

## Tourism to the Table Mountain national park: community beneficiation

Cynthia Nokubonga Dube

Gift Muresherwa\*

Centre for Tourism Research in Africa

Department of Tourism and Events Management

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

Corresponding Author: Gift Muresherwa: Email Address - [giftmuresherwa@gmail.com](mailto:giftmuresherwa@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*The management of protected areas needs to be done in a sustainable manner, which includes ensuring that various stakeholders' needs are considered. Park management needs to work closely with these stakeholders particularly communities surrounding them to allow for opportunities that do not compromise the integrity of the area and contribute to local economic development. The objective of this study was to examine how local communities are benefitting from the management of the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). It also looked at the projects which the park has proposed to maximise community involvement as a way of ensuring that locals enjoy the economic spinoffs from the park. The study details partnership challenges between park and communities. Analyses were grounded on semi-structured interviews with the identified stakeholders with knowledge of how the park operates. Key findings indicate that the TMNP strives to create opportunities for communities and these include; skills development and training, job creation, as well as entrepreneurial prospects to its neighbouring communities.*

### Introduction

Conservation efforts especially within protected areas can be successful when community benefits are maximised. Community members residing around the park's borders need to also reap the benefits from the tourism-economic activities which take place in protected areas. This is done for several reasons, including poverty alleviation, discouraging participation in illegal activities (i.e. poaching, fishing and logging) by community members, and providing a sense of ownership and support for all efforts aimed at conserving the biodiversity (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007). It is therefore important to always review the level of community benefit to ensure that locals are fairly benefitting from protected areas' economic activities. Butler and Richardson (2015) contend that national parks attract millions of tourists each year, and contribute significantly to the tourism economy, hence, this research article aims to unpack how communities that are located adjacent to the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) in Cape Town, South Africa benefit from the park (the stakeholders' perspective). The South African Government acknowledges the importance of protecting national parks hence designating them as protected areas, being done to ensure that both humans and the biodiversity live in harmony. Communities around the park need to be empowered to benefit from the economic activities since this is anticipated to generate a 'sense of ownership and a need to protect the park' (Mthimunye, 2017:1). Keitumetse (2011) refers to communities as carriers and immediate custodians of cultural resources in Africa; the same can be said about natural resources.

Many tourism businesses often gain enormous benefits (mainly economic) from natural and cultural resources, often belonging to local communities. Most of these benefits are enjoyed by businesses while local community members surrounding the parks are left with limited benefits from the natural endowments which they should fully own. This thus calls for a pragmatic management approach by various stakeholders to ensure that communities are involved in a way which ensures community beneficiation (Castro-Arce, Parra & Vanclay, 2019). In light of the above, sustainable management

frameworks guided by national policies need to be implemented with emphasis on ensuring that locals do own and benefit from protected area-activities. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2002) notes the existence of an imbalance of benefits between local communities and the parks. This therefore calls for mutually beneficial linkages between various stakeholders to allow all players to fairly benefit from the management of natural resources (biodiversity).

In South Africa, national parks work as powerful tourist magnets drawing in huge numbers of tourists who come to experience the country's biodiversity (Saayman, Saayman & Rossouw, 2013). They further add that these protected areas act as major export earners and as such, are an important part of the tourism industry. This is mainly because of their power to contribute a significant proportion of the national gross domestic product (GDP), foreign exchange earnings and employment generation (Saayman et al., 2013). Despite the tough economic times the South African economy faces, the country continues to receive much revenue from the management of protected areas for example, in the year 2017/18, over R2.1 billion (over US\$137 million) total revenues were generated from the country's national parks (SANParks Annual Report 2017/18). The national conservation agency, the South African National Parks also referred to as SANParks, sees the importance of 'social sustainability' which is realised when local communities are successfully benefitting from tourism initiatives (Saayman et al., 2013:440). The World Wildlife Fund (2004) supports the need of ensuring that protected areas are managed in a sustainable way as this results in effective fulfilling of the objectives of biodiversity conservation, environmental management and the protection of the world's cultural heritage.

SANParks works as a system which has a vision to work closely with communities and ensure that the management of biodiversity is sustainable. This organisation has shown that it has significantly transformed from upholding a vision which solely focuses on environmental preservation and exclusion of communities surrounding the park, into a responsible practice that strives to connect with societies (SANParks, 2019a). Under the apartheid era (a time when South African laws segregated people based on race), no or very limited access to protected areas was permitted thus limiting community beneficiation from the natural diversity in their vicinity (Sibiya, 2017). During this era, the mission of SANParks mostly concentrated on maximising benefits to park management. However, the ending of the apartheid system brought with it many changes to the way protected areas were to be managed. This was informed by national policies with several amendments aimed to develop, expand, manage and promote a system of sustainable national parks that represents biodiversity and heritage assets, through innovation and best practise for the just and equitable benefit of current and future generation as indicated in the 2016/17 SANParks' Annual Report (SANParks, 2019b).

As a result, on average, many of the people living next to parks can be characterised as low-income earning households, with high levels of unemployment, high dependency on social grants and high reliance on subsistence agriculture and natural resources. SANParks' Table Mountain National Park has made a concerted effort from the mid 1990's to engage positively with local neighbours in order to build positive relationships. However, it was only in the Protected Areas Act Number 57 of 2003 where National Parks were officially defined as existing for sustainable use by the broader society and where an emphasis was placed on their potential contribution to local economic development and the ecosystem goods and services that flow from them.

Saayman et al. (2013) note the change which national parks have gone through especially in their management and contribution to local communities. This has been made possible by the SANParks' National Conservation Agency, which strives to ensure that local communities surrounding these protected areas benefit from their management (Venter, Naiman, Biggs & Pienaar, 2008). These benefits should have the power to alleviate poverty, especially since most communities adjacent to national parks are rural with "poor quality socio-economic infrastructure and services, high rates of unemployment and high levels of poverty ..." (Pelser, Redelinghuys & Velelo, 2013:1210). Some national parks especially in East Africa have pursued the profit-sharing approach as a strategy to achieve sustainable management of the parks (Tumusiime & Vedeld, 2012). The profit-sharing approach has been accepted globally as a key instrument for preserving protected areas including national parks. The tourism proceeds sharing approach seeks to ensure that various stakeholders share the responsibility of managing and conserving the world's biodiversity. These stakeholders include communities, businesses, Non-Governmental

Organisations (NGOs) and the government. Tumusiime and Vedeld (2012:15) note that the approach promotes “hybrid environmental governance” where responsibility and revenue is shared for the sustainability of the activities. Using the concept, local community members residing close to the parks receive a certain percentage from the proceeds which goes to the park.

National parks in South Africa are visited by millions of tourists, and therefore entrepreneurial opportunities and cultural tourism opportunities should be created. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre [UNEPWCMC] (2008) states that the level of community involvement varies greatly between individual protected areas, organisations and countries, and in relation to their management category and form of governance. In the case of an urban park, the relationship between conservation and the local community may be even tenuous and should be managed in a more effective way (Saayman et al., 2013).

Natural diversity serves as a key drawcard for tourists to Southern Africa, particularly in South Africa’s Kruger National Park and the TMNP among other protected areas. The long-term conservation of this natural diversity occurs mainly in protected areas such as the TMNP which is managed by one of the biggest ecotourism product owners, SANParks, which currently manages 21 of South Africa’s national parks, which are situated across South Africa, conserving the biodiversity, landscapes and cultural heritage of the country (Engelbrecht, 2011). However, Mearns (2002) notes that many conservation efforts from the late 1800s and early 1900s either displaced local communities or restricted their access to natural resources. This affected local communities’ attitudes towards protected areas and only at a later stage were efforts put in place to rectify these conflicts (Snyman, 2014). The future success of conservation and ecotourism in many protected areas will depend on the attitudes and behaviour of communities living in or adjacent to these areas (Snyman, 2014), thus the need to continuously empower communities. Approaches are thus required that effectively engage local people in management and decision-making that enables their livelihood needs to be adequately met as it is important to link protected area-management with the economic activities of locals (Bajracharya, Furley & Newton, 2006; Mearns, 2002).

In South Africa, the National Environmental Management Act (Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003) requires government-funded protected areas to provide ‘benefits’ to neighbouring communities and contribute to the development needs of poor communities outside of the reserve (Taylor & Atkinson, 2012). Saayman et al. (2013:440) state that the role and contribution of local communities in managing national parks has changed significantly over the past few years. This is due to a paradigm shift at the National Conservation Agency of SANParks from traditionally being a pure conservation agency to becoming a conservation agency striving to benefit and empower local communities. The management of the TMNP is informed by various SANParks and South African Government policies and management plans. The Planning Department is responsible for the management and updating of all policy documents (SANParks, 2015).

TMNP’s primary purpose is to manage areas of important biodiversity, scenic resources and cultural heritage, including on the Cape Peninsula, while allowing for opportunities that do not compromise the integrity of the area and contribute to local economic development (TMNP Management Plan, 2008). Malan (2009) states that in the context of co-operative environmental management, concepts such as inter-governmental relations, partnerships, collaboration and co-management are brought into consideration, thus emphasising the importance of working together and soliciting public input to manage the environment in a sustainable manner.

The SANParks Management Plan Policy Framework (2006) sums up by stating that the participation of all interested and affected parties in environmental governance must be promoted, and all people must have the opportunity to develop the understanding, skills and capacity necessary for achieving equitable and effective participation, and participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged persons. SANParks recognises that parks must serve societal values and that they need to be part of and interrelate with the broader landscape and socio-economic context within which they are situated (City of Cape Town, 2015). TMNP is a people’s park meaning it considers the local communities in its mandates (City of Cape Town, 2015). Interest in the management of the park ranges from individuals, entrepreneurs and recreational user groups to environmental and social pressure groups, local, provincial and national government departments (City of Cape Town, 2015).

The objective of this study was to examine how local communities are benefitting from the management of TMNP. It also looked at the projects which the park has proposed as a way to maximise community involvement and ensure that locals enjoy the economic spinoffs from the TMNP. The study also details partnership challenges between park and communities. Analyses were grounded on semi-structured interviews with the identified stakeholders with knowledge of how the park operates.

## **Methodology**

### **2.1) Study area, design and data collection procedure**

TMNP is found in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, stretching from the Signal Hill in the north, to Cape Point which sits at the southeast corner of the Cape Peninsula (TMNP, 2008; Draft TMNP Management Plan, 2015). This park is South Africa's largest urban park, and includes a marine park (Saayman et al., 2013). The TMNP is unique as it includes one of the modern "Seven Wonders of the World" and being part of the Cape Floral Kingdom, which is the smallest floral kingdom in the world, but with over 8 500 plant species is the most diverse in the world, of which 70% are endemic (Draft TMNP Management Plan, 2015). TMNP is of international importance receiving over six million visitors annually, being a national and international tourist destination (Sibiya, 2017).

In 2004, the national park was changed from Cape Peninsula National Park to the TMNP and was subsequently proclaimed on the 28th of May 1998 in terms of the National Parks Act (SANParks Stakeholder Engagement Report, 2015). The decision to establish the TMNP was made by South African lawmakers in April 1996 when the cabinet chose to appoint SANParks as the future management authority for the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) with the intention to declare it as a national park (Steven & Associates, 2006; TMNP Management Plan, 2008, Draft TMNP Management Plan, 2015). The TMNP is part of the SANParks network which manages a system of parks which represent the indigenous fauna, flora, landscapes and associated cultural heritage of the country (SANParks, 2015). According to the National Environment Management: Protected Areas Act (NEM:PAA Act No.57 of 2003), TMNP should be managed according to the purpose for which it was declared which includes the area within, and conservation worthy land adjacent to the national park which must be managed to ensure the development of a prosperous, healthy, culturally rich and scenically attractive Cape Peninsula for the benefit of all residents and visitors and the optimal use of the areas unique set of natural and cultural resources (City of Cape Town, 2015). One of the park's current intentions include allowing spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and tourism opportunities which are environmentally compatible and contribute to economic development (City of Cape Town, 2015).

Figure 1 shows the map of TMNP area illustrating its expanse, and the suburbs in its three sections. The Northern Section is where the main tourist attraction, Table Mountain is found, with various more affluent suburbs on the coast from the Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront to Llandudno. On the other side of the Northern Section, suburbs such as Rondebosch, Claremont and Newlands are noted. The Central Section stretches from Hout Bay (with Imizamo Yethu), Chapman's Peak to Noordhoek on the coastal side while on the other side, one finds the TMNP headquarters and other suburbs. The coastal towns of Muizenburg and Fish Hoek sit in the Central Section. Finally, the Southern Section of the TMNP stretch is surrounded by coastal suburbs including Simon's Town, Boulders Beach, Kommetjie, Scarborough and to the far south, Cape Point.



Figure 1: Map of TMNP area

Source: SANParks (n.d.)

The methodology assumed for the study followed the adoption of a qualitative approach, using in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders of the TMNP area. More specifically,

eight stakeholders who had knowledge about TMNP's operation and those affected by the park were selected for this study (see Table 1). These stakeholders included; two Municipal Councillors, Tour Operator/Local Guide, Conservation Officers, TMNP Area Manager, Project Contractor, and Community Liaison Officer responsible for conservation. By adopting a qualitative approach to the current research study, the researchers considered it appropriate to gain a complete overview of stakeholder perspectives, regarding the research topic at hand. Consequently, the stakeholders were purposefully selected by virtue of their characteristics, which had some bearing on their insights and experiences regarding the progress made since 1994 in relation to the management of TMNP and community beneficiation initiatives. Prior to commencing this study permission was sought from TMNP authorities which granted a licence to access the park and conduct the study (Research Permit - CRC/2016-2017/018-2016/V1).

Respondent Identifier	Designation
Participant 1	Conservation Officer – Youth Development
Participant 2	Social Development Coordinator
Participant 3	TMNP Area Manager
Participant 4	Community Liaison
Participant 5	Local Counsellor – Llandudno, Hout Bay, Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu
Participant 6	Local Counsellor – Fishhoek
Participant 7	Tour Guide/Tour Operator
Participant 8	Contractor

Table 1: The study's participants and designation

Source: Researchers' construction

All the interviews were conducted with the prior consent of the study participants. Each interview was conducted at a location chosen by the respondents, which was usually their workplace. Some respondents were comfortable with answering the questions by typing their responses and returning data via electronic mailing. The semi-structured interviews were guided by a set of questions relating to the topics identified through the literature review, although the interview procedure consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the interviewer to probe, or clarify issues raised, and to explore the particular areas of experience, or expertise of the respondents involved. The focus of the interview questions largely centred around community beneficiation in relation to the management of the TMNP. The interviews lasted between 40 to 50 minutes and were digitally recorded and manually transcribed verbatim. Effort was made to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, by means of constantly checking the interview transcripts, as well as continuously comparing them to the interview recordings and field notes made during the interview. A thematic presentation of the results is outlined in the following sections.

## Findings

### 3.1) Community projects and involvement

In trying to ascertain levels of community involvement in the park's activities, the researchers asked the participants about their involvement and the projects they were involved with. To get a further sense of community benefit, the respondents were also asked to indicate whether locals were involved in some of those projects. It was revealed from the study that local community members were involved in some of the projects in the TMNP. One excerpt to confirm this was the following "I run the Junior rangers and 2 eco-clubs. Previously we had the 'Kids in Parks programmes' which brought 500 kids to the park for 3-day stays (over 5 weeks)" (Conservation Officer - P1). The respondent was however reluctant to disclose the exact communities which were involved in the mentioned project. The purpose of involving communities in the Park project was to ensure that access to the park was permitted and promote sustainable living and career development.

Community members coming from different areas bordering the Park including; Sea Point, Camps Bay, Constantia, Mitchells Plain, Hangberg, Llandudno, Hout Bay, Masimpumelele, Langa, Ocean View, Imizamoyethu and others further away are empowered through receiving training as seen in the study's findings "... offer training to SMMEs on how to start businesses, several businesses including emerging small ones are supported ... they also receive useful information, assisted to get permits to do business in the park" (Community Liaison Officer - P4). These members also participate in various projects such as the alien-

vegetation clearing initiative among others. The Park's commitment to keep the park beautiful, clean, ensuring safety and security is made possible through the community's involvement in Park affairs. They also help to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity conservation.

The researchers also wanted to establish how the Park works with local community members. The results from the study showed an agreement between participants that communities surrounding the Park are involved in some projects which are initiated by SANParks. However, from the responses, it was noted that the projects were not only limited to communities adjacent to the Park. Other communities including Mitchells Plain, Langa, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu for example were also involved and benefitting from the TMNP. School children are brought into the Park by buses, so as to learn more about the conservation of nature. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), a government initiative aimed at reducing poverty in the communities that border the park was one of the programmes identified by the respondents. This programme seeks to offer training and create opportunities mainly targeting the following communities; Masiphumelele, Red Hill, Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay, Ocean View, Westlake, Loyolo as well as other areas on the peninsula (SANParks, 2019). Through the EPWP, "...training and setting up of SMMEs" has been possible (Conservation Officer: Youth Development - P1). One contractor who is working in EPWP projects had this to say "I have been trained by the Park in giving first aid; HR management and financial management. With my salary I have bought myself cars; built a house and I support my family" (Contractor - P8).

The study participants were also asked if they were aware of any entrepreneurial opportunities available for communities close to the park. The Conservation Officer indicated that there were efforts by the Park to develop and register small businesses. However, the other participants were aware of locals who run SMMEs including catering services at their meetings and events. Some community members run small transport businesses and are contracted by the Park to offer transport services. In addition, there is the training of tour guides and these come from the adjacent communities.

### 3.2) Community beneficiation from Park

Local communities who share geographic proximity with protected areas must accrue the economic opportunities and benefits (Mearns, 2012). The opportunities and benefits are particularly significant in Africa, where local communities near and on boundaries of protected areas are often vulnerable with high rates of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and distorted patterns of land use (Naughton-Treves, Alix-Garcia & Chapman, 2011). Naughton-Treves et al. (2011:1319) note the blame that is usually placed on protected areas for increasing poverty in the tropics "because they prevent local access to resources", thus presenting hardships during times of crisis. The poor usually view conservation of protected areas as a move by parks to allow the wealthy foreign visitors to enjoy and benefit from their resource. This triggers resentment which should be managed in a strategic way for example ensuring that local communities also reap the economic opportunities and benefits from the protected areas. It should also be remembered that communities surrounding parks used to obtain resources such as wood, grass, herbs and sometimes meat through hunting before these areas were fenced as parks. Their access is now limited and controlled in most instances.

With regards to the TMNP, results indicate that local communities have received a number of benefits from conservation, including improvements in access to the Park. The TMNP is an open access park where communities come and go as they please, as the Park is not fully fenced. Infrastructure has been improved in the Park especially the footpaths and these helped in promoting local jobs. This is a conservation effort as many visitors to the Park usually hike up the mountain.

Locals are also involved in setting up of infrastructure that is used by local people, that is, stalls, restaurants, arts and craft markets. Maintenance of infrastructure is done by local community members and they are also involved in a number of projects including alien clearing/cleaning, beach cleaning and for these projects to go ahead sustainably, local contractors are preferred.

Some of the benefits which locals enjoy including getting discounts to use some of the Park's facilities. The study also revealed that school groups are given free access to the Park which is aimed at raising awareness of conservation and exposing them to the country's biodiversity. Other benefits which were cited by the study's participants included:

Free permit to collect wood in their bakkies

Locals can also come to harvest reeds and for this no permit is required

Free access in the heritage month of September as a way to promote locals to come and experience the protected areas.

### 3.3) Partnership challenges between the Park and communities

A number of challenges are experienced when it comes to the management of protected areas which presents some complexities on the partnerships between communities and the Park. From the current study, poverty featured very prominently as one challenge affecting communities on the boundaries of the Parks. TMNP is surrounded by several communities which are both affluent and poor. The affluent areas on the boundaries of the TMNP include the following suburbs: Camps Bay, Llandudno, Sea Point and the Fish Hoek fishing village, among others. On the other side there are poor townships, for example Imizamo Yethu and Ocean View, with large populations contained in cramped areas. Usually the expectations of these groups (rich and poor) vary which at times makes the partnership between the Park and community a bit challenging. Highlighting the differing expectations from the rich and the poor communities surrounding the Park, the Local Guide, also a resident of Imizamo Yethu indicated that locals *"expect the Park to give more land for housing ..."* whereas on the other hand residents from the richer suburbs such as Llandudno *"... would strive to do anything possible to ensure the Park is conserved"*. There is one challenge noted that those residents staying on the boundary of the Park *"... have a tendency of encroaching the land and at times destroying the demarcated boundary into (sic) the Park area"* (Contractor - P8). Consequently, this creates huge tension between the Park and communities. It has been noted that communities closer to the Park live with limited amenities and services, high levels of unemployment and poverty (Pelser et al., 2013) and this generates higher expectation by community members especially the creation of jobs.

The use of the Park by the poor and rich communities generally differ with the wealthy using it for nature walks, dog walks, camping, picnics, sport (jogging, quad biking and cycling) among other uses. Conversely, the poor communities use the Park to obtain natural herbs especially traditional healers and herbalists (*sangoma*) as well as Rastafarians. These uses may conflict with each user's interest for example as highlighted by the TMNP Area Manager (P3) who views the *"affluent suburbs prefer peaceful and quieter environments"* and this may not be the case with those who use the Park for spiritual connections especially those who conduct religious activities in the protected areas. An example of a suburb in close proximity to the Park was given, *"... the affluent residing in Camps Bay always complain of high noise levels from those who use the Park for their spiritual awakening ... they sing loudly during the night and at times beat drums which is so disturbing to them"* (TMNP Area Manager - P3). Several religious groups are renowned for using the Park for spiritual purposes which poses a problem to those with a different belief. It was also revealed from the interviews that there seems to be no formal community-use agreements for the use of biological resources within the Park. Conversely, there are numerous traditional practices and religious services that are conducted in the Park. Because there is no official record of these people who come to use the Park for religious as well as traditional purposes, it becomes difficult to monitor the activities. However, informal records of the extensive medicinal use of many of the plant species from the Park do exist.

It was also indicated that it is quite difficult for local community members to access business opportunities which limits their potential to benefit from the Park. Therefore, more sustainable ways of ensuring that community members benefit from opportunities need to be devised for example empowerment through proper training can be expanded. This training may include aspects on *"how to start and successfully run a business thus encouraging entrepreneurial skills"* (Conservation Officer - P1).

This study has revealed that visitor numbers to national parks have risen and the numbers continue to grow. However, with the 'open access' nature of the TMNP, it has become difficult to collect exact figures relating to visitor numbers to the Park, however statistics exist only for the gated entry points. For 2017, visitor numbers had grown as indicated *"... visitor fluctuation but has increased to 4.8 million ..."* (TMNP Area Manager - P3). The Park now has also open access which was not the case during the apartheid era. This has made it hard to collect statistics of exact numbers of people who use the Park. Many picnic sites for example Oudekraal and Newlands are accessed by community members as well as tourists and it is difficult to keep a record of these numbers. In terms of facilities, *"the Park offers*

*accommodation and camping facilities for use by various people” (TMNP Area Manager – P3). “The urban parks are accessed freely while others an entrance fee is charged” (Local Counsellor – P5).*

### 3.4) Entrepreneurial opportunities

There are several entrepreneurial opportunities which have started and are linked to the TMNP and these include community projects to develop and uplift skills. Catering was one of the business opportunities presented to locals by the Park. When the Park has ‘important days’ such as hosting of Park events and activities, meetings, workshops, seminars and even conferences, local people coming from adjacent communities provide catering services. Some arts and craft markets run/operated by locals are benefitting from the selling of artefacts in the Park. In addition to business opportunities presented to local community members, a Contractor (P8) who was resident in a suburb adjacent to the Park talked about SANParks’ contribution in uplifting community members through “*skills development*”. The contractor indicated that through the Park’s initiative of empowering and ensuring that locals benefit from the Park, training in various projects is offered. In her personal account, she was pleased because of the vast entrepreneurial opportunities which were presented to her “*I got trained as a tour guide and now work running walking, hiking, and nature guide tours to visitors ... I also managed to get registered as a caterer and know of others who provide catering service to the Park...*” The Cape Town Environmental Educational Education Trust (CTEET), an organisation that works with the TMNP and various conservation organs in Cape Town has embarked on various programmes all aimed at ‘changing lives through nature’ (CTEET, n.d.). CTEET acknowledges the challenges faced by the youth especially the astonishing high unemployment rates (48.0%) and through their initiatives, several have been helped. Training and development programs and initiatives are undertaken to ensure that young South Africans get the skills required by industry (CTEET, n.d.).

There are also commercialisation initiatives including the public-private partnerships (PPP), which presents entrepreneurial opportunities to locals. PPPs occurs when the state works closely with private companies or individuals in the management and conservation of the Park and this is viewed crucial for South Africa’s national parks (Doke, 2018). PPP has long been recognised as an important model for the growth of the tourism industry. Through PPPs, additional revenue is generated, and this goes a long way in conserving protected areas. Other uses of the funds generated from the PPP include funding some of the underperforming state assets, assisting to facilitate rapid infrastructure delivery as well as leverage private capital and crucial expertise (Doke, 2018). As of 2017, SANParks had over 45 PPPs in operation, and these present opportunities to private partners, for example permitting access to state property for agreed periods of time, thus allowing business and entrepreneurial activities to take place (Javan, 2017). The model is viewed as a sustainable risk management strategy whereby potential risks are transferred to the private sector and allows SANParks to focus on its core function of wildlife conservation.

Highlighting the importance of the PPPs in the TMNP, the contractor testified that these have benefitted locals in several ways including “... *allowing local private companies as well as individuals an opportunity to use existing Park buildings and infrastructure on lease basis*” (Community Liaison – P4). The TMNP has in place formal management agreements and leases which allow the private sector to conduct sustainable businesses within the Park. The businesses particularly SMMEs are assisted in a number of ways including information dissemination and enabling them to operate efficiently. Most stakeholders agreed that the Park is very supportive as a way of encouraging entrepreneurship. The view denoting TMNP’s support of local businesses came out in the interviews for example, the Community Liaison (P4) explained, “... *the Park has been instrumental in developing and registering several SMMEs.*” It is also important to note that the Park presents many business opportunities for locals and for these to be exploited, permit applications need to be undertaken. In trying to promote the entrepreneurial spirit among locals, the process is simplified with much support given thus giving more locals access into businesses in the Park. The Contractor (P8) also stated that community members who want to work as contractors need to register in the City of Cape Town’s data base. This will place them in better chance of being selected when opportunities come.

Aliens invasive plant species, which are considered one of the biggest threats to biodiversity needs to be cleared for various reasons. These plant species have the capacity to destabilise riverbanks, are flammable and cause fires, interfere with waterways and have adverse impact on the indigenous fauna

(Gurevitch & Padilla, 2004; South African National Biodiversity Institute, 2019; McDonald, n.d). Alien clearing has been spearheaded as a biodiversity management way to reduce the impact of these species. The TMNP undertakes the alien clearing programme in collaboration with the department of Water Affairs and Forestry (SanParks, 2019). This programme employs between 300 to 350 people coming from the surrounding communities. Other alien clearing initiatives are being undertaken in the indigenous Afromontane forests. The TMNP Area Manager revealed how the alien plant species were destroying the indigenous fauna and he proposed for the involvement of more stakeholders in the clearing exercise and coming up with solutions. There was a general agreement in the findings that the alien cleaning exercise and coastal clean-up projects have enabled locals to work in these projects.

### 3.5) The park and community involvement

The study also sought to find out the interactions between the Park and local communities. It was noted from the study that most communication is through community structures and Park forums which were established to ensure that there is clear information flow. Meetings between community leaders or representatives and Park officials are held periodically (some quarterly while others every two weeks) so that community members can get an update of the Parks' activities and projects. It is in these meetings that *"problems and possible engagements are discussed ... leading to solutions to problems and all this aimed at ensuring that communities surrounding the Park are happy ..."* (Local Councillor – P6). Various methods are used to link with community members including electronic mailing especially with community representatives, notices of upcoming meetings are displayed on notice boards, and at times information is relayed via the telephone. Interactions between Park and community members provides the opportunity for input from both sides within reasonable timeframes and emphasises sharing of information. Permitting local participation and involvement in key decisions and projects usually recognises the value of all knowledge, as well as the diversity of values and opinions that exist between members. In addition, when local community members are given the platform to interact with the park, it enables feedback to be provided and would demonstrate how community input has been considered in the decision-making process. In this study, it was noted that there are established communication channels between the Park and community members and mostly *'community forums'* were used. Cohen, Dengate, Morrell and Lee (2015) note the critical role the media plays in the management of protected areas. They argue that the media can be used to achieve conservation objectives (Cohen et al., 2015:443). Protected areas managers usually use media (both traditional and modern) to reach a wider audience with conservation messages as well as to raise awareness and garner co-operation from the public. In addition to using the traditional media platforms to reach various audience, TMNP management uses the *'modern media'* including Facebook, Whatsapp, Podcast, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, blogging to reach communities with messages which help foster relationships and support for conservation.

Examining how the TMNP involve communities in the management of the Park, the responses varied but reflected that there was involvement. There is the public participation process which is an initiative by the Park management to ensure that communities are part of the decision-making. It includes *'clear information flow'* where *"local people are informed about what is happening or going to happen"* (Social Dev Coordinator – P2). In addition, community members need to be made aware of how the Park is managed as noticed in the following except *"... Park management plan communicated to all communities we work with so that they know where we are coming from and going ... this affords us a chance to listen to their concerns and we try to be accommodating ..."* The Community Liaison Officer (P4), added that *"When the Park management plan was developed, community members were engaged, allowing their questions to be answered and clarified."* The projects which are run in the Park are managed by local community members with *'project advisory committees'* involving members from various organisations such as local councillors, community leaders, SANParks and Department of Environmental Affairs representatives.

The study provides a basis for future research on the interactions between protected areas, and the adjacent communities, particularly benefits to locals. This would establish the overall value of these areas in promoting conservation of biodiversity. The involvement of local community members in Park activities and conservation programmes has proved successful in several protected areas in South Africa and beyond. Community members as custodians of the natural biodiversity can fully support conservation efforts when the benefits from these resources are realised, therefore it is imperative to find

ways of maximising community benefits as means to achieving sustainable conservation. Future studies should therefore be expanded to include more stakeholders, especially locals from communities surrounding the Park. The current study was limited to only eight key informants. Since the study's focus was on community beneficiation, the 'voices' and views of these community members could have provided a richer picture regarding the benefits from the TMNP. Considering the above, the authors recommend a multi-stakeholder (including residents from both the richer and poorer suburbs) study on community beneficiation as this is anticipated to provide interesting study constructs.

## Conclusion

From the stakeholder perspective, the TMNP is doing the best they can to involve communities in the Park's issues. Information is well communicated through the already existing systems. It is also interesting to note the existence of entrepreneurial opportunities for communities surrounding the Park. These has helped locals in several ways including offering opportunities for jobs and subsequently earn an income. The authors of this article believe that more can still be done to create even more entrepreneurial opportunities for people. The EPWP initiative has done well in providing jobs to locals and in creating business opportunities for locals. It is also true that the cultural aspect of these locals has not been explored to the full. The area is visited by millions of tourists annually, and tour operating businesses can bring tourists to local communities to explore their culture. This could bring more benefits to locals, as they would understand tourism as well as conservation principles.

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