



Transform Training and Support for Resource Management Programme

A COOPERATION PROGRAMME BETWEEN DEAT AND GTZ



Success Stories in South Africa Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

1. Introduction

GTZ and the South African government's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) have jointly set up a partnership called Training and Support for Resource Management (Transform). This programme assists the poorer strata of South African society to improve their lives through careful and responsible use of the natural resources – such as plants, water, soil, forests and wildlife – that they live with.

The Transform programme is community based and aims to assist rural people to make use of their natural resources in a way that brings tangible (economic) and non-tangible (spiritual and cultural) benefits. The co-operative programme has been in existence since 1996.

In its first phase, the programme aimed to maximize benefits that rural communities could achieve through co-management of protected areas – such as game reserves and national parks. Since 2001, the programme has expanded to focus on a much wider range of community based natural resource management issues (CBNRM).

Transform has undertaken a number of projects that involve close co-operation with communities, the private sector, civil society organizations and government institutions. The most prominent ones include the following:

- Assistance in drafting the national government's "Country Partnership for Combat of Land Degradation", which plans for the reduction and reversal of land degradation and the relief of poverty in rural areas.
- Design and drafting of national guidelines for CBNRM together with relevant government departments at national and provincial level. These CBNRM Guidelines were launched at the World Parks Congress held in Durban South Africa in September 2003. They are now widely used by various agencies of government and applied in many different community based projects to promote the sustainable use of natural resources.
- The guidelines are, in turn, based on findings and lessons learnt in pilot areas where Transform has been involved in major forms of CBNRM such as nature tourism, integrated catchment management, sustainable use and production of plants, animals and non-biotic natural resources, community managed conservancies, co-management of protected areas as well as forestry and agro-forestry.

- Many of the lessons that went into the drafting of these guidelines derived from Transform's experience in helping to set up and implement integrated conservation and development programmes in areas such as the Richtersveld, the Makuleke Region of the Kruger National Park, and the Bourke's Luck Centre for Local Economic Development.

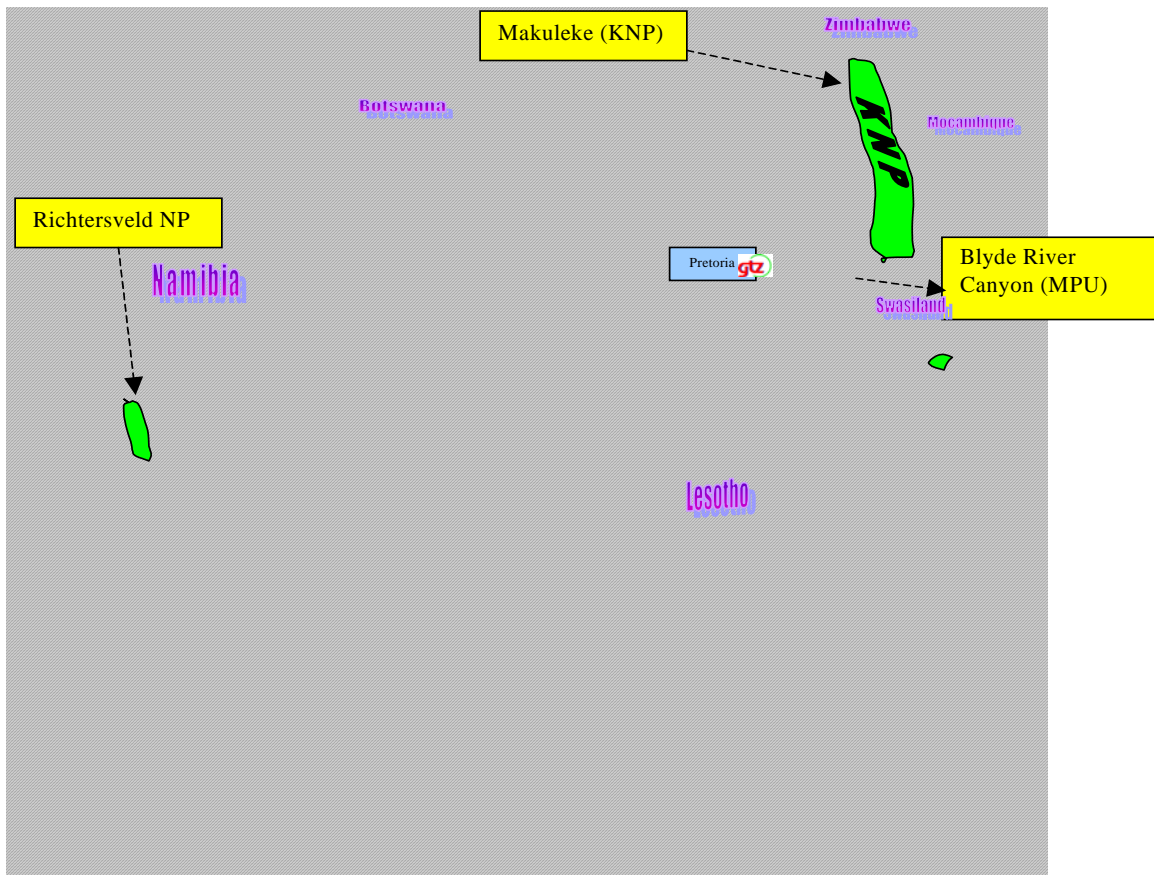
The above three programmes are South African success stories in the arena of economic growth and job creation through CBNRM and form the main content of this document. They are considered to be pilot projects that will allow similar methods and techniques for promoting rural development to be extended to all provinces of South Africa.

The CBNRM projects undertaken by Transform are aimed at reducing high levels of poverty that exist in parts of South Africa while at the same time encouraging the rural poor not to overharvest the resources they live with and depend on. Recent research conducted by Transform has shown that families in communal land use areas make the bigger part of their livelihood from grass, reeds, firewood, building material harvested from trees, twigs, animals, soil, clay and many other natural species. Degradation of these thus endangers the security and subsistence levels of the poor.

Awareness-raising around the principles of CBNRM and ensuring that the policy guidelines are used in the mainstream of government and community based programmes is a major part of Transform's work.

Another key component involves technical support for a number of CBNRM projects that contribute to the improvement of rural livelihoods and job creation. These projects are all in line with the South African government's poverty relief programme. They exist in all nine provinces in South Africa. A monitoring system to measure the economic, social and ecological impacts of these projects has been designed and is in progress.

This paper aims to highlight the processes that Transform has followed in the past few years to assist and support communities where CBNRM projects were undertaken. It aims to share with readers the lessons that have been learnt in the Bourke's Luck region of the Blyde River Canyon (Mpumalanga province); the Makuleke Region of the Kruger National Park (Northern Province); and the Richtersveld (Northern Cape province). It also aims to highlight possibilities of applying lessons learnt from these model projects in other areas.



2. Bourke's Luck Centre for Local Economic Development in the Blyde River Canyon

2.1. Background



This project is located in the Graskop area of Mpumalanga province on a beautiful site overlooking the Blyde River Canyon, one of the largest canyons in the world with a rich combination of different ecosystems as well as plant and animal species. The site is a

former military base that is now being converted into a multi-purpose centre for tourism-led growth and local economic development.

The local municipality is fully involved in the initiative and has set up a dedicated development company to drive the programme, called the Bourke's Luck Development Company. The board of the company is representative of local communities and stakeholders. Furthermore, the initiative is supported by all national, provincial and local government agencies involved.

The national Department of Public Works owns the site and its buildings and has granted the development company a long lease over the site. The new multi-purpose centre will promote job creation, skills development and sustainable economic development in the villages surrounding the former military base and in the municipal areas

The Department of Public Works put the site out for public tender in 2002 and called for expressions of interest from bidders to either purchase the site and its buildings or to lease the site for tourism led development. Transform provided technical support to a consortium that was made up of the local municipality and civic organizations. This led to the drafting of a concept plan for the conversion of the former military base into a centre for local economic development.

The Department awarded the site to the business consortium on condition that the site will be used for maximizing local empowerment, job creation and economic development. Since then more detailed business plans, investor mobilization, infrastructure planning and improvement have been undertaken.

2.2. Objectives and achievements

The objectives of the project include the following:

- New and sustainable commercial enterprises led by the tourism sector are created.
- A significant number of new quality jobs are created for the residents of villages surrounding Bourke's Luck.
- Partnerships are set up between relevant government agencies, conservation agencies, local communities and the private sector.
- A significant number of local residents are trained in hospitality, management, tourism and small enterprise skills. This will ensure the life and health of the project even after development partners have departed from the area.
- A number of small businesses are set up, trained and provided with contracts from the development company to carry out work such as security, maintenance, laundry, furniture and textile manufacture.
- A significant increase in average household income in the villages surrounding the centre is ensured.

A number of tangible successes have been attained, and more are expected in the near future. These include:

- Two tourism developers have been given a concession to construct a R35- million hotel on the site. They hotel will pay a regular rental to the development company based on a fixed guaranteed amount as well as a percentage of turn-over.

- The hotel investor has predicted that it alone will directly create 150 new jobs, which will annually contribute over R2 million into the local economy through wages. We can expect similar returns from other investors.
- The investors have also agreed to put forward R200 000 as an upfront payment that will be used for community based projects.
- The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has made a poverty relief grant to the development company for R4.8 million to be used to supply infrastructure (water and electricity) to the site and to repair and upgrade basic services.
- Beneficiaries will participate in the development company and over time be able to participate in the project and individual businesses on the site as equity owners.
- The small businesses set up will be expected to conform to the same principles of corporate governance as the development company and big businesses who became tenants on site.
- The small businesses will be encouraged to operate on a sustainable and competitive basis and will be required to devise business plans that promote sustainability.
- There will be an emphasis on encouraging high levels of responsible governance of the small businesses and avoiding dependency.
- A high profile launch of the project, scheduled for mid-August 2004 will be a marketing tool for tourism in the area.
- Small businesses will together create 300 jobs which will contribute a substantial amount of money into the local economy.
- A hospitality and tourism training institute will be located on the site and this will ensure that local community members will get entrepreneurial skills needed to manage tourism-based developments.

The Bourke's Centre for Local Economic Development involves a partnership between government, local communities and the private sector. Such partnerships create effective opportunities for long-term development and at the same time the conservation of natural resources upon which economic growth depends. Communities are directly involved in development initiatives and they receive training to run businesses, and maintain them. They are thus in control of all development that happens in their respective areas. The skills do not leave with development partners, but remain with communities. Business development initiatives such as these can be repeated elsewhere in developing countries because they ensure sustainability.

3. The Makuleke Region of the Kruger National Park

3.1 Background



In 1969 about 3000 people were forced at gunpoint to burn their homes in a place now known as the Pafuri section of the Kruger National Park. They were displaced without hope of regaining ownership of their land during a period in the history of South Africa that witnessed forced removals throughout the country.

The Makuleke people were among the first claimants to win their land back in terms of South Africa's new land restitution laws in 1996. This happened after negotiations with the South African National Parks Board and the South African government. The negotiations brought the following four results:

- The Makuleke people got full ownership and title back to some 24000 hectares of land that has the richest combination of wild plants, animals and landscapes in the Kruger National Park.
- The Makuleke people guaranteed to use the land in a way that is compatible with the conservation of wildlife. They will not participate in activities such as mining.
- They gained full rights to commercialise the land in the park by entering into partnerships with private businesses.
- A joint management board made up of representatives from the villages and the conservation agency to govern the way in which the wildlife in the area is protected.

Thus the land within the Kruger National Park between the Luvuvu and Limpopo Rivers was transferred from the state and returned to its original owners. The land was then reproclaimed as a contractual park and was reincorporated into the park. The Makuleke people added another 5000 hectares of communal land to the park, thus expanding the size of the national park.

The people of Makuleke have always had the ability to work closely with outside experts and advisers. A group called "Friends of Makuleke" was started in the early 1990s and this group supported the Makulekes in the lodging their land claims and its settlement. GTZ Transform has consistently provided financial and technical support in order for the people to get to where they are today. There are many other organizations that have offered valuable support to the people of Makuleke.

The results of the Makuleke project include the following:

- In order to take back ownership of the land, the Makuleke people were required to set up a communal property association (CPA).
- The CPA holds the title to the land and its executive committee is democratically elected every two years. It has merged with traditional forms of local government that existed before the land claims.
- A development forum has been created to represent the views and needs of ordinary people and to ensure that village development is promoted in a transparent and sustainable way.
- The Makulekes have set up a joint management board that takes decisions about anti-poaching, road and fence maintenance, wildlife management and other conservation issues.
- The Makulekes have trained field rangers who go out on anti-poaching patrols and collect data from the field about management issues.

3.2 Achievements

The following achievements have been made in the Makuleke project.

- The Makuleke leaders have actively sought out partnerships with the private sector, resulting in R60 million worth of investment being mobilized by mid 2003 for the creation of four new lodges in the Makuleke Region of the Kruger National Park.
- The CPA, together with the private sector, has already opened a six-star 36-bed lodge called the Outpost in a beautiful site in the park. All jobs in the lodge are for local people, a regular rental is paid to the CPA and a skills transfer programme is in place.
- Wilderness Safaris, a top nature tourism development company plans is currently investing R45-million in order to develop another three top-of-the-range safari lodges in the Makuleke region. This development is projected to bring over R2-million in the form of wages from permanent jobs in the next four years. Contracts will be given to local small businesses and the Wilderness lodges will pay an annual rental to the CPA calculated at 8% of their turnover.
- The CPA is currently using its resources to stimulate new small businesses in the resettlement villages outside the park. These include plans to set up craft, textile and cultural groups.
- The CPA has set up its own guest house which includes a replica of the old hut in which their chief lived before the removal.
- A local museum is under construction.
- The Makuleke leadership has initiated extensive skills development programmes in the areas of leadership training, conservation management, hospitality and tourism training, and commercial skills.

In addition, the GTZ Transform programme has played an important role in supporting the CPA's executive committee to review and design new institutions for fair benefit sharing and good local governance.

Much time has been spent agreeing on how community projects could benefit from income earned in the park. Issues around benefit sharing are never easy to deal with, but the Makuleke leadership is aware of the need to ensure that the poorest residents of their villages benefit from these programmes. This objective is one of the critical challenges that now faces the Makuleke project.



4. The Richtersveld

4.1. Background

The Richtersveld is in the extreme north west of South Africa in an arid mountain desert which has high levels of biodiversity. The Orange River which flows into the Atlantic Ocean to the north of the Richtersveld had deposited rich layers of alluvial diamonds on its bed and in the sea.

Given the region's extremes of distance and climate, the communities living there have been neglected in the past. However, this situation has changed since the end of apartheid. The South African government and donors began to put resources into developing more sustainable land uses such as tourism.

In 1996 Transform was asked to support a programme that looked at the role of the Richtersveld National Park, which is wholly owned by the community but managed by South African National Parks, and the possibility of expanding the tourism infrastructure in the area in a way that would benefit residents.

Transform gave financial and technical support for the drafting of the first Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in the Richtersveld, which reflects the conservation and tourism aspirations of the residents. This meant that local development objectives could be set, priority areas identified, and an integrated vision for the Richtersveld developed.

The IDP showed a clear focus on CBNRM and nature tourism as a potential economic motors for the region. The aim of this support is to ensure that the Richtersveld becomes an established tourism destination with better infrastructure. The main idea is to change the nature of the economy from one dependent on minerals to a more diverse one which includes tourism and conservation as major elements.



4.2. Achievements

The following achievements have been made in the Richtersveld with support from Transform:

- The Richtersveld IDP process has resulted in a strong public commitment to conservation objectives, and identification of various conservancy initiatives by the communities themselves.
- Tourism potential in the Richtersveld has grown with over 5000 tourists visiting the Richtersveld National Park each year.
- There are plans to develop a tract of land where special and endemic species were discovered into an urban conservation area or municipal reserve. This area is near Port Nolloth along the coast.
- The Orange River Mouth Transfrontier Conservation Area involves incorporating the Richtersveld National Park with similar conservation areas across the border in Namibia. This has the potential to become an important tourist hub in the region.
- A management plan has been drawn up to inform the transfrontier park process of sorting out land management, mining activities, and the flow patterns of the river.
- The Richtersveld municipality has suggested a joint venture between a private developer and the Richtersveld Community Property Association (CPA) to jointly manage and control the two tourist sites situated on the Lower Orange River. These sites already have existing tourism facilities.
- Port Nolloth has developed around the mining and fishing industries linked to its harbour but is now also becoming a tourist centre.
- The communities of the Richtersveld who own the land used by the Richtersveld National Park have been major role players in the establishment of the Transfrontier Park.

In addition, Transform was instrumental in supporting the local authority to prepare the new legal framework for municipal planning and an integrated development programme which sets out how the municipality will carry out its mandate to promote local economic development and job creation in the area. The council adopted the strategy in 2002.

Young people have been involved in AIDS awareness initiatives in surrounding towns. This activity has helped a lot in reducing problems related to alcohol and crime.

A R1.6-million grant was given to the Richtersveld to promote arts and crafts in the region. From this grant, R300 000 was used for the production of a business plan and a part thereof was used to run the first Richtersveld cultural festival.

5. Conclusion

All three of the above projects have provided Transform with invaluable experience in terms of how to go about planning and implements CBNRM projects. Some of the key lessons learnt include:

- The key to these projects being successful is that they were based on a strong human rights approach – given local residents the right to own their land and make commercial use of the resources that exist on their land.
- There is a need to set up strong and democratic local institutions of governance that are able to partake in businesses ventures, ensure stable forms of administration and distribute benefits in a fair and equal way. It is a tricky business to set up such institutions and experience in the above projects has been invaluable.
- Partnerships with all levels of government, conservation agencies and other relevant organizations are vital to ensure success. In particular, joint ventures with the private sector bring experience and professional to CBNRM projects and also allows skills to be transferred to local people. It is not easy to set up such partnerships and this requires extensive negotiation and conflict mediation – all skills learnt by Transform in the above projects.
- When interacting with the private sector, it is vital to set up an open process of selecting private partners against key criteria that entrench the rights of the community in the partnership. This avoids communities being saddled with unscrupulous partners.
- It is important, in order to overcome high levels of poverty, to find as many streams of benefit for local residents. These can include work and contracts for small businesses, guaranteed jobs in major tourism businesses and skills programmes to ensure that local people take up as many of these jobs as possible and fair rentals for the use of community land by new investors.
- Quality technical support to local communities is vital but needs to be provided in a way that does not encourage dependency.
- Clear contracts and agreements outlining the rights, roles and obligations of the various parties are vital.
- Monitoring by watchdog bodies – including relevant government departments and civil society organisations – is vital to ensure that the rights of local communities are respected.

Transform has learnt these lessons over many years of experience in the model projects described above and is now in a position to extend the lessons learnt from success, as well as failure, to the new CBNRM projects it is now involved in.