



Learning from the Practitioners:

Benefit Sharing Perspectives
from Enterprising Communities



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Premise, Objectives and Design

- Archetypal framework on Bioprospecting
- Equity in this scenario
- Inter/ Intra community equity and policy linkages
- Providers as Users
- ABS within a “capabilities” framework

Premise, Objectives and Design (2)

- Focuses on how various communities in a range of ecosystems
 - use and govern their *biological resources*;
 - share the benefits derived from economic activities and;
 - how that affects their ability to meet their needs and ensure social and economic well-being
- In order to draw some lessons on community priorities on benefits and link it with the ongoing policy discussions

Premise, Objectives and Design (3)

- Interviewed during COP-9, 14 community representatives, who are partners of the Equator Initiative
- After explaining to them the purpose of the research and outputs (PIC)
- Pre-designed questionnaire
- Responses on ecosystems, activities, governance of biological resources, benefits from the activities and their distribution and impacts

Respondent communities

1. Latin America

Countries: Mexico (2), Ecuador, Guatemala (2), Costa Rica (2)

2. Africa

Countries: Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal

3. Asia

Countries: Lao People's Democratic Republic, Philippines, India

4. Pacific

Country: Papua New Guinea

Common characteristics

- Most of them host multiple ecosystems;
- All use biological resources for livelihood activities
- Have built on traditional skills, knowledge and inherent capacities, and (modified) customary norms/ laws or common principles
- Have established some kind of formal institutional mechanism operating on co-operative principles *facilitated* by an external agency
- All integrated with market economies at various degrees
- All evolved benefit sharing principles that ensure a degree of equity either derived from customary law, or newly fashioned in accordance with the prevailing circumstances
- Most include/ are anchored by women in decision making and implementation roles

Use and Governance of Resources

- **Fish:** zoning, varying net size, harvesting wider variety
- **Non-timber forest products:**
 - voluntary fencing,
 - minimum disturbance to other resources,
 - refrain from harvesting in sacred areas, taboos (eg. Totems)
- **Agriculture:**
 - mixed/multiple farming usually native varieties suited to locale;
 - collective management generally although ownership patterns vary;
 - taboos on consumption of seeds (buffer) and other customary norms;
 - in some instances community pacts to manage land

Use and Governance of Resources

- **Ecotourism:** Codes of conduct for visitors; integration of traditional crafts; enhanced conservation/ maintenance activities; high risk and hence almost all have alternate activities
- **Hunting:** generally prohibited; important for coming of age rituals; understanding of enhanced ecotourism potential; stewardship roles
- **POINT:** Implicit in the resource mgt practices is the assertion that the rights to the resources and their habitats resides with the communities. Supported by the laws of respective countries.
- Thus, effectively implementing ABS principles can only be with consent of communities.

Benefits

Benefits flow from

- Income from Sale of products or services (major source)
- Income from Grants or donations from external agencies such as NGOs; partnerships/ linkages
- Govt. support incl. subsidies, preferential schemes, autonomy over management of resources, infrastructure, credit facilities.

Communities have generally followed an endogenous path by

- identifying their comparative advantages in terms of resources, skills, knowledge and capacities;
- have embarked on appropriate activities, integrating mainstream and traditional worldviews on development and well-being

Indicates *an assertion of their Bio-cultural rights/* right to self determination

Benefit sharing

1. Direct payments for produce
2. In cases like fish, value of harvest *minus* contribution to a common pool given from central pool
3. Prices + Dividends
4. Wages (esp in Ecotourism activities) + community funds
5. Community funds used for
 - Better roads and infrastructure such as bridges, warehouses and the like;
 - Education – through the establishment of schools, sponsoring more teachers in local schools and providing scholarships for higher education in distant towns
 - Health-care facilities, through:
 - Sponsoring doctors and nurses in existing hospitals;
 - Revitalizing local health practice
 - Improving access to food and nutrition through intensive cultivation of a variety of crops;
 - Emphasizing and ensuring sanitation;
 - Using non-toxic cooking fuels

Terms of partnership

- **Academic research:** examining economic potential. For eg., The Shompole Trust, charges a fee for its cooperation with an academic research institute on research related to wildlife.
- **Commercial activities:** None of the respondent communities had a direct working relationship for industrial prospecting. But all indicate clearly that they would insist on signing prior informed consent certificates and would look hard at the economic and conservation impacts of any proposal.
- **Conservation activities:** often serve as entry points for communities to generate economic returns in return for enhanced environmental stewardship roles. Includes PES

Facilitating factors

- Use of local resources and adaptive use of inherent capacities;
- Autonomy to govern resources and determine the path for economic development;
- Facilitative role of macro-governance structures;
- Often catalytic role of non-governmental organizations and other partners in terms of organization, fund-raising, distribution and enterprise development;
- Strong domestic demand for produce;
- Innovative use of markets and marketing mechanisms
- Fairly comprehensive approach to addressing various social problems through the benefits of economic activities.

II. Implications for Wellbeing

- Wellbeing: an overall feeling experienced by people as a result of various needs being met.
- In this study, well-being of individual communities measured using Sen and Nussbaum's *capability framework* and Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*.
- The capabilities framework helps to describe the well-being of a social group (community) whose members have made decisions within the “freedoms given to them” and available “capabilities” (including natural endowments, skills, norms, values and markets).
- Hierarchy of Needs refer to Basic needs, Safety Needs, Belonging Needs, Self esteem and Self Actualization need up an Pyramid.

Indicators, Scores, Rationale

- *Basic needs*

1. Food security
2. Health security
3. Shelter

- *Safety needs*

Safety needs are met when community members have the freedom to make decisions related to their assets and when they are in a position to mitigate fears related to economic and natural risks

1. Settled <security of tenure rights>
2. Economic security
 1. Savings
 2. Alternative economic activities
3. Security from natural risks
 1. Insurance
 2. Community funds
 3. Conservation activities

Indicators, Scores, Rationale

- *Belonging needs*

The presence of social groups and equity in transactions among the different members of the groups enhances community solidarity and a sense of belonging among the members of a community.

1. Social groups

2. Equity in transactions

1. Gender equity

1. Economic activities

2. Leadership

2. Equity among all stakeholders

1. Equal rights of access to resources

2. Equal rights to occupy leadership positions

3. Equal rights to share in returns commensurate with contribution and justice

Indicators, Scores, Rationale

- *Self esteem and Self actualization Needs*

1. Autonomy over regulation of resources

2. Autonomy over economic activities

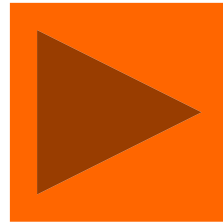
3. Autonomy over local governance

4. Education: improvement in physical and financial accessibility of educational institutions

5. Confidence: improvement in the ability of the respondent communities to negotiate with external agencies to arrive at mutually desirable outcomes

Scores: Scores are assigned on a scale of – 2, -1, 0, 1 and 2 to indicate sharp decline, moderate decline, no change, some improvement and much improvement in the fulfilment of each indicator.

Well-being



Impact of engaging communities in benefit sharing on conservation and well-being

- With payments, rate of conservation will rise
- However, rate of increase in well being would be lower
- Growth of Wellbeing could be higher than conservation when communities are effectively engaged, and with sufficient autonomy

Learning from the Practitioners

- Practice for Policy
- Community perspectives of well-being and conservation action
 - Lessons for the new CBD Strategic Plan
- Challenges for implementation of MEAs that links with development (mainstreaming)
 - Governance
 - Equity
 - Access
 - Entrepreneurial actions
 - Benefit Sharing

Reflections for ABS

- Community practices for PIC, MATs and MTAs
- Sharing benefits
 - Operational mechanisms
- Capabilities Approach
- Understanding some operational elements of PES from community perspectives

Reflections for ABS

- Identification of implementation options for national and local actions on ABS (if the goal of ABS discussions is to help conservation action and improving livelihoods!)
- Understanding the linkages between Article 8 (j) and 10 (c) and ABS
- Some inputs to clarify issues of legal treatment of genetic resources
 - Source of resource, user groups, ownership, exclusivity vs. collective ownership and the relationships

Lessons Learned

- **Need to look broadly into ABS debates**
- **Need to look at inclusive approaches (not just participation!)**
- **Ensuring practice informs policy and policy development is sensitive to existing practices**
- **Learning from communities helps ABS, TK related discussions within CBD and elsewhere contribute to development rather than counter development**

**Dedicated to
The work and memory of
Benson Venegas**

