

Working with communities to achieve conservation goals

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Presentation overview

- How are local communities incorporated into conservation initiatives?
- What are the likely effectiveness of these changing practices on biodiversity conservation?
- What are some of the problems associated with these approaches?
- How might we secure more effective strategies of working with communities to achieve conservation goals?

Approaches to including communities in conservation

Community Based Conservation (CBC)

- Inclusion of local people in planning & implementation generates 'ownership' of natural resources & 'accountability' vis a vis resource use
- Assumes this will encourage sustainable resource management.

Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs)

- Provide economic & social development opportunities in exchange for, or as compensation for, biodiversity protection
- Underlying assumption here is that poor resource access drives environmental degradation (questionable)

Communities – who or what are they, and why is this important?

Commonly assumed members have similar beliefs and needs, and will act cooperatively for the good of the group.

But

Within any group access to & control of resources is influenced by age, sex, livelihood, resources, hierarchy & political structures.

Inclusion/exclusion from target community has implications for:

1. Access to benefits
2. Composition of co-management committees
3. Representation in decision-making process

Can CBC and ICDPs deliver?

Biodiversity Conservation

- The Community Baboon Sanctuary, central Belize (Alexander, 2000)
- The Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal (Bajracharya et al., 2005)

Social & Economic Development

- Some success in delivering revenue-sharing & income generation, but don't necessarily produce a change in people's use of targeted habitats/species
- **Promote positive attitudes towards conservation & agencies**

Shortfalls of CBC & ICDP approaches

1. Identifying & delineating communities
2. Magnitude & guarantee of benefits to communities
3. Transparency & management systems
4. Monitoring & evaluation
5. Time scale

Conclusions

- CBC & ICDPs – have not delivered reliable community development or biodiversity conservation
- But community participation, and generation of even small amounts of ‘benefits’ promote more positive views wildlife and conservation within local people
- Challenge – to develop more effective strategies & structures to secure reliable future for wildlife and local people.