

CASE STUDY 2

Participatory Leadership for Climate Resilience – setting up new resource management partnerships

Orynx, Awash National Park



Protected Areas provide many important ecosystem goods and services and have important roles in enabling wildlife and people to co-exist in areas of both important resource value and often intense resource pressure. Such high pressure resource management situations mirror the challenges and opportunities of improving the management of resources in the context of climate change. Having a functional management system in place is crucial for protected areas, such as National Parks, to succeed. However this has been a critical challenge in Ethiopia. National Parks are typified as areas of resource conflicts and degradation.

In order to address this issue, the SCIP funded project of Population Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE-EC) started pilot work in two of Ethiopia's National Parks; the Awash National Park and the Simien Mountains National Park. The project started in April 2013. The project is being implemented in partnership with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and two NGOs;

Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) operating in the Simien National Park, and Wildlife Sustainable Development (WSD) operating in the Awash National Park. The main aim of the project is to establish functional multi-stakeholder management taskforces that will ensure inclusion, partnership and collaboration among government and community stakeholders; for better park management and leadership.

Once set up the new management taskforce have been strengthened through capacity development. A number of trainings related to improving awareness of climate change, understanding of Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, reproductive health (linked to improving family/population planning management) and wildlife management have been conducted. The trainers were drawn from the various Ministries including the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF), EWCA and the Ministry of Health (MoH). The project also organised an exchange visit for taskforce

members between the two Parks.

During a SCIP Fund monitoring visit a number of interviews were conducted with project implementers and taskforce members. Below are some of the views of different members.

Discussions with Dr. Yirmed Demeke, head of WSD, confirmed that the new park management taskforce in Awash National Park is set up and actively engaged in park management. He explained that taskforces have been set up at different levels (Kebele, Woreda and Region) and include representatives from government sectors and administration offices, community elders and groups, local NGOs, academic institutions and private sector actors. The taskforce members conduct regular management meetings, reviews and planning sessions with the aim to strengthen the Park's management. Dr. Yirmed said that he was 'especially impressed by the commitment shown from the local communities, whom, based on taskforce



Taskforce training, Awash town



Through the project the park authority have incorporated local government partners at the Woreda and Kebele levels who were previously never involved park management"

- Dr. Zelalem tefara, project leader with FZS

discussion and decision making, had significantly reduced the cattle pressure on the park'. Livestock encroachment in the Awash National Park has been a long standing conflict between the Park authorities and local communities.

Mesele Yilma, acting Administrator of Awash Fenale Woreda is a member of the new Park management taskforce at Woreda level. He said that the creation of a taskforce has 'enabled my office to create a strong link between the community and government'. According to Mesele, previously the park was almost forgotten by most stakeholders and local communities had no role at all in the park's management, and as a consequence park management was problematic. Mesele stated that this new management system is reversing this situation. He also noted that to sustain the management taskforce, the park authorities should take over (from the project) the facilitation of the new management system.

Group discussions were also held with community members of the Kebele level taskforce; Taha Mohammed, Momina Hassan and Ware Musa. The group expressed the view that the success of this project is based on its commitment to get communities involved in discussions of the Park management for the first time. The group noted that the exchange visit to the Simien Mountains National Park helped them to understand how communities can support themselves whilst benefiting the Park, for example communities organizing themselves to work in tourism activities. The group stated that; as newly recognised custodians of the park's natural resources, local communities have now agreed to take various responsibilities and ensure the Park is well managed. It was noted that they will continue to work in these

new roles provided that the government continues this engagement and supports them to be legally recognised members of the park management.

Dr. Zelalem Tefera, who is leading the project with FZS in the Simien Mountains National Park, stated that 'through the project the park authority have incorporated local government partners at the Woreda and Kebele levels who were previously never involved park management'. This inclusive management system has been an eye opener to many actors and has increased accountability amongst taskforce members. Dr. Zelalem's view is that 'the new management system is showing potential to resolve long standing Park management challenges'.

Kumera Wakjira, Director for National Parks and Sanctuaries Directorate, EWCA, stated that the project is progressing well and EWCA is pleased with what has been achieved so far. Based on this pilot experience the authority intends to engage more stakeholders in park management and to scale up the system to other National Parks and Protected Areas.

Simien Mountains National Park

