

Understanding and Managing Environmental Conflicts

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
(CANARI)

Conservation Training Week II
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This session will...

- Introduce basic concepts associated with environmental conflicts
- Present stakeholder approaches that can help manage conflicts and disputes
- Identify principles that can guide interventions in conflict situations

Understanding and Managing Environmental Conflicts

The context for conflicts and natural resource management

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

Conflict occurs "when two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals, seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capability".

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

Why is conflict a feature of environmental management in the insular Caribbean?

- ❑ Essentially about rights and access;
- ❑ Dense populations – especially compact in the coastal zone;

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

- ❑ Resources are finite – giving rise to fierce competition among diverse users. Livelihood strategies v. big business;
- ❑ History of resistance to authority and resilience in the face of adversity;
- ❑ Systems are changing, as are resource use and stakeholders. Socio-economic changes (e.g. demise of agriculture, migration, tourism);

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

- Attitudes to natural resources have changed – they are seen less as goods, more as services;
- Conflicting policy imperatives – economic development and resource management or conservation;
- Inadequate consultation and information sharing.

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

Natural resource managers find themselves on the front line because...

- They have statutory responsibilities to regulate natural resource use.
- They have close working relationships with natural resource users.

But...

Conflict and environmental management in the Caribbean

- They are often removed from the processes and decisions that have created conflicts.
- They often lack the resources (people, money, skills) to work in this context.

Where does participation fit in?

One response to the increasing complexity of resource management in the region has been participatory management.

Where does participation fit in?

- Increase in participatory approaches to development and natural resource management – internationally as well as in the Caribbean.
- Policies of Caribbean governments are beginning to provide a framework for participation in natural resource management – Jamaica, St. Lucia.

Where does participation fit in?

But...

- The policy intent has rarely been matched by action. Instances of participatory planning and management swim against the tide of prevailing practice.

Where does participation fit in?

Notwithstanding...

- Participation in natural resource management facilitates dialogue among all actors; mobilises and validates popular knowledge and skills; supports communities and their institutions to manage and control resource use; and seeks to achieve sustainability, economic equity, social justice and maintain cultural integrity.

Where does participation fit in?

- ❑ Participation with its emphasis on identifying and involving stakeholders is not a cure-all; far from it.
- ❑ It can lead to complex arrangements that actually reveal conflicts rather than make them go away.

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Selected Concepts

Key concepts

- Conflict has social and cultural dimensions, with responses and connotations embedded in norms and values. Conflict will mean different things to different people.

Key concepts

- The roots of conflict can be found in:
 - differences in **power** and the way it is used. Some have more power than others;
 - lack or regard for **needs** of the various stakeholders. Needs, unlike desires, are essential to our well being;

Key concepts

(Roots of conflict continued)

- differing **perceptions** of reality, often born from lack of understanding of others' interests, needs;
- incompatibility of **values** or when values are not clear

(The human factor – feeling and emotions – influences how we deal with conflict, in both public and private spheres.)

Key concepts

- ❑ Conflicts are not just between two sides. (Primary parties, secondary parties etc.)
- ❑ Expressions of conflict are often the focus of resolution and are referred to as disputes. (If differences are not expressed, there is no evidence of conflict.)

Why conflict management?

- ❑ Conflict resolution v. conflict management.
- ❑ Enables a focus on outcomes that support co-existence and the pursuit/achievement of management objectives.

Why conflict management?

- If the conflict and its underlying causes are understood, parties can reach a consensus that meets their respective needs. Mutual benefits and stronger relationship.
- Stakeholder approaches can be used proactively (stakeholder analysis in planning) and reactively (stakeholder analysis and conflict mapping in negotiation, mediation).

Can conflict be a good thing?

Conflict can be a good thing when it:

- ❑ Reveals issues and interests
- ❑ Reveals stakeholders and relationships
- ❑ Signals breakdowns
- ❑ Provides opportunities for problem solving

Can conflict be a good thing?

Effectively managed conflict can lead to:

- ❑ New ways of thinking
- ❑ Growth and innovation
- ❑ Additional management options

Five steps for managing conflict

- ❑ Analysis of the conflict
- ❑ Determination of management strategy/approach
- ❑ Pre-negotiation
- ❑ Negotiation
- ❑ Post-negotiation

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Why do environmental disputes happen?

Cross cutting themes

- **Change:** Management of the environment is concerned with rules that govern access and use, rather than natural resources. When those rules change, rights are affected and disputes may arise.
- **Status of the resource:** Where resources are finite, scarce, or symbolic disputes may arise with increasing intensity.

Cross cutting themes

- **Context:** Many of the causes and reasons for conflicts are beyond the control of natural resource managers – but managers must be able to interpret the wider world and understand the relevance for their work.

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What are the main responses to disputes?

Responses to conflict

In determining how to address the conflict, stakeholders will opt for one of three approaches:

- Separate action
 - Retreat; Struggle; Tacit coordination

- Third-party decision-making
 - Adjudication; Arbitration; Autocratic decision-making

- Joint decision-making
 - Negotiation; Mediation

Responses to conflict

Separate action (e.g. squatting)

- ❑ Stakeholders conclude that they have more to gain outside systems than within them. They choose a “Better Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement.”
- ❑ A strategy used by those with too little or too much power.
- ❑ May be seen as a last resort, but can have negative consequences.

Responses to conflict

Third party action (e.g. arbitration, adjudication)

- ❑ Stakeholders are unwilling to move from their initial position (e.g., when a principle is at stake).
- ❑ Stakeholders are obliged to submit to a ruling by a third party (usually a court, or tribunal).
- ❑ Favours those with resources, can be cumbersome and can alienate.

Responses to conflict

Joint action (e.g. negotiation, mediation)

- ❑ Stakeholders are identifiable and willing to move from initial positions.
- ❑ There is a mechanism that is acceptable to all where stakeholders can give and take.
- ❑ Conditions are created to make mechanisms accessible (language, venue).

Responses to conflict

In determining a conflict management strategy, the convenor should bear in mind:

- Their role in the conflict;
- How they are perceived by other stakeholders.

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Using stakeholder approaches in managing conflicts

- Stakeholder approaches provide appropriate tools and methods for analysing and understanding the complex, needs and interests that will affect the negotiation process and its outcomes.

What is stakeholder analysis?

- The systematic identification and analysis of stakeholders to gather information relevant to the management of natural resources.
- A tool – a means to an end, rather than a project obligation.

Stakeholder analysis can...

- ❑ Identify sectors, groups, communities, individuals that have a stake in the resource;
- ❑ Help determine who should be involved in an intervention – be it management, conflict resolution etc.;
- ❑ Analyse expectations, rights, responsibilities and relationships;

Stakeholder analysis can...

- ❑ Design processes that aim to make decisions or generate options;
- ❑ Reveal hidden agendas and underlying needs;
- ❑ Design other tools (such as communications strategies);

Stakeholder analysis

But...

- ❑ It must be tailored to answer the specific question that needs to be answered.
- ❑ It must be reviewed regularly as stakeholders come and go.

Stakeholder analysis...getting started

- ❑ Determine the purpose. What do you want to understand?
- ❑ List the stakeholders. More questions can help (e.g. What is the resource used for? Who are the users? Who are the winners and losers?).

Stakeholder analysis ...getting started

- Think about their interests (analysis). More questions (e.g. What are their interests? Which of these interests conflict with others? Which interests are negotiable?).
- Focus on the relationships and interactions rather than the completeness of the list.

Stakeholder analysis ...getting started

- It's a tool for participation, but does not have to be participatory (but it can help get stakeholders to see each others point of view).

- A simple table can help organise the information.

Conflict mapping

- ❑ Conflict mapping is a technique that can help systematically determine the scope of a conflict and can help identify options for conflict management or resolution.
- ❑ Conflict mapping provides basic information that is essential to planning a constructive response to a conflict.

Conflict mapping can identify:

Source: Wehr, P. Conflict Mapping.
<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/cmap.htm>

- ❑ **Conflict Context:** history, physical and organisational settings.
- ❑ **Parties:** primary parties oppose one another and have direct stake in the outcome of the conflict, secondary parties have an indirect stake and are often allies or sympathisers. Third parties – mediators.

Conflict mapping can identify:

- ❑ **Causes and consequences** – sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish between the two – a consequence of one conflict can become the cause of another.
- ❑ **Goals** - the more or less acknowledged objectives of parties in a conflict. Can usually be put into words. Sometimes goals are referred to as positions; specific demands being made by one party or the other.

Conflict mapping can identify:

- ❑ **Interests** - what really motivates the parties, what they really need to achieve: security, recognition, respect.
- ❑ **Dynamics** – Conflicts are not immutable, even if parties are at stalemate, aspects of the conflict context will be changing.

Conflict mapping can identify:

- ❑ **Functions** - or purposes of the conflict. It may have positive consequences for the opposing parties. E.g., tension release, status, or visibility etc.
- ❑ **Regulation potential**: Every conflict context has conflict-limiting elements, e.g, external factors - law or other higher authorities; third parties who could intervene; or internal factors - the parties' wish to maintain their relationship.

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Joint action to resolve environmental disputes

Fundamental Assumption

- Joint action (negotiation, mediation) assumes that for management to be effective it must meet as many of stakeholders' complementary interests as possible.

Therefore stakeholders must be:

- Identified and aware of interests
- Willing to give and take
- Aware of the different layers of conflict (the process and the substance)
- Included (if they impact on the outcome of the negotiation)

Levelling the playing field

- Do stakeholders have the capacity to participate?
- Is everyone being heard?
- Who set the agenda?
- Can everyone revisit the outcomes?

Getting started

- ❑ Gather information before intervening;
- ❑ Clarify areas of ambiguity;
- ❑ Set an agenda and timetable;
- ❑ Feed outcomes back into management;
- ❑ Be creative;
- ❑ Monitor and evaluate outcomes.

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Principles of constructive
conflict management

Principles of constructive conflict management

- ❑ **Separate people from the problem.**
Depersonalise the issues.
- ❑ **Focus on interests, not positions.**
Focusing on interests, rather than positions, makes it possible to come up with better agreements. Even when people stand on opposite positions, they usually have a few shared interests.

Principles of constructive conflict management

- ❑ **Generate options for mutual gain.** 'Win-Win' approach
- ❑ **The process is as important as the outcome.** Assure a fair and transparent process that enables the participation of all parties.
- ❑ **Engage in direct communication.** Parties talk to each other, not about each other.

Resources

□ **CULTIVATING PEACE**
**Conflict and Collaboration in Natural
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