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THE ROLE OF NGOS IN INTEGRATED CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MADAGASCAR

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is the result of a collaborative effort among several individuals. Michael Brown has taken primary responsibility for the writing of the paper, with assistance and informational support from Veloson Rajafetra and Olivia Randrianasolo-Ravony of World Wildlife Fund (WWF)/Madagascar. Sheila O'Connor organized the WWF/Madagascar input into the paper. Some of the ideas expressed here may not fully reflect on the opinions of the Madagascar-based colleagues, but logistical constraints would not have it otherwise.

The objective of this presentation is to describe the role that NGOs must play in the implementation of integrated conservation and development (ICDP) projects in Madagascar if they are to be successful. A look at past and current expectations and assumptions about this role is made to determine just how realistic or unrealistic these may have been, with consideration of current needs. Particular focus is given to the notion of sustainability in the context of non-governmental organization (NGO) work[1] in ICDPs, since we argue it is one hingepin around which integrated conservation and development depends.

To accomplish this objective, the role which other actors are expected to and/or must play in conservation work in Madagascar is addressed. A minimum of contextual information concerning how ICDPs fit into national conservation programming in Madagascar is presented so that the role NGOs must play can be better understood.

The thesis of this paper is that to achieve sustainable management of natural resources in and around protected areas in Madagascar, the locus of ICDPs, NGOs (Malagasy in particular) will have a crucial role to play in developing and executing programs. Yet given current levels of Malagasy NGO participation in ICDPs, expectations about Malagasy NGO's existing capacities and interest level to effectively participate in ICDPs may have been unrealistically high, and programming to elicit participation insufficient. Expectations were also unrealistic in regard to the capacity of <u>all</u> operators to design feasible and appropriate projects (since ICDPs demand such a broad array of expertise) and to develop the kinds of collaborative working relationships necessary to determine over time what is required in terms of organizational and management arrangements for ICDPs to succeed.

We argue that specific actions can be taken to ensure that Malagasy NGOs are progressively involved in the full gamut of ICDP planning and implementation activities so that the NGO community is positioned to assume a greater and more effective role. While steps have been taken over the past year to address "the NGO issue", it is arguable as to whether a coherent strategy is in place at a government or donor level which will prioritize NGO capacity building as a primary objective in ICDPs.

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1 By NGO, we refer in this paper to mean service providing organizations which support community level or resources user groups in Madagascar.

On another level, as ICDPs are often referred to as "pilot activities", a seemingly banal question which should be asked in the Malagasy context involves the notion of "pilot activity" -- What does it mean? Does it refer to an activity that has as its objective the testing of methods and technologies, to learn from the inevitable bevy of mistakes that will occur to better inform future actions regardless of the situational specificity in Madagascar? Or is it moreso to **demonstrate a principle**, that ICDPs can/must work, before we are in the position to demonstrate the principle's validity? The nuances and implications of these two ways of considering ICDPs in Madagascar are discussed in this paper.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT ICDP ACTORS

Before describing ICDPs in Madagascar, it is important to be acquainted with the principal actors. In theory, **border communities** to protected areas are co-managers of the buffer zone to protected areas and assume a complete share in all conservation and development activities in the zone. These peripheral zones do not generally have a legal status for conservation management. These communities are envisioned, still in a nascent way, of increasingly assuming some as yet defined management role in the protected area itself.

Implementors under the First Environmental Action Plan (PAE) are primarily international conservation and development NGOs. They catalyze the integrated development and conservation activities, and work directly with the local populations in implementation.

ANGAP (Association National pour la Gestion des Aires Protegées) is the coordinating agency overseeing all implementation of ICDPs. It represents other implementing agencies under the national PAE coordinated by the Office National de l'Environnement (ONE). ANGAP is also expected to become progressively involved in protected area management in its own right.

The **Water and Forests Department** (Direction des Eaux et Forêts) is responsible for national policy on forest ecosystems and their biodiversity. Their agents play a key management role in most protected areas.

CURRENT STATUS OF ICDPs IN MADAGASCAR AND ELSEWHERE

There are a number of constraints to successful implementation of ICDPs in Madagascar. Different students of ICDPs would attribute different weights to these constraints, which include the following:

- Limited ownership by local communities in planning and driving the ICDP process;
- Limited financial means vis à vis long-term objectives;
- No existing management plans for protected areas;

- Little attempt to determine or develop potential economic value of biological resources which can provide strong feedback incentive to populations to conserve biological resources; and

- Lack of long-term vision on the part of managers and implementors as to how to make ICDPs sustainable, particularly regarding the role of NGOs in assuring sustainability.

Very little definitive can be said about ICDPs in Madagascar at this time from the perspective of conservation of endangered biodiversity. The paucity of conclusive data is not just an issue in Madagascar. In a recent article (Kremen et al, 1994) a worldwide compilation by students of ICDPs on ICDP's impact on biodiversity conservation shows limited impact to date. Of 35 projects, only 5 appear to be achieving their objectives.

That said, the lack of data may not mean that positive development of the **enabling environment** (including processes, capacities, working mechanisms, etc.) relevant to the viability and long-term sustainability of ICDPs is not being achieved. While this needs to be determined on the basis of objective indicators, it appears in the case of Madagascar that most accomplishments have occurred at the level of enabling environment. An immediate focus on conservation values to the exclusion of other ICDP elements which Kremen, et al are justifiably preoccupied with, may nonetheless be either premature or misleading at this time. This is particularly the case in the early stages of ICDPs in which "process indicators" make the most sense to monitor. Most ICDPs in Madagascar fall in this category.

There are a number of reasons why ICDP experience has not met expectations in Madagascar or elsewhere. Unrealistic expectations about what ICDPs can and should be, particularly in the short-term, are at the base of this disappointment. At the same time, it is not clear whether ICDP programs have fully "capitalized" on the pilot nature of ICDP programs. Programs which (1) test a broad range of hypotheses and which (2) focus on strengthening technical and institutional capacities are in fact particularly appropriate at their early stages. This has generally not been the case, in Madagascar or elsewhere.

As has been previously suggested, ICDPs are at the outset of being tested in developing country environments (Brown and Wyckoff-Baird, 1992), even if the concept of multiple use zones through programs such as UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere have existed for a long time. As such, one of the key strategies of ICDPs in their early stages should be to **take risks** in testing different hypotheses which will provide the data to determine <u>how</u> ICDPs should be designed, the <u>realistic limits</u> to expect for NGOs and communities to play in management, along with methods to use in implementing different project components. This will permit the demonstration of whether the underlying hypothesis underpinning all ICDPs is true -- that local resource users will be effective environmental stewards once clear economic and legal incentives for conservation of biodiversity are provided.

One constraint to the ICDP learning experience has been the quality of monitoring, not just

of biodiversity values, but of the entire process in which potential hypotheses to test are identified, necessary working relationships to implement projects are formed, and actual implementation occurs. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation was not systematically designed into most ICDPs as a core activity. Even in Madagascar where the main donor program supporting ICDPs -- the USAID sponsored SAVEM Project -- had as its explicit objective the testing of the hypothesis that linking economic incentives to conservation of biodiversity will promote the latter, monitoring has apparently not been a strong suit to date.

In the case of SAVEM, it is debatable whether the project has been perceived by the various implementors (or operators) as an implementation project to protect biodiversity in the short-term, or a research-action project to determine methodologies, roles and responsibilities to protect biodiversity in the future. While this is seemingly a semantic issue, it actually is not.

If the purpose of undertaking an ICDP in Madagascar is to learn, then many risks may be worth taking to reach that end. Testing out different management arrangements of NGOs (and community groups) with operators and government services in all aspects of project planning and implementation, would be one risk taking strategy which could be increasingly assumed in Madagascar. If, on the other hand, ICDP managers perceive the real objective is to produce tangible outputs--in this case arguably short-term conservation/development achievements--then the latitude of maneuver for risk-taking may be more limited. Most operators in Madagascar are apparently preoccupied with the challenges of achieving short-term outputs, which could be argued, would go towards confirming or refuting the fundamental ICDP hypothesis.

There are two problems with this strategy. By prioritizing tangible outputs so that the fundamental hypothesis is tested, the opportunity to test lower level process related hypotheses is forsaken. Many other subsidiary hypotheses pertaining to options in approaching management responsibility of different stakeholders, methods to engender participation or raise awareness, etc., are not being systematically tested. As anyone who has approached the issue of conservation education knows, for example, there are many potential methods that can be conveyed in many different formats with potentially many different results. One objective of ICDPs could be to systematically figure out, from a technical perspective, what educational tools work best under different circumstances among different stakeholder groups.

Instead, operators are now preoccupied with providing a tangible "development" link for resource users so that they will be encouraged to adopt conservationist behaviors in the short-term. Seeing for instance that the policy is implemented which states that 50% of park generated revenues will go to protected area peripheral zone residents living adjacent to all national parks (see ANGAP, 1994) is one means of "implementing" and "testing" the validity of the hypothesis linking development (a new revenue sharing policy) with conservation. While focus on achieving such development outputs which will encourage conservationist behavior is worthy and difficult in and of itself, other issues which demand attention are being underprioritized. These issues have to do with the processes through which

development and conservation are integrated -- how decisions are made, who undertakes what roles and responsibilities which different stakeholders assume in a range of situations, who should be doing what so that conservation can be sustained, etc. All of this is equally fertile ground around which hypotheses concerning management design, implementation and management responsibility pertain. ICDP programs in Madagascar have not been oriented to capitalize on the opportunity to test different hypotheses which encompass these issues.

The long-term implications of avoiding these issues is illustrated by an example from Nepal. During a recent visit to Nepal, it was found that staff at one of the oldest ICDPs (all Nepali employees of the King Mahendra Trust, a national NGO), the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), were preoccupied by issues of strategies, roles, responsibilities and impact monitoring and reporting to assess these impacts of ACAP. For the past 10 years at ACAP there has been so much to do, and so much continues to be done (in terms of activities) that strategy and capacity building were relegated to second tier status. While staff can now proudly point to many accomplishments but in an almost enviable sense of existential angst, they are wondering if these are really the "right" goals they should have been working towards. Have their activities reflected on what should be done strategically to enable biodiversity to be conserved? What would indicate this? Are all of their seemingly important development activities actually leading to conservation of biodiversity? Now that so much is underway there is a realization that the existing data management systems are not yielding the information required to assess the significance of the ACAP activity in terms of its original objectives. Nor are the local institutions currently in place to sustain ICDP activities. While ICDPs in Madagascar still have a ways to go before they can claim such concrete accomplishments, unless forethought is given to these issues they could be asking questions similar to ACAP's 5-10 years down the road.

NGOs IN MADAGASCAR: THE CAPACITY FOR RIGOR AND SYSTEMATIC WORK

There is considerable talk about involving NGOs under the Plan d'Action Environnemental (PAE) and is a specific Office National de l'Environnement (ONE) strategy (1994). Yet at a macro level, there are few actions that have been seen to promote the participation of Malagasy NGOs in ICDPs. There has not been an attempt to systematically address this issue, by either ONE or ANGAP. If it is truly assumed that the international NGOs will progressively hand over responsibility for their roles to local NGOs in ICDP management, then it is entirely unclear now how this could possibly be done given current activities and strategies.

Service-providing NGOs (distinct from community level groups) in Madagascar are generally weak in terms of technical and institutional capacity. Several strong Malagasy NGOs do exist, all of which are offshoots of international church groups. These include: FIKRIFAMA, SAF-FJKM, CARITAS and ORIMPAKA. These NGOs are among those capable today of working both rigorously and systematically on ICDPs. COMODE, (Conseil Malgache des Organisations de Développement et l'Environnement) is a national consortium of Malagasy

NGOs which was formed, with support from USAID/Washington together with World Learning Inc., CARE and World Wildlife Fund/US, to provide a forum for NGOs in Madagascar. One activity of the forum is to address the issue of technical and institutional capacity building. This activity has been ongoing over the last 5 years with a group of 35 NGOs, including some of the stronger Malagasy NGOs, together with others who work in development and environment.

Grimm and Byers state the current situation of international NGOs and their national partnerships in Madagascar quite clearly:

> Not many [international NGOs] have a carefully and strategically integrated vision and long-term plan, in some cases they appear to be "flying by the seat of their pants...Unfortunately, we found no clear vision among the international NGOs about how they can work themselves out of a job, and only a few examples of real commitment to engage in a program of Malagasy NGO capacity building."

At present most Malagasy NGOs have little experience working in the remote areas around Madagascar's protected areas. For those that do, as is the case with WWF's partner ASOS and FAFAFI in Andohahela in southern Madagascar, their interventions are specific to the health and agropastoral sectors. The US NGO VITA is working with SAF-FJKM in Andasabe-Mandia. It will be interesting to see whether SAF-FJKM and its work with VITA, or ASOS and FAFAFI with WWF, will be able to serve as a model for other Malagasy NGOs interested in partnering with international NGOs in ICDPs. As SAF-FKJM is one of the stronger Malagasy NGOs, its experience will likely be most relevant for the stronger group of Malagasy NGOs. ASOS and FAFAFI may be more representative of the potential experience of more local or regional Malagasy NGOs and should be interesting to monitor, given that their role (like SAF-FJKM) is service delivery (versus building their capacities so that they can deliver services in the future).

NGOs' comparative advantage today in Madagascar is their ability to approach and mobilize village communities to engender participation. They also have the potential to contribute to the future sustainability of ICDPs. Given that funding levels to guarantee the permanent presence of international NGOs to manage ICDPs is dubious at best, this potential capacity is of great importance.

On the other hand, significant NGO weaknesses currently exist which constrain NGO participation in ICDPs. NGOs are weak in design of feasible and appropriate development projects. There is no national NGO expertise in design of ICDPs. While the NGOs within COMODE have strengthened their project design capabilities over the past 5 years, it is still premature to speak of well-developed design capacity which is immediately available for playing a lead role in ICDP design (and implementation).

So too with participatory rural appraisal (PRA), a cornerstone of the ICDP strategy in

Madagascar. Malagasy NGOs are developing their PRA skills to promote community diagnosis of problems and opportunities in different development areas skill areas of great relevance to design and implementation of ICDPs. Yet as Grimm and Byers (1994) note, most PRA in Madagascar to date is done by international NGOs primarily to identify the "porte d'entrée" through which contact can be made with communities. PRA may thus be serving to raise expectations about satisfaction of development needs, prior to linking any development to conservation of biodiversity. Grimm & Byers feel that this may exacerbate conflict between conservation and local perception of development needs, though they cite the international NGO CARE and its work at Masoala as an example of appropriate PRA application.

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM THE ICDP EXPERIENCE IN MADAGASCAR?

1. All stakeholders to ICDPs in Madagascar are slowly ascending the learning curve. Understanding of the challenges which ICDPs pose are far better appreciated today than several years ago. That said, the strategy needed to address certain needs and gaps in capacities and skill area building may still not be as developed as on would hope.

2. There will inevitably be a dependence for many years in Madagascar on foreign expertise to monitor and evaluate ICDP impacts on biodiversity as national capacities at both the government level, and particularly the field implementation level are extremely weak. That said, donors have become less willing to commit funds to international NGOs for ICDP work for the time necessary to achieve both short and long term objectives. Yet, no adequate strategy appears to be in place which will <u>systematically</u> address the transfer of skills from international to national organization, particularly at a local level.

3. NGO capacity in project design in Madagascar is weak. This is certainly true for Malagasy NGOs, and is arguably the case for most expatriate NGOs as well, particularly in regard to the identification of economically attractive options for current unsustainable activities. Government institutions now play a predominant role in protected areas management. They are however only at the early stages of solidifying their own management capacities (ANGAP is after all a 3 year old donor inspired NGO creation). For this reason their ability to reach out in partnership to an NGO consortium like COMODE, which could provide certain key inputs, may be constrained.

4. The national NGOs which need to play a decisive role in ICDP implementation currently lack the capacity to do so on the scale necessary to impact significantly on the conservation of biodiversity across Madagascar. The SAVEM project has over the past year acknowledged this deficit and begun a program of NGO capacity building which is meant to address this. Many of these activities will be similar to those already initiated under the PVO-NGO/NRMS project, a project whose mandate is

NGO technical and institutional capacity building to address a broad gamut of natural resources management (NRM) concerns, of which ICDP related issues would be a subset. There is therefore a precedent for NGO capacity building upon which to build. It is still not clear however as to whether the commitment to capacity building on the parts of government, donors and operators will however be sufficient.

5. The point to which capacities need strengthening, and at which one can say they are strengthened such that a significant impact will be generated, is still distant. Given this, expectations of what national NGOs can do in the short-term must not be confused with assumptions about what NGOs "must do" from an ideal standpoint (especially given that they technically will not be able to do that which is desired, at least for some time).

6. There may still be confusion between hypothesis testing and demonstration of proven ICDP approaches in the Malagasy context. The potential for testing subsidiary hypotheses which consider strategies to achieve conservation, partnership between stakeholders, education or awareness raising methodologies, etc. is not being fully explored.

7. At present only several Malagasy NGOs are active in ICDPs. SAF-FJKM at Andasibe-Mandia, ASOS and FAFIFA at Andohahela, and CEDID and CAPR at Ranomofana are examples, all reflecting very different degrees of involvement. In each of these cases the NGOs are involved in various kinds of service delivery, as designed by the larger international NGOs that they are partnering with in the project. While there is no literature on the quality of the working relations between the international and national NGOs in the context of ICDPs, the role of national NGOs in the ICDP planning and implementation process is still not very clear.

   There is still lack of confidence on government's side over NGO capacities to participate effectively in ICDPs. For its part, COMODE feels that ANGAP and other government institutions incorrectly perceive it in some ways as a competitor versus a partner, thus precluding fruitful collaboration from occurring. On the Malagasy NGO side there is also a combination of an evolving degree of bravado -- the notion that Malagasy NGOs can in fact do much more in ICDPs than others give them credit for -- along with discomfort at the prospect of actually being put before the test.

8. Most Malagasy NGOs have a very sector specific experience. The logical entry role for Malagasy NGOs in ICDPs will be to serve as intermediaries between resource user communities and planning and implementing agencies, a role which in many senses requires NGOs to understand the gamut of ICDP issues in a given situation. Given that these NGOs have not been involved in ICDP design, have no impact on any resource tenure related issues pertaining to implementing the ICDP, and have little to no experience on biological conservation issues from a scientific standpoint, Malagasy NGOs are at a comparative disadvantage at the outset to impact effectively

in ICDPs. Efforts will need to be made to change this.

9. Technically, ICDPs pose such a range of challenges that when one begins to think seriously about the gamut of skills and conditions required for success, one may be tempted not to embark on an ICDP at the outset. From biological monitoring, to tight administrative capacity, to the ability to carry out a technically appropriate PRA, local NGOs must increasingly assume a greater and greater role if ICDPs are to work. As argued, these abilities seem to be singularly lacking. Can this be overcome in Madagascar?

Grimm and Byers (1994) note that while many SAVEM project funded ICDPs are planning and carrying out activities that respond to problems and perceived needs, not many have a carefully and strategically integrated vision and long-term plan -- they thus appear to be "flying by the seat of their pants". So too, there appears to be no "clear vision among the international NGOs about how they can work themselves out of a job, with only a few examples of real commitment to engage in a program of NGO capacity building" (1994).

Until and unless a long-term strategic plan is put in place where Malagasy NGO capacities are systematically strengthened so they can play a more effective role over time in ICDPs, and until hypothesis testing begins to focus on the limits of the Malagasy NGO role and responsibilities (along with that of community level structures), there likely will be a fairly classic top down structure to ICDP programming in Madagascar for years to come. In this scenario, ANGAP will be the primary arbiter and decision maker regarding ICDPs, international NGOs will continue to be the major implementors, and national NGOs will never assume the capacity to enable them to participate integrally in programming. As for the ability for the communities to become managers of parks and the like, without a major revamped strategy this goal will remain purely rhetorical.

At some point, either through ANGAP fiat, or USAID fiat, the notion of partnering with local NGOs (including communities) in all aspects of planning and implementation will need to be tackled if the prospects for long-term ICDP sustainability through Malagasy institutions is to be achieved. To accomplish this, there will likely need to be a rethinking of strategy regarding the role that existing Malagasy institutions such as COMODE can play in capacity building. While the SAVEM project through its grants management unit (GMU) has over the last year been discussing with COMODE possible means of collaborating on NGO capacity building, conversation needs concretizing into action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For conservation to be achieved in Madagascar, through ICDPs or otherwise, national NGOs will need to play a major role. Neither the state nor international NGOs have the capacity to implement ICDPs so that conservation behaviors will be sustained. The incentives for populations to conserve biodiversity based on awareness raising on the part of outsiders of the ecosystemic service value in protecting biodiversity, is (as Kremen, et al [1994] argue) at best a vague concept given communities' short term development needs. Pressing subsistence needs, and lack of viable technological and occupational alternatives to slash and burn agriculture, do not offer "awareness raising" campaigns much latitude of maneuver in tropical forested zones. Awareness raising can only make sense to resource/technology poor farmers when viable options to current practices and methods are made available. Both national and international NGOs will have a role to play in the development and testing of technologies leading to more sustainable resource use than existing practices. Determining how to extend the interval between slash and burn (tavy) for instance, versus attempting to eliminate tavy as is currently the case, would be an excellent place to start. This would build on an interesting Eaux et Forets initiative conceived in the 1960s (see Le Bourdiec, 1974), which for some reason seems to have been forgotten.

2. What are the components to achieving sustainability in Malagasy ICDPs?

   These draw on recommendations from Brown and Wyckoff-Baird, 1992. While generic, they hold equally true for Madagascar.

   a. **Consider biological and socioeconomic criteria in selecting project sites, with these taking priority over political criteria.**

      To date in Madagascar, it is arguably the case that site selection has been driven primarily by biological values versus a balanced look at where biological values are high, coincident with areas where socioeconomic criteria seem most promising (and where implementation feasibility **may** therefore be highest). Feasibility in the siting of ICDPs from a socioeconomic site should be given greater priority.

   b. **Test various hypotheses in the design, monitoring and evaluation of ICDPs.**

      While the overarching hypothesis that economic incentives will be linked to conservation of biodiversity is being tested in all the ICDPs under the SAVEM project, opportunities to test methodological approaches or the style of particular working relationships linking international and national NGOs, or national NGOs and government institutions, appears not to be systematically explored. These methodological and operational issues are fundamental to enabling the development/conservation linkage to be achieved in the first place, and seeing that it be sustained over time. These corollary aspects of

ICDPs should be given much greater attention in Madagascar than has heretofore been the case.

c. **Ensure grassroots participation and collaboration between stakeholders, not only token participation.**

This issue is highly subjective and political; one person's notion of "participation" is the next person's notion of disempowerment. Experience has demonstrated that effective development projects require negotiating a set of commonly shared perceptions and understandings between all key stakeholders. Similarly for an ICDP, responsibilities in design and management must be shared among all stakeholders. The less the sharing, the less the feeling of ownership so integral to ICDP success.

In Madagascar it is not really possible to speak of involved local communities as "sharing" in ICDP design and management responsibilities. While consulted on an ever increasing basis, the design of ICDPs has not been in the hands of communities. The premise that ICDPs rest on in Madagascar is that provision of **economic incentives** will in and of themselves be enough to promote conservation behavior within communities. It has not been an explicit premise of ICDP hypothesis testing under SAVEM that co-management and full partnership of communities in the design of ICDPs is a prerequisite to successful and sustainable ICDPs. This certainly could be tested in Madagascar under different permutations to determine if greater or lesser empowerment of communities in design and management in fact effects ICDP implementation and sustainability.

d. **Promote local control over access to resources and effective institutions that set and enforce rules over use.**

The ability of local people to limit access by outsiders in the short- and long-term is critical to effective resource management. In many areas in Madagascar, the issue of in-migration is crucially important. If resource users do not have control over access by outsiders, the most rational management strategy for them is to use the resource to their benefit before outsiders plunder the resource.

The perception of different Malagasy resource user communities regarding this issue requires assessment as to whether tenure and access rules are providing incentives or disincentives to users.

e. **Ensure that the relationship between action and benefit is as direct as possible in the eyes of the local people.**

As repeatedly discussed, an essential element in the design of every ICDP in Madagascar or elsewhere is the consideration of the linkage between conservation and development objectives. All material benefits should be clearly tied to the conservation action, as perceived by the people themselves. Sometimes, linkages between development and conservation activities can be strengthened by directing the activities to groups or individuals whose current behavior threaten the protected area. Viable alternatives for meeting economic needs must exist for individuals to adopt conservation behavior, particularly when the conservation action requires the alteration of existing extraction or production activities. In Madagascar this will particularly be the case for tavy, where finding creative solutions to very thorny technical problems should be a driving priority.

3. What should be the strategy for skill transfer to Malagasy NGOs, so that international NGOs are indeed working themselves out of a job? The answer lies at several levels relative to different actors. Firstly, institutions at all levels must be committed to this as a strategic objective. At present, the commitment is apparent at a rhetorical level, and less clear at a program level. Secondly, the clarification needs to be made about services that NGOs can provide today to test ICDP hypotheses, and services that NGOs will need to acquire so that ICDP sustainability can be guaranteed. While at a rhetorical level all stakeholders in Madagascar are committed to working with NGOs, a clear and realistic vision of what NGOs are now capable of doing versus what capacities they will need to acquire to ensure ICDPs sustainability, has not been made. This leads to continual frustration on the part of all stakeholders. Thirdly, an "affirmative action" approach to working with NGOs will increasingly need to be assumed so that skills can be transferred. "On the job training" through field level partnerships in pilot ICDPs will be required. This demands, a forthright commitment to both capacity building as a core ICDP activity, as well as acceptance of a high profile of risk taking as an inevitable consequence of this investment in capacity building.

This paper has touched on a number of areas related to the evolution of ICDPs in Madagascar. Hopefully the analysis provided can offer food for thought to Malagasy decision makers and other operators to help make ICDP programs in Madagascar all that they potentially can be.

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