

Center for Community Based Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

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Case Study Name:	Linking management and livelihood in environmental conservation: case of the Korup National Park Cameroon		
Authors:	Mbile, P., Vabib, M., Mebokac, M., Okonc, D., Arrey-Mbod, J., Nkonghoe, F., and Ebongc, E.		
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Region:	Africa-south of Sahara		
Country:	Cameroon		
Ecosystem Type:	Arid and semi arid		
Social Characteristics:	indigenous community, community inside protected areas		
Scale of Study:	Community, regional		
Resource Type:	Forestry, non-timber forest products		
Type of Initiative:	Research driven-project		
Community Based Work:	Resource management		
Keywords:	Livelihoods; Protected area; Adaptive management		

Summary:

Biodiversity conservation has emerged within the past two decades as one of the most important global challenges confronting national planners, world bodies, professionals and academics. Governments faced with increasing biodiversity loss as a result of human activities have resorted to the creation of protected areas as a strategy to both slow down habitat loss and/or degradation and eventually mitigate species extension and reduction rates. However, the creation of a protected area can have strong implications on the livelihoods of people inhabiting the forest and depending on it, especially those caught within its borders. The involvement of such inhabitants in the management process of the protected area can be profitable. This paper discusses the case of the Korup National Park, Cameroon, considered in the late 1980s by some to be a flagship of conservation and development efforts, and later on in the late 1990s by others as a catastrophic failure as an example of integrated conservation and development. As a means of updating the program's management information base, an in-depth participatory and socio-ecological survey was conducted by some of the program's technical staff. This study aimed at appraising the extent to which the Park's human community of 4200 inhabitants continued to relate to its resources and depend on them for their livelihood. The aim was to evaluate the potential links between the communities' livelihood and the long-term management and survival of the Park as the important biodiversity conservation zone it had been found to be. Results indicate that the successful management of a Park like Korup may well depend on the involvement of the local communities; and that successful management through approaches that minimize the potential contributions and aspirations of the local people is difficult to achieve.