Self-strengthening of ICCAs

Dr. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend   gbf@iccaconsortium.org
www.iccaconsortium.org

The ICCA Consortium

"ICCAs" is an abbreviation for: territories and areas governed, managed and conserved by custodian indigenous peoples and local communities

or the "jewels", the "heart", the "seeds" ...

...of bio-cultural diversity around the world!

ICCAs— territories of life...
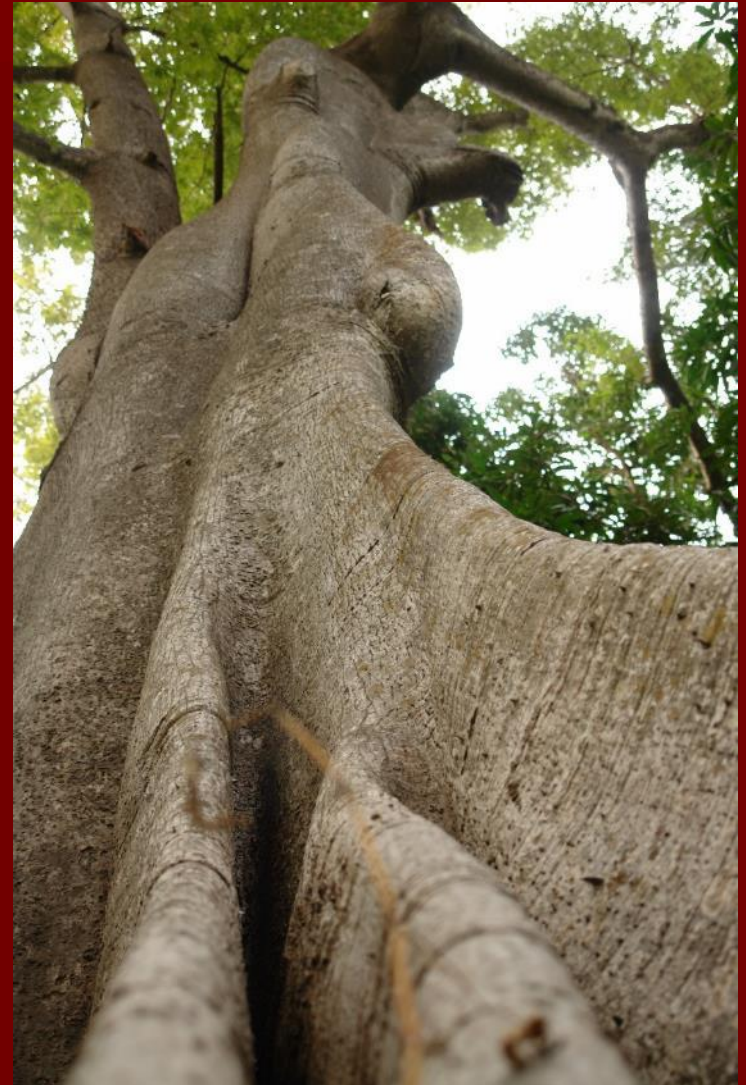
3 characteristics of ICCAs

1. A really strong bond between a community and its territory (terrestrial or marine)

2. The community is able to take and enforce decisions/ rules on its territory

3. These rules maintain the territory in good conditions for nature and for the community

Different types of ICCAs

- **Defined ICCAs**— these are ICCAs that currently exhibits all three characteristics - i.e., the strong community-territory connection, the well-functioning governance institution and the positive results for nature and the community

- **Disrupted ICCAs** – these are ICCAs had all three characteristics in the past, but do not today (though they may still have one or two) because of disturbances that the community believes it can still reverse or counteract

- **Desired ICCAs** – these are ICCAs that never had all three characteristics (though they may have one or two today) but have the *potential* of developing the three characteristics through new, or newly effective, community engagement

"emblematic" ICCAs– territories of life

- … intrinsic charisma and great potential to inspire others…
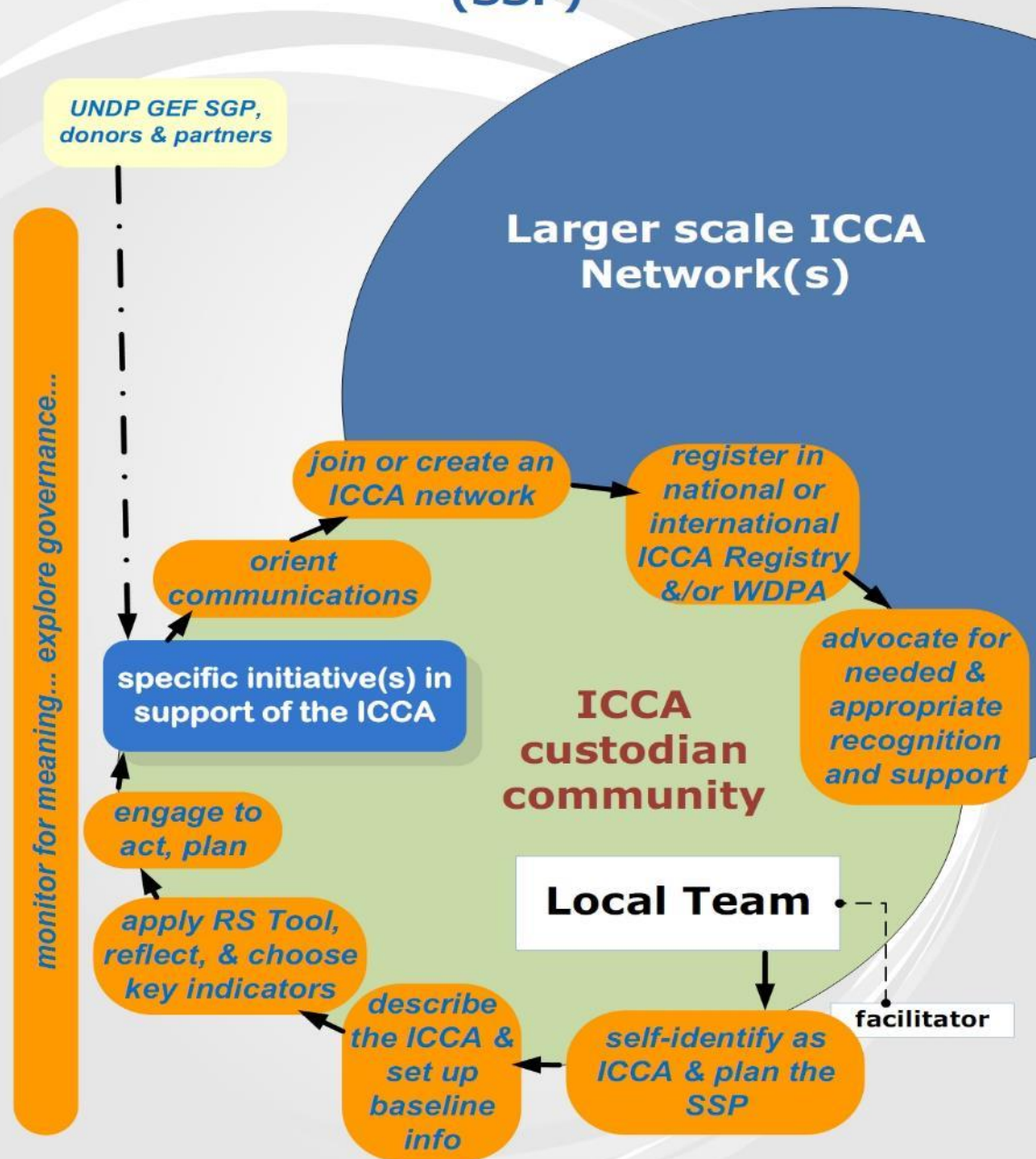
- …an example for other communities & allies…

If a community wishes to strengthen its ICCA, how could it do it?

Guidance is available (in three languages):

Self-Strengthening ICCAs – Guidance on a process and resources for custodian indigenous peoples and local communities

The ICCA self-strengthening process (SSP)

Larger scale ICCA Network(s)

UNDP GEF SGP, donors & partners

monitor for meaning... explore governance...

join or create an ICCA network

orient communications

register in national or international ICCA Registry &/or WDPA

specific initiative(s) in support of the ICCA

ICCA custodian community

advocate for needed & appropriate recognition and support

engage to act, plan

apply RS Tool, reflect, & choose key indicators

describe the ICCA & set up baseline info

Local Team

self-identify as ICCA & plan the SSP

facilitator

main method:

- Grassroots discussions on the basis of meaningful questions

...and indeed a facilitator does help...

ICCAs are as strong as:

- their custodian communities are strong, and demonstrate integrity and determination…

- the three ICCA characteristics are fully there

A process in seven steps:

1. Enhancing self-awareness and planning

2. Describing and documenting the ICCA

3. Assessing and analysing ICCA security and resilience

4. Developing initiatives

5. Taking and monitoring action

6. Communicating

7. Networking and advocating for appropriate ICCA recognition and support

first step… /module 1:
Enhancing self-awareness and planning

1. Make sure that the community has time to discuss and decide on its own…

2. « Become aware» of the existence of the ICCA and of its conditions (defined? disrupted? desired?...)

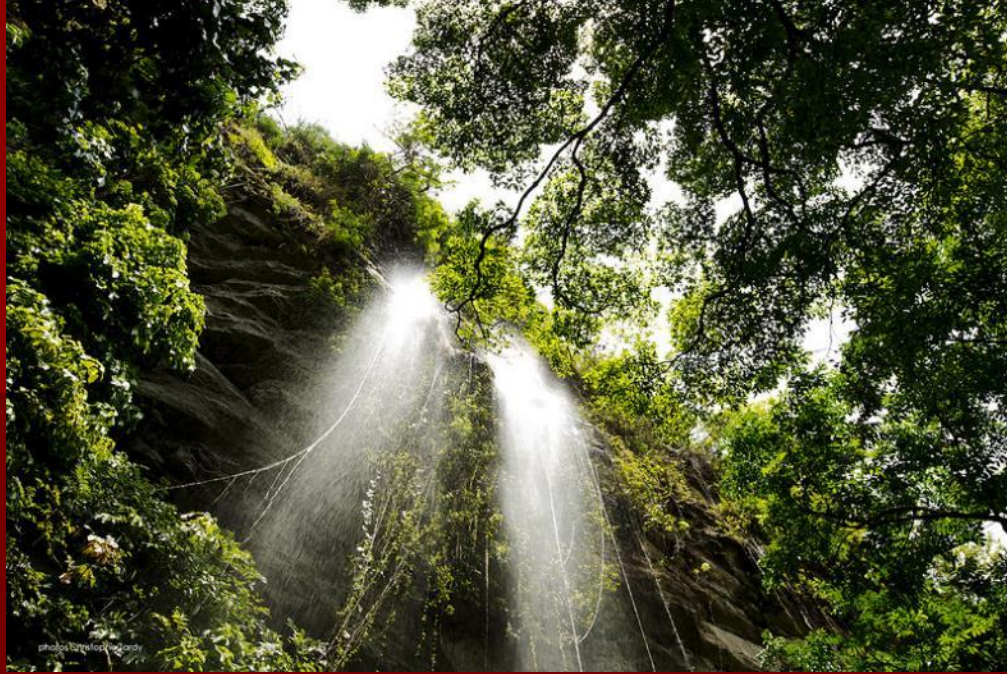3. Does it need strengthening? If yes, plan the steps to do so…

a- time to discuss and decide on its own

- no flash visit... several days to meet the elders, the custodians, the different groups in the community and identify the real leaders ...

- time for convivial and frank discussions, without much interfering with the life of the community ...

- offer the idea of autonomous empowerment process ... avoid talking about "projects"!

- if the community agrees, it identifies a local team that will organize and pilot the steps... and hopefully will include at least a few real leaders...

The true community leaders- individuals capable of bringing the community to give the best it can give... to be the strongest and best community it can be!

b- become aware of the ICCA

– local team (small informal group, spontaneous, passionate, not "small chiefs" but real leaders and facilitators)

organizes some grassroots discussions... at first small and then possibly larger...

– the right questions and the right attitudes are key!

☛ **Discussion questions:**

– The link between the community and its territory (history, specific boundaries, cultural, spiritual, economic relations...)

– Community governance (rules, system for making and enforcing decisions...

– Situation (status of the natural environment? welfare of the community?...)

– Is the ICCA defined, disrupted or desired?

c- Plan the steps

Planning is necessary and important, the community must be informed and in agreement… (FPIC)… but the plan must also be flexible, under the control of the community (process, activities, documentation, results, etc.)

☞ Discussion questions:

- Does the ICCA need strengthening? To which end? Which vision?
- Is the community ready to engage?
- How will it do that?
- Who will specifically engage to do what?

Module 2 : describing & documenting the ICCA

1. Describe the ICCA (characteristics, values…)

2. Gather, generate & organise the information necessary to properly document the ICCA

a- describe the ICCA

– the community develops its own understanding of what is needed to describe the ICCA, for instance:

☞ **Discussion questions**

- **territory**, boundaries, natural resources, seasonal variability...

  participatory maps!

- who is part of the **community**?
- **governance** and **management** system
- vision and life plan / **values** of the community

Importance of territory maps!

b- gather, generate and organise the information necessary to properly document the ICCA

– Systematised, purposeful information ⇨ documentation

– data: maps, videos, inventories, measurements, lists, observations, images, experimental results, visioning exercises, plans for the desired future, etc.

– documentation remains through time, can be shared, can demonstrate community knowledge, governance and management capacities, and rights!

– all data is property of the community, not of external facilitators!

– no data dissemination without community FPIC

☞ **Discussion question**

– What information can best document & demonstrate the importance of the ICCA?

– Under what form we need it?

– Shall we share our data?

– Why? How?

– What threats? What opportunities?

Module 3 : Understanding the ICCA

Analyse and assess the resilience and security of the ICCA, identify the key indicators to follow change

☞ **Discussion questions**

Use the simplified tool of analysis, listing 5 "building blocks" of resilience and security for an ICCA:

- the integrity and strength of its custodian community
- the link between the community and its territory
- the functioning of the governance institution
- the state of conservation of the territory
- the well-being of the community

– More interesting than the score: analysis of change, community perception of key indicators

– Strengths, weaknesses, problems, assets, threats, opportunities …

– Who, when, where, how … what indicators can best track change?

Module 4 : Developing initiatives

a. Conceive what is needed in support of the ICCA

- Identify agreed priorities on the basis of a good understanding of the situation / FPIC / engage the entire community...

- think about issues of ownership / access / autonomy / coping with threats, responding to opportunities ...

- do not immediately or only think about "financial resources" and projects, rather ask:

☛ **Discussion questions**

- Can the community implement this WITHOUT external help? (self-help = better way to promote community autonomy and independence!)

- Can outside help come from neighbouring communities?

- Only if really impossible to solve alone, prepare a project proposal for external help (example of the GSI)

b- if truly necessary, elaborate some project proposals

☛ **Discussion questions**

- What problems & opportunities do we face?
- What do we need to respond to those?
- Up to what point will the project help (what indicators are expected to show positive change?)
- Up to what point the community is willing to engage and invest in its own initiative?
- Local capacity & time to manage a project?
- Financial management? Reports? Communication? Technologies?
- Are there possible negative effects: internal conflicts, unexpected consequences?

a. Implement the initiatives and monitor the indicators chosen by the community, discuss issues regularly, learn from action…

- **Follow** your **own progress** = improve self-awareness, manage risks, learn from lessons
- Collect and analyse monitoring data = one of the elements of **self-strengthening**
- With GEF SGP support, the **monitoring report is mandatory** and needs to be studied by the community
- **Valid, relevant, specific, simple** indicators **sensitive** to the type of change desired towards the community's own vision and life plan…
- Understand the community's capacity to respond to threats and opportunities and, in general, to change
- Governance institutions must be studied from within (community general assembly, council of elders, municipal council) according to internal values

☞ **Discussion questions**

- Are we obtaining the **expected results**?
- Are those taking us to our **desired goals?**

- Is **governance functioning** well?
- **Quality of governance** (legitimacy and voice, vision, performance, responsibility, equity, respect for rights)
- **Vitality of governance** (effectiveness, dynamism, wisdom, appropriate response and ability to adapt, learn, create, innovate, etc.)

b.- advance towards the vision & life plan of the community

- Monitoring and evaluation protocol = set of indicators + plan to draw lessons from measured change

☞ **Discussion questions**

- What changes? What trends?
- Do these evolutions make sense for the community (root causes, likely consequences?)
- Does the ICCA actually contribute to the vision and life plan of the community?
- How better react to change?
- Clear strategic direction?
- Need specific initiatives, communication, partners, policies, advocacy?

Module 6 :
Communicating

Possible and at times very useful to communicate about the ICCA at various levels : internal, local, regional, national & international

- Many reasons to communicate:
  - enhance self-awareness of ICCA and its governance
  - inform others and inspire them ...
  - hear others and collaborate with them

☞ **Discussion questions**

- What to share?
- What audience?
- What aims?
- What risks & benefits?
- Two-way communication?

- Engage people with will and capacities
- Use collected documentation
- Use various and appropriate means (celebrations, markets, radio, videos, social media, meetings...)

Module 7 : Networking and advocating for appropriate ICCA recognition & support

1. **Network** with other custodian communities and partners

2. **Learn** more about ICCA international recognition

3. **Register ICCAs in a national and / or international registry** following a peer support and review process

4. **Assess** what is possible/ desirable in national legislation and policies

5. **Engage in** advocacy **for** appropriate forms of recognition and support

a.- Develop a national network among ICCA custodian communities (and others, as desired)

☞ **Examples of networks in**

www.iccaconsortium.org

- **links** and **alliances** for **mutual strengthening**
- start with **neighbouring communities** or other indigenous peoples in the region
- expand to **allies** and **peers** in larger circles nationally and internationally (eg ICCA International Consortium)

Types of network available at national level

- **working group**: rather informal
- **coalition or platform**: more formal
- **association or federation**: more formal, representation to other actors, can receive/ use $

- To promote a network = **organize a first meeting** with the representatives of the ICCA custodian communities... but the network must **emerge from a felt need**, not from external eagerness
- Network is needed for **peer support and peer review to register** in the ICCA International Registry of UNEP WCMC Cambridge
- The facilitator of the self-strengthening process can support the setting-up of the ICCA network and its advocacy work but should refrain from delving into advocacy content or methods

b.- Learn more about the
international recognition of ICCAs

– **ICCAs in international conservation policy** (IUCN, CBD…)— awareness of the conservation benefits they generate ⇨ strong advocacy argument

– **Rights to Self-Determination** of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, etc.)

– **Local collective territorial rights** based on local, national and global policies

– Seek advice and connections from relevant **civil society organizations (CSOs)** in the country and elsewhere (eg, those who have already participated in relevant international conventions and forums), **relevant UN agencies** or Government Representatives, CBD, Human Rights, Progressive Food Policy, GEF-UNDP MFP, ICCA Consortium …

c.- Register the ICCA in a national or international registry

- The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) offers the opportunity to register ICCAs directly in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)

- **WDPA** = database containing all types of protected areas defined by IUCN (incl. ICCAs)

- **ICCA Registry** = ICCA-specific database only

- To register an ICCA, the community completes an FPIC form and a questionnaire

- A peer support and peer review process is requested to ensure that it is an authentic ICCA, that the appropriate registration procedures, such as CLIP, have been followed, etc.

- The peer review process must be developed and conducted in each country by a genuine network of indigenous people and local custodians of ICCAs

- ICCA registries also exist at the national level (e.g. in Spain, the Philippines, Iran…)

- No automation: decision on a case by case basis, with community agreement (FPIC), and registration can also be kept confidential

☞ **Discussion questions**

- Do we want more visibility for ICCA?
- Is this for better internal appreciation?
- Is this for more security and protection because its values would be better recognised nationally?
- Is it to gain international relations?
- To obtain technical and financial support?
- Would it be better to remain invisible to the large public ?
- Are our aims better served by the ICCA Registry or the WDPA?

d.- Assess what is possible and available in the national legislation and policy

– **Various forms of legal and political recognition** of ICCAs are **possible**

– Recognition of **collective land rights** of indigenous or tribal peoples and **rights of use** of bio-cultural diversity (examples: Colombia, Philippines, India, Ecuador ...)

– Recognition of communities as **governance institutions** for conserved areas, sometimes integrated into the official system of protected areas (e.g. Australia, Mexico, Italy, Fiji…)

– Today, some countries are discussing whether communities could declare their territories as "ICCAs" and thereby prevent underground exploitation (examples: Philippines, Colombia)

Step 1: Understand what options are available/ possible under the legislation and policy of the country concerned

e.- Engage in advocacy for appropriate recognition and support

- Need for **legal, social and practical recognition** (eg for support of local management rules) and **appropriate support**
- Well-informed and transparent exploration of the benefits and risks of various options
- **Advocate together**, as **ICCA network**, for the passage or implementation of convenient laws and policies = interesting opportunity to link with other **civil society organizations** working on land rights, peasants, indigenous peoples, etc.
- Take advice from people and organizations with **legal expertise**

Discussion questions

Recognition of what? Collective property? Governance? Management? Use? Support to own rules? Capacity-building for custodian community? Anything else?...

Integrity and strength of the custodian community = the most fundamental condition for the existence and prosperity of an ICCA.

- External support should never compromise that!
- Financial support is dangerous…. it can become a burden for the community and bring discord (especially by corruption and jealousy).

...more questions for you:

- Concerning the ICCA of Vardahovit visited yesterday, would it be useful for its custodian communities to go through some of the process steps we have discussed?

- If yes, is there any specific step that seem essential to you?

...many thanks again, and please visit www.iccaconsortium.org