseminate the information.

As much as the role of the traditional leaders is crucial, it is important to understand that there is still a gap that exists between the leaders and their subjects – the community members. Although development proponents will not gain access to the community without consent from the leaders, in order to confidently claim that they have successfully implemented a landscape approach, and managed to include the community in a participatory process, there is a lot more that needs to be done. Admittedly, whilst a community leader might be on board with a development activity, and have influence on community members, dissatisfaction amongst the people will not lead to long-term project support. The following section therefore looks into the level of inclusion of community members in development projects, and what this means for the success of those projects, even with support from community leaders. The complexities portrayed in this section and in the following, highlights the important point raised in the literature regarding the focus awarded to community based conservation projects, wherein the primary concern is the community, whereas much focus is required on multiplicity of factors and interests, with various actors within the community pushing their own agenda forward. Focus needs to shift towards how these actors and institutions (both internal and external) influence decision-making processes (Agrawal and Andrade 1999). Oftentimes, the community becomes peripheral to the meaningful processes that ultimately effect decisions that will affect people on the ground; the community only serves to provide a subject or vehicle for debate and for accessing large funds from NGOs, INGOs and BINGOs.

Community Participation and Inclusion

As portrayed in the literature, one of the main tenets of environmental justice is the level to which communities or people are included in conservation projects. A departure from

the protectionist model of natural resource and biodiversity conservation has been observed and promoted in recent years, moving towards a more harmonious relationship between communities and protected areas, where linkages are made between biodiversity protection and human benefits (Cock and Fig 2000). An important first step to establishing this holistic conceptualisation of environmental protection is to ensure that the concerned communities are included and involved. This is the main principle behind the protected landscape approach adopted in the Eco-Lubombo programme, and within the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) as a whole.

Participation has emerged as an elusive concept within the community, and bears definition. There have been some standardised definitions of the concept, which will only be summarised here, as the crux of my inquiry relates more to how the project participants, from community members to project proponents, understand the concept and put it to practice. The table below is based on Markowitz' (2016) discussion on participation (adapted from Pretty 1995, p. 1252), and serves to aid the discussion on how the stakeholders in the LTFCA programme perceived their role within this participatory process and what they view their level of inclusion to be. Juxtaposed with these typologies of participation presented below is the participation model (or guideline) employed by the Eco-Lubombo Programme in their community participatory process.

Table 5: Typologies of Participation (Adapted from Markowitz 2016, p. 15)

Typology	**Characteristic**
Manipulative participation	Participation is superficial, with unelected and powerless 'representatives' in project committees.
Passive participation	People are merely made aware of decisions that have been taken at higher levels of the project implementation. The people's contribution is not taken into consideration.
Participation by consultation	People are consulted in a 'question and answer' fashion – at the level of information gathering, without necessarily taking people's views on board.

Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources in return for material incentives – the contribution of labour by community members in community development projects is common.
Functional participation	People participate in formalised groups to expedite predetermined goals. It may be interactive and there may be shared decision-making, but usually only after the project proponents have made important decisions.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, and not just a means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining the structures of practices.
Self mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how the resources are used. Self-mobilisation can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework.

Evidently, the ideal scenario then in terms of community participation and inclusion is to promote the last two forms of participation – interactive participation and self-mobilisation – which are the highest and most inclusive levels of participation. There is a clear picture that emerged throughout the time period spent at both Mhlumeni and Shewula communities. In Mhlumeni particularly, I was able to observe and participate in some of the community engagement activities, whereby I was able to assess the type and level of participation adopted by the project participants. Having interacted with the project managers (Project Leader 1 and Project Leader) prior to any exposure to the community, I was under the impression that the level of participation was quite good, whereby the community participated either functionally or interactively. In several

interviews with the project leaders (Project Leader 1) it was made clear that they believed they had achieved the best level of participation and a high percentage of inclusion of all community members. In particular reference to Mhlumeni community, they were adamant that at one stage or another during project implementation they had managed to interact and engage every adult community member. This certainty on their part was in their perspective supported by the number of community meetings, workshops and other engagement activities that they had hosted over the years during the implementation of the project.

The project leaders (Project Leader 1) confirmed that they had had numerous engagements with all stakeholders, particularly the community, and had received support from most of the community leaders. Project Leader 1 continued to explain that they followed quite a rigorous process when introducing a new project to a community, throughout the implementation stages until completion. The members of that community are always involved, starting from the Chief to the youth, the community is assisted to form various associations and committees, and community members are trained in the management and running of the project products. The project team further ensures that the project committees develop organizational structures that will aid them not only in the daily administration of the project activities, but also in the management of the finances raised from the operation of the project products (Project Leader 1). This would mean that there is functional participation within the project environment, where community members formalise themselves and take up certain responsibilities in the implementation and running of the project. They furthermore possess decision-making powers, and can develop their own goals and objectives regarding the outcome they foresee for the project and project products. It is imperative to note that whilst there was functional participation, there was also a significant cohort of those interviewed who only engaged in passive participation, and were in fact of the opinion that most community members simply took directives from their community leaders without questioning much of what they were presenting. They felt that their opinions and contributions were not sought, and even when given were not necessarily applied to any decision-making process, as

decisions are usually already made at a higher level before the project is even introduced to the people.

With this in mind therefore, and through some of the interviews with other stakeholders, such as the consultants, NGOs and some of the early interviews with community members, there was a sense that the project proponents had been thorough in their attempts to fully include the community. The project leaders were all very well versed in community development initiatives, as well as in conservation programmes, they had varied and extensive experience with such projects, and have dealt with traditional societies and authorities for over 20 years jointly. They were therefore undoubtedly experts in their field and are more than able to deal with and resolve challenges that accompany such complex community development projects, for the complexity of community development projects, especially those related to conservation can be tremendously intricate and near impossible to implement successfully. Campbell and Vaino-Mattila (2003, p. 418) assert that 'it is with biodiversity and wildlife that the largest gaps between the concepts [participatory development and community-based conservation] can be seen'. In support of their claims as a result, I sought to ascertain the veracity of the statements they had made in the interviews. The aim therefore was, through the interview process, to establish whether community members did indeed feel that they had been adequately involved and included in the participation process, and what the levels of representation were amongst community members. Mhlumeni presented the best opportunity for getting some of these answers, as the project is on going and very current.

In my early visits to Mhlumeni, I stayed in the newly completed Mhlumeni Mountain Camp (a product of the LTFCA/Eco-Lubombo Programme) and conducted several interviews with the staff there, who are also members of the community (Community Member 2 and Community Member 3). What I discovered was the seemingly unwavering support of the project, the project proponents and the extensive participation process that the community underwent (Community Member 2). The importance of community buy in was highlighted as the one act that would determine project success or

failure. To get the community on board, it was firstly necessary to educate them about the project and especially about the potential benefits that would accrue to the community (Community Member 2). It was stressed that most of the community members were ignorant about environmental matters and the importance of conservation, and because they could not see how their activities could change the trajectory of natural resource sustainability (positively or negatively), they were unable to participate fully or contribute towards any meaningful decisions. In other instances, people are also content with being ignorant, and do not show much interest in any shared community activities – these kinds of people are also quick to dismiss any new ideas without giving them a chance (Community Member 2 and Community Member 3). However, it is important to note that these matters are generally not as simplistic as they first appear, as there are usually a plethora of other underlying factors, that may not be commonly known by all within the community, which may deter community members from participating in development projects. Having said that, it is also a reality that some community members, and even entire communities in some instances, may have generated a culture of dissent, indolence, general disinterest towards development projects, especially when participation calls for them to get involved in activities, and will usually be motivated by financial or material incentives rather than the altruistic objective of community growth and advancement. For instance in Mhlumeni, the promise of economic growth for the community was not such an attraction for some of the community members (Community Members 11, 15, 16, 17) who raised the question of personal beneficiation, and further questioned whether the benefits from the programme would trickle down to all members of the community or just the lucky few. Although the conservation of the environment for future generations is incentive enough for members to participate in development activities, especially since most directly eke out their livelihood from environmental resources, it is still important to interrogate the real economic benefits of these community development projects for all members of the community.

While some of the community members (Community Members 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) are very well versed on project particulars, most of these are members that have some level of involvement or role within the programme (LTFCA/Eco-Lubombo); this is true for

both Mhlumeni and Shewula communities. This observation became even more apparent the longer I spent in these communities, whereby there appeared to be a cycle where those who participated more benefited more from the project, and in turn had a very positive overall outlook on the project, which then increased their likelihood for further participation in, and higher potential to benefit from, future activities. Random interviews conducted with community members that were not directly involved in the projects however revealed another side to the story. These interviews highlighted the questions of 'attitudes and values held towards community projects, and who these projects are garnered for, as well as who is allowed to participate'. They also probed the very nature and premise behind the concept of participation. Another factor that was brought to question was whether physical distance and access to the proposed project site was a contributing factor in whether residents participated or not. Community Members who live towards the outskirts of both communities and therefore a fair distance from the Mhlumeni and Shewula Lodges raised the issue of isolation and feeling like that distanced them from any community projects and deterred them from participating actively (Community Members 12, 19 and 20). One of the Mhlumeni community members stated that due to the fact that he resided a fair distance away from the action (the project site, the community meeting hall and the Mlawula Nature Reserve), the project activities were not very relevant to him and his family, and as a result he felt that the project was already earmarked for certain people in the community. As valid a point as this may be, there are community members that live very close to the Lodge site who have a different perspective; for them the proximity to the site selected for the Lodge has created more problems as they have lost some of their land, and there have been no talks of compensation to date. One of these community members proclaimed that:

> 'These lands have always been in our family. When I arrived at Mhlumeni as a young woman to marry my husband, I found my husband's family farming in this area. Our family has grown and our children have been able to set up their own homesteads on the land. Now that it has been taken from us, I worry that the children and grandchildren will not have a place in the future. The community leaders have said that since the land is lying fallow and is rocky it is not that useful to us, but I have managed for years to cultivate some crops, and am only unable to do so now due to old age and because the children have either left the community due to a lack of jobs which means that they cannot help tend to the fields. This however does not mean that they will not be able to do so in the future.' (Community Member 17, aged: late 60s)

Other community members in Mhlumeni shared similar sentiments, and further complained that compensation for their lost lands is not necessarily welcome, as some of these areas had been in their families for generations and hold sentimental value. Furthermore, the lands that they may be awarded may not be within the homestead's vicinity, which brings about further challenges with tending to them, especially with older residents, and ensuring security for their crops would be difficult if they are designated for agricultural purposes. Lastly, the newly allocated lands may be in worse condition than the land that they have been cultivating for years (Community Member 11 and Community Member 13).

Shewula residents (Community Members 19 and 20), who are younger members in the 19 – 25 age range, felt that both their age and location within the community impacted negatively on their inclination to participate meaningfully. Although community meetings are open to all members of the community, younger member often feel that their voices are not as appreciated as the older and more respected members of the community. 'The youth's views may occasionally diverge from those of older residents, and the project products that they envisage as potential beneficial for them do not necessarily equate to those of the older generations or to those pre-determined by the project proponents,' (Community Member 19). This underlines the difficulty in consolidating diverse viewpoints within a community into a comprehensive participatory process. Those that feel marginalised and perceive their perspectives as being ignored by community leaders, elders and project authorities may remove themselves from the process and cultivate the belief that they are neither respected members in the community nor is their participation necessary for the project to go on. Yet, these younger groups have the potential to contribute innovative ideas to the community development process. It is important to note that all community members interviewed, even those that had not attended community meetings, were aware of the programme and some of the activities that were taking place as part of the project implementation. So even those that did not show much of an interest did admit that there had been some level of participation, albeit at the lowest level in their opinion.

Some community members from Mhlumeni – the relatively young – were dismissive of any voices of dissent, saying that everyone knew about the meetings and had an opportunity to participate – it was only a matter of choice. They, for instance, took interest, and have continued to further their knowledge by associating themselves with some of the game rangers and reserve managers from Mlawula and Mbuluzi Game Reserve (Community Members 2, 3 and 8) and have successfully trained as nature guides. Having had no experience of environmental management and nature conservation prior to the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area Programme (of which the Eco-Lubombo project is a part), they made concerted efforts to show interest and pursue knowledge. For this, one of the guides (Community Member 2) says that they are usually ridiculed or not seen as "real men" in the community. A lot of their contemporaries are involved in illegal hunting or poaching, and ownership of hunting dogs in the Mhlumeni community is indicative of one's manliness, and gains respect from other men. In his opinion therefore, it is not because people are excluded intentionally, or even because they are not invited to participate, but a simple matter of a lack of interest, and wanting to pursue illegal activities – he said this in particular reference to the men in the community. The two guides (Community Member 2 and Community Member 3) agreed that some of the male members who were against the project, especially in the early stages, were more worried that the presence of outsiders and increased activity in the community would expose their hunting activities, or would in fact become more of a barrier to their hunting practices.

Beneficiation and Project Ownership

The question of benefits came under scrutiny as far as participation and inclusion was concerned. Residents were clearly incentivised to participate where they felt that they would directly benefit from the project, and that the benefits would be realised within a relatively short period. Although some residents were quick to pronounce "*sentela bantfwabetfu*" (we are doing this for our children) when pressed about whether they understood that their participation and actions now would benefit future generations, and that they may not necessarily see the benefits in the short term. This was not a lasting

assertion though, as most were preoccupied with what they could gain now, even those who spoke positively about the project. Their immediate concerns were on how they could improve their economic situation so that they were able to provide for their families. Access to natural resources in the protected areas for instance was one primary means in which they could realise those objectives in an expedient manner (this point will be discussed in depth in the following section). As specified in the project description, Shewula community is significantly larger than Mhlumeni , in terms of both area and population, and the size of a community will more than likely determine the percentage of those who benefit from development projects, depending on the size of the project. In this case, the Mhlumeni eco-tourism products that have been completed to date under the Eco-Lubombo Programme have not been rolled out at such a scale as to be of meaningful economic benefit to the entire community. As is the case with most development projects, benefits may be realised in the long term, which makes it even more important that community members have a high conviction in the value of the project, that they genuinely support, believe in and commit to the project's objectives.

Most of those directly involved with the Mhlumeni Lodge live at a comfortable walking distance from the Lodge, and participate more in community meetings and in the development activities. As a result, some community members felt that although these community development projects were a good thing in principle, they had nothing to do with the majority of residents, but were garnered for a select few (Community Member 12, Community Member 13). It was felt that because there was an existing Community Development Committee (CDC) when the LTFCA/Eco-Lubombo Programme was first introduced, the very same people from that committee had been placed in the Community Trust that ran the project activities by default, albeit under the guise of a democratic election process; the overriding feeling therefore was that such community projects are essentially designed to benefit a few in the community who are already in choice positions or have the Chief's ear. The general feeling was that communities are duped by project proponents and "foreigners that come into their communities without understanding local conditions" (Community Member 11) with promises of employment and economic benefits, and then further sold out by their leaders. Most of the time, even

when these projects do come into fruition, the benefits are very minimal, or never realised in the first place. The majority of the community at Mhlumeni have not received any direct or indirect benefits from the programme to date, whilst residents from Shewula acknowledged that they have seen a significant improvement in community life over the years as a result of the programme, but due to the size of the community, poverty rates were still high, and the number of people that have received real benefits is not encouraging.

I noted to some of the community members in Mhlumeni that the lack of benefits could be due to the fact that the project was still in its infancy, but they felt that so many in the community had been overlooked and only a few, either due to their influence or position in the community had been allowed to participate (Community Member 12, Community Member 13). One of the project leaders and another community member (Project Leader 1 and Community Member 9) indicated to me however that, firstly it would be impossible for everyone to be actively employed or involved in the project, but also, there were many community members who refused to even hear of the project in the early stages, choosing to believe that the community leaders had "sold" their land. Some of these community members had had a change of heart since, and unfortunately by then, positions had already been filled within the project. Community Member 9 continued to lament that it was unfortunate that some community members have become resentful towards them because they were ready and willing to volunteer their services in the early stages of project implementation. In further interviews it was revealed that some community members had only attended a few of the community educational meetings, with one of those interviewed having missed all of them. Most of them had concluded quite early on that it was not for them, and felt that they had other pressing priorities in their daily life to attend to than to waste their time on something that "already had its people" ("*inebantfu bayo leproject*" – a recurring statement amongst those interviewed, meaning; the project has its own people).

Prompted to explore the matter further, the majority of those interviewed acknowledged the potential benefits that community development projects brought, but continued to

express displeasure at the manner in which they are introduced to the people living in rural communities. Although they did not attend many of the educational meetings, some of the community members adamantly asserted that outsiders (referring to the project proponents) come into the community and "buy" favour from the leaders, who are easily swayed, and then without really consulting the residents, they make decisions that best suit themselves (Community Members 11, 15, 16). In a sense, this statement had some credit as one of the foremost goals of the project aims when it comes to participation (and is evident in the model used) is to target the community leaders, engaging them in a plethora of workshops and ensuring that they get on board with the intentions of project proponents. However, this is not to say that residents do not have a voice, only that major decisions will usually be made before the matter is presented to the community as a whole. There is an overall patriarchal sense that permeates throughout the community, in the project spaces, and is demonstrated in the manner in which decisions are made and by whom. Community leaders assume that they can speak and act on behalf of their community members, and make decisions in their best interest. Some community members refer to their chiefs as their 'father; (*'ngubabe wetfu'*) and perceive the traditional system of rule as the best *modus operandi* for Swazis, in fact, they rejoice in having someone who represents their interest outside the confines of the community. So the concept of having a benevolent leader is still very much alive amongst some member of the community.

> 'The community leaders told us about the project when the project team first came to Mhlumeni and this team is allowed access to the community to this day. They have taken us through a series of educational sessions, including a tour to Shewula Lodge to observe and learn from the team there. The tour was a turning point for most of the sceptics and most of the Mhlumeni residents became more excited about the project thereafter.' (Community Leader 14)

Community members therefore often do not make their own independent decisions as to whether they really like a particular development project, or explore whether the ideals of that particular project are really meaningful to them; it is simply a matter of business as usual, and following their leaders.

The idea of promoting ownership of community development projects, including conservation development projects, has emerged as a means in which the level of project success can be improved. Community members receiving development benefits have carried a number of labels over the years, since the development agenda began post World War II, from being seen as "target groups", to "beneficiaries", to "interest groups", then stakeholders, and now finally being seen more and more as project owners, (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003). Moore et al (1996), writing in Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, (2003), explains that ownership in a development project is high when:

> i) The intended beneficiaries substantially influence the conception, design, implementation and operations and maintenance of a development project; ii) the implementing agencies that influence the project are rooted in the recipient country and represent the interests of ordinary citizens; and iii) there is transparency and mutual accountability among the various stakeholders. (Moore et al 1996, p. 9 cited in Campbell and Vainio-Mattila 2003, p. 428)

Whilst the established development projects in Shewula (the Shewula Mountain Camp has been operating for 18 years) show signs of maturity and growth, the newly established Eco-Lodge at Mhlumeni has experienced teething problems and shows some cracks arising from the introduction of a development project into such a traditional rural environment. This does not take away from the positive intentions on the part of the project and project team, but only exposes some existing tensions within the community itself, which are highlighted by the potential benefits anticipated by the community from the project. Furthermore the level to which community feel that the project is theirs and is for their benefit is low, particularly for those that are not directly involved in projects activities. If the community members have not been involved in the conceptualisation of the project, then they may feel that it does not necessarily provide solutions for the issues that take priority in their lives. And for many community members, biodiversity conservation has fallen by the wayside in terms of their priorities, although they still acknowledge the potential benefits to be had if environmental health is maintained. The fact that there is still a lot of mistrust among the protected area management and communities is a major factor influencing the level to which community members engage positively with the conservation development project.

In an in depth interview with Community Member 9 and Community Member 10, women who are both active in the community, play an important role in the Mhlumeni Lodge and are part of the Community Trust, the challenges they have faced started to surface. Having spent some time with Community Member 9 on previous occasions, during which she mostly talked positively about the project, it was enlightening to spend in excess of three hours talking to the two women, whereby some of their misgivings emerged. Although they were still optimistic about the success of the project, the journey to having an operational lodge had been difficult and some of the resistance had taken a toll on them. The interview with the ladies came after I had attended a meeting in the community chaired by the inner council (*bandlancane)*, with the community liaison officer, some NGO's and the community development trust in attendance. In the meeting members of the community trust had an opportunity to speak and present to the council a "hard-earned" tourism-trading license from the Ministry of Tourism. They were evidently very proud of the Trust's efforts in obtaining this certificate, and emphasized the difficulties they had endured in order to get through this milestone.

What became apparent in this meeting, which had initially seemed like the perfect time to observe participation in action, was the tension that existed amongst the various players, who kept face within this formal occasion. There was obviously some strain within the inner council itself, where some members were more reluctant to participate than others, or appeared to harbour some element of resentment towards the headman (*indvuna*). Some of these tensions had to be quelled by the community liaison officer. The second layer of strain was observed between the community leaders (*bandlancane* and *indvuna*) and the community development trust. As the indvuna opened the meeting, he was quick to admonish the trust by stating that it was unfortunate that some members were not always present, which made it difficult to operate consistently. So when the Trust members were given an opportunity to speak, they spoke strongly about the challenges they had faced to date, and stressed that they would need active support from the community leaders.

One of the primary challenges raised by community members involved in the running of Mhlumeni Eco-Lodge was the issue of compensation and salaries. One member of the Community Trust made it a point during the meeting with *bandlancane* to mention, whilst giving thanks to COSPE for all their funding, that they had not made any profits since the Lodge has been operational, and therefore had nothing in their bank account. This was obviously a big concern as it was a point they dwelt on during our subsequent interview. Having expected that it would take time for the lodge to start making a significant financial contribution, they felt that they had not received any compensation or enough appreciation for the level of hard work and perseverance they had put into the project. Another member of the Trust followed this by taking a religious perspective and stated that she had done so much of the work from the goodness of her heart, and that her reward was in heaven. Community Member 9 on the other hand was clear in that she was doing this for her children and was trying to be farsighted unlike most in the community, who cannot see past tomorrow. She further expressed that in the community it was every man for himself, and the survival of the fittest, so she was determined to continue working hard and involving herself in projects and taking up all opportunities that come her way. She indicated that she had been appointed to the positions she currently assumed not because of her experience, but because she was already very active in the community, both as a local small-business owner and as a lively participant during community meetings and in community politics.

At this point in time, the lodge does at times resemble a family business, as the majority of those employed come from the same family, the produce sold to the Lodge, such as sorghum, eggs, and free-range chickens, also mostly comes from the same family. In terms of benefits from the lodge therefore, this one family does receive more than any other family in the community. It is not a significant amount however, as over the three to four-month period of fieldwork, I saw evidence of about three paying overnight guests, including myself. The lodge does have campers occasionally; they lead adventure-hiking tours, and also have day visitors. Community Member 9's greatest worry was that the young lodge staff would not be satisfied with the working conditions in the long term if things do not improve; she said that it was unfair for them to work for next to nothing

when they had hospitality qualifications and continued to improve their environmental education. She stated that some of the Lodge employees sometimes struggled to afford basic necessities due the paltry wages they received.

In the description put forward by Igoe and Brockington (2007) the neoliberal pie does not necessarily grow bigger and bigger giving everyone the opportunity to partake of it. Some of the promises that neoliberal conservation makes, and are advanced by NGOs in conservation development projects, include the infusion of novel resources into biodiversity conservation, an increase in democracy and participation through the dismantling of restrictive state structures and practices, and the guaranteeing of property rights so that they can engage in conservation-orientated business ventures, especially those linked to eco-tourism, (Igoe and Brockington 2007, p. 434). This fallacy presented by neoliberal conservation that there are no losers in conservation development projects, even under such as auspices as 'protected landscape approaches', is made clear through empirical evidence coming out of this research. There is definitely a limitation to the amount of new resources that any development can bring to a community, and not everyone will have the opportunity to partake of those new opportunities. The barriers to benefit sharing are often structural and the democratisation of some of the processes, particularly in traditional societies that have such stringent and far-reaching political and social dynamics, is usually near impossible. This evidence again suggests that there is no panacea for all situations, and every context needs to be assessed on its own merits and challenges. Igoe and Brockington (2007) summarise the major systematic issue with neoliberal conservation:

> Nature is protected through investment and consumption….and conservation can be achieved without addressing the difficult and systemic inequities and power relationships that are inextricably linked to soma many of our global environmental problems today, (Igoe and Brockington 2009, p. 434).

As already seen in this empirical chapter nature conservation cannot and should not be divorced from some of the historical political, economic and social factors that are consistent with every community. Power (both within the communities as well as state

power) dynamics, tradition and institutions continue to play an important role in some of the structural inequities and poverty within many of these societies.

The frustrations that resonate with Mhlumeni community members are not exceptional in a project of this nature and at its infancy. In a meeting held at Shewula Mountain Camp, one of the Shewula Community Trust members shared similar experiences that they dealt with early on in their project implementation. She said that at first, the staff, mostly young community members at that stage, was earning around R20 per week (when they had guests), which they used as pocket money when they went to school. With time the money increased to R50, and then R100, and now they can have a real salary. Some of these school-going children returned to work as permanent staff at the Camp once they had completed their studies. Community Member 5, who is now in her 70's, did not hide the fact that community projects such as these are not quick fix, quick money endeavours, and those involved need to be well educated about the benefits, but also more importantly, about the amount of hard work that goes into such schemes. She stated that it takes years for any real returns to be seen, but the benefits after years of perseverance are worth the wait. And indeed it does take a significantly long time for benefits to be realised, let alone be equitably shared amongst the entire community, and the reality is that it is a monumental task to even ensure that half of the opportunities promised by development projects come to fruition. A lack of understanding of local conditions and a lack of appreciation that goes beyond merely focusing on community needs will certainly exacerbate the levels of project failure.

The Land Issue: Connotations for Conservation and Community Development

We have already established that community leaders play a very powerful role within communities, serving an almost paternalistic role, where the community members are seen as subjects, who can be moulded to suit their interest. These interests are of course supported by the traditional system of governance, which devolves from the very upper echelons of the national rule of law (from the King, whose powers are absolute) to Chiefs in the various Chiefdoms – Chiefs and their deputies therefore can almost behave in a carte blanche manner within weak communities where there is very little resistance. With

regard to land of course, they are responsible for awarding land parcels to subjects. They are therefore in a position to decide which piece of land to give and to whom they will assign it. In the same way, when it comes to development matters, they can decide which piece of land to apportion and set aside for conservation and which may be utilised for development activities. At times these decisions infringe on land that already 'belongs' to community members (as we have seen in this research), but once the traditional leader and his council have reached a consensus, the reversal of the decision is not easy to achieve. There is however and appeals process that the concerned community member can apply, but as these appeals are notoriously very lengthy, and yet development decisions are extremely time-bound[12], the project may still go ahead.

Resistance to ruling power is a very rare occurrence in traditional rural communities in Swaziland. Resistance is not only rare, but also hardly effective in the cases where local communities have attempted it. This kind of resistance, may be understood as *episodic resistance*, which is described by Stewart Clegg (1989) in Sadan (1997, p. 52) as occurring within a context of overt exercise of power, and is the opposite of *effective resistance*, which is organized and structured and leads to the institutionalisation of a new power. This latter form of resistance is rare and hardly occurs in traditional, rural societies. In Swaziland, sporadic, episodic resistance events have taken place in recent years in the context of land disputes, but although, intensive and extensive in effort, they have largely failed to be effective in achieving the demands of the community majority. The power of those in positions of authority often proves to be so well entrenched and insidious that any conflict is quashed in an expeditious manner. Due to their limited success therefore, bouts of episodic resistance achieve the very opposite of their intention, and 'actually strengthen the stability of power and confirms its representational character,' (Sadan 1997, p. 52).

[12] Donors that fund development projects often stipulate a time frame within which the donated funds have to be utilized, otherwise the revert to the donating agency. According to the project managers, they have on a few instances lost some of these monies due to the fact that the communities could not make a decision fast enough, or that they had to first deal with lengthy internal issues.

In addition to the above perspective, and as already established in the literature, we see evidence of the concept of quiescence expounded by Gaventa (1980), wherein in the face of the unchecked and unrivalled power of the elite, the non-elite fail to resist and enter into a form of quiescence. As Gaventa (1980, p. 4) states, 'In situations of inequality, the political response of the deprived group or class may be seen as a function of power relationships.' The non-response, as it were, of local people who are affected by the decisions of community leaders and rigid political and traditional structures serves to maintain the status quo and perpetuates these power relations. We have already seen how in the majority of cases the interests of community leaders are self-serving rather than influenced by the needs of the community as a whole, that only if the elite is to benefit in some way from a development project, only then do they take action, and even then, without necessarily engaging with their subjects. We see how community members in traditional settings are truly treated as subject, as proposed by Mamdani (1996), where we see a differentiation between "subjects" living under and governed by customary laws and "citizens" who enjoy the benefits of modern society.

Institutional arrangements may in many cases be at fault. Historically, indigenous groups were able to manage their lands and the natural resources on which their livelihoods depended, but with time and the deterioration of strong, representative leadership, as well as the rise of corruption amongst community leaders, many community members have lost the will to continue with natural resource management and take a backseat in any conservation issues. Instead, they choose to take whatever they can get their hands on, worrying more about the short-term as opposed to long-term management of the land and resources. This is extends beyond environmental matters, but permeates throughout most social relations between community members and their leaders. So when, new projects are presented to the community, most members have already been so disempowered that they show a distinct lack of interest, which is often misinterpreted by project proponents and NGO agents as laziness or as senseless resistance. The only recourse to resistance that is left for many members of these communities is not to participate at all. This attitude was evident in a number of those interviewed, who raised the land issue several times, pointing to a long-standing undercurrent of displeasure with the traditional

institutions and laws that governed them particularly when it comes to the handling and apportioning of land. Generally, the lack of secure tenure is seen as deterrent for development and economic growth in developing countries; Dlamini and Masuku (2011, p. 302) state: 'Property rights are important for developing countries where a risk to assets is put forth as a crucial determinant of lagging growth…. the perceived lack of transfer rights… is the most important factor in explaining the relatively low investment in developing countries'. Agrawal and Gibson (1999) support this point and assert that 'poorly articulated and enforced property rights arrangements provided disincentives for individuals to protect resources'. This has certainly come out as the case in the communities presented in this study – although people benefit from natural resources and find that the restrictions brought about by protected areas in terms of access to and utilisation of resources are a hindrance to their livelihood options, they simultaneously lack the motivation to sustainably manage these resources because they do not have a sense of ownership of the land upon which they occur.

A number of challenges were brought up during an interview with Community Member 9 and Community Member 10 of Mhlumeni. Although they agreed that the community leaders had been somewhat supportive during the implementation of one of the programme's tourism products (the Eco-Lodge), they felt that at times they were part of the problem. They mentioned for instance the recurring issue of land rights, ownership and apportioning of land. After the meeting with *bandlancane*, we (community liaison officer, the Trust, and the Italian NGO, COSPE) visited the Lodge and walked its boundary where they were proposing to put up a fence – an urgent matter that the Trust had been pushing. The biggest challenge was faced on the Northwestern boundary, where the land was adjacent to a community member's fields, which had been fallow for some time. The big debate was whether to simply assign another area to the affected families or to just take the land back for the good of the community, as the family was not doing any farming on it. When speaking to Community Members 9 and 10 later, they were of the view that the community leaders were simply delaying the issue unnecessarily, as it would be easy for them to identify another piece of land and give it to affected family (this was not the ideal solution however, as was seen in later interview with the

concerned family, who were significantly unhappy and deeply offended by the entire exercise).

Community members 9 and 10 continued to express this sense of injustice by explaining that the leaders may harbour some ulterior motives in not wanting to apportion virgin land to compensate for the portion that would be taken up by the Lodge. They felt that the leaders were only reluctant because they were receiving financial gains by selling off portions of land to outsiders, and yet they had all agreed as a community that they would not allow new settlers since the Mhlumeni area was not so big and the population was increasing. They were particularly concerned for their children and the younger generation who would struggle to get suitable and productive lands once they were of age due to the good pieces of land having been sold off. She mentioned that because they did not yet have a Chief locally, and are reliant on the *indvuna* and the council, who could basically act in any way, without being accountable. So although they appear to be active and supportive, their actions are sometimes driven by personal gain.

Traditionally, since the chiefs are only acting as representatives of the King, who holds the Swazi Nation Land in Trust for the Swazi Nation, they do have the mandate to apportion land using the Swazi *Khonta* system, where an aspiring resident offers allegiance to a Chief to be accepted as his subject. It has become common practice that a cow is presented to the Chief to thank him for the land, although this was not historically done (Hughes 1964). In recent years however, this practice has become even more adulterated and there is growing corruption whereby Chiefs accept money, well over the price of a cow, in exchange for land. This not only leads to strife between the traditional members of the community and the new settlers, but also causes mistrust between the community and the leadership, and raises questions as to whether the leaders have the community's best interest at heart.

The local community leader (Community Leader 4) on the other hand disputed such talk as lacking in truth and wanted to know who these people were, and why they would speak against the laws of the land, which they, as community leaders, were tasked with

upholding. He said that the land is not theirs, but the King's and they were only the King's boys/messengers *('lelive akusilo letfu, kwetfu nje kuba liso leNgwenyama njengebafana beNkhosi'*). It is evident that although the handing over of the cow to the Chief has long been in practice, it has always been a delicate matter due to the 'emotive significance attached to the accusation that anyone in authority is "selling the country" (*kutsengisa umhlaba*),' (Hughes 1964, p. 134). Community Leader 4 continued to say that they can not refuse people in need, who came to the community in search for land to build a home for their families ('*labo labafuna indzawo yekufihla inhloko'*). 'In fact, that is one of the important roles we play as community leaders – to make sure that a man gets equitable and sufficient land to build a comfortable home to raise his children and feed his family, regardless of where he comes from,' he said. The reality though is that there does not seem to be any formal or sensible manner in which land size is decided, so different families have different land size parcels – it all appears to be based on the case made by the prospective resident during the *Khonta* process, and every decision is unique. According to Hughes (1964, p. 132), 'The settler will normally have expressed a preference for a particular dwelling site, and discreet inquiries will already have been made among the neighbouring homestead heads as to whether they are agreeable to his living near them.' Community members at Mhlumeni were however adamant that they were hardly consulted on such matters, and that the chiefs are happy to accept anyone as long as they have money, without even doing a background check to see if the settler was an upstanding citizen in his previous community (Community Members 9, 11, and 17).

The separation between communal lands under the Swazi Nation Land (SNL) tenure system and the protected areas under the management of Mlawula Nature Reserve (National) and Mbuluzi Game Reserve (Private Shareholding) exacerbated the negativity held by community members in the two areas under study. Historical bad blood shared between the communities and the protected areas has made it difficult to engineer trust between these two entities. Community members feel that the reserves only want to appropriate more of their lands, and believe that this is what happened in the past, as their leaders sold them out. According to the UNDP (2015), 'rural Swazis have traditionally had an uneasy relationship with conservation projects and established wildlife parks,

viewing them as elitist and exclusionary.' The nature reserve stakeholders do not shy away from this categorization; they remain very conservative where community inclusion is concerned, and retain a protectionist approach, with little interest or sustained credibility in the adjacent communities. This has been engendered by years of strained relations between these groups (the community and reserve management), and it has become a challenge to dispel this bad blood.

All Reserve Authorities held a similar protectionist view, arguing that community members had to be kept out of the reserves at all costs, even to the extent of shooting down individuals found to be trespassing in the reserve. They did not trust the community, and they had information on repeat poachers, as well as systems within the reserve that assisted them in tracking and catching poachers and other trespassers. Some of the Reserve Authorities that were from Shewula and Mhlumeni admitted to the fact that they knew some of these 'trouble-makers' personally, and most were simply out to benefit themselves and were not necessarily involved in this legal activity for the benefit of their families. They dismissed the notion that the protected areas may have belonged to the community in the past, asserting that communities did not know the first thing about nature conservation, and if the land was given to communities to manage, the animal numbers would decrease at unimaginable rates. One Reserve Authority, showed sheer disbelief that I would even conceive of such a notion where there could be joint management between the reserve and the community, with sustainable utilisation of natural resources, claiming that albeit noble in theory, the reality would be a far cry from the theoretical. In the Reserve Authorities' opinions, the establishment of the protected areas, and managing them under a different tenure system to the community lands was the best route and efforts should rather be made to make this separation stronger.

The implications of this separation of community lands and protected areas are further discussed in the following section, particularly as they relate to natural resource access, use, and distribution.

Ownership, Access to and Equitable Distribution of Natural Resources

Inevitably, conservation programmes in their nature act as control mechanisms in the access of natural resources and 'tie up natural areas that are highly sought after by resource-dependent agrarian communities,' (Brechin et al, 2002: 44). As seen earlier in the report, the Mlawula Protected Area continues to restrict community access into the reserve. In an interview with reserve authorities, they explained that they had agreements in place with the Shewula and Mlawula communities in previous years, allowing them controlled and monitored access into the reserve. They were able to bring in their livestock to graze, which, according to Reserve Authority 2, was also beneficial to them as they used the cattle to manage the growth of the grass and to also keep the tick levels down, as the cows would attract the ticks which they would then get rid off on the days they went the cattle dipping tanks. This promoted good health amongst the wild fauna in the reserve. Livestock was also allowed to gain access, under supervision, to the watering holes within the nature reserves. Women were also allowed to enter the reserve and could collect certain grasses and reeds for weaving, and could also collect firewood from dead trees and fallen branches. This however, according to reserve authorities, became problematic because within a short space of time, the cattle herder began to 'lose' livestock within the reserve, and under the guise of searching for the lost livestock, they would then take the opportunity to conduct a reconnaissance and alert poachers on which side of the reserve the animals could be found as well as keeping an eye out for the rangers. In that time frame, the rate of poaching increased substantially. As a result, they started restricting access again, and adopted a harsh policy, which allows them to shoot down any trespassers within the protected areas. Some community members concurred with the reserve authorities' version of events, but then added that although the poaching was a problem, they needed to find other means to allow those who needed access to the reserve for altruistic purposes and out of necessity. Community member 17 for instance complained that the fencing off of the protected area and labelling of her activities as illegal has imposed limitations on her livelihood options. The landscape Approach is supposed to provide for this reintegration of community and protected area, but reserve authorities were adamant that such solutions would be impossible to manage and they would not consent to them – this statement was stressed in particular by authorities from

the privately run Mbuluzi Game Reserve. The different ways in which protected area resources, and natural resources in general, are perceived by communities and reserve authorities is markedly different, and reserve authorities are of the opinion that if communities fail dismally to manage resources in their own local environments, how much more those resources they see as belonging to the protected area.

Feder and Feeney (1991, p. 136) state that property rights are 'a bundle of characteristics: exclusivity, inheritability, transferability, and enforcement mechanisms,' which are all important factors that affect the manner in which people relate to the land, and the choices they make regarding what they do on that land. It furthermore impacts people's perceptions of development activities that take place on that land. If land is communal for instance, that means that all individuals in that community has equal access to that piece of land and all resources contained therein, be it flora or fauna, mining, passage routes, grazing and cultivation of that land. Unfortunately, this also means that since responsibility for the care of that land is communal, in which case no one takes responsibility, and therefore those very resources of which many are dependent on are inevitably destroyed. Exclusivity in terms of property rights, land ownership and security of tenure is therefore important in the healthy management of natural resources, and contribute to individuals garnering more concern for their lands. Feder and Feeney consolidate this point by arguing that 'the lack of any exclusivity implies the lack of an incentive to conserve, and therefore often results in degradation of scarce resources'.

Communal ownership of resources within a traditional rural setting provides complex and fascinating relationships between people and the land, and how they relate to their environment. The manner in which rural peoples understand the natural resources upon which they largely depend on is usually unexpected to the outside eye. When local groups depend on their environment to such as extent that there is hardly any separation between the land and its fruits and their livelihoods, it highlights a marked departure or contrast from urban perspectives. What is evident is that the majority of rural residents do not perceive the concept of *environment* or *nature* as "other", or as separate from their daily existence and way of life. The environment is part and parcel of their daily

activities, be it as a source of fuel and warmth, a means of sustenance, a place from which water is obtained; products collected from nature are used in a variety of rural activities – from the building of houses and kraals, the weaving of grass mats, the fashioning of eating utensils. There are other more useful uses that natural products go towards, the most important, and prolific, in Swazi tradition being the medicinal use of flora and fauna. The essence of this relationship between man and nature within this setting becomes glaringly apparent – it is largely from a benefits point of view, that is, the benefits that the community can acquire from the environment. This does not signify a relationship solely based on extraction of those natural resources however, on the contrary, the fact that rural populations are so dependent on the natural environment for a sustainable livelihood means that they have historically sought to protect and sustain those resources so that they continue to benefit from them. Preserving the environment for the environment's sake, and for enjoyment is still a foreign concept amongst many in communities such as Mhlumeni, and although the community members interviewed understood it in theory, they were either very sceptical of its practicality or felt that the concept was not applicable to them and the conditions in which they lived.

There are two broad perspective that are held within the community with regard to environmental resource conservation – one held largely by community members that are either in leadership positions in the community, those who are actively involved in the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) projects, and those who have better formal education and have had more exposure beyond the boundaries of Mhlumeni and Shewula. This cohort of the community is more open minded to change and new ideas, and some older members of this group recollect a lot of the old ways in which they used to protect natural resources and espouse opinions on why things have changed over time. The other community members that were interviewed provided a different perspective. They were reluctant to admit to the old methods of conservation, and some were not aware of any, stating that perhaps their fathers and grandmothers may have practised some of these methods, but their desperate and marginal existence meant that they did not have the luxury to concern themselves with such measures beyond ensuring that the family did not sleep on empty stomachs. Another member echoed a view that had been

raised several weeks earlier at a meeting held with the traditional leaders, that the loss of power, responsibility and integrity amongst community leaders was a contributing factor that allowed community members to act as they wished and without consideration of the community as a whole.

During the two-day meeting/workshop held with the traditional leaders from the 2nd of August 2017, the role of community leaders – the chief, headman (*indvuna*) and the small council – towards environmental conservation and controlling the utilisation of natural resources was strongly emphasised. Several of the elders who attended the meeting were particularly knowledgeable of the various ways in which resources were protected and extracted without depletion in the past – noteworthy was the preservation of wetlands. The elders spoke ardently about the continued destruction of wetlands in their communities and lamented on how the traditional leaders had abdicated their responsibilities by allowing community members to build on wetland areas and extract wetland resources indiscriminately. An elderly Prince (Community Leader 5) went on to assert that they were even aware of the growing threat of climate change that was threatening some of these resources, including the wetlands, and if the leaders did not take proactive roles within their communities, they would regret it in the future. According to the Prince:

> 'Community leaders are important in the conservation of resources in rural areas, particularly when it came to activities that take place on the environment. When it comes to development projects, the leaders need to be firm enough in their resolve and be able to confidently point out suitable sites for the project, without compromising the environmental integrity, especially when it comes to rare or protected species and areas.' (Community Leader 5)

The consensus during the meeting with the traditional leaders was that although there were several challenges that faced communities, the onus was on the leader to be proactive. Weaknesses in leadership structures led to unruly communities, where members acted according to their own wishes. They also agreed that it was important for the Swazi King, as the true owner of the land, to put down enforceable environmental legislation that would ensure that citizens towed the line. Having said that, the group also

highlighted the importance of having consensus within the community, whereby the community participated in decision-making and set goals that related to their relevant community regarding the best way to protect and sustainably utilise natural resources. Traditional values that determined resource use and preservation have been eroded over the years, and the need for agriculture – be it grazing or the growing of food – has taken over the need for conservation of natural resources, As a result, a significant number of species that were commonplace in the past, are now hardly found within community lands, and can only be seen in the protected areas. The leaders were given the opportunity to each speak to the group on their experiences with regard to natural resources, and most reiterated the point that farming and building in wetlands has led to changing water flows, which has in turn contributed to the deterioration of important fruit trees that were found along water bodies; they pointed out to the unrestrained harvesting on indigenous hardwoods without replanting, which has led to the loss of habitat for woodland species; and further indicated that some of the modern farming practices have led to the deteriorating quality of soils, which has changed the rural way of life. They had collective understanding of how protected areas in the form of game and nature reserves have played an important role in maintaining some of these vital natural resources. Thus the last few hours of the workshop were spent formulating a plan on how to declare a bio-diverse forest (Jilobi Forest) under some of the existing environmental legislation in Swaziland. This forest is communally shared by three communities, which fall under the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTFCA) – Lukhetseni, Maphungwane and Tikhuba communities.

Participating in a workshop in which the traditional leaders engaged and formulated goals and objectives, and developed a plan that would be presented to government concerning the protection of an important natural resource allowed me to observe the process that is followed by communities in attempting to protect such communal natural resources. Through the facilitation of the LTFCA project team, the traditional leaders were all able to contribute their own definitions of the environment or what they considered a natural resource to be. Upon establishing these definitions, they were then able to determine what exactly they wanted to protect in this forest, and further allowing them to specify how

they wanted to utilise the forest resources – whether they still wanted to have restricted harvesting of forest resources, allow traditional rituals and practices to take place there, or fence it completely, so that access is restricted for tourism-related activities. This forest resource is not only communally owned by one community, but also shared amongst three communities of different sizes and diverse needs. The needs of the three communities and the benefits that would be derived from declaring Jilobi Forest as a protected area would differ vastly. However, the success in protecting the forest and ensuring that eco-tourism thrived in this area was heavily dependent on all three communities participating equally. This, at least, was the expectation.

In reality, even at this early planning stage, it was evident that the power and abilities possessed by the three community leaders was not equal. One of the Chiefs (Community Leader 2) seemed to be more educated and had travelled several times outside Swaziland; he was therefore more articulate, and had more advanced ideas about how he wanted his community to participate in this project. This community leader for instance did not agree with the point that all gains from the tourism products that will be associated with the protection of Jilobi Forest should be shared equally amongst the three communities, but felt that each community should benefit according to what they had contributed. He was keen to foster a competitive atmosphere to the way the project was implemented and operated, and felt that his community already had that competitive advantage, as it was much bigger in both size and population than the others. In addition to that, although communities may receive some funding from non-profit organisations for such an endeavour, it was still mostly their responsibility to raise funds in order to support the project; Community Leader 2 also had an advantage in this regard, as he had access to and knowledge of potential sources of funds and fundraising activities, respectively. Unequal power dynamics even amongst different community leaders therefore play a significant role in the manner in which project are adopted and implemented in the various communities. A leader with a strong influence can more or less effect change in his community with relatively little resistance and limited consultation, whereas in other communities the implementation of development projects may take longer. An interesting concept to interrogate would be whether projects implemented under more assertive

leadership, but with weaker participatory processes are more successful in the long run than those with more passive leaders that rely on a more democratic participatory process. It is quite crucial to emphasise the fact that an increase in power within such community dynamics is not the ideal scenario as it only creates a situation whereby capital and development, one of the main goals of NGOs, is not equally distributed, but focus is awarded to those areas that already have a high potential value in terms of realisation of benefits. Unfortunately this is usually advantageous only to those who are already considered "haves" within that community. According to Igoe and Brockington (2007) therefore, the aim then shifts from a consideration of the community as a whole, towards marketing these pockets within the community, commodifying them as the model to 'touristic and consumptive experiences, rather than reflecting the complexities of the actual experiences on the ground', (Igoe and Brockington 2007, p. 435). The benefits therefore accrue to those resource rich areas within the community and fail to be disseminated to the poorest of the poor within the community, who are often found in the marginal landscapes.

Another important thread that has emerged from the range of meetings, workshops, interviews and observation over the last few months is the challenge of communal ownership of natural resources. The very manner in which Hardin (1968) described the 'tragedy of the commons' is what appears to play out on the ground in these rural communities. There is an element on wariness amongst community members, and concern over what the neighbour has compared to what he has. There are very few that speak of equal access to and use of resources. Of those I spent time with at Mhlumeni for instance, those who spoke idealistically of a community that shared resources and participated together positively towards the common good of the community also seemed to have some advantage over the rest of the community – usually a financial or material advantage, or a political/power advantage. The 'ordinary' community members held a more cynical viewpoint. Community Member 14, who had given a generally positive perspective during the interview, was dismissive of the notion of equal ownership of resources. He said that there are always those who will have some advantage over others in the community, and echoing Hardin's view, he said that, firstly, as long as a person did

not have formal title to a piece of land, and had not felt the pinch of purchasing or working hard to get that piece of land, then they would not feel any obligation to look after the land ('it would always be another man's problem', he stated). Secondly, every community member will always want to improve their lot, and do better than the next family, so they will continue to use more of the natural resources at their disposal, continue to increase his livestock numbers leading to overgrazing, and even have larger pieces of land to call his own. And with increasing populations, decreasing land area and high unemployment, there will always be overexploitation and eventual depletion of natural resources.

Brechin et al (2002) argue that a deeper understanding of key aspects of local social and political processes may aid in promoting more positive sustainable results for biodiversity protection. They recommend going beyond the generally prescriptive modus operandi of traditional "people-centred" approaches, such as Integrated Conservation Development Projects (ICDPs), Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) co-management, and perhaps even including the Protected Landscape Approach, and moving towards 'a general people-oriented strategy that affords social justice and nature protection the same degree of importance and yet favours addressing specific problems in context', (Brechin, 2002:44). In Mhlumeni, the introduction of the Landscape Approach with all its positive objectives has not as yet succeeded in including the majority of the community. In this case, the scale of the project is currently so restricted that it cannot possibly reach and benefit all community members even within such a small community. Similarly, the implementation of various products at Shewula community has not led to all disadvantaged community members benefiting from the projects due to the sheer size of the community and the growing numbers of those living in chronic poverty. The project has however garnered such a high level of international NGO and national support over the years, that it has achieved a far-reaching impact. The project at Shewula started as a community conservation development project, but has morphed into providing a number of income-generating activities, social nets for orphans and the vulnerable, free clinics and schools. In addition to this, plans to introduce game to the well-managed Community Nature Reserve are well under way. The unfortunate reality

therefore is that, where the needs of vulnerable groups and poverty-riddled communities are immediate, the benefits from development projects are slow to be realised, and more future-orientated. This is the reason most community members complain that development projects are synonymous with the proverbial white elephant, and come with the promise of poverty alleviation and economic development, but do not make good on those promises. Community members become disheartened and this affects project ownership and acceptance of any future development proposals presented to them.

An understanding of the social context, as Brechin (2002) advises is vital to the successful implementation of conservation development programmes. This is particularly essential when it comes to the extraction and utilisation of natural resources. Without a deep understanding of the traditional uses of environmental product, project authorities are bound to find themselves in similar scenarios as currently exist in Mhlumeni for instance, where relations between the community and the protected area remain strained even after the implementation of the Protected Landscape-based approach to biodiversity conservation. As community members are still denied access to the protected areas, they remain dubious of the development projects, and community members who were previously very supportive of the project begin to have doubts. Some members of the community were not shaken in their resolve to support the project, but did share their disappoint with Mlawula Nature Reserve, stating that they were now uncertain as to whether they were simply being placated with the Eco-Tourism products because the reserve had only strengthened its stronghold on the protected area, and further assimilated additional land that belonged to the community into the protected area, claiming that they were restoring historical boundaries. In addition to this, there have been more incidents of poachers being shot inside the protected areas, which engenders different views on either side – community members feel that if they could develop a sustainable system of access and extraction of resources in the reserve, then the illegal hunting practices might be abated; the reserve authorities on the hand use these incidents to consolidate and justify their stance, saying that community members cannot be trusted, and any form of access would just promote uncontrolled utilisation of resources and accelerate the rate of environmental degradation. The implementation of the Eco-Lubombo Programme's

Protected Landscape Approach has so far achieved limited success in achieving a workable solution that satisfies the stakeholders on opposing sides of the fence.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

The future of community conservation development projects, where participation and inclusion is concerned lies in the ability of project proponents to redefine the participatory process so that real power is transferred to communities so that they are able to shape their own objectives, set out suitable methods of project implementation and formulate representative management structures. Agrawal and Gibson (1999, p. 630) stress that 'community-based conservation initiatives must be founded on images of community that recognize their internal differences and processes, their relations with external actors, and the institutions that affect both.' For it is apparent that there is no one formula for community development that works in all cases; project actors need to home into the fundamental characteristics of a community, to find out what makes that community different, what the underlying tensions and relationships are, both within the community itself and with external factors too. And with this in mind, figure out how to fit whatever participation guidelines they may have to the observed scenario, as opposed to attempting to force the communities into behaving and acting in a preconceived manner. As Chuguill (1996, p. 434) states, 'understanding the political context of the country where development programmes or projects are to be implemented is essential in identifying opportunities for community participation.' Agrawal and Gibson (1990, p. 630) further encapsulate the issue by stressing that "community-based conservation initiatives must be founded on images of community that recognize their internal differences and processes, their relations with external actors, and the institutions that affect both".

There are multiple perspectives on the nature and level of involvement of community members, held by the different stakeholders I interacted with during the research exercise. They differed especially on their understanding of the role of the community and what it means to have real community participation and inclusion. The community leaders held the opinion that their role was the most important, and that since they had the community's best interest, they were the best representatives, in addition to the deep-

seated belief that they had been given the mandate by the King to be responsible for their subjects. As they were going through a series of training programmes, and gaining valuable knowledge about the development project and biodiversity conservation, their 'subjects' remained ill-informed and disinterested in the entire development process, and in except for a few cases, did not display any significant growth in the knowledge they had about their environment post project implementation. Traditional leaders on the other hand demonstrated a relatively sophisticated understanding of the project components, in addition to believing that their communities had been extensively involved in a comprehensive participatory process. Project proponents held a similar view, and asserted that they had performed a thorough public participation process, and made every effort to include all community members – those that had failed to participate were seen as either obstructive, unwilling or disinterred in the development process.

Community members on the other hand agreed that there had been extensive knowledge exchange through participatory meetings, however participation was not necessarily open to all community members. This is not because some members are overtly or specifically excluded, or uninvited from these meetings, but due to prevailing tensions within the community that force some members to exclude themselves from the process. Pre-existing conditions and relations with key performers in the community, including the community leaders, have rendered some community members unable to participate, and if they do, their voices go unheard. History has therefore taught these community members that development projects benefit the select few; they therefore choose to focus on other priorities that will promote their own livelihoods.

Whilst community leaders welcomed the sectioning of some of the communal lands for biodiversity conservation and for the introduction of wildlife, community members were divided on this matter. The main concern was that leaders seem to be taking more land away from the community and "selling" it off under the guise of development. They see leaders as being in cahoots with the nature reserves, which have already sanctioned off more communal lands and integrated them into the protected area. Some of these lands that are being set aside for conservation are rangelands that were used for the grazing of

local livestock. Community members lamented at the already harsh conditions under which they have to live – drought conditions that have decimated their cattle and crops, coupled with stressed soils – and pointed to availability of resources, including water, within the reserve, which are now inaccessible to them. The benefits of having open access to the reserve have been taken away from them and the Eco-Lubombo programme had not really provided substantial alternatives that will benefit the community in its entirety. Admittedly, misuse and overutilization of natural resources by community members is a significant problem, however, most community members see this as a management and communication issue. The predominant view is that there needs to be a way in which the protected areas and the communities can live together and be of use to each other in a sustainable way.

The biggest problem for development programmes within the context of such communities is the complexity of the pre-existing factors that are difficult even for local development specialists to contend with. Although they are local, they are still outsiders in the realm of the community and cannot openly address local matters, especially those that have a far-reaching historical basis. Issues of poverty in rural societies are immediate and intricate – whereas Swazis were proud of their ability to work the land and feed their families, they now find themselves in chronic poverty, and a development project that comes with little promise of immediate solutions to improve this state will often find it hard to take root. It is not that communities cannot think of the future, but as one community member stated,

> "I have three of my children at home with me, without any jobs. All are girls and all have at least one child. The other who are at work are not earning enough to support us all, and also have children that they have left for me to look after. The children remaining with do not have the same strength of will that we had as youngsters and are not interested in cultivating the land. I have to push them to assist me in the fields, but they are not good workers. In addition to that, our soils are just plain rock so nothing grows there. They get seasonal work from time to time, but for the most part I have to worry about where the next meal will come from. They have now put up some fencing between the community land and the nature reserve, which has closed off the main pedestrian route that we previously used to get to the nearest shopping centre. We now have to travel a very long distance and board public transport to get to the nearest town – we cannot afford this, and when we illegally go through the reserve we are punished. I used to be able to harvest

> wild spinach and other natural fruits in the reserve, but now we are restricted and hardly anything grown on the land we have." (Community Member 17).

This concluding anecdote encapsulates the general experience of rural peoples in the Lubombo, and throughout many such communities in Swaziland. Communities are under constant pressure to realise their basic livelihoods and provide for their families; this strain does not seem to be alleviated by their traditional leaders, who may also be sharing similar experiences, and conservation matters are often perceived as so far removed from their daily existence and far down on their list of priorities. Development projects are generally welcomed, but most community members soon lose interest when they realise that benefits will not be immediate, and that these do not make any progress to improving their status quo, not only in terms of financial benefits, but also in terms of resolving the pre-existing power relations and tensions within the community. Participation processes and the involvement of external project proponents may at first be perceived as saviours that will lift community members out of these strenuous conditions, and provide a platform for resistance, but change is very small, achieving it is a gruelling, long process, and when results come in dribs and drabs, many falter and find it difficult to maintain their enthusiasm.

The scope of this research, both in terms of the research questions as well as time available, did not allow for further delving into whether other community members' stories matched or showed similarities to Community Member 17's narrative above. Prior knowledge of rural communities in general, observation conducted in the field, numerous country reports on poverty and the state of rural peoples, literature, as well as statements made by some community members proved to all lead to the same supposition. It would be important then to further conduct research that would provide a clearer picture of whether the material status of community members affects their level of participation and ownership of community development projects, and therefore their success. As the Eco-Lubombo Programme is on-going, and more of the economic development projects are expected to mature, it would be interesting to conduct research into the extent to which these conservation development projects actually benefit local communities, even providing a matrix of economic analysis that would show real benefits as well as the

distribution of these benefits. At this point in the implementation of the Eco-Lubombo programme in Mhlumeni, the community as a whole was benefiting very minimally, and benefits seemed to accrue to a select few, whilst others continued to be marginalised. The programme products are relatively still at their infancy, so another few years would allow for a better assessment. Shewula community that has more mature eco-tourism and community nature conservation products would provide the ideal setting for comparison. Finally, with regard to future research possibilities, and perhaps for a more extended study, it would be fascinating to again take environmental justice as a lens to assess the landscape approach more exhaustively, as if has been implemented in the broader Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area programme; so in essence, extending the case study to South Africa and Mozambique, and engaging communities on their perception on matters of inclusion and participation, on the levels of access to natural resources and integration with protected areas and whether there is equitable distribution of those resources, as well as analysing actual benefits that the community members have accrued. The major findings that I had not anticipated in my research was the sheer importance of power relations with the community, and the role that power plays in all aspects of community life, from impacting the levels and ways in which community members participate, to affecting issues of resource access. I believe that a research study focusing on power dynamics within such a conservation development project's context would and within a rural community sphere would make a significant contribution to power theory and scholarship. The concluding quote from Brechin et. al (2002) below would make an ideal basis for extending this research further – making a more explicit linkage between traditional politics, power and resistance in the context of biodiversity conservation and rural poverty:

'The highly politicised nature of conservation and development increases both the complexity of the protection project and the corresponding incidence of conflict and resistance. It is important to recognize that most areas considered to be high priority biodiversity "hot spots".....are also social and political "hotbeds". There rural areas…often feature high levels of poverty, insecure land tenure and landlessness, unstable and/or undemocratic political systems, and histories of state-sponsored repression,' (Brechin, et al, 2002: 42-44).

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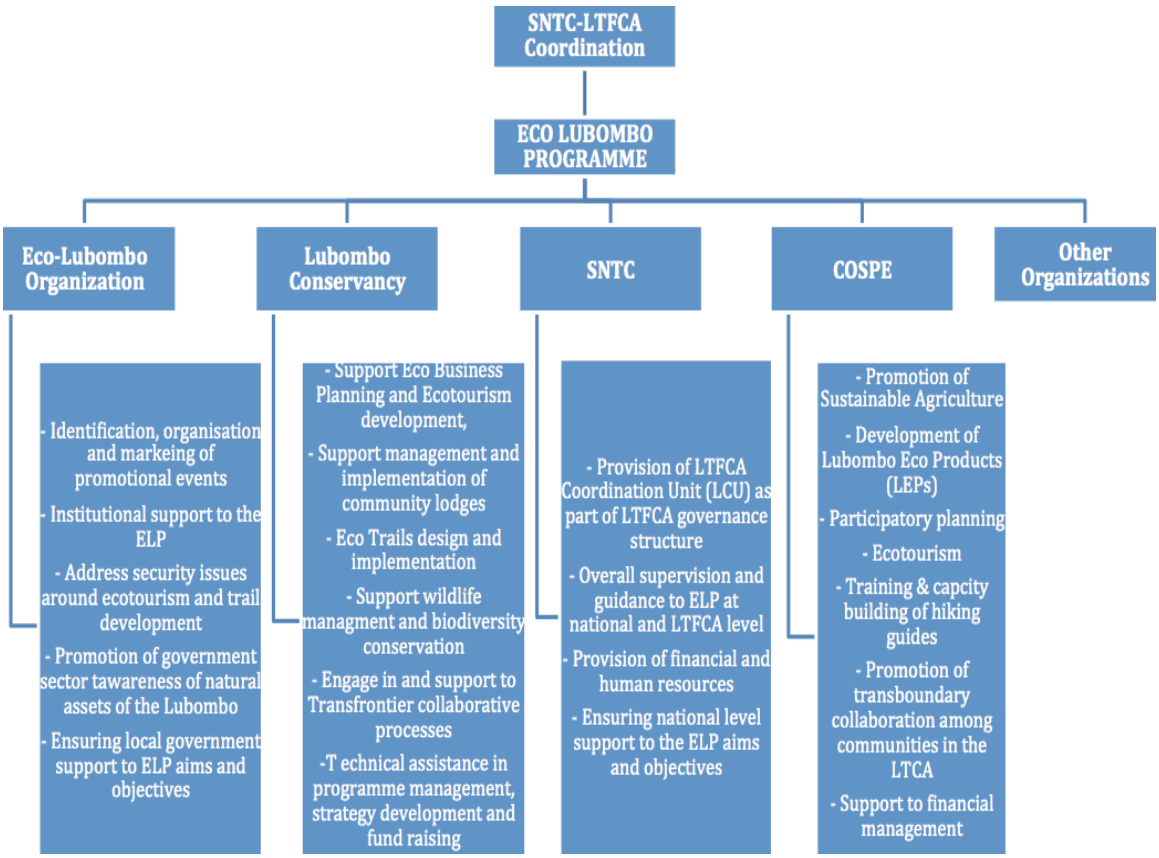
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Governance Structure for the Implementation of SADC-LTFCA Eco Lubombo Programme (Swaziland only) – Adapted from the Background of the Eco-Lubombo Programme (2016)



Appendix 2: Summary of Participatory Planning Process for Eco-Lubombo Programme (Adapted from Eco-Lubombo Programme: Guidelines for Participatory Mapping and Planning, COSPE)

STEPS	PROCESS	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES
STEP 1: **Preparation** - Gathering of primary information, identification of the typology of the stakeholders, presentation to the local authorities, baseline study and definition of the action plan.	Situational Analysis: Stakeholder Analysis and Desktop Studies	Desktop Study – general features of project area are assessed
		Stakeholder Identification and Mapping - all actors, institutional and non-institutional, involved in the process are identifies and mapped - Participatory mapping and planning team defined in terms of composition and roles.
		Governance Study – position, power and responsibilities of the stakeholders is assed
	Project Introduction to the Local Authorities	Initial meeting – community authorities are engaged and introduced to the project, highlighting the relevance of the LTFCA to conservation efforts in the community. Second meeting – local

		authorities will be introduced to the components of the participatory mapping and planning process, and asked to summon a meeting with relevant actors of the community in order to carry out a baseline study.
	Baseline Study in the Community	Aimed at providing a picture of the socio-economical environment of the community, focusing on key topics, such as public services, economic activities, other development projects, etc.
	Definition of Action Plan	The strategy is formulated with the partners, draft timelines are set, and participatory process regulations and roles are drafted.
STEP 2: **Introduction** - The key output is to gain support from traditional leaders.	Project Introduction to Local Authorities	Chief and inner council are introduced to the objectives, activities and methodologies of participatory mapping.
	Introduction open to Community	- all community members are invited to the meetings with the aim of introducing the

		team, objectives and the partners of the programmes. - Participants select local facilitators and key informants.
STEP 3: **Participatory Mapping, Assessment and Field Activities** - Cornerstone of the mapping process and involves community key informants and external consultants on agriculture, biodiversity and ecotourism. - Key outputs include the mental maps and proposals for the planning and zoning of the community area.	Preliminary GPS Mapping	Field activities are carried out with local guides, selected for their extensive knowledge of the area geography and resources, including community boundaries, grazing areas, water sources, as well as areas of special interest.
	Specialist Assessment on biodiversity, agriculture, rangeland and ecotourism	External consultants conduct desktop and field studies on issues such as biodiversity, agriculture and grazing, and ecotourism potential.
	Community training sessions and participatory mapping	- Entire community may be invited to these meeting to gain confidence in concepts of biodiversity and the interface of landscape and community. - Active participation of community is important in development of an agreed SiSwati terminology

		dictionary. - Key informants are trained to develop evaluation and mapping skills.
	Local facilitators training sessions	The team discusses roles and responsibilities of local facilitators during the participatory process.
	First mental mapping exercise	- a practical exercise devised to address the most important geographical elements of the locality. - the key informants are expected to point out on the map the critical land issues and values that need to be taken into account in the management plan. - Mental Map is developed and sketched by key informants to represent their perceptions and experiences about the community's land.
	Community training sessions	- Ecosystem function is explained to the community, upon which the community is asked to value ecological components.

		- Through interactive exercises, the participants list and map community ecosystem services.
	The "Drivers of Change" table	Using a matrix table, the key informants are expected to work together to identify and define the main drivers of change – a list of the most critical environmental management issues.
	Second mental mapping exercise	Key informants elaborate the information about the ecosystem services and identify the most valuable sites to be protected in their area on the map, and any possible constraints in achieving ecosystem services.
	Questionnaires	Thematic maps developed from the questionnaires represent either the land units' capacity to provide specific ecosystem services and goods to the community.
	Final meeting	Open to all community members, and will summarise work progress.

STEP 4: **Participatory Planning and Zoning** - defining conservation, limited development and development areas in community land - basis of Integrated Management Plan - contribute to Ecobusiness plan	Introduction of the need of zoning and legalisation of a conservation area	Institutional actors and key informants share need for zoning community land to ensure successful conservation efforts and sustainable management of development areas.
	Vision setting	Define common community vision and strategy and identify actions necessary for the achievement of the vision.
	Technical meeting with the Land-use Planning and Development section of the Ministry of Agriculture	Officers from different institutional levels review issues concerning planning and zoning of the community.
	Zoning matrix and zoning map	- community trust committee, key informants, institutional actors and programme authorities will coordinate to identify activities and select suitable zones to implement them. - Ecobusiness Plan to be formulated by specialist consultants.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

1. PROJECT LEADER 1 – Multiple Dates

2. PROJECT LEADER 2 – Multiple dates

3. RESERVE AUTHORITY 2 – 17 July 2017

5. RESERVE AUTHORITY 3 – 17 July 2017 and 20 July

6. COMMUNITY MEMBER 1 – 18 July 2017 and 20 July

4. RESERVE AUTHORITY 1 - 20 July 2017

7. LUBOMBO TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES MEETING/WORKSHOP – 2nd and 3rd August 2017 - 15 Community Leaders in attendance and individual interviews done with:

7.1. COMMUNITY LEADER 1 (Indvuna)

7.2. COMMUNITY LEADER 2 (Chief)

7.3. COMMUNITY LEADER 3 (Chief)

7.4. COMMUNITY LEADER 6

8. MHLUMENI MOUNTAIN CAMP – 20th to 23rd August 2017 - Interviews and Participant Observation while staying at the camp:

8.1. COMMUNITY MEMBER 2 (three interviews)

8.2. COMMUNITY MEMBER 3 (two interviews)

8.3. COMMUNITY MEMBER 4

9. MHLUMENI BANDLANCANE MEETING – 13 September 2017 – in attendance were six members of the inner council, members of the Community Trust and Community Development Committee, NGO representatives and one Project Leader; interviews and participant observation done:

9.1. COMMUNITY LEADER 4

9.2. NGO REPRESENTATIVE 1

10. SHEWULA MEETING – 15 September 2017 – In attendance were, three community leaders, several members of the Shewula Community Trust, Shewula Lodge employees, the Project Leaders and 10 representatives from the Mozambique cohort of the LTFCA:

10.1. COMMUNITY LEADER 5

10.2. COMMUNITY MEMBER 5

10.3. COMMUNITY MEMBER 6

10.4. COMMUNITY MEMBER 7

11. MHLUMENI MOUNTAIN CAMP - 17th to 19th September 2017 - Interviews and Participant Observation whilst staying at Mhlumeni Mountain Camp

11.1. COMMUNITY MEMBER 8

11.2. COMMUNITY MEMBER 9

11.3. COMMUNITY MEMBER 10

11.4. COMMUNITY MEMBER 11

11.5. COMMUNITY MEMBER 12

11.6. COMMUNITY MEMBER 13

11.7. COMMUNITY MEMBER 14

11.8. COMMUNITY MEMBER 15

11.9. COMMUNITY MEMBER 16

12. NGO REPRESENTATIVE 2 – 14 November 2017

13. COMMUNITY MEMBER 17 – 15 November 2017

14. COMMUNITY MEMBER 18 – 15 November 2017

15. COMMUNITY MEMBER 19 – 15 November 2017

16. COMMUNITY MEMBER 20 – 15 November 2017

17. CONSULTANT – 16 November 2017

18. COMMUNITY MEMBER 21 – 20 November 2017

Appendix 4: Interview Guide (English)

Interview Guide
University of the Witwatersrand ● Johannesburg
COMMUNITY

Title of Study: Environmental Justice and Development Projects: A Case Study of a Landscape Approach to Biodiversity Conservation in the Eco-Lubombo Programme - Swaziland

Researcher:

Name: Londziwe Simelane **Dept:** Development Studies **Phone:** 24048515

Date of Interview: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Age:
□ 18 – 24
□ 25 – 34
□ 35 – 44
□ 45 – 54
□ 55 – 64
□ 65 +

Sex:
□ Female
□ Male

Marital Status:
□ Single
□ Married

Occupation:
□ working full time (more than 30 hours a week) _____

□ working part time (8 to 30 hours a week) _____

□ carer full time (of home, family, etc) _____

□ temporarily unemployed (but actively seeking work) _____

□ retired _____

□ other permanently unemployed/ or other independent means

NOTE: The interview themes below provide a general guide of information that will be sought from participants and are based on the three environmental justice thematic areas that underpin the research problem. The guide will be further developed once the specific Eco-Lubombo project documentation has been assessed in order to incorporate the specific objectives and anticipated outcomes of the protected landscape approach within this programme.

BACKGROUND OF PERSON BEING INTERVIEWED

- Position in community and how they came to be in this position
- General level of participation in community matters
- Description of community in which they live – physical and social attributes, including demographics and social structures

THEME A: Rights, Ownership, and Access

- Understanding of what comprises the community
- How participant came to be a member of this community and "own" the land on which they live and eke out a livelihood from – history of the community and traditions
- Their understanding of the social hierarchy within the community and how it affects property rights dynamics, ownership of and access to resources
- What natural resources are available and accessible to the community; do they own these resources and what is the manner of ownership (individual, private, communal)
- What are some of the specific activities undertaken to access resources and attain livelihood

THEME B: Equity, Distribution, and Benefits

- In depth description of their environment – natural, resources, social, commerce
- What resources, services, employment and business opportunities have been available to the community before and after project implementation
- How have resources been traditionally distributed in the community? Was access fair and equal amongst all community members? Have there been any changes to this after the project implementation
- What are some of the benefits of specific projects developed under the Eco-Lubombo programme? Have there been some environmental benefits?

THEME C: Decision-making, Inclusion, and Participation

- Community leaders and gender dynamics in decision-making processes
- Institutions and community politics
- Attitudes and values towards community projects – who they are garnered for, who is allowed to participate (is participation open)
- Have community members been involved, do they continue to be involved, in key phases of this project? In what ways have people in the community been involved? Have project objectives and outcomes been clearly and comprehensively explained to the community.
- Were you satisfied with the level of inclusion in project planning, implementation and post project-implementation

Appendix 5: Interview Guide (SiSwati)

Luhlelo Lwemibuto
Inyuvesi yeWitwatersrand ● Johannesburg
UMMANGO

Sihloko seluphenyo: Kuphatseka kwemvelo emisebentini lephatselene nentfutfuko: Kusebentiseka kwemhlaba nekuvikeleka kwemvelo emsebentini we 'Eco-Lubombo' eSwatini

Lophenyako: Londziwe Simelane **Lucingo:** _____

Lusuku: _____

Libito lalongenele luphenyo: _____

Umnyaka:
□ 18 – 24
□ 25 – 34
□ 35 – 44
□ 45 – 54
□ 55 – 64
□ 65 +

Bulili:
□ Umsikati
□ Umdvuna

Sigaba Sekutsatsa/Sekutsatfwa:
□ Awukatsatsi/Awukatsatfwa
□ Utsetse/Utsetfwe
□ Lokunye

Umsebenti:
□ uyasebenta/ucashiwe ngaso sonkhe sikhatsi (ngetulu kwema awa langu30 ngeliviki)

_____

□ uyasebenta/ucashiwe kepha hhayi sonkhe sikhatsi (ema awa langaba ngu8 kuya ku 30 ngeliviki) _____

□ ngisebenta kunakekela likhaya nemndeni (ngigadza bantfwana noma lomdzala, ngibona likhaya, etc)

_____

□ angikacashwa kwesikhashane (kodvwa ngiphishanekile ngifuna umsebenti)

_____

□ sengitsetse umhlalaphansi

_____

□ angisebenti kwanhlobo/ nginaletinye tindlela tekutiphilisa

_____

NAKA: Letinhlelo letiniketwe ngentasi tikunika luhla lwaloko lokutawudzingeka kulongenele loluphenyo. Titsatselwe engcikitsini yaloluphenyo lekhulumisana ngekuphatseka kwemvelo, tase tehlukaniswa katsatfu. Leluhla lwemibuto litawuphindze lilolongwe ngekubuketwa kwemigomo yeluhlelo lwemsebenti we 'Eco-Lubombo'.

IMININGWANE YALOWO LOBUTWAKO

- Sigaba sakho emmangweni
- Ufike kanjani kulesigaba
- Lizinga lohlanganyela ngalo emisebentini yemmango
- Chaza indzawo lophila kuyo – ufake ekhatsi imvelo nemhlaba kanye nendlela leniphilisana noma ke lenihlalisana ngayo naletinye takhamiti talommango, uphindze uchaze luhla lwebantfu lolutfolakalako kulommango
- Chaza ummango lophila kuwo, ufake ekhatsi indlela leniphilisana ngayo nalabanye emmangweni kanye neluhlaka leniphetfwe ngalo

THEME A: Rights, Ownership, and Access

- Ngekubona kwakho ungatsi yini tintfo longatibala letakha ummango?
- Nguyiphi indlela loyilandzelako kute ube lilunga lemmango, nekutsi ukhone kuba nemhlaba emmangweni. Nitiphilisa njani solo naba yincenye yalommango?
- Yini lwati lonalo ngekuphtatfwa kwebantfu kanye nemhlaba yemmango, nekwabelwa kemhlaba kanye netintfo letinye letitfolakala emvelweni; tikhona yini tincabekelwane letikhona endleleni leniphatseke ngayo letihlukubeta emalungelo enu ekutiphiliseni
- Yini tintfo letitfolakala emvelweni lenikhonako kufinyelela kuto njengemmango; ngekubuka kwakho ekuhambeni kwesikhatsi, nisafinyelela kuto leti tintfo ngendlela lefanako nasesikhatsini lesengcile. Emalungelo enu ekusenbentisa lomcebo wemvelo ingabe ungawachaza utsini? Ngibekise nje emadlelo, emanti, ematete, tihlahla, tilwane – nitisebentisa njani leti tintfo, kanye kanye njengemmango, noma kwemuntfu munye lonetimphepha letisemtsetfweni, noma

kwebantfu labakhetsekile emmangweni?

- Misebenti mini leniyentako, noma ke nitikhandla kanjani kute nikhone kufinyelela kulengcebo yemvelo kute kutsi nikhone kutiphilisa?

THEME B: Equity, Distribution, and Benefits

- Ngalokujulile, chaza kabanti ngemmango wakho, ufake ekhatsi imvelo, indlela bantfu labaphilisana ngayo nendlela bantfu labatiphilisa ngayo
- Yini tintfo longatibala letihambelana nemvelo, nematfuba emisebenti, noma emabhizinisi letivetwe ngulomsebenti weLubombo kulommango?
- Nawubuka emuva, nangendlela yesintfu, ingabe lokutitselo temvelo bekwabiwa ngendlela lengashiyi labanye ngaphandle yini? Tikhona yini tingucuko letentekile ekutfoleni lomcebo wemvelo emvakwekutsi kusungulwe lomsebenti weLubombo?
- Yini lukuhle longakubala lokuvetwe ngolomsebenti weLubombo? Kukhona yini lokusite imvelo?

THEME C: Decision-making, Inclusion, and Participation

- Bobani labenta tincumo kulommango; ngekubuka kwakho imivo yato tonkhe takhamiti imcoka yini ngalokufanako, lokufaka ekhatsin yalabadvuna nalabasikati?
- Luhlaka lwetembangave noma kukhulunywa kwetindzaba temmango; imivo lenesisindvo ingabe yabo bani?
- Niyitsatsa kanjani imisebenti yetentfutfuko lefika emmangweni? Ngekubuka kwakho lena misebenti yentfutfuko iletselwe wonkhe wonkhe yini emmangweni, bobani labavumelekile kutsi bangayingenela lemisebenti?
- Bantfu balommango bayahlangayela yini emisebentini yetentfutfuko lefikako emmangweni? Bobani labafaka sandla kakhulu kulemisebenti? Bantfu bayachubeka yini kusebentisana kuletintfo letisungulwako emmangweni ngekuhamba kwesikhatsi, noma inkhaphukhaphu ibese iyashabalala tingahamba letinini teNkhosi letisitako nakucala lomsebenti? Ingabe imigomo yalemisebenti iyachazisiswa yini kubantfu uma ifika emmangweni, kanye nemiphumela lengahle itfolakale ekusungulweni kwalemisebenti yekutfutfukisa ummango?
- Uyenetiseka yini ngelizinga lenimenywe ngalo ekutsini nifaka sandla noma ke nihlangayele usasungulwa lomsebenti, noma sekucalwa kusebenta, kute kube ngulamuhla?