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Empowering the rural poor as partners in the conservation and management of protected areas: the evolution of integrated conservation and development



INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS) BY WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES: GUIDELINES FOR THE CARIBBEAN

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BACKGROUND

- MPAs are seen as a prominent means of addressing coastal resource management in the Caribbean. Studies on the impacts of MPAs have usually shown them to be positive for biodiversity and fisheries management.
- Amongst advocates of MPAs, there has been a tendency to extol their potential value in socio-economic terms. In reality, the establishment of protected areas often generates deep resentment in communities that find themselves excluded from resources to which they have traditionally had access, undermining the viability of those protected areas.
- Over the last ten years, management of MPAs has evolved from being a preservation tool to integrating considerations of development, sustainable use of resources and stakeholder participation. With this focus, it is believed that they can play a key role in conserving natural ecosystems and contribute substantially to sustainable development.
- The overall purpose of research was to identify current institutional constraints to, and develop-

ment options for, successfully implementing MPAs in a way that leads to sustained improvement in livelihoods of coastal communities in the Caribbean. A key premise of this work is that successful implementation and beneficial stakeholder outcomes, including outcomes for the poor, are inextricably linked and priority has been given to understanding the dynamic relationship between processes and outcomes.

- Particular attention has been paid to systems



Princess Alexandra Land and Sea National Park, Turks and Caicos

STUDY SITES AND METHODOLOGY

- Study sites for this research were selected following a *Characterisation Review of 75 Caribbean MPAs* conducted by CANARI (Geoghegan et al., 2001).
- Study sites are indicated with red stars on the map below. Fieldwork was conducted between September 2001 & March 2002 at 12 MPAs in four countries in the Caribbean. An additional MPA (Soufriere Marine Management Area) in St

Lucia was included in the study although no field work was undertaken due to the availability of publications from this site.

- A team of six MSc students from the University of the West Indies undertook legal, ecological and livelihood assessments of the impacts of the MPA institutions and management programmes on local stakeholders.
- The two authors of this poster undertook participatory appraisals at the four MPAs considered to



COUNTRY	MPA site	Student work	PA focus
Jamaica (large island)	• Negril • Montego Bay	• Legal, ecological, livelihood • Legal	*
Belize (continental)	• Hol Chan • Glovers Reef • Gladden Spit	• Legal, ecological, livelihood • Legal, ecological, livelihood • Legal	*
Turks and Caicos Islands	• Princess Alexandra • Admiral Cockburn	• Legal, ecological, livelihood • Legal	*
Dominica (small island)	• Soufriere/Scott's Head	• Legal	*

RESULTS FROM CHARACTERISATION REVIEW OF 75 CARIBBEAN MPAS

- Coral reefs are found in 80% of MPAs, mangroves are cited in at least 66% while seagrass beds are the least represented type of coastal ecosystem. Few MPAs are established specifically to protect endangered species.
- While 'conservation' is emphasised in objectives/mission statements it is clear that management programmes do draw on a wider range of purposes. Namely enhancement of tourism, conservation and sustainable and equitable use of coastal resources.
- An associated trend is noted in the types of management arrangements in place for MPAs: sites established for more than 20 years are generally managed by a single government agency or national trust, while more recent arrangements are more complex involving government partnerships with NGO's, consortia etc. In addition, stakeholders engage 'to some degree' in most MPAs - with more than half including active or formal consultation mechanisms.
- Funding comes from one of three core sources: national government, donor or visitor/user fees. Unsurprisingly, those MPAs with poor tourism capacity and low national priority are more reliant on external donor support, which in turn may increase their vulnerability and lower their likelihood of success.
- With respect to the links between MPAs and poverty, a key focus of this research, it is clear that many MPAs border areas of significant poverty, while others are close to pockets of "at-risk" populations. While links between poor people and MPAs are often not yet clearly established, potential for MPAs to benefit the poor exist.
- Fishing is cited as a key use of MPAs in 70% of cases surveyed, yet water based recreation, i.e. tourism, is clearly the predominant use of MPAs in the region. As a corollary, the most frequently identified conflict amongst users is between fishers and divers, with zoning and consultation being the most common forms of management response.
- Previous research and this review suggest again that the sector benefitting the most from MPAs is marine based tourism (with ownership disproportionately expatriate). Access to the benefits from successful MPAs is a key element to understand when considering their potential to address national poverty. Some MPAs actively address the impacts of management on their poorer neighbours, but beyond giving stakeholders greater participation in MPA management, the impact of such programmes is still to be determined.

A RANGE OF LEARNING POINTS...

- The viability of protected areas is often undermined by non-compliance, bad practice or lack of co-operation by local people. This can often be fuelled by local resentment of an MPA's existence.
- Under such conditions, local actions can lead to many types of chemical, physical and biological degradation.
- Evidence shows that there is a significant amount of conflict amongst MPA users, and non-compliance throughout the Caribbean region and that, therefore, this is a widespread issue.
- This is only one problem area affecting the effectiveness of MPA management but solving it can have a knock-on effect on resolving others. For example, good co-operation can decrease agency monitoring and enforcement costs thus decreasing financial constraints; or, it can lead to better local technical knowledge, thereby improving ecological design.
- To address these issues, you must know who your stakeholders are. Stakeholder analysis is a start and should be continually re-examined on a regular basis.
- Frequently, the MPA agency will not have the necessary information at its fingertips to carry out a detailed analysis. More research may be required and there are well documented means of achieving this.
- In many cases, MPA management has a poverty dimension. Research suggests that, more than any other group, poorer users will be less likely to be able to comply with MPA measures due to their necessarily short term perspectives and access to fewer alternatives. These people must be identified and an understanding of their livelihoods, and associated constraints, developed.

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- This is made more difficult by the 'invisibility' of poorer groups, who are frequently less articulate, less well connected, represented unknowingly by others and less socially aware. Special strategies may need to be developed for establishing connections and communication channels.
- There are many good examples throughout the Caribbean of local involvement in management programmes. Examples can be found for all ac-



tivities that will normally comprise a management plan, such as supporting, implementing, informing and outreach. Local involvement can be a tremendous resource that should be tapped.

GUIDELINES FOR CARIBBEAN MPAS

Who is this guide for?

- Those responsible for the day-to-day operations of an MPA (e.g. MPA managers; Advisory Boards / Management Committees) and / or;
- Those who make decisions on how an MPA will be managed (e.g. those responsible for writing management plans);
- The aim of these guidelines is to show how working more closely with people living in and around Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) - addressing their needs and concerns and encouraging their involvement in management - can lead to increased MPA effectiveness.
- When planning these guidelines there was much debate about whether to use the words 'local communities' or 'local stakeholders' in the title. One of the main aims of this guide is to highlight the role of people who are frequently not acknowledged as local MPA stakeholders, so the more inclusive term 'community' was preferred. Used here the term refers to the non-homogenous set of people who live in or around the MPA.
- MPAs are rarely set up by, or explicitly for, the general populace living in around the Park, yet MPA implementation can have a profound effect on these people's livelihoods, affecting, for example, their sources of income or nutrition, or their means of recreation. At the same time, the activities of local people impact on resources within MPAs and can therefore have a significant effect on the success of any management initiatives.
- These guidelines highlight these two-way impacts. They suggest how negative consequences can be minimised, positive consequences maximised, and how local involvement in management can be fostered to improve the effectiveness of MPA operations.
- Information here is not in the form of a step-by-step guide, but instead a selection of ideas, real world examples from the Caribbean region, and theoretical insights/methodologies that have

Increasing MPA effectiveness through working with local communities



GUIDELINES FOR THE CARIBBEAN



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These guidelines can also be found on the MRAG website www.mragltd.com (select "Land Water Interface" from left hand column, then "Selected Project Examples" and refer to the MPA project section), or the NRSP website at www.nrsp.org.uk

