

NGOs and the Integration of Conservation and Development in Madagascar: An Assessment for the USAID SAVEM Project

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Introduction

International interest in Madagascar has focused primarily on two topics in recent years. First, the island nation is one of the world's ecological treasures because of its rich and unique biological diversity, and there is widespread agreement on the need to conserve this biological heritage. Second, having undergone a political transformation, Madagascar is one of the nations in the vanguard of Africa's democratic revolution. The USAID Mission in Madagascar has interventions in both sectors, seeking to help build an independent Malagasy civil society that will encourage democratic governance, and investing in programs designed to reverse the trend of environmental degradation that threatens Madagascar's biodiversity and natural resource base. Major efforts include the Knowledge and Effective Policies for Environmental Management (KEPEM) Program, a five-year activity with a funding level of \$33 million to be disbursed through a combination of project and nonproject assistance, and the Sustainable Approaches for Viable Environmental Management (SAVEM) Project, a seven-and-a-half-year activity with a \$40 million life-of-project funding level. Both programs embody state-of-the-art planning and implementation strategies designed to integrate environmental conservation with community development activities that promote local participation in the development/conservation process, in part through supporting and strengthening nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Increasing local participation in the design and implementation of programs and projects is an essential component of effective environmental programs as well as a Congressional mandate of the Development Fund for Africa. Examining both positive and negative aspects of AID's experience with promoting collaboration and participation in natural resource management activities can provide useful guidance for current and future work.

Objectives

During a temporary assignment in Madagascar, the authors sought to learn more about the mechanisms by which international NGOs are encouraging local participation in the design and implementation of natural resource management and environmental conservation activities with SAVEM Proj-

ect support and to share pertinent experiences gathered during the course of their fellowships at USAID.

Although collaboration with Malagasy NGOs is a vital component of the effort to foster local participation, such collaboration has not always been easy. A SAVEM Project Paper Supplement (USAID/Madagascar December 1993) indicates that the original project planning overestimated the institutional capabilities of Malagasy NGOs. A major objective of the assignment was to gather information on plans and activities designed to increase the technical and institutional capacity of local groups involved in community-based conservation and development activities. Institutional strengthening of indigenous, national NGOs is a goal of USAID and other donors in Madagascar and elsewhere. The authors thus sought to examine briefly the ways USAID/Madagascar is supporting innovative programs that combine conservation and development while simultaneously strengthening civil society in Madagascar.

Methods

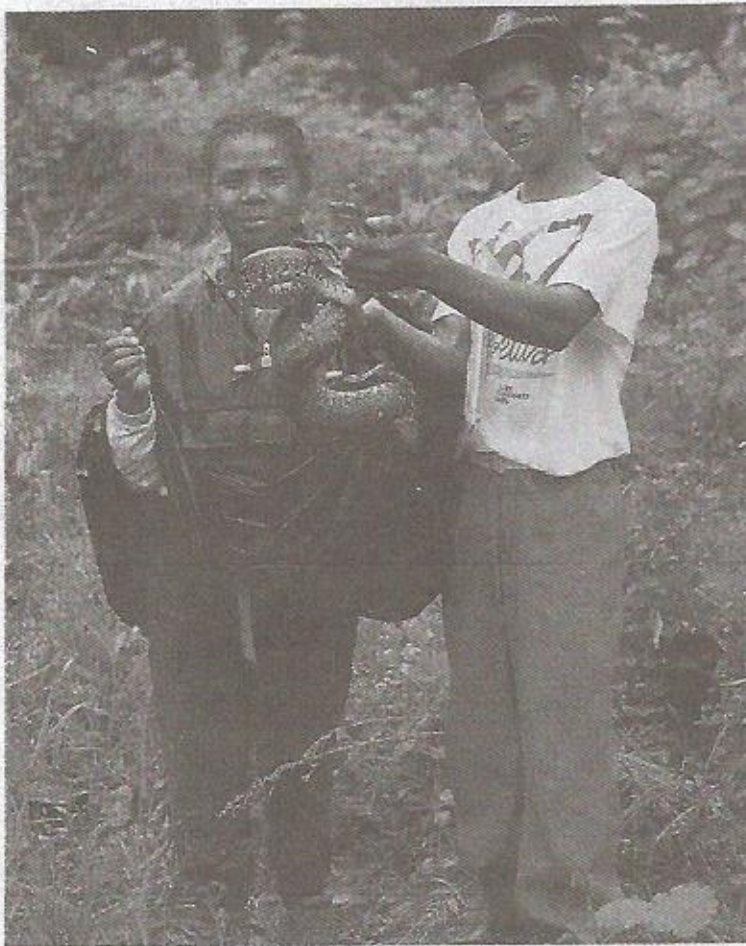
In carrying out this assessment of the roles and capacities of international and Malagasy NGOs² in the planning and implementation of community-based, integrated conservation and development activities under USAID/Madagascar's SAVEM Project, we relied on interviews with key participants in SAVEM Project activities, a review of selected background documents, and field visits to two integrated conservation and development project (ICDP) sites.

Interviews were carried out in Antananarivo and during field site visits. A review of selected documents provided background on the biodiversity conservation and development situation in Madagascar, details about specific activities undertaken to date under the SAVEM Project, and some proposed future activities. Site visits were made to two ICDPs: the Andasibe (Perinet) Reserve and the Andohahela Reserve. Project staff were interviewed at these sites, and the ecological and social setting was observed.

Findings

Integrating conservation and development is a challenge: hypotheses about linkages are being tested.

The central element of the SAVEM Project—the integration of conservation and development—depends on generating tangible benefits and values for *people* from activities that also preserve the habitats and populations of other species. Though currently a fashionable concept, integrating conservation and development is easier said than done: there is no formula for creating a sustainable system that combines the two goals. A strength of the SAVEM Project is that it



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Villagers trained in ecology and conservation serve as guides for tourists to Andasibe Reserve.

recognizes that integrated conservation and development is largely terra incognita, and one of the project's objectives is to identify and test "various hypotheses concerning the management of sustainable, interactive development efforts in selected protected areas and their peripheral zones" (USAID/Madagascar Environment Program 1993?).

Some ways to integrate conservation and development are clear enough. The sustainable harvesting of wildlife, fish, or forest products from a reserve or its buffer zone would be one example. Stabilizing (or maintaining the stability of) the flow of water from a protected watershed that makes irrigated agriculture possible is another. Economic benefits from ecological tourism for people who live in areas around parks, and pharmacological prospecting that provides revenues from international drug companies to local inhabitants are still other examples. Benefits and values derived by local people from conservation need not always be material or tangible in the traditional economic sense; they can be spiritual, psychological, or aesthetic, as in the conservation of sacred groves in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa.

In some cases, however, linkages between conservation and benefits to humans are obscure at best. When a conservation project funded by a foreign donor promises to build a school, a clinic, or a road for a rural village in exchange for the residents' not cutting trees or killing wildlife, local people may see no clear or "real" connection between conservation and the development benefit. They are likely to think of the money for the school, clinic, or road as coming from the donor, not from the conservation activity, as a "bribe" for conservation, rather than a development gain achieved through conservation. Conservation motivated by such "bribes" from international donors is not likely to be sustainable.

Analytical methods are being used to design ICDPs, but better methods are needed.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). A key to integrating conservation and development is understanding the needs, aspirations, values, and behavioral motivations of local people who live near parks and other protected areas, and influencing their behavior if necessary. This understanding requires the use of appropriate social science methods. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a catchall phrase for a spectrum of methods, ranging from surveys and interviews with key informants to holding community meetings and initiating participatory planning. PRA has been used widely during the planning phase of many of the large ICDP projects being carried out under the SAVEM Project.

We found a potential problem with the use of PRA in this context, however. PRA was developed as a tool for rural *development*, not specifically for integrated conservation and development. Consequently, its use entails a predisposition to identify what local people perceive as their economic development needs and problems, without necessarily linking their solutions to conservation activities.

This seemed to be the case with the PRA assessments done in the Mantadia-Andasibe area. For example, the residents of the village of Andasibe listed their priorities as constructing a pharmacy, building a grain storage facility, and acquiring agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seeds (Ford 1993). Such priorities would probably be shared by most other rural villages in Madagascar, even those far from any protected area. Surprisingly, PRA methods elicited no mention of increasing ecotourism as a priority in Andasibe, even though the village is in a prime location to realize benefits from increased visitation to the Andasibe Reserve, —where the indri, Madagascar's largest lemur species, can be easily observed.

When a donor-funded project asks local people about their development needs and problems, it may unavoidably raise their expectations that the project will address those needs

and solve those problems. But the purpose of the SAVEM Project is not development alone, but the integration of conservation and development. There may be conflicts between conservation needs and what local people perceive to be their development needs. Raising expectations by conducting PRAs or other assessments that focus only on development needs seems likely to exacerbate such conflicts, not resolve them. When PRAs or other assessment methods are used to design and foster ICDP activities, the methods need to be modified so that they identify *linkages* between development and conservation, not just development needs and priorities. PRA training activities carried out for CARE in the Masoala and Montagne d'Ambre ICDPs (Okali and Gilling 1992) demonstrate an awareness of this issue and may provide a model for use by other SAVEM ICDPs and small-grant projects.

PRA is only one planning and analysis tool among many. SAVEM ICDP operators frequently seem to rely on the results of a single PRA, without performing more thorough socioeconomic analyses in the project zones. Although longitudinal studies and other data-collection activities are often more costly and difficult to perform, they are needed to cross-reference information from PRAs and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of local social, cultural, political, and economic structures. An over-reliance on PRAs will eventually lead some project activities down the wrong paths.

Pressure Analysis. During their initial planning stages most, if not all, of the large ICDPs funded under the SAVEM Project apparently have made use of "pressure analysis," a spatial analysis of where human activities in the buffer zones of parks and reserves are creating the greatest threat to conservation values. In principle a good concept, pressure analysis provides a way to link development issues with conservation, but we found two potential problems with it.

The first is methodological: in carrying out pressure analysis, the projects need to do more cross-checking by using several different, independent ways of understanding a given situation. This need is similar to the need for cross-referencing with Participatory Rural Appraisals, discussed above. At the Andohahela Reserve we witnessed an example of why multiple data sources are required. Pressure analysis had identified a "target village" (one of twenty villages so designated

by the project), and a PRA had opened a dialogue with the villagers. Yet neither method had discovered that this village was actually a satellite village, or hamlet, and therefore leaders from the "mother village" (several kilometers away and *not* chosen as a target village) had to be involved if the decisions made were to be implementable.

Second, if it is to lead to sustainable solutions, pressure

analysis must focus on more than the short-term stresses affecting the protected area and its immediate buffer zones. Analysis must encompass the longer-term, larger-scale problems that lie behind the immediate local pressures—population growth, drought, fluctuating markets, and the effects of differential access to resources based on gender and class—factors that operate throughout the entire region if not the entire country. This relates to the need to make sure that Malagasy and international or-

ganizations working away from the protected areas are sharing information with the ICDPs and vice versa.

Long-term, cross-sectoral, strategic planning is needed for conservation through development to be sustainable.

One strong impression is that although many SAVEM Project-funded ICDPs are planning or carrying out activities that respond to problems and meet perceived needs, few have a carefully and strategically integrated vision and long-term plan. While this may be inevitable given the complexity and urgency of the problems and the newness of the projects, it is not ideal and may limit the sustainability of the desired integration of conservation and development. This problem also relates to the need mentioned above for an integrated vision not just for the protected areas that are the focus of ICDPs, but for sustainable development on a larger scale, in the region or country as a whole.

Institutional capacity for integrated conservation and development is weak and requires strengthening.

The organizational structure for civil society in Madagascar is still quite weak. Few strong national NGOs and few local associations seem capable of undertaking major activities to foster development through conservation without



"Sifaka" lemur in southern Madagascar, Berenty Reserve.

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some prior capacity building. Building capacity takes much time, effort, and commitment, and it can create problems, such as the tendency to build dependency and/or overwhelm a fledgling organization with funds and demands. USAID/Madagascar is not the first Mission to recognize that no methods exist that can quickly strengthen the institutional capacity of local organizations, in the environmental sector or any other. Experience to date suggests that institution building for its own sake does not work very well. Positive results have been obtained through partnerships between stronger and weaker organizations. One successful technique is to make the less-capable organization responsible for specific tasks at first, with a gradual increase in responsibility and decision-making power. To make this approach effective, however, there must be a real commitment on the part of the stronger (usually international) organization to work with the local organization and to hand over responsibility.

Although few in number, there *are* Malagasy NGOs. The multipurpose development NGOs affiliated with various Malagasy churches provide a base from which to begin. For example, the national NGO called FIKRIFAMA seems to be quite well organized. Although its work has focused on the single issue of potable water, this focus may actually be an appropriate one for linking conservation and development because many of the drinking-water systems depend on springs, and reliable springs require forested watersheds. Thus, potable water development could link with conservation.

FIKRIFAMA also seems to have succeeded at building community organizations that can independently operate and maintain potable water systems. Their approach seems similar to the very successful community-organizing programs developed by the USAID-supported WASH (Water and Sanitation for Health) project. Community structures set up to manage specific local resources have in other parts of the world served as platforms for a wide variety of community development activities. SAVEM has not worked with FIKRIFAMA to date, and this NGO does not currently have operations near the major protected areas, but there is clear potential for future collaboration.

SAF-FJKM, another church-affiliated development organization, is the indigenous NGO collaborating with VITA (Volunteers in Technical Assistance) on the ICDP in the Andasibe-Mantadia complex of protected areas. The relationship between these two organizations is the best model

of collaboration between national and international NGOs that we saw. The two organizations appear to operate as true partners, with integration taking place on a diverse range of issues and tasks. The project has a strong Malagasy team, which will be joined by two VITA expatriates who are expected to arrive in the near future. It is only speculation, but the lack of resident expatriates during the project development phase may have

contributed positively to the excellent working relationship that currently exists between VITA and SAF-FJKM.

But what about the future? Can the SAVEM Project's objective of building local institutions be achieved and complete management of project-funded ICDPs be handed over to Malagasy staff within a reasonable length of time, say ten years? Unfortunately, we found no clear vision

among the international NGOs about how they can work themselves out of a job, and only a few examples of real commitment to engage in a program of building Malagasy NGO capacity. This is a challenge that SAVEM Project managers and the major ICDP operators need to address before local resentment of foreign control builds up and undermines the positive results achieved so far.

Trust by and rapport with local communities is weak and needs emphasis.

In general, ICDPs funded by the SAVEM Project need to build trust and rapport with the local people. We heard that many planned project activities—building health clinics and schools, for example—are designed as points of entry to gain local trust and acceptance. This is perhaps necessary at first, but the projects must be careful that the entry point does not become a *goal* of the project. Project success should not be measured by such things as the number of clinics built, number of people treated, number of children in school, or kilometers of improved roads, but rather by how these things change people's natural-resource decisions and their motivations toward better conservation practices. This is much harder to measure and, not surprisingly, we have yet to see many solid attempts to do so. Developing measures of trust and rapport with local communities would be useful as part of SAVEM Project monitoring and evaluation, as would developing measures of the linkages between conservation and



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Ring-tailed lemurs in southern Madagascar.

development, rather than measures of either development or conservation success alone.

Trust and rapport between local people and ICDP staff is not enhanced by a donor-recipient—not to mention patron-client—mode of operation. Authentic partnerships with local people must be a goal of these projects; true participation by local people, and transfer of decision-making to them, is ultimately needed. But accomplishing this is complex and difficult, and the potential for disputes and conflicts cannot be ignored. Some conflict is inevitable, and on certain issues it may never be possible to reach consensus among all of the stakeholders in biodiversity conservation, as they span a geographic scale from international to local, and differ greatly in power, wealth, and options. Techniques for managing and resolving conflicts are essential for the successful integration of conservation and development, but resolution of environmental disputes is a rather new field, which requires further development and dissemination.

Pronounced regional and local heterogeneity exists, complicating project design and implementation.

Intra- and interregional differences may be pronounced. These differences probably preclude the development of a single national model for ICDPs, and perhaps even a single plan or approach within a given ICDP. The Land Tenure Center team conducting a study for the KEPEM program emphasized the need to understand cultural and socioeconomic factors. Sometimes just by crossing a river in Madagascar one encounters people who do things very differently from the people on the other side, they said. In the far south, for example, the Antandroy, near Amboasary, use plows in their fields. Just a few kilometers east and north, the Antanosy do not use animal traction: we saw groups of young men running five or six bullocks around the paddies to stir up the mud before the rice was transplanted. The Andohahela reserve is ecologically very differentiated—that is part of the reason for its existence. The socioeconomic characteristics of the people living in the area are similarly differentiated. To understand these socioeconomic systems takes much time and effort; to influence them in a desired direction depends on such prior understanding.

Communication about approaches and lessons learned is not yet well developed.

We found that there is not yet a well-developed communication system for sharing ideas and lessons about project approaches and activities. The number of meetings held per year among managers of all of the SAVEM Project-funded ICDPs in Madagascar (approximately one) is not enough for this purpose. The current approach of the SAVEM Project, to try many different strategies in order to test hypotheses

about the integration of conservation and development, is good, but more communication and sharing of information between ICDPs and small grantees is needed to make this approach effective in identifying, testing, and choosing among the hypotheses.

The rush to see impact may be counterproductive.

SAVEM-funded projects are driven to produce people-level impacts within a short period of time. This admirable mandate of the Development Fund for Africa legislation may be somewhat ambitious for integrated conservation and development projects. Much of the first year or two of SAVEM Project activity has been taken up with the ICDP design process. Design has concentrated on understanding socioeconomic systems, primarily through PRAs, but there has not been enough time to understand these systems, much less design a project that will produce impacts within the next one or two years. To use the example cited earlier, the World Wildlife Fund's initial selection of hamlets around Andohahela as target villages without including the mother villages connected to these hamlets has already slowed project implementation because of the need to reassess the community decision-making process. Hamlets cannot make important decisions without consultation and consensus with their mother village and co-hamlets. This argues for more of a regional strategy (or at least a strategy based on relevant decision-making structures) and not a spatial focus on those particular communities (partial communities?) that are identified by a quick and superficial pressure analysis of the buffer zones. All of this requires enough time for regional inhabitants to develop their voice and their capacity truly to influence and become part of the SAVEM project.

The CARE-New York Zoological Society/Wildlife Conservation Society ICDP, on the Masoala Peninsula, seemed to be sensitive to the need for a real understanding of how land-use decisions are made, as demonstrated by their analyses of the relationship between intracommunity socioeconomic differences and environmentally destructive activities. According to Remko Vonk, CARE International Director in Madagascar, their analysis showed that landowners often underexploited their irrigated rice fields and hired poor ex-fisherfolk to clear and burn forested areas for growing unirrigated upland rice, a practice called *tavy*. Even though the Masoala area produces a surplus of rice, there was an incentive to clear forest for *tavy*, because by clearing and burning land one then owns it!

The KEPEM study being conducted by the Land Tenure Center provides another example of the need for a detailed understanding of how natural resource decisions are made. In the Andohahela area, data on marriage and inheritance patterns revealed extremely high divorce rates and a related lack of secure access to resources that may lead women to engage in environmentally destructive practices.

All of this argues that the projects should take a very long view and have a systematized, sophisticated socioeconomic monitoring capability that emphasizes disseminating information and sharing technical expertise. Most of the recommendations in the following section revolve around this theme.

Recommendations

Develop a better mechanism for sharing information among SAVEM Project partners.

We found widespread agreement that integrated conservation and development is still very much in the hypothesis-testing stage, and that some very creative approaches are being undertaken by all the SAVEM collaborators. To date, however, there has not been a coordinated program to synthesize the positive and negative lessons that are being learned. The multifaceted approach is one of the most important aspects of the SAVEM program, but individual operators may be spending too much time and effort independently devising interventions that carry the risk of repeating each other's mistakes. We hope that the newly installed monitoring and evaluation unit in ANGAP will greatly improve this situation. Nevertheless, it is important for this unit to focus on disseminating information as well as on monitoring impacts of conservation and development. Information exchange is crucial to increasing the effectiveness and institutional capacity of Malagasy and international organizations. This is true not only for those organizations currently involved in SAVEM Project activities, but also for organizations with the potential to replicate the project's successes in areas of Madagascar that are not part of the SAVEM Project's focus.

ANGAP currently publishes a quarterly newsletter entitled *Hanitriniala: Le Magazine des Aires Protégées*, but so far this very well-prepared publication seems to have concentrated on the conservation side of the equation. Most of the articles appear to be reports on academic research and general ecology rather than on ICDP activities. The newsletter should highlight specific projects or activities, with contributions from field-based operators that emphasize their positive and negative experiences in designing and implementing ICDPs. A newsletter with an ICDP focus would allow the sharing of technical information among ANGAP operators as well as provide information about ANGAP and its activities to development organizations throughout Madagascar.

KEPEM study reports and any other relevant development literature should be widely shared and distributed to ICDP operators and local NGOs. USAID might be able to provide an e-mail link to the Washington-based Africa Bureau Information Center (ABIC) so that ICDP operators could obtain state-of-the-art information on development efforts in specific sectors, particularly those in which the individual NGOs do not have a great deal of experience.

A coordinated program of sectoral technical assistance and training is needed. SAVEM should institute a series of sectoral workshops to share technical information on approaches being taken by the various implementers and to provide training for individuals and organizations that have insufficient technical capacity in specific sectors.

We found a demand (most frequently voiced by local NGOs) for specialized technical assistance, as the ICDP project implementers develop interventions in sectors in which they have little past experience. A great deal of overlap arises in the activities proposed for each of the ICDPs. Most of them have components involving health, education, population and family planning, rural credit, agricultural intensification, and conservation, but the capabilities of the ICDP project implementers in these different sectors varies considerably.

International and/or local organizations that have a comparative advantage or a long institutional history of involvement in specific sectors should take responsibility for planning and implementing the individual workshops. Some of these should be current ICDP operators. For instance, CARE could take the lead for an agro- and social-forestry workshop, and VITA might be the logical choice to arrange a workshop on microenterprise and rural credit programs. For other sectors, it may be more useful if workshops are led by organizations that are not currently involved in SAVEM activities if they have more experience than any current SAVEM collaborators.

We found, for example, an across-the-board need among the ICDPs for technical assistance in implementing population and family planning activities. This is an area where USAID is a recognized leader, and the organizations involved in the Madagascar population program could be brought in to provide some training for the ICDP operators. Similarly, the local NGO FIKRIFAMA has a long and impressive history of working to create and support rural community water user associations; their experience should be shared with organizations less knowledgeable about this sector.

Conflict resolution involving environmental and natural resource issues is another key area in which training activities would be useful. This is a rather new but rapidly growing field, and international organizations not currently involved in SAVEM activities may have the greatest expertise in it. Perceptions of conflict and styles for resolving it differ dramatically across cultures, however, and understanding local dispute resolution methods is important. If international NGOs are the initial vehicle for bringing technical assistance in natural resources conflict resolution to the SAVEM Project, the significance of having Malagasy partners for adapting

Western methods to the Malagasy situation cannot be over-emphasized.

Participation in the workshops should not be limited to SAVEM collaborators. Rather, the workshops should form part of a broader program to build capacity among local NGOs and government line ministries. Invitations should be extended to a broad range of actual and potential development partners; this is crucial in order to extend and replicate successful ICDP activities throughout the country. An effort should be made to involve implementing staff from the field rather than high-level project directors. Costs could be minimized by holding very tightly focused, one-day events. All the ICDP operators have budgeted fairly large amounts for training; these funds should be used in a coordinated and cross-fertilizing manner.

USAID should make sure that those sectors where it has strong experience and comparative advantages—in population and family planning technical assistance particularly—are coordinated with SAVEM programs.

Finally, it is too early to judge ANGAP's recently reinforced monitoring and evaluation unit, but SAVEM should have a "methods" coordinator to oversee training of APNs or extension agents in socioeconomic/sociocultural survey methods and data analysis and interpretation.

Individual ICDP operators should formalize plans to work themselves out of their current jobs and hand over activities to Malagasy institutions.

The current situation, in which international NGOs operate the reserves (on behalf of the institutionally insecure ANGAP), is akin to an emergency relief situation, but many Malagasy resent it, and such resentment is likely to increase. In discussing our findings in the preceding section, however, we noted a lack of a clearly defined plan to turn over the ICDPs and national park/reserve management to Malagasy organizations. It may take time to do so—five or even ten years—and plans may change, but in each ICDP case something more concrete is needed than the current vague promise that handing over project management is an ultimate goal. Incremental actions ought to be taken to demonstrate that the handing-over process is under way.

The SAVEM Project should establish new mechanisms and procedures to work with and through Malagasy organizations, thereby promoting an independent civil society.

We know we are far from the first to recognize that building local NGO capacity through SAVEM and other

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USAID/Madagascar activities is a very slow process. Madagascar provides as clear an example of what the Office of Development Planning of AID's Bureau for Africa (AFR/DP) has called "the missing middle" as anywhere else in Africa. There is great potential for community organization at the lowest, most local level, and there are good intentions as well as willingness and capacity among NGOs in Antananarivo, but there are very few intermediate-



Farmhouse and rice fields, Madagascar High Plateau near Antananarivo

scale institutions or mechanisms for linking the two levels.

The SAVEM Project has a structural design problem that limits its effectiveness for building the capacity of intermediary NGOs. On the one hand are the large ICDP grants to international NGOs: while the implied intention is that these organizations should collaborate with local nongovernmental institutions, the current application of this intention is highly variable. The only example of true partnership that we found during our short visit is the excellent relationship between VITA and SAF-FJKM for implementation of the Andasibe ICDP. Other ICDPs have small activities that involve local NGOs, but one would be hard-pressed to say that these relationships involve the shared decision-making needed for authentic participation and indigenous capacity-building.

On the other hand, Conservation Action Grants (CAGs) are designed to fund small-scale, community-level conservation through development activities. These grants are generally too small to induce existing Malagasy NGOs to become involved in new types of activities (ICDPs) and/or in new areas of Madagascar (protected areas and their buffer zones). To its credit, the Grant Management Unit (GMU) has recognized this problem and is taking steps to resolve it. For example, the contract with SAF-FJKM to place, train, and equip six field agents to assist local communities with CAG proposal preparation is a good start. But more efforts and new mechanisms to involve existing local NGOs in SAVEM activities are needed.

One possible mechanism for achieving greater involvement of Malagasy organizations would be to make local participation a measurable objective of the SAVEM Project. The incremental handing over of project responsibilities to local institutions could be viewed as a result equivalent to the people-level impacts that are expected through the integration of conservation and development in the project areas. Participation could even become part of the Mission's assessment of program impact process (API), with preset objectives and annual tracking.

Several of the recommendations above provide mechanisms for expanding the role and number of local NGOs in SAVEM programs. Sectoral workshops can provide an opportunity for local NGOs to receive technical training. Whenever possible, technically capable local NGOs should be given responsibility for organizing such workshops. For the ICDPs, the implementation of a formalized handing-over process provides opportunities to turn project activities over to local organizations. Finally, the GMU should continue and expand its efforts to involve Malagasy organizations as intermediaries between the GMU and communities. One recommendation here, offered by SAVEM Project Officer Lisa Gaylord during the recent meeting with the GMU on the redesigned CAG process, would be to find local organizations willing to operate three information centers proposed for regional towns, rather than have the GMU operate these centers directly.

USAID/Madagascar has embarked on an ambitious program to link conservation objectives with development results while simultaneously building the institutions of an independent civil society. Considerable progress has been made, but this challenging task requires continual experimentation and learning. New problems will emerge as the current ones are resolved. The goal of the program is to build the local capacity to deal successfully with problems as they arise.

An overarching conclusion from our assessment is that careful applied social science analysis is required to understand and address the challenges of integrating conservation and development. The nongovernmental organizations operating ICDPs in Madagascar are developing the skills needed to implement successful programs, but more effort is necessary to build the comprehensive social analysis, monitoring, and evaluation capabilities required to make the activities sustainable and replicable.

We make a number of recommendations here that emphasize sharing information and technical expertise. It is our hope that these suggestions will contribute to the repertoire of approaches available to the local and international organizations seeking to improve Madagascar's social and economic conditions, as well as to preserve its rich and unique biological diversity. Many other countries in Africa and

throughout the world face challenges of development, biodiversity conservation, and democratization similar to Madagascar's, and we hope that the findings of this assessment will be useful in those countries as well.

Notes

1. At the time of this assessment, the authors were American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellows working at the US Agency for International Development (AID), Curt Grimm, an anthropologist, in the Bureau for Africa, Office of Development Planning, Program, Strategy and Evaluation Division (AFR/DP/PSE), and Bruce Byers, an evolutionary biologist, in the Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, Office of Environment and Natural Resources (G/R&D/ENR). From 28 February to 18 March 1994 they were on temporary assignment at the USAID Mission in Madagascar.

2. In this article, "international NGOs" refers to organizations with headquarters or corporate affiliation outside of Madagascar. Many of these are US private voluntary organizations that are registered with AID/Washington. The terms "Malagasy" or "indigenous national" NGOs refer to local nongovernmental organizations whose operations are limited to Madagascar. This distinction is not always exact, however, and specific explanations are provided when needed.

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Acronyms

- ABIC Africa Bureau Information Center
ANGAP Association Nationale pour la Gestion des Aires Protégées
API Assessment of Program Impact
APN Agents pour la Protection de la Nature
CAG Conservation Action Grant
GMU Grant Management Unit
ICDP Integrated Conservation and Development Project
KEPEM Knowledge and Effective Policies for Environmental Management (Program)

NGO Nongovernmental Organization
PRA Participatory Rural Appraisal
SAVEM Sustainable Approaches for Viable Environmental Management
VITA Volunteers in Technical Assistance
WASH Water and Sanitation for Health



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