

SOUTH AND EAST AFRICAN CO- MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES: Implications for Communities

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ESA Fish Workshop, Tanzania, 14 to 17 March 2006

Sources used

- Workshop (13-17/03/06) presentations
- Nielsen, J.R., P. Degnbol P., K. K. Viswanathan, M. Ahmed, M. Hara and N. M. R. Abdullah. 2004. Fisheries Co-Management - An Institutional Innovation?
- Hara, M. and J.R. Nielsen. 2003. Experiences with fisheries co-management in Africa
- Viswanathan, K.K., J.R. Nielsen, P. Degnbol, M. Ahmed, M. Hara and N.M.R. Abdullah. 2003. Fisheries Co-management Policy Brief: findings from a worldwide Study.
- M. Hauck and M. Sowman (editors). Waves of Change: Coastal and Fisheries Co-management in Southern Africa. 2003.
- Geheb, K. and Sarch, M.-T. 2002. Africa's Inland Fisheries: The Management Challenge.

Key Aspects of Fisheries Management

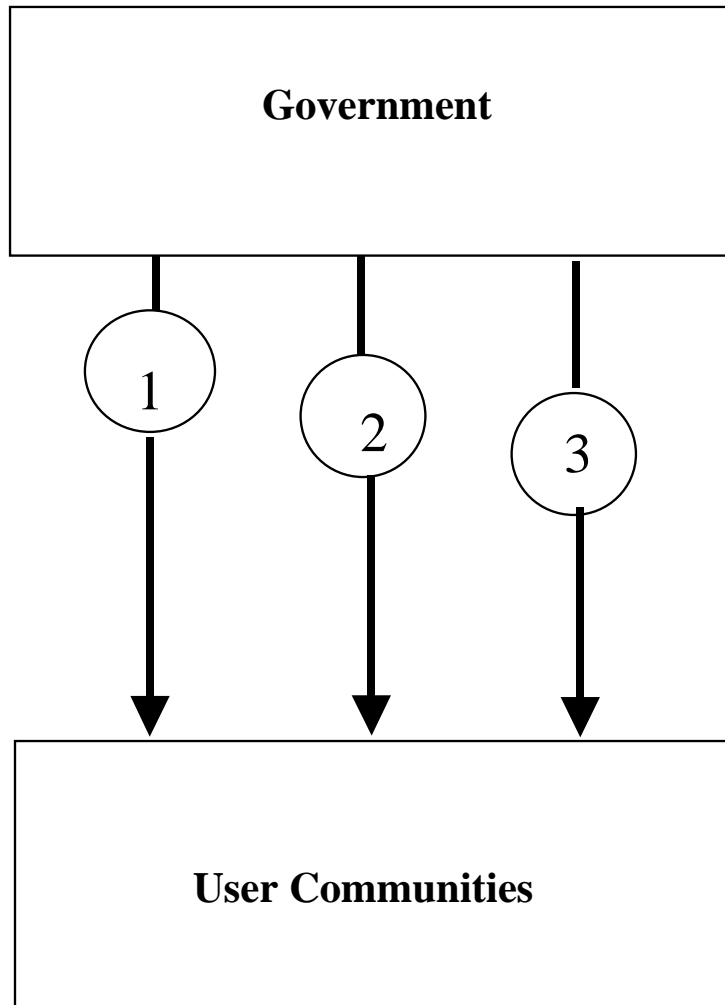
Management involves three main aspects;

- Setting of management objectives
- Defining and providing the knowledge base for management decisions
- Implementation of management decisions

Historically..

Management approach- top-down

- Fisheries resources state property
- Objectives focused on conservation
- Knowledge base -biological sciences
- Implementation through policing



- ① - Setting Objectives
- ② - Knowledge Base
- ③ - Implementing Decisions

Why co-management?

- Top-down approach has not prevented over-exploitation of fish resources
- One of the reasons for failure; Exclusion of users from all management aspects, resulting in barriers between administrators and user communities
- Co-man widely seen as promising option
- Part of democractic decentralization requirements following end of cold war

How has Co-management been Implemented?

- Usually initiated and led by govt line agencies
- Creation of user 'representative' organisations ('democratically' elected committees)
- Mostly as short-term donor funded projects. Process has sometimes lacked flexibility because of specific donor requirements

Experiences with Co-management

- **Conflicting objectives**
- **Problems around Property rights, exclusion and limited access**
- **Type & Level of participation**
- **Role of traditional authorities and local elites**
- **Capacity of local communities and government agencies**
- **Representation and accountability of user institutions**

1. Conflicting objectives; Conservation vs. socio- economic

- Government approach has usually been instrumental; co-opt users into management process to achieve the same old conservation objectives without really accepting alternative knowledge, ideas and views from users.

2. Property rights, exclusion and limited access

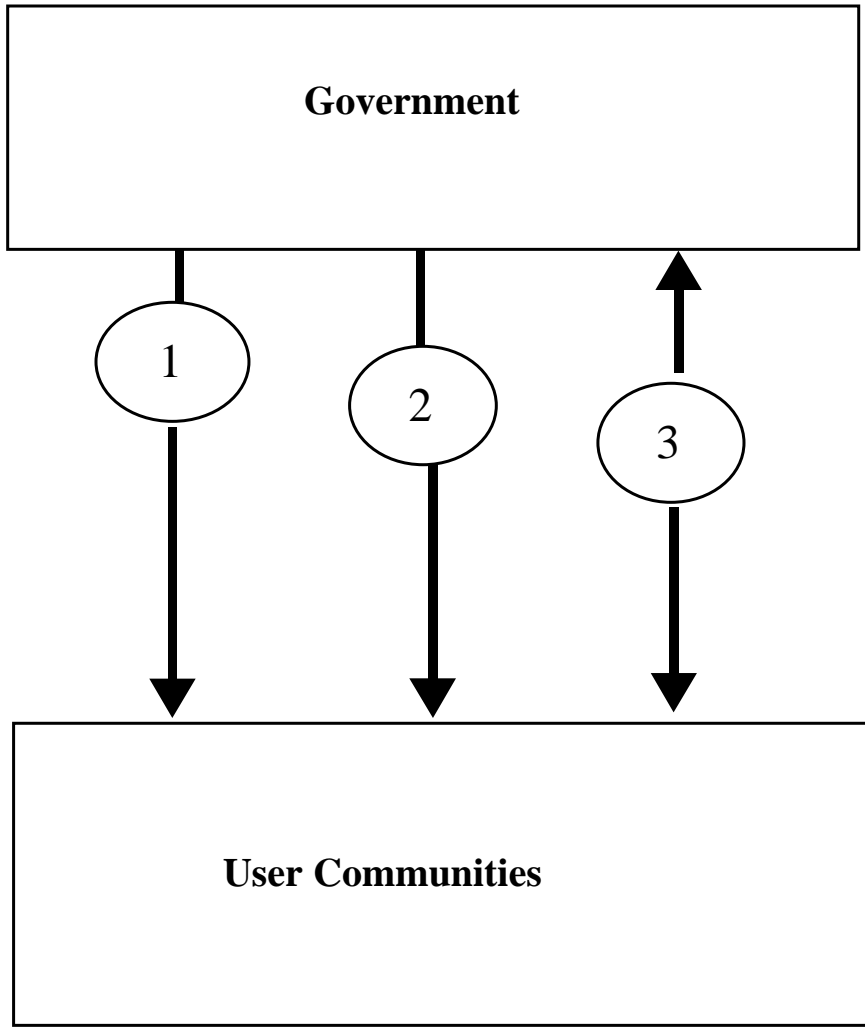
- Co-man seen as way of dealing with open access problems... introduction of access rights so as to enable effort control
- But such access & effort control initiatives might clash with historical fishing practices
- Enforcing access control problematic where there alternative economic opportunities are lacking

3. Type & Level of participation

- Generally, centralised systems still in favoured
- Knowledge base still mainly based on govt's natural scientists..no inputs from users
- Usually, only tasks that govts. have failed to implement or are costly (e.g. local enforcement etc.) left to user groups
- Communities usually not legally empowered...their negotiating position vs. that of govt. still weak
- Govts. generally reluctant to devolve real power and genuine authority to user groups

3. Type & Level of participation continued...

- The most common types of co-management are been 'instructive/consultative'
- Largely, govts. do not perceive co-man as a means of introducing more democratic principles of fisheries management - but as a means to better achieve govt's original conservation objectives.



- ① - Setting Objectives
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4. Role of traditional authority and local elites

- Co-man usually require customary sources of power held by traditional leaders for effective application of sanctions...thus the need to involve traditional authority
- Local elites usually important power brokers
- These raise problems of capture of power by traditional authorities/local elites..especially if powers & authority of new co-man organs clash with those of existing local power brokers.

5. Capacity of local communities and governments

- Most Govts. have not adapted their organisational structures in line with new approach and management philosophy
- Govts. Lack appropriate skills and capacity to undertake co-man. E.g. having social scientists and anthropologists as part of staff complement
- Communities might not have the economic, social and political incentives or capacity to undertake some responsibilities required under co-man.

6. Representation and accountability

- Definition of 'user community' and 'stakeholders' (can be evolving & dynamic - seasonal & spatial). Who are users and who should represent them? How should these be elected?
- Lack of or low degree of downward accountability of representative organs
- Govt. tacit threats to revoke powers and authority forces upward accountability

What is to be done?

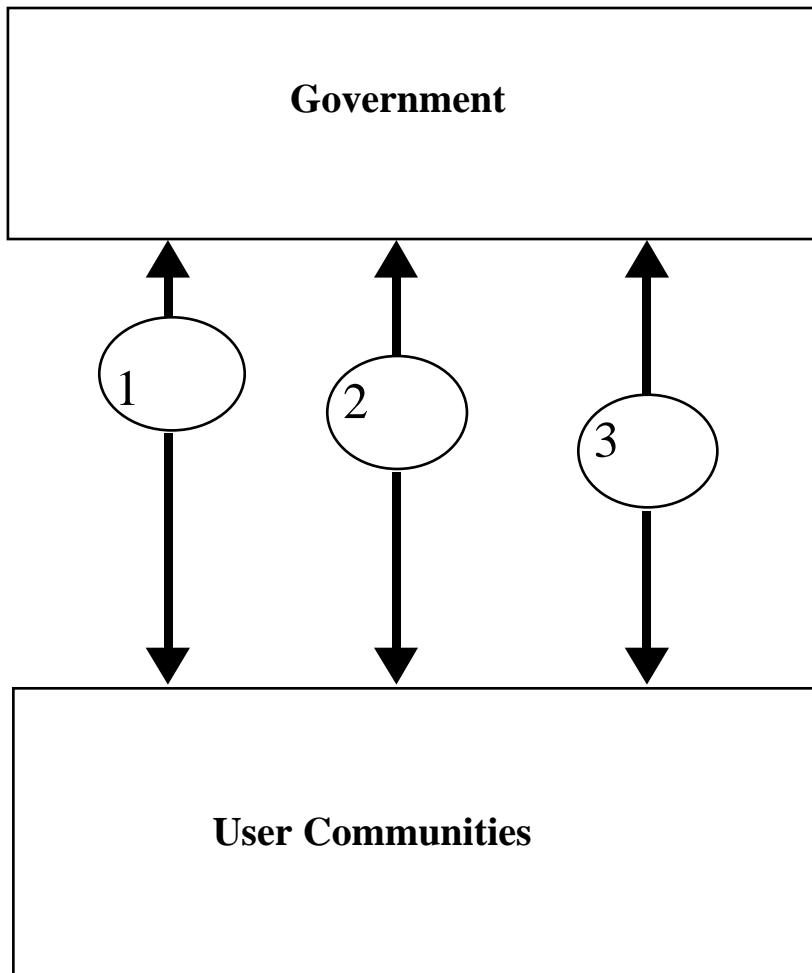
- Co-man models should acknowledge and integrate the role of:
 - poverty in community/individual decisions
 - Occupational and geographic mobility in community/individual livelihoods
- Promote “empowering co-management”
- Improve ability of communities to agitate

Poverty and livelihoods

- What is the role of fishing in people's/community's livelihoods
- At what level are they exploiting resource?
- What other sources of livelihoods (assets) exists/combine with fishing?
- What is the role of occupational and geographic mobility in livelihoods?

Empowering co-management

- Involve users fully in: setting of management objectives; integrate 'user knowledge' into formal science; implementation of management decisions
- Should enable users to challenge formal science (including international conventions) using their local knowledge to balance conservation with local socio-economic concerns
- Is a learning process for both parties - thus will initially be 'muddling through' and chaotic at times
- Holds better promise for achieving efficient, equitable and sustainable fisheries management.



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Improve ability of communities to agitate

- True enabling environment -legal and govt attitude
- Better organisation
- Access to information
- Improved resourcing - human and financial