



## 1 PEOPLE AND PARKS IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

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Two international guests were invited to the conference to share learning's from people and parks projects around the world. These two presentations provided an international context regarding the global significance of people and parks type programmes, and highlighted some of the challenges and successes of these programmes internationally.

### 1.1 Community Conserved Areas in International Perspective

Mr Ashish Kothari from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) delivered an address outlining international trends in indigenous and community conservation areas (ICCAs). Mr Kothari noted the important work that has been done in South Africa with regard to developing sound People and Parks Programmes, and commended everyone's efforts. He noted South Africa has having many success stories worthy of international recognition and was pleased to return to South Africa to continue to learn and share experiences with us.

Mr Kothari's opening remarks highlighted the need to add "by the people" to the People and Parks slogan "conservation for the people, with the people". He outlined that such additional emphasis would further encourage an understanding of community based conservation as being about more than simply co-management, but also including conservation activities by communities capacitated to take responsibility for conservation on their own – within their communities as well as on claimed land.

Mr Kothari's address focused on outlining some of the most important principles governing community conservation areas and partnerships, providing examples of successful community conservation areas from around the world, looking at the international significance of community conservation areas and assessing the status of community conservation areas internationally.

This summary of Mr Kothari's presentation highlights some of the key learning's he presented focusing on the following key areas:

1. **Principles** governing community conservation areas and partnerships;
2. **International examples** of successful community conservation areas;
3. **International significance** of community conservation areas.
4. **Status** of ICCAs internationally.

#### 1.1.1 Principles governing community conservation areas and partnerships

The Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) outlined in the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) commits countries to engage with conservation activities within formal protected areas, as well as within indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs).



ICCAs include natural and modified ecosystems with significant biodiversity, ecological services and cultural values that are voluntarily conserved by indigenous and local communities through customary laws or other effective means.

Within these areas, it is important to understand what the term governance means? Who decides what is done, and who decides how it is done? In other words, who holds power, authority and responsibility with regard to indigenous/community conservation areas?

Governance of protected areas is distinct from management and in recent times, more attention has been paid to governance issues in conservation. The 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress held in Durban, South Africa in 2003, the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2004, the World Conservation Congresses 3 and 4, and the Marine Parks Congress 1 all addressed issues of governance as being central to conservation.

An important realization to emerge from the increased focus on governance is that governments are not the only managers of protected areas. There are currently four types of organizations / collectives responsible for the management of protected areas, namely:

1. **Government** (at various levels);
2. **Indigenous** peoples and **local communities**;
3. **Private owners** of land and natural resources (individuals, corporate actors...);
4. **Various** parties (together).

In an attempt to accommodate these previously unrecognized modes of conservation governance the IUCN has developed a **matrix** of protected areas categories and governance types (new IUCN Guidelines). They are now promoting the **legal recognition** of all governance types as well as national **protected area system reviews** to include innovative governance types: including indigenous/community conserved areas (ICCAs).



### 1.1.2 International Examples

There are numerous international examples of indigenous/community conserved areas across a wide range of different landscapes and land types. ICCAs include a diverse range of sites including sacred lakes and hill tops; nesting roosting and feeding habitats of endangered wildlife;



indigenous territories and cultural landscapes/seascapes; territories and migration routes of nomadic herders and mobile indigenous populations; sustainably managed wetlands, fishing grounds and water bodies; temporary and permanently forbidden sites; biosphere reserves; community forests and lakes; and sustainably managed resource reserves.

Some examples of these sites include:

Type of Site	Example
Sacred lakes and hill tops.	Indian Himalaya Chizire sacred forest. Zimbabwe Sacred crocodile pond. Tibet, China.
Nesting roosting and feeding habitats of endangered wildlife.	Rushikulya turtle conservation, Orissa, India.
Indigenous territories and cultural landscapes/seascapes.	Paruku Indigenous PA, Western Australia. Alto Fragua Indi-wasi National Park, Colombia.
Territories and migration routes of nomadic herders and mobile indigenous populations.	Wetlands in Qashqai mobile peoples' territory, Iran
Sustainably managed wetlands, fishing grounds and water bodies.	Lubuk Larangan river, Mandailing, Sumatra Coron Island, Philippines.
Temporary and permanently forbidden sites.	Bijagos
Biosphere reserves.	Guinea Bissau Rekawa lagoon.
Community forests and lakes.	Rupataal, Nepal. Parc Jurassien Vaudois, Switzerland. Qanats, Central Asia.
Sustainably managed resource reserves.	Jardhargaon forest, Indian Himalaya Global diversity of ICCAs.

### 1.1.3 International significance of ICCAs

The diversity of sites that could be managed through indigenous/community conservation areas could double the earth's protected area coverage! This would be a remarkable achievement for the conservation community as well as local communities as it would ensure key ecological and social processes are sustainably managed. ICCAs have the potential to maintain critical ecosystems services and provide ecological connectivity impossible to achieve through formal protected areas. These ecosystem services are the basis of livelihoods and cultural identity for millions of people and protecting them would assist in maintaining these communities. ICCAs are site specific and built on sophisticated ecological knowledge systems, yet most are still unrecognized.

Formal recognition of such areas would expand the total coverage of protected areas, address gaps in the system and improve connectivity in the landscape, enhance public support for



conservation and increase the flexibility and resilience of ecosystems, assisting in their ability to adapt to climate change.

Formal recognition of such areas would require combing a variety of categories and governance types in a national system of protected areas, which could help create linkages between wild and domesticated biodiversity, and associated cultures. This would provide resilience, adaptation, food security for all ecosystems, including human systems.

#### 1.1.4 Status of ICCAs internationally

The IUCN conducted a survey of how countries are faring in recognizing and supporting ICCAs in thirty countries across the world. The survey noted that there are three ways to legally recognize ICCAs:

1. Through **protected area systems** (e.g. Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003);
2. As part of more **general conservation measures** (e.g. People and Parks Programme);
3. Embedded in a **recognition of indigenous peoples**, decentralized governance, etc (e.g. Communal Land Rights Act 11 of 2004).

The study found that there has been good progress in some countries, but halting progress in others. Key issues identified related to the still unidentified and documented nature of most ICCAs; the increasing threat to ICCAs by forces of development, commercialization and cultural change; the slow pace of change in conservation legislation; inappropriate, top-down recognition forcing uniform approaches to a diverse set of ICCA institutions. It was also found that uncritical funding allocations often created more problems than solutions.

#### Key Learning's from the IUCN

- Most ICCAs are not yet identified or documented!
- Forces of development, commercialisation and cultural change threaten many ICCAs.
- Conservation legislation has been slow to adapt to ICCAs.
- Inappropriate top-down recognition leads to uniform approaches that undermine diverse ICCA institutions.
- Throwing money at ICCAs creates more problems.

For more information regarding the IUCN and international case studies:

[www.tilcepa.org](http://www.tilcepa.org)

[www.iccaforum.org](http://www.iccaforum.org)

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## 1.2 Lessons from Lesotho

Ms Refiloe Ntsohi representing the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, Lesotho, presented a case study outlining the history of protected areas and their management in Lesotho. The presentation looked at land use practices in Lesotho, and the extent to which traditional livelihood choices influences the interaction between people and protected areas in Lesotho. The presentation concluded with a summary of lessons learnt from efforts at developing protected areas able to respond to community concerns in Lesotho.

### 1.2.1 Background

Lesotho is a relatively small country covering 30,355 km<sup>2</sup>. With a population of only 1.8 Million people (2006 census) and a landscape dominated by mountains (75%), land use practices in Lesotho are important for livelihood and ecosystem services within and beyond the borders of the country. Lesotho is landlocked by three provinces of South Africa, namely the Free State, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape.

A democratic system of governance and the traditional laws of Lerotoli govern Lesotho. Traditionally these laws dictate that the land belongs to the Basotho people and is held in trust by the King. The power to allocate land was traditionally delegated to Chiefs.

Land reform started in Lesotho in 1979 and continues to date. The Land Act of 1979 determined that land allocation be delegated to Land Committees elected by the Minister rather than through to Chiefs elected by the King. The Local Government Act of 1997 and the Land Act of 2009 further democratized land allocation by assigning land allocation powers to democratically elected Community Councils.

### 1.2.2 Land Use Practices

Land use in Lesotho is divided between residential areas, development areas, agricultural areas, rangelands, mountain rangelands and protected areas. The Basotho are traditionally a nation of livestock keepers, with the majority of the country's land being allocated to rangelands and mountain rangelands. Herds are predominantly sheep, goat, cattle, horses and donkeys. The focus of Basotho livestock herding is on herd size maximization and not turnover, with emphasis being on large herds representing social power and wealth rather than commercial activity.

Rangelands provide a critical food source for livestock and rangeland and grazing rights are communal. As a result, overgrazing is the most important environmental challenge in Lesotho.

Rangelands often contain key resources like wetlands and host most of the countries biodiversity, including 2,961 plants species, of which 19 are endemic, as well as 63 species of mammals, 318 species of birds, 40 species of reptiles, and 14 species of fish.

### 1.2.3 Establishment of Protected Areas

The first protected area in Lesotho was established in 1970 (Sehlabathebe National Park). The area was traditionally used for summer grazing and a conventional park establishment process



led to the evacuation of cattle post owners and fencing of the site. Another two national parks were established in 2000 (Tsehlanyane National Park and Bokong Nature Reserve) and a fourth in 2008 (Letsa La Letsie).

These protected areas were established through more in depth community consultations and no periphery fencing was put up.

In the establishment of the Tsehlanyane and Bokong National Parks, a co-management model was used. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) conducted consultations. The model included the establishment of community representative CCFs under a legally registered constitution. The co-management agreement includes an arrangement through which a percentage of the total revenue goes to neighbouring communities for development projects. The agreement also allows for the regulated utilization of natural resources such as medicinal plants and firewood. The parks also provide a source of water for communities during droughts.

#### 1.2.4 Lessons Learned

The establishment of protected areas through community consultation has proven to be successful in Lesotho. It was learned through the process that the government is committed to the process, and intensive consultation with communities ensured a smooth process. Real benefits for communities through the beneficiation agreement have provided incentives for community buy in. On-going park-community projects are also important, as is on-going community empowerment.

#### Lessons Learned in Lesotho

- Government commitment is essential;
- Intensive consultations with communities ensures collaboration and success;
- Real benefits are important to facilitate community buy-in;
- On-going Park-Community projects are important to the growth of the sector;
- On-going community empowerment is a key outcome for the Ministry.

There are currently proposals underway to develop another three protected areas at Senqu Sources, Liqobong and Qeme Plateau.