Module 7: Communities and Conservation

Forestry Training Institute

Tubmanburg, Liberia

Key Topics

- Participatory approaches to decision-making
- Social Surveys
- Conflict management
- Management of protected areas with community participation (participatory management)

READING

“Introduction to engaging stakeholders and mainstreaming biodiversity” (p. 156-173)

Communities and Conservation

- Social factors play a critical role in almost every conservation problem. There is a pressing need for conservation researchers and practitioners to understand both the ecological and human dimensions of their systems in order for projects to be successful.
- Many conservation professionals come from a natural science background with little training in or limited access to social research methodologies.

Communities and Conservation

Social advocates believe that:

1. Only initiatives related to poverty alleviation will lead to successful biodiversity conservation since poverty is a root cause of environmental destruction;
2. PAs have been frequently established at the expense of local communities (in and around PAs) through displacement and dispossession, and are responsible for perpetuating poverty by the continued denial of access to land and other resources; and
3. Even if parks do generate economic value, the distribution of these benefits is so skewed against poor rural people that the role of parks in local development is negligible, and they neither justly compensate for lost property and rights nor contribute to poverty alleviation.

Communities and Conservation

- With the establishment of Pas, indigenous communities are frequently denied their traditional rights and responsibilities for the stewardship of those resources.
- Communities adjacent to protected areas may suffer from crop-raiding animals or predators that kill their livestock. This in turn can result in resentment that threatens the survival of the PA through illegal incursions to collect fuelwood or to hunt, or through encroachment by agriculturalists or pastoralists.

Communities and Conservation

- PAs are expected to contribute significantly to economic development and alleviate human poverty in addition to fulfilling their primary mandate for biodiversity conservation.
- However, many believe that the goals of economic development and poverty alleviation strongly conflict with the goal of conserving biological diversity, and that protected areas cannot effectively fulfill a mandate beyond that of biodiversity conservation.
- In general, the conflicting mandates imposed on PAs pose significant challenges for their management and effectiveness. In particular, the relationship between parks and people will continue to dominate international and national dialogues on biodiversity conservation.

Integrated Conservation and Development Projects

- ICDPs represent one of the earliest approaches that aimed to integrate conservation with development in and around PAs.
- Although ICDPs vary considerably in form and size between sites, the underlying model throughout is to establish “core” protected areas in which uses are restricted and in the surrounding areas (buffer zones) promote socioeconomic development and income generation compatible with park management objectives.
- New models have started to incorporate elements of adaptive management, new types of partnerships with stakeholders, and integration of site-level work with policy initiatives and institutional development.

Community-based Conservation in Africa

- In Africa, community involvement in conservation has been promoted as an alternative to ‘fortress conservation” – defending protected areas (PAs) and wildlife from the depradations of people.
- Across Africa community involvement takes many forms. In some cases, it means trying to build community support for a state-run PA. In others, it means a vision of conserving wildlife, forests and other renewable natural resources on community land outside staterun PAs.

Community-based Conservation in Africa

- The involvement of local communities in conservation, known generally as “community conservation”, emerged as an alternative approach based on experiences in East and Southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Community Conservation has two main elements: (1) people in and around protected areas should participate in the management of natural resources; and (2) conservation objectives should be linked to local development needs.

READING

Hillers et al, “Community based conservation is needed for the survival of the endangered pygmy hippo.”

Community-based Conservation in Africa

- Large areas of land are under some form of community management across Africa. However, what is more important is the nature and quality of management taking place.
- Where proprietorship over land and or resources is strong and benefits are perceived to be significant, generally positive conservation impacts have been recorded.
- Where land and resource rights have been weak or insecure and benefits low, wildlife has been decreasing.

Community-based Conservation in Africa

A number of lessons emerge from recent reviews of community conservation in Africa. Success factors include:

- Provision of strong and secure rights over land and or resources
- Benefits are perceived by local people (rather than outsiders) as significant
- Capacity building of community management skills
- Support for good governance and participatory decision-making

Conflict in Communities

- Conflict exists to some degree in every community. The form and intensity of conflicts vary widely by place, and over time within each community.
- The ways in which communities and their members respond to conflicts also vary considerably. Significant diversity often exists within communities in terms of knowledge, opinion, material wealth, power, and status.
- Therefore, conflicts and the way they are handled should be examined from a social and historical perspective, with an understanding and appreciation of the range of local viewpoints.

Conflict in Communities

READING

Brottem and Unruh, “Territorial Tensions: Rainforest Conservation, Postconflict Recovery, and Land Tenure in Liberia”

Sources of Conflicts

- Conflicts are rooted in stakeholders' dynamic rights and interests: access, use, ownership, management, legal, and identity.
- These conflicts are manifested in various ways: poor decision-making, conflicts over ownership, boundary disputes, loss of forest cover, eviction of indigenous people, and illegal exploitation of natural resources.
- Another key aspect involves conflicting mandates of government and other institutions.

Sources of Conflicts

Conflicts can arise within a local community because…

- Local communities are not homogeneous, but composed of various subgroups of stakeholders.
- Differing interests or access to information of subgroups within communities can give rise to conflicts about land ownership, boundaries, and traditional authority.
- Intergenerational struggles for control over forests and trees are sometimes rooted in the long-term production cycles of these resources.
- Lack of transparency in benefits sharing.

Differences within Communities

- Rather than viewing communities as uniform entities, community forestry is concerned with identifying levels of differentiation within and between communities, in order to address the needs and potentials of each group appropriately.
- In this context, there are several key categories for examining social and economic differences: gender, income levels, age, ethnicity, class or caste, religion, cultural traditions regarding resource use, etc.

Sources of Conflicts

- Conflicts also arise between the stakeholders of a local community and outside groups, such as logging companies, government, NGOs and nearby villages.

Conflict Management

- The process of **negotiation** is one of the most common forms of local-level dispute resolution, in part because it usually costs less than other methods, but also because it allows disputants to work out their own resolutions, often leading to more satisfying and enforceable settlements.
- The disputants seek to move beyond their impasse through discussion and persuasion, culminating in a collaborative decision.
- Negotiation may be combined with other techniques, including **mediation**, **conciliation**, and **arbitration**. It also often includes elements of ritual (ceremonies and appeals to divine justice) and theatre (dramatic rhetoric and unfolding suspense as the case plays itself out.

Stages of Conflict

Stages within the process of community forestry where conflicts may emerge and must be managed …

- Entry point: understanding who initiated a conflict and its causes
- Analysis of conflict: determine who needs to be involved, and the scale and boundaries of the conflict.
- Broader engagement of stakeholders: raising public awareness about the conflict management effort, sharing the preliminary analysis of the conflict, etc.
- Stakeholder analysis of conflict: identify key stakeholders or groups to involve in conflict resolution.

Stages of Conflict

Stages within the process of community forestry where conflicts may emerge and must be managed …

- Assessment of conflict management options: assess the various options available for managing the conflict and devising a response and strategy for achieving stakeholder interests.
- Negotiation of agreements: based on the individual and shared needs and interests that have been identified.
- Evaluation, learning and conflict antic*ipation*: identify necessary changes to support improved governance in community-based forestry.

Differences within Communities

- Marginalized groups (such as women) are disadvantaged by insecure access and property rights to forest, tree and land resources, by discrimination and bias in the provision of services including credit and technology, and by exclusion from decision-making at household, community and national levels.
- Marginalized groups disproportionately bear the costs of tree and forest management, realize only a fraction of the benefits and tend to be enlisted for decision making only when forest and tree resources are degraded.
- Moreover, lack of formal education, employment and personal networks makes marginalized individuals poorly placed to influence resource allocation or research.

Why Gender Matters in Conservation

- Despite a wealth of studies demonstrating the critically important roles women play in managing natural resources, women's contributions remain underappreciated.
- Women are traditionally the main collectors of fuel wood, medicinal and aromatic plants and other non - timber forest products (NTFPs) from forest and agroforestry landscapes.
- Their participation in decision making at household and community levels, although limited, has been demonstrated to improve forest regeneration, increase crop yields, improve financial management and prioritize funding for pro-poor and empowerment programs.
- Typically, women in forest communities generate more income from forests compared with men.

Definitions of Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Indigenous Knowledge: a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.

- Indigenous or traditional knowledge refers to the know-how and practices maintained and developed by peoples, generally in rural areas, who have extended histories of interaction with the natural environment.
- Indigenous or traditional knowledge is part of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, practices for using resources, ritual, and spirituality.

Definitions of Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Indigenous knowledge provides the basis for local-level decision-making about many fundamental aspects of day-to-day life such as:

- hunting, fishing, gathering
- agriculture and husbandry
- food production
- water
- Health, and
- adaptation to environmental or social change.

Definitions of Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Indigenous Knowledge is:

- Locally bound, indigenous to a specific area.
- Culture- and context-specific.
- Non-formal knowledge.
- Orally transmitted, and generally not documented.
- Dynamic and adaptive.
- Holistic in nature.
- Closely related to survival and subsistence for many people worldwide.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

- In indigenous knowledge systems, there are three components:
  - local observational knowledge of species and other environmental phenomena
  - practices for carrying out resource use activities
  - beliefs regarding how people fit into or relate to ecosystems.
- In short, traditional knowledge is a knowledge-practice-belief complex (Berkes 1999).

IK and Forest Management

- Forest peoples interact with their environment and make their livelihoods within their own framework of norms and values, beliefs, social relations, and institutions.
- There exists a diversity of local or traditional practices for ecosystem management. These include multiple species management, resource rotation, succession management, landscape patchiness management, and other ways of responding to and managing ecological change.
- Social mechanisms behind these traditional practices include a number of adaptations for the generation, accumulation, and transmission of knowledge including:
  - the use of local institutions to provide leaders/stewards and rules for social regulation;
  - mechanisms for cultural internalization of traditional practices; and
  - the development of appropriate world views and cultural values.

IK and Forest Management

READING

Fouladbash and Currie, “Agroforestry in Liberia: household practices, perceptions and livelihood benefits”

Flora Fauna International, “Why not Alternative Livelihoods?”

Traditional Forest Resource Management

- Traditional forest management practices varied between communities according to social organizations that were largely based on egalitarian principles and kinships, and where disputes were settled through negotiations and/or inter-clan and tribal wars.
- The pattern of land use was established on a clan (tribal) system in which rights of cultivation and other agricultural land-use rights originated with secular or spiritual chiefs and leaders.
- These leaders controlled land use, its allocation for cultivation, wood harvesting, access to wildlife resources, and their inheritance by kinship.
- Customary policies were clearly understood and provided a sense of ownership among local communities.
- Low population densities, use of simple tools and technologies, and limited movement allowed the forests to meet the subsistence needs in a more or less sustainable way.

Traditional Forest Resource Management

- Traditional management systems have precise control instruments and mechanisms based on shared norms, values, and regulations rooted in community-specific customary laws.
- Rules and regulations governing resource exploitation can promote sustainability and environmental conservation. Unwritten and informal taboos, rituals, and rules regulate interactions between individuals and the natural environment.
  - Many traditional management systems contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through a variety of practices, including the use of more varieties, species, and landscape patches than do modern agricultural production and silvicultural systems.

Traditional Forest Resource Management

- Struggles for land and its resources between competing stakeholder groups were historically settled through negotiations and/or wars.
- The sanctity of institutional curbs such as the guidelines on the use of sacred areas helped to regulate societal attitudes towards nature. These values supported the evolution of social relationships to manage conflicts.
- Spirit mediums controlled large ritual groves and protected forests where no one was allowed to hunt, cut trees, graze livestock or cultivate. This system of resource management and use endured for centuries due mainly to the strong links with the ancestors and low population densities, which helped to assure a sound ecological balance.

Traditional Forest Resource Management

- Communities practiced systems of sustainable production through practices such as coppicing, low impact harvesting, and rotational harvesting under the jurisdiction of tribal elders.
- Customary property relations have been under constant strain with the emergence of modern property ownership and use pattern. Traditional systems in themselves are not the answer to present day forest malaise. Rather, they illustrate systems that worked to some degree in the past, but usually under different social and ecological conditions than today, and particularly under much lower population pressure.
- Many of these practices can, with some modifications, provide useful lessons in the development of community forest user groups.

Traditional Resource Tenure

- Traditionally, land parcels were recognized by ridges, streams and rivers and ownership was vested in the clan chief/leader/council of elders.
- The community generally held the land with clearly defined spatial and temporal use-rights allocated to its members. Accordingly, indigenous tenure systems often provided high levels of tenure security.
- Intergenerational transfer of family rights proceeded under the control of the community through its decision-making body, according to prevailing rules of succession.
- But indigenous natural resource tenure systems were rarely static: a notable degree of change occurred over time, often in response to social and economic changes, new technologies, natural calamities, migration and population changes, and war.

Traditional Resource Tenure

PRACTICUM: Documenting Local Knowledge

The class will visit a local community, and ask the residents about their uses of nature.

Divide the responses into categories.

What categories are most important to local people, and what values are attached to them?

Stakeholder Consultation

The following types of stakeholders may be relevant to the biodiversity baseline:

- Indigenous groups
- Community groups
- Recreational users
- Hunters/fishers
- Farmers
- Governments
- Scientists and academics not serving as expert advisors
- NGOs that are locally active on the issues of biodiversity, community development, and other related concerns.

Stakeholder Consultation

- Local knowledge can reveal important information relevant to understanding the biodiversity values and/or ecosystem services by project-affected communities within the project area.
- Stakeholder consultation can help ensure that stakeholders support the scope and design of the protected area, increasing the likelihood that they will support conservation.

Who is a stakeholder?

- The people and organizations who are involved in or affected by an action or policy and can be directly or indirectly included in the decision making process.
- Anyone who is a decision maker, is responsible for implementation, is able to block or impede, is able to assist, etc.

Why engage multiple stakeholders?

Why engage multiple stakeholders?

- Yields multiple sources of information
  - Potential to build a better plan and higher quality decisions
  - Opportunity to weigh alternatives
  - Early feedback and gather consensus prior to decision
  - Solutions better suited for the social and cultural context

- Prevents later conflict or non-compliance
  - Participants have a voice and are heard

- Promotes an ethical and democratic process
  - Facilitates empowerment, trust, and equity
  - Promotes social (collaborative) learning

Stakeholder Consultation

PRACTICUM: Assessing local community conservation values

i. The class may visit a community close to an area targeted for ecotourism/nature conservation. Gather information about local people's knowledge and behaviors regarding the area.

ii. Students will be divided into small groups and assigned a protected area. Each group will briefly describe their protected area and the communities around it. They will then draft a series PA management, particularly measures that can benefit local people and the protected area.

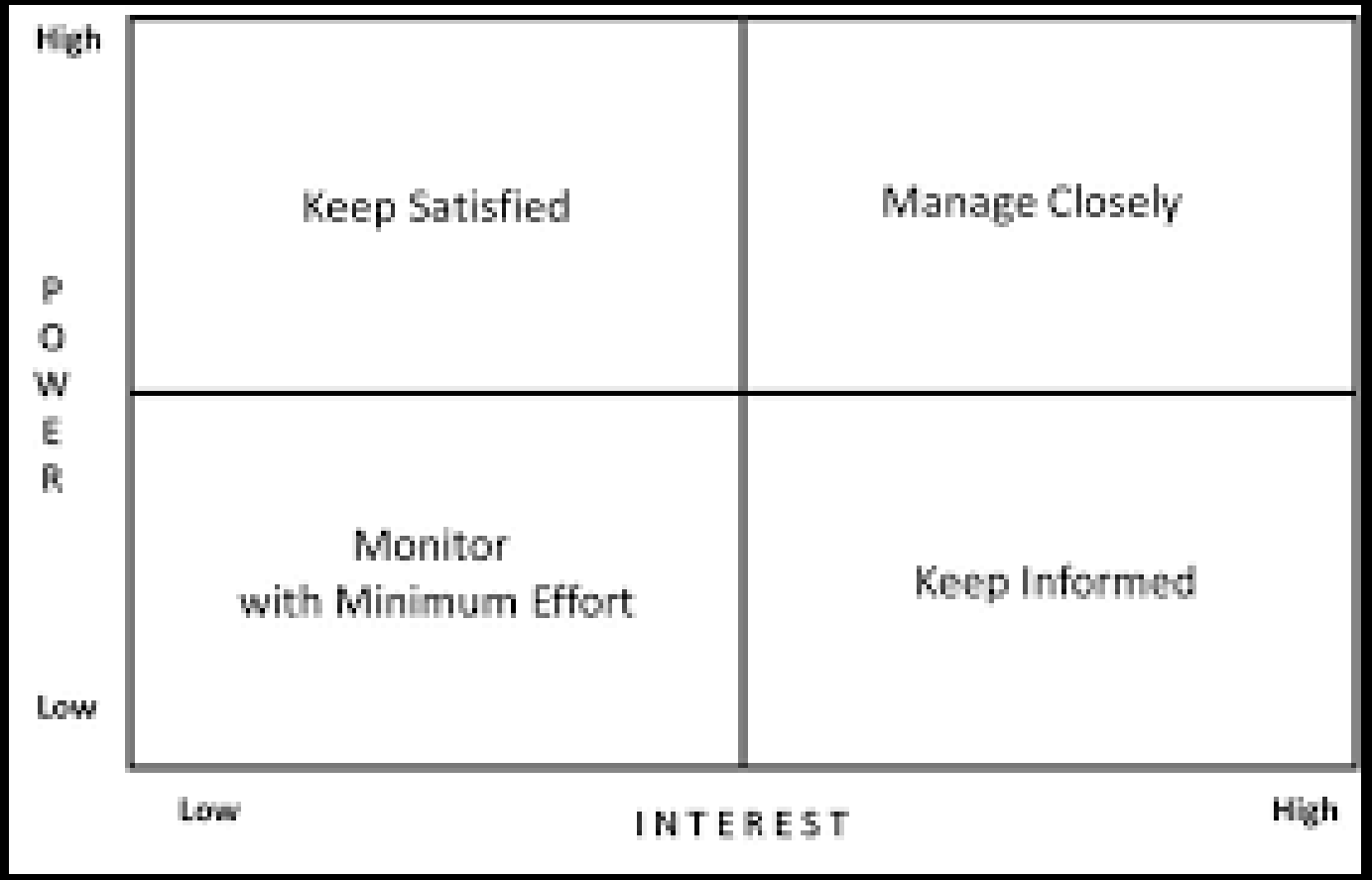
Collaborative learning is [a] goal of stakeholder involvement. Through learning, stakeholders can begin to understand one another, resolve conflict, and develop shared visions and creative solutions.

Potential Stakeholders

- Local officials/decision makers
- Key business groups
- Community organizations
- Community residents
- Technical experts
- Others?

Stakeholder Grid

- Plot each stakeholder by relative interest in the proposal, and their influence on the process
- Where would you plot the stakeholders of your project?



Principles of Engagement

Stakeholders agree to hold open and fair deliberations

Integrity – openness and honesty about purpose of engagement;

Inclusion – a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;

Deliberation – sufficient and credible information for dialogue, space to weigh options, and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities;

Influence – input in designing how they participate; policies and services that reflect their involvement

Using a Facilitator

Facilitation: the act or process of assisting a group to focus its energies to accomplish a given task

- The facilitator may be a non-stakeholder, or a stakeholder willing to forego defending any single position

- Roles, responsibilities, skills:
  - Manages the process
  - Group problem solving
  - Conflict resolution
  - Guides decision, does not make it

Strategies for Face-to-Face Meetings

- Prior outreach
- Organize a public forum
- Establish rules of engagement
- Consider a facilitator

Strategies for Face-to-Face Meetings

- Facilitated discussion
- Scenario planning
- Capacity development
- Participatory Mapping

Common Challenges of Community Engagement

- Excessive focus on the procedure
- Project is too large/complex for decision makers
- No commitment for implementation
- Stakeholders left out; hidden stakeholders not identified

Key Factors for Successful Outcomes

- How stakeholders are identified
- How diverse values are integrated
- The timing and degree of engagement
- The motivation of the stakeholders
- The presence of effective leadership
- A commitment to building trust

Review

1. Identify **potential stakeholders**
   - Who is a stakeholder?
   - Why engage multiple stakeholders?

2. Conducting a formal **stakeholder analysis**
   - Understand/analyze the **interests and influence** of each stakeholder

3. Facilitating inclusive **stakeholder engagement**
   - Strategies for face-to-face meetings