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***Parks* is published to strengthen international collaboration among protected area professionals and to enhance their role, status and activities by:**

- maintaining and improving an effective network of protected area managers throughout the world, building on the established network of WCPA;
- serving as a leading global forum for the exchange of information on issues relating to protected area establishment and management;
- ensuring that protected areas are placed at the forefront of contemporary environmental issues such as biodiversity conservation and ecologically sustainable development.

Cover, *clockwise from top: Dangejheri women patrol and protect their local forest. Dawid Kruiper and David Kariseb of the Khonami San discuss tracks on their land in the Kgaladagi Transfrontier Park, S. Africa.* Phillipa Holden. *Blackbuck* Antelope cervicapra *at Bentnoi, Orissa benefit from CCAs. The unique ecosystem of the coastal range forests of Mapu Lahual IPA, Chile.* Gonzalo Oviedo. *Burning spinifex grass for regeneration, Walalkara IPA, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands, South Australia.* Bruce Rose.

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Editorial

ASHISH KOTHARI

COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS (CCAs) have burst upon the global conservation scene in the first few years of the new millennium, and are the most exciting development since the concept of 'protected areas' came into vogue, over a century back. CCAs, variously called indigenous protected areas, biocultural heritage sites, community reserves, and various other names, are not new in practice. The conservation of sites and species by indigenous peoples and local communities is age-old. But the fact that these are equivalent in many ways to conventional, government-managed 'protected areas', has only recently been recognised. Two events advancing such recognition were the IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC, Durban 2003) and the VIIth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, Kuala Lumpur 2004). Both of these meetings, attended by thousands of conservationists from virtually all countries on the planet, endorsed the need to recognise CCAs as an important phenomenon. The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas has explicitly committed countries to recognise, support and take other action regarding CCAs by 2008.

Unfortunately, even as this recognition has grown, so too has the realisation that there is precious little documentation of CCAs, that they remain neglected and discounted in most national conservation policies, and that they face immense challenges and threats. As the analysis contained in this issue shows, urgent action is needed to redress this situation.

The actual and potential benefits of CCAs more than justify urgent national and global action to support them. I would make bold to say that such action may well double the current area of the earth that is under special conservation status (i.e., conventional 'protected areas'), thereby considerably increasing humanity's ability to protect what is left of the planet's biodiversity. Equally important, such action could enable a considerable enhancement of the livelihood security of tens of millions of people, and provide ecological benefits to many more. Never before have we been presented with so clear an opportunity to meet the twin objectives of ecological and human security that all countries are supposed to be striving to achieve. CCAs could in fact be a significant force in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

This issue presents a general introduction to CCAs followed by a series of regional assessments of CCAs. No uniform format has been imposed upon authors for the latter, but most have brought out the current state of knowledge on CCAs, the extent and numbers of CCAs where known, opportunities and challenges facing CCAs, and key lessons on which to build future strategies. The size limits of this issue have required authors to shed a lot of detail and nuances that would have enriched their arguments, but the papers do provide an initial glimpse of the richness and complexity of CCAs.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to cover all regions, or even within the regions covered, all countries. Some glaring gaps are Europe (only partially made up for by Box 1 in the first paper, *Community conserved areas: towards ecological and livelihood security*), western and central Africa, and central and western Asia. Readers may wish to look at some of the readings mentioned in the first paper, where case studies of CCAs from these regions are found.

It is hoped that despite these limitations, this issue will serve as a useful starting point, for increasing our knowledge, understanding and support of CCAs across the world.

I would particularly like to thank Antoine Lasgo, an intern with Kalpavriksh, and Tasneem Balasinorwala, of TILCEPA[1]/Kalpavriksh, for their valuable help in editing this issue.

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This issue of PARKS has been produced as part of a series of publications and reports emanating from the work of the Strategic Direction on Governance, Equity, and Livelihoods, a joint initiative between WCPA and IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP). Previously, this initiative was known as the Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA). For more details, please visit www.tilcepa.org.

The issue was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of the Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (PCLG), an initiative co-ordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The goal of PCLG is to facilitate learning on conservation-poverty linkages between and within different communities of interest. This is done by:

- promoting good practice through information provision and dissemination via an open access website (www.povertyandconservation.info); and
- influencing policy change through provision of a programme of 'learning activities' to organisations actively working on conservation-poverty linkages.

PCLG is currently funded by the Ford Foundation and Irish Aid. For more information please check our website (www.povertyandconservation.info) or contact Dilys Roe, e-mail: dilys.roe@iied.org

Clarification

The editors and publishers of PARKS confirm that the zone boundaries shown in Figure 1 of Gjerde, K. and Kelleher, G. (2005) *High Seas marine protected areas on the horizon: legal framework and recent progress*, PARKS 15(3) p.17 are, like all maps published in PARKS (see note in front cover), purely indicative and have no juridical basis or express any opinion.Thus, and in particular, the delineations do not imply that any international agreement has been reached between Peru and Ecuador or between Peru and Chile concerning their maritime boundaries.

1. IUCN's Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas (TILCEPA).

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Community conserved areas: towards ecological and livelihood security

ASHISH KOTHARI[1]

Community conserved areas (CCAs) have emerged as an exciting new development in conservation, and have the potential to significantly increase the global area under special conservation status. They include officially designated indigenous protected areas or community reserves, but also tens of thousands of sites not yet recognised by governments. They also range across the entire spectrum of IUCN protected area categories. While there is a diversity of motivations for communities to conserve ecosystems and wildlife, they provide enormous conservation, livelihood, social and political benefits. Yet they also face significant threats and challenges, and are in urgent need of recognition and appropriate support. The paper provides details of the kinds and range of CCAs, their spread and benefits, the threats they face, and ways forward to support them.

COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS (CCAs) can be defined as natural and modified ecosystems with significant biodiversity, ecological and related cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities[2] through customary laws or other effective means. This encompasses three essential features:

- one or more communities closely related to the ecosystems and/or species, because of cultural, livelihood, economic or other ties;
- community management decisions and efforts lead to the conservation of habitats, species, ecological benefits and associated cultural values, although the conscious objective of management may not be conservation *per se*; and
- communities are the major players in decision-making and implementing actions related to ecosystem management, implying that some form of community authority exists and is capable of enforcing regulations.

CCAs are found in both terrestrial and marine areas (see a number of examples in the following papers). In size, they can range from a tiny forest patch of less than a hectare (e.g. many sacred sites in South Asia; see Pathak, this issue), to several million hectares (e.g. the indigenous protected areas in some South American countries; see Oviedo, this issue). They can also be of many kinds, such as the following (for an example of a typology of CCAs, see Oviedo, this issue):

- indigenous peoples' territories managed for sustainable use, cultural values, or explicit conservation objectives;
- territories (terrestrial or marine) over which mobile or nomadic communities have traditionally roamed, managing the resources through customary regulations and practices;
- sacred spaces, ranging from tiny forest groves and wetlands to entire landscapes and seascapes, often (but not necessarily) left completely or largely inviolate;
- resource catchment areas, from which communities derive their livelihoods or key ecosystem benefits, managed such that these benefits are sustained over time;
- nesting or roosting sites, or other critical habitats of wild animals, conserved for ethical or other reasons explicitly oriented towards protecting these animals; and

1. This paper is based heavily on a chapter on CCAs by the author, in Lockwood, Worboys and Kothari 2006; it also draws from the work of a number of members of the IUCN WCPA-CEESP Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA) (now renamed the Strategic Direction on Governance, Equity and Livelihoods Relating to Protected Areas), which can be credited for having brought CCAs into the centre-stage of international conservation circles. Considerable help for editing this issue was provided by Antoine Lasgo, an intern with Kalpavriksh, and Tasneem Balasinorwala of TILCEPA/Kalpavriksh.

2. For the sake of convenience and without prejudice to the importance of recognising the special status of indigenous peoples, the term 'communities' is used to denote both indigenous peoples and other long-established local communities.

- landscapes with mosaics of natural and agricultural ecosystems, containing considerable cultural and biodiversity value, managed by farming communities or mixed rural-urban communities.

Though they may occasionally contain private lands, CCAs are mostly found on common or collectively held property, or on government lands that the community considers as part of its commons.

How much area do CCAs cover?

There is no clear idea of the extent of area that CCAs cover across the world. Some scholars estimate that about 420 million ha of forests (11% of the world's total) are under community ownership or administration (Molnar *et al*. 2004), and that this could double in the near future due to increasing policies of decentralisation (White *et al*. 2004). Of this, about 370 million ha is reported to be under some level of conservation management by communities (Molnar *et al*. 2004). Add to this other ecosystems (wetlands, marine areas, grasslands, deserts and so on) that would be under CCAs, and the sheer magnitude of this conservation effort becomes impressive. For instance, Ferrari (this issue) reports that the Philippines alone has over 500 marine sites under coastal resources management initiatives. Similar large numbers are reported from the islands in the South Pacific and marine areas. On-going documentation in India, perhaps the first large country where a detailed national picture is likely to emerge by early 2007, suggests the presence of thousands of CCAs spread over all kinds of ecosystems (see Pathak, this issue). Oviedo (this issue) points out that one-fifth of the Amazon is covered by indigenous protected areas (IPAs) and territories that are effective against external threats and deforestation, which is five times more than formal protected areas. Some of the IPAs he lists are several million hectares in size. Very large sizes and numbers of CCAs are also reported from the Southern African region (see Holden *et al.*, this issue).

The extent of CCA coverage of different kinds of ecosystems and wildlife communities is an area in need of urgent research and documentation. Such research could also help come up with a clearer classification of CCAs, based on a number of factors, such as size, ecosystem types, key wildlife, motivations for conservation, origins and history, kind of managing institutions and rules, type of ecological and social benefits, tenurial and legal status, and so on (for further discussion on this, see Kothari 2006).

Are CCAs protected areas?

Given the international recognition that CCAs have received since the IUCN World Parks Congress, governments and conservation organisations will increasingly be faced with the question: are all CCAs to be considered protected areas? Taking the definitions of protected areas by IUCN and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), one can delineate the following key features of a protected area:

- geographical limits or boundaries;
- predominantly aimed at achieving conservation benefits, but not excluding other related benefits;
- designation and management by legal or other effective means;
- existence of a body of governing rules; and
- a clearly identified organisation or individual with governance authority.

Many or most CCAs could have these elements. Other forms of governance, such as conservation by private land owners, also display them. With this understanding, the IUCN protected area category system is being updated to include a governance dimension (see Borrini-Feyerabend *et al*. 2004). This has made it possible to include non-official conservation areas, such as CCAs,

Table 1. *Community conserved areas as protected areas in the IUCN category system (adapted from Kothari* et al*. 2003; for examples of CCAs in each category, see Kothari 2006).*

IUCN Category (Section 3.3)	Community conserved area type
Categories Ia and Ib Strict Nature Reserve and Wilderness Areas	Sacred/forbidden or otherwise 'no-use' groves, lakes, springs, mountains, islands and so on with prohibition on uses except in very particular occasions, such as a once-a-year ceremony, once-a-year collective hunting or fishing strictly regulated by the community. A special case here may be the territories of un-contacted peoples (such as in the Amazon). (Note that the main reasons for the communities to protect the area may be cultural or religious rather than aesthetic, scientific or intrinsic values; it has been proposed that IUCN integrate such an objective into the definition of this category)
Category II National Park	Watershed forests above villages, community declared wildlife sanctuaries (at times also for ecotourism use)
Category III Natural Monument	Natural monuments (caves, waterfalls, cliffs, rocks) that are protected by communities for religious, cultural or other reasons
Category IV Habitat/Species Management Area	Heronries and other village tanks with wildlife populations, sea turtle nesting sites, community managed wildlife corridors and riparian vegetation areas
Category V Protected Landscape/Seascape	Traditional grounds of pastoral communities/mobile peoples (including rangelands, water points and forest patches), sacred and cultural landscapes and seascapes, collectively managed river basins and landscapes with a mix of natural ecosystems and high agrobiodiversity areas
Category VI Managed Resource Protected Area	Resource reserves (community forests, grasslands, waterways, coastal and marine stretches, including wildlife habitats) under restricted use and communal rules that assure sustainable harvesting through time

in national protected area systems. Table 1 shows how CCA types can be allocated into each of the six IUCN protected area categories. It is important here to reiterate the importance of recognising sites in Categories V and VI as protected areas (there have been some challenges to this from conventional conservationists who would like the term restricted to Categories I to IV). Many CCAs would fall into Categories V and VI, and contain significant biodiversity and wildlife values, and it would be completely unjustified not to give them the recognition they deserve.

Why do communities set up CCAs?

A wide range of motivations can lead to the establishment of CCAs:

- *A concern for wildlife protection* (see examples given in Pathak, this issue).
- *To secure sustainable access to livelihood resources* (see, for example Coron Island in Ferrari, this issue, and Cuvu Conservation Initiative, Fiji, in Kothari 2006).
- *To obtain sustained benefits from ecosystem functions* (such as protecting hydrological benefits of forests, in Pathak and Brown *et al.,* this issue).
- *To sustain religious, identity or cultural needs* (covering thousands of sacred sites across the world; see Laird 1999, Chambers 1999, Bernbaum 1999, Posey 1999).
- *To secure collective or community land tenure* (see examples from most regions, e.g. South-east Asia in Ferrari, Australia in Smyth, South America in Oviedo, and southern African in Holden *et al.*, this issue).
- *To attain security from threats* (see example of Peruvian territorial reserves for indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, in Kothari 2006).
- *To obtain financial benefits* (such as from ecotourism, see examples in Holden *et al.*, this issue).

What are the key benefits of CCAs?

CCAs are critical from an ecological and social perspective in many ways. They often (though not always):

- help conserve critical ecosystems and threatened species;
- maintain essential ecosystem functions, including water security and gene pools;
- sustain the cultural and economic survival of tens of millions of people (not only in countries of the tropics but also industrialised nations, as is clear from the paper on North America, Brown *et al*. this issue);
- provide corridors and linkages for animal and gene movement, including often between two or more officially protected areas (as illustrated by examples from Southern Africa, North America and South America, see respective papers in this issue);
- synergise links between agricultural biodiversity and wildlife, providing larger land/waterscape level integration;
- offer crucial lessons for participatory governance, useful even in government managed protected areas;
- offer lessons in integrating customary and statutory laws, and formal and non-formal institutions, for more effective conservation;
- build on and validate sophisticated ecological knowledge systems, elements of which have wider positive use;
- aid in community resistance to destructive development, saving territories and habitats from mining, dams, logging, tourism, over-fishing and so on;
- help communities in empowering themselves, especially to reclaim or secure territories, tenure, and rights to or control over resources;
- aid communities to better define their territories, e.g. through mapping (such as in Central America, see Solis *et al.,* this issue);
- help create a greater sense of community identity and cohesiveness, and also a renewed vitality and sense of pride in local cultures, including amongst the youth who are otherwise alienated from these by modern influences;
- create conditions for other developmental inputs to flow into the community;
- lead to greater equity within a community, and between the community and outside agencies.
- conserve biodiversity at relatively low financial cost (though often high labour inputs), with costs of management often covered as part of normal livelihood or cultural activities, through existing systems and structures; and
- provide examples of relatively simple administration and decision-making structures, avoiding complex bureaucracies.

In many ways, CCAs are eminently suited to help meet the Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to eradicating poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability (see Pathak *et al.* 2005). Indeed, they provide a bridge amongst these goals, which is otherwise weakly developed in most country policies and programmes (see Table 2).

Importantly, community initiatives have often integrated the conservation of both wild and domesticated species and tend to look at them as part of a continuum (rather than the sharp divide that formal scientists often make), from predominantly wild to semi-wild and semi-domesticated to predominantly domesticated. A classic example is from the Peruvian Andes. Here, Quechua indigenous peoples have established a potato park as a biocultural heritage site, where a mosaic of agricultural and natural ecosystems is conserved along with the revival of potato diversity in its place of origin (Alejandro Argumedo, pers. comm.).

Table 2. *Ecological and socio-economic benefits of community-based conservation in South Asia (adapted and updated from Kothari* et al. *(2000).*

Type of initiative	Ecological benefits	Socio-economic benefits	Illustrative examples
Traditional protection of sacred sites	Protection, often total, of forests, grasslands, village tanks	Cultural sustenance, protection of community identity	Several thousand in India and Bangladesh, usually small in extent
Traditional protection of sacred species	Protection of key species	Cultural sustenance, aesthetic enjoyment, marginal livelihood and economic benefits	Blue bull, *nilgai*, *Boselaphus tragocamelus*, rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta*, blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra* and fig trees *Ficus* species. in many parts of India
Traditional sustainable use practices for habitats	Conservation of habitats such as village tanks, pastures and forests, and wildlife species resident in them; corridors or gene movement between official protected areas	Sustenance of traditional means of survival and livelihoods; financial revenues in some cases	Kokkare Bellur, India; *bugiyals* (pastures) and *van panchayats* (village forest council managed areas) in the Indian Himalaya; several marine sites with traditionally regulated fisheries, in India, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere
Traditional sustainable use practices for species	Conservation of wildlife species along with or independent of their habitats	Sustenance of traditional livelihoods and cultural practices	Trees like Mahua, *bassia latifolia*, harvested with great restraint in many parts of tribal India; hunting restraints for several species
Recent initiatives to revive degraded habitats and sustainably use them	Regeneration of forests, grasslands, and other ecosystems, and of species dependent on them	Revival of traditional livelihoods, sustenance of survival resources, generation of new livelihoods, including financial revenues and employment, political and social empowerment including in many cases greater equity (gender, class, caste and so on)	Several million hectares of forest lands in India, Nepal, and Bhutan (Joint Forest Management or community-initiated); community fisheries in freshwater wetlands, Bangladesh
Recent initiatives to conserve and/or sustainably use relatively intact ecosystems	Conservation of important ecosystems and their resident species, reduction in threats to them	Generation of new livelihoods, including financial revenues and employment, revival of old or generation of new cultural practices and identity, political and social empowerment including in many cases greater equity (gender, class, caste and so on)	Mendha (Lekha), India; Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal; Muthurajawela Marsh and Lagoon, Sri Lanka; community wildlife and forest reserves in Nagaland, India; sea turtle nesting sites on India's coasts; freshwater wetland sanctuaries, Bangladesh
Recent initiatives at sustainable (consumptive and non-consumptive) use of single species	Revival of threatened populations of wildlife, such as ibex *Capra ibex*; and reduction in over-exploitation, e.g. of plant and aquatic species	Generation of new livelihoods including financial revenues and employment	Hushey, Pakistan; Rekawa, Sri Lanka; Baghmara, Nepal
Resistance to destructive commercial forces	Reduction or elimination of factors threatening ecosystems and species	Protection of survival and livelihood base, protection of political and social identity	Protection of Indian coastal and marine areas by traditional fisherfolk, from destructive fishing and aquaculture; movements against big dams and mining projects in several countries

What legal and policy status do CCAs have?

CCAs are usually based on customary law and traditional practice. Not only do they often have no statutory backing in national law, but often they represent a struggle in the face of unfavourable legislation. But there are also a number of countries where CCAs are backed by national or local government policies and laws, either explicitly as conservation units or protected areas (e.g. in Australia and many South American countries, see Smyth and Oviedo, respectively, this issue), or generally through protection given to community territories and rights. Examples of both 'informal' CCAs, that have no statutory backing, and 'formal' ones which are part of a country's protected area system or are recognised in other ways, are given in the papers that follow (see also Box 1 on European CCAs, below).

Following the international recognition given to CCAs at the IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC; see: www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/index.htm), and within the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the CBD (see www.biodiv.org), a number of countries are exploring ways to provide legal backing to CCAs (for an ongoing survey of national laws and policies relating to CCAs, see: www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/ccalegislations.htm). After the President of Madagascar dramatically announced his intention to triple his country's protected area coverage at the WPC, legal options are being considered for the recognition of CCAs as part of its protected area system.

While many existing and newly developing laws and policies provide (or are considering providing) full management authority and responsibility to the conserving community, several others legitimise CCAs through some form of collaborative management agreement with the government, or with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or even with the private sector (see chapter on Collaboratively Managed Protected Areas, in Lockwood *et al*. 2006).

Box 1. CCAs in Europe

Europe (not covered in this issue) has a long tradition of CCAs. To give some examples:

1. Traditions of community forestry and pasture management in the north of **Italy** date from the Middle Ages. In some places such as the Fiemme Valley, communities even resisted takeover of their forests by the Italian state, through armed struggle. A good example of a CCA is the Regole d'Ampezzo of the Ampezzo Valley, which has a recorded history of about 1,000 years. Some 15 years ago, the Regole received recognition as the legal managers of the Parco Naturale delle Dolomiti d'Ampezzo. Thus this regional protected area is established on the land and the resources the local community has conserved through the centuries. A first national meeting of representatives from Italian CCAs (Patrimoni di Comunità) entitled *Community conserved areas in Italy: History and Culture, Nature and Landscape* was held in December 2005. Participants explored the concept of CCA and its value in the current Italian and European context and identified elements that appear crucial for its usefulness and vitality (Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, pers. comm.).
2. For over 35 years, **France** has been experimenting with conservation by local stakeholders. Elected people, NGOs, inhabitants, and private industries together define a project that meets the stakes of a rural area recognised for its rich but threatened cultural and natural heritage, and with a fragile socio-economic base. After a validation process, the government classifies the area as a Regional Nature Park (RNP). Such parks, found in mountains, the plains, on the coast, in forests, and on wetlands, vary in size from 25,000 ha (Haute Vallée de Chevreuse) to 300,000 ha (Guyane), averaging about 150,000 ha. Each RNP is managed by an organisation of the elected people of the local communities (regions, departments, villages). A multi-disciplinary technical team runs it and its financial means are essentially provided by public funds. By 2004, there were 44 RNPs representing 3,689 towns and villages, and covering seven million ha or 12% of the land. (Adapted from information provided by Federation des parcs naturels regionaux).

Another interesting situation is when community territories that were once taken over by the state (typically, for instance, during colonial times in many countries), are 'restituted' to the community (a course of action specifically recommended in the outputs of the WPC). In a number of such cases (e.g. in Southern Africa and Australia, see Holden *et al.* and Smyth, respectively, this issue), communities have opted to retain the lands under conservation, thereby creating, or reviving, CCAs. It is estimated that about 84% of national parks in South America overlap with community lands, and in many of these areas communities are regaining legal land and management rights (Amend and Amend 1995; see also Oviedo, this issue). In addition, several countries (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Panama) have legal provisions recognising the indigenous peoples' direct right to manage their land. Indeed, in the not so distant future, a major proportion of existing protected areas of this region may be totally or partially community-managed.

Many CCAs stretch our understanding of the concept of 'area', as the territories under protection do not have clear borders, being associated with forces of undetermined nature or place, or with changing seasons and climatic phenomena. This is particularly true with reference to mobile communities (on land or at sea), which generally relate to very broad territories and resources, which are profoundly affected by varying climatic conditions (see paper by Bassi, this issue and also www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/WAMIP/WAMIP.htm).

What challenges do CCAs face?

CCAs are not a panacea for all conservation problems. They often suffer from serious limitations and problems. To cite a few (each of which is illustrated with regional nuances in the following papers):

- Traditional institutions and knowledge systems have been destroyed or eroded by colonial or centralised political systems, across the world, weakening community ability to manage their environs.
- Such institutions and systems have also been eroded by other forces, such as integration into national and international markets and the consequent incursion of powerful commercial forces, inappropriate educational systems that undermine a community's pride in its own traditions, or the growing interference of national or sub-national party politics.
- In many countries, a substantial part (often almost all) of common lands and waters are under government ownership or control, reducing community ability to use their own mechanisms of conservation (see, for instance, Pathak and Ferrari in this issue, regarding South and South-east Asia).
- Many CCAs are on lands on which the community does not have ownership or tenurial security, or other forms of control, making the maintenance of CCAs difficult, especially in the face of outside pressures (this is a serious problem in all regions, as strongly brought out by all papers in this issue).
- CCAs generally lack governmental support except in a few countries;
- In many countries, well-intentioned government policies to support CCAs are based on straitjacketed approaches, often taking over key community functions, or establishing uniform and parallel institutional bodies based on representative politics, rather than facilitating and improving upon an existing system (Pathak, this issue, points to this problem, whereas on the contrary, Holden *et al.* point to where flexibility and a site-specific approach is beneficial).
- Communities are often plagued by internal inequities and social injustices, with decisions regarding natural resources being taken by the powerful (the men, the landowners, the 'upper' castes), very often at the cost of the powerless (the women, the artisans, the head-loaders, the pastoralists); this could undermine CCA initiatives, or skew the distribution of their benefits.

- Conflict with neighbouring communities, or inter-village inequities in access to land and resources, can at times undermine CCA initiatives.
- Severe threats are faced from 'development' projects that could destroy or degrade the ecosystems being conserved; the dominance of governments and private corporations even on lands that are being conserved by communities, frequently renders communities helpless against such projects.
- Traditional forms of authority and legitimisation of CCAs could be undermined by new political or social forces, including immigrants (see examples in Bassi, this issue; see also Box 2).
- Newer generations are often not interested in carrying on conservation-oriented traditions, influenced by 'modern' education that devalues such traditions, or finding them irrelevant in the face of severe livelihood problems.
- Human and livestock population increases have in several places shrunk the total available resource base, and led to over-exploitation that the community is unable to curb on its own.
- Communities sometimes find it difficult to sustain the current costs of managing CCAs, such as investment in time and labour, funds for the salaries of village guards, conflict situations with neighbours or migrating communities, opportunity costs related to the inability to access or utilise certain land or resources, and human-wildlife conflicts.
- Previously sustainable levels of resource use may now be causing over-exploitation, as a number of extraneous circumstances may have led to the decline in extent or abundance of these resources. This is the situation, for instance, with traditional hunting of wild animals where the populations of these species have declined due to various factors emanating within and outside the community.

It is vital to understand that none of these problems and limitations are an argument against the viability of CCAs as a conservation model. Indeed, there are very many examples (including many given in the following papers), where communities have been able to successfully face these challenges. But this would happen more often if society at large were to provide the support that CCAs urgently need.

What is the way forward for CCAs?

The most important step needed to help CCAs deliver their potential for conservation and livelihood security, is also the most difficult: a shift in thought paradigms. Professionals and practitioners in the 'formal' world of wildlife conservation need to expand their minds to respect the world's oldest conservationists, indigenous peoples and local communities. We need to

Box 2. Traditional CCA authority in Cameroon

Batoufan in western Cameroon is an area controlled by around 100 independent chiefdoms that possess and guard a series of sacred forests through various community-based and secret societies. Many of these forests are of high biodiversity value, and different types of forest possess different cultural and spiritual status for the communities concerned. Access to these sacred forests is strictly controlled by community institutions, but community members can enter either to collect key medicines by sacred healers or through limited annual access, when all community members can enter to harvest a wide range of products. Key dilemmas faced by this community-based conservation model include the diversification of cultural norms due to immigration, which tends to dilute the authority of the customary system, and the conflicting rules between national forest and conservation laws, on the one hand and customary protection measures and spiritual practices on the other (Nelson and Gami 2003).

recognise that CCAs often are not just 'projects' that communities take up, but are very much a way of life, with a grounding in history and tradition, even if many may actually be quite recent. And we also need to convince and lobby governments to provide this respect and recognition.

Specifically, though, and building on the breakthroughs made at the WPC and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (see Box 3), there are a number of measures that are urgently needed at local, national, regional and global levels. All these must emanate from, or be based on the free and prior informed consent of the conserving communities. These include:

1. Documenting and conducting needs assessment of CCAs in each country, involving explanation of the implications of various steps that follow, to relevant communities.
2. Facilitating mapping of CCAs to establish boundaries (where relevant), and claims to territorial and resource rights or custodianship.
3. Providing legal backing, where appropriate, allowing the flexibility to accommodate local contexts.
4. Integrating CCAs into national protected area systems, with recognition of their governing communities as protected area managers, and without interference from government authorities in existing community institutions.
5. Reviving or providing tenurial security and rights (with attendant responsibilities) over lands and waters contained within CCAs, to the conserving communities.
6. Providing CCAs with social recognition, economic and financial support, support to address internal and external threats, conflict resolution mechanisms, institutional and networking support.

Box 3. CCAs in the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas

(For full Programme of Work, many other elements of which are relevant to CCAs, see http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/cross-cutting/protected/wopo.asp)

1.1.4 By 2006, conduct, with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, national-level reviews of existing and potential forms of conservation, and their suitability for achieving biodiversity conservation goals, including innovative types of governance for protected areas that need to be recognised and promoted through legal, policy, financial, institutional and community mechanisms, such as protected areas run by Government agencies at various levels, co-managed protected areas, private protected areas, indigenous and local community conserved areas.

2.1.2 Recognise and promote a broad set of protected area governance types related to their potential for achieving biodiversity conservation goals in accordance with the Convention, which may include areas conserved by indigenous and local communities and private nature reserves. The promotion of these areas should be by legal and/or policy, financial and community mechanisms.

2.1.3 Establish policies and institutional mechanisms with full participation of indigenous and local communities, to facilitate the legal recognition and effective management of indigenous and local community conserved areas in a manner consistent with the goals of conserving both biodiversity and the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.

2.2.4 Promote an enabling environment (legislation, policies, capacities, and resources) for the involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision making, and the development of their capacities and opportunities to establish and manage protected areas, including community-conserved and private protected areas.

2.2.7 Promote, through the Clearing House Mechanism, technical publications and other means, the international sharing of experience on effective mechanisms for stakeholder involvement and governance types in conservation in particular with regard to co-managed protected areas, indigenous and local community conserved areas and private protected areas.

7. Re-orienting development priorities and processes, to avoid imposing destructive or damaging projects on CCAs and their managing communities.
8. Facilitating the resolution of internal inequities, especially to enable weaker sections to take part in decisions and sharing of benefits.
9. Building ecological and social monitoring systems to assess the successes and failures of CCAs.
10. Building community capacity of various kinds, including technical, financial, managerial, and legal, to enable better support of CCAs.

Box 4. CCAs and World Heritage – opportunity or impracticality?

The recognition of CCAs as valid entities for conservation by the Convention on Biological Diversity, has opened up the possibility for their inclusion in international conservation regimes. Accordingly, the suitability of the World Heritage regime for CCAs should be considered.

The core idea of UNESCO's 1972 **World Heritage Convention** (WHC) is to declare exceptional cultural and natural sites of the world as heritage of humankind. In 1992, the introduction of the cultural landscapes category testified to the long and intimate relationship between people and their natural environment. Such landscapes have a lot in common with CCAs. Both types are associated in the minds of their inhabitants with powerful belief systems and are part of the identity of indigenous and local communities. Their traditional knowledge, regulatory customs and sustainable lifestyles are highly significant for biodiversity preservation.

CCAs could therefore help to fill the recently identified regional gaps (under-representation of sites in the developing world) and thematic gaps (all living cultures) of the World Heritage List (ICOMOS 2004). CCAs could qualify for World Heritage status, provided that the Convention's requirements of outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity are fulfilled.

However, the WHC is an agreement among sovereign nation-states whose governments sign the Convention and incorporate it into their domestic legal system. Thus the WHC does not allow designation of sites independent of the governments' nomination process. But because State Parties are encouraged to prepare their tentative WH lists with the participation of local and regional governments and local communities, indigenous and local communities may have the liberty to strive for inclusion of their areas on these lists.

Direct applications from CCAs as World Heritage sites by relevant communities or NGOs, is not yet desired by UNESCO, although this would make sense especially for transboundary areas inhabited by mobile pastoral peoples, as is the case in Scandinavia with the Saami people, or for territories independently run by indigenous peoples, for instance the Inuit governed North-Canadian territory of Nunavut or the Danish autonomous region of Greenland. In the light of the increasing indigenous demands for rights and recognition, the World Heritage Committee should rethink its state-restricted formal nomination procedure.

The types of World Heritage site management vary considerable depending on the characteristics of the site and the respective national political and legal system. Government management is the most common, though there are also examples of joint-management such as the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Landscape or Kakadu National Park in Australia.

However, there is nothing in the WHC that specifies that a World Heritage site must be governmentally managed. Once a site is on the List, the Committee concentrates on whether it is conserved properly. Officially, it would require only a small step from joint-management where authority and responsibility are shared with government agencies, to CCAs where the power rests with those communities. This is, however, dependent on the willingness of the respective states to grant those communities territorial rights, resources and political autonomy, and to enter into a respectful dialogue between equal partners. Once the CCA governance type became integrated into conventional conservation systems, it would require states which are able to move away from rigid state-centred policies, to pursue political and legal pluralism as well as to promote more multilayered and context-sensitive conservation systems.

11. Involving CCA representatives, chosen by the relevant communities, in larger level conservation initiatives, including decision-making at landscape, subnational and national levels.
12. Facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and personnel relating to CCAs, especially exchange of community members themselves.
13. Integrating CCAs into various international regimes, including the UN List of Protected Areas and the Global Database on Protected Areas, as well as treaties such as Ramsar and World Heritage (see Box 4).

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Indigenous protected areas in Australia

DERMOT SMYTH

In the mid-1990s the Australian Government launched a programme to support indigenous land holders to voluntarily declare and manage their land as indigenous protected areas (IPAs). The programme was devised to help Australia meet its goal of establishing a comprehensive protected area system that incorporates environments within all bioregions, some of which only occur on indigenous-owned land. There are now 20 IPAs across Australia, comprising about 20% of Australia's terrestrial protected area estate.

The IPA programme provides funding for various activities: to enable indigenous landholders to hold consultation meetings and seek independent advice to consider an IPA declaration over their land, to develop management plans if such a declaration is made, and to support implementation of the plan.

State conservation agencies are currently reluctant to include IPAs in their registers of protected areas because IPAs are not dedicated to conservation in perpetuity under legislation. Nevertheless, all declared IPAs are consistent with IUCN's definition of a protected area, and they are proving to be a suitable mechanism for some indigenous groups to manage the natural and cultural values of their land, while making a significant contribution to Australia's National Reserve System.

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS (IPAs) in Australia are areas of land (sometimes also including coastal water) voluntarily declared as protected areas by the indigenous people who are the custodians and managers of the area. The first IPA was declared at Nantawarrina in South Australia in 1998. Since that time, 64% of all new protected areas in Australia have been IPAs, which now comprise about 20% of the terrestrial protected area estate across the country. IPAs are established and managed in accordance with IUCN protected area guidelines, and are provided with funding and other support by the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Heritage; in some instances IPA management is also supported by State or Territory conservation agencies[1]. This paper summarises the history and stages in development of IPAs, and considers challenges for their long term future.

Background

In 1992 the Australian Government made a commitment to establish a 'comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas for Australia', with the aim of ensuring that all ecosystems were adequately represented in protected areas. An ecological mapping process known as the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia, identified a total of 85 bioregions across Australia, all of which were to be represented in protected areas through a nationally co-ordinated program called the National Reserve System. It was quickly recognised that some of the identified bioregions occur only on land owned and managed by indigenous communities or organisations, particularly in central and northern Australia. This provided an incentive to develop a new approach to establishing protected areas – one which did not require indigenous people to give up ownership and management of their land.

The concept of what has become known as 'indigenous protected areas' was explored through several research and consultative processes, which are described in detail in Smyth and Sutherland (1995), Thackway *et al*. (1996) and Szabo and Smyth (2003). Initial discussions with indigenous landholders and organisations indicated that they were cautiously interested in exploring the concept of IPAs further. Meanwhile, a review of Australian legislation indicated that there were no legal barriers to implementing the IPA concept across Australia (Sutherland 1995).

1. Australia is governed as a federation of six States and two Territories (formerly separate British colonies) and most national parks and other protected areas are managed by State and Territory government conservation agencies.

Another key process was an examination of the IUCN *Guidelines for Protected Area Categories* (CNPPA/WCMC 1994) to determine whether the IPA concept was consistent with agreed international principles for protected areas, as required by Australia's National Reserve System. The examination revealed that the IUCN *Guideline*s did indeed contain the flexibility of vision to accommodate all the important features of IPAs. IUCN's definition of a protected area is:
"*An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity* ***and associated cultural resources****, and managed through legal* ***or other effective means.***"

The reference to '*cultural resources*' recognises the importance of indigenous cultural values associated with land, sea and biodiversity. The reference to '*other effective means*' provides the opportunity to declare and manage protected areas outside the normal legislative arrangements under which government-managed protected areas are established.

Other aspects of the IUCN *Guideline*s that supported the establishment of IPAs include:

- Management of protected areas may rest with '*central, regional or local government, non-government organisations, the private sector or the local community*'.
- The primary objective of a protected area is determined by '*national legislation or similar effective means, such as customary agreements or the declared objectives of a non-government organisation*'.
- Management objectives and constraints for most of the IUCN protected area categories provide for the sustainable use of natural resources by indigenous peoples.
- The potential role of indigenous communities as managers is specified in the description of several protected area categories. However, the descriptions for all categories, except Category 1 (Strict Nature Reserves and Wilderness Areas), envisage the potential for management by '*a local organisation or community*', which could be an indigenous community.

Anindilyakwa IPA rangers weighing 'ghost nets' (discarded fishing nets from foreign fishing vessels that threaten marine turtles and other wildlife in Australian waters). Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt archipelago) was declared as an IPA in June 2006. Photo: Anindilyakwa Land Council.

The following definition of an IPA was developed by indigenous delegates at a national workshop in 1997:

An indigenous protected area is governed by the continuing responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to care for and protect lands and waters for present and future generations. Indigenous protected areas may include areas of land and waters over which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are custodians, and which shall be managed for cultural biodiversity and conservation, permitting customary sustainable resource use and sharing of benefit.

Implementation of the IPA Programme

Utilising funding provided to expand the National Reserve System, the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Heritage developed an IPA funding programme that enables indigenous communities or landowning groups to take a stage-wise approach to considering and declaring IPAs.

Stage 1: Consideration of the IPA concept

Indigenous landowners consider the viability and desirability of establishing an IPA. This may include seeking advice on the legal, cultural heritage or conservation aspects of the proposed IPA to inform decision-making. Typically funds are provided to enable landowners to visit an existing IPA, to discuss the concept with other indigenous people. Community meetings are held and information is provided on a range of issues, such as IUCN protected area categories, the level of funding and other support for IPA management, training and employment requirements.

The constraints imposed by establishing an IPA are also considered during this stage. Potential constraints include limitation of economic development to activities that are consistent with the biodiversity and associated cultural values for which the IPA is declared, and requirements to meet management and reporting commitments made in funding contracts with the Australian Government.

Stage 2: Development of a management plan

This stage includes more detailed community consultation about requirements for managing particular areas, species, values or other issues. Expertise from government conservation agencies, neighbours and others is engaged during this process. The final product is a Management Plan endorsed by the indigenous landowners, which reflects their long-term aspirations for their country and contains management actions for the next five to seven years. Each plan also identifies the IUCN protected area category or categories which best reflect the management objectives of the area.

Stage 3: Declaration of an IPA

Declaration takes the form of a public announcement of the intention to manage land as an indigenous protected area according to the management plan and specified IUCN protected area category or categories. The landowners formally write to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage to register the details of their property on the Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database (CAPAD), which includes all protected areas constituting the National Reserve System.

Stage 4: Implementation of the management plan

IPA management is implemented through on-ground works as specified in the Management Plan, such as putting into place weed and feral animal controls, cultural and natural heritage conservation activities or the establishment of infrastructure to manage visitor access. IPA managers continue to access annual funding for these purposes through the IPA programme.

Inspecting revegetation work on Badger Island IPA, Tasmania. Photo: Ivan Haskovec.

Stage 5: Monitoring

The IPA managers, in consultation with other agencies, monitor the implementation of activities under the Management Plan and the effectiveness of the on-ground works. Monitoring mechanisms are identified in the Management Plan and focus on the condition and trends of the natural and cultural resources in the IPA. Monitoring results are used to adjust management activities to increase their efficiency and to contribute towards the development of future Management Plans.

Funding

Funding is based on budgets developed to implement the Management Plan, and is negotiated each year with the Department of the Environment and Heritage. It is typically about AUS$100,000 (US$74,000) per year per IPA. State or Territory government conservation agencies may also provide funding, training or other support to assist with the implementation of the IPA Management Plan.

IPA budgets are supplemented by funding from the Australian Government's Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP) which enables unemployed indigenous people to undertake paid employment for two days per week. Other funding sources include income from commercial activities within the IPA (such as cultural tourism or recreational fishing) or grants from government agencies or NGOs to undertake specific natural or cultural resource management projects.

Contribution of IPAs to the National Reserve System

Twenty IPAs, comprising a total land area of approximately 14 million ha, have been declared and added to the National Reserve System since 1988. This represents about 64% of the land area added to the National Reserve System over the same period, even though only about 17.5% National Reserve System programme funding has been allocated to establishment and management of IPAs. This high return on investment has occurred because funding is not required to purchase IPAs, which remain in indigenous ownership. By contrast, other protected areas added to the National Reserve System over the last decade have required large funding allocations for the purchase of land. Taking into account all the national parks and other

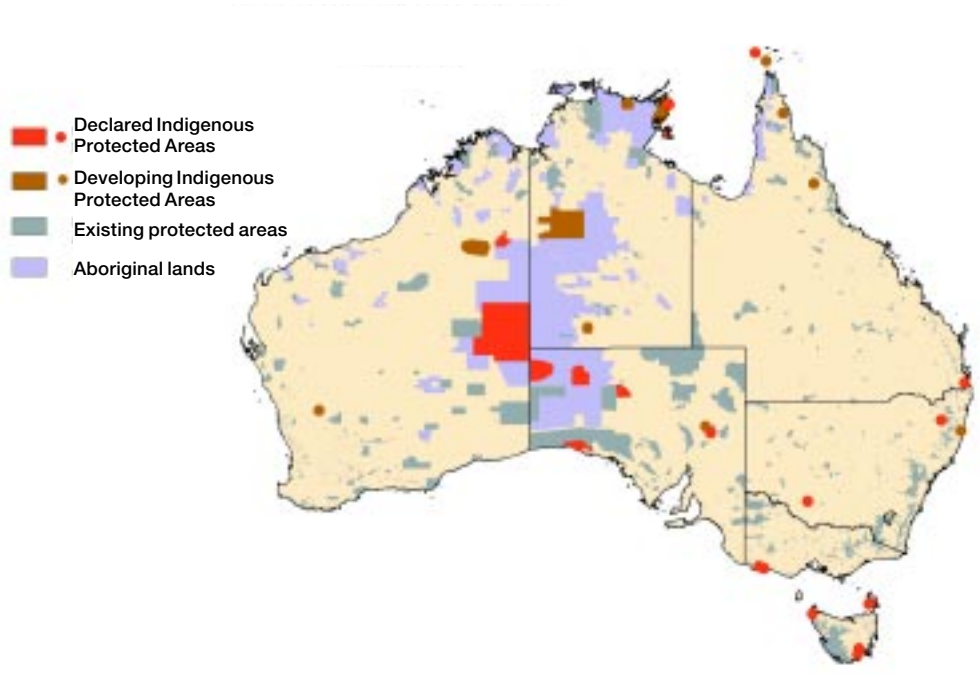
terrestrial protected areas in Australia, including those established over the last decade, IPAs now comprise about 20% of the total protected area estate in Australia. The declaration of IPAs has also enabled some Australian bioregions to be included in the National Reserve System for the first time.

Where are the indigenous protected areas located?

The location of IPAs in part reflects the legacies and opportunities for indigenous people that resulted from the differing colonial and post-colonial histories of the separate Australian States and Territories. Indigenous groups in the north and centre of Australia have maintained or been granted ownership of large areas of land, some of which have now become IPAs. However, through various land claim and land granting processes over the last 30 years, indigenous groups own some parcels of land throughout Australia and there are now declared IPAs in each State and Territory, with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory where the local indigenous people are involved in the management of the government-run Namadgi National Park.

The 20 declared IPAs comprise a diversity of environments across Australia, including deserts, forests, grasslands, coastal environments and islands. Several coastal and island IPAs also include the adjacent marine areas or 'sea country', though the management of marine components of IPAs raises complex jurisdictional issues (see discussion below). The distribution of current and pending IPAs is shown in Figure 1. Further details of each of the declared IPAs and other aspects of the IPA programme are available at: www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/ipa.

Figure 1. *Map of Indigenous Protected Areas declared and under consideration in Australia, June 2006.*



Discussion

Over a relatively short period, IPAs have substantially increased the protected area estate in Australia. IPAs also provide a mechanism for indigenous groups to strengthen or re-establish management of their traditional lands with the support of government conservation agencies, but without the loss of indigenous control experienced in co-managed protected areas (Smyth 2001). On the other hand, IPAs lack long-term security of funding and typically struggle to offer the full-time employment and career structures provided in protected areas managed by government agencies.

At national meetings held in 2003 and 2005, IPA managers reported that establishing IPAs has yielded cultural, education, health, employment and other social benefits in addition to the environmental management outcomes. These social benefits include:

- providing opportunities for elders and other Traditional Owners to return to their traditional country, often after long absences;
- involving school children in IPA field trips, transferring knowledge between generations and strengthening languages;
- re-establishing traditional burning practices, maintaining waterholes and looking after cultural sites;
- providing training and employment in managing country; and
- promoting economic opportunities consistent with the IPA values (such as cultural tourism and a commercial wind farm).

The IPA programme's own monitoring processes[2] have shown that:

- 95% of IPAs report benefits for economic participation and development from their IPAs;
- 85% of IPAs report that IPA activities improve early school engagement;
- 74% of IPAs report that their IPA management activities make a positive contribution to the reduction of substance abuse; and
- 74% of IPA communities report that their participation in IPA work results in more functional families by restoring relationships and reinforcing family and community structures.

The Australian Government's IPA programme is currently under review, but it is anticipated that annual funding for IPAs will be maintained or increased beyond its current level of about AUS$3 million (US$2.2 million) per year and that the number of IPAs will continue to increase. In addition to the ongoing level of Australian Government funding, a key issue for the future of IPAs is the extent to which they gain recognition and support from State and Territory governments. Although all declared IPAs are consistent with IUCN's definition of a protected area, some State conservation agencies are currently reluctant to include IPAs in their registers of protected areas because IPAs are not dedicated to conservation in perpetuity under legislation. In response to this scepticism, one of the challenges for IPA managers is to decide whether or not to enter into legally binding conservation agreements, such as attaching conservation covenants to land titles, as a means of demonstrating indigenous peoples' commitment to conservation.

Another matter for future consideration by IPA managers and government agencies is the extent to which the IPA concept can apply to marine areas. Currently marine areas are only included in an IPA if the indigenous people have some acknowledged authority to manage the area, such as where there are registered marine sacred sites (e.g. the Dhimurru IPA in the Northern Territory). This is a matter of some urgency as State and Territory governments are

2. The IPA programme monitoring and evaluation framework is tracking outcomes from IPAs across the Strategic Areas for Action on Indigenous Disadvantage identified by the Australian Government's Productivity Commission (www.pc.gov.au).

committed to establishing systems of marine protected areas in their coastal waters. For indigenous people who view their traditional coastal land and water holistically, the separation of land and sea into terrestrial and marine protected areas is contrary to cultural beliefs and responsibilities. However, whereas indigenous people can manage their terrestrial IPAs on the basis of their legal rights as landholders, their rights over their traditional marine areas, when recognised at all, are viewed by Australian law as non-exclusive. Indigenous management of marine components of IPAs will therefore require negotiation with governments and other marine stakeholders.

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parks

Community conservation areas in Central America: recognising them for equity and good governance

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Mesoamerica is an ecological bridge-filter between North and South America with unique flora and fauna, and a heterogeneous geomorphology running from coastal areas to over 4,000 metres above sea level (a.s.l). It has over 100 ethnic groups who still face social, economic and legal marginalisation. From the 1990s, international and regional meetings have addressed the need to recognise these values of the region, and the indigenous peoples' land rights and access to their natural resources. Moreover, the dilemma of biodiversity conservation versus human interests in conventional protected area strategies has emerged sharply, becoming a major topic for discussion at the Second Mesoamerican Congress on Protected Areas recently held in Panama City. This paper provides examples of progress made in community-based conservation in Panamá, Honduras and Nicaragua, and establishes the need for the governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and indigenous peoples to work on concrete agreements and policies for good governance relating to conservation.

MOST OF THE PLANET'S biological diversity is located in the tropical countries, primarily on indigenous territories. Although the indigenous people inhabiting these lands and their traditional rights are being ignored, the fact is that 'biodiversity' is well known by them, and they have the customs or statutory rights to use and conserve it, as well as to protect their territorial rights.

Biological and cultural diversity in Mesoamerica

Mesoamerica,[1] due to its geographic location as an ecological bridge between North and South America, has developed a globally important natural heritage, with heterogeneous geomorphology running from the coast to 4,000 metres a.s.l., and 22 eco-regions including forests, savannahs, reefs and other marine and coastal ecosystems.

The region also has a significant cultural heritage. The first human footprints appeared within what is currently the Central American isthmus and southern Mexico around 18,000 years ago[2]. They established themselves and spread out, adapting to the region's diverse ecosystems. They spoke at least 62 different languages and showed a variety of cultural formations that ran from small gatherer tribes to the complex Mayan civilization (from www.tierrasnativas.org).

Currently reduced by 90%, the 100 or more ethnic groups that are spread out across indigenous lands continue to be marginalised by official governments through processes where their traditional lands are occupied, colonised and privatised. This is in addition to social, economic and legal marginalisation, caused by governments ignoring their rights.

Despite this, the Mesoamerican region has major original populations, who retain ways of relating to and conserving natural resources. This is based on an indigenous world vision of agriculture and maintenance of community conservation areas (CCAs), that have survived the disastrous impact caused by colonisation.

With the signing of Agreement 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the 1990s, there was a beginning, at least formally, to recognise the right to their lands and access to their natural resources. The countries with the greatest cultural diversity (Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras) have established different legal means for recognition (see Boxes 1–3, over).

1. Mesoamerica includes five states in southern Mexico (the Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco and Chiapas) and the seven Central American countries: Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.
2. Some recent discoveries have been made that place their appearance at 40,000 years ago in Mexico.

Toward good governance

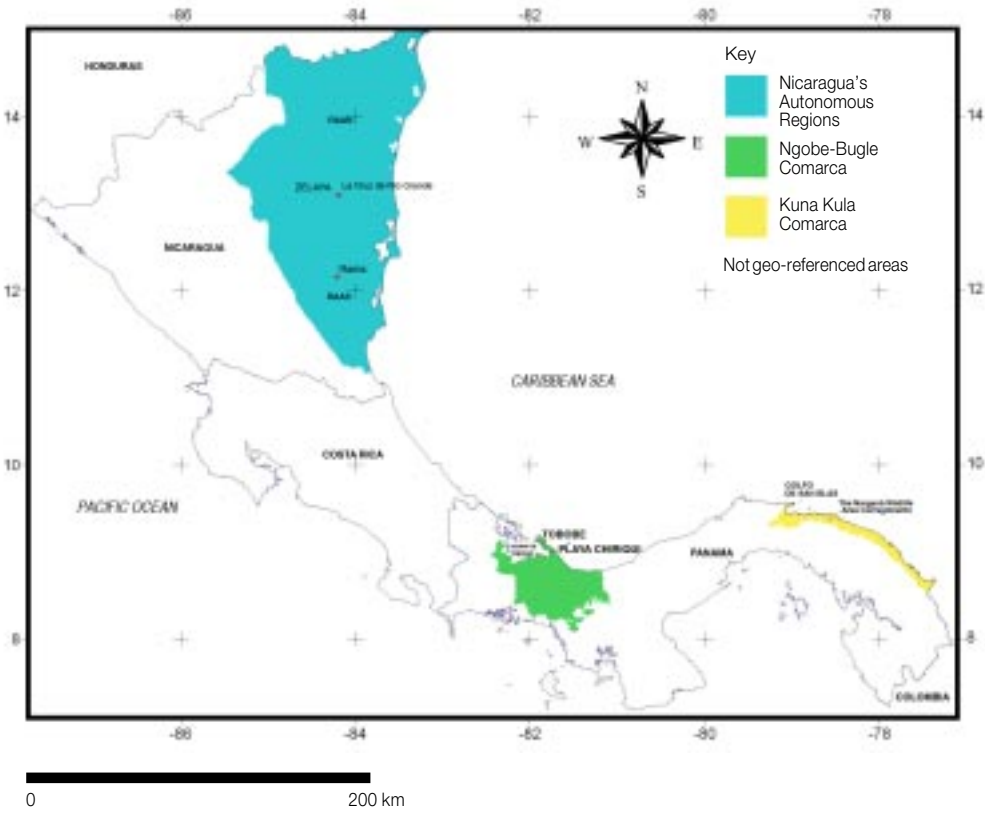
The IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban 2003), asked governments to recognise the different forms of governance in conserving protected areas (governmental, co-management, private, and CCAs). Recognising these areas' cultural and biological value is the corner stone for the region's socio-economic development. As in other parts of the world, Central American CCAs currently provide:

- conservation of critical ecosystems and species in danger of extinction;
- features critical to the cultural and economic survival of millions of people;
- valuable lessons about the different forms of governance, participation and equity; and
- an opportunity for indigenous people and local communities to resist types of development that they consider to be alienating to their culture, and to vindicate their territorial rights.

Conventionally, protected areas in Mesoamerica have upheld governmental and private models, where in most cases there is social exclusion of indigenous people or local communities.

As mentioned in several documents (Campbell undated; McCarthy and Salas 1998; CCAD 2002; WRI 1998; Mack 1994; CCAD and IUCN 1996) from the Central American Commission on the Environment and Development (CCAD in Spanish), despite not having any sort of progressive policies, the number of protected areas established has more than doubled in the last 30 years. Nevertheless, scientists and technical people have published warnings, as early as 10 years ago, saying that even though they may have legal status, in reality the areas are only protected on paper.

Figure 1. *Map of community conserved areas in Central America.* Source: Marion Fonseca Borras and Eugenie Murillo Rojas.



When the Mesoamerican governments showed an interest in beginning a regional process to consolidate the national protected area systems and biological corridors, the dilemma about biodiversity living side by side with human beings was back on the table. At the Second Mesoamerican Congress on Protected Areas, held recently in Panama City, discussions on citizen participation, poverty, and the need to recognise the different forms of governance (including CCAs) reaffirmed the move towards more participatory paradigms.

At this Congress the suggestion of a new regional policy called the 'proposal for a Central American policy on shared protected area management' was noteworthy. This effort reflects some level of political commitment to making progress, even though it is still far from ensuring and effectively recognising community rights and their contribution to biodiversity conservation (www.ccad.ws).

Based on our experience, there is an urgent need for the following:

- The communities in these CCAs and other biologically important areas need their lands and access rights to be recognised.
- Awareness of indigenous and traditional cultures must be incorporated into protected area management. Conservation that excludes people is much more burdensome in monetary terms and with regard to social stability, making it more difficult to sustain the region's economies in the long run.
- Biodiversity conservation should be carried out using a broader ecosystem approach where trans-border efforts and diverse agricultural development systems are included as a basis for the people's food sovereignty.
- Tourism's role should be analysed in depth so it can help strengthen fundamental human rights and so its economic potential can benefit the most marginalised peoples.

Some examples in the region might provide a good start for putting into practice some of these ideas (see Boxes 1, 2 and 3).

Box 1. The Ngobe-Bugle Comarca, Panamá

Within the Comarca Ngobe-Buglé region in Panamá, are very important examples of the links between biological and cultural resources. This includes the Playa Chiriquí, historically considered the most important Caribbean nesting site for the Carey turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*. This region also possesses biodiversity rich lagoons and mangroves.

Panamá's legal system allows the creation of *Comarcas* (precincts), in recognition of the right of indigenous people over their lands, their natural resources and traditional land organisation structure and management.

Governing and managing the *Comarca* is in the care of the traditional authorities. The main decision-making body is the General Comarca Congress, an organisation that encompasses the local congresses and the administrative authorities (mayor and rector), who share authority and decision making. Within this territory, private appropriation of land is prohibited. Only existing titles and the ownership rights given by the National Direction certificates coming from the Agrarian Reform are recognised. In the case of land for sale, priority for buying the land must be given to the *Comarca*.

Within this *Comarca* structure, the General Congress is the supreme decision making body. The local congresses are mandated to conserve and strengthen the traditions, language, culture, unity and integrity of the inhabitants, for economic and social development. The highest traditional authority of the *Comarca* is the high chief (*cacique general*), elected by the General Congress through popular vote for a six-year period. Similarly, regional and local chiefs are elected by the regional and local congresses.

Source: Solis* et al. *2005

The Escudo de Veraguas in the Ngobe Buglé Comarca, Panama. Photo: Coope SoliDar R.L.

Box 2. Nicaragua's autonomous regions

Nicaragua's autonomous regions occupy 500 km of Nicaragua's Caribbean coast, some 43% of the Nicaraguan territory, and are divided into two regions: the Región Autónoma del Atlántico (the Atlantic Autonomous Region) and the Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte (the North Atlantic Autonomous Region).

These regions are inhabited by Miskitos, Mayangnas-Sumos, Ramas, Garifunas, mestizos, and creoles, with about 200,000 people in 299 communities, of which 199 are indigenous.

This extensive region is still mostly covered with natural forests, has a high relative humidity, and is watered by rivers running to the Caribbean. Close to the sea there are large wetlands that contribute to maintaining a complex ecological system.

These autonomous regions are governed by a regional council, made up of 45 community representatives, that coexists with municipal and community authorities.

The Autonomy Act, 1987, opened up the possibility to legally grant ownership of the traditionally occupied lands; however, the lack of regulation and land delimitation gave rise to the case being taken to the Interamerican Human Rights Court, which found in favour of the Mayangna people.

The Mayangnas use the land and natural resources based on traditional practices 'so they are always there'. The land is divided into three zones, running from intensive use to conservation areas, further divided into areas that range from some use to absolute protection.

Source: Law no. 28, 1987; Ortega 1996; MARENA-PANIF 1999

Box 3. The Narganá Wildlife Area Corregimiento, Panama

Geodisio Castillo

The autonomously managed Kuna Yala Comarca (precinct) is made up of four *corregimientos* (a political division in Panama). The founding law establishes that they should have their own protected areas, which is the case of the Narganá Wildlife Area Corregimiento, created in 1987 by a resolution of the Kuna General Congress (KGC).[3] The goal of the Kuna Yala Comarca's General Management and Development Plan is to declare the whole Comarca to be in a biosphere management category that in its first phase covers the Narganá Corregimiento, with approximately 253,435 ha of land and sea. Zoning is established based on traditional thinking about how to use the land, which has been in practice since the middle of the 19th century. The management zones are: *neg serret* (natural zone), cultural land and sea zone, special use zone, recovery zone, and buffer zone. In November 2005, the KGC also declared the island of *Gaigirgordup* as a sea turtle and coral reef protected site, located within the Narganá Corregimiento or SA.

The Narganá SA is managed by the KGC using the judgment and primary assertion in *duigua negssed* (joint determination of our own fate), a sort of *shared self-management* among the communities in an *adaptive* fashion. A second assertion is that the people are bound to their natural resources in a friendly fashion – this continues to be a strong force for identity, culture, and functional norms.

With these joint actions, the Kuna people ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, and are aware that this is the only way to maintain social stability, as well as clear ownership of rights and responsibilities governing the land, resources, and traditional knowledge.

3. The Narganá SA, with an area of about 100,000 ha (excluding the buffer zones) of land and sea was declared on 2 August 1994, by the Board of Directors of the National Renewable Natural Recourse Institute (INRENARE in Spanish), through decision J.D. No. 022-94, thus becoming part of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP; Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas).

The way forward

To open up opportunities for the region's CCAs and indigenous peoples, the Central American countries should consider the following proposals:

- The governments, with the support of NGOs and the indigenous people themselves, should define and reach an agreement on policies on key areas for sustainable management. Based on years of experience, these stakeholders are in a position to define the best options in the national and regional settings.
- By mutual agreement, the holders of protected lands should be provided with concrete support in mapping and planning their territories, using the best practices available. Appropriate attention should be paid to legal issues. In many cases, people need to be trained, and should receive external support (see Box 4).
- A review is needed of the legal framework, which is insufficient and does not have any effective interpretation and implementation tools. Agreement 169 of ILO provides excellent instruments that should be carefully examined for application. Likewise, it may be necessary to strengthen the governmental system to promote constructive enforcement of the existing legal framework.

In general, the opportunities and challenges facing the CCAs in the Central American region may be summarised into the following points:

- A national/regional policy on participatory management must be based on conceptual support and an integrated approach enhancing information exchange between the global and local levels. Different forms of governance including CCAs should be advocated, while addressing the larger challenge of poverty. This approach is essential in relation to equity and benefit distribution.

- CCAs should be inter-sectorial benefit tools; they are conservation and well-being indicators for local communities. Benefits could be measured in terms of health, education and other areas of socio-political concern. This could involve support from other sectors and more relevance in national politics.
- Establishing indicators may prove that this governance model is much more efficient in relation to costs/benefits compared with other forms that only show the responsibility of a sector such as the state. Their start-up costs are often higher, but the benefits absorb the monetary concerns over the long term. This approach also bolsters external aid.
- There is a need to develop a social strengthening approach, going beyond biology and conservation issues, encouraging access to the years of experience in the development, agricultural, co-operative, and other sectors.
- There is a need to integrate these initiatives into the indigenous peoples' life plan, recognising their power in making decisions about their lands.
- The political-legal framework relating to the region's lands and cultural diversity, should be recognised as part of a multi-cultural nation-state, as a principle underlying fundamental human rights.

Box 4. Ethnic mapping in Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua

At the beginning of 1990, the Honduran Miskito indigenous communities and the indigenous communities in the Darien area of Panama prepared maps of their lands and traditional resources, using appropriate technical support. They have used these maps in their own planning efforts and, in some cases, to legally defend themselves or to gain access to legal property titles. Recently, diverse organisations have supported the Mayangnan and Miskitos in the Nicaraguan region of Bosawas in creating their own maps and documenting their co-management areas.

Source: Chapin and Threlkeld 2001

Doña Angela sings in traditional language (Gnobe-Buglé) for the presentation of the children, at Rio Cana village, Panama. Photo: Coope SoliDar R.L.

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parks

Community conserved areas in the Horn of Africa

MARCO BASSI

The Horn of Africa holds an extraordinary mosaic of diverse peoples and subgroups. In their interaction with the environment several have developed cultural features and indigenous governance mechanisms to assure the sustainable use of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity.

In this region indigenous conservation is often totally informal and unrecognised. It is in great jeopardy, but still constitutes an extraordinary conservation asset in a context where conventional approaches are failing to achieve relevant results. Applying a community conserved areas (CCAs) approach here mainly means recognising, supporting, valorising and formalising indigenous (or customary) governance and customary tenure systems based on common property. Unfortunately collective rights are hardly recognised in the legislation of these countries.

Using the case of the Borana conserved landscape, the paper illustrates the mechanisms of indigenous conservation and the current challenges. It also accounts for some interesting initiatives that have helped to valorise indigenous conservation even in the absence of specific country-level policies favouring CCAs.

CONSERVATION POLICIES in the Horn of Africa have long been characterised by a strong top-down approach. Concern about the efficacy of the conventional approach to conservation, along with consideration for issues of equity and participation from the late 1980s (Barrow *et al*. 2001; Rutten 2002), have not yet produced significant results. Local communities are still legally denied access to national parks, are excluded from their management and are marginal to sharing benefits (Beltràn 2000; Bassi 2003).

The Horn of Africa holds an extraordinary mosaic of diverse ethnic groups. In countries such as Ethiopia, where formal protected areas are so ineffective, or in Somalia, Eritrea and southern Sudan, where protracted civil wars diminished the State's role in protecting biodiversity, valuable biodiversity still exists in harmony with livelihoods and cultural needs. Communities that for centuries lived in a certain territory, or perceived themselves as more or less permanently associated to it, have a simple reason to care about the sustainable use of natural resources: the need to survive and to assure the group's reproduction. The long-term survival of the group must be combined with the immediate need of the productive units to gain access to the natural resources for their livelihoods. Over time the natural landscape is shaped by ecologically compatible human action, while culture develops in association with the modified environment and the need to preserve key resources[1]. The interaction with the environment thus determines the definition of groupings co-operating in productive activities, and defines norms of access to and exclusion from natural resources.

We can identify a dominant ethnic group or nation in this region who share not only a mother language but also values and beliefs, rituals, norms, procedures, political models and, of course, a territory. The size of these communities may vary from a few thousand individuals (for example the small linguistic groups in South-Omo in Ethiopia) to 30–40 million in the case of the Oromo of Ethiopia and Kenya, the largest nation in the Horn of Africa. The largest groups are clearly highly segmented, and their governance of natural resources makes sense only at a lower level, such as the Somali clans or lineages, or the localised Oromo identities of the Borana and Karayu pastoralists. It is especially at the level of such 'ethnic groups', 'tribes', or Somali 'clans', that specific devices such as norms on circulation of people and access to resources, decision-making councils, rituals and myths are elaborated in association with the environment.

1. The positive link between natural resources and livelihoods has been especially recognised for pastoralism, a key ecological factor for the growth and survival of large and diverse wildlife (Berger 1993: 23–4).

Indigenous conservation – defined as the direct or indirect action of environmental conservation based on culture and a collective identity – is often totally informal and unrecognised in the Horn of Africa. It survives, but is in great jeopardy. Of course, not all localised cultures are equally effective from the point of view of biodiversity conservation. But in contexts where we can clearly identify environmentally friendly patterns of resource use and where associated biodiversity is conserved, it is possible to link global biodiversity goals with the values and practices of the local and indigenous communities, respecting the basic principles of equity and building on local cultural notions and models. In this region, CCAs still constitute an extraordinary conservation asset in a context where conventional approaches are failing to achieve conservation results.

Applying a CCA approach here mainly means recognising, supporting, valorising and formalising indigenous (or customary) governance and customary tenure systems based on common property. Unfortunately collective rights are hardly recognised in the legislation of the countries in this region. Collective rights are sometimes implicitly considered as a secondary claim in some sectoral law or policy document, usually under the heading of 'community' or 'local community'. However, the concept of 'community' or 'local community', lacking any reference to the environment-specific cultural elements, is too broad for indigenous conservation to have meaning.

Figure 1. *Location of community conserved areas mentioned in this paper.*

The Borana conserved landscape

The Borana-Oromo, a pastoral group of about 400,000 people living in Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya, provides a model case study of a threatened community conserved landscape. It includes diverse ecological zones and a variety of key natural and human-modified resources. Different resources are subject to differential access rules, but all are fundamentally conceived as strongly complementary and as an indivisible heritage of the whole ethnic community, that contribute to the viability of the pastoral system. The Borana conserved landscape, very effective until the late 1970s, includes open rangelands, traditional wells (*eela*), the three largest juniper forests (*baddaa sadeen*) and other scattered patches of forest, three volcanic lakes and correlated hydro-geological systems (*boqee*), and ceremonial grounds (*ardhaa jilaa*). It hosts several species of birds with highly restricted ranges (Borghesio and Giannetti 2005; EWNHS 1996; Borghesio 1997).

The sound management of the rangeland is promoted through norms of inclusion/exclusion designed for pastoral activity and known as *seera marraa bisanii* – 'the law of grass and water', which shares the basic principles of most East African pastoral groups. It requires maximising the use of wet-season pasture (with good grass but only accessible during rains) whenever possible, to minimise pressure on the most intensely utilised rangelands served by permanent water points.

The 'law of water' also imposes rules regarding traditional wells (*eela*), gathered in the localities where the aquifer can be reached. Nine of these well complexes – the *tulaa sallan* – have a special ritual and symbolic relevance, for the particular qualities of the water and the surrounding environment. The wells have differential norms regulating the investment required for digging and rights of access, providing for priority to clans and families that have actually

Site of traditional wells in the vicinity of a volcanic lake; the wells are marked by lines on the ground. Photo: Marco Bassi.

Crater lake producing minerals for livestock (and wildlife) consumption. Photo: Marco Bassi.

invested in it, but also a limited quota for outsiders, including members of other ethnic groups and wildlife (Bassi 2005: 10–12 and 145–163; Gufu Oba 1998: 19–36). There are also special provisions to ban any permanent or temporary human settlement in the vicinity of the wells. Thus, the 'law of water' ensures sustainable use of water and other resources.

The *baddaa sadeen* are three dry evergreen forests with juniper *Juniper procera*. While being too humid for permanent pastoral settlement, some open patches contain excellent dry-season pasture and permanent springs. The forests have an important function as last refuge for grazing in case of drought, and are a reserve for medical and ritual plants. They were never subjected to special management provisions, with the exclusion of a very strict prohibition to start fires inside them, but have a high symbolic value (Boku Tache, pers. comm.).

The *booqee sadeen* are three volcano craters, providing different salts and high quality water for both humans and cattle. Access by the community is regulated in accordance to a balance between customary and statutory laws, the latter imposing a tax on salt extracted by the local community. When the government announced in national newspapers a public bid for their industrial mining, the entire community mobilised and managed to conserve the customary use, and therefore the conservation values, of the *booqee*.

Borana governance is built around the highly complex *gadaa* system of generation classes (Asmarom Legesse 1973). Every eight years a new generation class, represented by elected leaders from the major clan divisions, takes the leadership of the *yaa'a*, the mobile ritual villages of the Borana, and perform a number of national ceremonies in different sacred sites scattered over the landscape. Most *gadaa* rituals are performed in the shade of a Sycomoro (*Ficus sycomorus* – vernacular: *odaa*) tree. The tree and the surrounding area, known as *ardaa jilaa*, are fully protected and should be maintained in a pure natural state (Taddesse Berisso 1995). The representatives of the *gadaa* generation class also have the responsibility to organise once in eight years the Gumi Gayoo, the month-long general assembly of the Borana, an event involving thousands of people in democratic debates. The assembly also serves as supreme court of the Borana and the legislative body (Bassi 2005).

From the mid-1970s onwards the Borana environment has been confronted with major land use changes. The socialist government limited mobility within the ethnic territory and promoted agriculture. The situation degenerated further after the change of government in 1991 followed

by the political marginalisation of the Borana. UN-backed returnee programmes and other development initiatives supported by international funds meant that entire portions of Borana territory, were entrusted to neighbouring groups. Large ranches were acquired by international investors and extensive portions of critical dry-season pastures were assigned to town dwellers and to non-Borana immigrants for cultivation. Since common property and indigenous land rights are not recognised in Ethiopia, the Borana's territory has been treated like 'no-man's land', to be assigned to whoever claimed it. The Borana have been squeezed into the driest pockets where their grazing land was bound to deteriorate, and deprived of their drought grazing reserves (Gufu Oba 1998: 62–63 and 75–6). The only possible survival strategy for the Borana has been to engage in farming in the remaining places, both to obtain some food during years of good rain and to secure some land rights.

The Borana institutions and norms appear unable to cope with the development and resettlement policies; decisions are simply imposed by the State administration. In addition, massive immigration of persons not sharing the values attached to Borana governance have delegitimised their landscape level effect. The negative impact on biodiversity is also tremendous, despite the establishment of some formal protected areas within the Borana territory (Bassi 2003).

Recognising CCAs

Norms and enforcing mechanisms of indigenous governance are based on values and conceptions that are shared only within the ethnic communities that have developed mutual adaptation locally, and not by outsiders. As such, they cannot cope with extra-cultural elements. This is particularly problematic since many cases of rapid environmental deterioration in the Horn of Africa occur with situations of competing claims between the autochthonous communities and other encroaching groups or opportunistic newcomers. In this context, CCAs can only be recovered if they are recognised through modern institutions. Even in the absence of specific country-level legislation and policies, some interesting attempts to valorise indigenous

A Sycomoro tree marking a ritual ground. The Borana only managed to protect the tree itself, while the surrounding area is now cultivated by newcomers. Photo: Marco Bassi.

The gadaa *leaders moved to Gayoo to organise the General Assembly of the Borana.* Photo: Marco Bassi.

conservation by harmonising it with national legislation have been made, mainly in relation to collaborative forest management[2].

An example of formal recognition of the conservation capacity of a CCA is that of the *kaya*. These are surviving patches of the coastal forest of Kenya conserved by elders for ceremonial reasons. A group of concerned professionals have secured financial, institutional and legal support to improve the capacity of traditional leaders to protect their sacred forests. The weakness of the process is, that due to the lack of specific legal instruments, traditional leaders are not directly empowered to manage the forest, and project mediation is required (Robertson and Luke 1993; Bassi 2003).

In the Horn of Africa many traditional leaders have formal titles, gained through specific rituals and training processes. They have the responsibility to guarantee the well-being of the community as a whole, on the basis of traditional wisdom, customary norms and local knowledge. The experience of SOS Sahel in its attempt to improve the management of the three juniper forests of Boranaland shows that in a CCA approach, reference to the customary leadership is crucial (Boku Tache and Irwin 2003).

Indigenous conservation is based on mutual adaptation between culture and environment and is primarily motivated by the need to assure a sustainable use of natural resources. This is fully compatible with IUCN protected area Category V, Protected Landscape. The Lorugum area of Turkana District (Kenya) provides a success story of reforestation by adopting a landscape approach based on the recognition of customary collective and individual rights (customary

2. Some efficient networks of NGOs have been established (the Kenya Forest Working Group and the National Forest Management Working Group, Ethiopia) with the objective to promote the participation of local communities in forest management and to enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility.

tenure), customary sanctions (elements of ethnic governance) and legal recognition by the local governmental institutions (empowerment) (Barrow, *et al*., 2002).

Another interesting example is Forole Mountain, a totally informal but fully protected community area, engaging two neighbouring Oromo pastoral communities of Kenya and Ethiopia in complex socio-economic and symbolic relations (Bassi 2003: Box 11) (Tablino 1999). Many indigenous and mobile groups in fact do not necessarily have rigid boundaries, and indigenous conservation does not necessarily work through a univocal association between one ethnic group and a defined territory.

In the southern part of the Ethiopian Rift Valley, the Arbore elders are hoping to establish an inter-ethnic committee to manage the wildlife of Chew Bahir, an Important Bird Area (EWNHS 1996) at the confluence of the Weito and Sagan rivers, and an area of intense interaction among several ethnic groups, often in conflict among themselves. The same committee would also serve as a permanent inter-ethnic forum to solve ethnic disputes at an early stage (Bassi 2003: Box 17). Unfortunately, the initiative has no follow up, mainly because of lack of a clear policy in favour of CCAs.

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Community conserved areas: experience from North America

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North American experience with community conserved areas (CCAs) draws on diverse traditions and a variety of arrangements for land ownership and management by indigenous as well as local communities. In this paper we explore two very different kinds of CCAs: the example of community forests in the New England region of the United States; and traditional management of aboriginal lands in Labrador, Canada. In the examples discussed here a range of tenure arrangements ensure community access to decision-making and the values associated with important resources. Governance of these areas spans political and institutional boundaries, geographically as well as across sectors and levels of government. These examples from the United States and Canada illustrate the contribution of CCAs to ensuring local self-determination, economic vitality and the maintenance of cultural traditions, while conserving important natural resources. At the same time, they highlight the important role CCAs can play in conservation at a larger scale, by linking other protected areas and strengthening linkages within the broader landscape.

NORTH AMERICAN experience with community conserved areas (CCAs) is rich and varied, drawing on diverse traditions, and a variety of arrangements for land ownership and management by indigenous as well as local communities. They occupy a range of time scales, from CCAs under customary management for millennia to those created recently. They include CCAs subject to management by customary laws and traditional practices throughout Canada and the United States, backed by land claim agreements, or as part of government-managed protected areas under collaborative agreements.

CCAs are an important element in the protected landscape approach. Such landscapes have been shaped by the interactions of people and nature over time. This approach recognises that the cultural and natural values of landscapes are inextricably linked, and that local communities are central to sustaining them. It is an inclusive approach, relying on participation and partnerships that bring together diverse stakeholders (Brown *et al*. 2005).

Residents of the Randolph Community Forest area. Photo: Edith Tucker.

This paper explores two very different kinds of experience with CCAs in North America: the example of community forests in the New England region of the United States; and traditional management of aboriginal lands in Labrador, Canada.

Community forests in New England: an old idea with new relevance

The early settlers of New England established community, or town, forests during the late 1600s. The settlers, who had migrated to this region of North America from England, initiated a tradition of "…*creatively [working] such forests and woodlots to public benefit*..." (McCullough 1995), that continues to this day.

Strong traditions, self-determination and a common sense of identity, all inextricably linked to the forested landscape, still define the New England region. The forests supported a vigorous forest products industry through much of the 20th century and, more recently, an increasingly important recreation and tourist industry. Community well-being is tied to the health of this resource. Communities, therefore, benefit when they have access to decision-making and the values associated with this asset.

Renewed interest in community ownership and management of forest land, coupled with the experience from some recently established community forests, suggests an increasingly important role for CCAs in the vitality and economic well-being of the region's communities and as a key component in regional landscape-scale conservation strategies.

Background

The economy and culture of the northern New England region is rooted in the productive forest land base. Conservation of this vital resource has been a priority for over a century during which time the region gained numerous protected areas under national, state and private designation. However, as large private industrial landowners respond to globalisation by selling off vast areas, and development pressures grow, fragmentation of the region's forests is increasing.

Virtually all the ownership of land remains with absentee landowners such as timber investors, state and federal agencies or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Although communities gain some benefits from improved stewardship and continued recreation options, the decision-making power and economic returns from the land continue to flow out.

Community forests offer a fundamentally different ownership model. Increasing local equity in the region's core asset supports local self-determination, resource protection and economic growth, while preserving and enhancing local traditions (Child and Lyman 2004). This approach may use different structures, tenure models and governance mechanisms, but at a minimum, should meet the following tests:

- A community should either own the land or have standing to participate in management decisions affecting the land; and
- A community should gain direct and tangible benefits (economic, social, environmental) from the management of the forest.

Community forests in New England

The full potential for the community forest model has not been realised in New England. Though there are hundreds of towns that own forest land, many towns do not view the land as a community asset nor manage it as a CCA. Additionally, some challenge the community forest model, suggesting that the political uncertainties within local governing bodies do not offer adequate assurances of conservation or sustainable forest management practices.[1] Finally, communities often do not think they have the resources, or access to resources to support the acquisition, ownership and management of forest land.

1. Conservation easements (required by many funding entities) and/or certification have become important tools in addressing this concern.

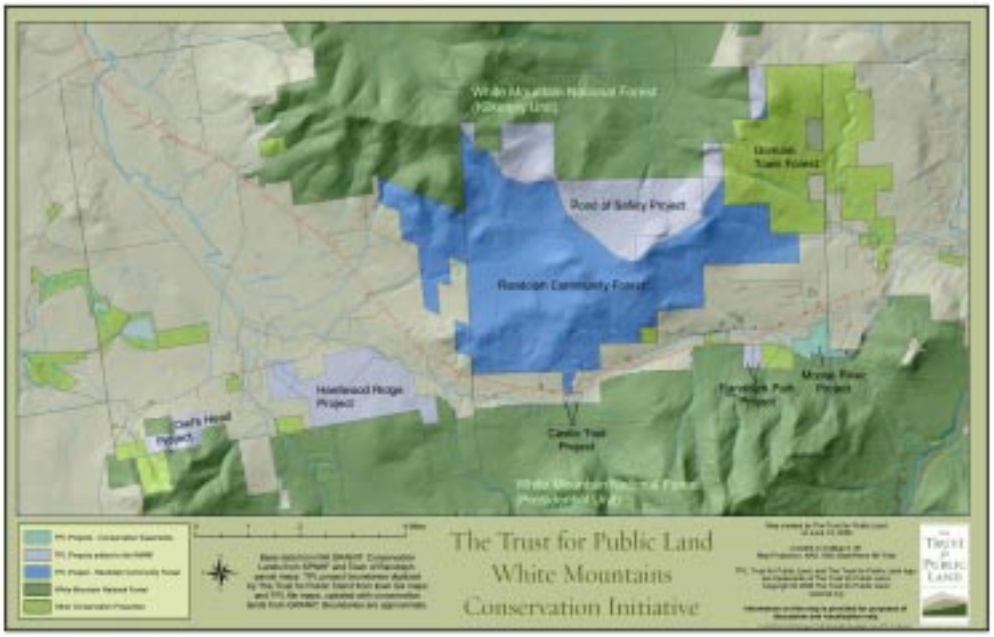
Moose in the Errol Town forest. Photo: Rodger Krussman.

There are, however, many examples of community forests rooted in the tradition of community-based conservation that illustrate one way that the CCA model is expressed in this region of North America. Examples include:

- **The Paul Doherty Town Forest** is a 2,023-ha tract of land in the towns of Gorham and Randolph (New Hampshire) encompassing an important watershed in the White Mountain. Having acquired the land in 1936 to protect its water supply, the town has expanded its management goals over the last 30 years. The forest now produces income through timber harvesting and provides an outdoor classroom to the town's public schools. A Forest Advisory Committee appointed by the town's governing body provides management oversight.
- **The Farm Cove Community Forest** (Grand Lake Stream, Maine), a 10,927-ha tract of forest, is part of a remarkable 138,400-ha land conservation initiative[2]. This forest, recently purchased by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust on behalf of the community, is strategically positioned between more than 242,800 ha of conserved lands in New Brunswick, Canada and 81,000 ha of state, federal and tribal lands in Maine, USA, making the overall conservation impact more than 405,000 ha (about one million acres) across an international boundary.
- **The Errol Community Forest** is a 2,100-ha area in northern New Hampshire that serves as a critical 'link' in a corridor of federal and state conservation lands including the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge and the White Mountain National Forest. The tract was initially considered for acquisition into the National Wildlife Refuge; however, residents of the town of Errol (population 350) working closely with NGOs[3], were able to acquire the land in 2005 to hold as a community asset.

A collaborative project of the Quebec-Labrador Foundation / Atlantic Center for the Environment (QLF)[4], the Trust for Public Land (TPL)[5], and the Northern Forest Center[6] seeks to expand the number of community owned and managed forests in the northern New England region. QLF is researching their potential role in the conservation strategy for the Northern Forest region and as a component in local community and economic development strategies. Findings of this research initiative confirm the following points:

2. The Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership is a collaboration between the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, the New England Forestry Foundation and the Woody Wheaton Land Trust.
3. The Trust for Public Land and the Northern Forest Center.
4. For more on QLF see: www.qlf.org
5. For more on TPL see: www.tpl.org
6. For more on the Northern Forest Center see: www.northernforest.org



Map of Randolph Community Forest and surrounds.

- ***Communities are important partners in landscape scale conservation:*** Community forests buffer, connect or link existing protected areas and offer opportunities to bundle smaller parcels of forest land into a larger protected tract. Community ownership can help leverage new sources of funding for conservation, and protect areas that would not be a priority for state or federal authorities.
- ***Communities receive benefits:*** Community forests provide income from forest management activities (Bisson and Lyman 2003), build social capital and expand the community's capacity to address other priorities. Institutionalising structures for oversight and management of community forests may improve local governance (Child and Lyman 2004).

Experience from aboriginal communities in Labrador

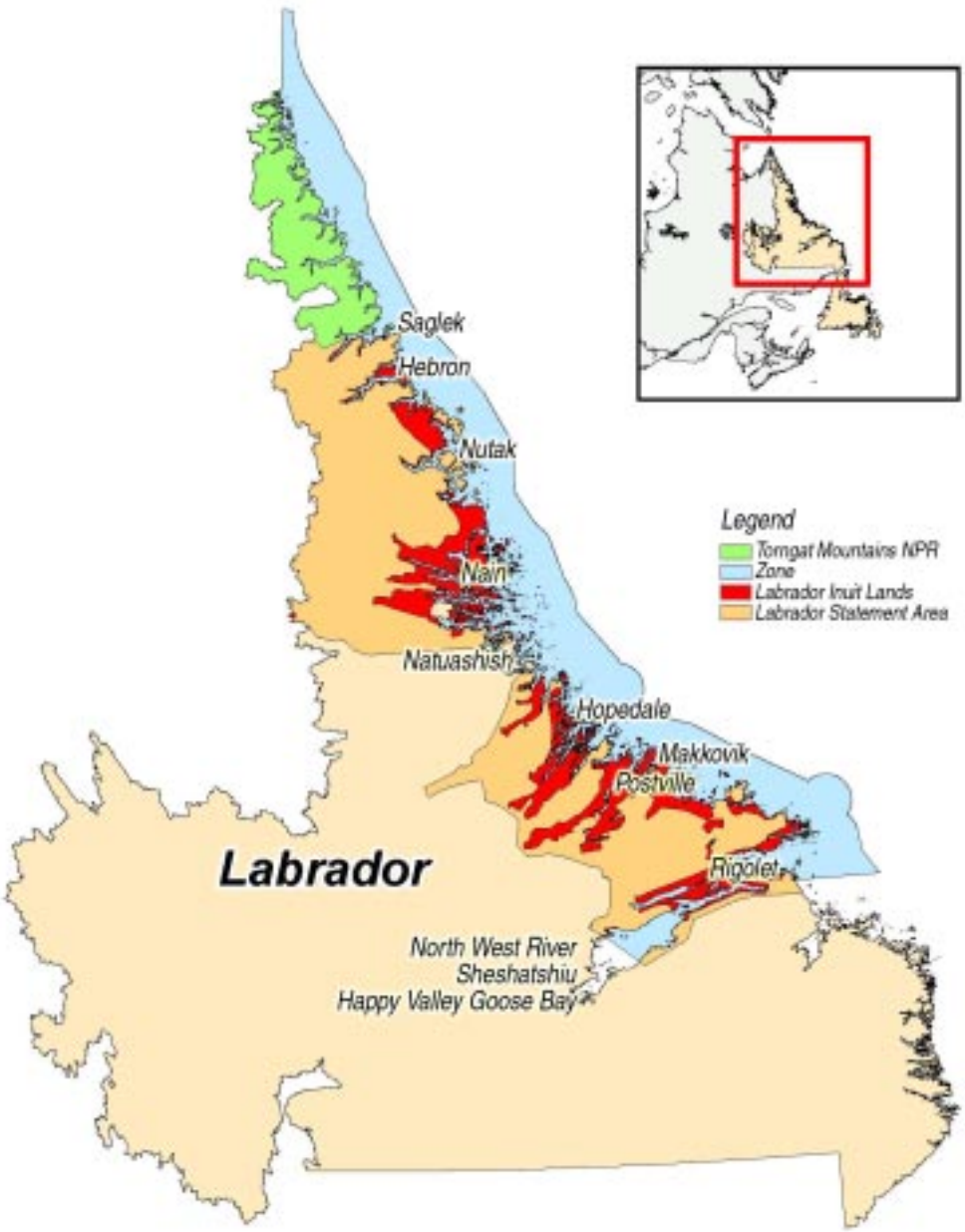
In Canada, there are five aboriginal reserves covering over 7.3 million ha. In Labrador, two groups are working to maintain the conditions necessary for indigenous customary law and self-governance. Using different strategies, both aim to strengthen the community ability to control decision-making within their traditional territories.

Nunatsiavut – "our beautiful land"

In northern Labrador Inuit leaders have chosen to pursue their self-governance goals through a land claim, a modern treaty that establishes their land, resources, and self-government rights. On 1 December 2005 this land claim agreement established Nunatsiavut ("our beautiful land" in Inuttut), which gives the 5,300 Inuit and settler beneficiaries of the agreement increased control over the region. While the provincial and federal governments retain ownership of the majority of the 72,500 km^2 of land (about one-third of northern Labrador) and 48,690 km^2 of sea within the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, the Inuit gain traditional access, harvesting, and some co-management rights. A small portion of the Settlement Area (15,800 km^2) is exclusively Inuit-owned land.

The Labrador Inuit Constitution (2002: Article 1.1.3.e), states that the Inuit *have a special responsibility to use and enjoy Nunatsiavut and its renewable and non-renewable resources with care and respect, without greed or waste and as stewards for future generations*. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2003) outlines a number of political structures that must be implemented. Inuit leaders are currently creating four new government departments, including a Department of

Map of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. Source: Labrador Inuit Association 2003.



Lands and Natural Resources. They are also setting up a series of management boards related to wildlife, fisheries, plants, regional land use and co-management of the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, which will have advisory status for federal and provincial agencies. Under the new agreement, Labrador Inuit have the right to continue traditional hunting and fishing practices year-round for food, social and ceremonial needs, though must now report previously undocumented domestic harvesting activities for potential use in deriving quotas.

The Land Claims Agreement provides a structure within which the Labrador Inuit will fashion a form of self-governance of their own. This structure mirrors existing provincial and federal departments, and is designed to facilitate working closely with outside agencies and jurisdictions. Community conservation mechanisms will have to be adapted to this new layer of governance, and the manner in which existing informal management practices will either be formalised or maintained remains to be seen.

Kamestastin Lake

Kamestastin Lake, located 350 miles north of Goose Bay town, is the site of one of the largest caribou migrations in North America, and historically an important landscape for the Innu people. Innu have travelled to the area to live, hunt, and fish for thousands of years, as the rich archaeological history shows. The area is Crown Land but many Innu regard it as the heart of their traditional territory.

Established in 1990 by a group of Innu and non-Innu supporters, the Tshikapisk Foundation is working to strengthen the conditions necessary for Innu culture and traditional land stewardship practices to continue here. Its mission is 'to promote their culture and safeguard their land' (Tshikapisk Foundation 2005). The Foundation offers experiential education to Innu youth and

Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve in northern Labrador. Photo: Parks Canada Agency.

employment for hunting families through cultural and ecotourism activities. It is in the process of building a cultural centre at Kamestastin Lake, which will be used as a tourism base and a centre for educational programmes.

The Foundation seeks to help the Innu cope with the dramatic changes in this region over the past several decades, including sedentarisation of the Innu, the increased role of provincial and federal governments in education and social services, the abandonment of the hunting life in favour of wage labour, and the impact of large-scale hydroelectric development and other industrial activity. Tshikapisk's solution to this situation is to create a self-sustaining economy based on cultural tourism, and to offer programmes for Innu youth to learn about Innu culture, history, country skills and spiritual aspects. This includes passing on to young people traditional resource management practices, such as those based on an *awareness of the obligations of the hunter to treat animals with respect and to maintain a harmonious relationship with the forces that control them. There are a host of different rules and procedures set in place over generations of Innu hunting experience, which arbitrate the relationship between the Innu and the other animals who share the land with them* (ibid.).

The Foundation has succeeded in creating international links with indigenous rights and environmental conservation organisations, religious groups, and research institutions. It has also generated local support from other Innu organisations, government agencies, and Innu individuals. The Foundation does not have ownership or jurisdiction over any of the land in the area, and has had to struggle with pressures such as potential mining activity in the Kamestastin Lake area. Rather than focus on specific lands or formal governance structures, it focuses on human health as it relates closely to cultural, economic, and spiritual well-being. Tshikapisk members stress that it is a complex combination of social and economic factors that allows Innu to maintain a healthy and sustainable relationship with the land.

These two cases from Labrador illustrate different approaches to creating and maintaining the conditions necessary for self-governance and community conservation. The Labrador Inuit leaders have created a new government in Nunatsiavut that will fit well with existing structures by aligning it closely with other levels of government. These bureaucratic and administrative structures confer authority, but they also may work to restrict more innovative policy developments. The Tshikapisk Foundation members, on the other hand, have chosen to align themselves with international interests in order to pursue a similar goal of self-governance on a smaller-scale. However, by not pursuing more formalised authority, they sometimes find themselves vulnerable to industrial activity and political influences. Both Tshikapisk and Nunatsiavut underscore the importance of a holistic approach in supporting community-based conservation.

Conclusion

Community conserved areas exist primarily under conditions that allow local and indigenous communities to assert authority over land and resource management; typically these conditions are negotiated with other groups, agencies or interests. In the examples discussed here, a range of tenure arrangements ensure community access to decision-making and the values associated with important resources. Governance of these areas spans political and institutional boundaries, geographically as well as across sectors and levels of government. From a base of conservation activity at a local level, connections are being made at other scales and with other sectors.

The move from informal to more formal access to resources and decision-making brings with it more complicated procedures, which could potentially undermine customary knowledge and management systems, as in the case of Nunatsiavut. However, in many situations current pressures are such that without formal access these lands and resources would be highly vulnerable to outside threats.

When conservation objectives are to be met over large areas of land, strategies are needed that can accommodate different ownership patterns, land uses, and management objectives. The cases here illustrate the contribution of CCAs to conservation at a landscape scale.

CCAs in these regions of North America face on-going challenges. 'Works in progress', these CCAs are playing an important role in the vitality of local and indigenous communities, the survival of cultural traditions, and conservation at a landscape scale.

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parks

Rediscovering community conserved areas in South-east Asia: peoples' initiative to reverse biodiversity loss

MAURIZIO FARHAN FERRARI[1]

In several South-east Asian countries, after a long history of marginalisation and loss of control over natural resources, indigenous peoples and local communities have recently been trying to regain rights over local resources and establishing various forms of community-based resource management. The paper provides information on the status and trends of community conserved areas (CCAs) in the region and examines some of the main challenges to overcome in order to achieve recognition and support of CCAs.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS have been shaping South-east Asia's environment for thousands of years. Until the beginning of the 19th century most people lived in villages and towns dotting this mostly forested region. But major social, economic and political changes in the past two centuries have had a tremendous impact on biodiversity and people. For instance, from 1970 to 1990, 31.4 million ha of forest was lost. About 50% of coral reefs are threatened (Burke *et al*., 2002) and 65% of mangroves lost (UNEP 2001). Most of this loss has been taking place since local communities were earlier deprived of their use and control of local resources by colonial administrations and since the 1970s by industrialisation and global trade policies.

Simultaneously, since the 1980s, some governments started to admit that since they have not succeeded in sustainably managing natural resources, local communities and indigenous peoples need to be involved. Traditional and indigenous knowledge systems have also been gaining recognition in this context.

Rediscovering community conservation and sustainable use

In the past three decades, although supporting legal instruments are only now evolving, there are increasing community conservation initiatives and community involvement in non-governmental organisation (NGO) or government conservation initiatives. While there is no fully reliable data on the exact number or the total area covered by community conserved areas (CCAs), there are indications of hundreds or even thousands of community forests in Thailand[2], more than 500 community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM) initiatives in the Philippines[3], and a large number of community forests in the highlands, as well as a growing number in Indonesia and Cambodia (see Boxes 1–4). Not all these local initiatives are operating successfully, but learning networks are being set up to help overcome shortcomings.

The wide variety of CCAs are of three categories: (i) based on traditional and customary beliefs and practices; (ii) externally motivated (NGOs, Government agencies, donor agencies); and (iii) a combination of these two.

1. This paper is based on research undertaken with Sahabat Alam Malaysia (1991–1996), the Forest Peoples Programme (1997–2006), a study on Community conserved areas in South-east Asia sponsored by TILCEPA (2002), and field work in the Philippines and Malaysia in 2001–02 as part of a PhD study sponsored by The Open University, UK.
2. Communication with Dr Somsak Sukwong, Executive Director of the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), Thailand, 2002. He also related that the Royal Forest Department's figure goes up to 10,000 forest areas, but the high number is due to the fact that it includes small-size tree planting in government-promoted areas, which cannot yet be confirmed as CCA.
3. Interview, Tanchuling 2001.

Ownership and access to natural resources

A critical (and sensitive) issue facing CCAs is the unequal power relation in ownership of, and access to, natural resources. Starting with the introduction of western land administration systems during colonial times and through the introduction of the modern state, most ecosystems that were managed by communities according to time-tested indigenous systems have come under the ownership of government agencies, with the resulting *de jure* alienation and marginalisation of the local communities (see also White and Martin 2002; Adams and Mulligan 2003; Poffenberger undated). After independence, with the government's focus on economic growth and the strengthened government-business nexus, local communities have increasingly also lost *de facto* control. This of course varies from country to country and place to place.

Many CCAs in the region have been started as a means by which communities claim their rights over their traditional lands and resources, be it individual and collective cultivated plots, fallow land, common forests, watershed and wetland areas, or fishing grounds. Addressing unequal relations and enhancing equity therefore requires a critical look and a creative approach to power relations and the political economy of resource management, to ensure a favourable policy and legal environment for CCAs.

Recognition and respect of traditional knowledge[4] and customary practices

Traditional knowledge, conventionally ignored in formal conservation circles, is increasingly being shown to provide important lessons and tools in the search for new conservation approaches. Such knowledge and practices still play an important role in biodiversity management (such as the continuation of *adat* or custom in resource management in Indonesia and Malaysia), or are being revived (see Box 1).

Emphasising this, however, does not mean rejecting modern knowledge or technology. For example, many indigenous communities have been carrying out community resource mapping, using a combination of traditional knowledge and sophisticated GPS and GIS tools, to document their customary use of resources and develop sustainable management plans.

Box 1. Reviving local ecological knowledge in community-based river conservation

The *Lubuk Larangan* (river protected area) system has been in operation by the Mandailing people in their territories (Mandailing Natal district of North Sumatera, Indonesia) since the 1980s. The protected river cannot be exploited by anybody during a closed season, generally one year. At the end of this period the public can participate in fishing activities in the river for a day, in what turns into a community festival. The participants pay a fee which goes to fund community development activities. The conservation monitoring is carried out by the community located close to the river and applies to all the people that interact with the river. Even before the spread of the *Lubuk Larangan* system, traditional conservation practices known as *rarangan* (prohibition) were applied to rivers and forests by the Mandailing. These were closely interlinked with the traditional land use system, governed by the traditional authority. The district government passed a decree to regulate the *Lubuk Larangan* system in 1988. The introduction of the *Lubuk Larangan* has created local solidarity, and provided economic benefits to the community, but more studies are needed on positive ecological effects.

Source: Zulkifli Lubis, Yayasan Bindu Nusantara,Sumatera, Indonesia

4. Traditional Knowledge (TK), Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK), Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are here used interchangeably, according to how they are used by data providers.

Mandailing people of Indonesia enjoying community fishing, once a year, according to the Lubuk Larangan rules. Photo: Zulkifli Lubis.

Despite the above, it does not seem that governments and, in many cases, NGOs are paying enough attention to stopping the erosion of traditional knowledge and customary practices in order to employ them in practical initiatives. Indigenous and local communities also point out that traditional kowledge and customary use can only be practised if their rights to land and resources are secured.

Securing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

Recognition and respect of indigenous peoples' rights

One of the key factors in marginalising indigenous peoples is the failure by many governments in South-east Asia to recognise and respect their basic rights to land, resources and to determine their own future. The Philippines is the only exception. On 29 October 1997, President Ramos signed the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). Although it is not considered perfect by the indigenous peoples, some are making full use of it to gain control over their resources and to develop sustainable management plans (see Box 2). Rights of indigenous peoples are to different extents recognised in the Constitutions of Malaysia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Thailand, but implementation is still highly problematic.

Addressing the rights of local communities: Community Property Rights

Many communities have started to address concerns about being marginalised in decision-making. In the Philippines, coastal fishers have formed an extensive network of Community-Based Coastal Resource Management (CBCRM) initiatives throughout the country. They have set up more than 500 marine sanctuaries, and developed the concept of Community Property Rights, which could apply to terrestrial resources as well as coastal and marine resources. The CBCRM Resource Centre in Manila has been serving communities, and has linked up with people and initiatives in Indonesia, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Thailand in a project called CBCRM Learning Regional Network (CBCRM LeaRN).

Community-based forest management (CBFM) was pioneered in the region even before CBCRM, in the 1970s. This approach continues to spread (see Box 3), but the situation remains patchy. As a result, at a meeting of the Forest, Trees and People Programme (FTPP) in April 2000, partners considered setting up a Good Forest Governance (GFC) in Asia project to improve the relationships among key actors in CBFM, and serve as a clearing house for best practices, lessons learned, and to monitor the effects of wider political processes on forest governance.

Box 2. The Tagbanwa of Coron Island

The Tagbanwa of Coron Island, Calamianes Islands, North Palawan, live on a stunningly beautiful limestone island surrounded by once rich marine resources, their main source of livelihood. By the mid-1980s, not having secure legal tenure, and faced with encroachment by migrant fishers, tourism entrepreneurs, politicians seeking land deals, and government agencies interested in controlling various resources, they were fast losing control to the point of facing food shortages. They reacted by setting up the Tagbanwa Foundation of Coron Island (TFCI) in 1985 and applying for a Community Forest Stewardship Agreement (CFSA), which they were awarded over 7,748 ha in 1990. They acted against the degradation of marine resources by dynamite, cyanide and other destructive fishing practices. They also used an Executive Order passed in 1993, to obtain a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC) over 22,284 ha in 1998, with help from a national NGO (PAFID). They produced high quality maps of their territories, an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Management Plan, and used the Indigenous People's Rights Act to obtain a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) in early 2001. As TFCI Chairman Rodolfo Aguilar puts it "*we are a living example of how IPRA can be used successfully by indigenous peoples*". Subsequently, Coron Island was proposed to be gazetted as a Protected Area, but this has so far been rejected by the Tagbanwa out of fear that they would once more lose control, although they were promised majority participation in the management board. They prefer to stick to their CADT backed rights-based approach rather than accepting an uncertain participatory approach. Several other communities are considering using the CADT, which could prove to be a powerful legal backing to many CCAs.

Source: Author's field work, 2001

Box 3. Community Forest Reserve on Gomantong Hill, Kudat, Sabah, Malaysia

The native Rungus of Tinangol village, in the state of Sabah, Malaysia, directly depend on the Gomantong Hill for their water resources. They have never agreed to let the Forest Department take over the hill as a Forest Reserve, and have successfully stopped proposed conversion of the forests into an exotic species plantation. The hill is also the watershed for another seven villages, amongst whom there is a long-standing agreement to protect its 45 ha. Recently, new initiatives have forged a collaboration between the villagers and the Forest Department, to establish community watershed areas, starting with 5 ha. The Rungus farmers grow about 40 traditional varieties of rice, significantly contributing to agricultural biodiversity.

Source: Persatuan Rakyat Tinangol (People's Organisation of Tinangol); PACOS; author's field work

Box 4. Conservation of River and Coastal Ecosystems in Trang Province, Thailand

Over 50,000 people sustained themselves along the Palian river basin and in the coastal area of Trang province, Thailand, till their lives were undermined by the destruction of the upstream rainforest, sago palm *Metroxylon sagus* forest, nypa palm *Nypa fruican* forest, mangrove forest, and seagrass beds, due to development projects, dredging, intensive shrimp aquaculture and destructive fishing gear.

Yadfon Association has been working in 40 villages here, to change the situation. Fishers have organised to stop using destructive fishing practices, and successfully petitioned the local government to enforce regulations within the protected 3-km coastal zone. They have rejuvenated the coastal mangrove forest, the nypa palm forest, and the seagrass beds since 1985, while the rice farmers have started restoring and protecting the sago palm forest since 1998. As a result, coastal and inland ecosystems have become healthy, and income from enhanced livelihoods has increased.

Having proven sustainable management, they have requested the government to grant the right to manage these wetlands, independently or through a co-management arrangement.

Source: Pisit Charnsnoh, Yadfon (Raindrop) Association, Thailand

Some successful projects that started as CBCRM a decade or so ago, are now expanding to river and watershed ecosystems, providing a holistic approach to community-based management from the mountain to the sea (see Box 4).

The struggle for local community rights has, in certain cases, become the highest political agenda. In Thailand for example, the efforts of forest dwellers, small farmer and fisher communities, along with NGOs, resulted in the 1997 Thai Constitution recognising certain rights of communities. Much, however, remains to be done to implement this on the ground, and to secure rights in most other countries.

National recognition of CCAs

No review of existing and potential forms of conservation, including CCAs, has been so far carried out in any South-east Asian country. It shows that states are not taking the CBD Programme of Work (POW) on Protected Areas seriously. Concerning the establishment of policies and institutional mechanisms to facilitate CCAs by 2008 (as required by the POW), some first steps have been taken in Cambodia (through the Community Protected Areas Legislation of 2006, which grants communities the right to establish community protected areas, usually in the buffer area of protected areas)[5]. In some other countries, policies and laws have started to be developed to recognise and support community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) including forests (CBFM), coastal resources (CBCRM), marine sanctuaries (CBMS) or protected areas (CBMPA), and watersheds (CBWM). Many of these could be considered CCAs. For instance, various forestry, water, and natural resource laws in Indonesia recognise community self-governance over local resources. The Philippines, for example, have probably the richest history in the region in terms of CBNRM.

Fisherfolk managing mangrove forests that were planted by them in the 1980s, Trang Province, Thailand.
Photo: Yadfon Association.

5. Communication with Bradley and Ironside, June 2006.

However, these laws generally fall short of delegating responsibilities for management to the community level. There are also numerous problems associated with their implementation, including vagueness of wording, which easily allows for powerful actors to manipulate them in their own interests.[6]

Conclusion

During the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of community-based projects in biodiversity management. Some of the most critical issues that still need to be tackled are the unequal power relations in ownership of, and access to, natural resources, and the recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities' rights, and their traditional knowledge and customary use. A much more active approach is needed in order to respond to indigenous peoples and local communities' efforts, initiatives and demands as well as to fulfil governments' obligations under international law.

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New book on marine CCAs

For more in-depth information, there is a new publication: *Atlas of Community-Based Marine Protected Areas in the Philippines,* edited by M.N. Lavides, M.G. Pajaro and C.M.C. Nozawa, Haribon Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, Inc. and Panama Ka Sa Pilipinas, Philippines. E-mail: act@haribon.org.ph

6. Morris, Igoe and Lasgorceix, based on AMAN, 2006; and communication with Eghenter,July 2006.

parks

Community conserved areas in South America

GONZALO OVIEDO

Indigenous and local rural communities in South America have a rich history and practice of conserving areas of land and water in their traditional domains, through special management regimes of limited human intervention. Such areas, variously called community protected areas, communally protected areas, community reserves, sacred sites, indigenous reserves, protected indigenous territories, etc. are true protected areas created and managed under customary law. Over the last two decades, such conservation experiences have developed in new forms, making use of legal and policy changes operated in most countries of the region. A significant number of community conserved areas are now integrated in formal protected area systems – a noticeably growing trend.

Although an insufficiently researched subject, current knowledge on community conserved areas in the region indicates that they have many strengths: they cover vast areas of critical ecosystems like the Amazon forests; they are a vital link to the broader landscape; they have a wide range of values (natural, cultural, spiritual, economic) that enhances their importance for communities; and they are effectively managed as they rely on engagement from entire communities. But they are also threatened by multiple external factors, by cultural change impacting especially the youth, and by lack of resources and power. There is an urgent need to mobilise forces and resources in their support.

INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL PEOPLES and rural communities in South America have been key players in the conservation of biodiversity, in spite of many interventions by colonial and dominant societies that affected their land tenure and resource use and reduced their ability to maintain traditional management practices.

Community conserved areas (CCAs) have many different forms and denominations in the region: community protected areas, communally protected areas, community reserves, indigenous reserves, protected indigenous territories, etc. Despite their diversity, they have common features that closely resemble the attributes of contemporary protected areas (defined boundaries, regulations limiting human intervention, statutory powers vested in recognised authorities, management institutions and practices); hence they can be considered true protected areas, owned or occupied and managed by local indigenous or non-indigenous communities.

Over the last two decades, CCAs have developed in new forms, due to policy and legal reforms in land tenure, indigenous and community rights and conservation regimes. For example, all South American countries, with the exception of the Guianas, Uruguay and Chile, have modified their legislation to include recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and land titling, and have ratified the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (Clavero 2002; Roldán 2002). In several countries such reforms have also covered, in a similar sense, non-indigenous traditional communities. Examples include Suriname, where Maroon communities (descendants of African slaves who escaped from colonial plantations and rebuilt their traditional communities in the forest) have the same status as Amerindians; and Colombia and Ecuador, whose Afro-descendent peoples are granted the same rights as indigenous peoples.

Other relevant legal and policy changes include the recognition of community land rights in protected areas; integration of traditional knowledge and management practices in protected areas management; and changes in protected area categories to allow for the integration of areas under sustainable use or 'extractive reserves' used by traditional communities (e.g. rubber tappers in Brazil)[1].

1. The Brazil extractive reserve model of rubber tappers served as the basis for the development of Category VI in the IUCN Protected Area Management System and is the earliest form of CCA recognised in national protected area systems in the region. Category VI protected areas are the fastest growing areas in South America, which is partly linked to new forms of arrangements with communities and represents a key strategy for the expansion and strengthening of protected areas systems (Oltremari 2000; see also Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Colombia 1998; Chape *et al.* 2003).

Landscape of the Alto Fragua – Indiwasi National Park, Colombia. Photo: Jose Ignacio Giraldo – Asociacion de Cabildos Tandachiridu Inganokuna.

These legal and policy changes have prompted a growing interest for indigenous and rural communities to request support and recognition for their own traditionally protected areas, and to create new ones, as a response to the growing threats to community lands, resources, and ways of life from unsustainable development projects and processes. Communities are increasingly aware that protected areas can help balance tradition and modernity, as well as offer potential benefits from ecotourism and external funding agencies' support for local development and conservation projects. There is also the hope that protected areas may provide security for threatened communities, and help establish management approaches suited to aspirations of self-determination.

Many customary-law based, traditional CCAs are designed to restrict human use primarily for spiritual reasons. In recently established areas, the predominant purposes are protection from external threats and creation of economic opportunities that increase livelihood security. However, in most cases these different types of primary objectives of CCAs coexist and reinforce each other.

It is not possible at this stage to estimate the number and the percentage of land that CCAs cover in South America, as available information is limited. The issue is compounded by difficulties in researching the subject, the diversity of cases and situations, and the changing terms of ownership and management.

The different types of CCAs

The following types of CCAs can be found in South America (see Box 1 for case studies):

1. *Lands traditionally belonging to indigenous or rural communities, which correspond partially or totally to an official protected area and which have become community-owned and community-managed areas, based on the recognition of community land and resource rights and co-management agreements and institutions*[2]. Kaa Iya National Park in Bolivia is an example of this type.
2. *Community protected areas established voluntarily by owner communities on their lands and territories, through customary or legal procedures, and with official recognition by government agencies*: they are thus integrated into national protected areas systems, e.g. Alto Fragua-Indiwasi National Park, Colombia.
3. *Sacred natural sites, "natural areas of special spiritual significance to peoples and communities" (Oviedo and Jeanrenaud 2005), where designation is entirely based on custom with no relationship*

2. More research and analysis is needed on the relationships between 'community conserved areas' and 'formal protected areas'. The IUCN literature makes a rough distinction between the former, as community-created, owned and managed areas, and 'co-managed' areas, for those established by governments but co-managed with inhabiting communities. In practice, however, this distinction often seems of little importance.

with official policies or intervention by government agencies. They range from very small areas (such as the sacred place at Peguche Falls in Ecuador, of no more than two hectares) to very large ones (e.g. Titicaca Lake on the Peruvian/Bolivian border).

4. *Community protected areas voluntarily created by communities but with no official recognition and therefore not forming part of official protected area systems*, e.g. the Mapu-Lahual network of indigenous protected areas of the Huilliche people of Southern Chile.
5. *Community areas with special management regulations under the responsibility of community institutions*. Although these areas may not be 'protected' in the formal sense, they are subject to special management regulations distinct from other areas, e.g. areas adjacent to the San Pablo Lake in the Ecuadorian Andes, where regulations aim to prevent further deterioration of the lake's environment. Some areas dedicated to ecotourism also fall within this category.
6. *Indigenous reserves and territories in areas with little disturbance and low intensity of human use*. These are areas owned or occupied by indigenous and traditional peoples (or areas where communities were relocated for permanent and secure settlement), dedicated to their exclusive, permanent use and protected from external intrusions. This type of indigenous reserve occupies one-fifth of the Brazilian Amazon – five times the area under protection in parks (Nepstad *et al.* 2006)[3] – and have been shown to be the most effective tool to halt deforestation (Ibid).

As in other regions with vital traditional cultures, perhaps the most widespread type in South America is number three (sacred natural sites) though, as with most CCAs, little knowledge exists so far on their number, extent, distribution and status. Some literature describes individual

A visitor centre in one of the Parks of the Mapu Lahual network, one of five centres built in the traditional octagonal pattern of the ruka *(Huilliche house). The centres provide environmental and cultural information to tourists, and are equipped with community libraries.* Photo: Gonzalo Oviedo.

3. Also quoted by the Woodshole Research Center http://www.whrc.org/pressroom/press_releases/pr-2006-01-25-ind-res.htm

Box 1. CCAs in South America: a sample

1. The Kaa-ya Iya National Park and Indigenous Territory in Bolivia
The Kaa-ya Iya National Park of Bolivia, declared in 1995, is co-managed by the government and the indigenous *Capitanía del Alto y Bajo Izozog (CABI).* Spread over 3.5 million ha, it is the traditional territory of the indigenous Guarani, managed under their own terms – their protected area. Kaa-Ya is one of the most successful cases of indigenous peoples' protected areas in South America. One of the keys to success is CABI's capacity to work with a range of partners – the government, international NGOs, other indigenous organisations, local governments and the private sector.

Source: *Beltran 2000*

2. The Alto Fragua – Indiwasi National Park in Colombia
The Alto Fragua – Indiwasi ('House of the Sun') National Park of Colombia was established in 2002, in agreement between the Colombian government and the Association of Ingano Councils. The first National Park of Colombia created at the request of indigenous communities, the Park covers 68,000 ha of traditional lands in the headwaters of the Fragua river in the piedmont of the Colombian Amazon – one of the top 'biodiversity hotspots' of the world. It is managed based on the Ingano's worldviews and aspirations for the area and the people.

Source: Zuluaga and Giraldo 2002

3. The Vilcanota Spiritual Park in Peru
The Vilcanota range is the second most important glacier system in the Peruvian Andes. It covers snowcapped peaks, steep slopes, deep canyons and isolated valleys that contain an amazing diversity of microhabitats and species. Through a collective land tenure system, approximately 10,000 indigenous Q'eros manage a range of habitats located between 850 and 5,350 metres above sea level. Management practices include rituals linked to ecosystem conservation of the *puna* (highlands), such as rituals that seek bountiful production of pastures for the alpacas.

Source: *Argumedo, Cesar and Alejandro, ANDES Association, pers. comm. 2006*

4. The Mapu Lahual Indigenous Protected Areas in the Coastal Range of Southern Chile
Chile's coastal temperate rainforest is a unique and threatened forest complex, one of the last temperate rainforests in the world. It contains outstanding biodiversity and extremely high levels of endemism. The area is the traditional homeland of the Mapuche-Huilliche indigenous people, who have conserved the largest tracts of native forest in the area. For them, the forest is populated by *ngens*, the spirit-owners of nature, who take care of the different elements of the universe. Ensuring the integrity of the mountain forests, the spirits' homeland, is a guarantee of well-being for the communities. To this end, the Huilliche created six indigenous protected areas spread over 1,000 ha connected by a 52-km belt of forests, covering key ecosystems in the coastal range. These are managed by an indigenous organisation called *Mapu Lahual* ('Land of Alerce') Network of Indigenous Parks. Alerce, *Fitzroya cupressoides* is a native tree recorded to live more than 3,000 years – a vital natural and cultural symbol of the area.

Sources: *David Tecklin, WWF Valdivia Ecoregion Co-ordinator, pers. comm. 2003; WWF 2005; Red de Parques Indigenas Mapu Lahual 2006*

5. The Xingu Indigenous Park of Brazil (Parque Indígena do Xingu – PIX)
The Xingu Indigenous Park covers almost 30,000 sq km in Mato Grosso State of Brazil. It includes transitional ecosystems between Amazon Forest and Cerrado (central lowlands savannahs), and the Xingu river basin. The indigenous Park shelters 14 indigenous peoples, for which the Xingu river is a key cultural and environmental feature. Occupation and deforestation for ranching, soy-bean monoculture and logging at Xingu River watershed headsprings are the main problems of the area. The headsprings are outside indigenous lands, but indigenous communities have been directly impacted by these activities. Indigenous communities of the Park partner with several organisations to protect it. Although the Park is still at risk, there is hope that this coalition will ensure its long-term protection.

Source: Maretti 2003

6. The Awá Life Reserve of Ecuador
The Awá indigenous people are settled on both sides of the eastern boundary between Ecuador and Colombia. The Awá Region contains an unusually high level of biological diversity. It also harbours the main remaining example of western equatorial forests. The 'Awá Communal Settlement Forest Reserve' was declared in 1988. The Reserve covers about 120,000 ha of tropical forest, where the Awá communities practice sustainable forest management and protect the territory. A reserve core zone of 17,000 ha, containing a high diversity of endemic species, was designated by the communities as *Life Reserve*, where human activities are strictly regulated.

Source: Oviedo 2003

Map of South America showing location of case studies in Box 1.
Inset: Map showing the six indigenous parks of the Mapu Lahual network in the Osorno Province of Chile. Source: G. Oviedo.

sacred natural sites or provides general overviews (e.g. in Bernbaum 1996 and 1997; Oviedo and Otegui 2006), but systematic research on their features and role in nature conservation is still to be undertaken. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that sacred natural sites are numerous, and that their contribution to nature conservation is significant[4].

The following seem to be features common to all types of CCAs in South America[5]:

a) Long-term strategies: To the communities, community lands are a resource base for future generations, favouring the development of a long-term vision for the land and its resources.
b) Relatively simple strategies for administration and decision-making: Decisions by community institutions can be immediately enforced without intermediation or complicated bureaucratic processes.
c) Healthy links with productive spaces and activities: Community-protected areas are structural components of broader land management strategies, thus facilitating landscape-level approaches and reducing the island effect of many protected areas.
d) Safeguarding of key structural and functional features of ecosystems and the landscape: Community protected areas are based not on biodiversity uniqueness, but on safeguarding structural and functional processes that secure the provision of ecosystem goods and services to the community.
e) Maintaining costs at relatively low levels: Maintenance costs for community-protected areas are largely covered through systemic regulation of the economic activities of the community, thus there is less need for extra investments compared to formal protected areas.

There is at least one fundamental difference between official protected areas and CCAs. The former are established and managed with the primary objective of biodiversity conservation, whereas the latter are linked primarily to community needs and well-being, including the maintenance of ecosystem functions that ensure the sustainable provision of goods and services for community livelihoods. Further functions include physically guaranteeing the security of the community and their property, or providing additional economic or material and cultural benefits.

In a climate of insecure tenure, lack of confidence in state institutions and policies, and a long history of abuse of indigenous and community rights, community conserved or protected areas are an instrument for long-term tenure security – including through land rights and assurance from governments that community lands will be protected and supported. This is not opposed to conservation; on the contrary, it is the basis and condition for conservation. It is precisely this capacity of bringing together biodiversity conservation, human well-being, livelihood security and tangible benefits to people, which will guarantee the long term survival of CCAs.

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4. A survey conducted in Ecuador in 2003 among 976 indigenous communities resulted in the identification of 328 sacred sites. This is preliminary and incomplete information, and most probably a higher number would result from more systematic research (Núñez *et al.* 2003).
5. Summarised from Oviedo 2002, Gonzalez Ortiz 2002 and Oviedo 2003. These features can serve as a basis for developing sets of indicators for CCA management effectiveness.

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parks

Community conserved areas in South Asia

NEEMA PATHAK

Ongoing documentation of community initiatives in South Asia suggests that community conserved areas (CCAs) are widespread. This paper presents the current understanding of these efforts, what makes them succeed or fail, and the lessons emerging for a more appropriate conservation model in the region. It also explores in brief the kind of economic development that these initiatives are pointing to, in which biodiversity conservation is an integral element rather than a constraint.

THE REGION OF SOUTH ASIA (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) contains over one-fourth of the world's population, and harbours some of the Earth's most diverse ecosystems. At least three of the 18 global biodiversity 'hotspots' occur in this region. These countries also have millions of people critically dependent on natural resources for economic, social and cultural reasons. They share a colonial history, and a common economic vision seeking to join so-called 'developed' countries.

The continuation of exclusionary colonial laws, policies, and attitudes in the post independence scenario, combined with neo-liberal economic policies driven by globalisation, have led to serious conflicts over natural resources.

Mass uprisings against the conventional model of conservation, increasing global debate on participatory conservation policies and the influence of donor agencies, have in recent times contributed towards a slight shift in the attitudes of the governments.

In **Bangladesh,** with 75–85% of rural households dependent on fishing, some initiatives have been recently started on community-based fisheries management, and involvement in forest and protected area conservation, largely under the influence of external donors. In particular, the Management and Improvement of Aquatic Ecosystems through community involvement, called MACH, has taken on improved management in about seven large wetlands in the country[1].

In **Bhutan**, with 70% of the area covered by forests, a very strictly state-controlled natural resource management regime is slowly relaxing. Recent government forestry programmes seek to transfer forest management responsibilities to local management groups.

In **India**, formal conservation has been very exclusionary. However, over the last two decades, the government has initiated programmes of joint forest management (JFM) in degraded forest areas and ecodevelopment in and around protected areas. These have had varying degrees of success and failure, with continued absence of power-sharing with communities. Outside of these formal efforts, India probably has the highest number of community conserved areas (CCAs) in the region. Officially these areas remain largely unrecognised, unsupported and under various kinds of threat. In 2003 a new category of protected areas, Community Reserves, was included in the Wild Life Protection Act. However, communities have been suspicious of bringing CCAs under this category, given its straitjacketed approach and the fear that it would increase governmental control or interference. Efforts at actual devolution of powers to village level institutions have remained stuck in bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of political will.

1. For more details see MACH-Technical Paper 1: Restoring Wetlands through Improved Governance: Community Based Co-Management in Bangladesh, May 2006, USAID.

Nepal has the most progressive conservation policy in the region. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 (amended 1989), provides for multiple use conservation areas, and for NGOs to manage protected areas. Legally-backed management of Conservation Areas, with site-specific regulations developed by local institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), is a significant innovation. Nepal is also famous for handing over rights and management of about 400,000 ha of national forests to over 7,000 community forest user groups. With very little investment by Government, community forest management capacity has been enhanced and wildlife has significantly increased. A national federation of forest user groups (FECOFUN) has also been formed. This has been accompanied by progressive changes in forest-related policy, though there have been recent setbacks.

In **Pakistan,** under the influence of large donors and international NGOs, the resource use and benefit-sharing rights of the local communities have been recognised in the management of protected areas. Such involvement has led to an increase in wildlife populations at several sites. Community Controlled Hunting Areas (CCHAs) in North-west Frontier regions include the distribution of harvest quota of Himalayan ibex *Capra sibirica hemalayanus* and Markhor *Capra falconeri* to local people. Local communities receive 80% of hunting fees. The recent Mountain Area Conservancy Project (MACP) also aims 'to protect the rich biological heritage of the Karakuram, Hindukush and the Western Himalayan Mountain Ranges through community-based conservation approach' (www.macp-pk.org)**.**

In **Sri Lanka,** reportedly the only traditional community left are the *Veddhas*. Even more than India, the colonial powers took over almost all common property, causing strong alienation amongst local communities. Participatory conservation has evolved in the last decade under the influence of large foreign donors. Many community-based initiatives have lapsed after donors withdrew. There are a few examples of community-driven conservation initiatives, but documentation on these is poor.

Hushey valley. Pakistan's mountainous areas have a number of community-based conservation initiatives.
Photo: Naeem Asraf Raja.

Fishworkers in the Srimangala area of Bangladesh – active participants in the MACH project to revive fisheries and protect critical wetlands. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

Indeed, with the exception of India and to some extent Nepal, there is little serious documentation of CCAs in the region. Consequently they find no mention and are not considered while designing conservation policies and programmes in the region, including India and Nepal.

Types and examples of CCAs in the region

CCAs in South Asia are extremely varied in their origin, functioning, objectives and impact. Their origins are diverse: self-initiated by communities, initiated by or with NGOs, resulting from social struggles, or initiated by sensitive government officials.

Some examples from India are:

- Protection of 1,800 ha of forest by Mendha (Lekha) village in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, by the Gond tribal community. This village has also achieved relative self-governance and assured income for all members through the year (Pathak and Gour-Broome 2001).
- Regeneration and protection of 600–700 ha of forest by Jardhargaon village in Uttaranchal state. Villagers have also revived hundreds of varieties of indigenous crops and are successfully growing them organically. In recent years they have also struggled against proposed mining in their region (Suryanarayan and Malhotra 1999; Kohli and Jardhari 2002).
- Protection of sea turtle nesting sites by a fishworkers' community NGO in Kolavipaalam, Kerala, including protection against sand mining despite continuous physical attacks and threats (Theeram 2001). Similar community protection of nesting sites of olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* occurs in Rushikulya area of Orissa (Pathak and Kothari 2006).

- Traditional conservation of the nesting trees of painted stork *Mycteria leucocephala*, the globally threatened spot-billed pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* and other colonial birds, by villagers in Kokkare Bellur village, Karnataka (Manu and Jolly 2000), Veerapattu and Nellapatu in Andhra Pradesh and several other villages in India (Satya Srinivas pers. comm. 2001).
- Conservation of forests in nearly 10,000 villages of Orissa state, without any input from the forest department. The oldest example is believed to date back to 1936. Most of these villages were faced with serious resource shortages and decided to regenerate their degrading forests.
- The Loktak Lake catchment, where 600 ha of village forest has been regenerated by youth from the Ronmei tribe at Tokpa Kabui village, Chandrapur District, Manipur. This community, traditionally known for its hunting skills, has also completely banned hunting of Sangai or the brow-antlered deer *Cervus eldi*, a severely threatened species (Rajesh 2002).
- Forest and wildlife reserves declared by various tribes in Nagaland, with over 100 villages (such as Khonoma, Luzuphuhu, Chizami and Sendenyu) managing several thousand hectares of forest. This includes the 2,000 ha Khonoma Tragopan and Wildlife Sanctuary declared by Khonoma village. These areas protect many endangered animals, including Blyth's tragopan *Tragopan blythii*, grey peacock pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, rufous-necked hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*, spotted linsang *Prionodon pardicolor*, tiger *Panthera tigris*, leopard *Panthera pardus*, wild dog *Cuon alpinus*, stump-tailed macaque *Macaca arctoides* and Asiatic black bear *Ursus thibetanus* (Pathak *et al.* 2006).

Some examples from other countries (where documentation is very poor) are:

- Baghmara village near Chitwan National Park in Nepal, an innovative example of community-based ecotourism. Here the villagers have protected the surrounding forests, which now harbour a good population of large mammals. Villagers have constructed a few watchtowers and earn revenue by charging an entry fee from the tourists, just like the adjoining official National Park (Kothari *et al.* 2000).
- The Annapurna Conservation Area, managed by a body represented by the members of local representatives from various communities residing inside, with help from NGO, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC). Communities carry out tourism as well

A villager at Kheechan feeding wintering Demoiselle cranes Anthropoides virgo, *treating them as annual guests.* Photo: Asad Rahmani.

as cleaning of trekking routes to this popular site (Krishna *et al.* 1999). Recent political disturbances are reported to have affected this initiative.

- Several self-initiated community forests (CFs) in the hills and plains of Nepal. In Dang district in the western Inner Terai, a local leader, Chyang B. Thapa, organised his community to protect a nearby forest in mid-1970s, even before the CF regulations were introduced. In 1993, the 212-ha Sal, *Shorea robusta* forest, christened Bhawani CF, was legally handed over to the villagers. Even today it is among the best managed CFs in Nepal (Bhatta *et al.* 2006).
- Several community-managed wetland sanctuaries, declared in Bangladesh as part of the MACH project (mentioned previously). The largest of these, the Baika Beel (part of the larger Hail Haor wetland ecosystem), has been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International.
- At several sites in Pakistan, trophy hunting or other incentives have been employed to move towards community-based conservation, especially in critical mountain ecosystems. These include a number of Community Controlled Hunting Areas and community conservation reserves.

Key lessons, including for formal conservation[2]

1. **Conservation benefits are not only monetary:** Benefits envisaged by communities include long-term livelihood security; economic benefits from sale of surplus produce, ecotourism, value addition, and so on; year round local employment; increased awareness, capacity and empowerment; a stronger political identity; community cohesiveness resulting in more appropriate social, health and education inputs; social recognition of local knowledge and innovations; greater negotiating power leading sometimes to even being able to influence national policies.
2. **Security of tenure is essential:** A sense of belonging or custodianship towards the resources is the most important reason for community conservation. This sense develops through constant consumptive, economic, cultural and religious association with these resources. Conservation initiatives are observed to be more successful if the local communities have legal ownership as in Nagaland in India, or *de facto* control, as in most other cases mentioned above.
4. **Decision-making and institutional functioning need to be transparent and well-informed:** CCAs clearly show that a transparent and democratic process of decision-making leads to more successful long-term effort. The emphasis on equal representation, transparent financial accounting, and consensus decision-making is often (though by no means always) followed. Additionally, there is an attempt to make well-informed decisions, including through a system of regular group discussions or seeking outside inputs, to help improve understanding.
5. **Role of local leadership is crucial:** Considering that a large amount of the villagers' time must go into earning a living, it is sometimes difficult to sustain the fervour for forest protection activities, especially if there are no immediate threats. In such circumstances, as also in times of crisis, the role played by a local or outside leader is absolutely essential. Such leaders have to pay an enormous personal price to play the required role, which can at times be a hurdle towards finding a second line of leadership.
6. **Are external interventions necessary?** While the local community is the most important actor in CCAs, a critical role has been played by external interventionists in most of the above-mentioned cases. An active role of the state as a partner in the management of resources is often envisaged by local communities, but on equal terms and in the capacity of a facilitator and guide rather than an authoritative ruler. There are numerous other examples where

2. More details on these issues have been illustrated with examples from the region in Pathak *et al.* 2002. See also Table 1 in the first paper of this issue.

external intervention has actually resulted in the breakdown of a well-functioning community effort, particularly in India and Nepal.

7. **Ensuring livelihoods does not always mean compromising biodiversity:** Most communities managing forest CCAs opt for a mix of slow and fast-growing local tree species rather than exotic or monocultural plantations, and harvest non-timber forest produce rather than timber (Poffenberger and McGean 1996). Many include within their management strategies completely inviolate zones, multiple-use zones and zones for rotational or seasonal use. Strict rules and regulations are framed to prevent over-exploitation. Although there is little ecological research on exactly how CCAs benefit wildlife, visual impressions, signs and oral histories clearly indicate that such benefit is taking place.
8. **Conservation planning needs to be at the landscape level:** Conservation of resources for communities is a part of cultural and livelihood insurance, and is linked with other social, political and economic aspects of community life. However, governmental (and often NGO) activities are highly compartmentalised, with little co-ordination between departments. Similarly, conservation cannot be separated from other developmental processes, which may undermine or complement it. This calls for landscape-level or regional participatory planning.

Conclusion

Community initiatives are social processes, which can be time consuming, complicated and often full of contradictions. Despite this, and despite numerous legal, policy, financial and tenurial constraints, communities in many CCAs have managed to achieve the twin objectives of conservation and livelihood security. Their achievements however remain highly undervalued and unrecognised, resulting in many CCAs being taken over for mining, dams and urban areas, or are dying out due to inappropriate interventions or lack of support.

CCAs represent lifestyles and worldviews different from the one prevalent in the dominant society. The current model of development mandates maximum use of resources in minimum

Villagers of Shankar Ghola, Assam, India, who are protecting forests containing the threatened and endemic Golden langur Trachypithecus geei. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

time and restricts conservation to a few human-free pockets. On the contrary community initiatives point towards a continuum of conservation efforts integrating ecosystem-based economic development and different forms of conservation ranging from inviolate zones to multiple-use zones. There is an urgent need to recognise and encourage such initiatives, provide the appropriate policy environment and tenurial security, help buffer them against external threats, and help them overcome internal inequities and constraints. All this must be done in an environment of consultation, trust, transparency and sound knowledge.

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A new printed brochure on CCAs in India is now available on the TILCEPA website, at: www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/Wkg_grp/TILCEPA/CCA%20India%20brochure.pdf.

parks

Community-based marine resource management in the South Pacific

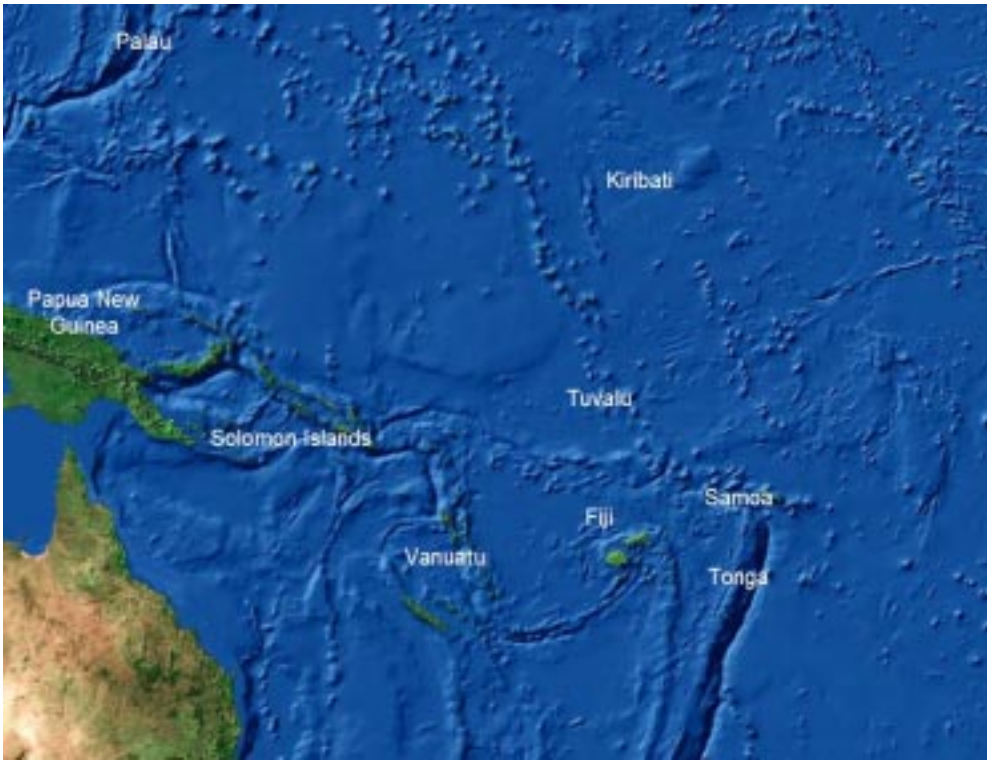
HUGH GOVAN, ALIFERETI TAWAKE AND KESAIA TABUNAKAWAI

Approaches to conservation and fisheries management often promoted at a global level have had little impact in the South Pacific, due to the special situation of these island nations. Community-based management of marine resources based on traditional and modern knowledge and developed at a local level seems to be the way forward. The close relationship that Pacific Island peoples have developed with the ocean over millennia is a key part of the region's rich culture. Despite the erosion of both cultural and natural resources in recent decades, the capacity and knowledge of coastal communities appear to provide the fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable livelihoods from the sea. Partnerships between communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments are an important mechanism but it is essential that the aspirations of communities are treated as the main driving force for this type of management and that their legal or *de facto* rights over resources are respected.

THE PAST DECADE has seen impressive progress in the application of community-based coastal resource conservation and management in the South Pacific. Traditional knowledge and resource ownership combined with a local awareness of the need for immediate action are frequently the starting points for these community-driven initiatives.

But successful community initiatives, such as those found in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu, are not based solely on traditional mechanisms, as communities find ways of adapting traditional

Oceanic map of the South Pacific region.



practices to modern times and integrating community governance in wider national contexts. They will often, though not always, seek to complement their existing knowledge and skills, by asking government and non-government organisations for advice and assistance in interpreting scientific knowledge and implementing planning processes.

Fijian communities have arguably shown the most impressive progress supported by a national network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government organisations supporting 'locally managed marine areas' or LMMA (see Box 1). Across the 14 provinces in Fiji, 177 villages have established some form of community-based management measures. An additional 50 to 100 villages have indicated keen interest, and are at the preliminary consultation stage of the community engagement process.

Samoa has shown the strongest government investment (supported by Australian aid) in community-based fisheries management. By the late 1990s, this had resulted in a national network of dozens of village fisheries management areas.

Communities in Vanuatu have preserved traditional management in the form of 'tabu' areas, and in others this tradition has been revived with the support of fisheries officers, other government organisations and NGOs. About 80 villages are reported to be actively managing their marine resources in this manner.

The situation is similar although perhaps less advanced in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Palau, with community, NGO and government partnerships resulting in dozens more areas actively managed by communities.

Most of the above community managed areas contain critical marine and coastal habitats, including coral reefs or mangroves. Being in the Indo-Pacific region, the coral reefs in particular are some of the most biodiverse marine areas in the world.

A community marine resource planning workshop for Mystery Island, Aneityum, Vanuatu, held in 2006.
Photo: Hugh Govan.

Box 1. Locally Managed Marine Area Network

A Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) is an area of nearshore waters being actively managed by local communities or resource-owning groups, or being collaboratively managed by resident communities with local government and/or partner organisations.

An LMMA strategy offers an alternate and complementary approach to the centrally-managed system where a centralised body (such as a national government agency) largely 'commands-and-controls' the management of a marine area. However, an LMMA does not necessarily exclude national government or other institutional involvement; rather it means that the marine area in question is managed locally, with or without government aid.

An LMMA differs from what is commonly known as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in that LMMAs are characterised by local ownership and/or control, whereas MPAs are typically designated by levels of management via a top-down approach. One or more MPAs or other management techniques or 'tools' may be employed within an LMMA.

An LMMA can vary widely in purpose and design; however, two aspects remain constant: a) a well-defined or designated area, and b) substantial involvement of communities and/or local governments in decision-making and implementation.

In using an LMMA approach, some coastal communities are reviving methods that have been used traditionally as part of their culture for many generations. Others are using more modern ideas introduced from outside. Some use a combination of both.

The LMMA Network is composed of projects in the Pacific that work with local communities to implement and adapt traditional marine resource management systems. This learning network is implemented by a wide range of organisations across the Pacific and has subsidiary networks in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Palau, the Philippines, Hawaii, and other countries. The Foundations for Success (FOS) provides technical and administrative support to the LMMA Network.

Source: www.lmmanetwork.org/

Given the regional combination of predominantly rural populations dispersed over vast areas, high dependency on coastal plants and animals and poorly funded central governments, many commentators see no alternative other than to greatly increase regional support for such community driven processes (reflected in Australian and New Zealand aid policy documents for example). At least, that is if the holy grail of sustainable use and biodiversity conservation is to be reached.

Of course, such a wholesale policy switch is not necessarily less expensive to implement in the short-term. However, given that the benefits of healthy coastal resources will impact the portfolios of health, employment, public works and trade ministries and not just those of fisheries and environment, it should be possible to share the cost with these sectors and in the process attain truly integrated policies.

On the positive side, there is much help available. Existing experience gained by communities with government and NGOs may provide many useful lessons (see Box 2). NGOs can help national staff develop (or rediscover) skills for working with communities. Together with regional organisations, they can help advocacy at the government policy level to incorporate the aspirations of communities into national planning.

The next decade will provide an opportunity to further capitalise on the unique attributes of the region, such as local resource ownership and governance structures, traditional knowledge and strong communities, and incorporate these as a vital part of the way coastal resources are managed – rather than obstacles to be avoided.

Box 2. Lessons learned in community-based management in the South Pacific

Community-driven resource management is by far the most promising option for coastal areas in Pacific Island communities (PICs)
Assisting communities in meeting their aspirations ensures their engagement and provides the best opportunity for attaining livelihood, fisheries management and conservation goals. Support agencies must be flexible in their work with communities, sensitive to their needs and aspirations and willing to support the process with patience. Governments should capitalise on the particular strengths of Pacific Island communities in terms of local governance and knowledge of their resources.

Priority needs to be given to building skills at the community level and of the extension staff who work directly with them
Individuals in local resource owning and resource using communities are the primary targets for training and skills building in the facilitation process towards sustainable marine resource use and management.

Innovative partnerships between government, NGOs and communities are vital
The majority of promising initiatives in the region are based on partnerships between government staff and NGOs. These partnerships need to be sensitive to the needs and constraints of both parties and play on their respective strengths.

Shared national vision
It is important for government, NGOs and communities to work towards defining a shared national vision of the objectives and strategy for achieving these. These shared visions provide a useful tool for countering models or visions that have hitherto been imposed by external agencies (and without much success).

National networking is an important tool
Supporting networks at the national level is an effective tool for building in-country capacity and tailoring national approaches. This sort of networking requires investments from all parties, and support from the highest levels.

The role of legislation
Appropriate use of local, provincial and national legislation should be made bearing in mind that enforcement capabilities are likely strongest at the local level and that legislation will not substitute for widespread community buy-in to local management efforts.

Nationally and locally appropriate approaches are needed
The wide variety of social, cultural, economic and ecological conditions in the region require that national approaches be developed separately, avoiding standard assumptions on governance or community processes. Regional or international support must be tailored to these national and local conditions.

Roles and responsibilities
Considerable effort in discussing roles and responsibilities and possible commitments to the community management plan pays off. For instance, ensuring responsibilities are clearly assigned to communities and not 'fobbed off' on external agencies, if these do not have the capability to follow through (even if legally obliged to).

Skills and curricula
The appropriate skills required to facilitate and support community-based management processes are not being developed through formal training available to the region and these need to be built through other processes such as informal training, networking, exchanges, piloting and so on. In the near term it is important to increase efforts to improve curricula used by regional training institutions.

Regional networking
Though potentially very costly, regional peer to peer exchanges and opportunities for sharing experiences are very effective in creating support networks and sharing lessons learned.

A locally managed marine area in Leitongo Village, Gela, Solomon Islands. Photo: Hugh Govan.

For further information, including case studies, see:
www.fspi.org.fj/program/coastal/coastal.htm
www.lmmanetwork.org/Site_WhereWeWork.cfm

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parks

Community conserved areas in some southern African countries

PHILLIPA HOLDEN, DAVID GROSSMAN AND BRIAN JONES

Policy and legislative changes in a number of southern African countries together with the dedicated efforts of certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), have seen the rise of community conserved areas (CCAs) in the region over the last few decades. The devolution of rights to local communities has in a growing number of instances empowered them to manage the land and natural resources, including wildlife, furthering regional and global conservation objectives whilst delivering opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development at a local level. The formation of community conservancies and wildlife management areas, co-management of protected areas and contract parks together with government departments, and benefit sharing of various types are becoming increasingly prevalent. Impediments to this remain and include a lack of capacity and resources, conservative mindsets within certain conservation and government agencies, political instability, complex community dynamics, and insecure tenure regimes that continue to undermine the rights of local communities. However, as the success stories increase and lessons are learned, the benefits that CCAs have to offer are being more broadly realised and accepted by all.

This paper provides a broad overview of the extent to which local communities in various southern African countries are presently able to be actively involved in and drive local conservation efforts.

DURING SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID YEARS, the majority of people were effectively prevented from enjoying the benefits of formal conservation areas, often bearing the costs associated with removal and exclusion from parks. However, with the advent of democracy in 1994, in order to achieve the dual goals of biodiversity conservation and social justice, institutional restructuring was undertaken (particularly at the level of the national parks agency), and innovative legislation introduced.

The land restitution initiative, aimed at redressing the dispossession of land during the apartheid era, added impetus to the transformation process by the formal gazetting of land claims in various national parks. In a number of cases, the claimants decided to maintain their land under conservation. They entered into a contractual agreement with the Minister of Environment Affairs and Tourism to establish a formal, legally recognised contractual national park (CNP), which can have varying co-management arrangements. The benefits of such agreements to local communities tend to outweigh the costs (Reid 2004; Holden and Grossman 2003). Consequently, CNPs are making an increasingly important contribution to the area under formal conservation management in South Africa, often in strategically located transfrontier areas and biodiversity hotspots.

Apart from this, the Protected Areas Act of 2003 makes provision for the proclamation by the minister of what are effectively community conserved areas (CCAs), with the motivation being provided by the community itself. This act makes provision for the development of local management capacity, implementation of co-management agreements, a consultation process, delegation of powers to local communities, income division and benefit sharing, and sustainable natural resource use. As the act has not yet been tested, it is not certain how simple the process is going to be in practice and whether community rights will be adequately protected.

In practice, a number of *de facto* CCAs already exist in South Africa, designated by the communities themselves (including sacred areas, indigenous forest rich in medicinal plants, and grazing reserves), but often without an enforceable legal basis due to insecure tenure regimes. There are also a number of instances where CCAs have been established in partnership with the private sector or province under some sort of a contractual relationship. Commonly they have been initiated as a sustainable economic revenue generating opportunity for the community. Furthermore, they are often key corridors that link state protected areas, increasing the ecological and economic viability of both.

Prior to the IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban in 2003, representatives of several affected communities came together for a workshop 'People and Parks: Processes of Change', and issued the Cape Vidal Memorandum. This statement called for implementation of national policy intended to intimately involve and benefit local communities in conservation, and outlined clear steps to give effect to that. In response to this the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) held a 'People and Parks' workshop in late 2004. However, implementation of the resulting work plan has been slow due to lack of institutional capacity, lack of political will at various levels and within different organisations, a need for champions to drive the process, and a slow land reform process. Nevertheless, a second workshop is planned for 2006 and there is ongoing commitment to addressing the situation. Implementation may also be hampered at a community level by disruptive internal dynamics and local political struggles. South Africa is still emerging from a long period of political and social dysfunction, but as the dust settles, the conservation debate is slowly maturing.

Namibia

Namibia has only recently been free to determine its own development path. The results of settlement by Europeans and the squeezing of the indigenous population into 'reserves' mirrored that of South Africa. However, since independence, the efforts of a number of far-sighted conservationists and NGOs, with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), has resulted in the establishment of a number of successful community conservancies. In the Kunene region, much of which is covered by conservancies, elephant numbers have more than doubled since the early 1980s, springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis*, oryx *Oryx gazella*, and mountain zebra *Equus zebra hartmannea*, have increased over 10-fold, and black rhino *Diceros bicornis,* have more than doubled over the past 30 years (NACSO 2004). Poaching of black rhino has become rare in the conservancies, which employ their own game guards, and monitor wildlife and problem animal incidents.

There are now 44 registered Communal Area Conservancies in Namibia covering more than 10,500,000 ha. Total income to these conservancies in 2005 was N$20.1 million (approximately US$3.1 million) (C. Weaver pers. comm.). Conservancies cover a range of habitats from desert and semi-desert in the west, to broadleaf woodland, riverine forests and floodplains in the north-east. Some of the conservancies contain biodiversity hotspots, contiguous groups of conservancies take in large parts of or all of different ecosystems, and a number buffer national parks or form corridors between state protected areas. For wildlife to thrive in arid, unpredictable environments, large areas of land are required on which animals can take opportunistic advantage of pasture growth and water supply. Mobility and flexibility is the key to survival, and in this respect the community conservancy model is ideal.

Clear legal rights are given to community institutions, avoiding regional government structures and the need for such structures to further devolve authority. Rather than being defined by artificial administrative units, which potentially force together people who would not normally co-operate, communities define themselves, enabling the development of cohesive social management units with incentives for individuals to co-operate (SASUG 1997). The rights given to communities over wildlife are relatively strong. In the case of tourism, concessionary rights automatically go to a conservancy on registration by the MET. Communities carry on their normal economic activities within a conservancy, and essentially wildlife and tourism become additional forms of land use. Many conservancies zone areas of land specifically for wildlife and tourism and, by the consent of members, settlement is either forbidden or discouraged in these areas.

The conservancy policy and legislation is flexible, with communities able to shape their conservancy according to local social and ecological conditions, and to choose their committees in a manner consistent with their own cultural norms. Jacobsohn (2003) highlights further

benefits of this arrangement to include the fact that for the first time, government has a set of environmentally responsible and accountable local social structures on communal land to plan with, and to put eco-regional plans into action. This also gives communities a stronger socio-political voice, through their recognition as democratically elected and locally accountable institutions.

However, communities face challenges with respect to security of tenure and control of access to resources. The current system of 'open access' to communal land in Namibia, without giving secure and exclusive land tenure to a particular community, is a threat to the conservancy approach. Some protection for conservancies is provided in the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002. Land Boards, which were created under the Act, may not allocate communal land for leasehold in a conservancy if this is contrary to the management plan of the conservancy, and conservancies are represented on Land Boards. However, the Act does not provide sufficient group tenure for conservancies to exclude people from land set aside for wildlife and tourism.

Botswana

There are a number of different policy documents and laws in Botswana, which together provide opportunities for government to allow communities to gain rights over wildlife and tourism. The Policy on Wildlife Conservation of 1986 calls for the greater involvement of local people in wildlife management, and for rural people to gain greater benefits from wildlife use. It does not, however, spell out how this might be achieved. The Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992 provides for the declaration of Wildlife Management Areas and Controlled Hunting Areas and provides for permission for wildlife use on communal land to be given by Tribal Land Boards. The Tribal Land Act of 1968 enables Tribal Land Boards to give out leases for commercial purposes. Policy directives provide for leases over hunting and tourism to be given to communities who form a representative legal entity. Quotas and hunting licenses may be obtained from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP).

The present framework depends to a large extent on the goodwill of government at a number of different levels. The Botswana government is threatening to withdraw the ability of communities to obtain direct payments from the private sector, and to channel the income through a special fund. Communities gain a wildlife off-take quota from DWNP and a 15-year resource-use lease (that includes a tourism concession) from the Land Board. In order to get community quotas and a lease, communities need to establish a representative, accountable and legal management entity which has to be approved by District Authorities.

Despite the absence of strong rights over wildlife, by 2003, 47 communities comprising 44,000 people had formed trusts for the management of wildlife and other natural resources. The total income to the trusts was more than BP 7.3 million or about US$ 1 million (Arntzen *et al.* 2003). CCAs in Botswana help to maintain large areas of land under wildlife outside protected areas and according to Arntzen *et al.* (2003), poaching levels are falling in these areas. However, in a number of areas, communities struggle to establish CCAs because of lack of resources to do the necessary planning, and lack of support from government agencies.

Zimbabwe

The Parks and Wild Life Act of 1975 accorded tenurial rights over wildlife to landholders on alienated land (private land). With the advent of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, the Act was amended to enable the Minister to grant similar rights to district councils. In 1989 the first two CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources) districts were granted Appropriate Authority to manage their wildlife resources and by 2001 this figure had grown to 37. Of these districts, 14 were wildlife producing districts (other districts focused on other natural resources) involving 94 communities with more than 70,000 communal area

Members of a Himba Community Conservancy give feedback at a project evaluation meeting in the Kunene region of northern Namibia. Photo: Phillipa Holden.

households benefiting from wildlife income, which amounted to more than US$2 million (Taylor 2006). It is important to note that success was initially achieved with the minimal amount of legislation, no formal policy document and little donor funding (SASUSG 1997).

The establishment of these CCAs has ensured more effective local management of natural and wildlife resources, whilst providing tangible benefits to communities. Of 12 primary wildlife districts studied in 1999, three districts had wild land in excess of 90% of the district area, six had 50–70% wild land, and only three had less than 35% (Taylor 2006). However, in recent years, habitat available for wildlife is diminishing in some areas because of population pressure and increased demand for agricultural land.

Unfortunately, the devolution of full rights to the community level has not taken place and the decentralisation process has stopped at the level of the District Council. A significant proportion of the wildlife income is retained at a district government level, thereby reducing the financial incentive for such activities (Jones 2003). This is reflected in the outcome that the most successful CCAs are those where the District Council has devolved authority over wildlife to the ward level, providing local control over income and management decision-making.

Mozambique

Mozambique is emerging from both the destructive effects of several decades of liberation struggle and civil war, and the effects of centrally planned economic and political strategies.

Provisions exist within the Land Law of 1997 and a Ministerial Decree of 1999 for communities to gain leasehold over their land through a relatively simple certification system, while the 1999 Forestry and Wildlife Law provides for the state to delegate powers of management of fauna and flora to local communities and the private sector. Unfortunately, government is not actively promoting community acquisition of land rights, and is instead promoting leases to the private sector, even where local communities are living (Jones 2002). Whilst local communities can benefit to a degree from this arrangement, e.g. by way of increased employment opportunities, in many they are increasingly stripped of their natural resource use rights and even moved off their land without adequate compensation and with a high degree of social disruption. There are, however, a few emerging examples of CCAs being established with the help of NGOs and provincial government, most often on land adjacent to national parks. The sustainability of these remains to be seen as they are often dependent on factors such as tourism flows to the region,

which can be highly variable. Furthermore, they still tend to follow conservation models where people are excluded from the area and restrictions are imposed on natural resource use, though slow progress is being made in changing this approach.

Where traditional and customary management is allowed to continue unhindered, local communities still use long-established systems that are both ecologically and socially defensible. In the Bahnine and Zinave, for example, strict controls over resource use, including penalties for misuse, are still maintained by the traditional authority. However, without strong tenurial rights, the ability of these communities to exclude outsiders and stop their unsustainable resource-use activities is hampered, with negative consequences for resident communities and the environment.

Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, in countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, policy and/or legislative change have given communities rights over wildlife and tourism. These changes have led to the formation of community wildlife management institutions and the legitimisation of wildlife as a communal land use alongside livestock and crop growing. Results have included the maintenance and in some cases the setting aside of wildlife habitat, maintenance and in some cases increases of wildlife numbers, and the maintenance of corridors between isolated protected areas. At the same time communities have benefited from income derived from wildlife and tourism, jobs, and training in a wide range of skills.

In countries such as South Africa and Mozambique, new approaches to community involvement in protected areas have been developed, changing the way in which conservationists and the public view national parks and protected areas. Co-management approaches that in some cases recognise community land rights provide new challenges for the communities and protected area managers alike, but represent opportunities to bring protected areas more in tune with the hopes and aspirations of post-colonial or post-apartheid societies.

Traditional fishing methods and customary natural resource management are discussed at a management plan meeting with a community in the Banhine National Park, Mozambique. Photo: David Grossman.

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Résumés

Aires conservées par des communautés : vers la sécurité écologique et des moyens d'existence

ASHISH KOTHARI

Les Aires Conservées par des Communautés (ACC) ont émergé comme un nouveau concept passionnant dans le domaine de la conservation, et ont le potentiel d'augmenter de manière significative la superficie globale ayant un statut spécial de conservation. Elles incluent les zones protégées autochtones reconnues et officielles, ou réserves de la communauté, mais également des dizaines de milliers de sites qui n'ont pas encore été identifiés par les gouvernements. Elles s'appliquent aussi à la gamme entière des différentes catégories des aires protégées par l'UICN. Tandis qu'il y a beaucoup de raisons pour que les communautés protègent les écosystèmes de la faune et de la flore sauvage, les ACC fournissent également d'énormes avantages sociaux et politiques, mais aussi des bénéfices culturels et de conservation. Elles font malgré tout face à des menaces et des défis considérables, et ont impérativement besoin d'être reconnues et soutenues de façon appropriée. Cet article fournit des détails sur l'éventail et les types d'ACC, leurs étendues et leurs avantages, les menaces qui leur font face, et la conduite à tenir pour les soutenir.

Aires protégées autochtones en Australie

DERMOT SMYTH

Dans le milieu des années 1990s, le gouvernement australien lança un programme de soutien pour encourager les propriétaires terriens autochtones à déclarer volontairement leur terre en tant qu'aires protégées autochtones. Ce programme a été conçu pour aider l'Australie à réaliser son objectif d'établir un système complet de'aires protégées intégrant les zones qui constituent toutes les bio-régions, dont une partie n'existe que sur des terres appartenant à des propriétaires autochtones. Il existe maintenant 20 aires protégées autochtones à travers l'Australie, constituant un domaine protégé d'environ 20% du domaine terrestre australien.

Le programme d'aires protégées autochtones fournit un financement pour des activités diverses : permettre aux propriétaires terriens autochtones d'organiser des réunions de consultation et de rechercher des conseils indépendants pour considérer la déclaration de leur terre en tant qu'aire protégée autochtone ; développer des plans de gestion dans le cas où une telle déclaration doit être faite, et soutenir son exécution au plan.

Les agences publiques de conservation sont actuellement réticentes à inclure les aires protégées autochtones dans leurs registres de secteurs protégés, car ces aires ne sont pas assurées d'une conservation pérenne par la législation. Néanmoins, toute aire protégée autochtone déclarée se conforme à la définition d'une aire protégé par l'UICN, et s'avère être un mécanisme approprié permettant à quelques groupes autochtones de gérer des valeurs écologiques et culturelles sur leurs terres, tout en apportant une contribution significative au système national de réserves australiennes.

Aires conservées par des communautés en Amérique Centrale : les reconnaitre dans un souci d'équité et de bonne gestion

VIVIENNE SOLÍS RIVERA, PATRICIA MADRIGAL CORDERO, MARVIN FONSECA BORRÁS, HUGH GOVAN AND VERA VARELA

La Mésoamérique est une passerelle écologique entre l'Amérique du nord et du sud. Elle possède une faune et une flore sauvage uniques et une géomorphologie hétérogène qui s'étend des secteurs côtiers à plus de 4 000 mètres d'altitude. Cette région comprend plus d'une centaine de groupes ethniques qui font encore face à la marginalisation sociale, économique et légale. Depuis les années 1990s, des réunions internationales et régionales ont évoqué la nécessité d'identifier les valeurs de cette région, et les droits d'accès au terres de ses peuples autochtones ainsi qu'aux ressources naturelles. De plus, des dilemmes entre la conservation de la biodiversité et les intérêts humains dans les stratégies conventionnelles des aires protégées ont clairement émergé.

Ceci fut un sujet important de discussion lors du Deuxième Congrès Mésoaméricain sur les Aires Protégées récemment organisé dans la ville de Panama. Cet article fournit des exemples de progrès réalisés dans le domaine de la conservation par les communautés à Panama, Honduras et au Nicaragua, et établit le besoin de travailler sur des accords et apports politiques concrets de la part des gouvernements, des organisations non-gouvernmentales (ONG) et des peuples autochtones pour une bonne gestion dans la protection de l'environnement.

Aires conservées par des communautés dans la Corne de l'Afrique

MARCO BASSI

La Corne de l'Afrique est une mosaïque extraordinaire de peuples et de tribus variées. Plusieurs de ces tribus ont développé, grâce à leur lien avec l'environnement, des dispositifs culturels et des mécanismes gouvernementaux autochtones pour l'utilisation durable des ressources naturelles et la préservation de la biodiversité en question.

Dans cette région, la conservation par des peuples autochtones est souvent totalement officieuse et n'est pas reconnue. La protection de la biodiversité est en danger, mais constitue toujours malgré tout des atouts extraordinaires de conservation dans un contexte où les approches conventionnelles n'atteignent pas les résultats escomptés. L'application d'une approche d'Aires Conservées par des Communautés (ACC) signifie principalement dans ce cas la reconnaissance, le soutien et la mise en valeur de cette région, et institutionnalise la gestion autochtone, ainsi que les systèmes traditionnels de gérance de la propriété communautaire. Malheureusement, les droits collectifs sont à peine identifiés dans les législations de ces pays.

En utilisant le cas du site de Borana qui est maintenant protégé, cet article illustre les mécanismes de conservation autochtones et les défis actuels. Il donne également des explications sur quelques initiatives intéressantes qui ont aidé à valoriser la conservation autochtone, même en l'absence de plans d'actions politiques spécifiques au niveau du pays, favorisant les ACC.

Aires conservées par des communautés : l'expérience de l'Amérique du Nord

JESSICA BROWN, MARTHA WEST LYMAN ET ANDREA PROCTER

L'expérience nord-américaine avec les Aires Conservées par des Communautés (ACC) est basée sur des traditions diverses, des arrangements variés de possession de terres et sur la gestion par des communautés autochtones aussi bien que locales. Nous découvrons dans cet article deux types d'ACC très différents: l'exemple des forêts gérées par des communautés dans la région de la Nouvelle Angleterre aux Etats-Unis ; et la gestion traditionnelle des territoires indiens dans la région du Labrador, Canada. Les exemples cités dans cet article démontrent l'existence d'une série d'arrangements de nature juridique qui ont pour but de favoriser l'accès des communautés à la prise de décision, ainsi que les valeurs liées aux ressources vitales. L'ampleur de la gestion de ces zones dépasse les frontières politiques et institutionnelles, géographiques aussi bien que les différents échelons gouvernementaux. Ces exemples américains et canadiens illustrent la contribution des ACC à l'autodetermination locale, à la vitalité économique et à l'entretien des traditions culturelles, tout en conservant les ressources naturelles importantes. En même temps, ces exemples accentuent le rôle important que les ACC peuvent jouer dans la conservation à une plus grande échelle, en rattachant d'autres aires protégés et en assurant la cohésion au sein d'un paysage plus ample.

Redécouvrir les aires conservées par des communautés dans l'Asie du Sud-est : l'initiative des peuples pour inverser la perte de biodiversité

MAURIZIO FARHAN FERRARI

Dans plusieurs pays asiatiques du sud-est, à la suite d'une longue période de marginalisation et de la perte de contrôle des ressources naturelles, le peuple autochtone et les communautés locales ont récemment pris l'initiative concrète de tenter de récupérer leurs droits aux ressources locales, et de rétablir diverses formes de gestion des ressources par les communautés. Cet article fournit des informations sur le statut et les tendances des aires conservées par des communautés (ACC) dans la région, et examine certains des principaux défis à surmonter afin de parvenir à identifier et soutenir les ACC.

Aires conservées par des communautés en Amérique du Sud

GONZALO OVIEDO

Les communautés rurales autochtones et locales d'Amérique du Sud ont un passé riche de pratiques de conservation de certaines zones terrestres et aquatiques dans leurs domaines traditionnels. Ces pratiques se sont perpétuées grâce à des régimes spéciaux de gestion des terres qui limitent l'intervention humaine. De tels secteurs, souvent appelés de façons différentes : aires conservées par des communautés, réserves communales, emplacements sacrés, réserves autochtones, territoires indigènes protégés, etc … sont de vrais secteurs protégés qui ont été créés et qui sont gérés en respectant les droits coutumiers. Durant les deux dernières décennies, de telles expériences de conservation se sont développées sous de

nouvelles formes, se servant des changements politiques et législatifs qui ont été mis en œuvre dans la plupart des pays de la région. Un nombre significatif d'aires protégées par des communautés est maintenant intégré dans les systèmes de réseaux officiels des aires protégées – une tendance qui s'accroit nettement.

Bien que ce sujet soit insuffisamment approfondi, les connaissances actuelles sur les aires conservées par des communautés dans la région indiquent qu'elles ont beaucoup d'avantages. Elles couvrent de vastes domaines d'écosystèmes en état critique comme les forêts amazoniennes, elles forment des liens essentiels avec le paysage, elles représentent un éventail de valeurs (naturelles, culturelles, spirituelles et économiques) ce qui augmente leurs importances aux yeux des communautés, et elles sont gérées efficacement par des communautés entières. Mais elles sont également menacées par des facteurs externes multiples, tels que le changement culturel touchant particulièrement la jeunesse, et par le manque de ressources et de pouvoir. Il y a donc un besoin pressant de mobiliser des forces et des ressources dans le but de les aider.

Aires conservées par des communautés en Asie du Sud

NEEMA PATHAK

La documentation actuelle sur les initiatives des communautés en Asie du Sud suggère que les aires conservées par des communautés (ACC) sont bien étendues. Cet article démontre la représentation actuelle de ces efforts, ce qui les fait aboutir ou échouer, et les leçons tirées de ces derniers dans le but de développer des modèles de conservation plus appropriés pour la région. On découvre également succinctement le genre de développement économique vers lequel ces initiatives se dirigent, et pour lequel la conservation de la biodiversité est un élément intégré plutôt qu'une contrainte.

Gestion de ressources marines par les communautés du Pacifique du Sud

HUGH GOVAN, ALIFERETI TAWAKE ET KESAIA TABUNAKAWAI

Les démarches de conservation et de gestion des pêcheries souvent favorisées au niveau général ont eu très peu d'impacts sur le Pacifique du sud, en raison de la situation spéciale de ces îles-nations. La gestion de ressources marines par les communautés basée sur des connaissances à la fois traditionnelles et modernes, et développée à un niveau local, semble être la clé de l'avenir. Le lien étroit que les peuples des îles Pacifiques ont développé avec l'océan pendant des millénaires fait partie intégrante des richesses culturelles de la région. En dépit de l'érosion des cultures et des ressources naturelles lors de ces dernières décennies, la compétence et la connaissance des communautés côtières semblent fournir les bases fondamentales pour parvenir à un développement vital durable des ressources marines. Les partenariats entre les communautés, les organisations non-gouvernmentales (ONG) et les gouvernements sont un rouage important, à condition que les aspirations des communautés soient traitées comme la force fondamentale unique pour ce type de gestion, et que leurs droits légitimes ou « *de facto* » soient respectés.

Aires conservées par des communautés dans quelques pays sud-Africains

PHILLIPA HOLDEN, DAVID GROSSMAN ET BRIAN JONES

La politique et les changements législatifs d'un certain nombre de pays sud-africains ainsi que les efforts soutenus de certaines organisations non-gouvernmentales (ONG) et organisations communautaires ont vu la progression des Aires Conservées par des Communautés (ACC) dans la région lors de ces dernières décennies. L'octroi des droits des communautés locales, dans un nombre croissant de cas, leur a donné le pouvoir de gérer les terres et les ressources naturelles, y compris la faune et la flore sauvages. De ce fait, ces communautés encouragent les objectifs régionaux et généraux de préservation de la nature tout en fournissant des opportunités pour le développement socio-économique durable à un niveau local. La formation de communautés de conservation et de secteurs de gestion de la nature, la co-gestion des aires protégés et les contrats de parcs ainsi que des services gouvernementaux et le partage de divers types de bénéfices deviennent de plus en plus répandus. Les obstacles à ce développement demeurent, et incluent un manque de compétence et de ressources, des mentalités conservatrices au sein de certains organismes gouvernementaux et écologiques, l'instabilité politique, la dynamique complexe de la communauté, et des régimes fonciers peu sûrs qui continuent à affaiblir les droits des communautés locales. Cependant, au fur et à mesure que les rapports de réussites augmentent et que les leçons sont retenues, les avantages que les ACC ont à offrir sont de plus en plus reconnus et acceptés par tous.

Resumenes

Áreas conservadas por comunidades: hacia la seguridad ecológica y del sistema de sustento

ASHISH KOTHARI

Las áreas conservadas por comunidades (ACC) se han revelado como un nuevo e interesante avance en conservación, y tienen el potencial para aumentar significativamente el área global bajo conservación especial. Estas áreas incluyen áreas protegidas indígenas o reservas comunitarias oficiales y reconocidas, pero también decenas de miles de emplazamientos que los gobiernos aún no han reconocido. También abarcan el espectro completo de categorías de áreas protegidas de la UICN. Hay muchas razones por las que las comunidades deben conservar los ecosistemas y la fauna y flora silvestres, entre otras, porque proporcionan grandes beneficios en cuanto a conservación y de sustento, así como sociales y políticos. Sin embargo, también se enfrentan a importantes amenazas y retos, y necesitan urgentemente reconocimiento y apoyo adecuado. En el presente artículo se proporciona información detallada sobre las clases de áreas conservadas por comunidades, su extensión y beneficios, las amenazas a las que se enfrentan, y las distintas formas en que pueden recibir apoyo.

Áreas indígenas protegidas en Australia

DERMOT SMYTH

A mediados de la década de 1990, el gobierno australiano puso en marcha un programa destinado a apoyar a los propietarios de tierras indígenas para que declararan voluntariamente sus tierras áreas indígenas protegidas y las gestionaran como tales. El programa estaba concebido para ayudar a Australia a alcanzar su objetivo de establecer un sistema de áreas protegidas completo que incorporase entornos de todas las biorregiones, algunos de los cuales sólo existen en tierras propiedad de los indígenas. En la actualidad, hay 20 áreas indígenas protegidas en Australia, que comprenden alrededor del 20% del área terrestre protegida de Australia.

El programa de áreas indígenas protegidas proporciona financiación para varias actividades: para permitir a los propietarios de tierras indígenas celebrar reuniones consultivas y buscar asesoramiento independiente para considerar el declarar sus tierras como áreas indígenas protegidas; para desarrollar planes de gestión si se realiza dicha declaración y para apoyar la implementación del plan.

Actualmente, las agencias de conservación estatales se muestran reacias a incluir áreas indígenas protegidas en sus registros de áreas protegidas porque éstas no están dedicadas a la conservación a perpetuidad en virtud de la legislación. No obstante, todas las áreas indígenas protegidas declaradas se ajustan a la definición de área protegida de la UICN, y están demostrando ser un mecanismo adecuado para que algunos grupos indígenas gestionen los valores naturales y culturales de su tierra, al mismo tiempo que contribuyen de manera significativa al Sistema de Reservas Naturales de Australia.

Áreas de conservación comunitaria en América Central: reconocerlas a fin de conseguir equidad y una buena gobernanza

VIVIENNE SOLÍS RIVERA, PATRICIA MADRIGAL CORDERO, MARVIN FONSECA BORRÁS, HUGH GOVAN Y VERA VARELA

Mesoamérica es un puente-filtro ecológico entre América del Norte y del Sur con una flora y fauna únicas, y una geomorfología heterogénea que se extiende desde las zonas costeras hasta más de 4.000 metros por encima del nivel del mar. Tiene más de 100 grupos étnicos que aún se enfrentan a la marginalización social, económica y jurídica. Desde la década de 1990, en distintos congresos internacionales y regionales se ha abordado la necesidad de reconocer estos valores de la región, así como el derecho territorial de los indígenas y su acceso a sus recursos naturales. Además, ha surgido el dilema de la conservación de la biodiversidad frente a los intereses humanos en las estrategias convencionales de áreas protegidas, que se convirtió en uno de los principales temas de debate en el Segundo Congreso Mesoamericano de Áreas Protegidas celebrado recientemente en la Ciudad de Panamá. En el presente artículo se proporcionan ejemplos del progreso realizado en la conservación comunitaria en Panamá, Honduras y Nicaragua, y se establece la necesidad de que los gobiernos, las Organizaciones No-Gubernamentales (ONGs) y los pueblos indígenas trabajen en acuerdos y políticas concretos para una buena gobernanza en lo referente a conservación.

Áreas conservadas por comunidades en el Cuerno de África

MARCO BASSI

El Cuerno de África presenta un extraordinario mosaico de pueblos y subgrupos diversos. En su interacción con el medio ambiente, algunos de ellos han desarrollado características culturales y mecanismos de gobernanza indígenas para garantizar el uso sostenible de los recursos naturales y la conservación de la biodiversidad.

En esta región, la conservación indígena es a menudo totalmente informal y no se reconoce. Se encuentra en grave peligro, pero todavía constituye un activo de conservación extraordinario en un contexto en el que los métodos convencionales no están consiguiendo buenos resultados. Aplicar el sistema de las áreas conservadas por comunidades (ACC) en este caso significa principalmente reconocer, apoyar, valorizar y formalizar sistemas de gobernanza indígenas (o tradicionales) y sistemas de tenencia tradicionales basados en el bien común. Por desgracia, los derechos colectivos apenas gozan de reconocimiento en las legislaciones de estos países.

En el caso del paisaje conservado de Borana, el artículo ilustra los mecanismos de conservación indígenas y los retos actuales. También explica algunas iniciativas interesantes que han ayudado a valorizar la conservación indígena incluso sin políticas estatales concretas para favorecer las ACC.

Áreas conservadas por comunidades: la experiencia de América del Norte

JESSICA BROWN, MARTHA WEST LYMAN Y ANDREA PROCTER

La experiencia norteamericana con las áreas conservadas por comunidades (ACC) se basa en diversas tradiciones y disposiciones para la propiedad y gestión de la tierra por parte de los indígenas así como de las comunidades locales. En este artículo, estudiamos dos tipos muy distintos de áreas de conservación comunitaria: el ejemplo de los bosques comunitarios de la región de Nueva Inglaterra en Estados Unidos; y la gestión tradicional de las tierras aborígenes en Labrador, Canadá. En los ejemplos que aquí se exponen, una serie de disposiciones sobre tenencia garantizan el acceso de la comunidad a la toma de decisiones y los valores asociados con los recursos importantes. La gobernanza de estas áreas traspasa las fronteras políticas e institucionales geográficamente y a través de los sectores y niveles de gobierno. Estos ejemplos de Estados Unidos y Canadá ilustran la contribución de las ACC a lograr la autodeterminación local, la vitalidad económica y el mantenimiento de las tradiciones culturales, conservando a la vez los recursos naturales importantes. Al mismo tiempo, hacen hincapié en la importancia del papel que las ACC pueden desempeñar en la conservación a mayor escala, vinculando otras áreas protegidas y reforzando los vínculos dentro del paisaje en el que se ubican.

Redescubriendo las áreas conservadas por comunidades en el sur-este de Asia: iniciativa de los pueblos para frenar la pérdida de la biodiversidad

MAURIZIO FARHAN FERRARI

En algunos países del sur-este asiático, después de una larga historia de marginalización y pérdida de control sobre los recursos naturales, los pueblos indígenas y las comunidades locales han intentado recientemente recuperar sus derechos sobre los recursos locales y establecer diversas formas de gestión comunitaria de los recursos. El presente artículo proporciona información sobre la situación y las tendencias de las áreas conservadas por comunidades (ACC) en dicha región, y analiza algunos de los principales retos que hay que superar a fin de conseguir el reconocimiento y apoyo de las ACC.

Áreas conservadas por comunidades en Sudamérica

GONZALO OVIEDO

Las comunidades indígenas y rurales locales en Sudamérica tienen una historia y práctica ricas en lo referente a la conservación de las áreas de tierra y agua en sus dominios tradicionales, a través de regímenes especiales de gestión con una intervención humana limitada. Dichas áreas, que reciben distintos nombres como áreas conservadas por comunidades (ACC), áreas protegidas en comunidad, reservas comunitarias, sitios sagrados, reservas indígenas, territorios indígenas protegidos, etc. son verdaderas áreas protegidas creadas y gestionadas según las leyes tradicionales. Durante los últimos veinte años, dichas experiencias en conservación han adoptado nuevas formas, haciendo uso de los cambios legales y en las políticas operados en la mayoría de los países de la región. Un número importante de áreas de conservación comunitaria están integradas ahora en sistemas formales de áreas protegidas, una tendencia que está creciendo sensiblemente.

Aunque es un tema sobre el que no se ha investigado suficiente, el actual conocimiento sobre las áreas de conservación comunitaria en la región indica que tienen muchos puntos fuertes: cubren áreas extensas de ecosistemas críticos como los bosques del Amazonas, están vinculadas de forma fundamental al paisaje en el que se ubican, tienen una amplia serie de valores (naturales, culturales, espirituales, económicos) que aumentan su importancia para las comunidades y se gestionan eficientemente ya que dependen del compromiso de comunidades enteras. Pero también se ven amenazadas por múltiples factores externos, por el cambio cultural que afecta especialmente a los jóvenes, y por la falta de recursos y poder. Es urgente movilizar fuerzas y recursos para apoyarlas.

Áreas conservadas por comunidades en el Sur de Asia

NEEMA PATHAK

La cada vez mayor documentación sobre iniciativas comunitarias en el Sur de Asia sugiere que las áreas de conservación comunitaria se están extendiendo. En este artículo se explica la interpretación actual de estas iniciativas, qué hace que tengan éxito o que fracasen, y las lecciones que pueden aprenderse de ellas para establecer un modelo de conservación más apropiado en la región. También se analiza brevemente la clase de desarrollo económico hacia el que apuntan estas iniciativas, en el que la conservación de la biodiversidad es un elemento integral y no una limitación.

Gestión comunitaria de los recursos marinos en el Pacífico Sur

HUGH GOVAN, ALIFERETI TAWAKE Y KESAIA TABUNAKAWAI

Los distintos métodos para la gestión de la conservación y la pesca, a menudo promovidos a escala global, han tenido poco impacto en el Pacífico Sur debido a la situación especial de estas naciones insulares. La gestión comunitaria de los recursos marinos basada en el conocimiento moderno y tradicional, y desarrollada localmente parece ser el camino que se sigue. La estrecha relación que los pueblos de las Islas del Pacífico han desarrollado con el océano durante milenios es una parte fundamental de las ricas culturas de la región. A pesar de la erosión durante las últimas décadas tanto de la cultura como de los recursos naturales, la capacidad y el conocimiento de las comunidades costeras parece proporcionar el pilar fundamental para conseguir hacer del mar un medio de vida sostenible. Las asociaciones entre las comunidades, organizaciones no-gubernamentales (ONGs) y gobiernos son un mecanismo importante, pero es esencial que las aspiraciones de las comunidades se traten como la principal fuerza impulsora para este tipo de gestión y que se respeten sus derechos legales o *de facto* sobre los recursos.

Áreas conservadas por comunidades en algunos países del sur de África

PHILLIPA HOLDEN, DAVID GROSSMAN Y BRIAN JONES

Los cambios legislativos y en las políticas en una serie de países del sur de África junto con las campañas de ciertas organizaciones no-gubernamentales (ONG) y organizaciones de base comunitaria, han dado lugar a un aumento de las áreas de conservación comunitaria en la región durante las últimas décadas. En un cada vez mayor número de ejemplos, la transferencia de derechos a las comunidades locales les ha otorgado poder para gestionar la tierra y los recursos naturales, incluidas la flora y fauna silvestres, favoreciendo los objetivos de conservación regionales y globales brindando a la vez oportunidades para el desarrollo socioeconómico sostenible a escala local. La formación de áreas de conservación y de gestión de la fauna y flora silvestres comunitarias, la co-gestión de las áreas protegidas y los parques a contrato junto con las administraciones públicas, y el reparto de beneficios de distintos tipos cada vez son más frecuentes. Los impedimentos siguen siendo la falta de capacidad y recursos, las actitudes conservadoras dentro de ciertos organismos oficiales y de conservación, la inestabilidad política, la compleja dinámica comunitaria, y los regímenes de tenencia inseguros que siguen minando los derechos de las comunidades locales. Sin embargo, como las historias de éxitos aumentan y se aprenden las lecciones, todo el mundo reconoce y acepta cada vez más los beneficios que ofrecen las áreas de conservación comunitaria.

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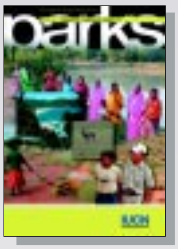

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