

Moving from open access extraction to new participatory levels of accountable management Malampaya Sound, Palawan, the Philippines

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SUMMARY

Pilien and Walpole observe that conflicts over the use of Malampaya Sound in northern Palawan began decades ago when commercial logging and fishing got under way. Intense resource competition continued for decades, depleting fisheries by the 1970s. Commercial fishing restrictions were imposed periodically. Officials often proposed conflicting policies and programmes for commercial development and resource conservation, usually with little community support. The case study describes recent efforts to incorporate community participation in plans for making the zone part of the National Integrated Protected Area Programme. Efforts have been made to establish links between stakeholders through facilitated public dialogues, community mapping, public hearings and a strategic planning workshop.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

KEY ISSUES

- How can local communities be participants in conflict management?
- Why do planners and policy-makers often overlook local stakeholders?

CONTEXT

- Who are the local stakeholders?
- What other stakeholders are involved in the Malampaya Sound?

CONFLICT BACKGROUND OR HISTORY

- What historical trends exist concerning local natural resource conflicts?
- How does historical analysis help us understand and manage contemporary conflicts?

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION PROCESSES

- How can conflicting parties to a conflict be brought together?
- What role can outsiders play in addressing conflicts?
- What sort of information is helpful in resolving conflicts?

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OUTCOMES

- What did the conflict management process accomplish?
- How has natural resource management changed?

LESSONS LEARNED

- Have the conflicts been resolved or managed?
- Does increasing local participation increase or decrease the incidence of conflicts?

KEY ISSUES

The story of Malampaya Sound and its people spans over 100 years and revolves around the resources of the land and sea. From the time the first visitors entered the area and saw the richness of its forests and waters, its natural resources have been continuously exploited, despite the area's isolation. It is a story that continues today as Malampaya Sound's aquatic resources, mangrove ecosystem and fragile upland forest all show signs of strain. Fish stock depletion, water quality deterioration, sustained commercial interest in the area, pressure on small fisherfolk to clear the surrounding uplands and small-scale illegal removal of forest products all pose threats to the area's natural resources.

Malampaya Sound is a historic fishing ground, which provides a source of livelihood for small-scale fisherfolk, and the basis for a major business enterprise for large-scale entrepreneurs. Yet, it is also identified as a priority area for protection and conservation because of its unique ecosystem, which serves as a habitat for many endangered species.

Conservation of a protected area and community subsistence

In a natural resource conflict management process, it is important to understand that however pressing conservation may be, it cannot be achieved at the price of the physical, cultural and socio-economic exclusion of the people in the area. Conservation has to be a basic human principle: a value that needs to be factored in at the start of a programme that will be implemented properly. A programmed conservation design that may have worked in other areas of the Philippines or in other parts of the world cannot simply be applied and assumed to be workable in another context.

Relearning the need for community participation in programme implementation

No particularly fresh insights are presented here, as previous conflict management experiences and the literature amply illustrate the importance of involving people in any conservation programme at the very start. Yet what is surprising and interesting in this case is that these lessons had to be learned afresh by people responsible for the national programme, local government units (LGUs) and communities. They came to an awareness that the bottom-up social process in conflict management is crucial; basic concerns of communities were articulated, considered and addressed before the programme design was fully implemented.

Critical role of assisting organizations

Malampaya Sound Protected Land and Seascape is only one of eight areas in the Philippines on which the protected area (PA) programme focuses. It is the largest of these, covering roughly 200 000 ha of land and sea, and may be one of very few sites where the communities provided the basis for the management plan. No external consultants were involved in drawing up the plan, only an assisting group that facilitated the process. Since the area has a long history of conflict over resource access and use, the challenge was to acknowledge the existing conflicts at the outset in a manner that would also recognize and pre-empt any emerging ones. At the same time, there was a need to translate into action the growing knowledge that the resources were dwindling; if not, this object of conflict would soon be gone.

Working with existing conflicts

Conflicts abounded because communities and local government did not know who to give their information to and whose job it was to process it. The remoteness of the area and poor communications also created logistical problems. There was an inability to sequence the designed activities properly and the communities rescheduled them. Zoning was designed by communities in great detail to make it more acceptable, but many found the concept of zoning threatening. In addition, the government programme had its own internal conflicts, both in principles and application. The primary problem was that people did not want a PA, as this was perceived as threatening their survival. For funding agencies and those implementing the programme, the size of the area created too many logistical problems. Given this problem, it fell to the assisting organization, Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC) to manage the situation. ESSC's basic approach was different from that of those implementing the programme and from that adopted in other PAs. The approach entails going back to the different communities on the ground and establishing the context in which they live, identifying the uncertainties they face and the issues that affect them before finding out how they view the degradation of the environment and how they might try to deal with this situation. This gave the communities an opportunity to establish a process of give and take.

A step backwards to move forwards

Overall, the strategy had been to keep the conservation programme away from local communities and not to let them interfere. This was because, as defined and designed, the programme was more appealing to society in general: it was socially acceptable, yet it was not made clear how the programme would directly affect communities struggling to survive using the area's resources. The primary diffi-

culty was social acceptability and the primary concern was protection of resources. This case study is a clear example of where protection was defined in a way that was in conflict with local resource use, in an area that has for so long been an open access area. However, protection can also be defined as building people's capacities and their ability to be their own guardians in different situations.

CONTEXT

A history of conflict

Malampaya Sound, located at the northern end of the province of Palawan, is a natural inlet with an approximate area of 24 500 ha surrounded by forest land. It is an area with a small indigenous population, rich natural resources, high biodiversity and unusual ecological features, which contribute to the Sound's national importance as a source of fish and other marine resources.

The Sound has been a stage upon which countless conflicts have developed and been played out, resulting in overextraction, underdeclaration of resource extraction and the irrelevance of government as primary stakeholder and absentee landowner. These conflicts came to a head through the latest intervention, that of the European Union-funded National Integrated Protected Areas Programme (NIPAP), developed in response to the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

People and livelihoods

Most of the 18 000 people in the 12 surrounding coastal *barangays* (villages) around Malampaya Sound migrated from Panay Island and the Bicol region in the 1950s, attracted by livelihood opportunities and the relative peacefulness of the area. The main sources of income are fishing and farming. The Tagbanwa, early inhabitants of the area, depend on swidden farming for their livelihood. About 70 percent of the population is dependent on fishing – which is a year-round activity – 25 percent on farming, and 5 percent is engaged in other types of livelihood activities.

Fisherfolk employ traditional methods of fishing, such as hook and line, pots, fish corrals and gillnets. Illegal methods, such as those based on cyanide and dynamite, are also used in the area. Of the 160 or so species of fish in the area, 60 are of high commercial value. About 90 percent of the fish catch is sold to intermediaries. These may be local traders or visiting traders from Manila or Puerto Princesa City, the provincial capital, and they determine the prices of traded commodities. There is limited monitoring or recording of products and volumes traded.

In the face of dwindling fish stocks and stiff competition over marine resources, some communities invested in fish pens to rear *lapu-lapu* (groupers). As these businesses proliferated in the Sound, some communities resorted to the use of cyanide to catch live groupers, which were then sold to fish pen owners.

The mangroves in Malampaya Sound are among the finest in the country and are considered one of the Sound's most important resources. They are being cut for charcoal production, fuelwood, fish pen construction and housing materials. Some areas have been cleared and converted to fish ponds or put to agricultural use. In 1985, satellite images showed that mangroves covered 2 500 ha. By 1998, there were fewer than 1 500 ha left. Fisherfolk recognize the association between declining fish populations and shrinking mangrove areas.

Communities in Malampaya Sound are also socially and economically dependent on forest resources and non-timber forest products for building materials and traditional fishing gear. Some of these are bamboo, wood, rattan, *pandan*, unprocessed rattan poles, *nipa* and timber, and the exploitation of many of these materials does not respect government regulations, because no levies are paid.

Government programmes and policies

Conflicts over the use of, right of access to and management of the resources in the Sound can be traced back to 1900, when a United States businessman with a group of migrants from Negros and a logging concessionaire established a sawmill in Barangay Liminangcong and started to log the surrounding uplands. In 1920, the waters of the Sound were leased to a fishing and lumber company. This lease eventually became the basis of other leasing agreements and policies on fishing and logging activities in the area.

Between 1935 and 1940, fishing activities began to escalate when fisherfolk from different parts of the country and Japanese fisherfolk using 80-tonne capacity fishing vessels operated in the Sound. By the 1940s, "Pescador" vessels, large commercial vessels that engaged in fish trading, had entered the area. After the Second World War, fisherfolk from Malabon and Navotas in Manila and from the Visayas re-established fishing activities. Again, the right to the fishing ground was leased to one individual for several years.

In 1950, San Diego Fishing Enterprises started buying fish and shrimps from local fisherfolk and introduced the fishing method known as *baklad* (fish corrals). Logging concessions were also increasing. By the late 1950s, migrants mainly from Bicol, Ilocos and the Visayas started to settle. It was also during this time that dynamite fishing started in Malampaya Sound. *Basnig*, a large-scale commercial type of fishing method, was also introduced. Communities began to notice that aquatic resources were dwindling and this led to the abolition of concession permits in 1956 by presidential proclamation.

In 1960, the influx of intermediaries bartering with communities for their fish catch led to higher prices but also to more intensive extraction of aquatic resources. After the declaration of martial law in 1972, resources in the area continued to decline at an alarming rate. In 1974, Malampaya Sound was closed to commercial fishing activities. However, local officials allowed the Sound to be trawled. Traditional fishing activities using gear such as hook and line and spears were allowed, but use of gillnets and fish corrals was prohibited. Communities, badly affected by the policy, petitioned for it to be amended and the ban on gillnets and fish corrals was lifted.

In 1979, the period of closure expired. However, even though there was a ban on commercial fishing, the use of *basnig* and traditional gear was permitted. From 1986 to 1991, another closure was imposed on commercial operations. In 1992, Congress enacted the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) into a law (RA 7611) to promote the sustainable management and conservation of resources in Palawan, the province being among the few remaining places in the country with significant biodiversity. In the same year a ban was imposed on commercial logging activities in the area.

In 1997, the local government presented a proposal for zoning the marine waters of the Sound. The plan was to allocate certain sections of the Sound for large-scale business ventures such as sea ranching. These lease agreements would effectively restrict access to communities on the basis of financial investment, again exemplifying the problem of primary access rights. In contradiction, also in 1997, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) asked a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Foundation for Economic Empowerment, Development and Environmental Recovery (FEEDER), to implement the government's Community-Based Coastal Resource Management Program (CBCRMP). In the same year NIPAP, jointly managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the European Union, identified Malampaya Sound as an area that should be protected under the programme. In 2000, Malampaya Sound was proclaimed a PA.

Ensuing concerns

Conflicting policies and programmes that provided no real support to communities, and the coming together of many other factors pressured small fisherfolk to begin clearing the uplands to grow maize. Several families are engaged in small-scale illegal felling, and this has led to erosion and siltation. Silted river beds, coupled with the use of agricultural chemicals, pollution from fish pens and unregulated dumping of solid waste and sewage, contribute to the deterioration of the Sound's water quality and the occurrence of "red tide".

BOX	TIME LINE OF RESOURCE CONFLICTS IN MALAMPAYA SOUND
1900	United States businessman and migrants from Negros arrive and a logging concession establishes a sawmill
1920	Malampaya Sound leased to a fishing company and logging operations established
1930	Conflicts and stiff competition in fishing activities begin as fisherfolk from other areas and Japanese fishing vessels arrive
1940	Fewer Pescador fishing vessels and fishing activities owing to Second World War
1960	Influx of intermediaries bartering for fish for higher prices
1970	<p>Martial law and closed season declared; commercial fishing, use of gillnets and fish corrals prohibited</p> <p>Affected communities file a petition – ban on gillnets and fish corrals lifted</p> <p>Closed season lifted in 1979 but commercial fishing still banned</p>
1980	1986–1991, second closed season imposed
1990	<p>1992 SEP law enacted and Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) declares Malampaya a priority area</p> <p>1992 NIPAS law enacted and DENR declares Malampaya a priority area</p> <p>1994 NGOs start research and community organizing activities</p> <p>1997 DENR entry, LGU Zone Map</p> <p>1998 Entry of ESSC, public hearings about Zone Map</p> <p>1999 Initial Protected Area Plan (IPAP) drafted, interim Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) formed</p>
2000	Draft General Management Plan public hearings. Strategic planning workshop. Municipal ordinance approved. PA proclaimed

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION PROCESSES

A rich, fragile environment, dwindling resources and communities' demands for immediate management and protection caused the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to identify Malampaya Sound as a priority area for protection in the late 1980s. By 1997, NIPAP had initiated the process of declaring the Sound a PA and started developing a management plan for the area, which required the establishment of different management zones. In the same year, the local government of Taytay was also preparing its own zoning plan for the Sound, to be approved by PCSD. There was little coordination among the agencies or with communities. Poor relations on all fronts caused NIPAP to plan a withdrawal. In mid-1998, however, despite all the conflicts over the preparation of an integrated plan for the area through management zoning, NIPAP requested ESSC to assist in the process of drawing up a management plan. The PA programme therefore became the circumstance in which the importance of communities, their stake and their role in planning and management were made clear.

Creating opportunities to clarify government agency roles

A visit by the Philippine Working Group (PWG) for Community-Based Forest Management to the area in February 1999 helped gain the support of the local government for ESSC activities in the area. (The PWG is an informal association of professionals from different agencies and organizations in the country that seeks to promote community-based resource management.) The visit was undertaken to develop an understanding of the resource management concerns of fishing communities and LGUs in Malampaya Sound, and to look at the capacity of the NIPAS planning process to integrate different concerns. During the visit, PWG members gathered community and LGU perceptions of NIPAP. Based on this experience, they suggested strategies that could enhance the programme's impact on the area. These focused on the need for communication, conflict management processes, the institutional sustainability of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and sustainability in project design.

Involving communities

The NIPAP approach acknowledged the importance of local communities, but was unable to translate this into effective action. Activities were brought to a new level of participation through a process of community involvement that was organized into a series of step-by-step interventions based on community mapping.

The activities were undertaken by a team of three that travelled to communities in dispersed areas around the Sound. The team worked intensively for two years, often travelling on foot or by boat for several hours to reach remote *barangays*. They moved from *barangay* to *barangay*, facilitating dialogues and activities for long stretches of time, leaving only to digitize maps and organize field notes and documentation.

Participants in the process included fisherfolk, farmers, indigenous people, *barangay* officials, *sitio* (settlement) leaders, businesspeople and professionals in the area. The activities were also supported by the Park Superintendent and his staff, *barangay* officials in each village, the cooperatives of small fisherfolk in Malampaya Sound, and an indigenous people's organization in the area. Community members and other stakeholders participated against a backdrop of real conflict, where illegal fishing activities such as those based on the use of dynamite and cyanide were frequently employed and large fishing vessels were a common sight in the Sound. Conflicting interests among, and even within, *barangays* were, and continue to be, the norm. These concerns provided the background to most discussions and were a common thread throughout.

Networking and initial discussions

This series of activities helped to establish links between different stakeholders. Initial dialogues were held informally to help participants understand the different points of view held by groups and individuals. Through these dialogues, gaps, conflicts and options for change were identified and discussed by the stakeholders.

One source of the gaps and conflicts stemmed from the different understanding of the programmes. The dialogues therefore became the occasion for NIPAP, ESSC and the LGU representatives to introduce and explain the context and extent of the programmes and to clarify some points that had been misunderstood.

The dialogues were generally conducted at the *barangay* level with local officials, and when possible other members of the communities were also invited. They were open to everyone who wanted to attend and participate. Community members were invited to participate so that they could understand the issues and conflicts, not just as explained by LGU and government officials, NGOs, other line agencies working in the area and *barangay* officials, but, most important, from the point of view of the *sitio* (the smallest outlying subunit of a *barangay*).

Data preparation

Data gathering was also an important part of the process of understanding the history of the issues and conflicts in the area. Through the data collected, an over-

all view was formed of past initiatives. This process also provided an understanding of how past programmes and projects had addressed the issues and conflicts and whether or not they had been successful. Data gathered from written documents, maps and the initial dialogue were collated and eventually presented to the communities. This openness and transparency helped to gain communities' trust.

Consultations with communities and site analysis

There were open fora that encouraged communities to express their opinions freely without fear of being misunderstood. The meetings were flexible with no formal programme of activities and there was sufficient time for all concerns to be addressed. These were primarily opportunities to discuss the programmes in terms of their effects and consequences. Concerns were clarified through question-and-answer discussions. These dialogues followed the whole process of developing a management strategy.

LGUs, government agencies and NGOs were invited to participate in the dialogue as observers and to give opportunities to community members to ask questions. Other opportunities were provided that allowed views to be presented and discussed in the latter part of the process when all stakeholders had expressed their points of view. The communities then decided to set schedules for the community mapping activity, and accepted that they had a responsibility to participate and make decisions for themselves.

Community mapping activities

Community mapping, carried out in the 22 *barangays* around Malampaya Sound, initiated and strengthened the communities' participation in the preparation of an integrated resource management plan for this large and diverse area. Communities were initially apprehensive that the information might be used against them. Clear and repeated explanations and discussions of the activity's purpose, however, put that fear to rest.

Community mapping, a process-oriented activity, was conducted in order to understand the communities' perspective on their environment through their experiences and relationships within the area. Participants were encouraged to illustrate their environment within the context of their own understanding and use of resources. Communities also described the management strategies, zones and activities in each zone through sketches. These were discussed and documented. At the same time, communities illustrated the issues, conflicts and concerns that affected them and the resources. Mapping gave the communities a new language in which to express themselves. In addition, communities gained a clearer understanding of planning and their own role in the process.

Community map validation

The community maps were digitized and brought back to communities for validation. During the validation, all comments and suggestions generated from the communities were presented to the 22 *barangays*, particularly to those *sitios* that may have been seriously affected by a suggested action. Again, dialogue and consultation were vital to generate consensus among communities.

Public hearings

Nine public hearings were held in strategic areas within the Sound, where the *barangays* were clustered into groups. All the different stakeholders (communities, people's organizations, youth organizations, women's organizations, NGOs, indigenous people, the business sector, traders, academic institutions, religious institutions, LGUs, national and line agencies) were invited to participate. Community members, including those involved in illegal activities, were asked to attend. National and line agencies – the Philippine Coast Guard, BFAR, the Department of Agriculture, DENR, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and PCSD – sent representatives.

The community maps and the technical maps (developed during previous activities) showing the proposed management zones for both marine and terrestrial resources, together with resource management issues and concerns, were presented. Stakeholders saw the interrelationships and interdependencies, and how cooperation could benefit everyone. The Initial Protected Area Plan (IPAP), a document containing the entire output of the previous dialogues, discussions and consultations, the different management activities (allowable and non-allowable) in each zone and the management strategies, was also presented.

The public hearings became occasions for multisectoral discussions and deliberations of all the proposed management actions. Each management option, together with existing and new policies, was discussed *vis-à-vis* its impact on communities and their activities.

There were agreements and disagreements among communities over some of the points raised. The disagreements were given a great deal of attention and were discussed not with the intention of resolving them immediately, but to make everyone aware of the various perspectives. Although government agencies also had a stake in the management, the resolution of these disagreements was fully entrusted to communities, particularly those who would be most affected.

Decisions were made based on policies (whether applicable or not), activities by communities (whether legal or not), suggestions and comments, issues and concerns and the situation (past and present). Through the increasing understanding that had been achieved, a plan that was workable and acceptable was formed.

Strategic planning workshop

After all changes and decisions made at the public hearings had been incorporated in the maps and documents, representatives of the different stakeholders were invited to a strategic planning workshop. Communities chose the persons they thought would best represent them. The workshop was designed as an opportunity to put together all comments and suggestions for a General Management Plan (GMP). The three-day workshop was facilitated by a Palawan-based NGO.

In the workshop, stakeholders focused their attention not so much on the conflicts over management zones, activities and management strategies, but on the conflicts over priority actions and activities necessary to implement the GMP. Conflicts over what actions and activities should be prioritized were identified and resolved through sustained discussions.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OUTCOMES

The process in which stakeholders came together, listened to each other and articulated their interests and concerns led to a greater understanding of the area as a resource base, of varying perspectives and of the basis for decision-making held by each interest group (community, government agency or NGO). This wider perspective allowed communities to be acknowledged as stakeholders and strengthened their position so that they could propose management zones and activities and become involved in negotiations. Such recognition in turn prompted local and national government agencies to understand the importance of coordinating with communities over laws, ordinances and regulations.

The process of participatory conflict management also allowed the NIPAP team to bridge initial differences with other agencies and groups (PCSD, LGUs) in the area, while incorporating the provisions of the SEP law and the municipal ordinances within the NIPAS Act framework. In essence, the process allowed stakeholders to develop a meaningful dialogue that led to the fulfilment of requirements for the proclamation of the PA.



Acknowledging communities as stakeholders

The involvement of communities in laying out management initiatives in the Sound allowed them a greater role and more responsibility regarding the sustainable management of the Sound's resources. The participation of communities was crucial not only in terms of their recognition as stakeholders but also because their involvement allowed for balance in decision-making and in the formulation and implementation of policies, management strategies, programmes and projects in the area. Their participation throughout the process eased the historic conflict arising from a lack of consultation and involvement in any aspect of management. Through this process, government agencies became aware of the importance of the community in all planning and management initiatives.

Recognizing the need for coordination among agencies and communities

The process adopted in Malampaya Sound made clear the need for agencies and communities to collaborate closely in the management and resolution of conflict. Bridging the initial discord between NIPAP, other agencies and communities helped to set the tone for further dialogue and gave rise to hopes that management strategies that acknowledged the concerns of all stakeholders could be developed. Within this context, it is hoped that stakeholders also accept responsibility for the implementation of such strategies.

Reaffirming the need for action

During the long process of planning, communities and government agencies reaffirmed the need to implement policies that will prohibit large vessels from fishing in the area. Additionally, there is a recognition that, even among communities, there needs to be a shift in small-scale fishing towards more sustainable methods.



GMP and PAMB: accomplishments and moving forwards

Of the outcomes, the most significant has been the inclusion of communities in the planning process, leading to the satisfaction of the requirements of the NIPAS Act in a meaningful way, including the development of a GMP in which all stakeholders have had a voice. The establishment of the multisectoral PAMB is an important accomplishment and it is hoped that it remains a relevant structure to participatory management. PAMB is composed of captains of the 22 *barangays*, mayors of the two municipalities, four additional local government representatives, representatives from each of the seven people's organizations, a representative from the indigenous people's organization and representatives from two NGOs. DENR and PCSD are co-chairs of PAMB.

The role of PAMB is crucial as this is the key management institution, responsible for implementing GMP and ensuring the coherence of all stakeholders as a group. It has a powerful yet accountable position, approving activities and disbursing funds for them, as outlined in GMP. Its structural evolution has been starkly different from that of some PAMBs that have emerged in other PAs, as the community groundwork was the starting point, rather than the appointment of the PAMB members. Another crucial point is the fact that members have to be representative of all the stakeholders in the area. Other PAs opted for more business representation, owing to the ecotourism potential offered by the PA. In the case of the Sound, ecotourism is not a significant management option, and this is evident in the composition of the PAMB members. However, it is vital that traders involved in the fishing industry be part of PAMB.

Recognizing how far to go

While the area has been declared a Protected Land and Seascape, its management as a collective effort has just begun because there is now an agreement. PAMB has the basis for management. What has been managed is the incoherence of activities. Initial general distrust was dealt with so that issues were clearer and responsibilities defined. Communities and other stakeholders recognize that the road to sustainability is a long one, and that more, and perhaps greater, conflicts are yet to come.

LESSONS LEARNED

The following are key elements that can be drawn from this case study with ESSC's intervention as the entry point.

Environmental brokering

The dialogue initiated through the PWG site visit in December 1998 brought about a local forum whereby conflicts between two local governments over a disputed boundary were discussed and worked out. Subsequently, with the intervention of other national government agencies in the area, the dispute was resolved when agreement was reached on a designation for a reserve area that incorporated the names of the two local governments (the El Nido Marine Reserve became the El Nido-Taytay Marine Reserve). This agreement also helped to prepare the ground for further discussions with the Taytay local government on the national PA programme planned for implementation in Malampaya. New options also emerged for dealing with the protracted conflict, and key working relationships were rebuilt between local government and assisting organizations. When the parties worked together to improve the relationship, a better understanding of the situation and of each other was developed, and creative yet realistic suggestions for moving forwards on issues of both substance and process emerged.

Assisted community mediation

The community mapping activities provided the opportunity for communities to articulate their concerns and questions about the implications of the PA programme and, in particular, how it would affect their livelihoods. They expressed their vulnerability and they were listened to. The mapping activities were used by the communities to present their situation and their own perspectives and to move forwards, recognizing that the resources they depend on are dwindling. It was acknowledged and accepted that if management proposals originate from the communities, they stand a better chance of negotiating successfully with local and national government.



Community strengthening of problem solving capacity

The community mapping activities also became informal sessions where the communities made a sustained effort to tackle the conflict and the problems involved, and discussed pragmatic options and possible solutions among themselves. A level of capacity was built to improve the ability of communities and other organizations in the area to negotiate productively and manage conflict effectively, and this was manifested in their definitions of the various zones in the PAs. Their practical knowledge guided them into assigning some zones for core protection, others for seasonal fishing, others as buffer zones, others for multiple use, etc.

Public hearings as public dialogues

Public hearings were part of the programme design, and although there was an initial recommendation to limit these to three – as was the case in the other priority PA sites – the number of hearings was increased to accommodate more communities because the area was extensive. Again, these public hearings were another opportunity for dialogues to take place and for management ideas to be negotiated.

Improving channels of communication

At the outset, the situation was characterized by very low levels of communication, and by people in various situations taking different positions on difficult and sometimes emotional issues, with no opportunities for common discussion. The different processes that communities, local government and programme implementers went through presented opportunities for people to talk and listen to each other, thereby enhancing communication, at the very least among primary stakeholders.

Conflict management and the participatory process

The broader realization was that conflict management focuses on discord and reducing levels of conflict, while the participatory process is directed towards mechanisms for establishing a functioning system of management. The latter can have greater breadth but is necessary for the meaningful resolution of conflict. In areas such as Malampaya Sound, the more focused process of conflict management, facilitated with transparency and clarity, is necessary so that stakeholders can think within a participatory framework before collaborative planning and implementation can be achieved.

Participation and conflict

Generally speaking, increasing participation may increase points of conflict. If not managed properly, participation can lead to further conflict. However, if participation is a managed process, the expectation is that, with greater clarity and transparency, there will be a reduction of conflict. On another level of participation, communities have agreed to become involved in monitoring water quality, confiscation and data gathering. At any level, what the programme had to stress was participation, because traditional fishing practices were exploitative of people and were secretive. When access to resources is open, as it is in the Sound, this can lead to exploitation of people and resources if there is a failure of all stakeholders to get together and exercise appropriate control. Implementation of PAs can quickly persuade people to leave an area and, in this case, they were somewhat confused and fearful of what to expect. There would be no more competition for resources, because people were going to be excluded. There was no understanding of general management and design. A common knowledge was built so that there was a basis for a common understanding of equity, sustainability, access to resources, and socio-economic and political accountability.

New levels of accountable resource management

Local people have agreed to an assessment of catches, rationalization of fishing gear, methods and practices, and water quality sampling and analysis. There is a recognition that at this stage, since some conflicts have been managed, events need not lead to a deteriorating situation, as they did in the past. There is also a willingness to push for greater involvement of the Coast Guard, the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Navy in controlling certain activities that are beyond the scope of local government.