THE IMPORTANCE AND INFLUENCE OF POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Community management of forest and forest resources in developing countries has been a rising trend since the 1970s. This shift arose due to instability in communities, on social and economic scales, as well as high deforestation rates. Governments have the option to devolve rights and title to communities to empower them to access and manage the forest resources, giving communities a chance at better livelihoods. Partnerships with external actors also provide influential assistance to communities through building communities capacity and providing funding and infrastructure. Using case studies from North and Central America, South Asia and Africa, this essay examines the potential of policy and partnerships within the realm of community forestry. Impacts of policy and partnership are assessed, followed by a discussion on current successes and setbacks. The author makes suggestion for emerging community forests in developing countries and a look at the future of community forestry.

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1. Introduction

Forests cover 30% of the land area on earth accounting for almost four million hectares worldwide, two thirds of their historical abundance (Charnley and Poe 2007). Currently, about 1.6 billion people rely on forest resources for sustenance (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002); however, most of these communities lack formal rights and title to access these resources. The dependence of local communities upon natural resources, and continued destruction of these resources, is a prevalent issue in developing countries. Response to the increasing rates of deforestation, and rising environmental movements in the 1970s created pressure upon governments to look for a solution to these environmental and social issues (Charnley and Poe 2007). The empowerment of communities through the devolution of rights and access to their natural resources has proven to provide promise of poverty alleviation, and sustainable forest management (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011). Community management of natural resource has been shown to contribute to equity and lower rates of deforestation compared to surrounding forests (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Management and control of natural resources remains inherently political and therefore community forestry is inevitably linked to policy (Gauld 2000). In addition to policy relations, communities often partner with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to gain further support in the uptake of community forestry. The relationships a community fosters can largely shape the outcome of the resource management.

1.1 The Rise of Community Forestry

In many developing countries, communities saw the rights to their land and forest resources revoked in the nineteenth century during a shift towards a colonial and scientific structure of land management (Bojang and Reeb 1998, Schroeder 1999, Gauld 2000,

Bracer, et al. 2007, Charnley and Poe 2007). With the emergence and subsequent spreading of community forestry since the 1970s, many governments are now looking to reverse this process, as it has been found that governments have not been adequate "stewards of the forest" (White and Martin 2002). Some communities in developing countries have seen their distribution of rights, devolution of power and even ownership rights reinstated (Molnar, et al. 2007). This trend of transferring rights to communities began in the late 1970s in Latin America and parts of Asia, spreading through the Amazon, Africa and many other developing countries by the 1990s (White and Martin 2002). Community forestry is in various stages worldwide; some communities have gained full rights and title to land and resources, and have been able to successfully manage their resources while other communities have yet to see on-the-ground results (Hajjar 2011).

1.2 Importance of Community Forestry

Community forestry has been seen as an answer to sustainable management of forests (Bray, et al. 2003), and benefits associated with successful forest management include reconciliation of equity, sustainability, biodiversity, stability and development within communities (Gauld 2000). Community forestry has the potential to enhance a community's political leverage by means of building capacity through organizing the community and their resources, and by building up their social and economic leverage (Sunderlin, Dewi and Puntodewo 2007). Further, community forestry has been promoted as a solution to deforestation, offering increased conservation and sustainable practices (Hajjar 2011) by transferring of control of natural resource to communities. It has been seen that secure transfers of rights and tenure to forest-dependent communities will result in motivation from the community to rehabilitate and utilize the resources in a sustainable

manner (Puhlin and Ramirez 2005), and when compared to large companies, communities often invest more in the local economy, resulting in equitable management (Molnar, et al. 2007).

2. Case Studies

All community forests are different across countries and regions (Bray, et al. 2003), in order to analyze the influence and importance that policy and partnerships can represent in community forests, seven main case studies were analyzed in this report. All of the case studies examine community management of natural resources in developing countries around the world, including government influence as well as partnerships with other external actors. Starting in Central America, the example from Honduras evaluates a cooperative of community forests. In South Asia, the examples from Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines look at different relationships between varying external actors and the alternative opportunities they present. In Africa, Ghana and The Gambia present promising political incentives that encourage a movement towards community forestry. Finally, in North America, the unique community forests of Mexico are used to compare the government impacts upon community organization.

2.1 Honduras

The example of the community forestry in Honduras, presented by Del Gatto (2007), follows the experience of the Honduran cooperative *Cooperativa Regional Agroforestal Colón Atlántida Ltda*. (COATLAHL) though the promotion of community forestry by the Honduran government, state institutions, and cooperatives over the past 25 years. Commercial exploration of the Honduran forests began in the 1800s, during which time the government's involvement was limited to tax collection from timber harvest revenue. With support from the Catholic Church, rural organizations, and a military general, the 1970s saw the drastic introduction of the *Cooporacion Hondurena de Desarrollo Forestal* (COHDEFOR) in 1974, a semi-autonomous state institution, which was intended to

maintain control over forest products. COHDEFOR incorporated the Social Forestry System (SFS), which was intended to increase community participation in forest harvesting and management. Del Gatto highlights the Honduran cooperative COATLAHL which was formed in 1977, one of the more than 120 cooperatives that appeared in the 1970s due to the promotion of the SFS. The forests of Honduras were reprivatized in 1982 for a time, due to a successful rally by loggers associations, which hindered COATLAHL's progress. Re-privatization saw SFS lose its footing and led to many community forests having to depend on international sources for funding. Fundamental changes to forest policy came in 1992: the Law of Modernization and Development of the Agricultural Sector saw the return of forest land to the communities. This law saw COHDEFOR reassigning administrative control over the national forest as well as the rise of SFS once again. The government of Honduras has announced that it is working towards creating a single legal instrument for forest policy, but when this will actually be produced is unknown.

2.2 Nepal

The original forest policies in Nepal arose under British influence in 1942, resulting in nationalization of the forests and a colonial, scientific approach to forestry becoming the norm. However, as Puhlin et al. (2010) illustrate, Nepal is currently seen as one of the world's most innovative countries with respect to community forestry. Due to legislation enabling community forestry in the 1990s (the Forest Act of 1993, Forest Regulations of 1995 and community forestry guidelines in 1999), community forest user groups (CFUGs) have gained legal rights to manage and sell forest products. The emergence of a network of CFUGs, the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN), has aided CFUGs in overcoming barriers such as land allotment and taxation.

2.3 Indonesia

Mayers and Vermeulen (2002) follow the path of a pilot site of the Forest Village Community Development (Pembangunan Masyarakat Desa Hutan, or PMDH) programme, located on the Indonesian island of Java. Timber production is a major type of land use in Indonesia, even on densely populated Java. Although a state-owned company, Perhutani, controls all of the productive forest on the island, the company has allowed local communities room to grow their crops within the forested land for decades in exchange for the locals tending young saplings for the company. During the 1980s, communities began to regain customary land rights, which allowed for greater involvement in forest management, resulting in the creation of the PMDH in 1992. The PMDH presents allotments of forest that are shared between families, as well as joint land management decision-making between community members and Perhutani.

2.4 Philippines

Gauld (2000) illustrates the community forestry in the Philippines with respect to current government agreements. Influence from the United States and colonial approaches prevailed over forest management in the Philippines for most of the twentieth century, which led to the centralization of control and commercial exploration. Due to an uprising against deforestation in the 1970s, community-based programmes began appearing in state policy in 1989. These policies were seen as a radical new development in which the responsibility of forest management was transferred to communities. In 1993, the Community Forestry Management Agreement was created, with a shift of focus towards returning forests to communities. The agreement is 25 years in length, with the possibility of renewal. This agreement arose out of the Philippine government adopting community

forestry as 'the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice' (Office of the President, 1995: 1).

2.5 Ghana

Social Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) created in Ghana under new government legislation in 1998 were investigated by Mayers and Vermeulen (2002). Prior to this legislation the only compensation that communities received from timber harvesting were intermittent payments that only benefited the community chiefs. During the 1990s there was a shift from concession based logging to forest management based on sustainability and equity. The SRAs require logging companies that operate on customary lands to negotiate with the local communities and create "a more transparent and equitable system of allocating timber concessions in Ghana"(Mayers and Vermeulen 2002: 77). Companies that wanted to operate on community land are now required to obtain a Timber Utilization Contract (TUC) and are legally required to abide by SRAs. Currently there are approximately 42 TUCs administered which cover over 290,000 hectares.

2.6 The Gambia

Tomaselli (2011) presents the current situation in the Gambia surrounding small and medium forest enterprises. Since the 1990s the Gambia has seen a move towards incorporating participatory forest management through inclusion with the Forestry Department. The community forest concept in the Gambia began in 1991 with the gradual transfer of ownership to communities, resulting in 7% of forests being owned by communities in 2005. This move led to direct involvement of 260 villages. The tenure reform led to security for communities, giving them legal backing to become involved in forest practices and to influence sustainable practices. Additional support came from the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which aided in business planning, focusing on sustainability. The Forestry Department of The Gambia has also aided in building capacity in communities through technical training.

2.7 Mexico

Bray et al (2003) investigate the unique state of affairs that has shaped the community forest enterprises (CFEs) of Mexico. As a result of the Mexican Revolution, communities gained control over natural resources and for the majority of the twentieth century; communities in Mexico have controlled large portions of forest, although gaining the rights to managing their own community forest did not occur until the late 1990's. A reformist, grassroots movement in the 1970's helped guide government and policy towards community management of forest, although no substantial policy changes occurred until the new forest law in 1997. The new law, in combination with the decades of self-organization that occurred in communities after the revolution, has led to a unique success story for community forestry. Currently in Mexico approximately 80% of the forest has been granted to communities, with approximations of 290-749 CFEs in operation since the 1980s.

3. Impacts of Policy and Partnership

Communities possess a vast amount of knowledge regarding their land and the resources upon it; however they require assistance from external sources with regards to legal, processing, marketing, organizational and business aspects of a community forest (Hajjar 2011). Either governments or NGOs whom act as external actors to community forests fill these voids. The relationship between communities and external actors affects the ability of the community to maintain their own ideals and self-organization concerning the management of the forest (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008). The establishment of a community forest requires enabling policies to provide rights and security to the community, partnership for linkages and capacity building, and funding to finance every process from administrative costs to infrastructure.

External actors have a major influence upon community forestry, as the communities are dependent on their support to create and enhance enabling environments in which the community can successfully manage its forest. In order to facilitate the transition that a community faces when entering the legal reform process of a community forest, major investments are required (White and Martin 2002). Investments in regards to capacity building, market access, financial aid, infrastructure and managerial training. External actors can range from something as basic an actor offering a loan of infrastructure or finances to help in the establishment of the forest, to a substantial management partner who provides support and connections. The influence that external actors have upon the community and its forest can largely affect the success of the forest; however, in many cases communities rely too heavily upon external actors for support and once the support is withdrawn, the communities face great risk (Hajjar 2011).

3.1 Impacts of Policy

Often, the legacy of colonial forest management, which imposed strict regulations upon forests and dates back to 1290 in Europe, lingers through twentieth and twenty-first centuries forest policy (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010). Governments are often the most influential actor that affects a community forest; government influence, policy and structure can easily accommodate or hinder the establishment and success of community forestry. Data shows that strong claims to land and rights granted by the government lead to improved social and economic well-being of communities, and sustainable forest management (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010). Unobstructed community forestry policies create enabling environments for the emergence of community forestry (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011).

3.1.1 Capacity

One of the most crucial aspects that can affect the success of a community forest is the ability for the community to build on their capacity (White and Martin 2002, Fonseca 2007, Hajjar 2011). Capacity building is key to helping members of an isolated community gain necessary skills, which can lead to financial success, which in turn brings in more capacity building through acquisition of infrastructure. A community's depth of capacity is extremely important in helping it reach markets and gain business skills, maintain funding and staying afloat (Molnar, et al. 2007). Governments in developing countries do not always have the capacity to fully encourage the uptake of community forestry. Governments can be a positive influence upon community forests, as seen in the Gambia, where the government has made efforts to promote capacity building, offering technical training and aid in financial need (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011). However political barriers are a common trend in community forestry, with long bureaucratic processes

often cited as hindrances to the uptake of community forestry. Many community forestry case studies criticize the long process of government regulations and administrative tasks as detrimental to communities' success. In an apparent effort to reduce corruption, the Honduran government has created a management plan approval process that has resulted in a two-year wait time for approval (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). The long, drawn out process of management applications and land use applications does not help promote community success, conversely reduces the efficiency, competiveness and capacity. Even with the Honduran cooperative COATLAHL existing for over 30 years, the communities in Honduras have yet to secure rights of access to their natural resources (Del Gatto, et al. 2007).

3.1.2 Power Shift
Many case studies have found that the secure transfer of rights to access and manage land increases the likelihood of community forest emerging and has resulted in communities being able to sustainably develop their management and practices in their forests, due to the addition of this legal backing (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011). Although the CFUGs in Nepal have been granted legal rights, the government still constrains the communities through over-regulation and high transaction costs (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010). In the Philippines it was revealed that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources still considered itself the most able environmental manager and withheld much power (Gauld 2000). Evidence of this can be seen, as the government continues to lease the land rather than transfer ownership, a way to maintain control over the land (Gauld 2000). Molnar et al (2007) highlight a common issue that is seen in many developing countries: the contradictions within community forestry policy. Many policies that are aimed at aiding community forests are continually embedded in traditional forestry policy, and favour

large companies (Tomaselli 2011). It seems as though policy can be created with the intention of aiding communities in the establishment of community forestry, however as seen in the Philippines, the underlying focus of government may be of efficiency and production rather than equity and community empowerment (Gauld 2000). Even when a community has been granted rights to manage, government regulations can burden communities' success (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010). However, a lack of regulation can also lead to many problems in community forestry management, often allowing for illegal practices to continue to thrive (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011). Governments are often resistant to see a full transfer of ownership or rights and title to communities.

3.2 Impacts of Partnerships

NGOs are often the crucial link between communities and many resources, such as infrastructure, markets, development and managerial capacity (Tomaselli 2011). When governments lack the capacity required for community forests, alternative partnerships are often sought out as an adequate substitution. As seen in the Gambia, when the government is lacking capacity, community forests look to NGOs to aid in the process (Tomaselli 2011) The community and NGOs have driven most of the reforms that have led to the emergence of community forestry and community forestry policy. Communities often require major capacity building that NGOs help provide through partnerships and linkages between organizations and the community. NGOs often provide training or a framework that helps the community to shape a functioning, successful governing system (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008).

3.2.1. Linkages

Mayer and Vermeulen (2002) found that key positive impacts from partnerships with NGOs were economic benefits, employment opportunities, improved environmental status, development of infrastructure, and new opportunities. In the Philippines, funder and partner the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) helped community forestry shift its focus, from capital intensive to labour intensive production of wood products (Gauld 2000). The cooperative in Honduras found relief from its originally flawed management through partnerships with the Danish NGO Nepenthes, which aided the community forests in reaching target markets (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Additionally in Mexico, where community forestry has been quite successful, developed community forest management groups have passed down infrastructure to communities that are in the uptake stage of community forestry (Fonseca 2007).

3.2.2 Influence

In some cases NGOs can be far too influential upon a community in their management process; NGOs can often define the entire commodity chain and influence the community to take on managerial structures that aren't necessary to the community (Del Gatto, et al. 2007, Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008). For example, the main pitfalls and hindrance to the success of the Honduran community forests involved with COATLAHL was the cooperative's management structure and protocol. The idea that the community forests must sell all timber to the cooperative reduces the competitiveness of the management, resulting in lower product quality (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Too much reliance on external assistance runs to risk of influence upon communities plans, which can lead to minimal benefits seen by the community (Del Gatto, et al. 2007) In many communities where there is a lack of political capacity, negotiations and agreements surround timber extraction are

carried out directly with logging companies. Communities often end up stuck in these relationship which they are not receiving optimal benefits from, if they receive any benefit at all (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008).

4. Discussion

Forests and forest resources are continually seen as the "national economic lifeline" (Puhlin and Ramirez 2005: 5) in many developing countries. In order for communities to successfully manage their natural resources some crucial requirements include: rights to land and resources, community organization and capacity, as well as adequate finances (Hajjar 2011). As Del Gatto's (2007) research concluded of the community forestry cooperative in Honduras, COATLAHL, "it is difficult to imagine that the cooperative would still exist without significant support and subsidies from cooperating projects" (Del Gatto 2007: 17). Although the development of relationships between communities and external partners has come a long way, power commonly remains "skewed towards the outside agent despite the continued rhetoric of community empowerment". (Hajjar 2011: 113). The support that a community receives from external sources should not develop into a crutch upon which the community risks becoming too reliant on. Often, aid from external actors is temporary or can run dry, which may leave a community facing greater setbacks than they originally faced (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008).

4.1 Successes

A community is a resilient and flexible entity, which is one of the reasons that uptake of community forests can be successful (Molnar, et al. 2007, Hajjar 2011). Prior to community forestry, unequal benefit distribution was noted in many case studies (Bray, et al. 2003). When funders set goals similar to those of the communities, the endorsement can go a long way. Some communities have stated that "they were indifferent about the fate of the forest" before the establishment of community forests, but once the forest became their property they protected it from illegal practices (Tomaselli, Timko and Kozak 2011: 7). Successful

community forests benefit from overall improved livelihoods and well-being, including long-term protection natural resources and cultural integrity, which are some of the most valuable resources that result (Molnar, et al. 2007).

4.1.1 Collaboration

Cooperation between NGOs and governments in the realm of community forestry has proven to be beneficial in the past. Governments and NGOs aid in the evolution of community forestry by demanding more from each other, which can result in advances in policy and community capacity. The emergence of community forestry policy in Mexico was credited to both grassroots movements and reformists in government (Bray, et al. 2003). In the Philippines, USAID agreed to contribute further funding to community forestry projects, on the condition that the government committed to the introduction of more efficient policies (Gauld 2000).

4.1.2 Environment

The incorporation of traditional practices into community management often offers many benefits. Timber harvesting in community forests typically follows traditional methods, often using animal power, which does less damage to the timber, soil and biodiversity (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Community forests in Mexico have even made changes in management, transitioning from focusing solely on sustained yields, to a focus that incorporates a broader sense of protection, harvesting below sustained yield measure to ensure protection of biodiversity (Bray, et al. 2003). Gaining forest certification is often seen as a measure of success for community forests as this proves their sustainable, successful management of natural resources. Forest certification is a useful strategy for community forests as it leads to increased marketability and can separate their practices from the

illegal competition. Honduran community forestry saw the first case of forest certification in 1991 and continued with its certification of community forests, with over a dozen community forests meeting the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Community forest practices in Indonesia have also sought out and gained FSC certification, which has helped them reach markets as far as northern Europe (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002).

4.2 Setbacks
Communities are often easily influenced by partnerships that they make, partnerships that are instrumental to the capacity building of the community, but can cause a community to stray from its original goals. An imbalance of capacity can distract a community from becoming successful in the management of their natural resources. While many countries do have strong regulations and frameworks for community forestry in place, the emergence of a successful community forest may still be hindered by their lack of capacity and many forests still face the risk of over exploitation (Bray, et al. 2003). Internal conflicts within a community can often subject a community to many setbacks on the path towards community self-organization. Often these conflicts can arise later into the management, between internal or external actors (Gauld 2000).

4.2.1 Corruption
When entering into community forest management, communities can experience continued political weakness over their land and natural resources, which leads to further internal and external dispute (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008). The CFUGs in Nepal were granted legal rights from the government, however unofficial regulation has led to major barriers for the communities. Government workers, such as the district forest officer, use

their power to impose further barriers upon the CFUGs, barriers that are likely posed to reduce the CFUGs competitiveness against commercial products (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010). Furthermore, the land allotment that community forests receive is often developed on a system based on giving communities land with low productivity (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002), or unreasonably high taxation on higher productivity land (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco, Regulations as Barriers to Community Benefits in Tenure Reform 2010). In Indonesia, the government instated programme PMDH was intended to aid in the land sharing between the company Perhutani and the communities, however the process resulted in a continuation of benefit distribution to elites (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002). Too often, policy changes that attempt to incorporate community forestry still resemble previous policy and remain aimed at commercial practices (Gauld 2000)

4.2.2 Instability

The lack of adequate structure in community forestry, with regard to policy and management, can often lead to great instability. This is illustrated in the Philippines where the community forestry policy has been described as some of "the most innovative in the region" (Del Gatto, et al. 2007: 230), however, much of the new policy still resembles the traditional forestry that they were trying to move away from, and the need for strong central control is still deemed necessary (Gauld 2000). Surrounding the issues of land tenure reform is the involvement of actors whom either oppose the reform, as they believe that they will lose out economically, or the actors who may take advantage of the reform to manipulate their own gain (Larson, et al. 2010). In Honduras, the transitional stage of a working policy along with external pressure and mishandling of funds within COATLAHL, led to further debt and setbacks for the community (Del Gatto, et al. 2007).

4.2.3 Dead end agreements

Dead end negotiations, or partnerships with governments or NGOs who ignore the community's needs are a common problem. Experiences with dealing directly with forest companies can lead to unhealthy paternalistic relationships in which the loggers support the communities through slight benefits and employment, while sabotaging their natural resources and cultural integrity (Medina, Pokorny and Campbell 2008). A large number of countries can be seen to be in the 'transitional' stage of community forestry (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). Talks of new policy in some countries are a step in the right direction; however it is unclear when these policies will actually appear. Many governments still appear unwilling to give community forests that political backing that is necessary for them to thrive.

4.3 A Path Forward

As the community forestry movement has only been a part of policy for the past couple of decades, conclusions towards pitfalls or potentials in community forestry are not clearly defined. Gauld (2000) cites that "the move towards community-based forestry is possibly one of the most important developments in forest policy in the developing world since the adoption of scientific forestry" (Gauld 2000: 230). Attempting to understand community forests and their outcomes involves understanding the foundation of the community forest. Important aspects that can affect the outcome of a community forest include: its origin, the implementation and the facilitation (Larson, et al. 2010). Developing countries need to assess the current status of communities that are dependent on forests, the capacity of external actors and the amount of control that government is willing to devolve. Some countries need to assert a large amount of structure and policy into community forests in order for them to emerge. Countries such as Nepal have seen a wealth of policy aimed at

community forestry arise in the 1990s (Puhlin, Larson and Pacheco 2010), whereas the Honduras experience was much more dependent on external actors (Del Gatto, et al. 2007). The community forests in Mexico may have gained from an earlier introduction of community forest policy, however the self-organization through the twentieth century provided communities with adequate internal capacity and management (Bray, et al. 2003).

As social interest in natural resource management is continuing to grow, so will the community forests in developing countries. Community's internal organization, structure and commitment need to be carefully investigated before entering legally binding agreements or partnerships with NGOs regarding natural resources. As mentioned above, many agreements seem to be a cover for government or companies to continue on existing practices through vague wording in legislative (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002). Creating incentives and enforcing policy surrounding community forest management can get rid of illegal practices and create better partnerships. All of the agreements and partnerships presented are in the early stages of implementation and dependable on community capacity (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002).

Although trends or outcomes may be hard to extrapolate thus far for community forestry in developing countries, suggestions can be created from the community forestry case studies to provide basic guidelines for emerging and future communities. Important factors that communities should address when persuading community forestry are to:

- *Assess community organization and capacity.* Prior to seeking formal community forest agreements communities should know their strengths and weaknesses.

- *Investigate policy and partnerships for corruption.* Vague legislative is nearly impossible to avoid, but knowledge is key to avoiding further distortion of agreements.

- *Remain resilient and maintain traditions.* The evolution of community forestry has not been easy in any region, but enabling environments will present themselves eventually.

5. Conclusion

The emergence of community forestry has not been without its major bumps and roadblocks on the journey to finding an enabling environment. The outcome of a community forest is often the result of the governance and partnership that support it. The economic dependence on the natural resources from forests in developing countries will continue to influence policy decisions (Gauld 2000). The ability and will of the government in developing countries to devolve rights and titles to communities creates a platform for community forestry agreements. A government's commitment affects the stability of agreements and therefore the community. More concise and transparent agreements, coupled with adequate enforcement, have resulted in increased stability in communities (Mayers and Vermeulen 2002). However, emerging policies are unlikely to find the perfect conversion from large-scale forestry to community forest management in a singular change in legislature.

Partnerships with external actors are also extremely influential upon the outcome of a community forest. When a community finds partners that have goals aligned with their own, the outcome of the forest can be equitable and prosperous. However, these partnerships can often result in an asymmetrical make-up of management, with companies or NGOs reaping the majority of the benefits from resource management (Gauld 2000).

In developing countries, communities may not be presented with plentiful options in regard to policy and partnerships, but community forestry has come a long way; moving from centralized power where government agencies set out to protect the forest from communities towards a devolution of rights to communities who have shown to be more effective land managers (Gauld 2000). While it has been shown that implementing models

based on previous external examples does not aid in capacity building for a community (Pacheco and Paudel 2010), forest communities should remain resilient, as better policy and partnerships do exist and create better livelihoods for the community.

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