

Review: Sharing Power: Learning-by-doing in Co-management of Natural Resources throughout the World

By Grazia Borrini-Feyeraband, Michael Pimbert, M. Taghi Farvar, Ashish Kothari and Yves Renard (Eds.)

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Grazia Borrini-Feyeraband, Michael Pimbert, M. Taghi Farvar, Ashish Kothari and Yves Renard (Eds.). *Sharing Power: Learning-by-doing in Co-management of Natural Resources throughout the World*. Teheran, Iran: IIED and IUCN/CEESP/CMWG, Cenesta 2004. 456 pp. ISBN 1 84369444 1

The last ten years have seen the emergence and evolution of a major new trend in protective area management, based in the concept of collaborative management. The formerly widespread practice of displacing tribal and other indigenous people from their traditional lands provided one starting point for this movement, but it has come to be more broadly seen as providing for extended public involvement in park management. The 2003 Durban World Parks Congress provided a formal international recognition of its significance.

As the sub-title indicates, this book arose from using a multitude of practical examples throughout the world to provide for improved conceptual development of the principles underlying co-management. Some 160 case studies, including both successes and failures, are included and demonstrate the value of creative approaches to land management. *Sharing Power* adopts a critical approach, not only toward the older top-down strategies of land management accepted in most of the Western world, but also toward assessing the new approaches which are increasingly being adopted. This approach must be taken seriously by all concerned. It is not just an advocacy of change for the sake of change, but constitutes a systematic and thorough review of land protection strategies through wider involvement.

Naturally, human organizations tend to do things the way they have been done previously, and to resist major changes. One example highlighting this problem is the resistance shown by "democratic" western countries to adoption of the *Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*. So, not surprisingly, the principles expounded here are very slow to find genuine acceptance in most OECD Countries.

Successive sections discuss the basis of co-management, the development of effective processes, institutional structures and the contextual fostering of civil society. The text is illustrated not only with real-world examples, but

with regular guideline summaries and checklists for planning purposes.

Sharing Power certainly challenges land management agencies to not only move ahead, but to subject their practices to continuing scrutiny and assessment.

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