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Bridging the Gap: Communities, Forests and International Networks

Synthesis Report of the Project 'Learning Lessons from International Community Forestry Networks'

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Acronyms

ACICAFOC	Central American Coordination for Indigenous and Peasant Community Agroforestry
AFN	Asia Forest Network
AMAN	Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (Indonesia)
ASOSODE	Association of Communities for Development (Costa Rica)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CF	Community Forestry
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAN	Forest Action Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FD	Forestry Department
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal
FKKM	Indonesia Consultation Forum on Community Forestry
FSC-SWG	Forest Stewardship Council-Social Working Group
FTPP	Forests, Trees and People Programme
GTA	Amazonia Working Group (Brazil)
HKM	Community Forestry Permit (Indonesia)
IAITPTF	International Alliance Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Research Centre
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
IPO	Indigenous Peoples' Organisation
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation
IUCN-CIFM	World Conservation Union - Community Involvement in Forest Management
JFM	Joint Forest Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
RDFN	Rural Development Forestry Network
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOFOC	National Union for Community Forestry (Mexico)
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
WRM	World Rainforest Movement

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Meal sharing during collective activities symbolizes mutual aid and reinforces social cohesion. Tikar farmers, Central Cameroon. (Photo by Edmond Dounias)

Abstract

Community forestry has transformed over the past 25 years from being an experimental means of providing wood-fuel for the rural poor to a community-led movement demanding reform of the forestry sector. International networks to promote community forestry, which emerged at very different moments in this history with different visions, goals, targets and participants, have played a key role in this transformation. Based on a review of seven countries and ten networks, the study compiles the main lessons learned from this experience in terms of advocacy effectiveness, communications techniques, network governance, relations with donors and linkage to social movements. The increasing mobilisation of community-based organisations means that supportive NGOs and government agencies now need to play a different role to the one they gave themselves 25 years ago.

Introduction

Since the 1978 World Forestry Congress, community forestry has become a major theme in international forestry debates. The idea that forests should primarily be managed to meet people's needs, especially the needs of the rural poor, has struck a strong chord with many developing country governments and development agencies. Just how this is best achieved and reconciled with the other demands for forest resources by industry, for export and by urban populations, has secured less unanimity and not just because of different national situations. To what extent should forests be devolved to local control, and be owned and managed by local communities? Ideas that were inconceivable to mainstream foresters 30 years ago are become commonplace topics of discussion today.

Formal and informal networking to promote community forestry has played an important part in the spread of these ideas, and development agencies have invested a substantial amount of funding to stimulate this sharing of experiences. Since the mid-1980s, a number of formalised international networks have sprung up to promote community forestry and the rights of forest dependent people. They have sought to do this in very diverse ways, with very different mixes of people, and with very different objectives. What have been the results? What lessons can we learn from nearly two decades of networking? How can these efforts be built on and improved? What are the prospects and pitfalls ahead?

This report synthesises the findings of a year and a half long CIFOR project, which was designed to answer these questions. The research programme titled 'Learning Lessons from International Community Forestry Networks' was funded by the U.K. Department for International Development and the Ford Foundation. Under the project, researchers were contracted to review eight countries' experiences with international community forestry networks. We were also asked to review the activities of eight international community forestry networks to try to distil out the main lessons that could be learned from their experiences.[1]

Our task was to review these experiences to assess how much 'value-added' they have provided, or could potentially provide, to activities at the local and national level, as well as their ability to advocate for community forestry at international levels. The project's central objective was to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of international efforts to support community forestry. The project has attempted to synthesize the lessons emerging from these networks, with the aim of then sharing these lessons as widely as possible. A subsidiary aim was to help improve the programmes of the development agencies that support community forestry and help CIFOR establish better links with the community forestry world.

As conceived, the project was emphatically not an evaluation of the networks and country experiences. It has thus adopted an open, collaborative, information-sharing approach designed to promote 'social learning' about community forestry networking.

Methods

Prior to engaging in the research, the team met with a number of others, to develop a shared methodology for the investigation. A Methods Workshop resulted in: agreed definitions for key terms used in the study (see Box 1); an agreed framework for investigating the effectiveness

of networking; a series of questionnaires for use by the researchers; proposed formats for national workshops; and a general outline for the case study reports to follow. It was agreed that all the studies should take care to contextualise information about international networking and its effects, and not focus too narrowly on the actual activities of networks alone.[2]

Selection of case studies

The Methods Workshop also selected the range of countries and networks for investigation. The only limit on the selection of the country studies imposed by the funders was that they had to be developing countries. The aim therefore was to select countries spread across the various continents with a wide range of experiences with networks and community forestry, a variety of community forestry regimes, and experiencing differing degrees of donor interest. Cost, language, and researcher familiarity with the countries was also taken into account. The result was the selection of Mexico, Brazil, Cameroon, Uganda, India, Nepal, Indonesia and China. For security reasons, the Nepal study subsequently

Box 1. Definition of Terms

Community Forestry. For the purposes of the review, the study used a broad definition of community forestry. It was not limited to the management of forests by communities for timber production or just for commercial purposes, but also included community management for non-timber forest products, subsistence, wildlife, biodiversity conservation, as well as environmental, social and religious purposes. Likewise, the scope of the survey included measures to promote community management by customary and traditional means as well as through local and introduced innovations.

Forests. The study used a very broad definition of forests and was not limited to 'natural' forests but included managed woodlands, woodlots and small plantations.

Degree of control. The study recognised that a continuum exists between state-owned exclusionary forms of forest management at one end of the spectrum, and community-owned forests, in which the State intervenes little if at all in forest management and use at the other end. In between are various forms of shared management where the community has different degrees of control of management and benefits. The study focused on the extent to which forest management has shifted in favour of local control.

Community. The study did not attempt a critique of the problematic concept of community but recognised that some forms of community forestry actually purposefully disaggregate caste- and class-divided communities into discrete user groups with the intention of ensuring that marginalised sectors have access to resources, and so that village elites do not monopolise benefits.

Network. A network was defined as a mechanism for the two-way sharing of information, experiences, power and/or resources between previously distinct or discrete entities (persons, communities or groups) having a common objective. Networks range from informal, unnamed interpersonal webs to formalised, named and structured mechanisms for information sharing and coordinated action. International networks are distinguished from international organisations in that all the activities of members of organisations are considered part of an organisation's plan of activities, whereas network members only act within an agreed framework towards certain agreed goals being otherwise autonomous.

International. An international network is one whose activities and members are in more than one country. (A national organisation receiving funding from overseas is not therefore international.)

Measuring effectiveness. The effectiveness of community forestry networking can be measured in terms of the degree to which it has succeeded in promoting:

- empowerment—inclusive decision-making, including marginal voices;
- equitable income generation and livelihood strategies in communities;
- access to, and control of forests by, the local communities;
- ecological sustainability and conservation;
- two-way flows of information in appropriate forms and languages.

The study did not presume that objective criteria exist for assessing sustainability or conservation and gave emphasis to local perceptions of what needs to be conserved and sustained.

was dropped and three states of India were studied instead.

Nine networks with a variety of approaches, aims and target groups, including regional and global networks were also chosen: Coordinadora Indigena y Campesina de Agroforesteria Comunitaria (or Central American Coordination for Indigenous and Peasant Community Agroforestry, ACICAFOC); Forest Stewardship Council's Social Working Group (FSC-SWG); World Conservation Union's Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management (IUCN-CIFM); World Rainforest Movement (WRM); Rural Development Forestry Network (RDFN); Forest Action Network (FAN); Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC); Asia Forest Network (AFN); and the Forests, Trees and People Programme (FTPP).

Limitations

From the beginning, the project also took stock of its inherent limitations. The budget limited country field visits to 12 days and network investigations to 7 days for each study, with brief periods of time also allocated to writing up each study. It was recognised from the outset that the studies would be anecdotal and impressionistic in nature and would not yield data amenable to statistical or rigorous comparative analysis.

Organising the Findings

This survey pulled together information from a huge diversity of sources. The countries and networks that we chose to look at are extremely diverse in their character, and the studies that resulted were also varied. This diversity is as much a reflection of the different backgrounds, interests, and training of the authors, as of the different networks and local situations that we examined. All the studies, however, show the extreme complexity of the networking endeavour and the multiple webs of causality and interaction in which they are part.

Notwithstanding this inter-relatedness, the discussion which follows attempts to make sense of this profusion of information under eight main subject areas, while seeking to highlight critical connections that exist between the various topics. A final section of conclusions brings the report to a close.

- ***Community Forestry: Origins and Trajectory*** provides a thumbnail sketch of the evolution of community forestry from the 1970s to the present, showing how the initial focus on technical concerns has expanded to address the broader framework hindering community management.
- ***Networking for Change*** traces the emergence of international community forestry networks during this same period. Information sharing and training approaches have been followed by campaigning groups championing structural reforms, culminating in the emergence of grassroots movements pressing their own demands for change.
- ***The Tool Box*** summarises the main tools or techniques that the networks use to achieve their aims and picks out the main lessons that have emerged.
- ***Internationals and Locals*** examines the extent to which the international networks are able to link to local actors or accommodate their interests and perspectives in their work.
- ***International Policies and National Change*** summarises the experiences with network advocacy for international policy reform. Although international agreements now give prominence to community forestry, they have not yet had much discernible effect at the national level.
- ***Money Matters*** looks at the financial aspects of community forestry and networking. Is community forestry sustainable without subsidies? Are networks viable without donors? How do the financial constraints affect the power politics of networking?
- ***Governance Dilemmas*** examines the institutional challenges networks face to meet their multiple aims and obligations. Different kinds of networks favour different structures: all face the same dilemma that while members want accountability and democratic decision-making, yet all also favour flexibility and responsiveness. Can they have both?
- ***Linking with Social Movements*** examines the very different situation that exists now that social movements pressing for community forestry are present on the international stage. How do networks support community-based organisations without occupying their political space and substituting their voice for those in whose interests they claim to speak?
- ***Towards Conclusion*** draws all these lessons together.

Community Forestry: Origins and Trajectory

Human beings living in communities have been dependent on forests for their livelihoods for tens of thousands of years. Archaeological evidence reveals that people have been managing forests for sustained timber production, through practices such as coppicing and rotational harvests, for at least six thousand years and quite likely much longer.[3] However, forestry as a science emerged in Europe during the early years of the industrial revolution as a response to forests being cleared for agriculture and for fuelwood and timber for burgeoning industries. Scientific forestry as conceived by those early foresters sought to remove forests from the control and use of local communities and place them under the control of official bodies with the principal aim of ensuring sustained supplies of timber to strategic industries.[4] This same model of scientific forestry was then imposed on the overseas dominions of the colonial powers from the middle of the 19th century in India, Burma and Indonesia and later elsewhere.[5]

From the start, colonial foresters had to struggle with the reality that forests being arrogated to the colonial state as forest reserves were in fact owned, inhabited, used, and managed by indigenous peoples. Curtailing the rights of these peoples inevitably sparked resistance that either had to be suppressed through forced removals, fines, exactions and worse punishments, or accommodated by permitting certain forest-based activities to continue as privileges subject to strict controls.[6] Experiments with Karen villagers in Burma, allowing them to interplant their crops between teak seedlings which they were charged with managing and protecting, the so-called *taungya* system, are often cited as among the earliest examples of community forestry.[7]

Despite the resistance to state control, the prevailing belief was sustained that industrial forestry was justifiable in the public interest as it would generate jobs, wealth and development

Links between international networks and national and local levels need to be improved to enhance the benefits for the rural poor. (Photo by Edmond Dounias)

that would promote general prosperity.[8] According to 'wake theory', scientific forestry geared to service the needs of industry would bring in its wake environmental and economic benefits to the wider society. By sustaining stands of trees, industry would be generating employment in environmental services and forestry operations as well as downstream industries. It was only in the 1970s that these beliefs began to be widely challenged by professional foresters themselves. Growing evidence was hard to deny that commercial forestry was responsible for widespread forest degradation and loss, that it caused serious harm to local communities providing relatively little, mostly temporary, employment, and was enclavistic, bringing little sustained benefit to society as a whole.[9]

The Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) VIIIth World Forestry Congress in 1978, titled 'Forests for People', is often identified as the turning point when mainstream foresters gave international recognition to the importance of developing forests in ways that directly benefit local communities. Spurred by early forestation experiments being carried out on collective farms in China and to establish collective woodlots in South Korea,[10] institutions such as the FAO and World Bank adopted policies aimed at complementing industrial forestry in natural forests with schemes to encourage poor communities to plant trees—and reap the benefits—in degraded forests, 'wastelands', village woodlots, along field boundaries, and on their farms. In the 1970s and early 1980s, substantial investment and grant aid was directed to developing countries, especially in Asia, to implant schemes of social forestry. Many of these schemes such as those in Nepal and later Cameroon were donor-led and did not spring from community demands.

Early experiences quickly taught lessons, though not all were quick to learn them. Not all wastelands are wasted; many are essential to the livelihoods of the very poor. Fields farmed for trees may displace landless labourers and sharecroppers. Risk-averse poor people may see growing trees just for fuel, rather than planting multi-purpose species, as an extravagant way to use scarce land and labour. Without secure rights, poor and marginal groups gain little from woodlots. Forestry officials need retraining to relinquish control of trees and harvests.[11]

As a result of these lessons, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the development of more participatory forms of forestry, which shifted management responsibility to local forest user groups, either through co-management schemes as in India's Joint Forest Management (JFM), through leases such as the Forest Stewardship Agreements in the Philippines and, later, Indonesia's Community Forest Permit (HKM), or through actual transfers of tenurial rights as in Nepal.[12] At the same time, appreciation grew that rural communities' own knowledge, institutions, management systems and practices were not only well adapted to their environments but also highly adaptable to changing circumstances. This strengthened arguments for greater devolution of authority to local communities.[13]

Wider agendas

The 1980s also saw the emergence of wider social movements demanding ecological justice and a curb on destructive development schemes.[14] Growing public concern about the escalating rates of tropical forest destruction,[15] were fuelled by targeted campaigns, which linked up with campaigns for the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples[16] and highlighted the social and environmental impacts of World Bank-funded projects such as dam building in the Philippines, road building and forest colonization schemes in Brazilian Amazonia, and transmigration in Indonesia.[17] These laid the ground for international campaigns for an overhaul of forestry policies of institutions like the World Bank and FAO, focusing initially on the Tropical Forestry Action Plan. The emphases of these campaigns was exposure of the underlying political ecology of forest destruction in order to justify the demands of social movements calling for radical reforms in policy, aid, trade, debt relief and land tenure regimes and give space for local alternatives, such as community forestry.[18]

Intergovernmental policy-making about forests had to wait until the late 1980s before there was official recognition that the overwhelming majority of industrial logging in the tropics was unsustainable.[19] International attention meantime focused on the social impacts of logging in Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo, where Dayaks were being arrested for blockading logging roads in defense of their ancestral lands.[20] Efforts to bring about forestry reform through the International Tropical Timber Organisation were, however, rebuffed.[21] In the run-up to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Southern governments reacted strongly against what they perceived to be unilateral efforts to impose standards on tropical forestry without similar measures being taken to control forestry in the North. The Rio

Summit thus saw a reassertion of the principle of national sovereignty over natural resources and a legally non-binding statement of principles was agreed to apply to *all* types of forests.[22] NGOs responded by focusing their attention more evenly on temperate and boreal forests.[23] However, calls for the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), to broaden its mandate to encompass boreal and temperate as well as tropical timbers were again rebuffed, this time by the North.[24]

Changing models of community forestry

These broader changes in debates about forestry, coupled with an exponential increase in understanding of both the immediate and framing obstacles to successful community control of forests,[25] have brought about a general change in civil society's perceptions of what is community forestry. Since the 1980s, the emphasis has gradually shifted from a focus on community forestry as a technical innovation—in which knowledge about forest management is passed down to farmers, and authority is shared with or devolved to them—to one with a focus on the validation or revival of customary systems of forest management controlled by communities. Correspondingly, the forestry focus itself has shifted from woodlots and reforestation to natural forest management and natural regeneration. A focus on promoting tree-planting for timber and fuelwood supplies has likewise shifted to multiple use forestry, non-timber forest products, and the promotion of wider livelihood strategies.

Table 1. Changing visions of 'community forestry'

Reforestation Model	Customary Rights Model
Technical innovation	Customary knowledge
Reforestation/plantations on 'wasteland'	Natural forest management/ regeneration
Timber and fuelwood	Multiple use, sustainable livelihoods
Collaborative management	Local control
Training	Collaborative learning
Forest management	Governance reform
Conflict management	Land rights and agrarian reform
Silviculture	Exposing underlying causes
Forest department reform	National policy reform
Consensus building	Advocacy
Multi-stakeholder approaches	Connecting with social movements

At the same time, the community forestry debate can also be seen to have significantly widened its agenda. Community forestry actors now focus as much attention on the reform of the national and international policy frameworks that constrain or make possible community forestry as on the delivery of ideas, resources, and practical advice to foresters and communities. This shift in emphasis of the key issues and major activities addressed by community forestry advocates can be represented in a highly simplified table (see Table 1).

The working definition of community forestry adopted at the outset of this investigation thus proved to be far too broad, according to many of our interviewees. The case studies from China, Indonesia, India, and Uganda all noted that key actors in the networks and community forestry movements repudiate government notions of what community forestry is, explicitly noting that China's social forestry programme, Indonesia's HKM, or India's Joint Forest Management (JFM) are not *real* community forestry. Even members of the Madhya Pradesh Forestry Department noted that JFM was not really community forestry. In Uganda, the split between these two approaches is institutionalised at the government level with the Ministry of Agriculture overseeing agroforestry, while the Ministry of Forestry oversees community-based timber extraction in natural forests.

Within regions, differences in community forestry also are very apparent. In Brazil, civil society advocacy in the 1980s started with a preoccupation with shifts in power and control over forests—goals which have been to a significant extent achieved through the slowing down of colonization schemes, the recognition of indigenous peoples' land rights, and the setting up of extractive reserves. The networks in the state of Acre, for example, are now moving towards a greater focus on community forest management for timber and away from the original emphasis on non-timber forest products. The exception does however also prove the rule. A major focus in Brazil also is on promoting workable market conditions so that community forestry schemes can be economically self-sustaining. Successful community forestry thus requires both adequate frameworks (policies, tenure regimes and markets), and solutions to the practical problems of forest management (technical know-how, viable community institutions, and workable relations with forestry departments and the local administration).

*In Tang Dui, a Tibetan village in western Yunnan, government reforestation programmes encourage the replanting of upland fields with fruit trees, with the assistance of a community forestry project funded by the Ford Foundation (*Photo by Marcus Colchester)

Networking for Change

The international community forestry networks reviewed in this study emerged at very different moments in this history and in response to very diverse challenges and perceived needs. The earliest networks such as the RDFN and RECOFTC were formed principally as mechanisms for sharing the growing knowledge and experiences of community forestry among professional foresters and students, through information dissemination and training. While RECOFTC focused on sharing the message within Asia, the RDFN, which has a long record of academic excellence, gave a strong emphasis to transferring the experiences and lessons learned in Asia to practitioners in Africa, where community forestry started somewhat later. The FTPP, which was generated within the bureaucratic FAO, aimed to spread knowledge and ideas more broadly, principally through a lively newsletter with a light and popular style, and also through other publications, meetings and capacity building. It secured budgets to promote the development of networks in the regions, first linking up with RECOFTC and then stimulating the emergence of regional networks in Central America and Africa. Although structurally quite different, the AFN emerged with similar broad aims, substantially out of the early experiences of professionals working in Asia, as a means of sharing lessons among promoters of community forestry in different parts of Asia.[26]

By contrast, other networks reviewed in this study came into being as part of the broader social and environmental movements pressing for more radical reforms. The WRM was created explicitly as a response to the FAO, the U.N. Development Programme, and World Bank's Tropical Forestry Action Plan, which was seen by NGO campaigners as a fundamentally flawed attempt to impose the old model of industrial forestry on developing countries with inadequate consideration for the rights and interests of local communities. A number of other networks also coalesced later with the primary aim of challenging the framework in which forestry was implanted and pressing for reforms of global forest policies being debated at the subsidiary bodies of the U.N.'s Commission on Sustainable Development. A temporary NGO

Table 2. The Emergence of International Community Forestry Networks

Date	Events	Networks	Key objectives/context
1978	World Forest Congress		Community forestry achieves first international exposure
1985		RDFN	Share technical insights among practitioners
1985	Regional FAO meeting	RECOFTC	Train community forestry practitioners in Asia
1986	FAO/WB/UNDP/ WRI launch TFAP	WRM	Campaign to counter top-down forestry and support community rights
1987		FTPP	Information sharing, developing tools, promotion of national initiatives
1991		ACICAFOC	Link community-based organisations and promote community forestry
1992	UNCED	AFN	Share lessons learned from community forestry experience in Asia
1992	UNCED	IAITPTF	Political alliance of indigenous forest peoples demands recognition of rights
1993	ITTO rejects labelling in 1991-02	FSC	Promote independent voluntary certification with attention to human rights
1995	IPF	FAN	Promote national and regional forest policy reform
1996	IPF	IUCN-CIFM	Promote Community Forestry in International Forest Policy regime
2002	WSSD	Global Caucus on CBFM	Promote policy reform to favour community-based and indigenous forestry

coalition hosted by the WRM and the IUCN-Netherlands was, at least temporarily, successful in focusing intergovernmental attention on the underlying causes of deforestation.[27] Regional networks such as FAN, which also emerged at this time, joined in these efforts. At the same time a more focused community forestry lobby, coordinated by the IUCN secretariat in Gland, invested huge efforts in documenting the advances in community forestry achieved over the past 15 years and getting the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to make declaratory proposals for action in favour of community forestry. (See Box 2)

The early 1990s also saw the emergence onto the global stage of new networks that were genuinely rooted in community organisations themselves. In 1991, in Central America, ACICAFOC was established by a coalition of indigenous and peasant associations to press for reforms in favour of communities. The following year, the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests also established itself, led by the effective regional indigenous peoples' coalitions which had emerged in Amazonia and the Philippines in the mid-1980s.[28] The Alliance positioned itself around a strong human rights agenda and was successful in getting the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests to take into account indigenous rights.[29]

A cumulative result of all this advocacy was that future policy-makers could no longer limit forest policy debates to negotiations between governments and with the private sector. The voice of communities also had to be taken into account.[30] The emergence of national forest users' associations such as the Jan Sangharsh Morcha, a coalition of tribal organisations in India, the Assembly of the Poor in Thailand, FECOFUN in Nepal in 1995, and AMAN in Indonesia in 1999 can be seen as part of this mould-breaking trend.[31] The creation of the Global Caucus for Community-Based Forest Management, set up in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, is another step in this process.[32] (See Table 2)

The emergence of market based approaches

As noted, concern about the impact of logging on forests became an international issue in 1980s, with much of the attention focussed on tropical forests. In the mid-1980s, NGOs from Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines called for a moratorium on tropical forest logging, which led supportive NGOs in developing countries to call for boycotts of tropical timber imports and

Box 2. Why network?

But why network anyway? Networking, as an activity, is not an end in itself but a means to an end. The main reasons given for networking that emerge from the case studies and workshops are the following:

- Share information and experiences;
- Share resources and expertise;
- Identify hot topics;
- Avoid the repetition of mistakes;
- Building consensus;
- Establishing shared values;
- Research;
- Publish findings and results;
- Give people confidence in their work;
- Building up recognition and self-esteem;
- Encouraging younger people to take up the issues;
- Create a framework for local actors;
- Provide a platform for the voiceless;
- Counter threats;
- Build credibility.

Most networking on community forestry is informal. People share information and interact without the need to formalise their connections. Informal networking was repeatedly noted as a preferable form of networking as it encourages creative innovation, without formality, obligations, and legal constraints. A number of country and network case studies urged the virtues of keeping networks as informal as possible, especially for advocacy work. The finding is confirmed by a review that the FAO undertook of the 135 networks in which its own staff have been involved: *'the effectiveness of networks is not necessarily influenced by the extent to which it is formalised'*.[33]

Formalised networks, as institutionalised arrangements such as the ones this review has examined, emerge from informal connections for a number of additional reasons:

- Secure legitimacy for new approaches (in some countries informal networking may even be illegal);
- Secure funding (donors need clear agencies with specific goals—networks need to reassure members that money raised in their names is well used);
- Cost effective financing to reach a maximum number of beneficiaries;
- Create a sense of identity among distant partners who share a common vision;
- Or contrarily, create a mechanism for forging a common understanding among diverse actors with very different viewpoints.

Do networks have a 'natural life'? A number of commentators suggested during this investigation that networks have a natural cycle, being born to achieve a certain shared goal, often catalysed by a charismatic individual or organisation. The networks evolve, grow to include a wider range of members, and then gradually fizzle out because: the original goal is achieved; the context changes; membership becomes diffuse; goals become too general or ambitious; structures become over-formalised; or mutual trust weakens. Networks then die a 'natural death'. Our study neither confirms nor denies this observation but does suggest that at the least the periodicity of this natural cycle would vary greatly from case to case. It may indeed be logical for some networks set up for very specific, short-term objectives to fold up once those objectives are achieved. The IUCN-CIFM, set up to ensure attention was paid to community forestry in intergovernmental forest policy fora, has logically come to term once the IPF and IFF had passed their resolutions. On the other hand, other networks with more ambitious or long term goals can be observed going through cycles of transformation; specific actions and campaigns may come to an end but the enduring commitments of members and their underlying goals carry the networks forward into new phases of work. Yet, other commentators warned against networks trying to spread themselves too thin. A common message we heard is networks that try to achieve too much often fail. Trying to do everything means you do nothing.

the labelling of timber to reveal its provenance. Many of these same NGOs took their concerns to the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), where they called on governments to label timber and develop mechanisms to trace timber from forest to consumer. These ideas were rejected by the ITTO, especially by Southern governments who felt that such measures would lead to unfair discrimination against tropical timber. Faced with government resistance, NGOs and some of the more progressive elements in the timber industry pushed ahead with proposals to promote voluntary labelling. This was to be based on the certification of forests, according to agreed standards independent of governments, along the same lines as certification pioneered for the promotion of organic farming. The result was that, in 1993, after some 18 months of hectic preparations, those civil society and industry groups founded the Forest Stewardship Council.

Expectations were high that the FSC's principled insistence on adopting social standards in line with international human rights law would give a market advantage to small-scale producers and community forests. The reality is, however, that the relatively low premium offered for certified timbers has meant that industrial-scale logging, benefiting from economies of scale, has cornered the emerging niche market for certified timbers. Notwithstanding, certification continues to be favoured in some regions, notably Central America and Brazil, as a way of providing recognition of community forestry and securing access to global markets even though it may be

dependent on significant grant aid to help communities get their forest management systems up to certifiable standards. Such interventions may not be without their own problems however. An extensive review of certified community forests carried out for International Institute for Environment and Development found that:

> *Certification has invariably been externally driven, often by donors, who have enabled communities to meet these challenges with significant subsidies that can undermine sustainable commercial decision-making by community enterprises.*[34]

Optimistic expectations that FSC certification also would open up political space for marginalised communities to get their voice heard in national standard-setting and assessments of industrial operations have not been fully borne out either. There are still doubts about whether certification will, on balance, provide a useful multiplier mechanism to secure community rights in forests. The indications are that the potential of the approach varies substantially depending on local and regional circumstances. A detailed review of certification in Sweden and Indonesia, for example, concluded that certification cannot replace the need for reforms in policy frameworks and, where these frameworks are unsuitable, will only have a marginal effect until such changes occur.[35] More recent reviews demonstrate how easily community voices and even NGOs can be marginalised in FSC processes, when the national policy framework is hostile and tenurial rights insecure. In these circumstances added vigilance is needed to ensure that certification provides real political space for reform rather than legitimizing the perpetuation of the status quo.[36]

Network strategies

Given their very different objectives, backgrounds, constituencies, targets and styles, the strategies adopted by the different networks to effect reform are also very different. Yet, notwithstanding this variety, our survey suggests that there is a growing sense of frustration among all the networks with the slow pace of reform and the extent to which forest department bureaucracies retain control of forests. This has spurred many of the networks, especially those linked to or embedded in social movements, to advocate for more far-reaching reforms. More radical and analytic examinations of the vested interests opposing community control of forests—and investigations of the underlying causes of deforestation—have formed part of this advocacy. Emphasis has shifted towards advocacy for national policy reforms, implying much greater mobilization of civil society to overcome resistance to change, and correspondingly, the need for stronger links with social movements.

Although networks broadly share a similar vision of what is needed to effect change towards community forestry (see Figure 1), they have chosen very different approaches towards achieving this reform, depending on national political processes and the make up and proclivities of members. Different networks have focussed efforts on very different pieces of the puzzle, reflecting their different histories and ideologies. Historically, relatively few networks focussed on national policy reform, but many are increasingly recognising that this is what is needed today.

Conflict management or structural reform?

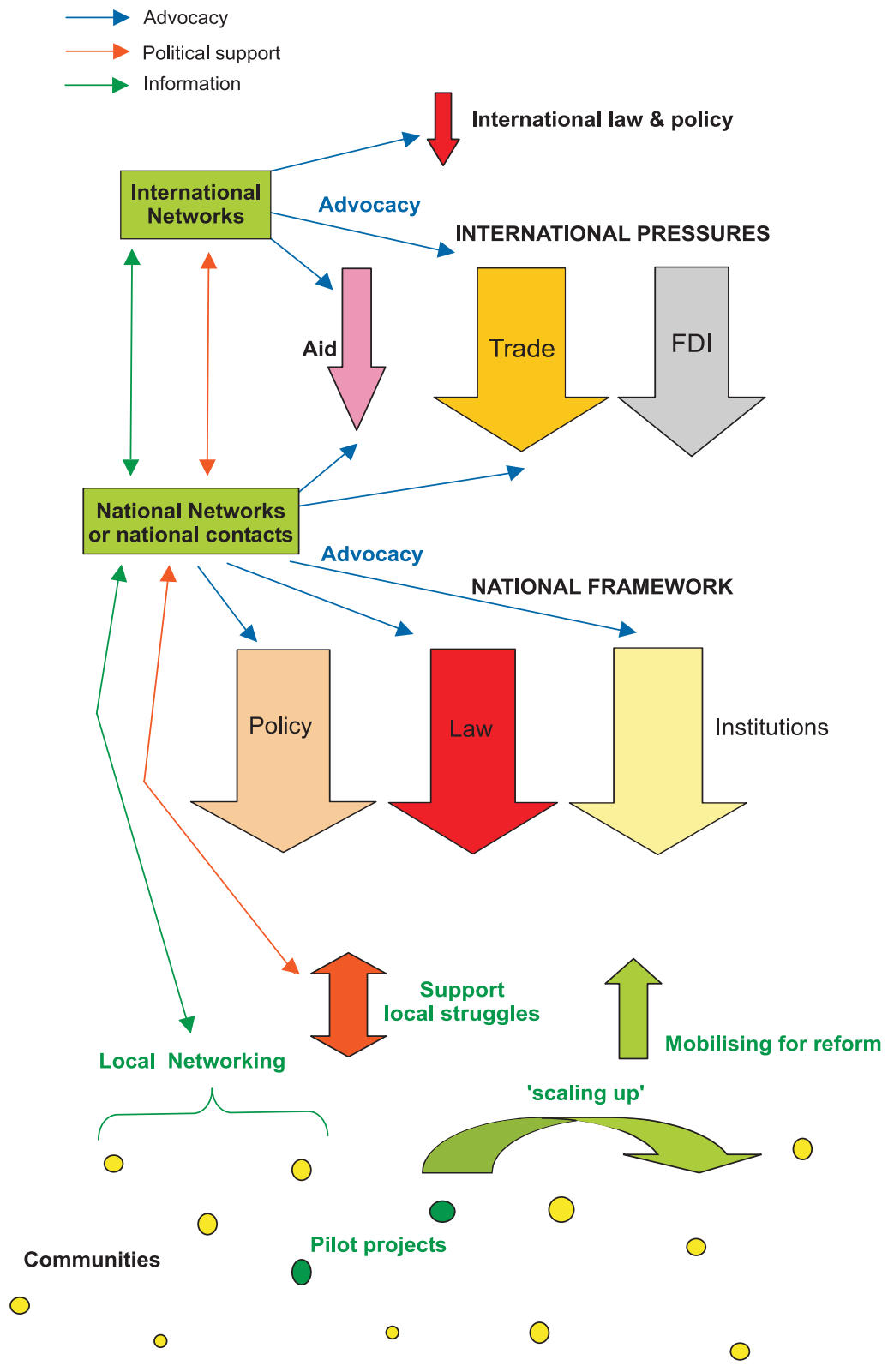
Many of the networks have promoted conflict management as an integral part of their service to communities.[37] They do this even though some of them accept that:

> *Ideally, one should work towards the resolution of each and every conflict; however, providing ultimate resolutions is not an easy matter. True resolution may require sweeping political, economic and other changes at the national and even global level, such as formal recognition of indigenous land rights, land reform, devolution of authority, or the reduction or curtailment of certain economic activities.*[38]

Yet our survey found that some organisations are critical of conflict management, insofar as it implies getting local communities to reconcile themselves to existing power structure and tenure regimes, when what they are calling for are major institutional reforms.

Figure 1 illustrates schematically the way some national and international networks envisage their promotion of community forestry and framework reform. Starting on the ground, the aim, often through pilot projects, is to assist targeted communities to secure control over forests resources, which are then backed up by efforts to scale up from these local experiences to reach additional communities. Local networking, exchanges, and institution-building form part of this work. Many of the national

Figure 1. Mapping change



networks and a few international networks see part of their role also being to provide support for local struggles, using their national and international advocacy skills to heighten the leverage and profile of local actors who face specific threats to their rights and livelihoods. Grassroots mobilization of community-based organisations is also supported as a means of pressing for reform from the bottom-up. However, this may not be enough to promote changes in the legal, political, and institutional frameworks that hinder community forestry and so are backed up by national networks and coalitions, which press for policy reforms through targeted advocacy at the national level. Other networks prioritise awareness-raising, consensus building and retraining of forestry officials to encourage forestry departments to adopt more participatory approaches more sensitive to local needs and rights.

However, the international networks recognise that national frameworks are in turn, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced by international pressures. Advocacy for international policy reform, changes in international law, targeted aid, and market transformation may encourage or pressurize national frameworks into forms more amenable to community forestry. Different networks have prioritised very different parts of this puzzle. Some have focused on the forest policy-making processes of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and subsidiary bodies. Others have prioritised legally binding international treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and various human rights instruments. Still others have targeted the World Bank and other international financial institutions, while for others targeting private sector agencies and pressing for market reforms have been given priority.

Just how networks position themselves within this changing framework determines to a great extent how they then interact with government agencies, the private sector, and communities themselves. A fundamental choice for networks at their formation is to decide whether or not they should include government officials within their membership or not. As noted below, many of the international networks do not, in fact, reach through from the international level to grassroots communities either through local and national institutions or directly.

Hybrid vigour

Some of the networks studied are composed of a wide mix of interest groups: community-based organisations; indigenous peoples; NGOs; academics; donor agencies; government officials. This is especially valued in networks that seek to build consensus among different players who start from quite different perspectives and experiences. For example the Indonesia Consultation Forum on Community Forestry (FKKM) in Indonesia was founded explicitly to build a shared vision among academics, NGOs, and government officials about ways forward to promote community forestry.

At the international level RECOFTC, FTPP, and AFN have also adopted the same approach. These 'hybrid' networks start with recognition that not all their members will share a view about the best ways to accommodate the interests of rural communities and indigenous peoples in forestry. However, the expectation is that through dialogue, information exchange, workshops, shared training, and carrying out pilot schemes, common ground can be found that will encourage officials to accept the feasibility of community forestry and effect reforms to make this possible on a wide scale. Even if debates do not yield unanimity, mutual respect can develop so long as opponents can see that their different points of view are at least being understood, if not accepted. The survey carried out in India elicited several comments from interviewees who were critical of the failure of the international networks to reach (and teach) Forest Department officials, which is a significant omission since a major barrier to reform is the resistance of forest officials to increased community control over forests.

Hybrid hubris

The study found that hybrid networks find it hard to maintain their broad platforms if they engage in partisan advocacy on behalf of local communities and social movements. For example, the FTPP regional network in East Africa, FAN, publicised a video with voices of Maasai herders claiming a so-called participatory plan for the Ngorongoro Game Reserve was, in fact, not so participatory. The international organisation that supported the plan protested the video and caused serious repercussions in the FAO's headquarters in Rome. In the same way, when the FTPP secretariat supported the Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal's campaign to stop Nordic companies gaining forestry concessions in community forestry areas in Nepal,

similar tensions and divisions surfaced. These tensions were among a large number of factors that contributed to FAO eventually closing down the FTPP network. Indeed, some of the mainstream foresters within the FAO even characterised the FTPP presence in the forestry department as an 'invasion of socialists'. The closure of the FAO's Community Forestry Unit soon followed, despite donor government appeals to keep it going.

A conclusion of this study is that networks with strong advocacy goals are rarely able to function for long as multi-stakeholder networks because it is hard for NGOs and activists to share their tactics and judgments with government and intergovernmental officials. Staff in RECOFTC, which has a broad mix of government and non-government in both its membership and the composition of its board, have had to be very circumspect in their engagement in local struggles. They now seek to act as host institution to a regional association of community forest users, which may be structurally difficult.

Members of community organisations express resentment at community forestry networks that are fence-sitters and do not commit themselves to supporting the communities in whose interests they claim to speak when the communities come into conflict with government officials. As one workshop participant put it:

> *Networks have created dreams for communities but they run away when we face a problem. Do they link with us or with the Forestry Department?*

According to this view, community forestry networks that lack real links with the communities and do not take their lead from them are unacceptable.

Synergies

An alternative view is that advocacy networks, information sharing networks, and capacity building networks all have their place. Support for partisan campaigns needs to be complemented with consensus building platforms. One of the surprises of this investigation is the extent to which the networks act in isolation from each other, given their apparent complementarity in terms of functions and perceived shared goals. Greater synergy and coordination between networks seems to be called for. The creation of the Global Caucus on Community Based Forest Management, discussed later in this article, may provide an opportunity for this.

Table 3. Networking Tools

One way tools	Two way tools
• Newsletters	• Correspondence
• Publications	• Email newsletters, listservs and discussion groups
• Resource centres	• Assemblies or annual meetings
• Web sites	• Regional meetings
• DVDs, CD-ROMs,	• Workshops
• Press releases	• Exchange visits
• Public radio and television	• Training courses
• Other mass media	• Field projects
	• Research

The Tool Box

Although networks have very diverse functions and ways of interacting, the actual tools they all use are surprisingly similar. Commonly used tools encountered during the investigation are listed in Table 3.

As suggested in the table, the tools can be divided into two sets. One-way tools are appropriate for reaching large numbers (hundreds or thousands) of participants. However, while they are suitable for disseminating large amounts of information, they are not best suited to encouraging feedback, dialogue, and shared decision-making. Two-way tools are useful for reaching much smaller numbers of people at any one time and they encourage dialogue, interaction, and joint decision-making. With the exception of occasional (and usually very expensive) large assemblies, most of these two-way tools are not well suited to stimulating shared communication and joint decision-making among groups much larger than about 50 people at any one time. This suggests that it is hard for interactive, two-way networks to include large numbers of people—on a sustained basis—in shared decision-making and interactive planning.

Digital divide

There have been expectations that the new technologies would help overcome limitations on networking. Certainly, email is highly valued for its convenience and ease of use by many network secretariats. Indeed, for those with the right training and infrastructure, email does offer a relatively cheap and simple means of communication over great distances. It suffers major deficiencies however.

- It excludes all those without telephone lines.
- It excludes all those who are not computer literate.
- It often substitutes for more personal and interactive means of communication.
- Unless specific measures are taken it discourages the use of several languages.
- Email overload can easily happen.

Our investigation suggests that over-reliance on email is one of the major weaknesses of networks. The case studies reveal that, in practice, sustained email networking as a means of shared communication and decision-making rarely reaches below the national level and tends to limit participation to those from middle-class, educated, and/or urban backgrounds.

This is not to argue that email should be rejected. The technology is here to stay, and as telecommunications improve it is bound to become more widely available in rural areas. Acquisition of cheap computers and the training of local organisations may be a logical next step for networks seeking to reach below the national level in some countries. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that if local communities are to be actively engaged in strategy and decision-making, networks cannot rely on email but must make alternative arrangements for effective communications.

Newsletter overload?

Newsletters provide a valued means of sharing information and sustaining a sense of shared endeavour among network members. For example, readership surveys carried out by the WRM and FTPP (the two networks surveyed with the largest newsletter circulation—9,000 and 12,000 respectively) show that those newsletters are highly valued. However, in the course of this study concerns were expressed that newsletters tend to become ends rather than means, are expensive and time-consuming, and that there are too many of them. This is especially the case with email newsletters, with which many people felt overwhelmed.

Face to face meetings

In the end however, there are no substitutes for face-to-face meetings for generating a genuine sense of shared purpose and decision-making. As one workshop participant put it: *'two-way means four eye'*. Face-to-face meetings are crucial to maintaining network coherence and to building good personal relations and trust. Annual meetings appear to be the minimum amount of interaction necessary, at least for the most active and core members. Virtual networks rarely survive without these get-togethers.

Workshops examining specific issues are also highly valued but networkers stress the importance of having follow-up mechanisms to ensure that decisions can be turned into joint action. Workshops are useful as fora for information exchange, but ideally, should not be ends in themselves.

Global networks find that information sharing and planning relevant joint actions intercontinentally is difficult because local and national contexts are so very different. Regional meetings are often more productive in developing joint strategies because local contexts tend to be more similar.

Exchanges

Contrary to our expectations, the case studies show that direct exchanges between countries and regions are highly valued. Face-to-face meetings between farmers, who can examine actual practices, are practical and educational. Mixed groups of visitors, including government officials and community members travelling together, can also break down hierarchies and help build shared visions.

Communications strategies

A number of other common concerns emerged about communications. The most serious is that, in general, the networks seem to lack clear communications strategies. Weaknesses include the following.

- Most networks are under-resourced and thus facilitators lack capacity and time to provide agile and detailed responses to local actors.
- Information extraction from the local membership is not complemented by adequate feedback back to the local level.
- Outputs for international advocacy are not simplified or adjusted enough for local actors to use. Many publications were criticized for being too technical and academic and not well targeted to promote desired changes.
- Individual members rarely place the publications they receive in libraries and resource centres, further limiting the availability of materials to other actors. Information networks should target libraries, resource centres and academies if they want to reach larger numbers of people.
- Workshop participants also emphasize the need for networks to make more use of

popular means of communication and mobilization—rallies, demonstration, sloganeering, and posters were all noted for their effectiveness.

New tools

Some relatively new tools that are increasingly being used by networks also deserve highlighting. These include:

- Participatory mapping of community systems of land use and traditional forest-related knowledge, which has proved a powerful tool on which to build local management capacity and dialogue with government officials;
- Public radio, videos, films, DVD, and drama as means to reach local communities for whom the written word carries less well than oral culture;
- Two-way radios, which have provided vital links for rural communities in Amazonia, linking their widely dispersed villages into federations and so to international processes. For unclear reasons, two-way radios are not widely used in other regions.

Languages

Considering the cultural diversity in most of the networks, the extent to which networks limit their communications to a single language, mostly English, is surprising. Of the networks surveyed, only FTPP, RDFN, and WRM were found to routinely publish in several languages, yet many of the other networks admitted that they needed to translate more of their materials. Likewise in meetings and workshops, we found that routinely there were inadequate provisions for translation, a lack which seriously discouraged informed participation. Clearly, the high costs of translation and interpretation are factors. Donors that support networks must recognise that translation and interpretation are vital to interactive and democratic intercontinental and regional networking.

However, the studies suggest that financial constraints alone do not explain the reluctance of networks to work in several languages. In effect, if not always in intention, network communications are being targeted at donors and policy-makers. Many networks seem content to limit effective participation to an educated elite, educated in the western style. They are not putting communication with community based organisations high in the network priorities, nor are they promoting community engagement in decision-making.

Our survey echoes the conclusions of Manuel Chiriboga. He reviewed international NGO campaigns in Latin America that were directed at the World Bank and found:

> *Transnational NGO networks appear to be strongly biased towards Northern leadership and concerns, information does not flow adequately from North to South, accountability to Southern members is limited, and risks incurred in global campaigns are not distributed equally.*[39]

Internationals and Locals

One of the strongest impressions that comes from the case studies in this review is of the great difficulties international networks have in reaching the local level. Obstacles created by inadequate analysis of local contexts, limited targeting of partners, inappropriate communications, language barriers, resource constraints, cultural differences, and capacity limitations confront all networks.

Some of the global networks such as the IUCN-CIFM, RDFN, and FTPP were clear from the outset that they did not expect to directly reach the local level. The cost however may have been to generate a heightened sense of exclusion among the target beneficiaries. Many of the other networks do, however, aspire to link to the local level while recognizing that this is a huge challenge.

Ascertaining the extent to which international networks are having an effect at the local level is by no means easy. Many ideas and experiences seem to trickle down to local actors even though their provenance is unknown. On the other hand, many local actors are dismissive of international networks without really knowing what the networks offer or intend, suggesting the presence of more profound communications barriers. International networks need to raise wider awareness of what they can offer and what their ideologies are.

The strongest and most common criticism of the networks we heard at the local level is that the networks tend to plan and make decisions from the top down. This relates both to the way they are funded (see Money Matters below) and their governance structures (see Governance).

International-local linkages

In general, few of the international networks and, even, surprisingly few of the regional networks, actually communicate directly with or involve

community-based organisations. However, this problem is not limited to international networks. A finding of this survey was that even relatively few of the national community forestry networks have good links to the community level. Inadequate vertical linking between local communities and community forestry networks is a prevalent problem not limited to the international level.

Many international networks rely on 'national focal points' to link to the national level and so through to the local levels. However, a finding of this survey is that these focal points are rarely adequately resourced to carry out the two-way sharing role that is ascribed to them. Thus they often act as barriers or bottle-necks rather than as facilitators of communication. Common complaints are that:

- Regional members, who attend international meetings, engage in exchanges and receive publications and other outputs, are relatively poor at sharing materials with their peers in-country. Even less gets shared with the grassroots groups.
- Communication bottle-necks at the level of the leadership of national networks limits the usefulness of international networks as they impede lessons being learned in both directions.
- Some national focal points have made huge efforts to channel information and decision-making upwards and downwards. It may be thankless work however. In networks where institutions are chosen as focal points, people suggest that it would be better to have individuals as focal points. In networks which rely on individuals, people suggest that it would be better to have organisations.

Three main conclusions emerge from this.

- International networks should not rely solely on focal points to reach national and local members.
- Focal points should be selected based on their record of inclusive communications, and adequately resourced to carry out their functions.
- Appropriate means should be developed to make focal points accountable to national members and constituents.

NGOs and communities

NGOs seem curiously unaware of the extent to which they are resented by local level actors because of the way they substitute their voice for those of local people or take over the political space of indigenous peoples and local communities. Hybrid networks of farmers, indigenous peoples' organisations, and NGOs need to clarify roles and responsibilities to avoid clashes. Northern networks likewise are often criticized for being blind to local realities in the South. Many local actors we interviewed were sceptical that the international networks could ever really engage with local networks on an equal basis. To many local activists the international networkers seem very remote. As one interviewee in India tactfully put it, '*You are talking about big ships, we are a small boat*'. These perceptions, valid or not, pose formidable barriers to effective two-way networking.

International Policies and National Change

The highly politicised nature of global forestry negotiations, in which forests have become a political football in a wider intergovernmental tussle for additional aid and better terms of trade for the South and technology transfer, has meant that forest policy is not subject to a legally binding instrument. Advocacy at the international level has shifted between a wide array of more or less influential international fora that have appeared to offer means for leveraging change in target countries—the World Bank especially in the early 1980s, Tropical Forestry Action Plan (FAO, World Bank and UNDP) in the later 1980s, the International Tropical Timber Organisation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Commission for Sustainable Development and its subsidiary bodies (IPF and IFF) in the 1990s, now the United Nations Forum on Forests and, lately, the World Bank again. The Convention of Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change also offer scope for forest-related advocacy.

Several of the networks examined in this review, including WRM, IUCN-CIFM, AFN, FAN, IAITPTF, and ACICAFOC, have invested a significant amount of time and effort in these policy discussions. A question for this review to answer has been: has there been value added as a result?

Although ascribing credit to any one agency for any particular change or activity is highly problematic, it is possible to point to concrete changes in projects, processes, and approaches which have resulted from the overall advocacy intent. The revamping of the Tropical Forestry

Action Plan, certain reforms in World Bank policies and procedures, ITTO guidelines, some of the Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, all are examples of changes that can be ascribed, at least in part, to advocacy inputs. Those are quite impressive achievements, especially considering the slender resources of the networks.[40]

However, the extent to which any of these achievements has led to change at the national level, let alone on the local level, is harder to discern. IUCN-CIFM and AFN express disappointment at the limited extent to which IPF/IFF Proposals for Action have been implemented, and both wound down their international advocacy following that experience. The country reviews show that national governments have been slow to amend their forest policies. In cases where they have done so, multiple factors have led to change, making it difficult to single out the influence of any specific international agency, much less trace this influence back to the advocacy efforts of international networks. Yet it may be premature to judge that these efforts have been wasted. At the international level, the networks sustained pressure during the later phases of the Intergovernmental Form on Forum (IFF) on the need for governments to implement agreed actions and to carry out participatory national reporting of progress made. As a result, the mandate of the UNFF, set up to carry on the IFF's work, does now focus on implementation and on receiving and assessing reports. For all its deficiencies, a mechanism gradually is being established that may allow civil society to discuss national forestry reform processes in the international arena and use this political space to press for change.

International agreements and discourses do also provide new advocacy opportunities for national networks to deploy their own efforts to secure reforms in country. For example, the important gains made by indigenous peoples in securing recognition of their rights in international instruments and agreements has tangibly led to a shift in attitudes, advocacy efforts, and even national laws and policies in Latin America and, to a lesser extent, Asia.[41] The country case studies note other examples where standards, concepts and procedures agreed at the international level have opened up new political space and possibilities for dialogue at the national level. It remains to be seen if similar gains can be achieved at the local level. It may be possible to influence national forest programmes so they give more attention to community forestry, participation, land tenure, and traditional forest-related knowledge by deploying language adopted in these agreements.

The main challenge for the international networks now is to help their national level members to develop their advocacy for reform so as to make the most of international level gains.

Money Matters

Community forestry may have endured in various forms for thousands of years. In today's global markets, with skewed tenure regimes, inequitable subsidy systems, and destructive resource extraction being the norm, sustainable community forestry often is uncompetitive and economically unviable in market terms (though it remains crucial to local livelihoods and markets).[42] Especially in Latin America and Africa, where agrarian systems are relatively less involuted than Asia[43] and where connections to global markets more direct, the promotion and revival of community forestry may require substantial start-up funds. If structural and market reforms do not soon follow, recurrent costs may also require continuing financial support or subsidies. The community forestry movement is in search of money.

Carbon fixation: global markets

The need for new mechanisms to finance community forestry has led to a search for new market mechanisms to reward communities for maintaining forests. One option has been to pay communities that maintain forests for supplying 'environmental services'. Institutions like ICRAF and CIFOR have even started promoting community forestry as a means of capturing carbon in the expectation that communities can benefit from the so-called Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol, which allows Northern polluters to offset continuing emissions of global warming gases in exchange for paying for carbon sequestration projects in developing countries.[44]

Community forestry as development

Convinced that community forestry is potentially a just and environmentally prudent means of promoting development and alleviating poverty, the major donor agencies have put substantial money into community forestry in various countries with varying results. In some countries, community forestry has been tolerated or

promoted by national governments as a means of capturing aid monies, but at the same time it has been institutionally and politically insulated from wider reforms in the forest sector or social policy. Community forestry risks becoming an enclave industry and not a sustainable reform.

Network survival

As previous studies have shown, networks cannot survive without continued donor support.[45] The majority of the networks examined feel obliged to offer their publications and services free to their members to ensure that they reach the right people. Of the networks examined, only UNOFOC in Mexico and ACICAFOC actually demand a financial contribution from their members. The suggestion is that even though these contributions may be token in comparison with the overall operating costs, they do promote a sense of ownership of the network among members and also make network secretariats feel more accountable to them.[46]

Networks as devices to capture money

The financial realities of community forestry in particular and networking in general have had profound effects on the nature of the community forestry networks. Since communities are seeking additional financing and the networks supporting them are seeking funds to ensure their own survival, there are real the risks that these processes get driven by donors.

In Acre, Brazil, for example, community forestry networks have emerged substantially as a mechanism to develop markets and lobby for subsidies for community forestry products. Other networks, in Brazil (e.g., GTA) and Meso-America for example, have been promoted by community-based organisations and NGOs as mechanisms to capture funds for 'projects'. Inevitably, this means that networks have become organisations that manage funds. The networks may be set up with the aim of avoiding patronage and control by intermediaries but end up replicating the very patron-client relations they were designed to avert. As an activist noted in Uganda, the dependency on donors that results, erodes the networks' autonomy.

Dancing with donors

The studies revealed many concerns about the ways donors deal with networks. Among the observations and concerns about donors are that they:

- Are reluctant to fund the real costs of networking. In particular, networks find it hard to secure funds for core costs and outreach costs (translation and interpretation, communications, focal point services, and the expenses of members' participation).
- Prefer to fund specific projects and product-oriented activities with predetermined outcomes and measurable results, as opposed to process-oriented activities.
- Are trend driven. Donors' preferences are constantly shifting, meaning that networks are always reinventing themselves in response to donor preferences (clear evidence of how donor-driven networks can be). Networks have grown quite skilful at this and also shuffle from one donor to another. Observes one interviewee: *'Networks recycle donors whilst donors recycle networks'*.[47]

These pressures combined have contributed to a number of problems.

- Networks have tended to be top-down, secretariat-driven and output-focused.
- North–South tensions are exacerbated where a network secretariat is based in the North.
- Networks have become project oriented and short-term rather than strategy and process focused.
- Long-term reforms based on supporting grassroots movements have been eschewed as donor dependence has curtailed support for controversial mobilization and advocacy.
- Networks have favoured ambitious top-down policy reforms which have lacked community engagement.
- The concerns of local communities and national members take second place to the concerns of donors.
- Accountability mechanisms are the reverse of what is desirable with networks and their secretariats feeling more accountable to donors than to members.

Indeed, the researchers were left asking themselves, do networks survive so long as they serve the needs of their members or only as long as they serve the needs of their patrons?

Donor points of view

Of course not all donors are equally guilty of these impositions. Indeed some of those interviewed in this survey or who participated in the workshops did not recognise themselves in these characterizations, though conceding they might apply to others. That these perceptions exist should not be doubted. The existence of these perceptions, valid or not,

challenges donors to reform the way that they interact with and support networks.

A particular challenge for donors is to find means of supporting networks over the longer term, without requiring excessive formalisation and bureaucratisation—without obliging networks to be 'logo carriers' and self-promoters claiming success for every successful campaign outcome, when in fact successful partnerships among and between networks will grow better if they can assume more modest profiles. It is obvious that donors have to demand financial accountability of networks and cannot write blank cheques for networks to do whatever they please. Donors are right to point out that largesse without targets or proof of performance has encouraged the emergence of inefficient and even corrupt leadership systems that are unaccountable either to donors or members.[48] However, novel methods for donors to support and evaluate network processes rather than project-oriented activities do seem to be required. Some donors may be prepared to accept greater risk in financing networks as long as there is up front risk analysis that shows the networks are not complacent or heedless about the challenges they face.

Evaluation

The survey reveals that one of the major contributions that donors make to networks is to demand performance evaluations using innovative and participatory methods. The case studies show that, where done right and with adequate engagement of network members, these evaluations provide important opportunities for secretariats to become accountable to their members and reappraise their structures, strategies, and priorities. We found broad agreement that participatory monitoring and evaluation processes should also be built into network programmes to encourage feedback and experience sharing.

Evaluations are not always easy however. Training and information activities are much easier to self-evaluate in terms of their effectiveness. Indicators are self-evident in terms of numbers of trainees, workshops, publications, communications, etc. Target groups can provide feedback on the usefulness of these services and get a clear sense of how responsive other members of the network are to their own inputs. Advocacy work (and other activities with less tangible results, such as awareness raising) is, however, much harder to assess, and this difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that many of the networks do not even try to carry out detailed self-evaluation. Those that do, despite the difficulties, are often more self-critical and aware of their shortcomings and thus able to improve their functioning, responsiveness, and effectiveness.[49]

Yet even evaluation mechanisms can get distorted. If networks fear that donors will cut funding if any problems are identified, evaluations will inevitably cover up problems to avoid losing support. How can donors encourage honest evaluation processes so that lessons are learned, feedback mechanisms optimised, and accountability to members encouraged? Long term partnerships and the build up of mutual trust may be the only answer.

Network collapse

The prospects of these long term partnerships developing are not entirely rosy. Many of the networks we reviewed are either currently in financial crisis due to the lack of donor support or, at best, face financial difficulties. We identified a widespread pattern of withdrawal of donor support, which suggests some underlying fatigue or fashion change among donors which has made them less enthusiastic about funding networks than in the past.

Governance Dilemmas

Since the 1970s, an estimated 20,000 transnational civil society networks have come into being, and although studies show that accountability is the key to the long term health of networks, relatively few of these have democratic systems of governance and accountability. Are networks trying to have it both ways, demanding standards of accountability from governments and the private sector, which they are not prepared to adhere to themselves?[50]

Suggested indicators that international networks should use to assess their accountability to the grassroots include the following:

- demonstrable benefits to constituents;
- shared information, including local knowledge;
- representation in advocacy and network decision-making;
- partnerships with poor and marginal groups;
- accurate and objective research;
- monitoring and evaluation by Southern groups.[51]

This review of international forestry networks highlights the major dilemmas that confront networks in choosing governance structures that suit their main goals, functions, target groups, funders, and political context. Like other studies it finds that bottom-up networking is possible but requires more time, resources, and investment than are often available.[52]

Membership

A general finding is that the global, as opposed to the regional, international networks tend to be Northern dominated (the exception is the WRM). Few of the networks studied are led by, or give prominence to, community-based organisations or indigenous peoples. Most are dominated by concerned academics, NGO activists and practitioners. Lacking grassroots members or participants, inevitably makes it harder for networks to be responsive to community visions and priorities.

Many of the networks, especially the hybrid ones, are open to all interested parties, since their main goals are to share information and build consensus based on a common understanding. However, with the single exception of the FSC, none of the networks appears to have included the private sector in their operations, although IUCN-CIFM had intended to link with the private sector when originally conceived.

Of the networks reviewed, the WRM is exceptional in not having general members. The WRM, acting more as a social movement than a formal network, recruits support through a wide-reaching mailing list without pretending that the readers somehow have a lien on the secretariat, which is instead governed by a small steering committee.

However, although the other networks do have members, few actually give their general members a say in decision-making. Those that do give their members a vote, such as ACICAFOC, IAITPTF, FAN, and FSC,[53] have developed membership criteria that are designed to ensure that all members have a joint commitment to a shared vision. Most networks however, seem to recruit members organically through personal webs of contact and trust.

Community organisations challenge international community forestry networks to be more open. If the members of the networks are not the local communities, then the question must be posed. Do the networks work for the benefit of their members or for the communities? Networks must take account of the fact that the political circumstances in 2003 are quite different from 1985. New mechanisms that ensure the participation of community based organisations must be considered if networks are not to forfeit their credibility.

Governance structures: to formalise or not

FSC, ACICAFOC, IAITPTF, and FAN do give their members a vote and have elected boards, yet it is not clear that these ostensible mechanisms of democracy really create accountability in the network as a whole and of its secretariat to the members. Indeed, few of the networks have clear mechanisms to ensure that members have control, or a strong say, in network decision-making on a regular basis. For this to be achieved, networks must formalise and develop complex decision-making procedures in which members can participate.

Some of the networks have gone down that route, but such institutional formalisation of networks comes at a high price—and not just financially. Formal mechanisms—to ensure transparency and financial accountability to members—make networks less agile, top-heavy with bureaucratic trammels, and expensive. Members warn of the problem of formalised network secretariats 'becoming NGOs', which paradoxically are then perceived as being disassociated from their membership. The risks are that in instituting formal structures of accountability, means become ends and networks become organisations.[54]

Networks that handle large budgets from a central secretariat seem especially prone to the accusation of being top-down and authoritarian. In these cases transparent accounting—letting the members see the books—is necessary to maintain trust. However, it may be preferable to encourage decentralised funding of network components to ensure autonomy and to avoid the build up of large centralised bureaucracies with concomitant power tussles for control of lucrative posts. For example, the study of FAN suggests that it found the FTPP's formalised institutional structures to be quite dominating and led to it developing a very project-oriented way of working.

Unusual among the networks surveyed, WRM and AFN have consciously chosen to have loose process-based, rather than project-based, networking with a minimum of formal structures and procedures. Those networks are highly informal and personalised. The downside is that those more informal networks may more easily

be charged with being unaccountable clubs, from which other civil society groups feel excluded.

We conclude that there is no correct solution for networks. The choice of how and how far to formalise is a tricky one. We suggest that the important lesson is that the choices be made in a way that is as inclusive and open as possible. If participants choose informality and an absence of rules to ease communications and promote dynamic action-oriented partnerships, they need to be aware of the possible pitfalls of that choice. Conversely, they also need to know the possible pitfalls of formalisation.

Does size matter?

Clearly, the size of networks has a bearing on these choices, with larger networks being obliged to formalise more than the smaller networks, which can afford to be more personal and informal. But the networks' size may not be so much the number of its newsletter readership or its members so much as the size of its budget, project portfolio, and secretariat. For example, the FTPP and WRM both have built up very large readerships (12,000 for FTPP's newsletter and 9,000 for WRM's).[55] However, they are at opposite extremes in terms of their budgets and numbers of staff. In those terms, the FTPP was the largest and WRM the smallest of the networks surveyed.

Autonomy is crucial for networks. The survey shows that those networks that were able to establish themselves independently of other institutional hosts or free themselves of such links over time, tended to be those able to develop healthy, interactive internal processes. On the other hand, those located within formal bureaucracies and large organisations, even though they sometimes benefited from having access to existing infrastructure, resources, information and contacts, were also those that were most constrained and secretariat driven. Suspicions, well-founded or not, of the connections between the secretariat and the host organisation, clouded relations with the membership and undermined trust. In the case of the FTPP, the host organisation intervened decisively in the workings of the network, which was one of the reasons that eventually led to its closure. Some of the experiences of FTPP call to mind the conclusion that the FAO itself drew about networks in 1992: *'Long term external support is essential for network development, but excessive inputs of money or personnel by sponsors will work against the development of self-reliance and a genuine network spirit'*.[56]

Staff stability

Potentially, international networks can act as important reservoirs of experience. They can become the institutional memories of social movements and civil society in general. Some of the case studies show that this key function of the networks is much valued by members. Some of this knowledge can be recorded and made available through the normal tools and transferred directly through workshops, exchanges, and training (see Table 3). But networks can suffer disruption when key members leave and this reservoir of experience is lost. Informal networks are particularly vulnerable as networks structures are built up around personal relations and not institutional structures.

The key role that individuals play in creating and sustaining networks is also widely remarked on in the survey responses. Many of the most successful networks were founded around one or a small number of charismatic activists who sustain the networks through their energy and vision. Yet those networks are most vulnerable when key individuals leave. They also are most open to the charge of being top-down and doctrinaire.

Choices not rules

Most of the lessons learned from this survey highlight that international networks have to make informed choices about strategies and structures. There are no universal rules that can be invoked as all decisions will be highly contingent on aims, targets, membership, and backgrounds. The most important general lesson seems to be that networks should consciously think through their structures and functions to ensure that they have certain characteristics:

- Clear aims and agreed upon methods;
- Clear and strategic targeting of focal points, active members, audiences, and 'policy makers';
- Informed constituencies;
- Well-judged decisions about when to include mixed constituencies and when to give each sector its separate space;
- Reasoned governance structure;
- A coherent communications strategy with multi-directional flow of communication and with adequate budgets for translation, simple tools, and face-to-face encounters among key actors;
- Participatory mechanisms to ensure feedback, in which monitoring and evaluation may be key;

- Donor commitment to core funding, offering programmatic support for flexible but evaluated outputs, and with adequate resources for national and local two-way sharing;
- Mechanisms to follow up international advances with national- and local-level actions and advocacy;
- Strategies for collaboration and interaction with other international, national, and local networks;
- Clear sharing of responsibilities among members, including financial responsibilities.

Trust

In the end you can have as many rules and procedures as you want, but once trust breaks down its hard for a network to recover.

Linking with Social Movements

The small size and limited financial resources of most NGOs make them unlikely challengers of economic and political systems sustained by the prevailing interests of big governments and big business. Yet the environment, peace, human rights, consumer rights and women's movements provide examples of the power of voluntary action to change society. This seeming paradox can be explained by the fact that the power of voluntary action arises not from the size and resources of individual organisations, but rather from the ability of the voluntary sector to coalesce the actions of hundreds, or even millions, of citizens through vast and constantly evolving networks … These networks are able to encircle, infiltrate, and even co-opt the resources of opposing bureaucracies... In growing numbers they are joining forces with and learning from the experience of established social movements. As we learn more about the nature of true movements, we realise that they are not defined by organizational structures… —David Korten 1992

Like activists in many other sectors,[57] advocates of community forestry have recognised that the main challenges to the adoption and spread of community forestry come from vested interests—those who benefit from the present system, which gives them preferential access to forest resources and forest lands. The promotion of community forests implies a transfer of both resources and power in favour of local communities. In most national contexts, the empowerment of communities implies the disempowerment of others who contest their

Village women of Romwe meet to discuss community action. (Photo by Carol J.P. Colfer)

rights of access to, and control of, forests. Although it is conceivable that these shifts of control over resources can be effected through the provisions of generous aid financing, in practice enduring shifts in power are rarely sustained without strong mobilization of the social groups that benefit from the change.[58] In other words, community forestry is a highly political, even radical, project, and the politics of representation, by which communities assert their rights and assume control of forest resources, is a central consideration.

Since the late 1970s, when the global community forestry movement can be discerned to have had its origins, the relationship of civil society with development agencies and States has undergone a major transformation. Civil society has emerged as a significant even necessary player in development dynamics. As Michael Edwards reminds us, civil society, however, *'is an arena and not a thing and although it is often seen as the key to future progressive politics, this arena contains different and conflicting interests and agendas'*.[59] In committing ourselves to support any one network or social process among so many it is important to take stock of their diverse agendas and interests: which among the plethora of emerging civil society voices clamouring to be heard should we rightfully attend to most? Are some authentic and representative and others not?

Howell and Pearce suggest that many development agencies are turning to civil society organisations as substitutes for state agencies. To make up the 'democratic deficit', to avoid costly and time consuming negotiations with weakened, downsized, and structurally-adjusted government offices, and in order to dodge corrupt counterparts development agencies are choosing to work with civil society groups that conform to their normative expectations of what civil society groups should be like. The language of 'participation' and 'partnerships' has become the norm.

Howell and Pearce detect two broad groupings of civil society organisations: 'mainstream' organisations and more 'radical' ones. Mainstream civil society works essentially within the current framework to promote socially responsible capitalism. This mainstream conforms to an increasingly stereotyped notion of civil society, accepting NGOs as legitimate vehicles to speak for society as a whole. Such groups are favoured as partners by the development agencies as they can readily be co-opted, contracted to act as economical channels for the delivery of aid while at the same time lending legitimacy through their participation to policies and programmes that the development agencies impose. Howell and Pearce perceive real risks that new forms of social exclusion will result from this process.

The more radical social movements, according to Howell and Pearce, are more overtly opposed to the 'Washington consensus' (which favours neo-liberal economics). Those groups also are often sceptical of state actors and seek to build what they characterise as 'alternatives to capitalism'. Many of the civil society groups trace their origins back to the radical social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, but have since transformed into increasingly formalised social organisations, and, having adopted sectoral, single issue agendas, now find themselves less well inserted than they used to be in the mass movements. However, they remain more closely aligned to the mass movements than do the mainstream organisations.[60]

These insights prompt real questions for those observing the community forestry movement. Which, among the many networks and NGOs that champion community forestry, are the mainstream civil society institutions that are letting themselves be co-opted by the development agencies and substituting their voice for the voice of the wider society? Which are the more radical social movements, more closely aligned with the mass organisations, who assert alternatives to capitalist development? And, more importantly, do the communities themselves feel comfortable being supported by either of these political currents?

One of the most coherent social movements to have emerged globally over the past 20 years, one which has made the most evident gains in terms of reforms of international law and national policy and which in a number of countries has already secured real transfers of land, wealth and power, is the movement of indigenous peoples. Despite coming from a multitude of different cultural and historical circumstances, and notwithstanding very real tensions, divisions, and differences among the various groups, the indigenous peoples' movement has successfully retained a shared agenda throughout the past 20 years. Central to its success has been its undeviating insistence on the right to self-determination, as a result of which it has been vigilant in ensuring that supportive NGOs and other civil society groupings remain just that, supportive, but are never allowed to substitute their voices for the peoples' themselves. The

ability of this social movement to secure adequate funds for major intercontinental meetings several times a year has contributed importantly to the build up of mutual trust and a shared vision and strategy.

This experience may teach some important lessons for the community forestry movement. As noted, the 1990s has witnessed the emergence of coalitions of community based organisations for whom community forestry is a major concern. A number of the regional and national networks examined in this review were born out of this mobilization, including ACICAFOC in Central America and UNOFOC in Mexico. In Brazil, the national networks promoting community forestry grew out of the social movements of Indians, rubber tappers, and civil society, which mobilised in the 1980s to oppose the central government's and international financial institutions' plans to open up the Amazon to road-building, colonization, loggers, mines, dams, and ranches.[61]

Other NGO networks such as the WRM and FAN purposefully set out from their inception to forge links with those social movements. For example, the WRM was linked to a number of social movements, for example, those opposing development of industrial plantations, shrimp aquaculture, dams, and mines. Most of the other networks, because of their institutional bases and hybrid composition, were less suited to directly partnering with social movements.

The review finds that most networks now agree that strengthening their ties with the social movements that support community forestry may be an important next step if their work is to be effective. The IUCN-CIFM's unfunded second-stage proposal envisions building this tie in a Coalition for Change. RECOFTC likewise is examining the possibility of acting as a locus for a proposed regional Association for the Promotion of Good Forest Governance in Asia that will link NGO networks with social movements of forest user groups. In July 2002, at the Bali PrepCom meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, groups such as RECOFTC, FAN, WRM, and CICAFOC joined the Global Caucus for Community-Based Forest Management to strengthen their coalition with the community forestry social movement.

How well are the international community forestry networks suited to social action? Given the difficulties they have linking to local communities and given the limitations imposed on their ways of working by donor constraints, it appears that the networks face real challenges in effectively partnering with and stepping up the actions of social movements. There may be a need for hard talking between the various civil society actors to explore these tensions.

Of the networks studied, only ACICAFOC and IAITPTF see themselves as mechanisms for representing community groups. Although both networks are legally constituted as organisations, both function as political alliances that respect the autonomy of their members. ACICAFOC grew out of a trades union and peasant movement that had become closely linked to party political structures and patronage systems. ACICAFOC's initial achievement was to break free from these historical shackles.

Ten years ago, David Korten offered nine principles to networks seeking to 'catalyse' the actions of social movements.

Box 3. Operating Principles for Strategic Network Catalysts[62]

1. Maintain a low public profile. Emphasize the commitment and contribution of other organisations to the network's goals. Measure own success by effectiveness in making others stronger and more successful contributors to these goals.
2. Recognise the differing motivation and resources of the groups engaged in the network.
3. Look at those who have the most direct and compelling interest in the outcome to provide sustained leadership.
4. Continuously scan the environment for opportunities to engage new participants who bring new perspectives and may appeal to additional segments of the public.
5. Do not take on any function that another group can perform. Facilitate linkages and fill temporary gaps not serviced by other organisations.
6. Work through existing communications networks and media to reach large audiences efficiently.
7. Help other groups find their own sources of funds, but don't become a funder.
8. Keep staff and budget small to assure flexibility, avoid competing institutional interests, and maintain dependence on effective action from others.
9. Use protest actions to position the movement to advance a proactive agenda.

During the Lessons Workshop, which concluded this study and which reflected on the case studies and an early draft of this report, concerns were voiced that the international networks could compete with the emerging social movements for political space. It was noted that in India, civil society voices were already actively substituting themselves for, and even delegitimising, local voices such as the Mass Tribal Organisations of Central India. On the other hand, some workshop participants warned against exaggerating the capacity of the social movements. In many countries, it was noted, social movements remain weak or may lack political space altogether. Many will need a lot of support if they are to find political space and grow. *'But once they do grow, then networks must learn to stand aside'*, voiced a participant. Moreover, warned another, *'If networks can't support social movements, they should at least leave them alone and not interfere or prejudice their growth'*.

But does the discourse of community forestry really constitute the basis for a joint platform for future reforms? For some, the term community forestry will always imply that communities should continue to be subject to the rules and ministrations of western forestry laws and outmoded forestry departments.[63] If what communities are seeking is food security, land security, and the right to choose the most environmentally appropriate vegetation cover and natural resource management regime to suit their needs, then framing their demands in terms of community forestry may only limit their options and separate them from other social movements making the same fundamental demands for land, livelihood, and a rights-based approach to community development.

Towards Conclusions

The community forestry of today is radically different from the community forestry that was promoted by foresters 25 years ago. Not only has the model of community forestry changed—towards one that gives far more emphasis to rights, local control, customary institutions, and traditional knowledge—but the framework for discussions about community forestry has also transformed. Today community forestry is analysed and discussed as one of many elements in local livelihoods and as one of several components in the national and international frameworks that control its implementation. Advocacy in favour of community forestry now focuses as much on legal, political, and market transformations as on technical innovations and local management considerations. There is indeed a risk that in focusing on the upstream governance, policy, and market conditions that frame livelihood strategies, too little attention will be paid to local needs, local particularities, and community realities. Thinking globally is no substitute for acting locally. The need is for both and for the global and national reform agendas to be driven by local visions and local voices.

The international community forestry networks that this study focused on have emerged at very different moments in this trajectory, and have started with very different goals, visions, priorities, and participants. One of the most encouraging aspects of this evolution has been the emergence of networks better linked to, and even run by, community-based organisations themselves. The trend towards locally run networks requires additional support, and other networks must do much more to link to these new initiatives, standing aside to let them grow when required. However, it would be naïve to conclude that, the earlier networks have all run their course or exhausted their potential. The need for training, information exchange, awareness-raising, international advocacy, and consensus-building still exists, especially for countries where social movements remain weak or suppressed. The challenge for the older networks is to adapt to these changing circumstances so that they act as supporters and services to community organisations, relinquishing any pretensions they may have had to act as practitioners, conflict managers, representatives, or forest managers.

The ways that international networks have contributed to community forestry are very diverse. Few networks can claim to have had direct impacts at the local level, except through a handful of pilot projects, but then few of the networks sought to achieve change this way. Rather, most of the networks have focused on providing information and services to national level actors to raise awareness, build consensus, and to arm them with the information, arguments, knowledge, techniques, resources, and skills needed to promote national and local change. These contributions have been so various and diffuse, and often, indirect, that drawing up a balance sheet of the costs and benefits of networking is impossible. There seems to be no denying that the collective result of all this networking has been helpful in many countries and crucial in some others, especially those where

donors also exert considerable influence. The gains attributable to the networks in international forest policy-making are both more evident and less certain, as for the most part these gains have not yet discernibly influenced national policy reforms let alone had local effects. Not enough seems to have been done to insert these international policy gains into national reform platforms. A cumulative result of all this networking and advocacy has been a growing global acceptance of the validity of community forestry. New ideas of how to promote it have opened up space to local communities to reassert their rights, revalidate their institutions and customs, and adapt to changing conditions.

For the networks themselves some key lessons do emerge. Consensus building networks that seek to include actors from communities, NGOs, and government do have an important role to play. However, they need to recognise their limitations and distinguish themselves from locally driven networks that are run by community representatives. Supportive NGO networks that seek to act in solidarity with local communities and social movements must also take care not to substitute themselves for local actors.

Networks also need to recognise the inherent limitations of the networking endeavour and not exaggerate the extent to which they are genuinely democratic and inclusive. De facto networks cannot effectively include more than around 50 individuals or organisations in routine collective decision-making, even though they can reach thousands through modern communication tools. Larger assemblies and congresses can set networks' strategic directions and broad goals, but, if networks are to remain agile, trust in a smaller group of leaders is essential. Every network needs to accept that there is an inherent tension between maintaining informality and flexibility and adopting structures and decision-making processes that ensure transparency and accountability. In choosing their governance structure, networks need to weigh the pros and cons of different ways of working and have clear reasons for whatever structures they choose.

Maintaining trust and links with and between communities requires substantial investments of time and resources. Over-reliance on computers and the Internet—email and the Web—for communications will exclude the effective participation of community organisations in many countries for the foreseeable future. Networks need to think through carefully their communications strategies to ensure they do reach those they claim to include. Face-to-face meetings and exchanges, due investment in translation and interpretation, and the modest use of newsletters as ends not means have proved their worth and need adequate financing, while some of the new technologies and techniques seem worth experimenting with further.

This study also has highlighted the challenge facing global networks in connecting to national and local levels. Networks have relied too much on a single national or regional focal point for communications. Networks need to more fully develop communication using these focal points, but also find other, complementary means of linking to national and local actors.

The lessons for donors also are challenging. Community forestry and community forestry networking do require sustained support if they are not to whither away. More support is needed to build up social movements and community based networks, even those critical of government and aid agency policies. The challenge is to support the networks in ways that promote accountability without imposing artificial goals, targets, and structures. Support needs to be long term and demand less pre-programmed outputs, for good processes rather than results-focused projects, and for inclusive sharing and decision-making as much as for specific publications and pre-determined advocacy goals. Participatory monitoring and evaluation to help networks reflect on the extent to which they are being effective and are genuinely reaching those they seek to include has proved its worth.

Now that participation has become a norm in development discourse and even practice, the time has come for a much more critical evaluation of the form of this participation. Multi-stakeholder decision-making, new partnerships, and routine engagements with civil society all promise new opportunities for local actors to have their voices heard. But these same processes are creating new divisions and possibilities of social exclusion. The community forestry networks and the social movements that they claim to support, both need to be vigilant to ensure that they engage in these processes astutely, using political space that is offered in ways that do not legitimise unacceptable practices and exclude the rural poor in whose name community forestry is advocated.

Box 4. Learning Lessons from China[64]

Context

China's south-western province of Yunnan is a mountainous area of high biological and cultural diversity that was annexed into China relatively late in Chinese history. The province has lost over two-thirds of its original forest cover and lost half of what remained in the last 50 years. Ethnic minorities make up about a third of the population of the province but predominate in forested areas. Chinese policy towards 'minority nationalities' at first recognised their right to to self-determination, but since liberation has oscillated between assimiliationist and integrationist approaches. Despite strong central government control, the law grants ethnic minorities an important measure of cultural and institutional autonomy at the local level.

Nationally, forest policy has been highly centralised and geared towards timber production. Over harvesting driven by quotas has depleted forests and has led to serious soil erosion and local impoverishment. The government has also blamed it for causing flooding and massive loss of life in the lowlands. Mass forestation efforts have been disappointing. Since 1998 the government has banned logging in Yunnan, allowing only very restricted cutting for domestic use.

Imprudent natural resource use is linked to the doctrine of State ownership of all lands and forests and the imposed structure of village collectives. Since the late 1970s, the government has progressively devolved management and use-rights of land, and then forests, to local farmers. Massive increases in agricultural production have resulted, but the lesser degree of autonomy granted farmers with respect to forest land, combined with the top-down quota system, inadequate supervision capacity, poor delineation of forests, and the slower rate of return on investment have frustrated social forestry initiatives. Farmers' scepticism that devolved tenure would give them real rights over timber has been confirmed by the logging ban. At the same time, in Yunnan, many upland farmers are being obliged to plant trees instead of grain on their higher fields with the aim of limiting run-off. The simultaneous loss of grain for subsistence and income from timber has hit farmers hard. The losses have not been made up with subsidies and grain handouts.

Local activists distinguish between the government's social forestry and the community forestry that has been promoted since the late 1980s by the Ford Foundation, international development assistance projects, and the international networks—notably RECOFTC. Despite major advances in awareness raising, training, the development of forestry school courses and curricula, and despite numerous educational pilot projects, community forestry has not yet taken off in the province. This can only come when the central government's policy changes.

The main challenges now facing community forestry in Yunnan are achieving national policy reform and building local capacity and awareness in both communities and the forestry bureaux. Recent government moves to allow village level democracy and to slim down the administration offer opportunities to give farmers greater initiative. Perhaps minority areas, where indigenous forest-related knowledge is retained and where there is nominally more autonomy, offer hopeful beginnings.

Networking experience

Laws restricting civil society organisations are quite strict in China. Informal social mobilization and networking is not allowed. NGOs either incorporate as associations under government bodies or as private corporations with obligations to pay at least some tax. Despite these limitations, an incipient provincial level network has evolved promoting participatory approaches to development and forest management. However, efforts to promote a national level community forestry network have been less successful. Although Yunnan has had a relatively limited experience with international community forestry networks, local actors provided insightful lessons and suggestions about how such networking should be improved.

The main lessons that emerge from the Yunnan study are the following:

- Government notions of what constitutes community forestry are quite different from the NGO perception;
- Linguistic, political, and technical difficulties create formidable obstacles to participation in international networks. Hence the main engagement in these networks is through select academics and individuals;
- Involvement in networks has introduced valued new participatory methods into natural resource development thinking;
- Monitoring and evaluation of network functioning is a vital tool in ensuring their local relevance;
- Networks now need to link more to local communities and have more active feedback mechanisms;
- Networks should not become mechanisms for attracting consultancies and funding, but should take account of the real costs to members of participation;
- Publications should be targeted at libraries and resource centres not just individuals.

Box 5. Learning Lessons from Indonesia[65]

Context

Indonesia is two things—a unified country and a plurality of distinct peoples governed by their own customs. The tension between these two underlies many of the problems and challenges that Indonesia's forests and peoples face today. Having once been fully forested, and home to nearly one-fifth of the world's biodiversity, Indonesia is now badly deforested and rates of forest loss continue to increase, exacerbated by recent steps to decentralise control of forests to district authorities.

Indonesia exemplifies to an unusual degree the intrinsic political, social, and institutional weaknesses of 'scientific forestry'. A centralised approach to forest management has denied community rights, favoured the emergence of a corrupt elite, established a technocratic forestry bureaucracy, and overseen a sustained over-harvesting of timber and misallocation of forest lands for over 50 years. The resulting political economy of logging has created huge barriers to those promoting community forestry. Additional obstacles are erected by the government's ethnocentric and assimilationist social policies towards forest dwellers, a land tenure system that provides very weak recognition of customary rights, and forest tenures which deny collective rights to forest lands.

The government's community forestry programme only really got going in the 1990s. Despite setbacks, this programme has established a co-management approach allowing communities that incorporate as cooperatives to gain 25-year leaseholds on unencumbered state forest lands. The programme has been applied primarily in degraded forest areas and among migrant farmer communities. Indonesia's experiment with decentralization now poses the main uncertainty to the future of community forestry in the country. Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, successive administrations have vacillated between devolving control of land use decisions to the districts and then trying to recover that control.

Community forestry has been promoted in Indonesia by a number of agencies, notably the Ford Foundation but also inter-governmental organisations, aid agencies, and NGOs. Networking has been an important part of this process. However, during the Suharto dictatorship, the scope for NGOs to promote radical changes in forest policy was limited and most aid agencies were very cautious about what they supported. The Ford Foundation itself sought to promote change within the parameters set by government policy while at the same time encouraging the introduction of new concepts about community forestry from overseas.

Networking Experience

The main national networking efforts were started in the late 1990s with two approaches. One approach favours inclusive dialogue with government. The other advocates a more radical reform that would secure community rights and recognise the value of customary knowledge systems. None of these efforts have been well linked to grassroots organisations. The recent emergence of a social movement of indigenous peoples could change this. Community mapping has proved a useful tool.

International networks have been important in training, introducing new concepts and helping local actors invoke international standards. However, national players are critical of the extent to which these networks impose their own agendas and priorities. The international networks also fail to connect with local communities. There is a considerable amount of suspicion of the real motives and values of Northern-based networks.

The following are some of the lessons from the Indonesian experience:

- To be more effective the international networks need to attend more to local realities, adopt agile working methods that give control to local partners and styles of communications tailored to suit local needs;
- Advocacy support for local communities should also be accompanied by capacity building support;
- Networks should avoid dependency on national focal points in linking to community organisations;
- Until it is clearer who is going to win the tug-of-war for control of forests being waged between the district and national administrations, it is hard to guess what kind of networking approaches will be most effective.

Box 6. Learning Lessons from India[66]

Context

About 23 percent of India's land area is classified as forest, most of which is administered by the Forest Department. About 100 million people live in India's forests with a further 275 million living nearby and who are dependent on forest resources in one way or another. In the 19th century, colonial rulers took-over forests for state commercial use and installed a model of natural resource management that excluded local inhabitants. A similar mindset continued after Indian independence. This severely restricted the access of locals to resources on which their livelihoods were based and effectively removed all responsibility of communities to look after their natural surrounds. Thus, local people have often become hostile to official management of forests. While communities have never stopped using forests unofficially since their livelihoods depend on it, they have suffered much hardship and harassment. In many cases, forests were seen as the property of an insensitive government, something to be used and exploited, often with great hostility towards Forest Department officials. A lack of dialogue and trust between the two sides has exacerbated the situation. Poor management and over-harvesting has led to rapid forest deterioration. However, examples have been emerging about communities who have independently taken the initiative to protect vast tracts of forests to meet their livelihood needs, with remarkable results.

The 1970s was the decade of social forestry, meant to promote the use of public and common lands to meet the fodder and fuel subsistence needs of village communities, and thereby lighten the load on government forests being used for industry. Over the decade, the government became aware that it was not possible to protect forests without local co-operation. By 1988, there was a greater devolution of powers to local communities to manage forests, reflected in the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme. JFM is the management and conservation of a forest by local communities and Forest Department officials, through joint committees and with communities entitled to a share in usufructs. There are diverse opinions regarding JFM with serious concerns raised about the lack of true sharing of decision-making powers with local communities. Legal reforms in recent years (e.g., Panchayat or Extension to Scheduled Areas Act of 1996) have gone further in entrusting forest resources to community control, but these measures remain largely unimplemented. The most important international agreement regarding natural resource management ratified by India is the Convention of Biological Diversity. A fall-out of this is the proposed Biological Diversity Bill, emphasizing community participation in decisions on biodiversity use and conservation. A National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan required by the Convention of Biological Diversity and recently formulated, has been a unique and ambitious attempt at participatory planning. Thus, the overall policy environment in India has been moving towards becoming more conducive to community forestry, though the success of its implementation is highly debatable with varying outcomes. Much depends on political will.

National Networking

India has had long experience with NGO activism and networking. Two notable attempts at creating a national-level community forestry network have mainly focused on promoting and steering the development of JFM. The National JFM Network, hosted by an NGO, evolved in the 1990s and generated various subnetworks concerned with different aspects of JFM. It aimed to include NGOs and forest officials. The network lapsed by the end of the 1990s. A second National JFM Network was launched in 2000 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests with the aim of bringing together NGOs and Forestry Department officials for dialogue. The first network was widely acknowledged to have made a significant contribution to popularising JFM across the country and facilitating the exchange of research and experiences of JFM. Opinion is more divided about the second network, which has been criticized by some people for being too bureaucratic. Two of the states studied also had a history of state-level networking.

International Networking

International networks in India have focused mainly on sharing ideas and information (e.g., FTPP), promoting policy analysis and documentation (e.g., AFN), and capacity building (e.g., RECOFTC/FTPP). Apart from a few examples of local level activity (e.g., in Orissa), international networks have neither sought nor achieved direct local level impacts. Overall, national actors consider the impact of international networks to have been small. Nevertheless, they have been appreciated by the academics, NGO representatives, and Forestry Department officials who

have been involved in their meetings, mailing lists, and training courses. Most interviewees felt that international networks had a valuable role to play in information dissemination, capacity building, providing inspiration and exposure, and building contacts. However, most people felt that national and local networks are far more relevant for leading to changes on the ground. Some other key findings on international networks follow.

- More effort needs to be made to communicate in local languages if a wider impact is to be achieved.
- The most glaring gap in international network activity was that there did not seem to be any attempt to create formal links with national or local networks, even where local networks were strong and vibrant. Linking with local networks would add value to an ongoing process and reach a pre-existing local base of community forestry actors.
- International networks may have had an indirect role in promoting community forestry at the grassroots and policy levels by influencing some people who work at these levels. They have impacted mainly on larger NGOs and institutions, researchers and academics. Efforts have not been made to target the Forestry Department at an institutional level. This misses out a key powerful player in the community forestry scenario.
- There may be an assumption by networks that targeting a few key individuals and institutions will ensure a wider network influence via a horizontal and vertical domino effect. However, given the vagueness regarding international network impacts at grassroots and policy levels, and the fact that networking was largely confined to a narrow clique of people, this does not seem to be a safe assumption.
- International networks may be seen as less relevant than national ones because they are viewed as top-down processes as opposed to need-based, context-driven networks. Foreign origins can also give rise to suspicions regarding the political agenda of networks.
- The study did not reveal much evidence of international networks taking a context-driven approach. Activities did not seem to be sufficiently shaped by an awareness of policy contexts, political contexts, local networking, attitudes to foreign activity, and the dynamics between key actors in community forestry.

Box 7. Learning Lessons from Uganda[67]

Context

Over 70 percent of Uganda's forests and woodlands are privately owned. Current community forestry approaches are focused on nationally protected forests, which are mainly institutionalised through collaborative forest management.

Most of the collaborative forest management initiatives operate through project-based approaches. Restricted project timeframes constrain tracking of processes across time, and conditions associated with donor support inevitably erode autonomy. Most of the projects are implemented at localised sites, which limits the relevance of lessons learned nationwide.

Waves of political and fiscal decentralization have swept across Uganda resulting in the creation of a nationwide superstructure of bodies for decentralised government. But much still needs to be done to give these bodies a democratic orientation.

Some environmental management has been decentralised primarily through the imposition of environmental committees on administrative and local government structures. However, the management still lacks necessary elements for democratisation. For instance, the emphasis must shift from mere benefit-sharing towards greater local decision-making and control. There needs to be accountability to the local level. In order to create more credible incentives, community dividends need to be more meaningful in terms of per capita value, and remittances need to be more regular and predictable. These elements are especially relevant for schemes at the forest margin.

Environmental decentralization to local authorities is still highly circumscribed and they appear to be under tight administrative and fiscal control of the Forest Department. Local authorities are only allowed to control forests less than 100 hectares, and even in those, Forest Department officials are responsible for issuing permits and collecting revenue—with revenue sharing arrangements skewed against the local authorities. Recently, a policy has been put in place that broadens the scope of community forest management to emphasize community forestry on private lands as well as multiple uses and multiple users. The policy describes the roles of the various stakeholders including facilitators under whom networks fall.

The underlying causes of the policy and legal shifts cannot be attributed to one factor in isolation but to the cumulative effect of many interacting factors.

Networking Experience

A variety of networks exist in Uganda at different levels. They have the potential for cross-level exchanges, but generally collaboration among them is weak.

- A formalised approach was viewed as a liability to networking because it leads to tension the network and its members as well as eroding their identity and autonomy.
- No networking tool is necessarily better or worse than the other, and networking tools work best in combination with other tools rather than in isolation.
- In terms of vertical and horizontal links, no structure appears better than the other. They may complement each other, with the question being, perhaps, that of balance.
- Strategic points of intervention including awareness raising, capacity building, and advocacy are synergistic components of the whole process of seeking to influence change.

Box 8. Learning Lessons from Cameroon[68]

Context

Cameroon is a large, culturally diverse country that has a varied vegetation mosaic consisting of humid forests, savanna grasslands with montane forest patches, and a semi-arid Sahelian zone. The moist tropical forests are by far the most economically important of these vegetation categories, being a source of commercially valuable timber species. For the entire colonial period and subsequently up to the mid-1990s, the forests of Cameroon were managed through a centrally-directed structure and process, which expropriated resources and control over them from local communities, and excluded such communities from accessing forest resources as well as economic benefits accruing from them.

A variety of interacting factors including donor pressures, international economic interests, local political considerations, sheer weight of local tenurial and use pressures, as well as pressure from civil society movements— including international and local community forestry networks—ushered in a pro-people trend in policy, which culminated in the enactment of the 1994 forest law and its complementary decree of application. Forest-sector reforms immediately preceding the 1994 law included a zoning plan that divided forests into two zones: a permanent zone exclusively owned and managed by the state; and a non-permanent zone owned by the state but used and managed by a variety of other actors including municipalities, private individuals, and local communities.

The 1994 law entitles communities to benefits of the forests through community forests, which are excisions of the non-permanent forest estate not exceeding 5000 hectares. The community forests are managed in partnership with the state through management plans and agreements. Communities derive economic benefit from the commercial exploitation of the forests as well as directly drawing resources for their subsistence needs.

Decentralised forest management in Cameroon is rather restricted because of the size restriction of community forests, which are already confined to the non-permanent zone. Communities often inherit secondary forests of diminished economic value because they've been salvaged by logging companies. This often puts the communities in conflict with the companies. The management plans further restrict harvesting, which diminishes more the benefits to the community.

Decentralisation through the conferment of community forests has only resulted in conditional community empowerment without addressing the fundamental issues of ownership and control of forests and the land on which they grow. Moreover, the process of establishing community forests is long and costly, riddled with implementational contradictions between the supportive law and its decree, and vests too much discretionary power in state-level actors at the expense of the communities. Overall, the implementation of community forests in Cameroon appears to take the focus and resources away from other community forestry activities, particularly those practised by communities outside the humid forest zone.

Networking Experience

A state-aligned local network formally institutionalises community forests in Cameroon. Though its 'civil society plus state' outlook is seen as enhancing delivery in terms of policy and grassroots impact, the partnership is seen as considerably eroding the network's autonomy. Not surprisingly, the network still has not crafted a broader vision of community forestry that transcends the insular concept of community forests where the forest management is in partnership with state institutions.

There is a sizeable complement of other local, regional, and international networks operating in Cameroon, which offers considerable scope for cross-scale insights and synergies, but unfortunately, coordination among all these networks is considered weak. The various networks have different combinations of intervention domains (e.g., awareness raising, capacity building, etc.), with those that have wider intervention areas being seen as building on 'internal synergies.' Although those focusing on fewer areas may result in 'high specialization,' some form of coordination was suggested to enable filtering of specialised insights to other networks and contexts.

The various networks use different combinations of networking tools, depending on their priorities and resource endowments. No particular combination of tool was necessarily considered better or worse than the other, but developing tools that enable more effective contact with grassroots communities was emphasized.

Some form of formal linkage or coordination unit was suggested as a way of ensuring that the activities of local networks feed into the scope of the work of international networks, as well as minimizing duplication among the networks. A suggestion risked by one informant related to the establishment of an official clearing house for tracking and monitoring, the ethics and mechanics of which are open to debate.

No fundamental contradictions were noted between government policy and the agendas of international community forestry networks, at least in terms of the envisioned objective functions like decentralization, sustainable management, poverty alleviation and community empowerment and participation. Some of the contradictions were seen to arise from differences in emphasis, with networks accused of often sensationalizing issues instead of engaging government in positive dialogue.

Box 9. Learning Lessons from the Forest Action Network[69]

The Forest Action Network (FAN), based in Nairobi, Kenya, is a networking organisation created in 1995, initially to coordinate activities of the global multi-donor Forest Trees and People Programme for East and Southern Africa. The programme's broad objective was to address the problem of '*insufficient local control over the management of natural resources, and over policy, administration and legislation pertaining to natural resource management*'. To meet this and other related objectives, the following themes were identified and implemented in the East and Southern Africa Region: conflict management; forestry and food security; participatory processes; farmers' initiated research and extension; and networking and institutionalisation.

FAN has used a variety of strategies and activities to meet the objectives and themes. It not only has advocated for policy change, but also has actively entered the policy making process by organizing stakeholders' workshops that incorporated community perspectives into the draft Kenya Forest Bill, and by actively contributing to the drafting of the Bill. In order to enhance its own capacity and that of its collaborating partners and communities, FAN has been involved in exchange visits, field demonstrations, training, and resource mobilization. As part of its information and networking strategy, FAN is involved in the following activities: organizing relation building workshops at a range of levels; producing and distributing three newsletters; distributing natural resource management videos, books and other publications; organizing radio programmes on a range of natural resource management themes; and recently, establishing a formal resource centre (library). The information service complements some of FAN's other strategies including awareness raising.

FAN implements several regional and national programmes in collaboration with other networks and organisations. It participates in several international policy forums including the Inter-Governmental Panel on Forests and has an observer status at some United Nations meetings. Its membership draws from a broad canvas of organisations at the local, national, and regional levels.

In this study, FAN's prominent strengths were readily seen as advocacy for policy change, networking, and its information service. Other strengths also were noted: using varied scales of intervention to allow for cross-scale insights; extending the scope of community forestry by placing emphasis on commercial values of non-timber forest products instead of just subsistence values; focusing on institutionalising gender awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness in natural resource management; developing a capacity for self evaluation and strategic planning; and linking to a variety of networks, fora, organisations, and individuals.

The following were among the reported challenges and constraints: a reporting format that does not adequately reflect its regional character; an over-reliance on donor funding; dominance of vertical linkages and upward accountability at the expense of grassroots-level horizontal linkages and downward accountability; challenges of phasing and sequencing of strategies for influencing and transacting change; a skewed membership structure; and a not well-targeted dissemination strategy. These are highlighted as opportunities for building strength in the future.

Box 10. Learning Lessons from the Forests, Trees and People Programme[70]

The Forests, Trees and People Programme (FTPP) was launched in 1987. Its global headquarters was lodged in the FAO in Rome, with support from a multi-donor trust fund. FTPP worked through regional and national institutions in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe, ending operations in December 2002. The FTPP had three main objectives: (1) to develop tools, methods, and approaches for participatory forestry; (2) to strengthen the ability of local and national institutions to work in participatory forestry and related fields; and (3) to share information and experiences on innovative methods and approaches. It was never an objective for FTPP to directly target grassroots communities. It was felt that a wider impact could be achieved by working with institutions and organisations, which would then work with local communities either directly or through local partners. The main tools of networking were: (1) annual and regional meetings; (2) regional visits by headquarter staff; and (3) publications, newsletters, web sites, and training materials produced regionally and by the global headquarters. FTPP aimed to be a decentralised network with decisions taken jointly by regional focal points and the global headquarters. The vision was that Southern actors should be partners, not beneficiaries. This was a valuable approach to networking, respectful of diverse voices and experiences.

While the study revealed conflicting opinions on most issues, FTPP was perceived by several interviewees to have been a vibrant process, particularly in its earlier years. The main findings that emerged from the study are as follows:

- *Communication Strategy:* A formal communication strategy to provide clear guidelines on knowledge management and to create multi-directional flows of communication seems vital in a large diverse network such as FTPP. Since key questions of communication were not formally strategised, problems in collaboration between components occurred. However, the strategy followed by the publication unit was largely a success, though there seemed to be a lack of a strategy for translating material.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation:* Not having a formal monitoring and evaluation strategy led to a lack of clarity regarding the impacts of FTPP, particularly at grassroots level. Tools of monitoring and evaluation need to be developed that take into account processes as well as products, since many network activities are process-oriented.
- *Leadership:* Mechanisms of functioning should not be reliant on the presence of one particular individual and his or her style of working, but on institutionalised strategies and mechanisms. This is more conducive to long-term sustainability and building of institutional memory and continuity.
- *Institutional Arrangements:* The flexibility and decentralisation that FTPP needed may have been limited by being housed in a large, bureaucratic organisation. Infrequent face-to-face contact between members may have been a problem in terms of building up personal relationships. The size of FTPP and the high cost of bringing all members together was a significant factor.
- *Donors:* Donors need to be more willing to learn lessons from network experiences and to include their own actions in the analysis. They also need to demand more substantial reporting in order to gauge network impacts.

Box 11. Learning Lessons from the Asia Forest Network[71]

The origins of the Asia Forest Network (AFN) go back to the early 1980s when exchanges on community forestry issues between small multi-disciplinary groups were facilitated by the Ford Foundation. The AFN was formally created in 1992 with an objective to provide a forum for exchanging knowledge on community forestry, gaining a broader vision of shifts in forest management policies and practices, developing appropriate tools for community forestry implementation, and guiding policy reform. Findings are communicated at global, regional, and national levels. Until 2000, the AFN operated from California in the U.S., but since then most activities have shifted to headquarters in the Philippines. Network members are planners, researchers, and scientists from a range of Asian NGOs, universities, and government agencies. Membership has included local communities over the years, but in general, local communities are reached through partner members.

The informal and highly personalised nature of AFN is one of the chief characteristics of the network and is a guiding principle in its administrative structure, recruitment of members, implementation of activities, and monitoring and evaluation, etc. Activities include annual regional meetings, field workshops, country working groups, development of field methods, cross-visits, information dissemination and documentation of case studies. AFN also has a significant publications list. Currently its activities are focused on five Southeast Asian countries.

Some of the main findings that emerged from the AFN experience follow.

- Providing free publications is an important networking strategy and is a valuable service provided to members.
- Face-to-face exchanges are more effective than publications in terms of learning lessons and building relationships between members. Hence AFN's emphasis on regional meetings and workshops with limited numbers of participants.
- AFN operations are lean and modest. Operating with relatively small amounts of money helps openness and honesty in the relationship with partner members since money is not the main focus of the relationship. The secretariat is clear that it does not want 'big' funding as this would require more structured work plans and would not be flexible in terms of strategies.
- A network needs a strong leader as a driving force, but as a network matures, and as the aims get more rooted, a strong leader can give more room for a wider base of leadership to ensure sustainability and fresh perspectives.
- The AFN has built up gradually based on commitment and personal equations rather than as a project-oriented network created on the basis of the availability of funds and infrastructure. This indicates that the AFN may be a network that is sustainable in the long run.
- Networks, particularly small ones like AFN, need to be strengthened to sustain involvement in resource intensive processes such as international agreements.
- More inclusive networking could take place if language translation was built into all budgets as a priority activity.

Box 12. Learning lessons from the Rural Development Forestry Network[72]

Having been formed in 1985, the Rural Development Forestry Network (RDFN) is one of four specialist networks run by the Overseas Development Institute, and covers areas such as agricultural research and extension, rural development forestry and humanitarian practice issues. The network's objective is to provide a tool to enable exchange of ideas between researchers, practitioners in the field, and donors in the North on topics relating to the role of forests in people's livelihoods. The Rural Development Forestry Network brings together 2900 members from over 120 countries, with the composition of the membership regulated by an affirmative recruitment policy that favours members from developing countries. The requirement that members contribute their own materials to the network, and the active soliciting of papers from them, provides a limited degree of two-way information flow. However, the network's policy information focus has meant that interaction with grassroots members has not been a key objective.

Mailings on topical community-forestry related issues is RDFN's major networking tool. Usually, mailings include a synopsis on the issue under consideration and a complement of four or five working papers, usually case studies. Despite its richness and depth, the case study material is of limited relevance to some members, particularly those from South America, a region that does not share the same colonial experience with India and Africa where the network has a longer history. This survey identified possible ways of enhancing the relevance of mailings: mailings based on cross-sectoral issues of common interest; or a quota system of issues coverage. The network discontinued the production of a newsletter, which it considered to be covering mostly ephemeral issues that received coverage in other media.

RDFN relies on donor funding, which—because of reduced allocations to forest sector portfolios, shifting priorities of donors, and increased competition for soft money among many forestry organisations—has been shrinking over the years. The regional preference of one donor saw the network engaging with the 'completely new universe' of South America, well beyond the zones of the network's traditional strengths. The wider geographical focus, nevertheless, gave the network a better comparative scope in addition to providing an arena in which the network could engage with a new target audience, instead of concentrating on 'converting the converted.' Interviewees from the network suggested fund raising strategies such as a multi-donor approach that provides adequate fallbacks, better packaging of proposals, and improving cost effectiveness through the generation of multiple products from single sets of information. The significance of cost-recovery was less emphasized.

RDFN's highly centralised structure was seen as a detriment to contact with its grassroots stakeholders. While the structure was seen mainly due to the network's limited financial capacity, survey respondents recognised the need for more active partnerships with the regions. It was envisioned that such partnerships could be crafted in such a way as to fulfil multiple roles including enhancing contact with the grassroots, providing quality feedback, providing some form of external advisory service, and involving more members in the network's decision making processes.

Box 13. Learning Lessons from the Central American Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator of Communal Agroforestry[73]

The Central American Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator of Communal Agroforestry (ACICAFOC) was born out of a 1991 regional meeting to promote community forestry, organised by the National Peasant Forestry Board of Costa Rica, an organisation designed to help smallholders access government reforestation subsidies. With decisive support from the FAO's Forests, Trees and People Programme, community organisations continued their regional interchanges, eventually coalescing as the networking body now known as ACICAFOC. ACICAFOC also salvaged elements from a previous but collapsing regional network of small farmer organisations, the Association of Communities for Development (ASOSODE), and linked to new partners in the region with the help of the regional IUCN bureau. ACICAFOC thus emerged as one of the few community-based federations of the region and is increasingly seen by regional governments and international agencies as an authentic interlocutor that can bring community concerns to international fora and help ensure that dialogue, technical assistance, and financial resources reach down to communities through a minimum of intermediaries, while assisted by a substantial informal network of supportive NGOs, technical advisers, and other fellow travellers.

ACICAFOC is formally incorporated as a regional organisation, governed by a general assembly of self-selected delegates from 65 member organisations, which range in size from being single community cooperatives to regional peasant federations and which pay a membership fee of US$100/year. Ten organisations, however, dominate ACICAFOC activities. Since March 2002, aspiring members are screened to ensure that they are genuinely rooted in the communities. The general assembly sets overall priorities for the organisation and elects a board and a general facilitator, who acts as the executive director of a small secretariat. Through this network, ACICAFOC: carries out training through local level workshops; promotes exchanges between member organisations; participates in regional and international policy fora; and carries out community-level projects in territorial mapping, forest management planning, and protected area co-management. It also promotes action-orientated research and has initiated attempts to ensure that rural women are involved in decision-making and forest management.

ACICAFOC also links its members to other international networks. It is a member of the Forest Stewardship Council, was a regional partner in the IUCN-CIFM project and is a regional member of the newly emerged Caucus for Community-based Forest Management. ACICAFOC also is jointly implementing regional projects with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and Global Environment Facility.

Key lessons from the ACICAFOC experience include the following.

- It's success has been dependent on unusually committed executive director
- Its increasing involvement in advocacy at international forest policy debates, without clear objectives, has detracted from giving attention to the smaller and weaker members of the network.
- Participation in regional fora has created political space for country members to raise, and engage in, dialogue with governments about issues that are hard to address at national level such as land tenure and indigenous territorial claims
- The creation of national offices distanced members from network communications rather than promoting their participation.
- Electronic and telephoned-based communications are inadequate means for good two-way information sharing with grassroots groups.
- Capacity-building of membership organisations is the primary need.

Box 14. Learning Lessons from the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific[74]

The Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) was established as a university institute in the mid-1980s and redefined as an international organisation in 2000. It has played a prominent part in the promotion of community forestry in Asia through training, capacity building and experience-sharing, and as a centre of technical expertise. During the 1990s, the Centre became over extended but it has now been streamlined with a greater emphasis on the need for strategic synergy between its various programmes. Between 1992 and 2002, RECOFTC also acted as the regional focal point for the FAO's Peoples, Forests and Trees Programme (FTPP). It relies on Northern donors for the major part of its recurrent, core costs.

Twenty years of active engagement promoting community forestry have taught the centre many important lessons, which have led to a change in its approach and even of its conception of community forestry. From being essentially a training centre for the technicalities of tree husbandry, RECOFTC has transformed into a learning organization that promotes a wide range of systems of forest management by communities. The centre now emphasizes the importance of national policy, institutional and governance reform to allow community forestry to flourish.

RECOFTC is run by a government dominated board and its main partners are, about equally, governmental and non-governmental organisations. It retains close links with the Thai Royal Forestry Department, while its formal and informal networks also embrace a wide range of players, including alumni from its training courses, networks of field project partners, community-based organisations, and NGOs serviced through the FTPP network. RECOFTC is a prolific publisher and distributes key materials in some of the national languages of client countries. Its web site is used widely.

Networking has been an important, but never central, part of RECOFTC's work. Looking back on years of engagement with the FTPP, RECOFTC staff view the partnership as useful, but do not lament the FTPP's demise once the FAO-led network had outlived its usefulness. Some staff are also critical of the FAO's lack of commitment to community forestry. Networking has been particularly important to RECOFTC's vital work in Thailand, where it has engaged very closely with the alliance of community organisations pressing for policy reform in that country. This has been an important learning experience for RECOFTC.

As well as admitting its own shortcomings as a networking agency, RECOFTC is also constructively critical of networking efforts of other international networks. As information providers, other networks are seen as useful, but they have been less effective in supporting community-based organisations pressing for reform in the region.

Some of the key lessons that emerge from the RECOFTC experience are the following:

- Training has been and continues to be a vital activity in promoting community forestry and both helps and is helped by networking;
- Networks can promote multi-stakeholder dialogues and platforms, which are needed as part of conflict resolution processes;
- More emphasis is needed regionally on political and legal reform to modify the framework in which community forestry is being established;
- Land tenure reform requires more attention from the networks, meaning more emphasis is needed on analysis and country engagement;
- Developing advocacy strategies and local engagements is hard for a hybrid network that includes both governmental and civil society actors;
- Closer links with emerging social movements are required to help promote change;
- Links should be as direct as possible and include mechanisms for feedback;
- Although informal networking is preferable, formalisation may be required to legitimise actors' involvement and strengthen the sense of shared endeavour.

Box 15. Learning Lessons from the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests

Following the release of the Brundtland Report in 1986, and in preparation for the U.N. Conference of Environment and Development, indigenous peoples' organisations carried out extensive networking to prepare a joint platform that would give their concerns a high profile at the 1992 Rio summit. At a planning meeting organised by the World Rainforest Movement in Penang in 1992, indigenous peoples from the Pacific, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America decided to establish the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, a coalition of autonomous peoples' organisations based on a shared charter of demands.

The Alliance has its roots in the global movement for indigenous peoples, which has been pressing for recognition of indigenous rights to land and to self-determination. The movement first sought access to the United Nations as colonized peoples and has since sought redress of violations of indigenous peoples' human rights at the U.N. Human Rights Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Since 1983, a working group on indigenous populations, open to any indigenous representatives has met annually in Geneva and its deliberations have led to drafting of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1993) and the establishment of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues under the Economic and Social Council (2002).

The Alliance, which has its own secretariat (currently in Chiang Mai), has the dual mandate of promoting the rights of forest dwelling indigenous peoples in international fora and of strengthening regional networks of indigenous peoples. It is governed by a conference of regionally elected representatives, which has met approximately every three years. The conference sets strategic objectives, reviews reports from the regions and committees, and delegates its authority to an elected international coordinating committee which makes decisions on behalf of the members between conference meetings.

The Alliance has established close ties with supportive networks such as the World Rainforest Movement and Global Forests Coalition and made substantial inputs into the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, including running an intersessional meeting in Leticia, Colombia. It participated in a similar process at the International Forum on Forests to focus attention on the underlying causes of deforestation, and the Alliance now is a focal point for indigenous peoples in relation to the U.N. Forum on Forests. The Alliance also is involved in the Global Caucus on Community Based Forest Management and promotes indigenous participation in the Convention on Biological Diversity and World Parks Congress.

Key lessons that emerge from the Alliance's experience include:

- Concerted advocacy can result in significant policy gains, but these are slow to feed back to the national level;
- Environmental policy processes are weakly linked to parallel standard-setting processes related to human rights;
- International policy work must be linked to parallel efforts to promote regional, national, and local capacity building to avoid grassroots groups being left behind;
- Email communications and newsletters are ineffective communications tools in reaching community-based organisations;
- NGOs must respect the political nature of indigenous organisations and demands;
- Substantial and sustained financial support is required to ensure transparent, participatory decision-making at an intercontinental level.

Box 16. Learning Lessons from the World Conservation Union's Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management[75]

Building on a Ford Foundation initiative to promote international forest policy reforms that favour community forestry, an international network calling itself the Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management was created in 1996 with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) acting as network secretariat.

The goals of the network were to accelerate a process of two-way learning between nations and across regions, channel the lessons learned from successful local experiences into global policy making, promote decentralization of forest management, and influence donors to give greater support to community forestry. The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) was chosen as the main target for advocacy. The Working Group emphasized the need to amplify civil society demands for a greater role in forest management, analyse regional and national trends in policy evolution, identify the main obstacles to reform, assess the role of the private sector, and document means of transition towards greater community control of forests. The group chose to focus its action on six regions.

The Working Group met at least twice a year between 1996 and 2000, when funding for the network more or less dried up. Most network meetings were in the margins of IPF and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) meetings and efforts were focused on advocating the adoption of official language supportive of community involvement in forest management. This advocacy was successful, although the IPF and IFF Proposals for Action have not yet been widely implemented at the national level.

The Working Group also sponsored regional studies on the status of community forest management, which resulted in five detailed regional profiles in book format—on North America, Meso-America, Western Europe, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Four other reports on Eastern and Southern Africa were also produced. These regional profiles contain a wealth of valuable information about community forestry but are too detailed and discursive to serve immediately as tools for advocacy. However, with the exception of Meso-America and Eastern and Southern Africa, the Working Group had little lasting engagement with regional networks or community social movements following the publication of the reports. The Meso-American and African processes were developed with extra funding, which allowed for much more interactive processes, more inputs into regional advocacy and more local capacity-building.

The main members of the network were described as 'highly experienced individuals who have often acted as change agents and leaders'. Two-thirds were from the north and predominantly from NGOs, government, and intergovernmental organisations. There were few direct links with community-based and indigenous peoples' organisations. The governance structure was light and secretariat-driven. Members did not take up efforts to devolve authority to a steering committee.

Self-evaluation was built into the network's functioning and resulted in useful lessons being drawn for an improved second phase, which, however, was not funded. More focus on regional advocacy and capacity building with much stronger grassroots membership and engagement in decision-making were all proposed.

Other lessons from the network experience include the following:

- Technical publications have limited usefulness and should be complemented with simpler stand-alone summaries for wider dissemination and advocacy use;
- Publication in the major U.N. languages is vital for effective intercontinental linkages
- More engagement with local social movements is necessary if regionally targeted advocacy is to have legitimacy and be effective in promoting change;
- Centralised, secretariat-driven networks end up having passive members; more engaged and accountable governance mechanisms are needed;
- Self-evaluations provide crucial moments for reflection and to check the networks' value to the membership;
- Information dissemination should target libraries and resource centres and not just individuals, NGOs, and offices.

Box 17. Learning Lessons from the Forest Stewardship Council[76]

In response to international concerns in the 1980s about the impact of logging on forests, particularly tropical forests, and the refusal of intergovernmental agencies to promote the labelling of timbers, NGOs and some of the more progressive elements in the timber industry developed proposals to promote voluntary forest product labelling. This led to the creation of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 1993. This Mexico-based NGO developed a global scheme for the certification of forests, according to agreed standards, independent of governments.

FSC is a 'chambered' membership organisation designed to be governed equally by members from economic, social, and environmental groups. FSC stakeholders developed global standards for environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest stewardship. Those standards are adopted and modified by national initiatives for application in specific countries. Nonetheless, consensus building in national fora has proved lengthy and requires heavy investment of time and resources from participants. Marginal and poor social groups have not been able to afford the time and resources needed to engage in these processes effectively. For this and other reasons, national standard-setting has thus tended to focus on developing standards appropriate for large, and not small-scale, producers.[77] Additionally, the requirements of independent certifiers to see documented management plans, the costs of certification inspections, and problems linking small-scale producers to concerned consumers have discouraged some community forestry operations from getting certification.

While the earliest FSC certificates in the tropics were for community forestry, certification grew most rapidly among public and private landowners as FSC funders, board members, and the secretariat gave priority to developing a significant market share for FSC certified timber. By 2000, over 90 percent of FSC certified forests were managed by public bodies, individuals, and corporations—not communities.[78] Most certified community operations had been supported by substantial grant-funded technical assistance. In general, certification, as a tool for market-based reform, has not worked well for communities in its early phases.[79] Nonetheless, around 50 FSC certificates have been issued to community forestry operations (principally in Central America and Mexico) providing an important set of experiences from which others can learn.

Notwithstanding, FSC has taken a series of measures through concerted networking to try to address these market failures and incorporate the needs of a broader range of forest users into its certification policies and procedures. In the mid-1990s, FSC members mandated the creation of a social working group to promote membership of the social chamber, and to formulate a strategic plan for dealing with social issues. Vigorous efforts were made to recruit more members from communities, trades unions, social justice organisations, and indigenous peoples. A still-active bilingual (English/Spanish) email list of 170 was set up. In 1998, FSC developed 'group certification', which allows groups of small-scale producers to jointly apply for certification and thus share administration and inspection costs. By 2002, almost 1 million hectares of forests, from over 7,500 individual forest operations in 23 countries had been certified under this scheme.[80] During this same period, FSC also invested considerable effort in devising a social strategy that was based on the recommendations and requests collected at previous face-to-face meetings such as the 2001 annual conference, Certification for the People. The strategy was developed via extensive consultations with FSC members, national initiatives, email circulars, and by using other networks such as RECOFTC's newsletter. FSC expects that further networking will be crucial to the successful application of this strategy.

In 2002, FSC also launched a new initiative called 'Increasing Access to Certification for Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests' (SLIMFs Initiative). This initiative seeks to provide guidance on interpreting standards and management requirements for small-scale operations, make information about certification processes and standards more accessible and intelligible, and simplify the documentation system of certification inspections and audits. Those objectives are now to be tested in field trials. Interested stakeholders are kept informed via regular review committee briefings.

FSC's experiences with networking bring out the following lessons.

- Considerable investment in translation and information servicing is required to keep networks active and working in two directions.

- Face-to-face meetings are crucial if technical issues are to be addressed and developed in any depth.
- A major challenge is finding cost-effective means of incorporating the views of resource-poor NGOs and community organisations into policy development. Email networking and consultation processes may not be the best way to reach them.[81]
- Bringing marginalised social groups into networks, national initiatives, and certification processes requires grants (self-financing is not an option in most cases). In most national initiatives, community participation is minimal.
- Although the governance structure of FSC allows for voting equality among the six stakeholders groups (social, environmental, and economic, each with a North and South division), in practice decision-making processes favour those with higher education, technical knowledge, access to communication, and financial resources.
- Overcoming this de facto inequality either requires capacity-building of southern and resource-poor social groups or novel mechanisms of decision-making, which give proper weight to local and indigenous knowledge, languages and discourses.
- FSC's formalised governance system and complaints procedures have nevertheless provided important political space for community-based organisations and indigenous peoples, which they have used effectively to address serious problems. Supportive NGOs and grant financing have proved necessary to make use of these apertures.

Box 18. Learning Lessons from the World Rainforest Movement[82]

The World Rainforest Movement (WRM) was born from two NGO conferences held in Penang, Malaysia in the mid-1980s that focused on the destruction of the rainforests and the global environmental crisis.[83] Much of the impetus for the creation of the group came from the perceived need to develop a common critique of top-down official solutions to the deforestation crisis; solutions that exclude civil society, indigenous peoples, and forest-dwellers in particular. WRM's thinking crystallised in the form of the Penang Declaration in 1989 accompanied by a popular document that explained the underlying causes of the forest crisis, the flaws in official solutions, and the need for an alternative approach based on securing the rights of local communities.[84] Initial efforts of the group focused on exposing the inadequacies of the Tropical Forest Action Plan and the International Tropical Timber Organisation, explaining the need for land security and agrarian reform to address deforestation and highlighting the threat posed to forests by industrial monocrop plantations.[85] The group also provided campaign support for the Dayak peoples of Malaysian Borneo (Sarawak) who sought to secure their land rights in the face of an aggressive timber exploitation regime that denied their rights.[86] At the same time the group embarked on a special programme to promote networking among forest peoples, which led to a third major conference in Penang supported by WRM members, but controlled by indigenous peoples organisations. The meeting led to the establishment of an autonomous intercontinental indigenous umbrella organisation—the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests.[87]

WRM has chosen to present itself as a social movement without a formal membership structure and decision-making. It has nevertheless been obliged to secure legal status as a non-profit organisation; it has set up a steering committee made up of committed NGO members who share the WRM's goals in order to pool ideas and make strategic decisions; and it has established a small secretariat originally based in Penang and now in Montevideo.

WRM seeks to change policy through mobilising public opinion and information dissemination rather than through direct negotiation in policy fora. It engages in many active campaigns in solidarity with local struggles and produces a widely distributed electronic newsletter in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English that reaches some 9,000 subscribers. While concerned about the risks of civil society being co-opted by, and thus legitimising, intergovernmental policy making processes, WRM nevertheless hosted the Joint Initiative to Address the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation at the Intergovernmental Panel and Forum on Forests and now acts as host to another NGO network—the Global Forests Coalition. WRM also coordinates NGO advocacy directed at policy reform at the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the U.N. Forum on Forests, and the Framework Convention of Climate Change.

WRM interacts actively with other networks such as the Taiga Rescue Network, Industrial Shrimp Action Network, OilWatch, Forests Movement Europe, and joined the recently formed Caucus for Community-Based Forest Management. WRM is seen as a Southern-based movement that prioritises a Southern constituency and is directed by Southern NGOs with support from NGOs based in the North. Although WRM acts to support community forestry, it does this mainly by seeking to promote framework change rather than by addressing directly community forest management regimes.

Key lessons from the WRM experience include the following.

- Two-way networking can be achieved with a minimally formalised governance structure.
- Direct support for local struggles through campaigns is highly valued by local organisations but to be successful requires a heavy investment in local level networking, field visits, and sustained information flow.
- Social movements that advocate against human rights abuses cannot readily accommodate governments in their networking activities.
- Synergies between networks can help strengthen advocacy and improve cross-sectoral policy reform.

Annex I. Terms of Reference

The CIFOR project, titled 'Learning Lessons from International Community Forestry Networks', was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ford Foundation. Under the project, researchers were contracted to review eight countries' experiences with international community forestry networks and also review the activities of eight international community forestry networks. A peer review/advisory team, comprised of Mary Hobley, Janis Alcorn, Madhu Sarin and Louise Goodman, was contracted to react to the research findings and contribute to the Lessons Workshop. The project has been handled as part of CIFOR's Adaptive Collaborative Management programme initially under Carol Colfer and then under Lini Wollenberg. The director of CIFOR, David Kaimowitz, took a central role in conceiving and then overseeing the project.

As given in the project outline, the stated purpose of the project was to:

Review the experience with international networks designed to promote community forestry, to assess how much 'value-added' they have provided or could potentially provide to activities at the local and national level and their ability to advocate for community forestry at international levels. The project's central objective is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of international efforts to support community forestry with the aim of:

- Promoting transparent, accountable, and democratic decision-making processes concerning forests that incorporate the views of the poor, women, indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities;
- Helping poor people retain and obtain access to existing forest resources, generate new resources, and earn greater incomes from the resources they have; and
- Protecting and regenerating forest ecosystems and biodiversity, and reducing environmental degradation.

The project's specific objectives are to:

- Synthesize the lessons emerging from international community forestry networks through a collective process, emphasizing these networks' ability (or inability) to provide 'value-added' to local and national processes and to advocate for community forestry at international levels;
- Share these lessons with the main stakeholder groups mentioned above;
- Improve the programs of bilateral and multilateral agencies and foundations that support community forestry, with particular emphasis on grant-making by the Ford Foundation and DFID;
- Help CIFOR and other international research organisations that support community forestry design an effective strategy for working with international community forestry networks.

Provide inputs into the design of a Global Summit for Pro-People Forest Reform.[88]

Annex II. Connecting to the Networks

For further information about networks mentioned in this review try the following web sites or email contacts:

ACICAFOC: www.acicafoc.org

Asia Forest Network :
www.asiaforestnetwork.org

CIFOR: www.cifor.cgiar.org

Forest Action Network: http://www.ftpp.or.ke

Forest Peoples Programme:
www.forestpeoples.org

Forests, Trees and People Programme:
www.fao.org/forestry/FON/FONP/cfu/cfu-e.stm
http://www.polux.sdnp.org.pa/~rfc/
http://www.cnr.org.pe/fao/index.htm
http://www.cnb.net/~ftpp-fao/welcome.html
http://www-trees.slu.se/nepal/
watchindex.htm

Forest Stewardship Council: www.fscoax.org

IUCN Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management: http://
www.iucn.org/themes/fcp/special/cifm/html

Rural Development Forestry Newsletter:
www.odifpeg.org.uk/publications/rdfn

RECOFTC: www.recoftc.org

World Rainforest Movement:
www.wrm.org.uy

Global Caucus for Community-Based Forest Management: globalcbfm@yahoogroups.com

Endnotes

[1] See Annex 1 for the Terms of Reference.
[2] Colchester 2002a.
[3] Rackham 1986:73, 382.
[4] Westoby 1987.
[5] Guha 1991; Bryant 1997; Peluso 1992; Westoby 1987.
[6] Gadgil and Guha 1993.
[7] Jordan, Gajseni and Watanabe 1992.
[8] Hobley 1996
[9] Westoby 1987
[10] Westoby 1987; Arnold 2001.
[11] Hobley 1996; Arnold 2001.
[12] Colchester 1992a; Hobley 1996.
[13] Arnold 2001.
[14] Tayor 1995.
[15] Caufield 1985.
[16] Davis 1977; Bodley 1982; 1988.
[17] Bello, Kinley and Elinson 1982; Rich 1985; Colchester 1986; Mikeswell and Williams 1992.
[18] Peet and Watts 1996; Bryant and Bailey 1997; Keil et al. 1998.
[19] Poore 1989.
[20] Colchester 1989; WRM/SAM 1990.
[21] Colchester 1993.
[22] Kolk 1996.
[23] Dudley, Jeanrenaud and Sullivan 1995
[24] FoE/WRM 1994; Gale 1998.
[25] Utting 1993; Barraclough and Ghimire 1995; Gibson, McKean and Ostrom 2000.
[26] Poffenberger 1990.
[27] Verolme and Moussa 1999.
[28] Alliance 1996.
[29] IAITPTF and EAIP 1997; Griffiths 2002.
[30] Humphreys 1996.
[31] Britt 2002; Apte and Pathak 2002.
[32] WRM 2003.
[33] FAO 1992. The FAO study defines a network as a *'voluntary cooperative arrangement among individuals and/or institutions in two or more countries, set up for a period of at least several years, to carry out jointly certain specified activities for the purpose of direct exchange of relevant techniques and experiences on common development issues'*.
[34] Thornber and Markopoulos 2000:2.
[35] Elliott 2000: xix, 232; see also Elliott and Schlaepfer 2001a, 2001b.
[36] Counsell and Loraas 2002; Colchester, Sirait and Wijardjo 2003.
[37] RDFN, RECOFTC, FTPP and FAN all have extensive publications and training materials on this theme, which is a favourite of the FAO.
[38] Means and Josayma et al. 2002 Vol 1:5
[39] Chiriboga 2001: 73.
[40] See Keck and Sikkink 1998 and Fox and Brown 1998 for in depth reviews of some of these advocacy campaigns.
[41] Colchester 2001.
[42] Unsustainable community forestry, of course, may be quite profitable, for a time!
[43] Geertz 1963. The term 'agricultural involution' describes the internal, very complicated material and moral economies that have developed in highly populated and intensively cultivated areas.
[44] Eg Smith and Scherr 2002.
[45] FAO 1992.
[46] RECOFTC is currently reconsidering how it can market its training services.
[47] See Uganda report.
[48] Chase Smith 1995.
[49] For discussions see Davies 2001; Roche 2001; Earl Carden and Smutylo 2001.
[50] Edwards 2001:4-5
[51] Clark 2001.
[52] Cf Brown and Fox 2001: 53-55.
[53] The original aim had been to examine the FSC-Community Forestry Working Group and not the FSC as a whole.
[54] Indeed a number of the 'networks' studied are in fact organisations in formal, legal terms.
[55] Fernandez 2002.
[56] FAO 1992:8.
[57] Eg Keck and Sikkink 1998.
[58] Britt 2002.
[59] Edwards 2001:1.
[60] Howell and Pearce 2001.
[61] Mendes 1989; Shoumatoff 1991; Keck and Sikkink 1998:140-142; Cardoso 2002.
[62] Korten 1992:43. He drew these lessons from examining the effective tactics of the Thai NGO 'Project for Ecological Recovery'.
[63] These views are particularly strongly felt in Asia, where the notion of 'forest' is considered a legal fiction and 'forestry' has become a term synonymous with expropriation and imposed management.
[64] Colchester 2002d.
[65] Colchester 2002c.
[66] Apte and Pathak 2002.
[67] Mandondo 2002a.
[68] Mandondo 2002c.
[69] Mandondo 2002b.
[70] Apte 2002a.

[71] Apte 2002b.
[72] Mandondo 2002d.
[73] Laforge 2002c.
[74] Colchester 2002e.
[75] Colchester 2002b.
[76] Laforge 2002a.
[77] Robinson and Brown 2002; Counsell and Loraas 2002; Draft Social Strategy.
[78] Rezende de Azevedo 2001.
[79] Thornber and Markopoulos 2000:2.
[80] Robinson and Brown 2002. Few of these are community forestry schemes however.
[81] For example while there are many developing country members of the SLIMF's review committee, over 90 percent of respondents to a recent SLIMF questionaire were from developed countries.
[82] Laforge 2002d.
[83] SAM 1987; APPEN and SAM 1988.
[84] WRM 1989.
[85] Shiva 1987; Colchester and Lohmann 1990; Colchester 1993; Colchester and Lohmann 1993; Carrere and Lohmann 1996.
[86] WRM 1989.
[87] Colchester 1992a.
[88] CIFOR funding application to Ford Foundation and DFID. Bogor, 2001.

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