**Some Questions Posed during the April 20 2021 Webinar and Panellist Responses**

Question #1:

What we find challenging from my experience in Nigeria is lack of Bottom-Up approach in solving conservation issues. While the citizen approach has worked in making more local people involved in community-environmental protection, the constant Top-down approach and increased government bottleneck is till a huge problem. Are other region/countries facing this?

*Laura Loucks:*

*Yes, the issue of top-down government approaches to conservation, resulting in delayed action, is a common problem throughout our case studies and symptomatic of the power dynamics at play. This issue is discussed in Chapter 8: power in realizing community conservation and livelihoods. While every region and country will have a unique set of conditions which play-into the top-down government approach, the case studies illustrate how communities have a multiplicity of approaches for overcoming these power dynamics, and commonly form alliances that level-up community conservation organizations through strategic collaboration and resource sharing.*

Question #2:

Mainstream development in the global south is based on Structural Adjustment and Poverty Alleviation policies that have detrimental social and ecological effect. Community conservation is about livelihood as well as conservation while international aid is about expropriation of people and nature by industrial societies. Is it possible to redefine development as conservation of livelihood and if so how might we begin to bridge to gap between these two different approaches?

*Laura Loucks:*

*We see the evidence from our case studies that community organizations can mobilize resources to generate positive livelihood outcomes, while improving conservation outcomes at the same time. We hope this evidence will influence a shift in current approaches that view people-in-community as barriers to conservation. In Chapter 6: Livelihood outcomes of community conservation, we describe the survey results from 20 different sites in which livelihood outcomes are produced as communities adapt to new conservation-based interventions.*

Questions #3-5:

* Hello, To Fikret Berkes: "Opening markets" for conservations seems to me to be counter productive: isn't our (neo-liberal) market thinking which is decoupled from ecology (and not coupleable to ecology) one of the main causes of our current ecological crisis (see: Doughnut Economics, Planetary Boundaries)?
* I agree with Fikret that for community conservation means livelihoods for which proper incentives have to be provided; my question is: what you do when greed takes over greed and livelihood means reaping unfair benefit creating social and gender inequity and inequality?
* Un défi que rencontre les communautés locales à Madagascar est la présence des grandes industries minières dont les activités ont des impacts négatifs sur les écosystèmes locaux. Les communautés locales malgaches sont désormais confrontées à de nouveaux problématiques liés notamment à la question foncière, à la dégradation des écosystèmes, etc. Cela se manifeste à travers les mouvements populaires massifs contre certains projets miniers. Pourriez-vous partager des expériences ou des solutions pratiques pour trouver un équilibre entre l’intérêt économique et l’intérêt des communautés locales dont les moyens de subsistance dépendent de la nature et de leur écosystème? Quel cadre de gouvernance serait adéquate pour concilier les deux intérêts?

*Fikret Berkes:*

*My main message was, community-based conservation requires local incentives. This is not about ‘market thinking’ or ‘neo-liberal’ incentives, but rather livelihood-related local incentives. They follow from Elinor Ostrom’s commons principles: people should be able to reap the benefit of their own conservation. The benefits are not only economic but also environmental (you need a healthy resource), social (better health, education and infrastructure), cultural (meanings and values), and political (empowerment). The benefits should accrue to the local community, not to someone else, to outsiders, and certainly not to mining interests in Madagascar! It is hard to reconcile conflicting interests. Greed is always a problem (for example, local ‘big men’); however, in well functioning communities, the social enforcement of norms and ethics keeps greed in check.*

Question #6:

What we find in India, especially the north-east is that mainstream politics and knowledge is undermining traditional natural resource use systems such as shifting cultivation. Tribal communities are being encouraged to shift to other systems without any scientific evidence to support their appropriateness to their local environments. Why is there so little science to support community management?

*Anthony Charles:*

*This is an important question, with many aspects to it. The role of politics and power is one aspect. There is a whole chapter focusing on this in the CCRN book* [*Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods*](https://www.communityconservation.net/communities-conservation-livelihoods-the-book/) *(Chapter 8) and it also underlies chapters on governance and on Indigenous realities. Another key aspect is knowledge – the need for respect for diverse knowledge systems. That respect is a necessary ingredient, according to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and many other bodies, but where that is missing, major problems can result. The need to respect diverse knowledge systems is precisely to avoid the disasters the question describes – of a push to shift longstanding resource use and conservation systems, with no valid basis. We have recently highlighted the importance of ‘*[*community science*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1462901119300942)*’ – doing science in a way that is led by the local community.*

Question #7:

In this pandemic situation both the countries and the communities are suffering and the focus is quite far from the problems related with nature. Now my question is: given the damage that is happening now to the nature, how can we recover later?

*Laura Loucks:*

*While the impact from the Covid19 pandemic will be different for every community, region and country, what we do know is that this global event could possibly trigger national, regional and/or community level conservation responses previously unforeseen. As explained in Chapter 6: Livelihood outcomes of community conservation, a trigger event often disrupts or shocks the social-ecological system such that unique a window of opportunity arises. As nations forge ahead to catalyze economic activity post-pandemic, communities could experience sudden changes in policies and governance, or other types of interventions, that support their reorganization for improved conservation and economic outcomes.*

Question #8:

Indigenous knowledge is the basis of Nature Based Solutions (NbS) and towards #BuildForwardBetter. are there examples where this connect is recognized by the Govt in the post Covid reconstruction strategy?

*Laura Loucks:*

*Yes, in Canada the recent federal budget announcement included significant funding to support the implementation of*[*Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas*](https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/nature-legacy/indigenous-leadership-funding.html)*in 27 communities across Canada. These funds will support conservation initiatives that are aligned with community-based livelihood outcomes such as the Indigenous Guardian program.*

Questions #9-11:

* What institutional resources help in community conservation as resources for communication and meetings? Museums? Town/community halls? Schools? I’m particularly interested in the potential role of museums.
* How can local stakeholders (municipal authorities, schools and universities, social housing and private individuals) influence community conservation through procurement of sustainable food and non-food products?
* Most of people don't understand the benefits of integrating local Community people in conservation. This sometimes makes government conservation policies fail to be implemented. How can local organizations, civil societies and government adopt the methodologies of integrating local Communities into conservation!! https://www.greenmountaininitiative.org/projects

*Fikret Berkes:*

*What helps community conservation depends on the kind of community, their geographic location, their history, politics and culture. Communication networks and meetings are always important, and so is the community’s ability to produce food and other products sustainably. There are good examples in the IUCN book (especially in the case studies section) of a huge variety of factors and conditions that foster or facilitate community conservation. That includes organic gardens (e.g., Nova Scotia), community meetings, civil society organizations (NGOs), and local producer groups like fisher organizations and agricultural co-ops. Many of the cases, in both Western countries and developing countries, show a mix of these factors. Strong local institutions that build social capital are the key: shared norms, networks, and trust relations.*

Question #12:

What effects can we see of the pandemic on community-based conservation initiatives?

*Anthony Charles:*

*The CCRN book,* [*Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods*](https://www.communityconservation.net/communities-conservation-livelihoods-the-book/) *was written prior to the pandemic, but we added a ‘postscript’ to discuss the very question being raised here, and what the future holds. That postscript highlights the importance in the pandemic, and afterwards, of “the crucial power of ‘collective action’ – when people, coming together in communities, meet their challenges by working together.” “The impacts of the pandemic on health, quality of life and livelihoods have been extensive in local communities the world over. The responses of communities have been, in many cases, equally impressive.” The book recognizes that “in the short term, it is challenging to focus on conservation activities (and climate action) when health and welfare are threatened immediately by the pandemic in many places” but in the longer term, “conservation practices (and climate action), on the one hand, and human well-being and sustainable livelihoods, on the other hand, are inextricably linked. The set-back due to COVID-19 must be only temporary.”*

Question #13:

Hello everyone. Julia from Brazil. In your opinion, are payments for ecosystem / environmental services a good solution to allow for conservation and sustainable development?

*Laura Loucks:*

*The payment for ecosystem services is just one of many innovative instruments that communities are using to create economic feedback loops from conserving ecosystems. In Chapter 6: Livelihood outcomes of community conservation, several factors are discussed that contribute to the success of these kinds of instruments, including improved governance and social relationships that support a reorganization process within which social-ecological systems can thrive.*