

Landscape Governance through Partnerships: Lessons from Amboseli, Kenya

Tabitha Mugo, Ingrid Visseren-Hamakers & Rene van der Dui

Abstract

The Amboseli landscape in Kenya has long been facing persistent challenges regarding conservation and development. To mitigate these problems and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), various policy interventions have been initiated, mostly in the form of partnership arrangements. This article examines two such partnerships, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) and the Big Life Foundation (BLF), to understand how they contribute to the governance of the Amboseli landscape, and the intrinsic link to power and politics. The research findings, based on document analysis, interviews and focus-group discussions, reveal that the partnerships have performed complementing landscape governance roles. Whereas AET focused on policy development, agenda-setting and meta-governance, BLF concentrated on policy implementation and meta-governance in relation to wildlife security. The way the partnerships performed these governance roles can be explained through the four faces of power, which reveal BLF's compulsory power and AET's institutional power. Nevertheless, the partnerships have only partially managed to bridge conflicting conservation and development discourses illustrating that the concept of sustainable development appears to hold little productive power on the ground. Overall, the article provides important insights into the contributions that partnerships can make to the SDGs, but also their limitations.

Keywords: Partnership, Amboseli, Landscape Governance, Power, SDGS

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