UNPACKING EQUITY FOR PROTECTED AREA CONSERVATION

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ABSTRACT

There have been numerous calls to ensure that protected areas are governed and managed in an equitable manner. While there has been progress on assessing management effectiveness, there has been less headway on defining the equitable part of the equation. Here we propose a framework for advancing equity in the context of protected area conservation that was developed through a process of expert workshops and consultation and then validated at three sites in East Africa. The framework comprises three key dimensions (recognition, procedure and distribution) and 16 principles embedded in a set of enabling conditions, which we illustrate with reference to case studies. We go on to present the case for shifting the framing of protected area conservation from a livelihoods framing to an equity framing, justifying this from both a moral (normative) and instrumental perspective. Finally, we show how equity relates to a number of other key concepts (management effectiveness, governance and social impact) and related assessment tools in protected area conservation, before outlining a step-wise process for using the framework to advance equity in protected area conservation.

Key words: Protected areas, Equity, Recognition, Procedure, Distribution, Environmental justice, Governance,

INTRODUCTION

The global protected area estate has increased massively over the last few decades, reaching 14.7 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 4.12 per cent of marine areas (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2016). Protected areas provide important global, national and local benefits by conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services. Yet such benefits may come at a cost to indigenous and local communities. The requirement for protected areas to be equitably governed and managed was introduced in the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2004 Programme of Work on Protected Areas (in which goal 2.1 calls for the promotion of "equity and benefit sharing" and goal 2.2 calls for enhancing "involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders") and then in Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in 2010, which required that protected areas should be "effectively and equitably managed" (CBD, 2010). In 2014, the IUCN World Parks Congress pressed for greater progress on enhancing the governance of protected areas, adopting rights-based approaches and addressing the "equitable management" dimension of Aichi Target 11 (WPC, 2014).[1] The expression of these goals has coincided with increased emphasis within sustainable development policy discourse more generally (e.g. in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) on addressing inequality and promoting equity.

In addition to the normative (or moral) argument for equitable conservation, there is growing acknowledgement that resentment and a sense of injustice among those affected by protected areas can drive threats to protected area conservation. Ignoring the rights and needs of these groups has led to significant conflict (Lele et al., 2010). Conversely, the success of many areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities makes a compelling case for the stronger engagement of local rights-holders and stakeholders in protected areas (Tauli Corpuz, 2016). A growing body of research provides evidence that empowerment of local people and more equitable sharing of benefits increase the likelihood of effective conservation (Oldekop et al., 2015).

Table 1. Brief description of the three validation cases

	Loita Community Forest, Kenya	Amani Nature Reserve, Tanzania	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda
Research partners	University of Southampton and Kenya Forestry Research Institute	University of East Anglia and Tanzania Forest Conservation Group	International Institute for Environment and Development and Mbarara University
Governance type	Community (formerly Trust) land; recognition by all stakeholders that long-term stewardship by the Maasai community has conserved this forest area	Government, with areas of joint forest management	Government
Size and ecosystem type	33,000 ha of dry upland forest with central third of dense forest surrounded by lighter woodlands	8,400 ha of submontane and lowland forest. Part of the Eastern Arc mountains, prized for high numbers of endemic species	33,000 ha of montane tropical forest
Population	About 25,000 Loita Maasai live in and around the forest	No people in the forest; about 20 neighbouring villages	No people in the forest, but very high density (up to 320 people per km^2) around the edge
Key ecosystem services	Emergency grazing resource for livestock during droughts; timber and poles for subsistence use by community; water for downstream users; increasingly a land reserve for settlement	Species harvesting for butterfly farming and *Allanblackia* plantations; water for downstream users in Tanga; harvesting of firewood and medicinal plants	Tourism (mountain gorillas); Multiple Use Programme allows local people limited access to harvest medicinal plants, basketry resources and place beehives
Main equity issues	Lack of clarity over community rights; pressure on land (encroachment) and timber resources	Distribution of tourism revenues and water benefits; compensation for land	Distribution of tourism revenue; recognition of Batwa pygmies; restrictions of the Multiple Use Programme; human-wildlife conflict

In spite of the increasing policy importance afforded to achieving equitable governance and management of protected areas, in practice progress is often constrained by differing understandings of what equity means, different ideas of how to advance it, and because various aspects of equity are addressed by a range of protected area assessment methods (Burgess et al., 2014). This lack of clarity is a recipe for weak political and financial support, poorly constructed strategies, the inefficient use of resources, and a lack of accountability for action to advance equity.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to contribute to a greater understanding of what equity means in a protected area context. We propose an equity framework that should help rights-holders and stakeholders[2] in protected areas of all governance types to operationalize 'equitable protected area conservation' on the ground, and, in broad terms, to assess progress.

We begin by outlining the process by which the proposed framework was developed and then present the framework itself, illustrating its different dimensions with case study examples. We then review why an equity framing is important for protected area conservation and, in broad terms, how a shift from a livelihoods framing to an equity framing might be achieved. We go on to explain how the concept (and assessment) of equitable protected area conservation relates to other important concepts (management effectiveness, governance, and social impact). Finally, we outline some steps to support policymakers, protected area managers, Indigenous peoples, local communities and other local stakeholders in advancing equitable conservation of protected areas at site, country and international level.

Resource Mapping by Manobo IP Community, Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, Philippines © GIZ-COSERAM

METHODOLOGY – DEVELOPING THE PROPOSED EQUITY FRAMEWORK

The proposed framework was developed in four steps. First, we reviewed a number of parallel streams of work including research on equity in the context of payments for ecosystem services (McDermott et al., 2013) and on environmental justice (Sikor, 2013), guidance developed for the good governance of protected areas (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013), and work promoting social assessment of protected areas (Franks & Small, 2016). In May 2015, a workshop of around 30 academics, policy-makers and practitioners (with a wide range of perspectives on equity, justice and conservation including NGOs engaged in advocacy for the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities) gave rise to a basic equity framework consisting of three main dimensions. Although the framework draws on both the equity and the environmental justice literature, policy and practice, we use the term 'equity' here in response to language used in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second, a smaller workshop in November 2015 elaborated the equity framework with a set of principles. Following consultation with a wider group of stakeholders, a draft version of the framework was published in January 2016 (Franks & Schreckenberg, 2016).

Third, we undertook field validation of the draft framework in three sites in East Africa (see Table 1), selected to represent a range of ecosystems, governance types and equity issues. At each site, one of the authors of this paper worked with a national partner to validate the equity framework through a series of semi-structured key informant interviews (with community representatives, government and non-government staff, and tourism operators) and focus group discussions (held separately with men and women and with people of different ethnic background). In most cases, we took a 'bottom-up' approach, asking respondents to identify the most important equity issues in the area, what they felt was fair or not fair about them, and how they could be made fairer. With some key informants, we took a 'top-down' approach and specifically asked about the different elements of the framework. In this way, it was possible to determine whether the concepts in the framework were understood and considered relevant at site level and whether they were sufficient to capture what local stakeholders considered to be the key equity concerns at their sites.

The validation teams came together with government and non-government policy-makers from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in Nairobi in July 2016 to revise the framework and discuss its potential application in the context of protected area systems. Whilst each case tended to highlight a sub-set of the equity issues covered in the framework, taken as a whole they illustrated the relevance of the full range of issues, suggesting no redundancy in the principles listed. Furthermore, none of the cases raised substantive new categories of equity concern, suggesting there were no major omissions. There were, however, minor revisions based on the validation process. For example, communities stressed concerns about timeliness that led to revision of principle 11. The workshop also highlighted concepts that needed clearer explanation in the accompanying text, such as the crosscutting nature of gender concerns, the definition of 'relevant' actors, and of 'trade-offs', all of which are elaborated in more detail below.

The fourth step in the process consisted of discussions with participants at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2016 in different formats on how the proposed framework could support and link with existing frameworks and tools for improving protected area management and governance.

THE PROPOSED EQUITY FRAMEWORK

In the proposed framework, equity is considered to have three interlinked dimensions that should apply in any field of conservation or development: 1) recognition; 2) procedure; and 3) distribution (Fig. 1). Within each dimension, the framework identifies a set of priority equity issues for protected area conservation framed as principles or desired outcomes (Table 2). The framework also identifies the enabling conditions in which all three dimensions are embedded. Each of the components of the framework is explained in more detail below, drawing on both the validation case studies and others with which the authors are familiar.

- **Recognition**

Recognition means acknowledging and accepting the legitimacy of rights, values, interests and priorities of different actors and respecting their human dignity. The duty to recognize a right is usually accompanied by the duty to respect the right – meaning to refrain from directly or indirectly interfering with the individual's enjoyment of their right. The term 'respect' is therefore included in most of the principles in this dimension.

Recognition and respect for human rights (including Indigenous peoples' rights[3]) are particularly important for marginalized groups who may lack the ability to make their voices heard. With about half of protected areas established on lands traditionally occupied and used by Indigenous peoples (Stevens, 2014), there is particular concern about how they have been affected by lack of recognition and respect. In her recent report, the UN's Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of Indigenous peoples despairs at the continuing *"human rights violations that conservation measures have caused indigenous peoples worldwide, notably by the expropriation of land, forced displacement, denial of self-governance, lack of access to livelihoods and loss of culture and spiritual sites, non-recognition of their own authorities and denial of access to justice and reparation, including restitution and compensation"* (Tauli Corpuz, 2016, p.6).

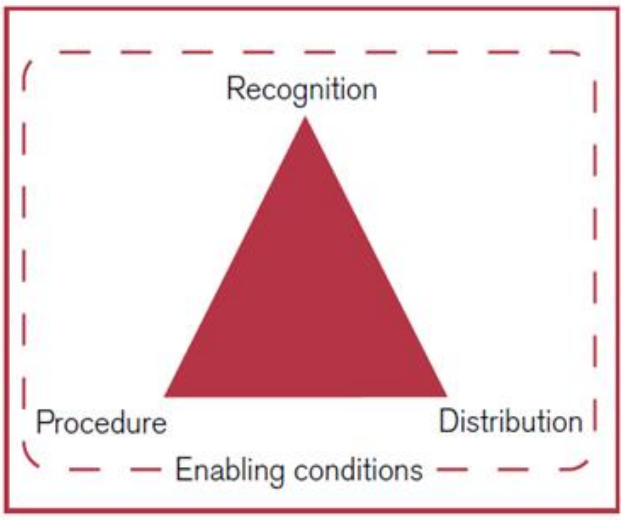

Figure 1. The three dimensions of equity embedded within a set of enabling conditions (Adapted from McDermott et al. (2013) and Pascual et al. (2014))

An example of the positive impacts of recognizing indigenous rights, institutions and knowledge systems is illustrated by the approach taken by a Philippine-German cooperation project in the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary. This Ramsar site and IUCN category IV protected area is one of the most important freshwater wetlands in the Philippines, and has large overlaps with the ancestral domain of the Manobo people. Recognizing and strengthening indigenous institutions played a key role in how research to document indigenous practices for biodiversity conservation was conducted. Indigenous researchers, selected by their elders, worked together with academics to ensure that the documentation followed customary laws and their own oral traditions of knowledge sharing. As a consequence, the process empowered the Manobo to apply their conservation practices more confidently and also encouraged them to use the results for the land use planning process for their ancestral domain (Osterhaus & Hauschnik, 2015).

Table 2. Equity framework for protected areas – equity principles and enabling conditions that apply to prior assessments and the establishment, governance and management of protected areas and to other conservation and development activities directly associated with protected areas (Source: Franks et al., 2016)

RECOGNITION

1. Recognition[i] and respect[ii] for human rights
2. Recognition and respect for statutory[iii] and customary property rights[iv]
3. Recognition and respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples, women and marginalized groups
4. Recognition of different identities, values, knowledge systems and institutions
5. Recognition of all relevant actors[v] and their diverse interests, capacities and powers to influence
6. Non-discrimination by age, ethnic origin, language, gender, class and beliefs

PROCEDURE

7. Full and effective[vi] participation of all relevant actors in decision-making
8. Clearly defined and agreed responsibilities of actors
9. Accountability[vii] for actions and inactions
10. Access to justice, including an effective dispute-resolution process
11. Transparency[viii] supported by timely access to relevant information in appropriate forms
12. Free, prior and informed consent[ix] for actions that may affect the property rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities

DISTRIBUTION

13. Identification and assessment of costs, benefits[x] and risks and their distribution[xi] and trade-offs[xii]
14. Effective mitigation[xiii] of any costs to Indigenous peoples and local communities
15. Benefits shared among relevant actors according to one or more[xiv] of the following criteria:
    - equally between relevant actors or
    - according to contribution to conservation, costs incurred, recognized rights[xv] and/or the priorities of the poorest
16. Benefits to present generations do not compromise benefits to future generations

ENABLING CONDITIONS

1. Legal, political and social recognition of all protected area governance types[xvi]
2. Relevant actors have awareness and capacity to achieve recognition and participate effectively
3. Alignment of statutory and customary laws and norms
4. An adaptive, learning approach

Notes:
i) Recognition means acknowledging, and accepting the legitimacy of, a particular issue, right or interest, etc. ii) Respect means not interfering with the enjoyment of the right. iii) Recognized within the country's legal framework. iv) In a protected area context, resource rights include rights to own or use resources. v) Relevant actors include rights-holders and stakeholders. These are organizations (including the protected area authority itself), groups and individuals with interests in, statutory or customary rights or influence over the protected area and its resources. vi) 'Full and effective participation' means meaningful influence throughout a decision-making process. vii) Accountability incorporates social, political and financial accountability. viii) Transparency relates particularly to decision-making processes, responsibilities and actions, and financial flows. ix) Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a process through which rights-holders are empowered to determine whether an activity that will affect their rights may proceed by giving, or having the right to withhold, their consent. x) The terms 'costs' and 'benefits' are used in the broadest sense to include all types of impacts on human wellbeing, whether or not they have monetary value. xi) Distribution includes: a) *spatial* — between actors at site level and also between site and other levels, and b) *intergenerational* — between youths and adults. xii) 'Trade-off' in this context refers to a situation in which decisions over the distribution of benefits and costs involve compromises between two competing objectives. xiii) Possible mitigation strategies include avoidance, minimization, compensation (cash or in-kind, or support for alternative sources of livelihood), voluntary relocation and restitution, decided through an effective FPIC process. xiv) In many cases, benefit-sharing strategies apply a combination of these criteria. xv) As determined by principle 2. xvi) Protected area governance types identified by IUCN — government, Indigenous peoples and local communities, private, and shared.

Farmer delivering butterfly pupae to co-operative © Adrian Martin

As outlined in principle 5, recognition refers not only to indigenous or marginalized groups, but rather to all 'relevant actors' who have a significant interest in the protected area. This includes the need to recognize (and counteract) the disproportionate influence wielded by some stakeholders, such as individuals keen to make a personal profit, powerful conservation actors or powerful development actors such as mining companies.

- **Procedure**

Procedural equity is built on the inclusive and effective participation of all relevant actors in affairs that concern them. This is not always easy to achieve particularly if there are large disparities in capacity between actors. In some cases, civil society organizations or other 'intermediaries' may have an important role to play in supporting certain stakeholders in putting forward their views. The use of visual tools, like participatory mapping exercises, for example, can also help people to convey how they use and value a particular area (de Koning et al., 2016). Both in the designation of new protected areas and also for management interventions in existing protected areas, special consideration must be given to the right of Indigenous peoples and local communities to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and to enabling the participation of marginalized groups. For example, in the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, the FPIC process allowed the Manobo to co-design project implementation in such a way that their values were respected and their traditional decision-making institutions strengthened. The resulting partnership of trust had positive outcomes for biodiversity conservation as people voluntarily surrendered their illegal electrofishing gear where previous enforcement efforts had often failed (Osterhaus & Hauschnik, 2015).

An important aspect of procedural equity is that responsibilities for action should be clearly agreed with a specified time-frame. Actors should be held accountable for their agreed actions and also for inaction. In the Loita case study, for example, many people raised concerns about the long delays they incurred waiting for compensation for wildlife damage. This led to negative feelings towards the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), even though the source of some of the delays was often outside the control of the KWS. At the Amani Nature Reserve, replacement land to compensate for the creation of the Derema conservation corridor has been delayed by as long as ten years, leading to continued conflict with the Reserve authorities. Where actors renege on their commitments, there needs to be easy access to effective dispute-resolution mechanisms (Jonas et al., 2014). These can be locally agreed mechanisms but recourse to formal justice must also be available as a last resort.

Where appropriate, the negotiation of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with elected institutions can be a good way to document the responsibilities of different stakeholders. Tanzania's Amani Nature Reserve has negotiated MoUs with 20 neighbouring villages. This has enabled villagers to negotiate increased access to the reserve for firewood, medicinal plants and labouring jobs, as well as a 20 per cent share of revenues from tour guiding. However, the proportion of tourism-derived revenue remains very small (less than US$200 per village per year) relative to the time invested by villagers, and a lack of transparency about the reserve's income means that the baseline for calculating the 20 per cent share is unclear.

- **Distribution**

Distributive equity is about how costs and benefits[4] are distributed between different actors – such as communities, protected area management, local and national governments, and global stakeholders. Although the distributive dimension of equity is often the one that is most strongly associated with the term equity and receives the most attention in high-level policy statements, in practice the varied ways in which the costs of protected areas can be avoided, minimized or mitigated, and the benefits shared, often receive insufficient consideration. When a protected area imposes use restrictions on households, for example, should it target mitigation efforts (e.g. compensatory livelihood projects) on all households equally or target only those who are most affected? Who receives the diverse range of benefits of conservation, and how these compare with the potential benefits of alternative activities like illegal wildlife trade, for example, are key factors in ensuring the positive engagement of communities in conservation (Cooney et al., 2016). However, preferred distributional norms can vary with particular local contexts. Residents of Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, for example, did not favour the principles of distribution widely employed in the design of conservation interventions, such as rewarding those most in need or those who have borne the highest costs (Martin et al., 2014). Rather the most common preference was for equal distribution of benefits. Gaining less than others was not desirable but gaining more also came with risks, including concerns about perceived favouritism or corruption.

A critical aspect of distributive equity is the acknowledgement that there are often trade-offs between different kinds of benefits and different benefit-sharing strategies (e.g. wildlife as subsistence food or as a tourist attraction). In the case of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, there has been discussion over many years on how to distribute the share of tourism revenues that is allocated to local communities. The national revenue sharing guidelines identify two objectives – reducing human-wildlife conflict (HWC) (principally crop damage) and improving the wellbeing of park-adjacent communities. Reducing HWC delivers on the human wellbeing objective but not necessarily vice versa, and there is a trade-off between the two as more funds for HWC interventions with park-adjacent households mean less wellbeing benefits for others. In fact, there has been almost no allocation for HWC in the last three years because providing wellbeing benefits more broadly aligns better with the priorities of the local governments that implement the revenue sharing scheme.

Distributive equity also encompasses trade-offs between people in different places and generations. In the Loita Community Forest, for example, a downstream soda ash mining company, which relies on water from the swamp in the centre of the forest, is negotiating to pay the community to reforest areas near the swamp and prevent further encroachment by farms. The Loitan forest protection committees were very concerned that their growing inability to prevent encroachment and over-exploitation of the forest would affect opportunities for future generations to benefit from the forest.

- **Enabling conditions**

Broadly speaking we define 'enabling conditions' as factors that are beyond the immediate control of the managers and other local stakeholders of a particular protected area. Certain enabling conditions can greatly advance the equity with which protected areas are established, governed and managed at the local scale. One of these is acknowledgement (nationally or sub-nationally) of the full range of protected area governance types identified by the IUCN, thereby encouraging the engagement of diverse groups of actors. Another enabling condition is ensuring that all actors have the capacity and opportunity to be recognized and to participate – as even the most equitable procedures will struggle in the face of entrenched societal discrimination (e.g. by gender, ethnicity, religion or class). Resolving serious conflicts relating to protected areas, such as those arising from the lack of recognition of customary rights to resources, is easier if relevant national laws are aligned with international laws, and if policies on protected areas are aligned with those on other land uses. Thus uncertainty about the status of community land (formerly trust land) in Kenya has, over the years, given rise to numerous court cases relating to the Loita Community Forest, as different groups (NGOs, government and individuals) have variously tried to use

Discussions on the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda © Dilys Roe

existing legislation to gazette the area as a forest reserve, protect it for the community, have it adjudicated into individual parcels, and establish group ranches – all in the face of strong opposition from other groups.

A final enabling condition is that the process of advancing equitable protected area governance and management is more likely to succeed if it is understood as part of an adaptive learning process that responds to evolving local perceptions of equity and enables forms of governance that are dynamic enough to address new challenges as they arise. For example, the conflict over the Derema corridor at Amani has partly arisen because negotiation over compensation has been institutionalized as a one-off procedure. But the experience here and elsewhere is that local ideas about what is fair evolve over time, for example changing as more information comes to light or as the realities of giving up land begin to bite.

- **Interactions between principles and enabling conditions**

The three dimensions with their 16 principles of equity should be considered as parts of a whole rather than in isolation of each other. The way in which they may be interlinked is illustrated well by the particular costs protected areas may impose on women. In Tanzania, for example, customary inheritance law does not allow a widow to inherit the estate of her late husband – an issue of enabling conditions – which can lead to her being ousted from her home by her in-laws (CEDAW, 2015). Cultural norms may also affect procedural equity, leading to women being less well represented or holding less powerful positions in decision-making fora. Ultimately this combination of discriminatory factors can result in situations such as in the Derema Corridor in Tanzania where, in spite of efforts to 'do no harm', women received less compensation than men for vacating land in a newly

established conservation corridor (Hall et al., 2014). This example also illustrates why it is important that gender is mainstreamed in the whole equity and conservation discourse. Rather than have one principle on gender, we argue that integrating gender throughout the equity framework, and the processes within which it is used, is more likely to deliver the desired gender outcomes. This includes gender equality, which is understood to mean that women and men, girls and boys should have equal opportunities (e.g. to participate in decision-making, education), as well as gender equity, which refers to the fairness of outcomes. In relation to some equity principles, fair will mean equal, but not in all cases. For example, in the case of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in Uganda, it might be fairer to have affirmative action in favour of women as they are the ones who do most farming and thus are disproportionately negatively impacted by HWC.

WHY IS EQUITY IMPORTANT FOR PROTECTED AREA CONSERVATION?

In this section, we discuss the need to shift from a livelihood framing to an equity framing for protected area conservation. In a classic paper about the core values of conservation biology, Michael Soulé (1985) argued that both scientific understanding and societal norms should guide the goals of conservation. We would add that we should also be guided by evidence of what works. Each of these three sources of guidance – science, norms and evidence of effectiveness – changes over time. This is one reason why dominant narratives of conservation undergo periodic change, such as the shift from 'fortress conservation' to 'integrated conservation and development' in the 1980s and to 'market based conservation' in the 2000s (e.g. see Hutton et al., 2005). Thinking on the social dimension of conservation has changed relatively little in the last 30 years: the general understanding is that conservation should at least 'do no harm', defined as a negative impact on livelihoods, and where possible it should have a positive social impact.

When a conservation initiative is considered to impose costs on local people, therefore, the most common response has been to provide support for their livelihoods, usually in the form of 'alternative livelihoods' that are also designed to reduce demand for protected area resources. In some situations this approach has been successful but in many others it has performed poorly (Roe et al., 2015). Focusing too narrowly on livelihoods has become part of the problem rather than the solution (as explained below), and a refocus on equity is overdue. The science, norms and understanding of what works have all shifted to support this recommendation. We now summarize this shift in two arguments: 1) the moral argument for how equity can make conservation more legitimate and 2) the instrumental argument for how equity can make conservation more effective.

- **Moral argument**

Also known as the normative argument, this argument flows from the need for protected area policy to align with national and global commitments on human rights. The right to development is now seen as an inalienable human right, and conservation must attend to this. A key shift is evident in the evolution from the Millennium Development Goals established in 2000, which included a headline target of increasing income to more than a dollar a day, to the SDGs agreed in 2015, which widen the commitment to addressing "poverty in all its forms." The SDGs emphasize the importance of equity in rights, opportunities, access to resources and outcomes, and strongly emphasize gender equality. In the context of protected areas, we see a similar shift from an 'old' normative argument stated at the IUCN World Parks Congress of 2003, that "protected areas should strive to contribute to poverty reduction at the local level, and at the very minimum must not contribute to or exacerbate poverty" to a 'new' normative argument which asserts a responsibility to recognize and respect, and in some cases help to fulfil, a broader set of rights that underpin human wellbeing and dignity. The international conservation community has made significant moves to respond to this new normative agenda, for example through the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights.[5]

- **Instrumentalist argument**

This argument holds that equity is necessary for achieving and sustaining effective conservation. Again, there is a distinction between new and old arguments. The old instrumentalism argued that a lack of income forced local people into behaviours that conflicted with conservation. This powerful narrative was popularized in the 1987 Brundtland report, which stated that: "*Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive….*" World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, p.28).

This implied that what was needed, then, was a means of raising incomes through livelihood support. But the approach was based on weak assumptions. For example, although the poorest in a community are often the most dependent on natural resources, their wealthier neighbours (as well as the global elite) often exert greater resource pressure (Cavendish, 2000). This is one reason why evidence soon emerged that simply providing income-earning opportunities (however desirable this

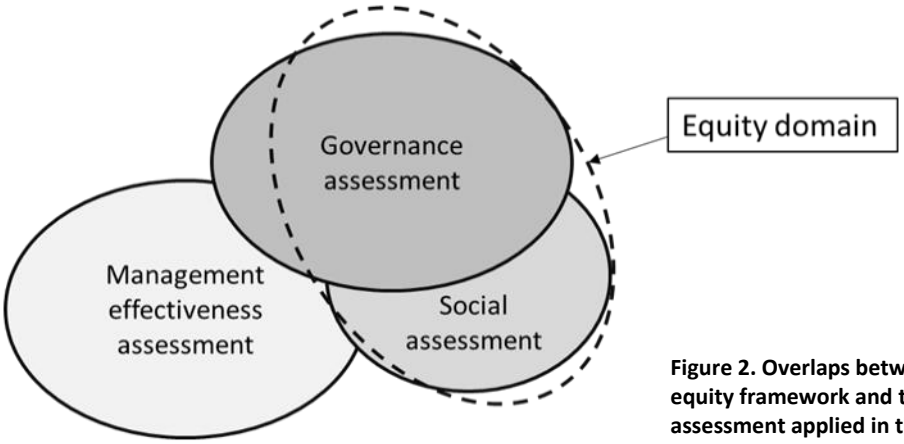

Figure 2. Overlaps between the issues considered within the equity framework and those captured in three main types of assessment applied in the protected area context

might be on its own merits) does not in itself bring about improvements in conservation performance (Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000).

We now envisage a 'new instrumentalism' based on equity rather than poverty and livelihoods; it has a more compelling theory of change and increasingly strong evidence to support it. For example, research in Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, found that where management interventions are viewed as inequitable, managers must rely on enforcement to ensure results, while they can expect more active support for interventions seen as equitable (Martin et al., 2014). In Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, local feelings of injustice over national park conservation were found to be as important a driver as rural poverty for illegal resource use. The more involved in decision-making people felt, the more benefit they reported from integrated conservation and development activities (Twinamatsiko et al., 2014). An equity-based instrumentalism still holds that economic benefits can increase conservation effectiveness, but this is not achieved with a scattergun approach to livelihood support. Evidence of effectiveness is strongest where economic benefits arise from the use of a protected area or related resources, thus underpinning the legitimacy of the protected area in the eyes of local communities (Blomley et al., 2010). In an equity approach, the distribution of benefits within communities is also crucial (de Koning et al., 2011), for example to avoid the elite or male capture of benefits.

Recognition and procedural equity – the main focus of work on protected area governance – are other essential aspects of the new instrumentalism, to ensure not just more equitable decision-making processes but also better -informed decisions and greater social and political legitimacy for protected areas. The issue of political legitimacy applies at all levels, from communities living in or near protected areas to global policy processes, where the polarization of views on the equity and justice of protected area conservation has often been a major obstacle to progress.

IMPLEMENTING THE EQUITY FRAMEWORK

A first step in implementing the equity framework is to consider the ways in which elements of the framework are already employed in existing guidelines and tools used in the context of protected area conservation. A second step is to promote the use of the framework to identify gaps and entry-points for action that can be addressed through a step-wise process.

- **Where does equity fit in relation to management effectiveness, governance and social assessments?**

Effectiveness and equity are different but essential and interdependent concepts in protected area conservation (Woodley et al., 2012). Management effectiveness assessment focuses on how well management is carried out and the extent to which it achieves the intended outcomes. The most widely applied assessment tools in protected areas are the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), which has been adapted by many organizations and countries, and the Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management Methodology (RAPPAM). Although the recently updated METT (Stolton & Dudley, 2016) includes some governance questions and emphasizes the need to include rights- and stake-holders in the assessment, neither tool addresses many of the equity principles (Fig. 2). Conversely, there are elements of management effectiveness, such as financial stability, that are not necessarily captured in the equity framework.

In contrast, there is a great deal of overlap between the equity principles and the content of governance assessments. Governance is sometimes defined primarily in procedural terms (e.g. Lockwood, 2010) and, where equity does appear, it has often been in terms of equal

Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, Philippines © GIZ-COSERAM

opportunities, as is the case, for example, in the UNDP framework of governance principles (Graham et al., 2003). However, for the context of protected areas, IUCN and its partners have adapted and expanded the scope of these principles to include: legitimacy & voice, direction, performance, accountability, and fairness & rights (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013). Although a wide range of governance assessment tools exists, none has yet been applied as widely in the protected area context as the management effectiveness tools. A relatively new addition to the toolkit is the Whakatane Mechanism, which has a particularly strong focus on situations of rights violations (Freudenthal et al., 2012).

Figure 2 shows that there is also a large degree of overlap between the equity framework, particularly its distributive dimension, and issues considered by tools that assess the social impacts of protected areas. The Protected Area Benefits Assessment Tool (PABAT) (Dudley & Stolton, 2009) supports protected area managers in identifying the legally permissible benefits provided by a specific site to different beneficiary groups. The Social Assessment for Protected Areas (SAPA) methodology and toolkit (Franks & Small, 2016) promotes a more participatory approach to assess how costs and benefits are distributed at a particular site. SAPA also asks some basic procedural questions (e.g. the extent of community participation in decision-making) as these have a large impact on distributive outcomes.

Between the governance and social assessment tools available, protected area decision-makers, managers and stakeholders already have a number of tools at their disposal to assess and act on the "equitably managed" element of Aichi Target 11. We argue that the equity framework adds value to this existing body of work in three main ways:

- Organization of the equity principles into three dimensions means that it can be used as an easy checklist to ensure that none of these three key areas has been missed;
- Condensation of key issues into 16 principles allows for the framework to be used as a quick reference, before referring – as appropriate – to the more detailed governance guidelines and/or social assessments;
- Wording of the equity principles as desired outcomes gives them a normative flavour that can be more easily translated into a minimum standard.

Entasekera Forest Protection Committee in Loita, Kenya © Kate Schreckenberg

We hope the equity framework will be used in conjunction with existing tools to identify and address gaps as necessary and to develop modular approaches tailored to specific needs and contexts. That said, if resources are not sufficient to conduct social and governance assessments in full, a more focused "equity assessment" methodology – yet to be developed – could fill the gap.

- **A step-wise process to advance equity in the context of protected areas**

There will always be a range of perspectives on what an equitable state looks like, and perceptions of equity will change over time (for example as people's rights are more widely recognized, protected and fulfilled, and people become wealthier). Achieving equity may be a problematic ambition, therefore, but it is perfectly possible to achieve a consensus on practical steps to advance equity (Franks & Small, 2016). We envisage the framework as a flexible tool (and one that is itself likely to continue to be adapted) that should support enhanced protected area governance and management at both site and system level. To ensure widespread relevance, it would be useful to validate the framework in a wider range of protected areas, including coastal and marine protected areas, and at the level of a whole protected area system.

A first step in achieving wider implementation of the equity framework would be to undertake a more rigorous mapping, building on the rough outline provided above, of assessment of equity principles within existing toolkits. The framework could then be used to identify gaps and integrate existing efforts. At system level, for example, the framework can be used to review how well the various equity principles are captured in existing policies and practice. Depending on the gaps or areas of weakness identified, it would then be possible to look for the appropriate tools for further action (e.g. SAPA for distributive issues or governance assessments for procedural issues). By elaborating and adapting the framework at national level (e.g. through the addition of location-specific indicators), it could also be used to frame assessments, and support monitoring and evaluation exercises.

Where national enabling conditions are not favourable, progress could still be made at site level. Here, the framework could be used in discussions or reflections about project approaches, for example, to identify which equity dimensions might need greater attention, including as a basis for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Rather than applying an equity lens to the entire range of activities associated with a protected area, it might be more practical – and better for building stakeholder buy-

Encroachment in Loita Community Forest, Kenya © Kate Schreckenberg

in – to start with certain key elements, such as participation in decision-making, provisions for resource access, and other benefit-sharing arrangements.

There is also a need to develop a few high-level indicators to allow for reporting on Aichi Target 11. These must be sufficient to give a basic picture of the extent to which protected area conservation is addressing all three dimensions of equity (but not all principles within each dimension).

Ultimately we hope that the equity dimensions and principles can be integrated into existing implementation instruments (e.g. GEF funding). A first step in this direction has already been taken with the IUCN's Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas (GLCPA) Programme, which aims to "promote effective, equitable and successful protected areas" (IUCN, 2016, p.3). The GLPCA global standard (Version Sept 2016) has four components (Good governance, Sound design and planning, Effective management, Successful conservation outcomes), each of which has subsidiary criteria and indicators. Equity considerations are strongly embedded throughout the standard. Thus achieving the GLPCA standard will contribute to advancing equity just as applying the equity framework will help to strengthen an application to the Green List.

CONCLUSIONS

In response to calls from various CBD decisions and the World Parks Congresses, specifically expressed in Aichi Target 11, there has been rapid progress in developing tools for assessing the effectiveness of protected areas management. The framework we propose is intended to help address the other side of the equation, namely assessing the equity of protected area governance and management. The three dimensions of the framework – recognition, procedure and distribution – together with a set of enabling conditions are intended to help policy-makers, protected area managers, Indigenous peoples, local communities and other key stakeholders to promote equity in protected area conservation at both site and system level. We argue that this will support a much needed shift of the conservation narrative from an overly narrow focus on livelihoods to a broader focus on equity that fully integrates the issue of protected area costs and benefits with protected area governance.

ENDNOTES

[1] 'Protected area conservation' is assumed to be a product of both governance and management. Although Aichi Target 11 only mentions protected area management, it is widely understood that it also refers to protected area governance (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013).

[2] From here on, unless otherwise stated, we use the term 'actors' to encompass both rights-holders and stakeholders.

[3] The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007) lays down specifically how human rights apply to indigenous peoples.

[4] The terms 'costs' and 'benefits' are used in the broadest sense to include all types of impacts on human wellbeing, whether or not they have monetary value.

[5] See www.iucn.org/content/iucn-and-members-form-conservation-initiative-human-rights

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RESUMEN

Numerosas exhortaciones han sido formuladas para que las áreas protegidas sean gobernadas y gestionadas de manera equitativa. Aunque se ha avanzado en la evaluación de la efectividad de la gestión, han sido escasos los avances logrados en torno a la definición de la parte equitativa de la ecuación. Aquí proponemos un marco para promover la equidad en el contexto de la conservación de las áreas protegidas que fue desarrollado a través de un proceso de talleres de expertos y consultas y validado posteriormente en tres sitios en África oriental. El marco incluye tres vertientes fundamentales (reconocimiento, procedimiento y distribución) y 16 principios incorporados en un conjunto de condiciones propicias, que ilustramos mediante referencias a estudios de casos. Luego exponemos las razones para cambiar el marco conceptual de la conservación de áreas protegidas, pasando de una concepción basada en los medios de vida a una basada en la equidad, y justificando esto desde una perspectiva moral (normativa) e instrumental. Por último, mostramos la relación existente entre la equidad y otros conceptos clave (efectividad de la gestión, gobernanza e impacto social) y los instrumentos de evaluación relacionados con la conservación de áreas protegidas, antes de describir un proceso gradual para utilizar el marco para promover la equidad en la conservación de áreas protegidas.

RÉSUMÉ

De nombreux appels ont été lancés pour s'assurer que les aires protégées soient régies et gérées d'une manière équitable. Bien qu'il y ait eu des progrès dans l'évaluation de l'efficacité de leur gestion, ce n'est pas le cas pour en évaluer l'équité. Nous proposons dans ce document un cadre de travail pour l'avancement de la conservation équitable des aires protégées, qui a été mis au point grâce à un processus de consultation et d'ateliers d'experts, et validé ensuite par trois sites pilotes en Afrique de l'est. Ce cadre comprend trois dimensions clés (reconnaissance, procédure et distribution) et 16 principes incorporés dans une série de conditions propices, que nous illustrons à travers des études de cas. Finalement nous soutenons que la conservation dans les aires protégées devrait être moins orientée sur les moyens de subsistance pour plus se focaliser sur l'équité, aussi bien d'un point de vue moral que pratique. Puis nous montrons comment l'équité dans la conservation des aires protégées peut se rattacher à un certain nombre d'autres concepts clés (efficacité de la gestion, gouvernance et impact social) ainsi qu'à des outils d'évaluation associés. Nous détaillons ainsi un processus par étapes qui permet d'utiliser ce cadre de travail pour promouvoir l'équité dans la conservation des aires protégées.