

Guidelines for Conservation through Community Involvement

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Conservation Through Community Involvement (CCI)

Much discussion occurred around a name for the activities described in this document. In the end, the name “Conservation through Community Involvement” was settled upon. Initially we discussed poverty alleviation, capacity building, financial assistance, and a wide range of activities. However, we realized that as conservationists, our task is the conservation of primates and their habitat, with a recognition that this can only be successful if the community is involved and supportive. Additionally, conservationists working in the field should become knowledgeable of local traditions and events and, as appropriate, involved with the local community. Balancing the needs of human and wildlife is difficult but it is possible if everyone works together. We use the phrase “Conservation through Community Involvement” to mean actions aimed at improving conservation by working with and through local communities.

Introduction

At the IPS Congress in Entebbe in 2006, we presented a paper and held a roundtable on the need for field projects to engage in some form of community initiative in order to promote primate conservation in their area (Conservation through Community Involvement, CCI). A questionnaire was sent out to a number of IPS members inquiring whether they already undertook any form of CCI and the results showed that many field projects are involved with local communities in a variety of activities. At the roundtable widespread interest was expressed in exploring CCI further and we brought this to the notice of IPS Council at the General Assembly. In order to take matters forward we were requested by IPS Council to set up an *ad hoc* committee whose job would be to propose a set of Guidelines for IPS members wishing to do CCI and to draft a Position Statement for IPS to consider at its next Congress in Edinburgh in 2008.

The *ad hoc* committee was formed as an email group soon after the 2006 IPS Congress. It numbers 70 members of IPS, all of whom are or have been directly involved in fieldwork. Communication is by email and we have set up a dedicated website. All regions of the world are represented. About half the membership is from universities, the remainder are working in NGOs, zoos, animal parks, government departments or agencies, and national parks.

The first communication was sent out in March 2007. This requested information of four kinds:

- Types of assistance given
- Advantages for conservation
- Disadvantages for conservation
- How disadvantages might be overcome.

From the replies received, many forms of CCI were distinguished in August 2007, together with much information on their advantages and disadvantages. From the assembled data we compiled a list of 25 guidelines. These were divided into 4 categories:

- Planning
- Implementing
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Funding

We also developed lists of sample activities and resources.

Note: Not all the Guidelines below will be relevant to your project. Incorporate what is useful to your work and site and leave the rest. This list is only meant to provide ideas for activities that can be initiated: it is not meant to be all inclusive.

Section A – Planning

1. Relate community support to primate conservation and plan to communicate this to local people. Make sure the community understands that your support is a result of their commitment to conserving the area.
2. Gather preliminary information about local groups before beginning your work in an area so you have a basic understanding of the culture and needs in the area.
3. Communicate in advance with any other projects or NGOs in the area, with a view to improving conservation impact.
4. Plan support, not giving; avoid creating dependency; collaborate with local people and empower them; expect local people to partner with you on an initiative e.g. if you provide funding for materials to build a community center, the community provides labor, or other in-kind contributions to the initiative – CCI is a two-way process.
5. Plan an exit strategy; CCI projects should be self-sustaining or completed when you leave.
6. Include a budget line for CCI in research proposals (see Section D).
7. Include measurable conservation success criteria if possible. Develop an evaluation that will be used to measure the success of your community initiative and identify shortcomings.
8. Consider attending a course on community involvement.

Section B – Implementing

1. Work with key individuals in the community to organise conservation actions by groups.
2. Provide goods requested on a shared-cost basis; for example, if you provide a bicycle, the recipient provides for the maintenance. If you help set up a water tank, the beneficiaries agree to maintain it.
3. Combine with and support other local groups or NGOs working to achieve conservation ends.
4. Obtain as much information about local attitudes to primates as possible ('ethnoprimatology').

5. Work with officials of wildlife, environment and law enforcement agencies. Help the community understand environmental laws, and help authorities enforce boundaries of forest reserves and other protected areas.
6. Educate people about primate-friendly practices as well as activities that are illegal.
7. Support local wisdom and work within the established framework to show your respect for the culture. Reassure people if they have concerns or fears about your presence.
8. Assist the community with local projects by volunteering your time and expertise.
9. Support the local economy by buying food and other items locally so the community benefits by having your project in the area.

Section C – Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Ensure that benefits to individuals or groups are evenly spread in the community. In particular ensure that minority groups, women for example, are not disregarded.
2. Create partnerships in the community to discuss problems and progress.
3. Evaluate impacts of your actions. For example, decreases in consumption of scarce resources, reductions in hunting or snaring, improved understanding of forest loss (maps may be useful), increase in tree-planting.
4. Local people often don't know how much resources they use. You can consider finding out e.g. weighing firewood. Sharing this information can lead to reductions in resource use as well as serve as a measure of conservation impact.
5. Don't let one failure discourage you. In the end, with persistence, you will succeed.
6. Remember that time is needed for proper evaluation. Is your time-scale long enough to evaluate long-term outcomes? Are there short-term outcomes that can be specified?

Section D – Funding

1. If applying for an IPS Conservation, Captive Care, Research or Jacobsen Education Award, consider seeking additional funds for CCI (this is an optional add-on to grant applications, see grant application instructions for details).

2. Once your CCI is established, consider seeking funding from NGOs that specialize in human aid. But think small and avoid large sums of money which inevitably cause problems.

Addendum – Some activities that have been effective in Community Conservation:

1. Become involved with one or more local schools or wildlife clubs in the area (providing supplies, materials, giving talks, etc.).
2. Combine conservation education with provision of school materials for subject areas.
3. Provide seeds or seedlings for planting, if appropriate, include fruit trees or other useful species.
4. Learn local folk tales that may enhance your conservation impact.
5. Help build capacity of local law enforcement officials to advance conservation goals.
6. Set up local competitions, or a 'Conservation Club'.
7. Help develop an herb garden.
8. Help with domestic animals.
9. Help locals with transport.
10. Assist with developing a bee-keeping project
11. Buy food locally
12. Sell your unwanted items to the community at the end of the project.
13. Help local people find markets for their handicrafts.
14. Communicate environmental and wildlife laws by festivals, plays and workshops.
16. Show DVDs, videos etc on conservation themes, followed by Q&A sessions.
17. Set up a drama group to enact conservation themes.

Resources

Books:

1. "Africa Works" by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz
2. "African Friends and Money Matters" by David Maranz
3. "The Conservation Handbook" by William Sutherland

Articles:

Brosius, JP, 2006. Common Ground between Anthropology and Conservation Biology. *Conservation Biology* 20(5): 683-685.

Quiatt, D and Koster, S, 1994. Resource Conservation and Sustainable Development: Anthropology's Contribution. *National Geographic Research & Exploration* 10(2): 139-143.

Sanderson, SE and Redford, KH, 2003. Contested Relationships Between Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Alleviation. *Oryx* 37(4): 389-390.

Sponsel, LE, 1997. The Human Niche in Amazonia: Explorations in Ethnoprimateology; pp. 143-165 in: *New World Primates* (WG Kinzey, ed.); Aldine de Gruyter, New York.

West, P and Brockington, D, 2006. An Anthropological Perspective on Some Unexpected Consequences of Protected Areas. *Conservation Biology* 20(3): 609-616.

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