ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia; Zo Zatovonirina in Madagascar; V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico; Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines; Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Kenya Datari and Carol Boender contributed to earlier versions of this document. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00 under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
The purpose of this Combining Conservation and Care publication series is to highlight key observations, findings, and lessons learned from the Population Environment (PE) programs of Conservation International (CI) in Cambodia, Guatemala, the Philippines, Madagascar, and Mexico. PE projects in these countries have achieved results in our target zones that have improved access to health services while increasing education and awareness of the importance of reducing family size and population pressure on natural resources. These efforts have contributed to improved biodiversity conservation in critical areas through improved natural resource management.

Through the course of our work, CI has learned valuable lessons about several themes: engaging communities in participatory ways, fostering and sustaining local partnerships, promoting alternative livelihoods, incorporating gender into conservation, and involving indigenous people in conservation. These lessons are summarized here, along with an overview of the four current PE country programs’ objectives and results to date.
**HISTORY OF PE AT CI**

Through its Centers for Biodiversity Conservation in five hotspots, CI’s impact soared from helping place 6.2 million acres of land under protection or enhanced management in 2001 to 54.4 million acres in 2003. During the same period, the organization’s partnerships grew from 18 to 166, and CI dedicated one-third of its budget to support the work of partner groups, large and small. CI recognizes that for biodiversity conservation to be lasting, it must improve the lives of local people. Our experience during the past 18 years has shown that conservation will not succeed in the absence of people-oriented strategies to enhance stewardship of the land and natural resources.

CI’s experience implementing community-based conservation has produced lasting results through a community empowerment and ownership approach. Recognizing the significant threat to biodiversity from human population growth and poverty, CI implemented projects to deliver access to reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) services to remote populations living in some of the world’s critical hotspots. In 1997, CI’s PE program began working in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, by strengthening midwife networks to ensure safe deliveries, providing RH/FP services to the community, and engaging communities in conservation dialogues. During the next eight years, CI worked with partners and communities to promote biodiversity conservation and human welfare enhancements in health, income-generation, and education.

Following on the initial midwife training work in the region, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation awarded CI a grant in early 2001 to implement an integrated health and conservation project in the Selva Lacandona, particularly the area surrounding the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The Selva Lacandona in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas has some of the highest levels of biological diversity in Mexico and the Mesoamerica hotspot. This vast reserve of floral and faunal species is under increasing pressure from rapid population growth and unsustainable natural resource utilization patterns. In response to these critical threats to biological diversity and human welfare, CI worked with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), Population Action International (PAI), and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to deliver integrated health and conservation programming.

In 2002, the Office of Population and Reproductive Health of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded CI the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests grant to increase understanding and adoption of integrated PE approaches to conserving biodiversity. Under this grant, CI and local NGO partners helped rural communities to understand the relationship between having smaller, healthier families and improving stewardship of natural resources and protecting forests that are habitat for globally significant biodiversity. The desired result was to facilitate a transition of such communities from poor, subsistence agriculturalists to economically stable families with diverse livelihoods.
and a working knowledge of resource management and biodiversity protection. Furthermore, CI hopes to enable a shift from large, unplanned families to couples with access to quality reproductive health care who plan both the number and the spacing of their children. Taken together, these efforts are benefiting not only global conservation but also the people taking care of these vital resources.

Selected PE Portfolio Results*

Some of the PE project results include the following:

- Raised contraceptive prevalence rates (CPRs) in the Philippines and Madagascar by an average of 5 percent in each target area during 2004;
- Raised the CPR in our target zone in Mexico from an average of 7.7 percent in 2001 to 36.7 percent by the end of 2003;
- Increased maternal and child health service utilization (including vaccinations and safe deliveries) in all target sites; The Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) International began delivering health services to 3000 people in the Cardamoms Conservation Landscape in Cambodia for the first time;
- Forged partnerships with government and nongovernment reproductive health programs to deliver reproductive health and family planning activities and implement conservation or natural resource management activities;
- Worked with partners to develop activities that functionally link reproductive health education with conservation and natural resource management; and,
- Built the capacity of local partners to create mechanisms for continued provision of integrated reproductive health and biodiversity programming after the project’s conclusion.

* PE program activities in Guatemala, funded by US Agency for International Development under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests grant, were suspended in December 2003.

OVERVIEW OF PE COUNTRY PROGRAMS

Key threats to biodiversity conservation in areas of high population growth include lack of access to family planning and reproductive health, human population migration and encroachment of human settlements in key biodiversity areas, unsustainable natural resource management, and slash-and-burn agricultural practices. These threats are being addressed through CI’s ongoing PE activities, and the sites selected for the project were examined for key biodiversity relevance, state of external pressures, and enabling conditions for enacting responses to address threats.

Cambodia

Encompassing more than two million square kilometers of tropical Asia, the Indo-Burma hotspot is still revealing its biological treasures. The hotspot contains Cambodia’s Cardamoms Conservation Landscape (CCL), an area with the world’s largest remaining population of critically endangered Siamese crocodiles, previously thought to be extinct. The area’s remarkable endemism in freshwater turtle species is threatened with extinction because of overharvesting and habitat loss. The CCL contains more than 30 globally threatened species and provides vital watershed services to southwestern Cambodia and parts of Thailand.

CI Cambodia works with communities in five communes around the CCL to protect this biologically rich terrestrial habitat. The project started in February 2004, when CI began working with Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International and Save Cambodia’s Wildlife to reduce population pressures on biodiversity in the CCL. Population growth poses an important threat to biodiversity in the CCL, from both natural growth and migration within the landscape. Rural populations in this area lack access to basic RH/FP services, which directly influences fertility rates. In addition, as rural populations expand, extraction of natural resources from protected areas

Cardamoms Conservation Landscape in southwestern Cambodia
of the CCL is becoming unsustainable. Without a means to develop economic alternative activities, pressure on rare and endangered species will increase.

The project has three objectives:

- Enable target communities to adopt safe RH/FP practices and to improve access to quality RH/FP services, thereby mitigating population pressures on biodiversity.
- Support effective integration of RH/FP services into local government planning and to build local capacities for natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.
- Improve regional planning for conservation and development in the CCL through demographic analyses and threat-migration strategies.

Results to date include the following:

- With CARE, CI increased access to RH/FP services by improving both existing health services and supply and emergency referral services. CI and CARE brought the first-ever health services to remote areas of the CCL by building a health post in Thma Bang and starting outreach nursing and health worker visits.
- CARE delivered vaccination services to remote areas as well, with mothers and babies lining up at the health post to receive necessary shots in the first few months of the health post operation.
- The project initiated women’s associations in two communes intended to improve livelihoods and to ultimately increase demand for RH/FP.
- The project facilitated Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) exercises in four communes in the CCL, integrating community resource needs with conservation in the target provinces. More than 1,200 people participated in the PLUP process.
- The project facilitated RH/FP and conservation priorities into commune development plans.
- The project strengthened commune council capacity, through increased participation by women, for community-based natural resource management.
- The project began preliminary assessment of demographic trends in the CCL region to ensure that threats to biodiversity and opportunities to achieve conservation outcomes are considered in regional development plans.

The Philippines

The Philippines hotspot contains more than 7,100 islands and is one of the world’s most biologically rich countries. Many endemic species are confined to the fragmented forest that covers only 7 percent of the original extent of the hotspot. The Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor (SMBC) is one among the most biologically diverse subregions in the country. A stronghold of globally threatened species, SMBC preserves 22 percent of the country’s remaining forest resources and 40 percent of old-growth forests. At the same time, the Philippine provinces of Cagayan and Isabela stand out as being at high risk for population growth and increased degradation of the natural resources.

The PE project is located in the municipality of Baggao in the province of Cagayan in northern Luzon and is...
located in the SMBC. The project began in October 2002 to engage communities living in and around the biodiversity hotspot in activities that integrate biodiversity conservation with improved access to RH/FP services and information.

Working with communities inside or near the forests where in-migration and fertility are high, CI, NGOs, and government partners are attempting to address the lack of access to RH/FP services, which has led to rapid population growth, thereby causing increased unsustainable use of forest resources. Many of these forests are included in concessions as community-based forest management (CBFM) areas and ancestral domains of indigenous peoples. However, they remain barely managed. Thus, uncontrolled timber poaching and clearing of forestland continue to destroy the forest, reducing further the forest’s capacity to meet the future needs of the communities, as habitat to diverse flora and fauna, and to sustain environmental services critical for the communities’ survival, which include the supply of water for irrigation of their farms and for domestic use.

The project objectives are to:

▶ Encourage and enable residents of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) in 6 barangays to adopt safe and appropriate RH/FP practices; and

▶ Build the capacity of target communities to effectively manage their CBFM and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) projects for sustained resource yields and biodiversity protection.

Results to date include the following:

▶ CI and partners strengthened RH/FP services by building the capacity of Local Government Units (LGUs) and more than 400 barangay health workers and other local health workers in Baggao.

▶ The project promoted effective delivery of RH/FP supplies and related services to the local communities in the target area, including raising the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) in our target zone to 65 percent in 2004 and 2005.

▶ The project strengthened the information, education, and communication (IEC) awareness campaign to build a conservation- and population-conscious constituency, reaching more than 1,000 people since the project began.

▶ CI and partners provided technical assistance and support for the overall integration of barangay plans, Community Resource Management Frameworks, and Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans with the Municipal Comprehensive Land-Use Plan of Baggao.

▶ The project built local capacity of people’s organizations, indigenous people, and the LGUs to effectively implement their development plans and enforce conservation policies and initiatives.
The project provided technical assistance for agroforestry and promoted other biodiversity-compatible economic activities that will engage men, women, and youth within the covered barangays.

The project worked with the local communities and other key stakeholders (LGUs, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the National Commission on Indigenous People) to set up a community-based monitoring and evaluation system for sustainable natural resources management and biodiversity protection of the project site.

The project improved management systems for the sustainable protection and maintenance of biodiversity in three CBFM areas and one CADC. LGU and community policies and projects are addressing links between RH/FP, in-migration, and natural resource management.

Madagascar

The Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands hotspot has an outstanding total of eight plant families, five bird families, and five primate families that live nowhere else on Earth. Madagascar’s 61 lemur species and subspecies are the island’s charismatic worldwide ambassadors for conservation, although tragically 15 species have been driven to extinction since humans arrived. The Zahamena-Mantadia Biological Corridor protects some of the island’s last remaining tropical forests and lemur habitats.

In this unique landscape, CI works with communities in and around the Zahamena-Mantadia Corridor, which is located in the eastern part of the country. This band of forest represents some of the last remaining lowland and mid-elevation primary forest ecosystems in the country. Zahamena National Park and Mantadia National Park, located in the northern and southern ends of the corridor, respectively, are anchors for CI’s corridor conservation strategy.

The PE project started in July 2003, and CI works with its Malagasy partners, ASOS (Action Santé Organisation Secours) and MATEZA. Later that year, the president of Madagascar committed to tripling the surface area of protected areas in his country, the pinnacle of Madagascar’s commitment to natural resource conservation. In a country rich in biodiversity but socioeconomically poor, the president recognized that conservation is essential for socioeconomic development. This conservation commitment presents a formidable challenge in rural areas, where the absence of alternative economic practices forces farmers to convert forest to subsistence agricultural practices, known as tavy.
or slash-and-burn. In addition, minimal access to RH/FP care, high fertility rates, poverty, and minimal education levels combine to produce increasing pressures on natural resources.

The project objectives are to:

- Increase local capacity in child and maternal health and improve access to quality RH/FP services in the target communities. (In the Madagascar PE project, the term reproductive health care includes attention to maternal and child health.)

- Enable corridor communities to manage their forest resources more effectively for both sustainable livelihood and biodiversity conservation.

Results to date include the following:

- CI and partners reached more than 2,000 village residents with IEC messages to improve understanding of RH/FP and its importance to healthy families and a healthy environment. They also helped to raise the CPR in target zones by an average of 5 to 6 percent, to an average of 11 to 14 percent in rural areas.

- The project increased vaccination coverage rates in the target zones from December 2004 to June 2005 for children 0 to 5 years old by an average of 15 to 20 percent per commune.

- The project trained 200 community health promoters in basic RH/FP with links to environmental health in all communities and priority sites, and it fostered more than 20 community action plans that included the aspect of biodiversity conservation.

- CI and partners worked with communities to implement natural resource management plans for a subset of communities in the target areas and to improve soil and natural resource management through ongoing capacity building activities.

- The project implemented alternative livelihood and nutrition training and capacity building for 55 Women’s Nutrition Teams.

Selva Lacandona forest in southern Mexico.

- The project promoted implementation of new agricultural production practices by training more than 100 farmers in 2004 and 2005.

Mexico

The Selva Lacandona sits in the Mesoamerica hotspot and contains some of the highest levels of biodiversity found in the Americas, yet its forests are under extreme threat from agricultural conversion by a rapidly growing population. The Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, in the heart of this biodiversity hotspot, includes one of the last large expanses of intact humid forest in Mesoamerica, providing habitat for vast floral and faunal reserves of high-profile globally threatened species such as the Jaguar and Harpy eagle. This area is under tremendous population pressures, such as migration and high birth rates—a result of minimal access to health services, low income and poor infrastructure—and poverty persists in this area. Furthermore, many people have limited options for earning a living, given the minimal education and lack of schools, combined with few economic alternatives to subsistence agriculture.

Since 2001, CI and our partners have made substantial strides toward combining biodiversity protection education with improved sexual and reproductive health service delivery in three key communities bordering the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. By building the communities’ confidence
and trust in project staff members, CI and our partners have been able to work in these communities and make progress toward improving RH/FP service delivery and awareness, as well as increasing conservation awareness and promoting sustainable resource management.

The project objectives are to:

- Increase access to and information on sexual and reproductive health in communities around the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve;
- Help communities to increase capacity to sustainably manage resources, especially the adolescent populations;
- Promote the empowerment of women through participation in microenterprises for conservation.

Results to date include the following:

- The project increased knowledge and use of RH/FP methods in the three target communities around the Reserve. We have helped to increase the CPR from an average of 8 percent in 2001 to 37 percent by the end of 2003. CPR increased slightly in 2004 and 2005.

We have learned many valuable lessons about the challenges of forging and sustaining partnerships among diverse organizations, integrating health and conservation activities, and eliciting stakeholder and community participation in areas of civil unrest, such as in Emiliano Zapata, one of our original intervention sites, which we had to abandon in early 2002 because of the potential risk to project staff members. Although much work remains in terms of improving health and welfare in this key biodiversity area, we have made demonstrable achievements in the Selva Lacandona, and there are valuable lessons learned to share with other PE projects worldwide.

**SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED**

During the past five years, CI and our partners have learned valuable lessons through the implementation of field-based activities to improve health and conservation outcomes. We have used these lessons to improve our technical approaches to communicate with communities and local stakeholders, to refine our key messages to local and regional government authorities, and to share our successes as models for replication.

Some of the key results achieved and lessons learned by CI and our partners include the following:

- The project increased awareness of environmental impacts of harmful agricultural practices through agroforestry projects and environmental education sessions.
- CI and partners expanded economic opportunities for women through women’s groups and microenterprise activities.
- Our work has reached more than 60 communities served by the network of rural health clinics of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS).
- CI and partners delivered more than 70 training sessions and workshops on reproductive and sexual health, environmental services and stewardship, and microenterprise skills to more than 3,600 people (including medical staff members, community organizers, health promoters, midwives, adolescents, farmers, and community women and men). These events ranged from short meetings to workshops comprising more than 200 hours of training time.
People need to see the benefits of conservation in order to pursue conservation. In Cambodia, community members perceived and understood the benefits of participating in planning for local land use in order to conserve valuable natural resources. This led to increasing participation by the community members.

Communities need to actively participate in conservation on all scales. The Philippines PE project built capacity for natural forest management with NGOs and community groups by tapping into local knowledge and adapting local techniques. These efforts have improved forest management in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor.

Health outcomes provide an entry point for communities to adopt conservation outcomes. Working with communities to improve health outcomes among the human population builds goodwill and acts as an entry point to discuss broader conservation goals, thereby creating good rapport with communities and local stakeholders. CI’s collaboration with CARE International in the Cardamom Mountains is a visible partnership, responding to local needs. The two organizations have worked together to create an effective emergency transport system for patients in remote areas to reach health services.

Building lasting partnerships and relationships requires leadership, commitment, and persistence. Working with established health, development, or conservation NGOs in a local area greatly enhances and facilitates progress, because the seeds of cooperation were already planted and potentially nurtured for several years.

Joint action, rather than competition, ensures solid results. In all four countries where CI is implementing PE projects, we have found that collaborative partnership with multisectoral NGOs and community groups allows us to leverage resources, minimize overlapping activities and create stronger programs.

Action speaks louder than words. For example, agreements with communities, Memoranda of Understanding, and other documents must be put into action. In the Philippines, CI learned through working with local government and institutions that communities value and respond to actions to operationalize these documents.

The involvement of indigenous peoples and organizations is integral to achieving conservation sustainability. In Mexico and the Philippines, CI and partners worked closely with indigenous groups located near the biodiversity target zone to ensure conservation outcomes were integrated into project activities.

Partnerships require respect for the culture of indigenous peoples. Building lasting partnerships for conservation with indigenous peoples requires organizations to respect indigenous people’s customs, traditions, and laws throughout the project stages—from planning and implementing the project to monitoring and evaluating its results. Sometimes project implementers bring packages of interventions without considering the customs, traditions, and customary laws of indigenous groups, and the project fails.

Incorporating gender analysis about roles and responsibilities can improve conservation efforts. Involving women in the agro-forestry and forest monitoring activities—traditionally the domain of men—increased tree planting and reporting of forest infractions and improved project results in the Philippines.
Partners need to identify solid, agreed-upon indicators of project performance. Doing so is essential to ensuring partners have ownership and responsibility for project activities. Regional coordination is essential. Although most PE activities take place at the local level, it is important to ensure higher-level regional coordination with government institutions and other partners. Such coordination can help prevent the conflicts that may arise between government initiatives and PE goals.

NEXT STEPS

CI plans to continue disseminating our lessons learned in PE programs in order to improve conservation practice and achieve outcomes. Through a new three-year cooperative agreement with USAID, CI will continue our PE work in Cambodia, Madagascar, and the Philippines. In addition, we will work to improve documenting the links between better health and conservation in a scientifically rigorous manner, in accordance with our institutional human welfare and conservation stewards objectives.
SECTION 1 PHOTO CREDITS

Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher, left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover: John Williams
Page 1-3; Introduction: John Williams
Page 1-4: John Williams
Page 1-5: map: CI
Page 1-6: CI Cambodia
Page 1-7: John Williams; map: CI
Page 1-8: John Williams
Page 1-9: map: CI
Page 1-10: Jose Santos Ortega
Page 1-11: CI Mexico
Combining Conservation and Care: Community Participation in Conservation and Health
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia; Zo Zatovonirina in Madagascar; V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico; Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines; Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Kenya Datari and Carol Boender contributed to earlier versions of this document. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00) under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
Community participation is one of the underlying approaches that Conservation International (CI) uses to build local commitment and capacity to conserve biodiversity hotspots around the world. This is especially true in the Population Environment (PE) program in integrated health and conservation activities. There are numerous, diverse ways in which to engage local communities, and CI has experience with many of them. In the past five years, CI has utilized Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) in Cambodia, Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in the Philippines, and the Champion Community approach in Madagascar. CI learns more about working with communities every day—about the great effort, flexibility, and awareness needed to promote quality community engagement and ownership in sustainable conservation.

**INTRODUCTION**

Conservation programs should have a holistic approach, addressing community issues that influence conservation.
OVERVIEW

The PE program works with partner organizations at the community level to build awareness and local capacity to deliver health services and reduce population pressure on natural resources.

Cambodia

Located in southwestern Cambodia, the Central Cardamom Protected Forest (CCPF) is home to over 30 globally threatened species listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Despite their rich surroundings, the area’s 5,000 human inhabitants suffer some of the worst socioeconomic conditions in the world. The country’s poor economy, especially in rural areas such as the CCPF, forces many citizens to rely intensively on natural resource extraction to survive. Illegal logging, clear-cutting for agriculture, wildlife hunting, and a growing wildlife trade have combined with a rapidly increasing human population to take a significant toll on conservation of this critical watershed and forest habitat. Years of civil conflict have caused great distrust among the population, and government-sponsored social services are minimal. Now a renewed sense of urgency to protect the natural legacy of the CCPF has spurred preservation efforts, successful because the local people themselves are directly involved in conservation.

Since 2002, CI has been working with the villages in and around the CCPF to complete PLUP to determine the best use of local lands for both economic and conservation purposes. Members of the communities create maps that illustrate the current uses of their land and then come together with CI technical staff to determine how to modify their practices to ensure preservation of the environmental resources upon which they rely. PLUP, besides proving to be technically valuable, carries special significance in Cambodia. The democratic process is just beginning in this country, and the free democratic elections used to select environmental leaders for PLUP are among the first such elections in which the people participated. Since the process began, more than 1200 men and women have participated in the PLUP process.

CI has played an integral part not only in preserving Cambodia’s vital natural resources, but also in advancing the cause of the local people. PLUP gives the people for whom conservation is most important a forum for discuss-

Community Engagement Tools

In Cambodia, the PLUP program excited participants, because they were able to say, “Now we can manage our forest again.”
ing their concerns and the power to do something about them. The results have been unprecedented. Commune inhabitants feel that they finally have control over their own land, and they show up to meetings in large numbers to use their newly found voices. Women and indigenous Khmer Daeum people, who are not used to having their opinions count, take active part in community decisionmaking. In one community called Tatai Leu, a young indigenous woman was elected chief of the Commune Natural Resource Management Committee—another milestone in a traditionally male-dominated society. These participatory approaches and mechanisms promote sustainable natural resource management in line with community priorities.

The Philippines

One of the principle objectives of the CI Philippines PE project in Baggao in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor on the island of Luzon is to build the capacity of target communities to effectively manage the identified CBFM and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) projects. CI and PROCESS-Luzon (a nongovernmental partner organization) work with many government partners to do this. In partnership with the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Local Government Unit, CI and partners provided technical support to the CBFM people’s organization in the review and updating of the Community Resource Management Framework, the CBFM’s management plan. From a series of participatory workshops, key stakeholders identified a number of common problems, such as the lack of clear zoning of CBFM areas to delineate multiple-use zones and strictly protected zones, and the lack of updated human population data for the area. Also, little information exists to show the extent of various threats to the CBFM, such as...
human population pressure brought about by natural birth and in-migration, timber poaching, slash-and-burn farming, wildlife hunting, mining, and collection of limestone in cave areas.

With the updated Community Resource Management Framework, the local communities recognized the importance of zoning after seeing the results of community mapping, and they are now conducting appropriate forest development and management, a continuous awareness campaign, and active participation in capacity-building activities. These activities include establishment of community nurseries and agroforestry farms, participation in information, education, and communication (IEC) for both natural resource conservation and reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP), ecotourism development, and enforcement of existing forestry laws to protect and manage their CBFM areas.

Working with the Agta indigenous people, the PE Baggao Project provided continuous guidance and raised awareness of the importance of their role in safeguarding, managing, and protecting the CADC. The project likewise began assisting the indigenous people in the conversion process from

From Hunters and Loggers to Community Educators:
The Dalaw-Turo Core Group in the PE Project in Baggao, the Philippines

- Three years ago, the rural community of Baggao was full of hunters, illegal loggers, and farmers practicing slash-and-burn agriculture. They were desperate families heavily dependent on upland resources for basic survival. They have now turned from these destructive practitioners to be active community residents who are advocating and practicing sustainable natural resource use.

- How did these extractors become active environmentalists? In July 2003, the DENR initiated an enhancement training on informal environmental education for indigenous peoples’ organizations in the region. DENR is the primary government agency responsible for conservation, management, protection, proper use, and sustainable development of the country’s environment and natural resources. CI works closely with the DENR staff to conserve the biodiversity around Baggao, but this training highlighted a different approach to conservation—a local community-based core group called the Dalaw-Turo core group. The Dalaw-Turo core group is a community-based information and education group running from one street to another, moving from one community and school to another, advocating not only biodiversity conservation and RH/FP, but also the links and interrelationships between these two pressing local concerns.

- This informal, environmental education methodology is proving to be an effective way in demonstrating the importance of local conservation efforts. This IEC approach combines information dissemination and entertainment, so that it not only informs, but also entertains local community residents, who respond well to underlying messages. The Dalaw-Turo core group uses environmental games, skits, folklore, and other nontraditional methodologies that further communication and awareness education, and that transform the once-destructive members of the community into local educators.

- In 2005, the Dalaw-Turo core group conducted 15 IEC campaigns in the six barangays (local community areas) included in CI’s PE project target zone. According to a recently conducted community-based survey, the community-initiated IEC activities led to an increased number of couples engaging into RH/FP methods and higher levels of awareness among youth and the general public of the state of their environment. Furthermore, the “Ligtas Buntis” (Safe Pregnancy) campaign of the Philippine Department of Health (a CI partner agency) conducted during the summer of 2005 showed that the majority of the 246 bilateral tubal ligation and 4 no-scalpel vasectomy pioneer-acceptors were participants in the series of Dalaw-Turo core group campaigns in the PE project site.
CADC to a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title and the formulation of an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan. This process is critical because it ensures indigenous groups have the legal rights and access to resources to manage their lands.

**Mexico**

In Mexico, the PE project has fostered community participation through several mechanisms. The project has accomplished the following:

- Trained and educated rural health volunteers to work with the Mexican Social Security Institute to disseminate integrated health and conservation messages in the 20 focal communities and surrounding areas.
- Delivered environmental education seminars and trained youth leaders, rural health outreach workers, and local midwives about the importance of forest fire prevention, species conservation, and environmental services. More than 200 environmental educators and 20 functional medical units have been created, and two youth groups have been consolidated into a civil association called Youth Group for Conservation of the Lacandona Forest.
- Worked with three microenterprise groups of women to promote community awareness of species conservation and opportunities for alternative livelihoods.

**Lessons Learned**

In the course of our community engagement during the past five years, CI and our partners have learned the following lessons.

- Conservation and health professionals working with local communities must be flexible and innovative. In many of the areas that need the most help, the landscape itself changes daily. Actors need to be aware that plans they make today may be impossible to carry out only days later, and they need to be prepared to deal with rapid change.
- Personal relationships are a major part of life in small villages—especially remote, rural ones. These relationships are vital to gain acceptance by and access to a community. People who do not get to know community members personally will find it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve lasting results. Sharing meals with people and making meetings fun and inclusive will lead to more participation.
- When engaging community members to participate in a project, one must learn how to listen, observe, and read nonverbal communication clues. Different commu-
ties—especially small villages—have methods of conduct that may be very different from those to which a NGO worker may be accustomed. Ignoring these differences can be detrimental to a project. Community members may not bluntly express what they think or want, but the NGO worker must figure out the messages people wish to convey. It is important not to act like a detached outsider and to abide by customary methods of conduct in order to encourage true community participation.

- It is essential to keep one’s word and one’s promises. One should not make loose promises to assist the community in a particular area unless one intends to actually do so. Communities have long memories, and failing to fulfill one’s promises is a sure way to lose trust and participation.

- Teamwork and open communication are vital among partner NGOs. CI has a tradition of working with our partners in order to broaden CI’s knowledge of the region and our ability to work with and reach the local people. However, working with partners poses challenges as well. If all partners do not have exactly the same understanding of project goals, limits, responsibilities, and workplan, project progress can be impeded. In addition, one must carefully consider all aspects of a decision to include a partner in a project. For instance, CI Cambodia’s PE staff members learned that you cannot “outsource” community engagement, and receive the expected results.

- People must have a stake in their future well-being and the results of their delegated actions. When working with land issues, one must acknowledge the role of people’s rights to land and other resources. Communities have protected their land to use its resources, and will be wary of environmental groups that wish to assume ownership or stewardship of their traditional holdings. In some situations, the communities have lost or never possessed legal state-recognized title to their land; by reestablishing the communities’ rights, an NGO will ensure broad and enthusiastic participation in its projects. In Cambodia, the PLUP program excited participants, because they were able to say, “Now we can manage our forest again.” Full land rights also make progress and conservation sustainable; when the NGOs leave or reduce their presence, community members will be much more likely to continue their conservation activities themselves.

- Conservation programs should have a holistic approach, addressing community issues that influence the success of conservation. For instance, in Cambodia, major land disputes and land-ownership issues afflicted the area when CI arrived. CI’s plan to restore rights to the people who depend most on local natural resources encouraged high participation in the PLUP process. An environmental NGO will find it difficult to gain acceptance and participation in an area without addressing problems with which the local people themselves are most concerned. Integrated projects with clearly stated objectives can work well, because they link the solution of more pressing issues to support for the environmental activities that may be less urgent to the local people.
New approaches to participation must be constantly explored. Village meetings are the most widespread method of garnering support and participation, but they alone may be insufficient. Powerful figures and large stakeholders in a project (e.g., the legal owners of land to be included in a new land-use plan) may not necessarily attend village meetings. New and innovative methods of encouraging the participation of all stakeholders at all levels will be needed.

One must recognize the differences—large and small—in culture and attitude among communities. The same approach will not work in all communities, even those from the same region.

All members of the community need to perceive that they will benefit from the project in some way, even if they will not directly participate in the project. In the Mexican state of Chiapas, culture dictates that the men of the villages decide whether or not the women may participate in a women’s microenterprise initiative. CI workers had to ensure the men came to the community information sessions, so that they would understand and support the plan; otherwise it would not have worked. This example not only illustrates the importance of understanding differences in cultures, but also that the whole community must be involved in the process, even if they are not targeted participants.
SECTION 2 PHOTO CREDITS

Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher, left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover: Carol Boender
Page 2-3: Introduction: Katie Fisher
Page 2-4: John Williams; map: CI
Page 2-5: top: CI Cambodia; bottom: CI Mexico
Page 2-6: CI Philippines
Page 2-7: top: CI Philippines, map: CI Mexico
Page 2-8: CI Mexico
Page 2-9: top: CI Mexico; bottom: IMSS staff
Combining Conservation and Care: Multisectoral Partnerships in Conservation and Health
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia; Zo Zatovonirina in Madagascar; V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico; Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines; Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Dr. Guillermo Vilchis Torres, Laura Miranda and Jose Santos Ortega provided valuable information. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00 under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement (LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
The purpose of this paper is to present the experience of Conservation International (CI) in working with partners in the Population Environment (PE) program and lessons learned from those experiences. The Meeting Population and Conservation Needs in the Selva Lacandona project partnerships are examined in this case study of CI’s PE program in Chiapas, Mexico, which was funded by the Davis and Lucille Packard Foundation. Additional lessons learned from other types of partnerships in other PE programs are also included.
Since it began in 1987, CI has worked closely with local partners to achieve conservation goals. During the past five years, the organization has increasingly relied on partners to achieve these results. Currently, more than one-third of the institution’s annual budget is dedicated to partners. This change reflects a long-term strategy to build local, regional, and national capacity for conservation while engaging a range of stakeholders in the health, development, and industrial sectors, as well as policy arenas. By forging strategic alliances with these groups, CI helps protect endangered species, plan and protect landscapes, and consolidate conservation corridors at all levels. Many organizations find partnerships challenging and complicated, but CI has proven that broad-based, collaborative projects can provide concrete and lasting biodiversity conservation results.

In the southern Chiapas region of Mexico, CI’s PE program has been working since before 2000 to combine conservation-and health-based initiatives. Following on small-scale midwife training in the PE project in the Selva Lacandona in Mexico and Guatemala, CI initiated a larger integrated health and conservation project in 2000 with support of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. This project has three objectives to:

- Increase access to and information on reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) in communities around the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve;
- Help communities to increase capacity to sustainably manage resources, especially the adolescent populations;
- Promote the empowerment of women through participation in microenterprises for conservation.

Since the project’s inception, CI’s role has been one of facilitator—bringing together the network of partners, creating coordinated workplans, overseeing progress, and implementing conservation project activities. CI staff members are responsible for the conservation and microenterprise components, while our partners have been largely responsible for the RH/FP and economic development activities of the program.

From the beginning of the project, CI has partnered with Population Action International (PAI), a U.S.-based research policy advocacy organization dedicated to increasing global political support for effective population policies and programs. PAI seeks to make clear the links between population, reproductive health, the environment, and development (Cincotta and Engelman 2000). In the early years of this integrated project, PAI provided strategic planning and guidance on project design and selection of a local partner to carry out the RH/FP component. PAI was well positioned to provide this input, given its reputation and extensive network of international health and family planning contacts.

Partnerships require flexibility and innovation on the part of both organizations.
On the basis of consultations with PAI, CI invited the Mexican Family Planning Association (MEXFAM), a national family planning nongovernmental organization (NGO) with more than 35 years of experience, to join its program as the health partner. MEXFAM’s mission is “to provide quality and [available] services in family planning, health and sexual education, focusing especially on the vulnerable population in the country: young people and the poor” (MEXFAM 2005). Following MEXFAM’s advice, CI also formed a close relationship with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), a government agency providing basic health services to rural poor in the Chiapas region.

CI’s experience working with MEXFAM offers many insights into the process of forming an effective partnership. CI has always had specific criteria for choosing potential partners. MEXFAM fit all of those requirements and was already established as a well-respected, professional organization in Mexico. However, the partnership proved unsuccessful when it became obvious that MEXFAM did not have the field-based presence required to carry out the local health service delivery component of the project in communities around the remote Selva Lacandona jungle. Primarily from urban areas, MEXFAM doctors were sent out to work with RH/FP in rural and indigenous communities, but they were unaccustomed to working with this target population. Despite claims that the young, urban male doctors were undergoing extensive training to prepare them for working with indigenous women, it was apparent that they were unprepared to serve in such a capacity. Their service did not appear to recognize the customs and needs of the communities and did not take into consideration important gender
issues. The result was detrimental to CI’s efforts in the area, and CI lost the communities’ trust. In addition, MEXFAM was not able to document its progress and provide CI with reports. After numerous attempts to work out these problems, CI made the decision to discontinue our partnership with MEXFAM.

CI began to look for other health partners to fill MEXFAM’s role in providing community-based health services and training. The outreach arm of IMSS, “IMSS-Oportunidades,” was a good fit in terms of its mission to reach the poor with health services and improve local conditions. This organization also was established in the area and had access to existing health facilities and information. CI discontinued our partnership with MEXFAM in 2002 and began to work instead with IMSS-Oportunidades. CI also joined with a new health partner, Marie Stopes Mexico (MSM), a branch of U.K.-based RH/FP NGO Marie Stopes International.

Women creating handicrafts with microenterprise groups.

As a partner MSM helped support the RH/FP component of the PE program. MSM runs three health clinics in the towns of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Comitán, and Tuxtla Gutierrez. Health service providers in the clinics provide pre- and post-natal care; screening for cancers that affect reproductive health (cervical, uterine, etc.); family planning information and services; sexually transmitted infection (STI) education and treatment; AIDS counseling; gynecological exams; and other reproductive health services. MSM also has two mobile clinics that provide these services to remote communities. In addition, MSM runs youth centers near its clinics where youth learn about sexual and reproductive health, gender issues, and family planning. IMSS-Oportunidades works in coordination with MSM, providing the partnership with facilities, doctors, and materials and making options more accessible to ensure its success.

On the basis of lessons learned with the MEXFAM partnership, CI coordinated annual partner meetings with IMSS staff members at national and local levels to review workplans and progress to date and to address issues such as community engagement strategies and use of integrated health and development educational materials. These meetings allowed partners to assess the proposed activities, budgets, and roles and responsibilities in order to determine the feasibility and timeline for the activities. This coordination mechanism was very effective in bringing partners together and setting consensus-based workplans and goals.

One additional change in PE program management reflected broader institutional grant management improvements. With CI giving away larger portions of the annual
budget for external grants, new guidelines were instituted to ensure partner performance through financial incentives and payments in return for services. In the past, CI might advance large portions of grants with fungible reporting dates and minimal reporting guidelines. In the early 2000s, CI adopted a more sophisticated, performance-based approach to managing partnerships.

From the experience with MEXFAM, CI refined its partnership model in the PE program and emerged with a new set of health partners: one government institution and one NGO. Although there have been challenges in these partnerships over the past few years, IMSS-Oportunidades and MSM have proven successful in meeting the project’s health goals. For example, CI and our partners have increased knowledge and use of RH/FP methods in the three target communities around the reserve. We have helped to increase the rate of contraceptive use from an average of 7.7 percent in 2001 to 36.7 percent by the end of 2003. Our work has reached more than 60 communities served by the IMSS network of rural health clinics. Since 2001, CI and our partners delivered more than 70 training sessions and workshops on reproductive and sexual health, environmental services and stewardship, and microenterprise skills to more than 3,600 people (including medical personnel, community organizers, health promoters, midwives, adolescents, farmers, and community women and men). These events ranged from short meetings to workshops comprising more than 200 hours of training time.

LESSONS LEARNED

We have learned many valuable lessons about the challenges of forging and sustaining partnerships among diverse organizations, integrating health and conservation activities, and eliciting stakeholder and community participation in areas of civil unrest. For example, in 2002 CI had to stop activities on one of our original intervention sites, Emiliano Zapata, because of the potential risk to project staff members. Some of these lessons are described as follows:

■ Work with project partners that demonstrate a high level of individual and institutional curiosity. The practice of working in partnerships requires flexibility and innovation on the part of both organizations.

■ Use a rigorous and extensive set of criteria for choosing a partner; factors to consider should include experience, knowledge of the area and the context in which it will work, and the reputation of the organization.

■ Constantly evaluate and update criteria for choosing partners and methods for working with them. This is the only way to perfect the process of working in conjunction with other groups and organizations.

■ Do not forget that personal relationships are critical elements of successful organizational partnerships. If staff members of one organization do not work well with those of the other, the working relationship will suffer. Even if other criteria indicate that the organization is a good choice for a partnership, this factor can ruin a partnership and should be taken into consideration.
At the inception of the partnership, devote adequate time to exploring and understanding each partner’s interests and priorities, and make explicit agreements about each one’s rights and responsibilities.

Establish a clear agreement, in writing, that grantees will provide regular progress updates to the partner providing the funds. If there is no communication process for this purpose, the partner receiving the funds may take advantage of the partnership.

Choose partner organizations carefully, and keep in mind that the communities with whom an NGO works will not necessarily differentiate between an organization and its partners. If a partner makes mistakes and acquires a bad reputation, both organizations may lose the communities’ trust.

Regularly communicate with the partner and actively monitor its progress as part of the collaborative project. As mentioned earlier, people will not differentiate between two organizations working together; even if a project component is run entirely by the other NGO, it is important to monitor progress to ensure that everything runs as planned.

Maintain a close, trusting relationship with the partner so as to avoid problems such as those discussed previously. The more staff members have experience with partnership building, the easier it will become. However, if problems do occur, immediately evaluate the partnership and discuss steps to address the problems, by changing the partner’s scope of work, refining aspects of the work, or discontinuing the partnership.

Make use of a partner’s advice and connections. The successful relationship between CI and IMSS-Oportunidades came about as the relationship with MEXFAM ended. At MEXFAM’s suggestion, CI continued working with IMSS to build a strong, lasting partnership.

Partner with a government institution in projects where appropriate. A government connection can enable the entire operation to run smoothly through increased access to facilities and information and a decreased chance of misunderstandings. This arrangement will also facilitate

Many multisectoral partners support a conservation site in northern Philippines
Ensure that a government partner accepts NGOs as valid institutions. In Mexico, IMSS-Oportunidades accepts CI and MSM without hesitation as valuable, credible organizations. However, previous experience showed that a national-level government health agency did not give NGOs the support they needed because it did not accept them as legitimate.

- Make sure partner organizations have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and timeframes. Coordination is always crucial in terms of planning and decision-making. Sometimes when MSM visited a community, it found that the IMSS doctors were not where they were supposed to be. This misunderstanding illustrates the need for both coordination and monitoring. The partnership between these two institutions is strong enough to overcome such misunderstandings, but this will not be true for all partnerships.

- Include partner organizations in all project planning and in all workshops and meetings, in order to maintain a good working relationship and positive personal connections.

- Provide support to partner NGOs that enter a region for the first time. For the new organization to build legitimacy with a community, it will need to work through the
established organization for a period of time. The project as a whole will benefit from the use of existing relationships to build new ones.

- Collaboration is most successful if each organization has a specific and unique function; extensive overlap will cause tension and possibly hinder progress.

- Facilitate a smooth working partnership through regular communication in the form of correspondence and meetings. For example, MSM and CI contact each other one to two times per week to prevent any problems in their relationship.

- Form partners with groups such as the private sector, People’s Organizations, and the mass media to enable the organization to meet the cross-sectoral needs of communities and to allow for the inclusion of many types of stakeholders.

REFERENCES

SECTION 3 PHOTO CREDITS

Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher, left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover: John Williams
Page 3-3: Introduction: Katie Fisher
Page 3-4: CI Mexico
Page 3-5: Katie Fisher; map: CI
Page 3-6: top: CI Mexico; bottom: Rosanna Cifuentes
Page 3-7: John Williams
Combining Conservation and Care: Promoting Alternative Livelihoods
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia, Zo Zatovonirina in Madagascar, V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico, Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines, Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00 under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement (LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
Biodiversity hotspots are home to some of the richest variety of flora and fauna in the world, but they are also commonly home to some of the poorest people. To reduce pressure on biodiversity, conservation nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and partners are exploring different strategies to alleviate poverty, often by integrating alternative livelihood options into their programs. This approach attempts to prevent environmentally destructive practices, such as slash-and-burn agriculture, and to foster more conservation-friendly income-generating activities. The activities of the Population Environment (PE) program of Conservation International (CI) often include alternative livelihood activities in conjunction with natural resource management for improved biodiversity conservation.

Poverty and lack of knowledge of alternative practices are drivers in biodiversity loss.
Threats to Biodiversity

CI’s mission is to conserve the Earth’s living natural heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature. CI’s approach to conserving biodiversity targets 34 biodiversity hotspots—areas of Earth’s biologically richest places, with the highest numbers of species found nowhere else. Hotspots face extreme threats and have already lost at least 70 percent of their original vegetation (CI 2005). According to a 2004 analysis, the hotspots are home to just under 2 billion people—about one-third of our global population (CEMEX 2004). Many of these inhabitants are poor, live on less than one dollar a day, and directly depend on the products of healthy ecosystems to meet basic human needs such as shelter, food, clothing, and medicine. In addition, they represent considerable resource demand near localities critical to biodiversity conservation (Gorenflo, da Fonseca, and Mittermeier forthcoming).

In our target countries, human population growth rates affect conservation through a series of human-induced pressures on natural resources, such as:

- **In-migration and encroachment of human settlements.** In each country where we work, migrants move into key biodiversity areas because of the need for agricultural expansion, as well as increased pressure and poverty in other more densely populated areas. The people who move to the region often remain dependent on subsistence farming, largely in poverty, with high fertility rates, poor reproductive health, and minimal access to government services. Although logging concessions have been closed in Luzon, the Philippines, since the early 1990s, large numbers of migrants still move to the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor (SMBC) seeking farmland. Home to the Cardamoms Conservation Landscape, Koh Kong province in Cambodia has one of the highest numbers of migrants from other provinces, in part because of perceived opportunities for poaching, illegal logging, and agricultural expansion.

- **Slash-and-burn agriculture.** Loss of habitats because of conversion of forests to agricultural land is a pressing threat to biodiversity worldwide. In Baggao, the Philippines, 88 percent of households practice slash-and-burn agriculture within secondary growth forest. In Madagascar, despite a government ban on the practice, poor rural farmers still burn parcels of land for rice production in order to meet family nutritional needs. In Cambodia, the average rural family does not have enough rice to meet its basic nutritional needs for three to four months out of the year. These economic pressures increase intensification of natural resource exploitation and lead to irreversible soil erosion and species loss.

- **Unsustainable natural resource management practices.** Community residents who lack alternative employment opportunities contribute to destructive environmental prac-
tices, such as unregulated hunting of wildlife, overfishing, and timber poaching. Poverty and lack of knowledge of alternative practices are additional drivers in biodiversity loss. In 40 countries, CI is working with our partners and donors to address this threat by building community and NGO capacity for sustainable resource use, addressing policy issues, and fostering coalitions and networks to improve species, landscape, and corridor outcomes.

**PE LIVELIHOOD RESPONSES**

To achieve sustainable biodiversity conservation, PE programs attempt to build local community capacity to improve natural resource management and to foster small-scale income-generating activities. These livelihood activities vary according to local biodiversity threats and local enabling conditions for opportunities for community action. In Chiapas, Mexico, CI included a microenterprise component in its integrated PE project. In Cambodia, community members investigated alternative farming methods and ecotourism possibilities, and the women formed two associations to initiate livelihood activities. In Madagascar, communities explored alternative farming and experimented with other renewable resource-based livelihood options. Finally, in the Philippines, communities initiated three environmentally friendly livelihood projects.

CI Cambodia and partners work with women’s associations to promote livelihood strategies.
Women’s Associations

In our PE country programs, CI has examined opportunities for improving income generating activities in the communities in biodiversity hotspots. One of the most common tools is to help form women’s associations, because women in more traditional societies do not participate in the formal sector and pursue other opportunities.

In Cambodia, two women’s groups created demonstration farm plots and gardens to teach farmers about diversifying crops for nutrition and increasing yields to sell market produce. CI plans to set up a buffalo bank—from which farmers can borrow buffalo to till fields—for the rice season. Rice production itself has been improved through education about integrated pest management and nondestructive farming techniques. In Mexico, two women’s groups formed successful artisan microenterprises designed to generate income for their families. (See Box 4.1 for more information about women’s microenterprises in Mexico.)

Women’s Microenterprises in Mexico

■ In the Selva Lacandona jungle of Southern Mexico, women in the Ch’iöl indigenous community of Frontera Corozal traditionally dedicate their time and lives to the welfare of the family and household. Inhabitants like María live on a subsistence level, and the society is heavily male dominated. When CI established a microenterprise project to promote environmental conservation and economic opportunity, María was among the first women to join—to change her life and take control of her future. The women’s group, Nich Ma’te’el, makes and sells embroidery depicting endangered species to visiting tourists. From these sales, they gain economic profit, promote environmental conservation, and have established themselves as an influential part of their community, a precedent in the community.

■ For the past five years, CI conducted regular meetings and skills-building workshops on embroidery training, family planning, environmental conservation, and organizational development. The success of these workshops is evident in the exceptional progress of the group. María and the other women have generated enough confidence in their potential to secure a three-year loan to buy sewing machines, thread, and cloth. They secured funds from external donors to build a training center, and they successfully petitioned the US Agency for International Development in Mexico for a grant to furnish and provide electricity for the center. Finally, as a result of successful negotiations with local authorities and the Chiapas government, they will soon have access to stores from which to sell their wares in a busy tourist zone.

■ María’s success, along with the other women of Nich Ma’te’el, illustrates the possibilities that arise when common economic interests and environmental responsibility are combined. Now the women are taken seriously in the community and are respected for successfully promoting the conservation of flora and fauna in the region. Their embroidery generates sorely needed income for their families. An unexpected benefit of their success is the opportunity to explore their own culture in more depth. Now that they have the materials and the credibility, the women of Nich Ma’te’el have begun to revive an intricate embroidery method and design that their community has not used since their grandmothers’ time. The design is popular with tourists, and the group’s success grows as its members preserve their cultural heritage. In addition to their personal achievements, they frequently use their knowledge to provide other women in their community with support for similar ventures and aspirations. As a result of the new training center, the women are assured that their efforts will continue to have a long-term impact for their children.

Alternative Agriculture

In Madagascar, the people traditionally practiced tavy, a destructive method of planting and harvesting rice that involves slash-and-burn deforestation. CI helped train them...
to use more sustainable methods of rice production and also to grow more and different crops such as tomatoes, beans, fruit, and potatoes. These new crops provide more complete nutrition for the families and maintain the integrity of the forests. In addition, the communities have experimented with farming fish, keeping bees and growing foods for market to provide them with income so that they do not have to rely on harmful agriculture for subsistence.

In addition, NGOs and CI work to implement alternative livelihood strategies, such as growing rice with technical improvements, practicing reforestation, and engaging in agricultural activities. The information, education and communication (IEC) component includes village theater sessions in 36 sites about the importance of reforestation in biodiversity conservation. During the past two years, more than 62 village animators were trained in reforestation techniques, and they share this information through informal outreach activities.

In the Philippines, where illegal logging had provided poor families with most of their income, community-planning exercises in six barangays identified three conservation-friendly alternatives—agroforestry, ecotourism, and the collection of nontimber forest products. With the help of CI, community members initiated and currently participate in all three of these livelihood opportunities and now actively oppose and prevent illegal logging in their forests.

**Ecotourism**

In the Philippines, communities in the SMBC have for several years expressed interest in developing ecotourism activities. In the past year, CI’s NGO partner PROCESS-Luzon succeeded in securing funding from the United Nations Development Programme for the development of potential ecotourism sites in the project area. The Local Government Unit also allocated funding for this effort, as it intends to boost the development of these ecotourism sites to generate alternative livelihoods for the community. These natural attractions are expected to contribute to the local economy if developed and managed properly. The blue waters area, with its pristine caves, was the primary attraction at the National Caving Congress in April 2005. CI is actively participating in various local planning activities to ensure that

A gardening project conducted by a women’s enterprise group in Chiapas, Mexico.
the ecosystem of the area will not be compromised through ecotourism ventures.

LESSONS LEARNED

Based on CI’s experience in all of the PE programs so far, CI presents the following advice and lessons learned from the field.

- It is important to pursue and encourage an alternative livelihood that is relevant to the people of the area and that coincides completely with the environmental efforts of the integrated project. If an NGO attempts to start a livelihood activity that the people cannot relate to, it will be difficult to garner involvement. In Mexico, two women’s groups ran embroidery microenterprises: not everyone knew how to embroider, but many did, and those who did not learned. This enterprise worked well because the practice was already established thanks to their location near a tourist area. The embroideries depicted local endangered animals, tying them directly to the conservation efforts and making the integrated project more effective.

- Community awareness and acceptance of the new livelihood activity is key if it will take time away from more traditional responsibilities. Women’s group activities can be especially controversial, because women frequently are not accepted as income generators for the family, and they traditionally spend most of their hours taking care of their children and their households. Numerous information and awareness workshops, as well as gender workshops, may be necessary to gain community acceptance for a project. Everyone must be included—men and women, children and adults.

- NGOs must be aware of major and minor cultural differences within and between groups and be observant, open, and flexible in this respect. These differences include cultural practices of the workplace as well as customs and ethnic differences.

- Every member of an alternative livelihood group must have an equal say in decisionmaking. If a group already exists when the NGO enters the scene, current leadership should be evaluated. In Mexico, the existing leadership of one of the women’s groups presented a problem because the group members were being dominated and their opinions were disregarded. When this fact came to light, the result was a much more open and participatory group.
In holding any workshops or information sessions for a livelihood group or the whole community, everyone must be actively involved in the meeting. A simple lecture will inform people but not excite them. If youth participation is needed, it is especially important to make meetings and workshops fun.

Unplanned and unforeseen expenses should be anticipated when setting up and supporting an alternative livelihood project component. Be prepared to change plans should the necessity arise. For instance, if the livelihood activity is agricultural, natural disasters or even heavy rains can ruin an entire effort; if the activity relies on creating a market for goods, it is by nature risky.

It takes lots of time to establish a successful alternative livelihood activity. In Mexico, one of the women’s groups did not progress as far as the others simply because it was difficult for staff members to reach them and the staff members therefore had less time to work with them. Microenterprises and other livelihoods should eventually be self-sustaining, but it takes a lot of time to provide a community with the resources and support necessary to successfully establish a livelihood option.

Verbal and nonverbal communication is key in any group activity, both between staff members and community members and among the participants. In Mexico, the communities spoke indigenous languages better than Spanish, and it was not until project staff members began to understand the people’s nonverbal communication and learn some of the language that the project began to function smoothly.

Children should be involved in the activities, so they become accustomed to different ways of making a living other than the traditional methods they usually witness. Women in Mexico bring their daughters to the group meetings, and in Madagascar, schools have set up demonstration gardens to teach students and their parents about sustainable farming.

The links between a new livelihood method and a community’s well-being should be made clear. In the case of a microenterprise, the connection is fairly obvious because the benefit is monetary. When promoting alternative agricultural methods for market foods and environmental preservation and nutrition, hold nutrition workshops and explain in detail the links between the environment and the health and well-being of the family. Remember that the project is integrated, and any chance to make links between components helps the whole effort.

REFERENCES


SECTION 4 PHOTO CREDITS
Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher; left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover:
Page 4-1: Introduction: CI Philippines
Page 4-2: CI Mexico
Page 4-3: map: CI; bottom: CI Cambodia
Page 4-4: CI Philippines
Page 4-5: top: CI Cambodia; bottom left: CI Mexico; bottom right: John Williams
Page 4-6: top: Katie Fisher; bottom: Katie Fisher
Page 4-7: Katie Fisher
Combining Conservation and Care:
Incorporating Gender into
Population Environment Projects
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia; Zo Zatovonirina in Madagascar; V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico; Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines; Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Thanks to Debbie Caro, Jim McNicholas, Michal Avni, Carol Boender, Scott Moreland, Theresa Finn, Debbie Banks, and DevTech Systems staff. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00 under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement (LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
Men and women have different gender-based roles and responsibilities in their lives, families, households and communities.

INTRODUCTION

The Population Environment (PE) program of Conservation International (CI) recognizes the importance of incorporating gender roles and responsibilities into activities to improve conservation in key biodiversity areas around the world. In biodiversity hotspots and wilderness areas worldwide, women and men have different gender-based roles and responsibilities in their lives, families, households, communities, societies, and nations. They have different knowledge of, access to, and control over natural resources and different opportunities to participate in decisions that directly and indirectly affect biodiversity. They are also affected differently by environmental and climatic change. (Boender forthcoming)

The purpose of this paper is to show how the PE program has incorporated gender analysis and training into activities and to share our lessons learned on incorporating gender to improve conservation outcomes. There are many ways in which gender-based differences are important to the success of conservation, and project results suggest that certain improvements in gender equity may lead to improved conservation results. By definition, gender is the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender relates to the socially constructed differences and relations between men and women within a given context (IGWG 2003).
Recognizing that incorporating gender into conservation strategy planning is critical to ensuring sustainable successes, CI’s PE program sponsored a six-day Strategy Development and Gender Integration Workshop in the Philippines in June, 2004. The workshop was also sponsored by the US Agency for International Development’s Office of Women in Development, which provided experienced gender trainers through its contract with DevTech Systems Inc. and partner organizations. The workshop included 12 women and 13 men from Cambodia, Guatemala, Mexico, Madagascar, and the Philippines.

The workshop brought together PE staff members and partners to share lessons learned in integrated program implementation and monitoring, to demonstrate success stories in the field, and to foster cross-team collaboration and capacity building. The gender portion of the training increased participant knowledge and awareness of gender concepts, of how gender relations affect the achievement of results in conservation and reproductive health and development, and how such interventions can improve gender outcomes. In addition, participants increased their skills in incorporating gender issues into program design, implementation, monitoring, and analysis of CI’s conservation objectives in the PE projects. The participants were specialists in reproductive health, rural development, community-based development, and resource management, and in general, they had very limited experience with analyzing gender roles and responsibilities.

During the course of the workshop, PE staff members and partners worked in country teams to refine project objectives and expected results to better target gender roles in resource conservation—particularly access to resources, knowledge, and management and use of biodiversity, such as plants and water. Trainers used the Gender Framework, which covers six analysis domains, including access to resources; space and time; legal rights and status; knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions; practices and participation; and power. Several groups did find it difficult to absorb and apply each domain to their programs.

The following examples illustrate gender aspects of conservation and CI’s responses to incorporate gender.

**Women’s Participation in Guatemala**

Around 2000, CI began implementing a PE project centered on training local midwives in family planning and reducing pressure on natural resources in the Petén. One of the project objectives was to support development of community groups in health and environment, but a constraint to women’s participation was that often women were confined to the home and did not use public spaces. In addition, women were not accustomed to working with other women outside their families. This barrier limited their participation in community groups. In response to these challenges, CI and our partners began to educate project staff members about the importance of involving women in decisionmaking and community-based group activities.
Gender Aspects of Water Use in Southern Mexico

Supported by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, CI’s Meeting Population and Conservation Needs in the Selva Lacandona project implements an environmental education component in order to raise awareness among youth about the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources. The education component focused on prevention of forest fires, which are the main threat to biodiversity in the jungle. While debating the gender aspects of this component, CI staff members and our partners began to consider gender roles in people’s use of water in the area.

Project staff members perceived that men in the area are generally not involved in gathering, carrying, or providing water for household use and therefore do not appreciate its importance. On the basis of a preliminary review of existing information on differences in water use by men, women, and children, CI decided to highlight the links between the different ways men and women use water, specifically looking at the health impacts on family members, such as childhood morbidity from acute diarrheal disease. Consequently, CI’s partner, the Mexican Social Security Institute, was asked to track diarrheal episodes by gender and to compile regular reports. These reports are helping to provide important information to community-based health professionals about water-related illnesses and to enable analysis of patterns of illness by gender.

In addition, project staff members developed an awareness-raising campaign and a series of educational activities with adolescent leaders (boys and girls) on water use (domestic and reproductive uses) through a partner organization, the Centers for Rural Adolescents. The project’s environmental education component targeted youth because of the great potential for adolescents to act as leaders in behavior change communication and adoption.

Gender and Community Planning in Decisionmaking in Cambodia

CI Cambodia works with local communities to plan their conservation and health priorities in a sustainable manner. One of the goals of the project is to facilitate the integration of reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP), conservation, and gender concerns into Commune Development Plans, in consultation with women’s associations (WAs).

To better understand local problems, livelihoods, priorities, resource uses, and other concerns from a gender perspective, CI and our partners began to ask questions about the structure and participation of the members of the commune...
councils and to examine the decisionmaking process through a gender lens.

The project identified several gender-based constraints, such as the fact that men are traditionally the primary decisionmakers in the households and in public affairs; women’s organizations did not exist; and women have the responsibility to care for children, making it harder for them to leave home and participate. In response to these constraints, CI redesigned our livelihood activities to create WAs in each village and to use the WAs as “entry points” for environment education, children’s clubs, health education, and awareness building. Working with a small Cambodian nongovernmental organization, Save Cambodia’s Wildlife (SCW), CI and local communities worked closely to design a collaborative workplan for health and conservation education and information, education and communication (IEC), coupled with practical livelihood development activities. Supported by the local chief of the Women’s Affairs Agency in the Cardamoms Conservation Landscape, SCW completed a gender and feasibility assessment in the fall of 2004 and crafted pilot livelihood activities in the spring of 2005. These activities include home gardening and cash crop production, such as ginger and chili, as well as livestock projects involving pigs and buffalo. These efforts have raised community awareness of gender roles in conservation friendly enterprises and helped meet community needs.

NEXT STEPS IN INTEGRATING GENDER INTO CONSERVATION

One of the important lessons learned from the gender analyses conducted by the country project teams was that the lack of existing data on gender differences in conservation limited the possible response options. Perceptions varied among staff members as to the roles of men and women in water use in Mexico, in family planning decision-making in the Philippines, and in reproductive health access in Madagascar. In the absence of baseline survey data and gender-sensitive indicators, interventions may not achieve intended results. This finding led the PE project to implement two follow-up activities:

- Follow-up training in specific countries.
- Collaboration with the MEASURE/Evaluation project, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), to construct a monitoring and evaluation framework for Cambodia that included gender-specific indicators.

Follow-up Trainings

Following the workshop, CI strengthened the field-level implementation of the PE program activities in two countries: Mexico and the Philippines. Both programs focused on improving CI staff member and partner knowledge and skills in addressing men’s and women’s roles in conservation through targeted gender trainings. This effort greatly enhances the implementation and resulting impacts of our PE programs.

In Chiapas, Mexico, CI conducted workshops on gender awareness for the medical health units or unidades médicas rurales (UMRs) in the Selva and Fronteriza zones of the Selva Lacandona jungle. A UMR is a group of doctors that administers RH/FP services and educates inhabitants of this key biodiversity area about the links between their health...
and the environment. Through the workshops, CI workers determined what gender perceptions existed among the doctors and nurses that hindered their efforts to educate and treat the people of the region. CI then created strategies to correct those issues to ensure the long-term success of CI’s programs there.

In Baggao, Cayagan province of the Philippines, a communication and awareness project mobilized educators and local leaders to educate community members about how biodiversity conservation is integrally connected to gender and RH/FP. CI received an anonymous donation that allowed project staff members to hold forums and “teach-ins” for two months and provide local teachers with the necessary knowledge and the orientation to spread this knowledge. In addition, CI purchased six months of weekly radio program time, disseminating information to the public about population and environment issues, including the role of gender in conservation.

**Collaboration with MEASURE/Evaluation**

Following the June 2004 PE workshop, USAID/Washington requested technical assistance in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) from the MEASURE/Evaluation project. MEASURE/Evaluation has more than ten years of experience compiling health indicators and is interested in expanding into PE. The CI Cambodia PE project received technical guidance and capacity-building assistance from the MEASURE/Evaluation project in the areas of M&E, data collection, and analysis in January 2004. MEASURE/Evaluation

Men and women have different roles in natural resource management across different societies.
staff members traveled to Cambodia to assist CI Cambodia’s PE staff in the development of an M&E plan, including a results framework, data collection and an evaluation protocol, as well as a detailed description of indicators, including data sources, targets, and justification.

The MEASURE/Evaluation team worked closely with CI staff members and our partners to produce a workable, realistic M&E plan, which was based on site visits to the Thma Bang commune in the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest. The team visited the health post managed by the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) as part of the CI Cambodia PE project; a Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) meeting in Tatai Leu; and a meeting of a women’s group coordinated through CI’s other cooperating partner, SCW. These activities were integral to understanding the way partners worked together, the data flow and possible data collection mechanisms already in place, and the potential obstacles for CI in collecting the necessary data for reporting to USAID. The framework has been vetted with partners, and they are collecting preliminary data.

The M&E plan contained several gender-specific indicators, such as the percentage of women with access to family planning, the percentage of women participating in PLUP or commune meetings, and the percentage of men and women exposed to IEC materials. Implementation of the plan assumes there will be a baseline Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey in the target zone in order to measure improvements in project outcomes. Once the KAP survey is completed, CI and our partners will coordinate data analysis and interpretation and use the results to refine on-the-ground activities.

Preparing for a meeting in Cambodia’s CCL.
LESSONS LEARNED

CI and our partners have found the following in our work on incorporating gender into conservation and health activities:

- Gender analysis takes time and resources. The concepts can be challenging in different cultural contexts, because the gender concepts are quite advanced and nuanced linguistically. Thus, gender analysis can pose challenges for many of the field staff members and it takes time to acquire solid understanding of the definitions and ideas.

- To ensure that gender analysis and strategies are effective, projects need to have solid M&E plans and data collection systems in place.

- Project staff members need information on local initiatives to incorporate gender and coordinate with other national- or regional-scale efforts, and they need to know whether there are potential resources for capacity building assistance at those levels.

REFERENCES


SECTION 5 PHOTO CREDITS

Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher, left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover: CI Cambodia
Page 5-1: Introduction: CI Cambodia
Page 5-2: CI Mexico
Page 5-3: top: Katie Fisher, bottom: CI Philippines
Page 5-4: John Williams
Page 5-5: John Williams
Page 5-6: top: Carol Boender, bottom: CI Philippines
Page 5-7: top: CI Philippines; bottom:
Combining Conservation and Care: Indigenous People and Conservation
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Janet Edmond and Katie Fisher prepared this overview with assistance from CI staff members and other colleagues. Thanks are due to CI staff members worldwide who reviewed drafts and provided useful comments. Contributors include: Sarah Milne in Cambodia, Zo Zatovanirina in Madagascar, V. Ivonne Sanchez in Mexico, Artemio Antolin, Juan Acay, Jr. and Marcelino Viernes in the Philippines, Susan Stone, Fred Boltz, Jason Berry, Terhi Majanen and James-Christopher Miller in Washington, DC. Special thanks are due to Tom Outlaw of USAID and Don Lauro of the Packard Foundation for their support of these projects.

This publication series is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Healthy Families, Healthy Forests project (GPH-G-00-02-00010-00 under Leader Associates Cooperative Agreement (LAG-A-00-00-00046-00), and by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Government, or the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

©2005 Conservation International.
The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of what the Population Environment (PE) program of Conservation International (CI) has done with respect to working with indigenous peoples in conservation. CI works with a variety of stakeholders and local partners to achieve sustainable natural resource conservation, and local indigenous communities are key partners helping to achieve our conservation goals in harmony with human societies. In many places around the globe, indigenous peoples are natural stewards of local resources and conservation partners.

In line with CI’s Indigenous Peoples policy adopted in 1991 (CI 1991), we identify indigenous peoples in specific geographic areas by the presence, in varying degrees, of the following factors:

- Close attachment to ancestral and traditional or customary territories and the natural resources in them;
- Customary social and political institutions;
- Economic systems oriented to subsistence production;
- An indigenous language, often different from the predominant language; and
- Self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group.

This paper describes our work with indigenous peoples in three countries and the associated lessons learned.
CI’s PE program has been working in southern Mexico since 2000, in an effort to meet human needs and biodiversity conservation goals in the Selva Lacandona forest, part of the Mesoamerica hotspot. This hotspot contains some of the richest biological diversity, containing 10 percent of the earth’s plant and animal species. A 1997 study that ranked countries with disproportionately high biological diversity placed Mexico among the top five countries in the world for combined species diversity and endemism. Chiapas is not only the home to a significant portion of this biodiversity, but also the last remaining intact tropical rainforest in North America. In addition, Chiapas generates over half of all hydroelectric power in Mexico, five percent of the nation’s oil, 12 percent of its natural gas, and 46 percent of its coffee. (PAI 2005.)

At the same time, the human population pressure from natural growth and migration to the area threatens biodiversity. Although Chiapas is one of the richest states in Mexico in terms of natural resources, the state ranks at the bottom of almost every social index, and the population is 60 percent rural. More than one-third of homes lack electricity and running water. Population growth is well above the national average. Infant mortality is twice the national average, and 40 percent of all rural people are illiterate. According to the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), 55 percent of the rural indigenous population in the jungle region is adolescent, and 40 percent of all pregnancies in the jungle are considered high risk. In addition, large influxes of settlers occur each year as rural farmers come to the area in search of jobs, agricultural land, and economic opportunities.

In response to these threats, CI’s PE project in Mexico, with the support of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, has been working since 2000 on an integrated health and conservation project. In collaboration with CI, IMSS is delivering basic health services to the rural indigenous poor in 20 communities in and around the Selva Lacandona.

CI and our partners also work with three local indigenous groups, the Ch’ol in Frontera Corozal, Tzeltal in Nueva Palestina, and Mestizo in Ixcan. We work in these three towns, which border the Selva Lacandona forest. Women in these communities are participating in alternative economic activities that improve their own well-being and that of their families. On the basis of data gathered in 2001 and 2002 through initial dialogue and consultations with stakeholders in the indigenous Selva Lacandona communities, we engaged women in the target communities who were interested in developing economic alternatives and forming cooperative groups. We conducted baseline studies on community enterprise interests and potential products, and we found that embroidery, community gardens, and vegetable production generated the most interest.

During the past few years, CI has conducted many workshops in reproductive and sexual health for more than 35 women and has reached more than 70 women through technical and organizational workshops designed to increase management, negotiation, and communication skills. The goal of these trainings was to increase the range of skills among
the women participating in the three focal microenterprise
groups and to foster sustainability in the group management
structures.

The women’s groups from Frontera Corozal and Nueva
Palestina continue to embroider flora and fauna species of
the region on clothing to increase awareness among the
general population of the importance of protecting natural
resources, and the Nich Ma’te’el (Frontera Corozal) group—
the most independent—has negotiated a loan to buy materi-
als and has explored marketing options for their products. In
addition, a group of 20 women from Ixcáñ have participated
in household gardening.

Although the microenterprise target communities are all
in the same region, significant cultural differences seem to
have influenced the results obtained in each of the groups.
Some groups were able to develop organizationally while
others struggled.

The Ts’unun group (Nueva Palestina) has been working
together for nine years, and there have been many conflicts
within the group. Some women expressed concern that the
president of their group looks at the project as her personal
enterprise. Training for this group focused on the technical
aspects of the microenterprise project.

The women of Nich Ma’te’el (Frontera Corozal) have
formed a solid group, and we are seeing positive results more
quickly than expected. This group obtained a three-year loan
to buy sewing machines, thread, and cloth, and they solicited
training from other organizations. They are an example of a
group working well within the community, because they give
assistance to other women who are looking for technical,
organizational, and financial support. CI continued to lever-
age funds to ensure sustainability and helped the community
in Frontera Corozal to submit a small proposal to the US
Agency for International Development (USAID) in Mexico
to support a training center. The community secured funds
to build the center, with CI’s help, through the support of
the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. This USAID
funding will help provide electricity and furnishings to sup-
port the women’s groups.

To ensure sustainability of the group after the CI project
ends in 2005, CI has worked with Na Bolom to continue
supporting this group at the local level. Na Bolom is a
national and regional group dedicated to preserving the
indigenous culture of Chiapas. During the past year, Na

Map Selva Lacandona, Mexico.

CI staff with indigenous women in the Selva Lacandona,
Mexico.
Bolom has helped train the women to design and create forest and fauna toys to highlight biodiversity for tourism. This training involves workshops on production skills such as sewing and painting, as well as marketing skills. Na Bolom is also representing the women’s group with local authorities and ensuring access to the training center and appropriate support for these activities.

In response to increased community demand for condoms, the Ixcán group recently started social marketing of condoms in their community. Given its proximity to the border and military installations, Ixcán has experienced a high level of immigration and prostitution, and health centers report increasing incidences of sexually transmitted diseases. As a separate activity, CI and Marie Stopes International (MSI), an international family planning organization with a local office in Chiapas, started promoting the social marketing of condoms with key stakeholders such as IMSS medical unit staff members, local authorities, and midwives in the community. When the microenterprise group learned of the potential for income generation through social marketing of condoms, the group pursued this initiative and agreed to work with MSI to plan for future activities.

THE PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, CI works in the northern Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor to conserve biodiversity such as the endangered Philippine Eagle, the country’s national bird, and other globally threatened endemic species like the Philippine crocodile. As part of these activities, CI has implemented an integrated health and conservation project with local communities since 2002. One of the main conservation objectives is to improve the management of the community-based forest concessions in key biodiversity areas, through appropriate land use planning and zoning and capacity building of target communities and community-based forest management committees (CBFM).

In terms of indigenous groups, CI works with local established people’s organizations (POs), government-recognized groups of indigenous people with natural resource rights in the area. The first inhabitants of the forests of the Sierra Madre, the Agta are a local nomadic group that sustains its living by hunting, fishing, and collecting wild fruit. They are a target population for the government-sponsored Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADCs) in recognition of their ancestral rights. CI helps with technical assistance and management and enforcement training for POs, CBFM committees, and other groups with lands under Certificates.
of Ancestral Domain, focusing on agroforestry, and with improved forest management to conserve these critical biodiversity resources.

Our activities with indigenous people have included training in 2003 for 47 indigenous community members along with barangay health workers (BHWs) and midwives (hilots) in reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) information and service delivery at project outset. From July to December 2004, the Local Government Unit committed to additional support to BHWs in the remote areas, particularly communities along the coastal areas (Valley Cove) where the indigenous Agta people live, allowing delivery of RH/FP services.

In addition, POs and indigenous communities were involved in biological survey data collection, used to strengthen CBFM and CADC management plans. Data collection also helped build local capacity among the Agta to monitor biodiversity over the long-term. From 2002 to 2003, CI worked with local governments and groups to obtain prior informed consent approvals from indigenous and local communities before survey work was begun, and to include them in the data collection process. This effort yielded important information on wildlife species in the area and helped lead POs to establish community nurseries. Subsequent evaluations of violation reports led to the use of CI training modules to reinforce capacity of POs to manage their projects.
CAMBODIA

CI works in the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest in southwestern Cambodia, which is of key biological interest because of species richness, particularly one of the last populations of the critically endangered Siamese crocodile. The communities living in and around the forest include the Khmer Daeum, who have been living there for generations and have a more advanced understanding of the forest than other local communities. Unfortunately, years of civil conflict and forced relocations by the Khmer Rouge have left the population impoverished and in search of improved welfare.

CI has been working with the local communities and Khmer Daeum to design innovative approaches to forest management and conflict resolution using Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) tools. The community-based planning process analyzes how the Khmer Daeum use their land and identifies unsustainable practices. The planning process leads to democratically elected commune boards, which carry out the community plans. From November to December 2004, the PLUP process initiated democratic election of local institutions in each commune, and in Tatai Leu commune, the chief of the commune is a young indigenous woman.

At the same time, CI has worked with Save Cambodia’s Wildlife (SCW), a small Cambodian nongovernmental organization, to reach local community members with information about the importance of biodiversity conservation in their areas. SCW produced storybooks using local legends about the forest and its magical powers as the basis for conservation and health messages. Many indigenous people in Cambodia have beliefs that are protective of wildlife, which assist conservation efforts. For example, indigenous people may not eat certain wild species because they believe they are protecting forest spirits, or they believe if a man goes out to hunt these species, his wife will become sick. Some of these beliefs offer opportunities for conservation. Other beliefs, such as that consuming snakes and tigers will increase one’s strength, can contradict conservation objectives.

In addition, CI sponsored five commune council and community members to attend a consultation forum on indigenous communal land titles for three days in September.
2004. This effort is important because it compliments the PLUP process and land use processes.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although CI’s work with indigenous groups varies by country, we have learned several lessons during the past few years.

- Indigenous people and organizations are important players in conservation sustainability. Opening dialogue and engaging these groups and stakeholders is essential to achieving lasting conservation effects in any hotspot.

- Building lasting indigenous partnerships for conservation requires organizations to respect indigenous people’s customs, traditions, and laws throughout the project—from planning and implementing the project to monitoring and evaluating its results. Sometimes project implementers bring packages of interventions without considering the customs, traditions, and customary laws of indigenous groups, and the project fails.

- Building lasting partnerships and relationships requires leadership, commitment, and persistence. Working with indigenous people and groups greatly enhances and facilitates progress, but it takes time to cultivate these relationships in mutually beneficial partnerships.

REFERENCES


SECTION 6 PHOTO CREDITS

Section Cover: top: Katie Fisher; left to right: 1, 2, 3 John Williams, 4 Katie Fisher
Inside Section Cover: CI Cambodia
Page 6-3: Introduction: CI Cambodia
Page 6-4: CI Mexico
Page 6-5: top: CI Mexico; map: CI Mexico
Page 6-6: top: CI Mexico; bottom: CI Mexico
Page 6-7: CI Mexico
Page 6-8: CI Mexico
Page 6-9: top: CI Cambodia; bottom: CI Cambodia