

Local participation in protected area management.
Opportunities and constraints Part I

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Introduction to Protected Areas and Conservation and Development Principles

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Background

The link between poverty reduction and environmental management, including the conservation of natural resources, is internationally recognised in policy instruments such as the Rio convention on biological diversity and the MDG

What is poverty?

Can be defined in economic terms and in terms of lack of assets, opportunities, lack of voice and empowerment, exclusion from decision making processes, vulnerability, lack of capacity...

- Poor people in particular depend on access to natural resources
- Poor people are often most vulnerable to environmental hazards and least capable of coping

What are protected areas?

IUCN's definition:

”an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal or other effective means”

IUCNs six categories of protected areas

- I. Strict nature reserve/wilderness area
- II. National park:
Ecosystem conservation and recreation
- III. Natural monument
Conservation of specific features
- IV. Habitat/species management area
Conservation through management intervention
- V. Protected landscape/seascape
Landscape/seascape conservation and recreation
- VI. Managed resource protected areas
Sustainable use of natural ecosystems

Why are protected areas important to poor people and development?

On the negative side, fortress conservation has resulted in

- Displacing people
- Loss of access to resources such as land, natural resource products and services etc

On the positive side,

- Protected areas (especially some categories) can provide these important products, services, jobs, revenue shares, payment for environmental services
- Tenure security
- Biodiversity – which is conserved for its value as a local livelihoods resource - and as a national and global public good

Why are poor people and development important to protected areas?

- The most biologically diverse regions are often found in the world's poorest regions
- There are specific threats from poor people such as encroachments, population increase, unsustainable harvesting etc
- "Increasing the benefits of protected areas and reducing their costs to local people can help mobilise public support and reduce conflicts and the enforcement costs of protected areas with poverty"

What does integrated conservation and development mean?

Protected areas that evolve towards more socially responsible models aiming at the involvement of local communities in protected area management

Examples of different ICPR approaches

Integrated Conservation and development projects

Compensation for lack of access, alternative income sources to avoid environmentally destructive practices

Establishing and maintaining buffer zones

Areas adjacent to protected areas, land use is partially restricted. Added layer of protection while benefiting neighbouring communities

Inclusive management approaches

Participatory planning: involving local communities in management, ensure their major stakes in decision making and that they benefit

Community conservation areas

Ownership control and management by indigenous peoples and local communities. Often customary tenure, and traditional institutions

Examples of problems related to integrated conservation and development projects

- Protected areas – and ICDP projects have and sometimes still are forced upon people
- There are often wide gaps between reality and ideals
- Most PA managers struggle with limited financial and human resources
- Equitable distribution of benefits is often a problem

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- Primary goal of most protected areas is still to conserve biological diversity and provide ecosystem services, not to reduce poverty.
- Need for a switch from biocentric ideology to an anthropocentric one?
- Focus on poverty may lead attention away from other important causes of biodiversity loss?