

Collective Community Sculpting

Understanding community structure on Bazaruto Island



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Executive Summary

Collective sculpting exercises were used to work with communities on Bazaruto Island to understand the communities and in order to collectively identify key issues that are preventing the communities from improving their quality of life. The information is used to identify strategic leverage points that can be used to shift the communities from their current state towards the future that they envision within the conservation objectives of the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). It was found that communities rely heavily on marine resources. There is a lack of feasible alternative opportunities on the island and a lack of infrastructure and community capacity (in terms of education) to build these opportunities. Taking this into account, at the moment, it will be most beneficial for the communities to begin monitoring their marine resources in a structured way, thereby deepening their understanding of the marine resources that they exploit and improving their capacity for management and representation as an important stakeholder. During this time, capacity and infrastructure could be developed in order to create the space for alternative or additional livelihoods. This is in line with the conservation objectives of EWT.

Introduction

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is commencing a three year marine conservation project on the island of Bazaruto, aimed towards conservation of seagrass habitats and improved fisheries through local management, monitoring and alternative livelihoods and, indirectly, the improved conservation status of Dugongs. The project is being implemented with a holistic approach based on Population Health and Environment (PHE), which aims to link environmental health with community health – an approach developed in conservation projects in remote areas (Explained in more detail by the Balanced Project, 2014). This approach has been seen to add-value to coastal conservation projects (e.g. D’agnes et al, 2010). The project, in collaboration with Blue Ventures (BV), facilitated initial community sculpting exercises with all communities on Bazaruto Island. The aims of these exercises were:

1. To gain a better understanding of the present communities
2. Initiate a participative culture in development and implementation of the EWT project with communities on the island in order to ensure holistic engagement with the communities at all levels.

Methodology

Community sculpting exercises were simplified and adapted from those developed at the Presencing Institute. These are hands-on participative exercises aimed at getting a community to review its current community structure and identify where and how positive changes can be made for the future. Participants were asked to model their community on a large sheet of paper using a variety of materials including markers, crayons, sticks, playdough, and stones. This allows

everyone's ideas to be represented even if they do not know how to write. Once the picture is explained, four questions are asked: (1) What do you like about your community? What is important in your community? (2) What don't you like about your community? (3) What would you like to get rid of in your community? (4) What would you like to improve or add to your community?

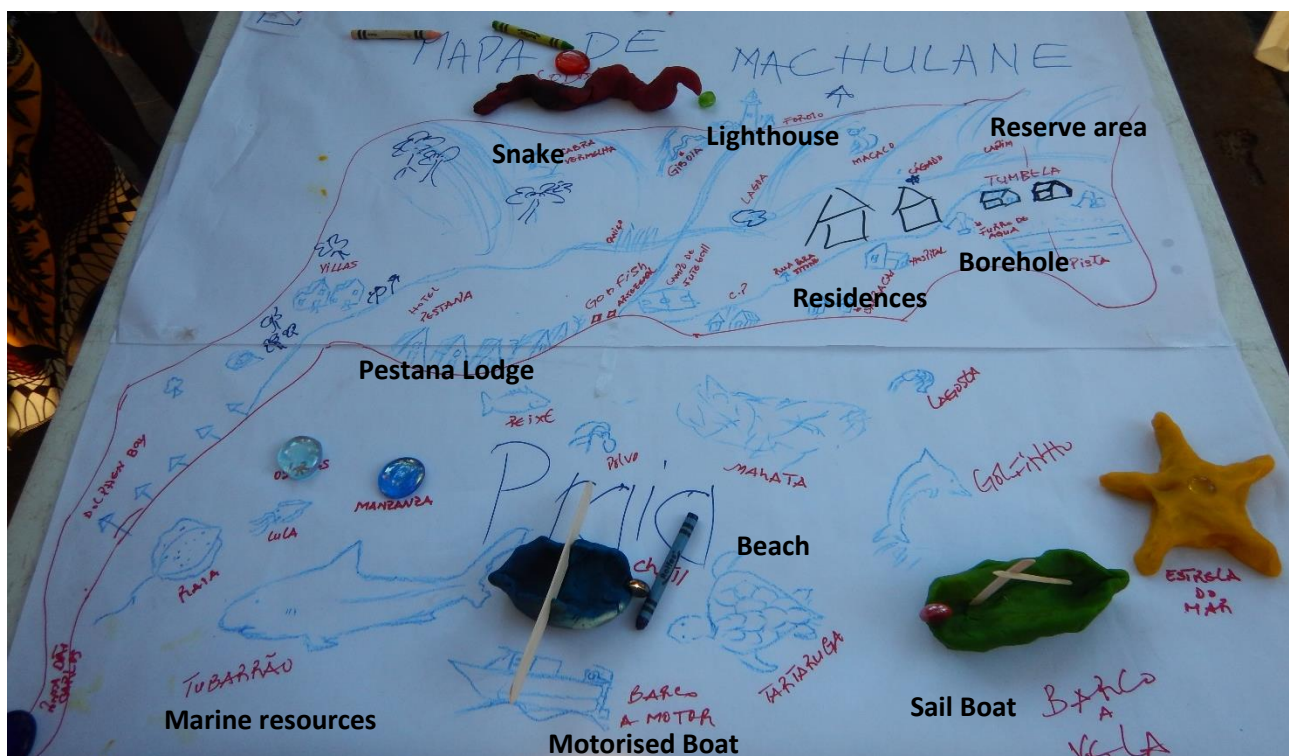
The community sculpting exercises were implemented in the three villages on Bazaruto Island: Zenguelemo, Pangaia and Sitone. Sitone was divided into the zones of Sitone and Nhadave and then Machulane because of distance considerations. The sculpting exercises were done separately for men and women to ensure full participation of both genders. They were facilitated in Portuguese and Xitswa. It should be noted that we are assuming a bias in the responses given by the villagers as can be expected when an organisation in collaboration with national park authorities approaches a rural community.

Results and Discussion

The World of the Villager

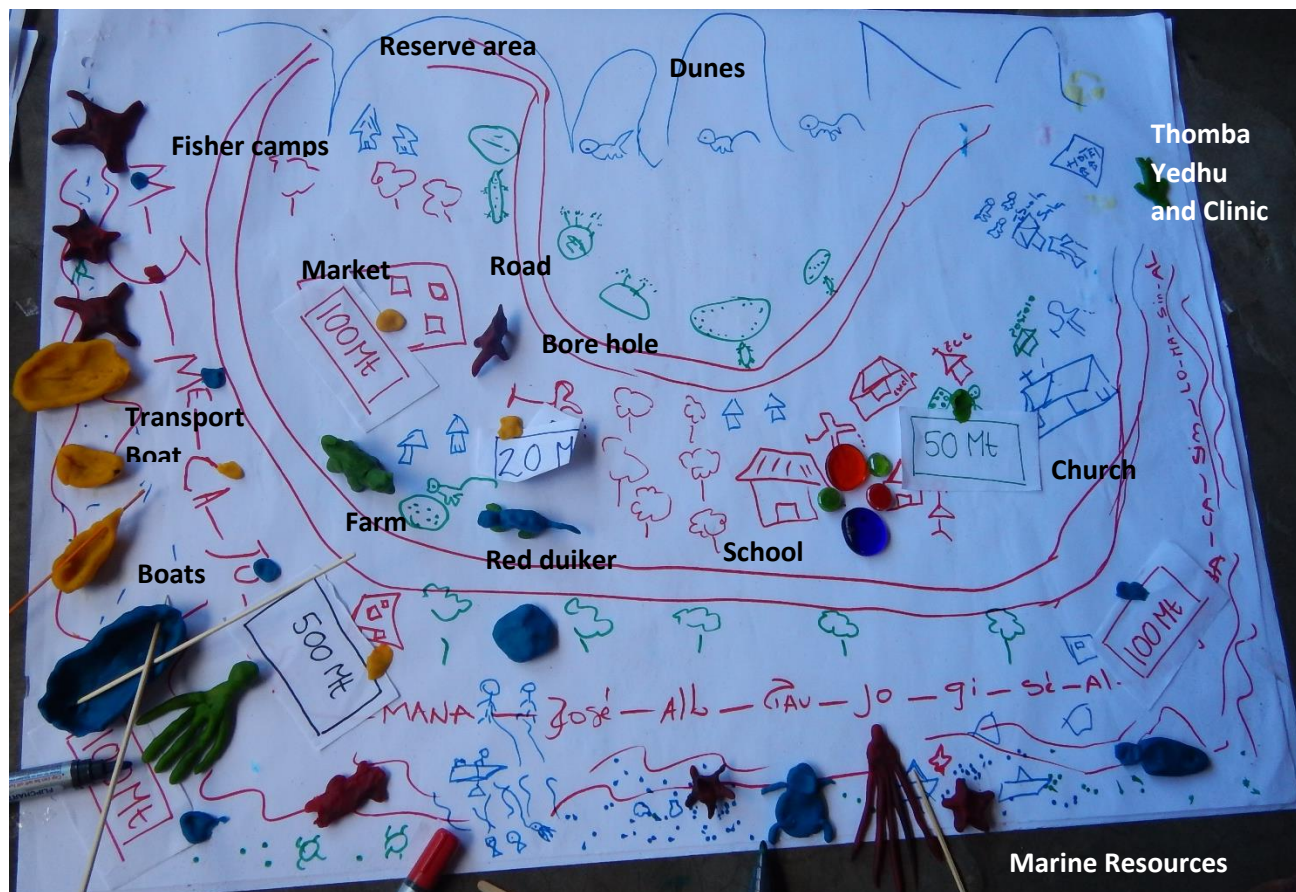
In general, villagers mapped their world as consisting of the beach and the ocean (with associated resources), the road that cuts through the village and the eastern part of the island that is the national park (for examples see Figure 1). Within the ocean, various marine resources were identified (e.g. fish, oysters, cuttlefish, crabs) and boats were always included. On the land, the most common features included in the community models were bore-holes (water sources), houses, areas for harvesting of bamboo and palm leaves, schools, wild animals (red duikers, snakes, monkeys, crocodiles), small shops and the clinic. It should be noted that everything that they highlighted existed within a 10km radius of their community. For example, Machulane village, that is located in the north of Bazaruto, mentioned Pestana Lodge but not Anatara (a lodge located further to the south). This village also did not include the school (located 3km away in Sitone) in its model. Sitone village, which is not adjacent to any lodge, did not mention either of the lodges. The mainland, (Mozambique) was never drawn into the model, however transport to the mainland was included. Churches were identified in all of the villages, indicating that spirituality makes up a part of the villager's world. In terms of leadership, at times local leadership and park presence were included in some of the villages but there was no mention of the Mozambican President or Provincial/District level leadership. The information provided by the villagers suggests that within each village of Bazaruto Island there is little consideration for the rest of Mozambique. Alternatively, the islanders may feel that the rest of Mozambique does not take them into consideration.

(a)



Machulane Village

(b)



Zenguelemo Village

Figure 1: Community maps (a) Machulane and (b) Zenguelemo

What is important to the villagers?

The main occupation of the villagers on Bazaruto Island is fishing/harvesting of resources for consumption or sale. Their worldview is composed of tangible resources and items that help them in this occupation. This is epitomized in the repeated description of the marine resources that are harvested by the villagers such as cuttlefish, crabs, oysters and fish and the description of small farms. Associated with this occupation was the description of the tools used. These are described as boats, nets and water pumps. There was not much mention of wages/jobs as being important within the community at the moment (although it is brought up as something that the villagers want in the future). This places them at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs where the basic needs of food are not being met, thus preventing individuals from the community partaking in other abstract activities that lead to self-actualisation.

What the villagers want to remove from their world?

A considerable human-wildlife conflict evidently exists in the park with villagers complaining about snakes, monkeys, crocodiles and red duikers.

What the villagers want for the future?

Villagers were asked to look at the model that they had created and identify what they wanted to change or improve. In general these were (sorted by order of most incidences):

1. Improved health services and access (distance)
2. Improved fish catch and safety at sea (in the form of better boats/motors)
3. More access to fresh water
4. Markets
5. Electricity
6. Schools
7. Having a wage income

Where to?

While the EWT project cannot support the villagers to address all of the issues they want to improve on, it is within the capacity of the EWT project to improve the fishery. This can be done with a participatory approach of improving fishery management and potentially improving the quality of fish through improved fish processing and the gear used.

To achieve this, the project will firstly need to determine the current state of the fishery and the marine resources that are being exploited. This should be done in collaboration with the fishers, contributing to the next important aspect of the project - the education of the fisherman with regards to the importance and role of marine habitats for the continued existence of a fish resource. Implementing the above points should result in a tangible service that the fishers can experience and benefit from. In the long term, this will be improved fish catch. However in the short term this may be more evident through fisher participation in the monitoring and management. It may also be possible to support the park in resolving some of the human-wildlife conflicts that are evident. Alongside this, EWT will be researching additional livelihoods to produce a cash-income and within the framework of the villagers expressed need for improved health, EWT is working with Blue Ventures to meet unmet family planning needs.

Considerations

The focus groups highlighted the isolated worldview that the villagers have. Any intervention should therefore be approached taking into consideration the localized and limited worldview of the villagers. Villagers may not always be fully be aware of all the possibilities that could be visualized for the future or the steps that they need to take in order to achieve what they want (due to the nature of their isolation on the islands). For example, increased education would increase opportunities for businesses, earning a wage income and improve general health. On a side note, in all of the simulations, men generally were more able to partake in the task, displaying increased adequacy in literacy and abstraction skills than the women. This is also a consideration when forward with the EWT project.

A note on sustainability

It should always be taken into account that the EWT project needs to be sustainable in the future and thus the goals that EWT sets should be designed in such a way that they do not overreach the capacity of the local community. This can be assessed by asked the question: "If EWT is not in Bazaruto, then what?"

There have been many management and development projects on Bazaruto Island and one already picks up a feeling that the villagers are tired of projects and organisations. Beyond this, today fishers continue with business as usual. Masons and carpenters were trained but have no work and so don't use their skill, there are no beekeepers on Bazaruto and there are no active sewing cooperatives. There is little evidence of continuity being implemented by the villagers or the park administration. Alternatively, it is possible that these project didn't work because they were not feasible economically. This highlights the imperative for good research and strong business plans for any development project that is in consideration.

Overall, it is recommended that the reach that EWT aims to achieve be designed to the capacity/built capacity of the park and the local fishers so that the work that EWT does is continued by the people that are invested in the park for the long term (e.g. the local fisher families and the park staff.)

Acknowledgements

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