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## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION | REVIEW ARTICLE

# Ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development by local communities within Southern Africa: Perspectives from the greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation, South-Eastern Lowveld, Zimbabwe

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**Abstract:** This paper seeks to delve deeper and assess ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises development by local communities within the Zimbabwean component of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA). Transfrontier Conservation was embraced by scientists, policy-makers and other stakeholders in Chiredzi and Chipinge Districts in the southeast Lowveld of Zimbabwe, among other reasons for improved wildlife conservation and community-based cross-border ecotourism development. The study sought to understand factors hampering local communities owned ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development. To understand the evolution of ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development by local communities in Southern Africa especially within the GLTFCA and to also assess the potential of local community

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chenjerai Zanamwe is an executive officer with Chiredzi Rural District Council in Zimbabwe. Transfrontier conservation was adopted within the GLTFCA. The researcher is trying to understand the subject for the further development of community-based tourism for poverty relief. He is a Masters of philosophy student with Chinhoyi University looking at challenges hampering ecotourism and wildlife conservation. He has been working with local communities in Chipinge and Chiredzi Districts since 2002. Among other duties is to research and advise policy-makers at local level during Environmental, Agricultural and tourism development policy formulation. His research interests include the tourism development and inclusion of local communal entrepreneurs in global tourism and wildlife conservation value chains. This study is crucial to the author since the inception of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park in 2002 the local communities have realized meaningful benefits from cross-ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Transfrontier conservation is widely regarded as an engine to foster Ecotourism and wildlife conservation. Ecotourism and wildlife conservation are complimentary. Related enterprises if properly planned and implemented they have great potential for poverty relief especially for those communities living within the Transfrontier conservation areas. Scientists and policy-makers throughout the whole world concur that Ecotourism and Wildlife conservation-related enterprises are a very important economic engine to move poor rural communities out of abject poverty they are reeling in.

The Greater Limpopo Transfrontier conservation area was put in place in 2002. However, 17 years after its formation the local communities are still living under abject poverty. It is therefore important to make an assessment on the ecotourism and wildlife related enterprise to better understand challenges hampering its development. This is important for the further development frameworks for improved community beneficitation from Transfrontier conservation approaches

Ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises development. Various documents such as books, journals, web documents, electronic sources, reports, financial statement and policy documents were reviewed. To buttress the study, 30 purposeful sampled key informants were also interviewed in Chipinge and Chiredzi Districts from January to June 2018 in order to solicit for firsthand data that are very useful for triangulation. The study is important for the further development of district, national and international policies. The study findings showed that Transfrontier conservation have not achieved its objectives towards improved cross-border ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development. Hopes by the local community especially on the Zimbabwean side for inclusion ecotourism and conservation-related enterprises chains have not been realized. Most local communities' members within TFCAs are still living under abject poverty. More still needs to be done towards socio-economic development in the area under study. The study has realized that the transfrontier treaty was operationalized at a higher level thus head of state and ministerial forgetting about the local level. Local institutions are not fully empowered and have clear policy guidelines. Findings from this study will help better plan, structure and execute ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises involving communities. The success of these initiatives will increase the size of benefits trickling to individual households in line among other objectives which led to the establishment of the Transfrontier Conservation Areas.

**Subjects: Environmental Management; Biodiversity & Conservation; Tourism; Sustainable Development; Rural Development; Economics and Development; Economics**

**Keywords: Conservation; Ecotourism; enterprises; poverty; Wildlife**

## 1. Introduction

Eco-tourism and wildlife conservation are complementary or overlapping sectors of the economy (Buckley, 2010). Globally, literature has proved demand for ecotourism-related products is on the rise (Balmford et al., 2009). Income generated from ecotourism can be used fund both wildlife conservation and socio-economic development to benefits local communities (Bello, Lovelock, & Carr, 2017). In the early eighteenth century most colonial governments especially those in the Southern Africa adopted the American conservation approach “fortress” conservation approach (Jones, 2006). Wildlife was put into protected area and the local people were alienated from their wildlife. Strict conservation laws were then enacted; a brutal quasi-military unit of rangers was formed to enforce these laws (Büscher & Ramutsindela, 2016; Ellis, 1994; Songorwa, 1999; Spinage, 1998). This did not only prove to be costly but unsustainable as poaching and human wildlife conflicts kept on increasing (Barrett & Arcese, 1995). Over time, it was realized that there was need to shift from these centralized approach often referred to “fences and fines” towards community benefitting initiatives (Barrett & Arcese, 1995; Mutanga, Muboko, Vengesayi, & Gandiwa, 2015; Songorwa, 1999). Pressure also kept mounting on most governments in Southern Africa including Zimbabwe. They were put under immense pressure to harmonize conservation and community benefits (Decaro & Stokes, 2008). It was noted with concern that local community should take part in wildlife conservation other than being reduced to the role of spectators only (Metcalfe, 1993; Muphree, 2009; Murombedzi, 2008). This saw the adoption of a series of initiatives which sought to include and benefit the local community from wildlife conservation. Among others, the Integrated Conservation Development Projects (ICDP), Community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) and transfrontier conservation (Barrett & Arcese, 1995; Martin, 1986; Murombedzi, 2008; Spenceley, 2003). Ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises were then embraced outside protected area to create benefits accruing to the local communities living adjacent protected areas (Suich, Child, & Spenceley, 2013).

These milestones thus ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises if realized would increase the size of the cake adding to the already existing CBNRM programs already benefitting the local community. For instance, the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) treaty was signed in 2002 (Spenceley, 2003) by the three head of state for Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The districts are part of the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA). The GLTFCA was formed through amalgamation of Kruger National Park in South Africa, Limpopo National Park in Mozambique and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe including the adjacent surrounding communities. However, these different components are run independently. There were greater expectations from the local communities and the Zimbabwean government that the formation of this extensive wildlife sanctuary and wildlife corridors would improve the socio-economic well-being of people living within the Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) through the development of ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises. However, 17 years after the adoption of the trans-frontier conservation approach, the local people are still living under abject poverty (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017). Both direct and in-direct benefits trickling to each and every house remains very low, thus living on less than a dollar per day (World Bank, 2018; Zimbabwe National statistic Agency, 2016). The purpose of this study is to assess ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development by local communities within the GLTCA in the south-eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe. Results in this study will assist in the further development of district, national and international policies which guides transfrontier conservation planning and implementation.

## 2. Methods

The study was carried out in Chiredzi and Chipinge Districts, in the southeast Lowveld Zimbabwe which is also part of the GLTFCA. The two Districts were chosen because they are found in the south eastern Lowveld and it is also part of the GLTFCA. The study was conducted between September 2017 and June 2018. The study was operationalized using the case study approach. Case study approach was used since it is and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2014). Both key data from informants and secondary data were sought for since case studies usually uses data that span over a length period of time (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2011; Arora & Stoner 2009; Creswell, 2009; Jankowicz, 2000). Data were solicited from 30 key informants, only those members of that society with in-depth knowledge about TFCA conservation were interviewed. A non-probability sampling strategy was used to choose participants (Trochim, 2006). Purposeful sampling method was used to pick the participants. Only those members of the community with in-depth knowledge were chosen. Secondary forms of data on ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development were reviewed. The paper is largely informed by historical, financial, other forms of records such as Institutions reports, plans and policies. Reports from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) and both Chiredzi and Chipinge Districts, Communal area management program for indigenous resources (CAMPFIRE) Association, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) were reviewed. Documentary review also included peer reviewed journals, documents from the internet, conference proceedings, websites, and text books. The data collected from various documents were not restricted to the GLTFCA only within the southeast Lowveld. Global and regional experiences were also interrogated. This diversity of information collected can make it possible for the findings of the study to be generalized in the perspective of Southern Africa.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. Historical foundations of CBNRM initiatives

Over years, there had been a discourse on how conservation should be approached. This saw changes from fortress conservation approaches to community-based conservation (CBC) approaches (Gandiwa, Heitkong, Lokhorst, Prins, & Leeuwis, 2013; Mbaiwa, 2010; Songorwa, 1999). Various governments in the world tried various conservations approaches which did not involve the local people (Adams & Hulme, 2001). The policy-makers did not realize that the success of any protected area is hinged on the goodwill of its neighboring community (Brockington, 2004). In Zimbabwe, in wildlife conservation approaches such as the fortress, king game's concept and

“fences and fines” were implemented over time. These governments employed brutal military and quasi-military units to try and halt illegal wildlife off-take through forms such as poaching and poisoning (Songorwa, 1999). The Rhodesian Government enacted the Parks and Wildlife Act in 1975 (Child & Child, 2015). These top-down conservation approaches did not only fail to curb the problems but proved to be very expensive and could not provide a long-lasting solution to poaching and human wildlife conflicts (Jones, 2006; Songorwa, 1999). Upon realizing that as long as the local communities do not participate in the management of wildlife, poaching and human-wildlife conflict was difficult to manage. Community based wildlife conservation approaches were adopted. In Zimbabwe, this led to the amendment of the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 in 1982 to enable the participation of the local communities in wildlife conservation (Gandiwa et al., 2013; Muposhi, Gandiwa, Bartels, & Makuza, 2016). Barrett and Arcese (1995) pointed out that the failure of the “fines and fences approach” was mainly because the authorities had failed to consider needs of the local communities. The user rights over wildlife in the late 1960s on freehold lands in Zimbabwe were under the rule of contested white minority regimes. The emergence of CBNRM in the 1980s resulted in a series of legislative reforms devoted to land owners. This dramatic shift away from strictly centralized governance of wildlife effectively changed wildlife’s status on private lands from being an economic liability to an asset (Muphree, 2009). It also led to profound recoveries of wildlife on freehold lands and the growth of wildlife-based industries in Zimbabwe (Reidinger & Miller, 2013). This saw the increase in the wildlife populations and booming of wildlife related processing industries.

In Southern Africa, various initiatives have been adopted by the governments to try and motivate the local communities especially those at the interface of protected area to live in harmony with wildlife through community-based ecotourism partnerships initiatives. These include CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, the Administrative Management Design Programme for Game Management Areas (ADMAGE) program in Zambia, Tchuma Tchato in Mozambique and Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) in Namibia (Fibricius, Koch, Magome, & Turner, 2013; Jones, 2004). This was to try and rationalize the game laws and regulations which were enacted to serve the interests of the minority white community and against the majority rural communities (Pangeti, 1992). Neumann (1998), noted that the natural resources management policies in the colonial era were a central component of the project, of extending European political control into rural African landscapes. Thus, colonization by European powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the accompanying spread of conservation practice did not bring along with it respect for traditional rights (Logan & Moseley, 2002).

The colonial model for nature conservation that was globally imposed by European nations was based on the American fortress approach (Buscher, 2016). The pristine wild areas that were set aside for human enjoyment and fulfillment was encouraged by concerns about the depletion of valuable natural resources (Child, Tavengwa, & Ward, 1997). Alexander (2006), stated that the ownership of land was gradually transferred from traditional local authority to the state domain, enabling colonial authorities to exploit African land, labor and resources at willy-nilly basis. The shift in tenure, which was the key driver of African independence, sought to recover entitlement to land and resources which were placed under the central regulatory authority alienating local people’s rights to utilize their resources over time. Unfortunately for Africans as cited by Chibhememe et al. (2014), newly independent African nations that emerged starting in the late 1950s inherited colonially devised political structures based on the centralized control and exploitation of natural resources. The African states often maintained heavily centralized political economic institutions as a result of socialist ideologies favoring state direction of the economy and ownership of valuable resources and the desire of elites in many emerging nations to build patronage networks essential for their own authority and political stability (Van de Walle, 2001). The reforms also laid down the basis of extending the model of local management to communal lands after the enactment of majority rule in Southern Africa resulting in Zimbabwe’s iconic CAMPFIRE in the 1980s and Namibia’s Communal Conservancies in the 1990s (Jones & Mosimane, 2007).

The objectives of some CBNRM such as CAMPFIRE emanated from the experience of the earlier failed government program. Programs such as Wildlife Industries New Development for All (WINDFALL) was initiated in 1978 as a conservation strategy by ecologists at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWM) (Murindagomo, 1990). According to Martin (1986), WINDFALL's major goal was to reduce soil degradation in communal areas. Unfortunately, the program's poverty alleviation and local community development goals were subsidiary to its broader environmental conservation concerns. Getz et al. (1999) highlighted that the economic benefits to rural communities were specific to minimizing conflicts between wildlife and local agriculture. It was also aimed at increasing the protein intake of villagers by making available meat from wildlife culls in adjacent game reserves. The program also focused on improving rural economic wherewithal by reverting to villagers some of the funds from Safari hunting. However, due to the fact that operation WINDFALL failed to abide with the local people's concern and this added on to the failure of operation WINDFALL.

By many accounts of Moore (1998), Metcalfe (1993), and Muphree (2009), WINDFALL failed to achieve these broad objectives for a variety of reasons some which are the program design. The top down approach was used instead of bottom up approach. The tourism partnerships were designed in such a way that the communities do not participate in the planning, management and conservation of wildlife at the same time deriving no benefits from these efforts. In the case for Namibian CBNRM, the rights over wildlife are given directly to local communities and institutions avoiding regional government structure and the need for those structures to devolve authority further down. Manyara and Jones (2007) noted that communities have to define themselves, enabling the development of cohesive social management units with incentives for individuals to cooperate together rather than artificial administrative units which potentially force together people who would not normally cooperate. Many project areas in Namibia recognize the role of women as resource managers who need to be involved at community level decision making over the use of natural resources and distribution of benefit (Lendelvo, Munyebvu & Suich, 2012).

Wildlife ecotourism and CBNRM are very instrumental tools for rural development and wildlife resources conservation in Africa (Mbaiwa, 2010). In Southern African Community, CBNRM programs have facilitated the creation of community organizations that allow the communities and households capture part of the monetary value associated with wildlife oriented enterprises (Muphree, 2009).

However, some conservationist still advocates against the paradigm shift from Fortress conservation approach to CBC (Berkes, 2002; Brown, 2002). The shift from the traditional centralized authoritarian protectionist approaches towards decentralized community based participatory approaches is very important in that development and conservation can be simultaneously achieved (Mbaiwa, 2010). The criticism focused more on a reductionist approach, whereby only biodiversity conservation is considered other than taking a holistic approach, by bearing in mind the political, economic and social factors too (Roe, Nelson, & Sandbrook, 2009). Some conservationist assumes that sustainable wildlife conservation can be achieved in isolation of all these other factors. This approach has not only proved to be expensive but also unsustainable (Child & Child, 2015). For instances in Tanzania and in other parts of the world, the "fence and fines" proved to be so expensive due to the need for manpower and equipment to enforce anti-poaching (De Boer, 2013). The government was forced to involve the communities in wildlife management through creation of Wildlife Management areas (De Boer, Van Dijk, & Tarimo, 2011). The stakeholders still felt that benefits to community and conservation potential were still partly restricted by these reductionist conservation approaches. The felt that there was need to broaden the wildlife habitats. This gave birth to transfrontier conservation.

### **3.2. Transfrontier conservation approach**

Transfrontier conservation is a fairly new conservation approach for both terrestrial and marine wildlife where by two or more countries combine their wildlife sanctuaries which could be national

parks, conservancies or communal areas (Hanks, 2008). Transfrontier conservation approach was adopted with among other aims of improved collaborative management of Natural resources and shared cultural resources, improved biodiversity conservation and Socio-economic development (Anderson, de Witchatisky, Dzingirai, Cumming, & Griller, 2013). The other advantages of trans-frontier conservation are improved employment opportunities for the local people, improved regional collaboration and poverty relief (Munthali, 2007).

Globally there have about 227 TFCAs sitting on a total area of about 4.6 million square kilometers. In the (SADC) there are a total of 18 TFCAs covering an estimated total area of 700,000 km<sup>2</sup> (SADC, 2012). The GLTFCA was formed in 2002 (Spenceley, 2003). The treaty was signed between Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique. The areas of cooperation where Gonarezhou National Park for Zimbabwe, Kruger National Park in South Africa and Limpopo National Park in Mozambique. This also includes surrounding communal areas and conservancies.

To better achieve the conservation objectives within the TFCAs there is need for all parties involved to have shared goals and shared vision. Some of the challenges which have resulted TFCAs no fully realizing their goals might include need harmonize policies and statutes.

The key informants have indicated that development of Sengwe–Tshipise corridor as wildlife corridor and community wildlife management area is still on its knees besides having been formally gazetted by the department of Physical department. Key informants have also indicated that TFCA activities have not been formalized at local level. Local level standard operating procedures have not yet been operationalized amongst participating countries. The agreement was operationalized at national level but not at local level.

### **3.3. Eco-tourism and wildlife conservation within communities in africa**

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world (Binns, 1999). Globally, it is ranked the third largest after oil and automotive industries (Brohman, 1996). In the twentieth `y, tourism was viewed as one of the most critical sectors of the economy with an estimated potential annual growth around 7.4% (Cobbinah, Rosemary, & Thwaites, 2013).Worldwide tourism is a crucial for people’s social, cultural, educational, and economic activities (UNWTO, 2017).

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines “tourism” as social, cultural and economic activities that involve the movement of people to other countries or location other than their usual places of residences for either personal or business purposes. Major types of tourism are inbound, outbound and domestic tourism e.g., travelling into a foreign country, travelling out of their countries residence or travelling within their countries, respectively. Tourism is a crucial source of both foreign and local currency for several countries (Simpson, 2008). Tourism open chances for other business avenues through demand for related goods and services (Manyara & Jones, 2007).

The industry is a source of income to the service industries such as transport, hospitality and recreational, in addition to the services industry tourist purchase goods for local consumption or to take away with them. Goods demanded may be food, beverages, souvenirs, clothes or other necessities. Besides the demand for goods and services, tourism creates employment in these support industries too (UNWTO, 2014).

Of late tourism has shifted emphasis on scale economies to economies of scope. Investors in the tourism industry are becoming highly innovative and specialized to meet tastes of a specific segment of customers, thus creating their own niche (Lew, 2008). Over the years, some forms of niche in tourism sectors include medical tourism, religious tourism, wildlife tourism, sex tourism, agritourism and cultural tourism just but to mention a few (Lew, 2008). Among other most current developments in the tourism sector, are sustainable and pro-poor tourism and ecotourism (Ashley, Boyd, & Godwin, 2001; Briassoulis, 2002). These are also aimed at improving social and economic

benefits to the disadvantaged and poor communities. Eco-tourism was developed to benefit the local communities at the same time conserving the natural resources (Schevyens, 1999). Demand for ecotourism is on the rise and has potential for funding conservation efforts (Balmford et al., 2009; Bello et al., 2017)

The UNWTO affirms that sustainable ecotourism can be an engine for economic development and at the same time contributing to the cutting back on poverty levels (UNWTO, 2017). A number of developmental and civil organizations are now considering ecotourism with special emphasis on community tourism as a way to rope in communities into economic development (Snyman, 2012). However, understanding of both the pros and cons of tourism is very important for effective planning, policy formulation and implementation, marketing and management of current and imminent projects (Ap, 1992).

Ecotourism opens opportunities for other entrepreneurial activities through demand for related goods and services in communal areas where ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises are conducted (Manyara & Jones, 2007). In addition to that it can also lead to the development of remote areas through the provision of infrastructural developments (Snyman, 2012). The local communities might gain access to infrastructure meant to service the tourist facilities such as roads, water, electricity and telephone facilities. The benefits from ecotourism incentivize the local communities to minimize rampant illegal off take of wildlife and conserve the wildlife habitat within their area of jurisdiction (Mashinya & Balint, 2006.). The magnitudes of benefits trickling to the communities in most case have correlated motivation to the local community to live in harmony with the wildlife. The people directly employed in lodges and other ecotourism facilities perceive wildlife conservation much better than those who are not realizing any direct benefits (Snyman, 2012). Services, servicing the ecotourism and conservation-related enterprises such as roads, piped water, electricity and telephone are very important to the surrounding community too. The improvements meant to service the tourism facilities, elevates the local livelihoods the local communities since they are crucial drivers to both economic and social development. Tourism has both direct and indirect benefits which are crucial for the social well-being for the poor local communities (Gandiwa et al., 2013).

On the other hand, literature also suggests that in as much as ecotourism has potential for advancing sustainable development, it also can also have detrimental effects (Cobbinah et al., 2013). The negative effects among others include local culture dilution and infiltration by foreign culture. Wildlife tourism can also result in water and air pollution including other undesirable environmental, ecological and socio-cultural impacts. In a much as tourism creates employment and improve the livelihoods for the local people, other means through which these are achieved is socially unacceptable such as increase in prostitution, increase in the number of single parents and teenagers turning into parents as noted in countries like Kenya, Thailand and Sri Lanka (Duffy, 2006; Okech, 2010; ).

The national parks wildlife authorities in almost all Southern African countries employed brutal wildlife conservation approaches such as “fences and fines” (Songorwa, 1999). They also enforced conservation of wildlife through use of quasi-military game guards both inside and outside protected areas. The local communities’ perceived wildlife rather as a liability than a resource (Barrett & Arcese, 1995). For years, wildlife conservation initiatives failed to generate local participation in decision making and the sense of local proprietorship thus with the absence of local involvement, conservation will be a great challenge for the future (Murphree, 2009). The little money from wildlife that found its way back to the communities was seen as a government hand-out, conveying little sense of relationship of the money and the management of wildlife resources to the communities (Metcalf, 1993; Moore, 1998). Very little money reached the communities that suffered heavy losses from wildlife damages. The centralized conservation approaches in most instances proved to be unsustainable and less effective. Little attention is being put towards building robust community-based institutions

through funding, capacity development and enactment of favorable policies (Child, Musengezi, Parent, & Child, 2012; Muphree, 2009). Key informants' interviews revealed that there are a number of community-based institutions in the area but they are not meaningfully contributing towards ecotourism and wildlife conservation enterprise development. This is partly because there is lack of financial support from the Government through grants or soft loans. They went on to point out that due to lack remuneration only those with passion are holding position albeit that they are rightfully qualified for the offices holding. This seriously compromises governance local community owned ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises (Deloitte, 2013)

The friction between the conservationists and the local communities intensifies during drought years when the local people would like to take their livestock into protected areas for grazing (Ottichilo, Skidmore, Prinns, & Mahommed, 2000) The escalation in the demand for resources is further evidenced by the fact that local people resort to encroachment into protected areas such as the case of the Chitsa people on the Northern Gonarezhou National Parks in Zimbabwe (Gandiwa, Matsvayi, Ngwenya, & Gandiwa, 2011).

These threats can however be safely guarded against if the projects are well planned and executed. The role of tourism towards sustainable development in developing countries outweighs its negative impacts (Cobbinah et al., 2013). Ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises development challenges in Southern Africa. Ecotourism is a fairly new crucial type of global tourism opportunity for tourist from across all the continents (Lawrence & Wickins, 1997). There are enormous opportunities for ecotourism worldwide; however, issues legitimacy has to be satisfied first (Bhattacharya & Kumari, 2004). The need to balance the three Ps has to be fully considered thus Profits, People and Planet.

Ecotourism can be defined as that low-impact nature tourism which furthers the protection of the natural habitat and the species living there in through their direct preservation and indirectly through generating revenue for the local people to value and protect the wildlife heritage areas as a source of income (Fennell, 2014). As long as the local communities realize value from wildlife this tend to shape their mind-set and they cease to regard wildlife as a liability but and value it as a resource (Barrett & Arcese, 1995). Once the local people value the resource coupled with the rightful proprietorship they will then protect and conserve it (Caruana, Glozer, Crane, & McCabe, 2014; Muphree, 2009).

Tour operators they are supposed to seriously consider surrounding people's welfare and make sure that they take care of the environment, other than putting all their emphasis on the economic gains only. However, a wide array of challenges has been encountered in coming up with a single universal standard based on similar indicators from the whole divide of stakeholders from all sectors (Wink, 2005). Each stakeholder will feel that his indicators are more important than indicators from the other stakeholders (Simpson, 2008). The tour operator will tend to consider more economic returns ahead of the welfare of people and the environment, since they will have made some serious financial investments. They feel that they have to recoup their investment. What remains crucial is that the critical resources should be strongly guarded from erosion (Lawrence & Wickins, 1997). For successful implementation of an Eco-tourism venture there is serious need to balance the commercial and environmental goals of various stakeholders including but not limited to private entrepreneurs, aboriginal groups, established tourism firms, industry associations, academic institutions, environmental groups, and regulatory bodies and also cultivate the political will from politicians and community at large. Mining, logging and agricultural activities tend to result in continuous atrocities to the environment, which result in land degradation and climate change. Most tourism technocrats perceive Ecotourism as a more sustainable economic activity which has regard for the environment and conservation activities, at the same time serving as an engine for furthering environmentally sound and socially responsible behavior

Ecotourism potential is also affected by barriers such as lack of government support, local people cultures and perceptions and level of capacity in terms of education and skills for the local people (Jamieson & Nadkarni, 2009). In most developing countries, there are competing claims between conservation and the need for resources such as firewood and veld by the local people (Holmern, Nyahongo, & Røskafta, 2007).

It is unfortunate that in some instances balancing these concerns is widely regarded as not an easy task (Frey & George, 2010). Some conservationist argue that ecotourism-related enterprises provides a larger and softer maker that is perhaps less ecological. The success of such ventures is mainly based on partnership building amongst the various stakeholders in creating a win-win situation with shared goals and objectives to some extent the stakeholders must be prepared to share risks. In most instances, each stakeholder aims at maximizing on their own key result area. This often jeopardize the possibility of alliance building amongst stakeholders this in some instances possess challenges to development on ecotourism ventures.

### **3.4. Eco-tourism development challenges within the GLTFCA**

Transfrontier conservation areas were created for so many reason but among them was collaborative conservation, harmonization of conservation resources and creation cross-border ecotourism-related enterprises through which the local communities living with these conservation areas can derive benefits. The GLTFCA was formed in 2002 (Spenceley, 2003). This vast conservation area was formed through the integration of Kruger National Park, Limpopo National Park and Gonarezhou National Park in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, respectively. One of the aims was to improve the livelihoods of the local through tourism development (Spenceley, 2008). The question could be what is holding back ecotourism and conservation-related enterprise development. It seems that there is much of theoretical background to clearly spell out as to why incentive base tourism initiatives such as ecotourism have not yet started contributing meaningfully towards the local communities in the GLTFCA, especially the Zimbabwean component with special attention Chiredzi and Chipinge districts. Mostly general literature on challenges on developing countries is available (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2009). However, specific literature on Chiredzi and Chipinge districts is so limited. The understanding literature on challenges to ecotourism and conservation-related enterprise development in the GLTFCA is very important for the future development District, National, regional and international policies. This is also important in coming up with strategies on how to create viable economic ventures to fund conservation, local economic development and strengthening social local networks. Since the inception of the GLTFCA the local people are still reeling under abject poverty. Most rural communities in these areas they are living on less than a dollar per day (World Bank, 2017). Literature have shown that ecotourism and conservation-related ventures are properly planned and executed it has been found to be capable of balancing conservation demands and economic benefits that trickle to the local communities (Buckley, 2010).

The size of benefits trickling to the local communities tends to be related to the conservation effort by the locals (Snyman, 2012). The effort and participation tend to be even more for those directly employed in these ventures. Ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development will not only benefit conservation and revenue generation. It also gives growth to support industries and contribute towards development of social amenities such a portable water, roads, bridges, electricity and health facilities (Binns, 1999).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Evidence on the potential Transfrontier conservation in fostering community-based ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise evolution is abundant but benefits trickling to each and every household remain insignificant (Munthali, 2007). The costs of human-wildlife conflicts outweigh benefits realized from community-based wildlife-based enterprise (Dickman, 2010; Gandiwa et al., 2013; Le Bel, Chavernac, Cornu, & Mapuvire, 2014; Le Bel et al., 2011). However, beside enormous evidence from literature on the promising potential of ecotourism and wildlife

related enterprises in contributing significantly towards both socio-economic development and conservation (Anderson et al., 2013; Balmford et al., 2009; Bello et al., 2017; Buckley, 2010). It is now more than 15 years after the formation of GLTFCA the much-anticipated cross-border ecotourism development to alleviate livelihoods for the people living within the GLTFCA remains far from being achieved (Brockington, 2011; Spenceley, 2003). The GLTP treaty was operationalized at higher level thus the head of states level through the GLTP treaty signed the three head of states and ministerial taskforce teams for Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Buscher, 2016; Chiutsi & Saarinen, 2017; Dhlwayo, Breen, & Nyambe, 2009)).

The institutions that were created to drive ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises developments remain weak and lacks capacity (Metcalf, 1993; Whande, Kepe, & Murphree, 2003). Most institutions such as Malipati Development Trust and Gaza Trust they lack funding and the members does not have proper academic and professional skills of the duties they are assigned to within the trusts. According to the key informants the Transfrontier Conservation approach and related initiatives lacked awareness. Most of them were not aware of all the GLTFCA plans, activities, funding mechanism, even the leading ministry (Wachowiak, 2016). The local community are not aware, for those in public offices, due to staff turnover some of the current staff members they have theoretical knowledge about TFCA but lack knowledge on ongoing ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related project. Most of the plans and policies which were crafted at the inception of GLTP to guide ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise have not been rolled out to the local community people (Dhlwayo et al., 2009).

The study findings might tempt one to conclude that transfrontier conservation is not a feasible engine to gain both ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprise development, if properly planned and executed both can be achieved. There is serious need to create awareness on the local communities and operationalization of the GLTP treaty at local level through enactment of policies and laws that enable the local communities and local entrepreneurs to participate in ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related ventures. Local institutions need better funding and to be capacity developed so that they can effectively participate on local and cross-border ecotourism and wildlife conservation-related enterprises global value chain.

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