

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Case Study Name:	Moving from Sustainable Management to Sustainable Governance of Natural Resources, The Role of Social Learning Processes in Rural India, Bolivia and Mali		
Authors:	Rist, S., Chidambaranathan, M., Escobar, C., Wiesmann, U., and Zimmermann, A.		
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Region:	Europe, South Asia, Africa - north of Sahara		
Country:	India, Bolivia, Mali		
Ecosystem Type:	arid and/or semi-arid		
Social Characteristics:	indigenous community, remote community		
Scale of Study:	community		
Resource Type:	other (natural resources)		
Type of Initiative:	research-driven project		
Community Based Work:	Indigenous knowledge / traditional ecological knowledge, resource management		
Keywords:	Governance; Social learning approach; Communicative action; Sustainability; Natural resource management; India;		

	Bolivia; Mali
Summary:	<p>The present paper discusses a conceptual, methodological and practical framework within which the limitations of the conventional notion of natural resource management (NRM) can be overcome.</p> <p>NRM is understood as the application of scientific ecological knowledge to resource management. By including a consideration of the normative imperatives that arise from scientific ecological knowledge and submitting them to public scrutiny, 'sustainable management of natural resources' can be recontextualised as 'sustainable governance of natural resources'. This in turn makes it possible to place the politically neutralising discourse of 'management' in a space for wider societal debate, in which the different actors involved can deliberate and negotiate the norms, rules and power relations related to natural resource use and sustainable development. The transformation of sustainable management into sustainable governance of natural resources can be conceptualised as a social learning process involving scientists, experts, politicians and local actors, and their corresponding scientific and non-scientific knowledges. The social learning process is the result of what Habermas has described as 'communicative action', in contrast to 'strategic action'. Sustainable governance of natural resources thus requires a new space for communicative action aiming at shared, intersubjectively validated definitions of actual situations and the goals and means required for transforming current norms, rules and power relations in order to achieve sustainable development.</p> <p>Case studies from rural India, Bolivia and Mali explore the potentials and limitations for broadening communicative action through an intensification of social learning processes at the interface of local and external knowledge. Key factors that enable or hinder the transformation of sustainable management into sustainable governance of natural resources through social learning processes and communicative action are discussed.</p>