

Training Protected Area Personnel: Lessons from the College of African Wildlife Management

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ABSTRACT. *The College of African Wildlife Management trains middle-level managers for the anglophone countries of Africa. Nearly 1,000 graduates from 16 countries are now in important positions in virtually all of the protected areas in eastern Africa. Lessons which have been learned over the 19-year history of the school are summarized, and future problems are fully discussed. Primary among these are the need to secure appropriate funding, and the importance of modifying the curricula to reflect the expanding importance of resource management in east Africa.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Located at 1400 m elevation on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Northern Tanzania, is the campus of the College of African Wildlife Management. Established in 1963, the College is the pioneer training institution serving anglophone Africa. In these first 19 years, the College has produced 24 Certificate and Diploma graduates from 16 countries; graduates are now responsible for management duties in virtually all of the protected areas in eastern Africa.

This paper presents a summary of the College's facilities and programmes, reviews its outputs, suggests some lessons we have learned and discusses some of the issues which we face in the future.

This paper is based on material compiled by the then-Principal, Dr. Felix Nyahoza in his monograph on the College, published by the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation in 1981. Our interpretations and opinions, however, are our own and do not necessarily represent official views of the Governing Body of the host government.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLEGE

The 21 ha site of the campus was chosen for the advantages of its location near various types of parks, reserves and game controlled areas. These include the savanna grasslands of the Serengeti, the plateau area of the Ngorongoro highlands, the montane forests and alpine moorlands of Kilimanjaro and Meru, the alkaline lakes of the Rift Valley, and the marine resources of the Indian Ocean. There is no other protected area training institution that operates in such a variety of life zones, ranging from glaciers at 5900 m through to coral reef and coastal zone habitats.

College facilities are equally extensive: We maintain a fleet of some 20 vehicles including buses and Unimogs for student transport, four-wheel drive pick-ups, and smaller vehicles. A workshop compound and stores area support our transport section. We also maintain field equipment that can accommodate up to 125 people under canvas. Specialized equipment such as field glasses, microscopes, and audio-visual equipment, although limited, is also part of our inventory.

Residential buildings include five student dormitories, 18 senior staff houses and six support staff housing complexes. For teaching purposes there are an administration building, 12 faculty offices, two lecture halls, one auditorium, one laboratory, a museum display and one study room. There is also a large library, a taxidermy room, an armoury and a weapons training area. Recreational facilities are provided in the form of a social hall, a soccer field and courts for basketball, tennis and squash.

Our physical plant is thus a substantial one. It follows that our maintenance budget is also substantial and our replacement value almost inestimable.

Teaching faculty however, are the real foundation of any educational institution. Their competence, experience and enthusiasm are the main contributors to the effectiveness of training. The teaching staff at Mweka is composed of a Principal, a Deputy Principal and 14 Instructors of various ranks. An additional 60 support staff (cooks, drivers, secretarial, grounds crew) are also employed.

For the 1981/82 fiscal year the total budget for recurrent costs of the College was just under \$500,000. Approximately 50% of this went towards teaching expenses (salaries, library, camp supplies), 25% towards student accommodation costs, 16% towards vehicle and building maintenance and 8% towards office administration. In addition to this, a total of three Instructors are sponsored by outside sources.

During the same year our capital budget expenditure was US \$333,000. This was primarily provided under a Denmark-sponsored development project which is making \$1.75 million available for new facilities and staff training. Additional counterpart money provided by the Tanzania Government for development amounts to \$260,000.

Over the past ten years the average total number of students in attendance was 80. In 1981/82 we had 77 students from 11 different African countries registered. The student tuition fees, which have recently been raised to \$6,000 per annum, do not cover operating costs. Over the past four years the Government of Tanzania has provided an average subvention of 27% of total operating costs in order to cover this deficit. This is the direct subsidy cost of the operation of Mweka by the host country.

3. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The thrust of the training programme at Mweka is directed to middle-level managers. The College continues to have this focus, which leads to the majority of graduates being employed in assistant and senior field officer posts.

Three levels of courses are offered. The Certificate course requires an ordinary secondary level education and is intended for posts at the Assistant Warden level. The Diploma course requires a Certificate in Wildlife Management or an advanced secondary level of education for entry and is designed to produce senior field officers. Both courses require two years to complete. Students must also have previous field experience and are admitted only through a sponsoring organization.

The Post-Graduate Diploma course is intended for University graduates who wish to take up senior posts in park and wildlife management. This one-year course is custom-designed to fit the career requirement of the individual student and requires the conduct of a research project leading to a Dissertation. To date, 25 Post-graduate Diplomas have been awarded.

There is also provision for the College to organize special courses on various topics. These are usually done on a specific request by the organization employing the particular student; such courses have been mounted in herbarium techniques, zoo management, taxidermy, ballistics and tourism.

The College curriculum has evolved over the years and is continuously being updated to keep it relevant. The most recent revision was completed in 1981 and is contained in a detailed 64-page syllabus.

The content of the training programme tries to strike a balance between a general background in ecology and conservation and practice training in the various skills involved in wildlife and protected area management. One third of the training is done on field practicals.

Courses are grouped in three main subject areas:

- 1) Natural Sciences, including mammalogy, ornithology, herpetology, geography, earth science, invertebrates, and botany.
- 2) Wildlife Management, including wildlife management techniques, range management, surveying statistics, vehicle mechanics, diseases, photography and ballistics.
- 3) Estate Management and Conservation Education including park management, planning, administration, law enforcement, conservation education, construction techniques and outdoor survival techniques. (Diploma course students are given more in-depth material, particularly in general management, planning, administration and public relations).

The Mweka graduate is therefore prepared to step into a field management position with a good general knowledge of the environment he is dealing with as well as the practical skills involved in managing it. The capabilities of Mweka graduates and their subsequent performance has been commended on numerous occasions by the various organizations employing them.

4. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The question of how to evaluate the success of an educational institution is a difficult one as there are few empirical measures to do so and a long-term perspective is required. Five criteria are discussed here and collectively should provide the reader with an impression of our relative success in meeting our objective of training effective protected area managers.

4.1. Student output

From the initial 25 students who entered the College in 1963 an additional 899 have followed them for a total graduating class to date of 924. Geographically these students were from Tanzania (333), Kenya (247), Ghana

(55), Zambia (50), Uganda (43), Nigeria (42), Ethiopia (32), Sudan (22), Botswana (18), Malawi (13), Sierra Leone (10), Liberia (9), Cameroon (7), Somalia (6), Egypt (4) and UK (1).

The production of this quantity of qualified protected area and wildlife managers is matched by few other schools of our nature. This output is further reinforced by knowledge that the great majority of Mweka graduates have continued careers in this field. The waste or drop-out rate that the various sponsoring organizations have suffered is known to be below 20%.

4.2. Student placement

Another measure of our success in providing qualified protected area managers is the current positions that many College alumni now hold. Virtually every protected area in East Africa has personnel who have been trained at Mweka, including the majority of wardens and semi-wardens. Several have distinguished themselves beyond this level. For instance, the Directors of Wildlife in Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi and the Deputy Director in Ghana are Mweka graduates. Two others are Assistant Directors with the Kenya Wildlife Department.

Former students are also heading other wildlife training institutions. These include the Wildlife School at Garoua, Cameroon, the Bussa school in Nigeria, the Ghana Game Scout school, the Mazambique Game Ranger School and the Pasiansi Institute in Tanzania. The Deputy Principal of this College is also a former student.

Another one of our graduates, now Warden in-charge of Tsavo National Park, recently was awarded the IUCN International Parks Valor Award.

4.3. Programme leadership

The College has served as a model for the development of the wildlife training schools mentioned in the above section as well as the new Naivasha Institute in Kenya. Not only former Mweka graduates but Instructors as well have dispersed to provide conservation leadership in many different parts of the world. Many of our former Instructors are now in various related posts with IUCN, Unesco, FAO and UNDP. Two others are currently training wildlife personnel in the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone.

4.4. Recognition of Mweka qualifications

Many of our diploma course graduates have gone on to further their education. Recognition of their Diploma for University entry has now been given by many institutions in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, USA and Africa. Many of these have also been accepted for post-graduate degrees. A Diploma or Certificate from

Mweka is thus not only recognized regionally but is widely known and accepted as a qualification for entry to programmes of higher education.

4.5. Conservation dividends

It is estimated that over 12,000,000 ha of land in various eastern African countries have been established as some form of conservation area since 1965. It may be safely concluded that Mweka's programmes have directly and indirectly had a positive role and influence on the conservation attitudes and achievements of participating countries. As many of these areas are developed for economic purposes (e.g. tourism and trophy hunting) it can also be concluded that the College has contributed substantially to the development of these countries resulting from wildlife-based tourism and sustained use of natural resources. The recognition of the College's contribution to conservation in Africa resulted to our being selected as a WWF recipient for 1981 of the International Award for Conservation Merit.

5. SOME LESSONS

Looking back over our nearly two decades of operation it is possible to identify some of the lessons we have learned that may offer guidelines to other training institutions. These are discussed below.

5.1. Timing

The establishment of the College coincided closely with the attainment of independence in eastern Africa in the early 1960s. It was increasingly recognized that "localization" of many of the posts in the national parks and wildlife departments would require a major regional effort in formal training of local staff. As one of the founders of the College noted at an IUCN Symposium which led to the launching of the College:

"Training . . . must be formalized, standardized, properly organized, largely centralized and soundly administered with adequate equipment and facilities. It is clear that that what is needed to meet these requirements is the organization of "Wildlife Management Training Schools" on a regional basis . . . to train up the largely missing middle ranks" (Kinloch, 1963).

The appropriateness of the timing of the establishment of the College was also given a strong endorsement in the following statement of the then Prime Minister J. Nyerere made at the same symposium and known as the Arusha Manifesto:

"The conservation of wildlife and wildspaces calls for specialist knowledge, trained manpower and money and we look to other nations to cooperate in this important task—the success or the failure of which not only affects the continent of Africa but the rest of the world as well."

Mweka, then, was an idea whose time had come, the right type of institution at the right time.

5.2. Political support

One of the key strengths of the College has been the continuing support from the highest political levels. The Arusha Manifesto has been followed up by a continued subvention from the Tanzanian Government for operating expenditures. This has increased steadily from US \$15,000 in 1963 to \$134,000 in 1980/81. Despite political differences that occur from time to time between neighbouring states, the College has largely stayed above these and regional attendance has continued.

5.3. Multi-institutional funding sources

The Mweka programme has been given support from an exceptionally wide variety of agencies. The governments of USA, Germany, Canada, UK and Denmark have all provided equipment and instructors to the College. UNDP/FAO have also contributed here. The Government of Kenya has provided an Instructor during the past three years. Both UNEP and Unesco have provided scholarship funds for students and instructors.

Various non-government agencies have added substantial inputs as well. These include the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, IUCN/World Wildlife Fund, Frankfurt Zoological Society and the Ford Foundation.

This diversified range of input from six governments, three UN Agencies and five NGOs has made the College widely known to potential donors and in turn has reinforced the international view of Mweka.

5.4. International flavour

As an institution serving regional needs, the College has brought together students from 15 African countries. As indicated above, Mweka Instructors, too, bring knowledge and viewpoints from many different countries. One of the strengths of Mweka, the fostering of international understanding and the global role of wildlife and protected areas, is further enhanced by the presence of instructors of many nationalities over the years and the representation on the Governing Body of 10 members from seven countries.

5.5. Emphasis on field practicals

During the 1981/82 academic year at Mweka, students in both the Diploma and Certificate courses spent a total of 67 days on field safaris. Comparing this to the 156 days spent in classrooms, field time is thus 30% of total learning time.

While the desirability of field training is notable it must also be recognized that this requires a substantial input in terms of equipment and safari vehicles. The equipment requirements for safari has been itemized in a previous section. Under the Unesco World Heritage Fund \$60,000 is being made available to purchase new tentage for instructors and students which is one reflection of the high cost of undertaking field safaris.

5.6. Cooperative links with related agencies

As indicated above, field exercises in the various protected areas of Tanzania are an integral part of the syllabus. In turn, these safaris require cooperative relationships with the various land agencies involved. On the one hand, these agencies provide free use of facilities in their areas as well as contributing resource personnel to meet with the students during the exercises. The Departments of Game, Fisheries and Forestry, as well as the Tanzania Wildlife Corporation, National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority all have provided substantial field input to the College programme.

On the other hand, the College has provided these agencies with various services as well including conduct of game control and live animal trapping exercises, maintenance of facilities and data collection. Various reports by instructional staff and post graduate dissertations have been submitted to and acted on by these agencies. The cooperation between the College and the various related Government agencies is thus a symbiotic one, with important practical benefits accruing to each partner.

5.7. Staff training programme

Provision for strengthening the teaching capabilities of the academic staff has been included in the development plans for the College. The majority of teaching staff have Bachelor degrees from regional universities where training programmes in environmental subjects are not well developed. Accordingly, 8 staff have received support for graduate study at North American universities (in particular the University of New Mexico). Currently, through the DANIDA sponsored programme, 12 scholarship-years are being provided. It is the aim of the College to have the majority of instructors trained to the Masters degree level.

Another method of staff training has been through the International Seminar on National Parks. Four of

our Instructors have been sponsored on this valuable course by the United States and through the World Heritage Fund. Add-on study tours were usually also included. It is anticipated that at some future time the College could play a role in sponsoring a similar international seminar in the East African region.

A third technique for reinforcing teaching resources was the provision of short term (two months) specialist attachments to Mweka by 11 members of the US Park Service. The team-teaching attachments focussed on providing feedback with park specialists and resource materials for teaching and reference. Both College staff and students gained from this exposure, but the disadvantages of minimal orientation time for the advisors suggested that two months was not an adequate period for adaptation.

Training of support staff (secretarial, finance, library) has not been neglected and is done at the regional level. Further efforts here need to be developed.

6. PROBLEM AREAS: FACING THE FUTURE

Looking forward we anticipate some modifications and new directions in our programmes if our one over-riding problem, that of funding, can be solved. These will now be discussed.

6.1. Funding

Like most institutions worldwide, we continue to face serious limitations on aspects dealing with our financial requirements. As outlined above, we have received generous support to date in our infrastructural development from many sources. The fact is, however, that there is no assured source of funding for the future. This is of great concern in light of the increasing difficulty of the United Republic of Tanzania to continue its subsidies in the face of other pressing social and economic commitments.

The root of our funding problem is the growth in recurrent costs which have increased threefold in the past six years. During this period we have had to raise the annual student fee from \$2,200 to \$6,000. Few countries in anglophone Africa will be able to afford this fee and enrolments are expected to decrease, causing a serious set-back to the progress of conservation on this continent.

We must emphasize that the only solution to this problem is the continuation of external support based on the regional role of the College. *How to obtain this support and assure it on a long term basis is the key issue facing the College in the future.*

6.2. Regional role

What will be the impact on Mweka of the possible development of other regional training institutions? Proposals for similar Colleges have been made for Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria and Ghana and a World Bank-financed wildlife school is due to open in Kenya this year. Will international funding be even further dispersed with a proliferation of similar institutions? It is suggested that to foster cooperation among these and other training centres that a regional coordinating body be established, possibly through IUCN. The duplication of programme offerings in an era of scarce funds could be reviewed and curriculum integration fostered by such a body.

6.3. Faculty research and consulting activities

College Instructors have in the past been encouraged to undertake various investigational projects in local wildlife areas. Some funds for these projects have been available and most have contributed effectively to teaching activities as well.

To further encourage this involvement the College will take a more active role in soliciting research and project funds as well modifying the teaching time-table to allow more time to be devoted to these activities. By extending our staff capabilities beyond teaching, it is anticipated that academic staff will demonstrate the capacity of the College to be of practical use to various development agencies which in turn, may allow funds to be channelled to associated College functions as well as contributing to professional development.

6.4. Curriculum modifications

Flexibility to modify the curriculum to adapt the College to changing needs has long occupied a great deal of effort. The most recent revision of our syllabus was made in 1981 to include, among other things, greater emphasis on conservation education and new approaches to protected area management planning.

In tune with the *World Conservation Strategy*, our curriculum has been expanding beyond basic wildlife biology to give increased attention to environmental issues in general, land-use planning, and the sociology of conservation. To reinforce our capabilities in these areas, we currently have a staff member undertaking graduate studies in natural resources planning in Canada.

Curriculum changes can most efficiently be reviewed by consulting former students as to their impressions on the adequacy of their training and relevance to current responsibilities. A study of this nature was completed by FAO in 1974 and another is needed to provide more current feedback and monitoring.