



The ICCA
Consortium

Conserving nature via self-determination and resistance to destructive development in ICCAs

#WCC_9626 **Conservation Campus** Room: 304A
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Executive summary

Custodian indigenous peoples and local communities govern billion hectares of land and sea, and demonstrate conservation by local institutions and rules, outside and inside protected areas. Such communities also resist destructive change and uphold cultural, spiritual and livelihood values in their conserved territories (ICCAs), and often pay for it... This conservation campus has explored some conditions and initiatives that promise to secure the immense, invaluable and yet poorly recognized community conservation efforts. These conditions include 1. **Documentation and demonstration initiatives;** 2. **Securing of livelihoods through sustainable use of natural resources;** 3. **Diplomatic and legal action and policy advocacy;** 4. **Strengthening and self-empowerment of ICCA governance institutions;** and 5. **Active resistance to environmentally and socially destructing, imposed “development”.**



Background

Billions of hectares of forests, rangelands, wetlands, mountains, coastlands and sea are still—de jure and/or de facto—governed by the indigenous peoples and the traditional communities who have customarily governed and managed them for centuries. When such effective local governance is accompanied by close and unique connections between people and nature, and demonstrated conservation results, we speak of ICCAs—an abbreviation that refers to the territories and areas collectively conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities. Please note that “ICCA” is not a label but a lingua franca term for peoples and communities to communicate across different languages and cultures.

ICCAs are voluntary and self-directed conservation efforts that exist within and outside official protected areas and are increasingly understood as a paramount conservation phenomenon. The fact that countless indigenous peoples and communities sustainably govern and manage their ICCAs and are willing to defend them— often even at the price of enormous sacrifice— is one of the few “positive news” that emerged in the last decades in the world of nature conservation. Yet, some policy makers and conservationists are still poorly informed when it comes to embracing the conditions (policies, practices, capacities) that secure community conservation efforts. This event was designed to explore such conditions, draw lessons and inspire partnerships for action to strengthen ICCAs.

Format

The event focused on lessons learned regarding the strengthening and securing of local institutions that exercise collective rights and responsibilities for nature. The political, legal, cultural, social, economic and ecological conditions that support such institutions were examined on the basis of real examples and lessons from implemented policies, from Aarhus Convention to CBD Decisions, from UNDRIP to FAO Governance Guidelines.

Particular attention was devoted to the conditions by which communities strengthen themselves to foster and achieve conservation (protection, sustainable use and restoration/ biological enrichment), including by:

- Maintaining sovereignty over land, water, food, seeds, breeds, wildlife and their own self-defined cultures and well being;

- Demonstrating governance quality and vitality by taking and enforcing management decisions that are well informed, adapted to changing contexts, wise, equitable and effective, and provide leadership for the rest of society;
- Establishing “No Go” policies and practices to limit unwanted or unsustainable uses and confront national and transnational patterns of destructive development and wildlife crimes.

Speakers

The workshop introduced and was chaired by Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend. It began with three case study presentations about ICCAs from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The individual presentations can be found at: http://www.iccaconsortium.org/?page_id=4290

Malaysia Case Study: Komiok Joe (Keruan Organization), Komeok Joe (Save Rivers) and Jettie Word (The Borneo Project) with a movie clip by Ross Harison. Presentation on the Taman Damai Baram (Baram Peace Park)

Madagascar Case Study: Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy, Roger Samba and Eric Alison Jocely from Madagascar Locally Managed Marine Area Network (MIHARI). Presentation on a network of community-conserved marine and coastal areas.

Mexico Case Study: Heidy Zaith Orozco Fernandez, Odilón de Jesús López and David Castro Arvizu from Friends for Cabo Pulmo Conservation. Presentation about communities protecting the “Rio San Pedro y marismas nacionales”.

Members of the ICCA Consortium spoke about various aspects of ICCAs. The presentation can be found at: http://www.iccaconsortium.org/?page_id=4290

Introduction to ICCAs, their characteristics and properties: Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend and Carmen Miranda.

Threats and responses to ICCAs: Giovanni Reyes, Holly Jonas and Kim Sander Wright

Group Work

Participants chose to work in small groups to share knowledge and discuss what can and should be done to strengthen and secure ICCAs. The aim was to learn from one another but also to establish grounds for action, including in new forms of collaboration among participants and/or by supporting the initiatives of the ICCA Consortium in various regions. **Five working groups** answered questions with focus on the following topics:

1. Mapping, documentation, **demonstration and international listing of the conservation values** of community conserved territories and areas (with M. Taghi Farvar, Colleen Corrigan, Kim Wright and Terence Hay-Edie)
2. **Consolidating and securing livelihoods through sustainable use** of natural resources in conserved territories and areas (with Vivienne Solis, Tanya Conlu, Eli Enns)
3. **Diplomatic and legal action and policy advocacy** to enhance ICCA visibility and recognition outside & inside official protected areas (with Holly Jonas, Stan Stevens)
4. **Strengthening and self-empowering of ICCA governance institutions** (with Grazia BF, Giovanni Reyes, Jessica Campese)

5. **Resisting imposed development initiatives** by thoroughly understanding impacts and declaring and enforcing “No Go” areas through legal, diplomatic, communication and civil disobedience efforts and processes (with Carmen Miranda, Sutej Hugu, Isis Alvarez)

Discussed within each group were examples of what works within their communities, ideas about what needed to be done, and suggestions and commitments from individuals and organizations about what we can do. An individual from each group made a presentation to the plenary with a summary of their discussions. These are presented below.

Before the presentations, M. Taghi Farvar offered another presentation on the **Mission, organization, strategy and work results of the ICCA Consortium.**

Working Group Reports

1. **Mapping, documentation, demonstration and international listing of the conservation values of community conserved territories and areas** (with M.

Taghi Farvar, Colleen Corrigan, Kim Wright and Terence Hay-Edie)
Participants discussed the need for documentation of ICCAs in order to increase support from local, regional and international players and the importance of capacity building to allow communities to



lead their own conservation initiatives. They also found knowledge and process sharing within and between communities to be an important source of capacity and support.

Examples:

- **Central and West Africa:** ICCA recognition is difficult because often government and conservation groups don't believe ICCAs “demonstrate conservation value”. **Communities need a clear entry point for how to document/demonstrate the value of their efforts.** South/East Africa is easier to demonstrate in this regard.
- **Myanmar:** National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) report includes a paragraph on ICCAs. There is a conversation happening between Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Forestry Department and others “working on indigenous peoples and nature together.” In 1995 the IUCN funded work in Borneo for a mapping process to sketch maps of sacred sites and boundaries using compass, GPS, GIS and drones. In 2012 maps were submitted to state government for recognition. A June 2016 workshop was successful in mapping customary tenure and shifting cultivation. Indigenous Peoples Network is now two years old. Network is critical for support.
- **Iran:** 700 tribal confederacies – local, national, international recognition govern and manage their territories as ICCAs via local conservation measures (i.e. migration corridors) that have global value. The 15% of Iran's territory is today interested by a pilot project that support

transhumant peoples and is funded by the European Union. The indigenous systems of sustainable use are intact.

2. **Consolidating and securing livelihoods through sustainable use of natural resources in conserved territories and areas** (with Vivienne Solis, Tanya Conlu, Eli Enns). Participants included individuals from Malaysia, Costa Rica, Philippines, US, South Africa, Canada, Madagascar, China, Nepal.

What works? Traditional Knowledge; respect values (traditional governance values & elder values); networking and exchanges of experiences, best practices; partnerships developed by addressing shared issues; finding adequate governance pathways; direct action; community alliances



What should be done? Education and awareness within and across communities and government; work toward keeping alive traditional ways and practices; reduce gap in information-sharing technologies; strengthening recognition of women and youth in sustainable use; encouragement within communities and capacity building; working with government increasing dialogue; documenting sustainable use; supporting self-determination.

What can we do? “Do no harm” – decolonize conservation practice – divest; engage in solidarity exchanges (connect to keep alive traditional ways and practices); document and share information and experiences; find spaces to discuss role of ICCA Consortium on taking global policies to local, and local to global (toolkits & guidelines); engage in advocacy work with governments (COP 13 of CBD); question how we can be present; provide resources (funds etc.).

3. **Diplomatic and legal action and policy advocacy to enhance ICCA visibility and recognition outside & inside official protected areas** (with Holly Jonas, Stan Stevens). Participants in this group discussed the key elements of national legal recognition. Although case-specific, these typically include: legislation regarding human rights and indigenous peoples’ rights; legislation that regulate land, territories and resources; and legislation on conservation and protected areas. There were some questions and concerns about whether appropriate recognition and support for ICCAs comes from adapting international provisions into domestic law. It was agreed that a deeper analysis is required to ascertain that point, and that communication about national-level recognition is needed to contextualize experiences and challenges. Two advocacy tracks were discussed: the first promotes “good” examples and positive ICCA recognition; the second challenges the unsustainable conservation paradigm. Both require coalitions for advocacy and some in the group considered that significant funding would be needed.

Some recommendations coming from this group:

- Call upon all states to ratify the CBD, and enact the necessary legislation to ensure compliance, including the articles related to ICCAs.
- Call on all states to adopt the UNDRIP and abide by the principle of FPIC
- Make sure that “Consent” means “Consent” and that “No Consent” means “NO-GO”.
- Once a proposed development has been opposed, the decision should be NO-GO.
- The non-regression principle should also apply



4. **Strengthening and self-empowering of ICCA governance institutions** (with Grazia BF, Giovanni Reyes, Jessica Campese)

What works? Linking and exchanging within and across communities; building unity and solidarity via a variety of organizing activities; having an appropriate and diverse leadership that allows to locally “own” decisions; engaging in various efforts at symbolizing, remembering, communicating; seeking and obtaining appropriate recognition of ICCAs in various forms and levels (at best connected and integrated); engaging in all sorts of initiatives that strengthen the relationship with the land, the territory, the history of the community; all this can be rendered more effective by using appropriate technological innovations...

What should be done?

Raising self-awareness through initiatives such as mapping, realization of rights and self-determination, advocacy and planning. Recognize that work in modes of listening and exploration (radical listening) takes time. Facilitation of appropriate recognition and integration is required along with organizing and building solidarity, capacity, awareness and power.



What can we do? 2D and 3D mapping; walking and remembering; support networking, organising and coming together; listening; exchanges.

5. **Resisting imposed development initiatives by thoroughly understanding impacts and declaring and enforcing “No Go” areas through legal, diplomatic, communication and civil disobedience efforts and processes** (with Carmen Miranda, Sutej Hugu, Isis Alvarez)

What works? Exchanges of experiences; providing space for dialogue; alliance building; empowering indigenous people and local communities; blockades; access to information.

What should be done? Bring issues to indigenous peoples and into public agenda; capacity building; more national legislation such as the “Writ of Kalikasan” (Protection of one’s constitutional right to a healthy environment in Philippine Law); Legalization of the precautionary principles (in a national context); legally recognize ICCAs at a national level (ensure compliance).

What can we do? Build alliances; project national issues at the international level; network between indigenous peoples’ and local community ICCA initiatives and strategy agents.

The workshop concluded with each individual making a commitment to at least one thing they can do, individually or collectively, and sharing this with the whole group.

This report was prepared by Kim Sander Wright and Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend
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For more information : www.iccaconsortium.org










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