URSA
UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Building Trust with Rangers and Communities

A scoping report for URSA by Sue Stolton, Hannah L. Timmins and Nigel Dudley

VOLUME 1: Scoping Report and Initial Findings

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE (URSA)

Supporting rangers today, conserving the world for tomorrow.

URSA is a global coalition of conservation organisations building a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. We advocate for the creation of inclusive and effective teams at the forefront of protecting nature, people, and the planet. Our priorities include representation, recognition, and resources for rangers around the world.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley established Equilibrium Research in 1991. Their work currently focuses on three main areas: (1) Broadscale Conservation: Integrating ecology with social values at a landscape level to achieve permanent conservation; (2) Protected Areas: Identifying threats, promoting greater effectiveness and making the arguments for protection. (3) Society and Environment: Researching the changing relationship between industrial society and the global ecosystem. Hannah Timmins joined Equilibrium in 2022 to bring a fresh perspective and new skills to Equilibrium Research.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Ranger and guide in the Ngare Ndare forest, Kenya © Jack Hewson

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Introduction to the scoping document

Summary

This scoping document on "Building Trust with Rangers and Communities" is a contribution[1] to the implementation of the five-year (2021-2025) Action Plan for rangers developed by the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) (see box 1, overleaf). The URSA Action Plan is supporting implementation of the International Ranger Federation's (IRF) Chitwan Declaration[2] developed and adopted by over 550 rangers from diverse backgrounds from 70 countries at the 9th World Ranger Congress in 2019. It begins to explore actions around one specific sub-objective (number E3): **URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities, by establishing meaningful participation and respect for human rights**.

The scope of this document is to develop simple, practical guidance for rangers and their managers working all over the world to strengthen ranger and community relationships drawing on actual experience worldwide. Volume 1 (of 2) outlines the issue of concern, discusses what is meant by the concept of trust and begins to develop a series of good practices illustrated by examples from the field. The aim is to translate this document into multiple languages. Case studies and stories collected during this scoping exercise have thus been summarized in volume 1 and can be found in full in the accompanying volume 2.

Following on from this scoping exercise, actions will focus on developing and testing an approach that will build a sound foundation for an ongoing process of gathering ideas, adapting responses and working cooperatively toward the ranger agendas developed by IRF and URSA. Further outputs are still in discussion but will likely be published by IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, in multiple languages and be disseminated in social media, webinars and events. Emphasis will be put on national, regional and site adaptation and implementation.

In the meantime, we hope the following document (and accompanying case studies volume) will provide a useful resource for URSA, IRF and ranger associations to ensure active engagement in building trust between rangers and communities.

Development

This scoping document draws on as wide a range of inputs and opinions as possible. The current text has been developed through multiple virtual workshops, group and one-to-one discussions. A simple widely promoted questionnaire in English, French and Spanish[3] was disseminated through mailing lists including: IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy mailing list; IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Privately Protected Areas Google group; via Facebook pages (IUCN WCPA PA and Conservation Learning News and IUCN PAPACO); Force for Nature App; IUCN GPAP/WCPA newsletter; US National Park Service; 140+ member associations of International Ranger Federation, 9th World Ranger Congress participants; Re:wild Guardians; SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi); and Game Rangers' Association of Africa. A wide group of people within the conservation community and social justice movement were also encouraged to share the questionnaire with rangers, agency staff and community members.

At a time when travel was restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the aim was to foster a genuinely collaborative approach to develop and test a project approach. However, limited connectivity, language and technical skills may have impacted the inputs from certain section of rangers and communities. Given the wide use of questionnaires and interviews during the pandemic, the questionnaire was kept deliberately short, with a focus on collecting good practices rather than extensive metadata. We received 75 responses to the questionnaire (42 in English, 29 in Spanish and 4 in French). The one metadata question asked was to note which groups the respondents identified with, from a list of five options (see figure 1, overleaf). Multiple groupings could be noted.
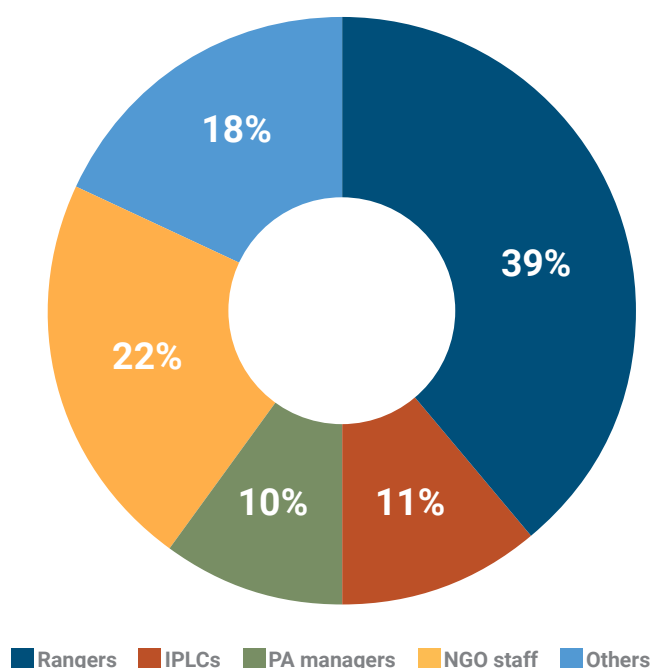
Figure 1: Self-identified affiliations of those who responded to the questionnaire. Respondents could identify multiple responses as many rangers, NGO staff, etc. are, for example, IPLCs and many working on conservation have multiple affiliations.

Many people were involved in this initial scoping phase. Two advisory groups were also set up by the project consultants (Equilibrium Research): one of URSA representatives and a wider Advisory Group made up of a range of people from ranger, community and Indigenous peoples organizations. A list of the people involved in this wider group is given the Acknowledgements list; however, it should be noted that although all agreed to be part of this project, interaction has been somewhat limited to date.

Primary audience

It is important to stress that this scoping document focuses on the initiatives rangers and protected area authorities can take at the site level. Building trust does not, of course, stop there, system level and legislative changes will be needed. But these are outside the scope of this document. And of course, building and maintaining trust is not a simple one-way or one-off process. Rather it is a staged, iterative, two-way and continuously ongoing process of mutual respect, learning, listening, dialogue making and acknowledging mistakes, revealing new information and vulnerabilities, and moving forward. All of this needs to operate at various levels within the protected area, ideally starting with senior management and being enacted at field level by rangers and at the community and Indigenous peoples level.

Table 1: Objective E3 of the URSA Action Plan[4]

E3. URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities, by establishing meaningful participation and respect for human rights.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
E3.1 Commission and disseminate research into relationships between rangers and communities in different protected and conserved area governance and management regimes.	E3.5 Ensure contributions from the ranger sector to global and regional processes and fora related to establishment and governance of protected and conserved areas.
E3.2 Compile a repository of best practices, training resources and tool kits that facilitate collaboration, diaogue and trust-building between rangers and communities.	E3.6 Promote through the IRF network the importance of good governance, co-management and rights-based approaches within ranger work.
E3.3 Facilitate sharing of best practices on widely used platforms (e.g. IUCN Panorama).	E3.7 Advocate for commitments by governments and ranger employers to establish systems and structures for ranger-community programs that ensure meaningful participation and respect for human rights.
E3.4 Incorporate key messages (e.g. value of community relationships in successful PCA management, recognition of rights and adoption of rights-based approaches) into members' work with PCAs and rangers, into global advocacy campaigns (See Result 1) and into capacity development (See Result 2).	

BOX 1: URSA

Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) is a partnership of conservation organizations.[5] The overall aim of the URSA Action Plan is to ensure a "*network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend*".[6]

The action plan is organized around five objectives. The "Building Trust with Rangers and Communities" initiative is focused on a sub-objective (number E3, see table 1) of this plan: **URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities, by establishing meaningful participation and respect for human rights**.

The Action Plan Summary

VISION	A network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend.				
GOAL	By 2025, there is a global enabling environment providing a unified voice for rangers and standards for capacity, employment, equality and conduct to build a demonstrably professional, accountable and competent ranger workforce, whose contributions are formally recognized and respected.				
COMPONENTS	**A. Advocacy and Representation**	**B. Capacity**	**C. Employment and Welfare**	**D. Equality and Equity in the Ranger Sector**	**E. Community Relations, Ranger Conduct and Accountability**
OBJECTIVE	By 2025, the ranger profession is increasingly and formally recognized internationally and by governments, with rangers effectively represented and connected.	By 2025, a common framework for improving and sustaining ranger capacity is in place and increasingly adopted and implemented.	By 2025, global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare are developed, and increasingly adopted nationally to enhance ranger working conditions and well-being.	By 2025, systems and structures have been adopted by IRF, its ranger associations and by URSA members that enable equal opportunities, fair treatment, and equitable working environments for rangers.	By 2025, rangers in all IRF regions are operating within a framework of working practices, ethics and conduct that value and build trust with communities and the public, and promote responsibility and accountability.
OUTPUTS	A1. IRF is strengthened as the global representative body for rangers and custodian of standards, promoting rangers' interests. A2 A growing network of ranger associations is established and strengthened. A3 Awareness of and respect for the ranger profession is improved at all levels. A4. The ranger occupation is officially recognised internationally and in multiple countries.	B1. Systems are in place to identify and track ranger capacity needs and development opportunities. B2. Ranger employers and supporting organisations have the capacity to enable effective ranger performance. B3. A global guiding framework of competences, standards and training and learning provision is established and adopted. B4. A global connected network of rangers is established. B5. Rangers and employers have access to essential and appropriate technology.	C1. Global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare are defined, promoted, and adopted by governments and ranger employers. C2. Ranger welfare and wellbeing are improving in all IRF regions. C3. The commitment and motivation of rangers is widely recognized as an important factor in effective conservation.	D1. IRF adopts and promotes clear policies and positions on equality, equity and rights in the ranger sector. D2. Resources, materials and guidance are available to support and promote national implementation of the policy on equality, equity and rights.	E1. A global code of conduct for rangers is defined and widely adopted. E2. Safeguarding policies and processes, designed to prevent and respond to violations by rangers of human, community and Indigenous rights have been established and adopted by IRF and URSA members. E3. URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities.

Community rangers in Tost Tosonbumba Nature Reserve, Mongolia © Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation, Mongolia

Key definitions

Rangers as defined by the IRF are individuals or group of individuals that play a critical role in conservation. Rangers are responsible for safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations. As representatives of their authority, organization or community, they work, often for extended periods, in protected and conserved areas and wider land- and seascapes, whether state, regional, communal, Indigenous or private, in line with legal and institutional frameworks.[7]

Indigenous peoples as defined by IUCN follows the definition or "statement of coverage" contained in the International Labour Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Therefore, it includes: (1) peoples who identify themselves as "Indigenous"; (2) tribal peoples whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations; (3) traditional peoples not necessarily called Indigenous or tribal but who share the same characteristics of social, cultural and economic conditions that distinguish them from other sections of the national community, whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions, and whose livelihoods are closely connected to ecosystems and their goods and services.[8]

Local communities cover a vast array of individuals and groups ranging from living in and relying on a protected or conserved area for their livelihoods, to local people using the area for recreation. The focus of the current project is on people living in or adjacent to protected and conserved areas, or living nearby, whose livelihoods and well-being are to some extent dependent on the area or are impacted by conservation initiatives taking place in the area.

Protected areas defined by IUCN as "A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values." The definition has a set of associated principles, the most relevant of which to this report are:

- Only those areas where the main objective is conserving nature can be considered protected areas; this can include many areas with other goals as well, at the same level, but in the case of conflict, nature conservation will be the priority;
- Protected areas must prevent, or eliminate where necessary, any exploitation or management practice that will be harmful to the objectives of designation;
- A diversity of management approaches is desirable and should be encouraged, as it reflects the many ways in which communities around the world have expressed the universal value of the protected area concept;
- The definition and categories of protected areas should not be used as an excuse for dispossessing people of their land.[9]

Conserved areas: Area-based conservation now encompasses two terms, protected areas as defined above and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), as defined by IUCN.[10] This document is primarily focused on protected areas, which have a long history of development and tensions between management and local people. However, good practices are relevant for all types of conservation, and examples of good practices from OECMs will be encouraged as these areas are beginning to be recognized and reported.

The issue

Protected areas are supposed to do all sorts of things, conserve biodiversity, provide and protect social and cultural benefits, mitigate climate change, and much more. In many cases they are succeeding. But there has been a hidden cost borne by communities around the world. Rules, regulations and restrictions designed to protect nature and ecosystems have, in some instances, had serious adverse impacts on people's human rights. Rangers, increasingly from those very communities, and others working directly in protected areas see and experience the impacts and

BOX 2: Policy changes: An example from Uganda

Uganda epitomizes many of the challenges facing conservation in the 21st century: a last stronghold of endangered species, a growing human population, competing pressures on natural resources and a conservation approach developed during colonial times with no thought of the social consequences for protection. There are no quick fixes to these challenges, but a determination to re-envision conservation and to adapt management is beginning to change how conservation and communities interact in Uganda.

Education and outreach programmes and park revenue-sharing initiatives became formalized in the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) policy on community conservation in 2004. Policies then became law in the Uganda Wildlife Act of 2019;[11] a major achievement that could be replicated in other countries with outdated colonial approaches. The law provides for community involvement in wildlife conservation through establishment of Community Wildlife Committees, education and awareness and benefit sharing programmes. Complemented by the National Environment Act, 2019[12] (which promotes, among other things, the creation of community wildlife conservation areas and community conservation areas outside protected areas), these two acts provide the framework for a new type of conservation approach.[13]

Of equal importance is the slowly changing relationship between government and Indigenous peoples and trying to right the past problems. For example, in 2021, the Ugandan Constitutional Court made a landmark judgement[14] ordering the government of Uganda to take responsibility for its illegal evictions of the Batwa, including in protected areas. As Dusabe Yeremiah, the chairperson of the Batwa's own organization UOBDU, noted: "*I dearly hope this case serves as a wake-up call for the Government of Uganda to finally recognise that the Batwa are their best friends and allies in the continued conservation of Bwindi, Mgahinga and Echuya forests*".[15]

Finally, a new Community Conservation Policy was agreed in 2020. The policy aims to more actively involve communities, as well as address their aspirations, concerns and interests, to secure their support for wildlife conservation while also ensuring they benefit from conservation. A key to this is understanding the root causes of problems faced by communities and how they are managed by UWA.

See case study volume for the full story

consequences of these policy failures on Indigenous peoples and local communities close up. However, rangers are often not in a position to solve the complex causes of the problems, and may be viewed as an extension of the problem; in some cases their actions may directly be the problem or exacerbate existing tensions. Today far more attention is being paid at a policy and implementation level to human rights and in ensuring that protected areas respect the rights of both Indigenous peoples and local communities and the rights of the rangers.

Although there are plenty of examples where protected area rangers, Indigenous peoples and local communities have trusting, harmonious and respectful interactions, and many cases where rangers, Indigenous peoples and local communities are one and the same,

there are unfortunately also many places where this is not the case. Conservation strategies which are poorly designed or implemented can cause conflict and difficult relationships. Many communities around the world feel threatened due to their rights not being respected, restrictions on their access to resources, and relocation from or threats of relocation from protected areas, while many rangers feel undervalued, undertrained, under-resourced, and isolated socially and culturally from surrounding communities. At the most extreme, both rangers and communities can face life-threatening situations linked to conservation practice and enforcement, although for different reasons.

These problems are often rooted in long-term and frustratingly intractable issues, such as historical legacies, power asymmetries, corruption, inequality,

BOX 3: Human rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. This was the first Declaration in human history to set out basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings should enjoy. The UDHR, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.[16] Recently, there has been increased focus on understanding the relationship between human rights and the environment. Of specific relevance here are the 16 framework principles related to human rights and the environment[17] that are based on existing work around the issues of human rights, and that should be the foundation of policies and implementation worldwide, including in the interpretation of human rights law in relation to the environment. Developed by the UN Human Rights Council appointed Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, the framework is aimed at states to implement, but nonetheless all those involved in conservation should be aware of the principles and their intent.

The principles start with promoting substantive human rights: the right to attainable standards of physical and mental health, to an adequate standard of living, to adequate food, to safe drinking water and sanitation, to housing, to participation in cultural life and to development, as well as the right to a healthy environment, should be available to all. The principles stress that legal and institutional conservation frameworks must not strike an unjustifiable or unreasonable balance between

environmental protection and other social goals, in light of their effects on the full enjoyment of human rights. The principles also stress that states should take additional measures to end discrimination and protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental harm, taking into account their needs, risks and capacities. These include women, children, persons living in poverty, members of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic, racial or other minorities and displaced persons. The principles stress that states should ensure that they comply with their obligations to Indigenous peoples and members of traditional communities, particularly in terms of rights to the lands, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied or used, and full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities in decision-making on the entire spectrum of matters that affect their lives.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to Indigenous peoples and is recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)[18] and in the 16 framework principles. It ensures Indigenous peoples the right to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage. Furthermore, FPIC enables Indigenous peoples to negotiate the conditions under which the project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. This is also embedded within the universal right to self-determination.

poverty, poor governance and lack of respect for human rights. These problems and the outcomes have been written up widely and thus will not be repeated here, but it is of course important to acknowledge the backdrop to this work.

So, while this piece of work acknowledges the bigger issues, and that policy and legislation changes are underway, the primary focus here is to find "on the ground solutions" that are replicable or adaptable across geographies. Box 2, however, provides a picture of the type of changes required, which are discussed in greater detail in the case study from Uganda in the accompanying volume 2 report.

Scope

The scope of this document is thus to develop simple, practical guidance for rangers and their managers working all over the world to strengthen ranger and community relationships drawing on actual experience worldwide.

Ensuring a human rights approach

Any focus on "Building Trust with Rangers and Communities" needs to start with a human rights perspective (see box 3) for all involved; rangers, other conservation staff, Indigenous peoples and local communities. Three key resources should be known by all working in this field: (i) the 2018 *Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment*,[19] should underpin conservation initiatives, notably the symmetry identified in the Framework Principles whereby protecting the environment helps protect human rights, and protecting human rights helps protect the environment; (ii) *IUCN's Natural Resource Governance Framework* is an initiative of the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP). The framework aims to set standards and guidance for decision-makers at all levels to make better and more just decisions on the use of natural resources and the distribution of nature's benefits, following good governance principles, such that improved governance will enhance the contributions of ecosystems and biodiversity to equity and sustainability;[20] and (iii) where businesses (which includes not just commercial businesses but also conservation NGOs) are involved in the management of protected areas, another important reference document is the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework*.[21]

Photos (from top to bottom): Rangers based in Maharashtra, India, set out on patrol © Rohit Singh / WWF. Ranger in Northern Velebit National Park, Croatia © Equilibrium Research

What do we mean by trust?

Building an understanding of the concept of trust was the first necessary step in developing this scoping document. Trust has been defined as: the firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability of someone or something.[22] This definition has been expanded for the conservation domain to define four different types of trust (see table 2). This illustrates the complexity of trusting relations by identifying the underlying basis for trusting or distrusting entities (e.g., protected area governance authorities). These relate to the specific dispositions and contexts of different groups of stakeholders (e.g., trust relationships can vary between different villages around a protected area or involve differences within a village or even within individual households, depending on their own situation).

Trust is also hard to quantify and measure; communities (whether of rangers or of local people) do not trust as a block, rather trust is a very individual concept linked to past experiences and future expectation, personal qualities and so on. Trust is also mutual: it requires actions with and by communities and actions with and by rangers to build effectively. This section of the scoping document focuses on just one side of a two-way relationship: focusing on the actions of rangers and their managers that can help in building trusting relationships. Trust relationships can thus be viewed as *rational* (e.g., based purely on performance and outcomes, which in the case of protected areas should be informed by rigorous monitoring and reporting); or can be more *emotive* based on affinity with the perceptions of others

rather than independently evaluated; or trust can be built through effective *processes and procedures*, including safeguards, which build confidence in a relationship.[23]

Building on these underlying concepts, figure 2 outlines the management tools needed to support effective and accountable management. The figure outlines three elements which form the foundation of trust in this context: *Conservation management*, which needs to respect human rights and follow agreed processes and procedures to avoid conflict; *monitoring and transparent reporting*, to ensure that management is successful in this context; and *grievance and redress procedures*, which are vital to establish truth and/or reconciliation through access to justice and remedy in case conflict has occurred. All of which are, together, important to build and maintain trust between communities and rangers.

Trust is built by two or more parties being clear and constant in their approach to an issue, when equity and equality are present, and through the innumerable small acts of kindness and thoughtfulness which help build a relationship. The breakdown of trust can happen in a moment, or over decades, when expectations are not realized or when inequalities are so entrenched that trust is virtually impossible.

The rest of this scoping document is focused on how trust can be built by sharing good practices collected from practitioners from around the world.

Rangers host conservation exhibitions and lectures for local people and school classes at the Tiger Learning Centre, Thailand © Rungnapa Phoonjampa, WWF Thailand

Table 2: Definitions and antecedents of the four types of trust[24]

Type	Definition/basis	Antecedents
Dispositional	The general tendency or predisposition of an individual to trust or distrust another entity in a particular context.	Can be based on innate tendencies, personal history, received cultural norms, and/or contextual cues from one's current environment.
Rational	Trust in an entity is based primarily on a calculation of the perceived utility of the expected outcome of placing one's trust in that entity.	Evaluations of information about the prior performance of an entity and the subsequent predictability and assessment of likely outcomes.
Affinitive	Trust in an entity based primarily on the emotions and associated judgements resulting from either cognitive or subconscious assessments of the qualities of the potential trustee.	Cognitive or emotional assessment of the integrity and/or benevolence of the trustee, resulting from any of the following: (a) assumptions of shared values or concerns; (b) feelings of social connectedness; (c) shared positive experiences; (d) subconscious or emotional response to charisma or perceived shared identity.
Procedural	Trust in procedures or other systems that decrease vulnerability, enabling trust in the absence of other forms of trusting relationship.	Perceptions of legitimate, transparent and/or binding procedures that enable confident predictions of the behaviours of others.

Conservation management
Codes of conduct, social and environmental safeguards and good practices

Human rights approach to effective and accountable management

Grievance and redress procedures
Internal grievance procedure and an external process (ombudsman) with power to act

Monitoring and transparent reporting
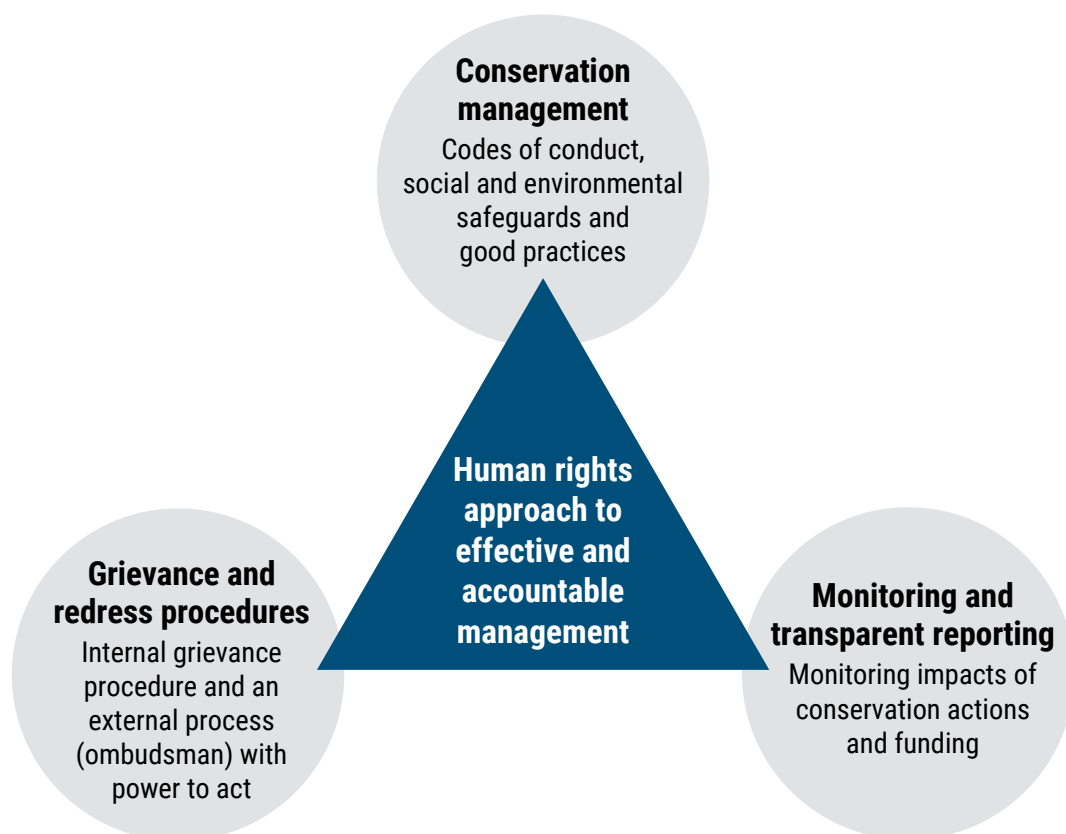Monitoring impacts of conservation actions and funding

Figure 2: Management tools needed to support building trusting relationships between protected area management staff, including rangers, and Indigenous peoples and local communities through effective and accountable protected areas management

Awapy Uru Eu Wau Wau and his wife Juwi Uru Eu Wau Wau from Rondônia State, Brazil.
Both are part of the surveillance team which oversees the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau indigenous land
to record loggers' invasions and illegal deforestation © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK

Section 2: Good practice examples to help build ranger and community trust

A framework for trusting relationships

Building on the discussion in section 1, protected areas' authorities should develop a positive vision for diverse stakeholders and rightsholders (including protected area staff, local people and Indigenous people) who live and work in and around the area and interact with the protected area. Achievement of this vision should:

- Ensure a strong understanding of and respect for the human rights of all individuals and corresponding obligations (see box 3).
- Ensure people from all backgrounds feel valued and enjoy similar life opportunities.
- Find opportunities for mutual collaboration between rangers and Indigenous peoples and local communities, to build and maintain trusting relationships.
- Generate respect through participatory dialogue processes and by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about "others".
- Develop through collaboration and inclusive consultation a defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and groups to an area, its conservation, local livelihood potential, etc. and find common/institutionalizing platforms that can bring both parties together.

- Have in place requirements of effective and accountable management (see figure 2) including ranger codes of conduct, an independent and fully functioning grievance mechanism, safeguarding mechanisms, and monitoring and reporting relating to human rights issues.

The actions and good practices which follow have been drawn from a wide range of sources: from conservation literature, literature from associated disciplines such as criminal justice, and, most importantly, by speaking with rangers and other protected areas practitioners and communities around the world. It is intended as a list of practical local actions, and thus it does not repeat the wide range of guidance and tools for community participation in conservation.

Starting with some overarching good practices for building a diverse and professional ranger workforce, these are then broken down into a series of headings (see figure 3) that group the good practices together.
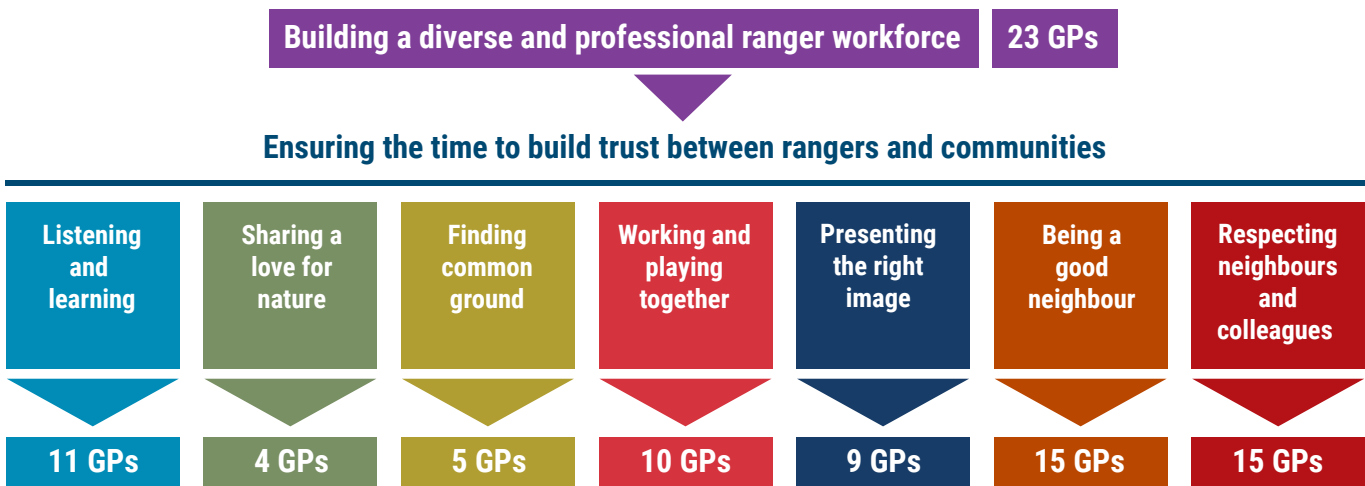
Building a diverse and professional ranger workforce	23 GPs

Ensuring the time to build trust between rangers and communities

Listening and learning	Sharing a love for nature	Finding common ground	Working and playing together	Presenting the right image	Being a good neighbour	Respecting neighbours and colleagues
11 GPs	4 GPs	5 GPs	10 GPs	9 GPs	15 GPs	15 GPs

Figure 3: A framework for building trust with rangers and communities related to the good practices (GPs)

Good practices for helping to build trust

The good practices are identified to clarify actions taken primarily by managers and those taken primarily by rangers. From this it is clear that there is much that protected areas and their staff can do to prevent, avoid and reduce conflict. Even the smallest actions can help build trust. And perhaps, just perhaps, each small building block of trust can over time help achieve more equitable collaboration, more meaningful dialogue and true transparency in the relationship between rangers, Indigenous people and local communities.

Applies to managers   **Applies to rangers**

As noted above, these good practices have been collected from around the world. They should not be seen as a "to do list" as not all will be relevant, feasible, practical or suitable for a site, but rather they are a compendium of good ideas to pick and choose from and adapt where appropriate. And of course, the factors that help build and maintain trust are likely to change over time and across generations, what has worked with one generation may not work with those following. One strategy is unlikely to cover all members of a community. Trust is also a personal thing and changes in personnel in a protected area and leadership in a community can lead to major changes, good and bad, in relationships.

Building a diverse and professional ranger workforce

Employ local rangers from a broad spectrum of the community wherever possible to avoid the feeling that jobs are being taken away from local people. The perception of "local" can vary; for some, coming from a neighbouring village is local, in other cases neighbouring villagers are seen as outsiders. Local rangers also have the additional benefit of having better local relationships and higher job satisfaction (see box 4).

BOX 4: The benefits of being local

A recent study of ranger survey data from across 11 countries explored how being local to a conservation area might affect ranger experiences and perceptions (local was defined as being within 20km of their conservation area). The survey found that being local corresponds to more positive relations with local communities, specifically with regards to perceived trust from local community members. This also correlated with rangers having a higher job satisfaction due to more amicable community relationships.[25]

Mini case study 1: Locally elected community rangers

The Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation (SLCF) in Mongolia has been working in Tost (Tosonbumba Nature Reserve) to support local people to conserve their livelihoods. Tost was declared a State Nature Reserve (NR) in 2016, since then SLCF has been assisting local herding families to organize into seven conservation communities, each community having a clearly mapped out Community Responsible Area (CRA) in the NR where they are responsible for conservation and protection. The CRAs are delineated and mapped with the participation of communities, based on traditional resource use and grazing patterns, and are approved by the local government.

Community rangers are elected by their fellow herder community members; rangers are chosen because of their known interest in, and knowledge of, nature and their physical ability to conduct the work. At each community meeting, held twice a year, the community rangers report on their work to their community members and to the NR administration. The seven community rangers patrol their CRAs on a monthly basis to conduct wildlife monitoring surveys, as well as to check any illegal activities taking place.

See case study volume for the full story

Employ a diversity of rangers across gender, ethnicity etc. In particular, ensure that women and Indigenous peoples are employed (see boxes 4 and 6), as well as members of other under-represented groups in terms of age, ethnicity, religion, ability and disability, sexual orientation, etc. In some cases this may imply challenging social norms (see box 5).

BOX 5: Challenging cultural norms

There is clearly a balance to be drawn in avoiding the imposition of ideals or values that go against the culture of a country or community, with ensuring observance of human rights and values such as equity and equality. For instance, in patriarchal societies and communities, there may be opposition to employing women rangers (see also box 6). Indeed, in countries where it is legal to post job advertisements that specify male or female applicants, many ranger jobs are advertised as male only.[26] Change will come both from sharing experiences worldwide and a process of conversation, understanding and then agreement to act, rather than imposing quotas or other external processes that do not take into account cultural norms and perceptions.

Community rangers in Tost Tosonbumba Nature Reserve, Mongolia preparing to go on patrol © Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation, Mongolia

BOX 6: Gender equity in law enforcement

A "best estimate" is that only 3-11 per cent of rangers globally, on average, are women.[27] Peer-reviewed literature on women as formal wildlife protectors is thus scant, and more research into the direct and indirect roles of women in wildlife crime is needed.[28] The first specific review of women rangers globally carried out for URSA, however, concluded that:

- In law enforcement or possible conflict situations, women tend to have de-escalation and negotiation skills.

- Women rangers may be better at "details" (including keeping patrol logs) than men.

- Women rangers may have better access than men to different constituencies (especially other women) in communities. Whether for information-seeking purposes, or gathering enforcement intelligence, women can expand the reach of ranger networks.[29]

- It has also been suggested that women rangers can contribute to preventing internal corruption.[30]

The URSA review noted good practices that will facilitate women's integration into ranger workforces including:

- Women-specific training opportunities.

- Critical-mass hiring of women (not just one by one) and at a senior level.

- Strong mission statements of commitment to gender equality, and enforceable and enforced policies of zero-tolerance for harassment.

- Women's specific ranger and conservation associations, both formal and informal.

- Training programmes on gender equality for all protected areas staff.[31]

Employ rangers who speak the local languages/ dialects. Where necessary, promote the learning of local languages and dialects and provide learning resources for rangers; learning a few words and practising with the local people will be appreciated as an effort to embrace their culture.

Think about how people react to having power. During the ranger selection process consider how individuals may respond to situations of power (see box 7).

Train and effectively equip local people as volunteer rangers where appropriate to support conservation and build community relations. *Mexico and Peru have good examples of formal programmes of Volunteer Rangers. In Mexico they are called "Vigilantes comunitarios" and are certified by the government (see volume 2) and in Peru, they are the Guardaparques Voluntarios del Perú.*[32]

Open up job opportunities through innovative programmes and creative planning to enable part-time and seasonal opportunities for participation, to help increase engagement from individuals with other responsibilities, family commitments, etc.

BOX 7: People and power

In the 1970s, a group of psychologists designed and executed an experiment to assess how being given a position of power impacts social interactions and determines behaviour. Known as the Stanford Prison Experiment, the experiment used a mock prison setting, with college students role-playing prisoners and guards to understand how power influences an individual's attitude, values and behaviour. The results were extreme: mock prisoners suffered intense emotional stress reactions caused by their sense of powerlessness induced by the guards who began acting in cruel, dehumanizing ways.[33] These results were, of course, related to those individuals involved and general conclusions should not be drawn. But an interesting hypothesis to come from this experiment is that power amplifies existing personality dispositions and tendencies.[34] Thus, when people are put in a position of power, as rangers often are, it is important to consider these interactions, and specifically to consider that those with a communal relationship orientation (e.g., those who take into account other people's needs and feelings when making a decision) tend to demonstrate a greater generosity when given power than those that don't.[35]

Mini case study 2: Volunteers become the mainstay of ranger patrols in Trinidad and Tobago

Nature Seekers[36] is a community-based organization founded in 1990 with the aim of protecting nesting leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Trinidad and Tobago from poaching. In order to find a long-term solution to this problem, the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division worked together with the local Matura community to establish a tour guide training programme. The intent of this programme was to educate the community about the need to protect the environment, and it was from this programme that Nature Seekers was formed. Although initially Nature Seekers operated purely on a volunteer basis, and had great difficulty in obtaining funds, they were later commissioned by the government to patrol the beach and to provide a mandatory tour guide service to visitors. While Nature Seekers has remained a non-governmental organization, they work in cooperation with the government to protect the leatherback turtles. Nature Seekers has also been successful in generating community awareness about the importance of conservation. Even some poachers and their families became convinced of the importance of conservation, and joined the Nature Seekers. Through this and their patrolling efforts, Nature Seekers have brought down the rate of turtles being slaughtered from 30 per cent to zero, and the anti-poaching patrol is being refocused to focus on monitoring and research.

BOX 8: Ranger working condition challenges

Rangers are a vital resource for both conserving and protecting biodiversity and developing mutual trust and good working relationships with local communities. However, one long-term and underlying problem has been the lack of professionalization linked with ranger employment, which is represented by a range of poor working conditions and inadequate (or inappropriate) training.[37,38] The consequences of this are manyfold, but paying rangers a living wage that allows their children to be educated and their family to be fed, also reduces the likelihood of corruption from rangers seeking to support their families' welfare, and leads to more professional and committed rangers.

Make long-term professionalization[39] **and employment commitments to rangers**, and in particular to community rangers (as well-trained unemployed rangers could be a divisive force in the community and a security threat).[40]

Ensure workplace equality. All rangers whether government employees, local community rangers or voluntary rangers, should be treated equally in terms of safeguards and minimum working conditions (see box 8).

Pay attention to ranger concerns about their safety and security, and respect for their human rights, including their right to decent conditions of work (e.g., provision of insurance schemes and family support in case of accidents and fatalities). This not only helps rangers and their families but delivers the message of a caring organization to the wider community.

Have supporting employment policies in place if more than one member of a household wishes to be a ranger; in some countries women have been barred from becoming rangers if their husbands are already employed as rangers.

Rotate rangers around ranger stations to prevent/avoid the potential for corruption and collusion.

Locate ranger outposts in villages to embed rangers more closely in the local community and their families.

Undertake random/shadow monitoring of patrols to ensure compliance with rules and regulations, including those related to interactions with resident or nearby communities.

Increase supervision of rangers beyond just patrol observations to help alleviate concerns related to human rights violations and other misconduct (e.g., corruption).

Identify individual rangers who can most successfully broker lines of communication between different constituencies (e.g., particular village communities, genders, elders, etc.).[41]

Ensure rangers are aware of the IRF ranger code of conduct, or a protected area or protected area authority's own code of conduct (see box 9).

BOX 9: IRF's Global Ranger Code of Conduct

In April 2021, the IRF with support from URSA, launched the world's first Global Ranger Code of Conduct, and has begun working toward its implementation. The Code provides a set of principles for behaviour and proper practices for rangers, as well as steps to help formalize the field to ultimately build and strengthen the reputation of the ranger profession.[42] The IRF Code is a template to be adapted to local contexts and multiple language versions are being developed.

BOX 10: Good practice principles for grievance mechanisms

Grievance mechanisms are a way for people or communities to express their concerns about a project, process, action or person. The ideal is for all community members and protected areas staff to be supportive of the conservation activities and the management actions being taken to achieve conservation and aligned objectives taking place in protected areas. But when problems over policy, process, management or relationships occur, grievance mechanisms provide a structure for addressing issues.

IUCN has outlined the key principles that should guide grievance mechanisms:

- *Accessible*: Mechanism is fully accessible to all parties that might be affected.

- *Practical*: Mechanism is cost-effective and practical in its implementation and doesn't create a burden for implementers.

- *Effective and timely response*: The provisions and steps for responding to complaints and seeking solutions are effective and timely.

- *Transparent*: Decisions are taken in a transparent way, and complainants are regularly updated on progress.

- *Independent*: Oversight body and designated investigator is independent from the project, process, action or person the complaint has been made against.

- *Protection from retaliation*: Procedures are in place to protect the complainant and minimize the risk of retaliation.

- *Maintenance of records*: Diligent documentation of negotiations and agreements and good maintenance of records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.[43]

Develop mechanisms for whistle-blowers, or those making complaints or raising issues, either anonymously or confidentially, to raise concerns that standard operating procedures or codes of conduct are not being adhered to.

Develop safe, secure, functioning and independent grievance mechanisms along with a clear process to resolve complaints and ensure access to justice (see box 10).

Ensure disciplinary procedures are transparent and known by both rangers and local communities; and those procedures are fully implemented.

Share good practices on working with communities; exchange information on what works and does not work, between rangers and IPLCs, for example through social media platforms such as a Facebook page, WhatsApp group or Apps such as the Ranger App from Force for Nature.[44]

Provide basic human rights training for rangers, so that they understand what the human rights of local community members and Indigenous peoples are, and what their duties and obligations should be. Capacity building should also cover rangers' human rights, so that they are able to understand what their rights are and how to claim them.

Ensure rangers understand application of law and order; and have access to and are trained in the use of clear protocols and standard operating procedures on law[45] and order,[46] including:

a. In what situations should different types of rangers intervene, especially in situations where there is a combination of "formal" rangers and community rangers/volunteers.
b. What is their jurisdiction, e.g., when are they authorized to make decisions and when should they refer to colleagues/superiors.
c. What are the national, local, site-based rules under which rangers operate.
d. How conservation law enforcement works with other law providers (e.g., police, army).

Ensure there are clear protocols available to rangers and communities where rangers bear arms,[47] including:

a. Who is allowed to carry arms.
b. Storage of arms outside of working hours (should be in an armoury).
c. When and how the use of firearms is permitted.
d. Protocols on documentation of when ammunition is used (and why).
e. Protocols if someone is injured/killed by ranger firearms.

Mini case study 3: Lessons learned from Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda

Ranger workforce actions taken to build community and ranger trust focused on:

- Rangers' ability to foster trust and collaboration largely depends on their professionalism, ability to empathize with the specific local situation, and their ability to choose and implement conflict management strategies.[48]

- Training of rangers in issues such as conflict resolution and community engagement helps build their social skills and sense of pride and professionalism and improve their interactions with local communities.

- Taking community members to different areas of the park and surrounding area widened their understanding of conservation.[49]

In addition, community volunteers (known as wildlife scouts) were engaged to help protect farms from crop raiding by wild animals, the lessons learned included:

- Wildlife scouts' training taught members skills in controlling wild animals that stray from the park using different interventions. This has helped to improve community relations with the management authority.

- Wildlife scouts were taught the behaviours of wild animals with knowledge transferred to the community members. This has helped improve the tactics of communities in chasing away the animals without causing them harm, thus decreasing conflicts and accidents.

- First aid training equipped wildlife scouts with knowledge to handle problems such as fractures and sprains, which then provided a community-wide resource.[50]

See case study volume for the full story

Listening and learning

Ensure rangers, and all staff, have the time to stop and talk to people as neighbours, find out about them or specifically what they know about the area, particularly in terms of issues which impact conservation.

25 **Take time to understand different communities' "world views" and their governance structures, beliefs and influences**. Communities are not homogeneous and are made up of people of different ethnicities, religions, political or other belief systems. It is important therefore to develop relationships with a range of community representatives, from the younger men and women, through to the elders (both men and women), and to target discrimination and inequalities and recognize groups whose voices are not currently being heard in decision-making.

26 **Take time to learn from communities about their sense of place, traditional knowledge on use of resources and relationship with the area**. Listening and learning should be a central part of a rangers job. *In Peru, community park guards in Communal Reserves undertake reconnaissance expeditions with older communal park guards to understand the sacredness of the area and how such places should be managed traditionally.*

27 **Work with village elders (men and women) and younger members of the community to walk boundaries** which are not clearly understood or demarcated, agree the boundaries and ensure that the information is passed from one generation to the next. *In Sri Lanka, when electric fences are erected to protect communities from crop-raiding elephants, local rangers follow local/community suggestions rather than the staff deciding the boundaries and fence locations, this sense of ownership is extended to communities also being paid to maintain fences.*

28 **Work with village elders (men and women) and younger members of the community to mark out trails**, and clarify local names of places and features, agree routes and ensure that the information is passed from one generation to the next (see box 11).

Women rangers in Bhutan © Rohit Singh / WWF

BOX 11: Using local knowledge in mapping exercises

Identifying trails and local place names inside Hin Nam No National Park in Laos based on local knowledge was identified as a useful starting point for involving local communities in co-management of the protected area. The mapping also created a good basis for dividing areas of management responsibility between villages and helped set up a village ranger patrolling system, which resulted in much better spatial monitoring data on occurrences of wildlife and threats. Villager trail mapping, village ranger system and scientific monitoring data is gathered in SMART. Updated maps are created and used in participatory zonation and other management functions, like guiding the ranger activities. The system works because each village has an interest in keeping people from other villages out of their use area. It also provides a strong basis for co-management between government and local communities.[51] Employing local rangers has also led to an increase in management effectiveness.[52]

29 Drop in and share a drink, meal or other social activity with local people as part of regular interactions with communities. The key element in developing trust and relationships is to sit and listen, don't speak, just listen, allow time for people to absorb what you have discussed, and do not expect an immediate response. Practise nonviolent communication to find common ground, empathy and collaboration.[53] *To foster trusting relationships with local communities/Indigenous peoples, one has to be open, honest and understanding of their conditions; interact with them by listening to their stories and traditional folklore and eat with them. Itu wetlands, Akwa Ibom state/Nigeria.*

30 Encourage local people to share information with rangers using social media, e.g., set up a Facebook page or WhatsApp group. However, information sharing will need to be confidential if it is on anti-poaching or whereabouts of animals if there is a poaching threat. Maintaining an open dialogue through regular ranger interaction with communities will help develop positive park-community relationships and encourage communities to report wildlife crime and empower communities to take responsibility for crime control and be more willing to intervene for the common good.[54]

31 Do not consider silence as consent to ranger / management actions. When listening and learning, do not consider silence as consent for a project, intervention or management strategy, it rarely is. But talking through issues can eventually lead to consent.

Develop process to understand the values that local people derive from the protected area and its surroundings and incorporate these into management wherever possible (see box 12).

Employ a range of tools to help understand the social and governance issues, values and impacts (whether real or perceived) of protected areas so rangers are informed and prepared, and managers develop strategies to mitigate any emerging problems (see box 13).

Avoid imposing outside ideals or values that go against the culture of the community. For example, if trying to recruit female rangers (see box 6) in patriarchal communities, build a programme slowly through conversation, understanding and then agreement to, rather than imposing immediate quotas which can build resentment.

BOX 12: The Protected Areas Benefits Assessment Tool

The Protected Areas Benefits Assessment Tool Plus (PA-BAT+) describes how to run a participatory, consensus-led evaluation of the range of ecosystem services available from a protected area (or any other defined area of land or water). It brings together a diverse range of stakeholders in a workshop setting over a day to discuss what the site being assessed means to local people, what benefits (economic and non-economic) they derive from the area and how they perceive those benefits flows to society. A standardized set of questions helps to identify and assess the level of importance and distribution of current and potential ecosystem services ranging from tourism, through water security and disaster risk reduction, to cultural and spiritual benefits. Open discussion allows facilitators to explore information on any additional benefits, problems, local experiences and stories, and suggestions for managers. Most important, managers and staff get to hear the views of stakeholders and different members of the community have a chance to interact and share ideas and experiences.[55]

BOX 13: Tools for assessing the social impacts, governance and equity of conservation

IIED has developed three practical and relatively low-cost tools for stakeholders/rights-holders (actors) to assess the social impacts, quality of governance and equity of conservation and associated development activities. The tools are listed below and a brief overview comparing the tools and their requirements has also been developed:[56]

- Social Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas (SAPA)[57] focuses on impacts of area-based conservation on the well-being of local people, plus a basic governance assessment. SAPA can be used with almost any type of protected or conserved area.

- Governance assessment for protected and conserved areas (GAPA)[58] focuses on governance challenges and underlying causes but only for PCAs where actors are willing to explore sensitive governance issues.

- Site-level assessment of governance and equity (SAGE)[59] focuses on governance and equity. SAGE is less deep than GAPA but covers a broader scope of issues and costs less. SAGE can be used with any type of PCA.

Mini case study 4: Using song and dance to raise awareness in Thailand

Mae Wong and Khlong Lan (MWKL) National Parks in Thailand provide important habitat for both the tigers and their main prey base of sambar and muntjac deer. However, the local people were previously more familiar with the African wildlife of nature documentaries than the wonders of the forests on their doorstep. While patrolling and wildlife monitoring take up much of the MWKL rangers' time (over 50 per cent of whom come from the surrounding communities), community outreach is also a major responsibility – in particular, raising awareness around the importance of tigers and their protection.

The rangers have been particularly creative with ideas for community outreach and awareness raising campaigns. In particular, the Big Cat Band was formed by ten MWKL rangers to engage people, particularly young people, through the medium of music. They perform popular hits but have also written their own songs about conservation and wildlife. For example, one of their songs is about Khlong Lan waterfall – its importance for water management and also how beautiful it is, encouraging people to visit the park and the waterfall for themselves, appreciate their natural heritage and support its protection. The band performs in schools and in villages on market days. People love the band, and they have developed friendships with the rangers through these musical interactions.

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Sharing a love for nature

Involve rangers in conservation education for all ages through formation of conservation clubs and societies in schools and communities. Give local children positive experiences in protected areas with rangers; and make education fun. Invite local people to join guided tours/events and undertake environmental education on site for school classes. *In Sri Lanka, community conservation/school awareness programmes run by NGOs ensure rangers are invited to take part, particularly in areas where there are ranger-community disputes.*

Ensure adequate training for rangers who take part in school visits and other community-based activities, e.g., in making presentations, facilitation and how to deal with questions and any tensions arising during interactions.

The Big Cat Band, Thailand © Rungnapa Phoonjampa, WWF Thailand

Set up junior/youth ranger schemes to develop a better understanding of rangers' work in the wider community. There are examples of Junior Ranger Programmes around the world including from Papua New Guinea,[60] USA,[61] Central America,[62] Kenya,[63] among many others. Benefits from this are twofold, at least: (i) youths will go home and educate their parents and elders on protected areas' goals and rangers' roles; (ii) youths are the future of protected areas and may become guardians, future community leaders, rangers and other conservation specialists themselves.

Respect local culture and work with local communities to ensure sustainable use of areas or resources linked to biodiversity. This may require encouraging innovation and changing traditions within communities (see box 14).

BOX 14: The Maasai Olympics: The hunt for medals, not lions

Hunting lions was the traditional way of proving manhood for the Maasai in East Africa. But lion numbers have dwindled. In 2008, the Menye Layiok, or Maasai "cultural fathers", had the idea to organize a sports event based on traditional Maasai warrior skills to replace the hunting tradition as a mark of manhood, bravery and prestige. Now well-established, the Olympics are held every two years. Participating villages select teams through a series of tournaments leading up to the finals across six categories: rungu and javelin throwing, high jump, and 200m, 800m and 5,000m races.[64]

Mini case study 5: Pakke Tiger Reserve: preserving biodiversity and local culture

The great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) has long been hunted for its beak, feathers and casque (the helmet-like structure on the bird's head) for decorative elements in the traditional ceremonial headgear of the Nyshi tribe who live around the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh in northeast India.[65] Traditionally hunting was sustainable, with conservation aspects ingrained. But the introduction of sophisticated long-range arms and ammunition led to increased hunting, this was coupled with a sudden population rise and a movement to revive the Nyishi culture.

The solution to this conservation problem was the introduction of artificial hornbill beaks and feathers that has removed the need to hunt hornbills. It worked because of long-term engagement and awareness raising, and because the cultural traditions of the area have been respected and conservation actions have been focused on aligning conservation and community objectives rather than trying to change or prohibit cultural activities.

This has been possible because of the high number of rangers coming from the local Nyshi tribe, who understood the importance of the cultural values being maintained. This alignment has gone hand in hand with creating awareness on the values of conservation, and in particular in employing local people in monitoring hornbill populations. Being able to adapt the all-important ceremonial headgear is, of course, a fairly unique situation to this area, but the process of engagement in problem solving, setting up local conservation management that works with local governance structures and ensuring economic benefits as well are all lessons which are globally applicable.

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Finding common ground

39 **Try to find common values or interests**; there are nearly always some interests that people share. Identifying common ground over which communities and rangers can start collaborating can lead to future collaborations over conservation issues.

40 **Walk and talk**; walking and talking is a good way to encourage communication with local people. This can either be informal or more formal "take a walk with a ranger" events which can be youth focused, as part of education programmes, or focused on members or representatives of local communities or Indigenous peoples.

Identify people/groups within the community who are interested in protecting the area or have a particular stake in the values of the area, biodiversity or ecosystem functions. Link rangers work with these groups (e.g., non-timber forest product collectors, women who rely on clean water from streams/rivers, etc.), to hear from them what they may need and build on these relationships to further conservation goals.

Mini case study 6: Finding common ground in the Amazon

Long-term conflicts over resource use and conservation management have led to direct conflicts between rangers and Indigenous peoples and local communities around the world. In the Amazon region, small-scale gold mining has been at the centre of one such conflict. However, a change in administration of the protected area saw a new priority, to improve the relationship between the area's personnel and the local community. A joint solution was sought between the community and rangers over resource use to help regain trust with the community. The result was a negotiated and mutually agreed agreement to allow limited artisanal gold extraction while communities sought alternative economic activities that were not harmful to nature to make up their income. The rangers in the area stress that when danger is involved, it is necessary to negotiate and make difficult decisions; to make trade-offs. Transparency and openness was an essential part of the process and that agreements were fulfilled. It has been a gradual process, they still do not have full trust, but the relationship has improved significantly. It has been a long task; it was achieved through visiting people and talking with the people. Now local communities and rangers undertake collaborative activities: sowing plants together or sharing lunch strengthens the relationship.

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Develop beneficial local groups, projects, etc. such as community forests, tree nurseries, beekeeping projects, traditional resource management and use, tree care programmes with local people to provide benefits to local people.

Consider trade-offs. Well negotiated, thought-through and monitored trade-offs where both sides win a little and lose a little can solve what seem like intractable conservation problems.

Working and playing together

44 **Build friendly relationships through shared extra-curricular activities** such as sports and music (e.g., create football teams with mixed ranger and community members).

45 **Take time to learn about other people's work in the community and find opportunities to collaborate** to add value to each other's work (e.g., work with local teachers to develop days out with rangers, make links with tourism businesses or people with similar livelihoods).

Mini case study 7: Working with local governance bodies in Mexico

The National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) works with landowners in the state of Oaxaca in the southeastern region of the Mexican Pacific to develop Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC, Áreas Destinadas Voluntariamente a la Conservación).

One of their most important lessons in terms of building trust between the local communities and CONANP rangers has been for the CONANP rangers to work with the internal organizational structures of the communities, and from there strengthen capacity for territory management, vigilance and monitoring. This has been a far more effective approach than inventing internal structures that have nothing to do with the community and employing people who do not know the territory. CONANP rangers thus participate on a daily basis in community decision-making bodies, such as local assemblies and in building the capacity of "vigilantes comunitarios" (volunteer local rangers) in conservation skills. CONANP rangers also help the communities in the process of creating and establishing the Voluntary Conservation Areas and have direct contact with the community by supporting the implementation of specific CONANP projects, which also helps build trust.

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Help set up environmental committees, or sub-committees within community governance structures, that promote positive changes in favour of the environment.

47 **Encourage communities to include rangers in local governance structures**. Rangers should represent the protected area/protected area authority in local/district/regional/provincial government meetings where environmental/conservation issues are discussed.

Work with local assemblies, councils or other governance bodies that are part of the community, instead of creating new mechanisms.

Ruaha National Park, Tanzania © Nigel Dudley, Equilibrium Research

BOX 15: Building relationships with community camera-trapping

In southern Tanzania around Ruaha National Park, there has been quite a bit of hostility between the protected area and local people. Meeting rangers and seeing wildlife is very important, for example through engaging local people through park trips, where they meet protected area staff and learn about the role of the park. The most effective development, however, has been through an innovation called community camera-trapping. Villagers are trained and employed to place camera-traps on their land and receive points for each sighting. Those points are then translated into additional community benefits. Benefits are agreed depending on local priorities, which are usually related to healthcare, veterinary medicine and education. The villages with the most points are awarded the additional benefits and are celebrated each quarter. The project works only on village land, but shows a very clear benefit to conserving the wildlife that comes from the park, so makes those areas seem more beneficial to local people.[66]

49 **Actively work with local people in formal and informal reserve and wildlife surveys** (see box 15), and monitoring work via citizen science and joint activities (e.g., camera-trapping, Bioblitz, summer camps, working bees). *The annual Tamaraw count in Mts Iglit Baco Natural Park in the Philippines involves rangers, Indigenous community members, students and biologists working in teams together.*

Minimize solo enforcement efforts within the community; having several rangers and ideally community members present during enforcement activities helps reduce false accusations and/or bad practice and protects both ranger and community members. It is also a safer way to operate ensuring there is backup if something goes wrong.

Encourage direct community involvement in law enforcement, either as full rangers or by supporting ranger activities. If communities are under threat from "outsiders" taking resources, then working together with rangers provides security for natural resource management as well as protecting livestock, etc.

52 **Support environmental defenders** who share the same commitment to protecting the environment and seek to promote solidarity between rangers and environmental defenders.

Develop programmes which support community members who have been in conflict situations with rangers. Hiring ex-poachers as conservation staff or "casual labourers" for a variety of basic jobs (e.g., grass-cutting) can help to strengthen community relations (see box 16). *In Uganda, poverty is a driver for poaching activities, so rangers believed that employing ex-offenders not only helped develop rapport with villagers but also reduced poaching.*[69]

Presenting the right image

Train rangers in good comportment, e.g., focusing on the way they act, the way they interact with local communities, and ensuring good behaviour. Training should include reflection on community engagement, non-violent communication,[70] gender dynamics and how power can be used and abused (see boxes 6 and 7). Rangers should be trained to be impartial in their work.

Diversify the stereotype of a ranger (which will vary depending on where they are in the world). The term "ranger" covers a vast array of tasks and responsibilities. Categorize and clearly identify rangers depending on their roles and responsibilities. Rangers who are responsible, or carrying out, education or tourism management, for example, should be clearly distinguishable from rangers who are tasked with anti-poaching and law enforcement responsibilities.

Mini case study 8: Rangers improving community security in Belize

Since 2018, transboundary incursions from Guatemala into Belize have resulted in a spike in illicit activities including hunting, logging and gold panning. Impacts on the Maya Golden Landscape (MGL) in Belize are being managed by Ya'axché Conservation Trust. Enforcement and Compliance rangers (the majority of whom come from the local Indigenous community) have been trained and authorized to carry and make use of firearms during deep patrols conducted jointly with the Belize Defence Force, Forest Department and often local police. Within their communities they are essentially local police, they have the power to arrest as delegated by the special constable training received and mandated by a co-management agreement with the government of Belize. Patrols are planned and approved by the protected areas programme and executive directors and under no other circumstances are Ya'axché's rangers authorized to carry and use firearms. Enforcement and Compliance rangers are required to undergo training on the latest version of Belize's criminal code act along with ammunition and weapons safety.[68]

BOX 16: Hiring ex-poachers

Officials in Periyar National Park, Kerala, India have developed a novel way to work with poachers. After arresting a group of 23 wildlife poachers, officials from the Forest Department started a rehabilitation initiative to help ensure these individuals did not re-offend. They set up an eco-development committee called Vidiyal Vanapathukappu Sangam to re-employ the poachers as rangers. The group all went through a three-month training period and carry out patrols and anti-poaching activities as well as participating in the local tourism industry through safaris, bamboo-rafting and as tourist guides. If any of the individuals involved are found to be carrying out poaching activities, they are expelled from the group indefinitely. Of the original group of 23, six have either left or been expelled. The remaining 17 have found stability through the project and many have been able to send their children on to further education as a result. The group has also facilitated the arrest of over 230 gang members engaged in poaching and smuggling in the park and they have transformed the Marayoor Sandalwood reserve into a poaching-free zone.[67]

Avoid mixed messaging so that rangers are not involved in both "hard" and "soft" crime prevention. This is especially relevant in sensitive situations. Having rangers visit a village as part of a "hearts and minds" campaign one day and then the same people potentially arresting villagers the next day causes tension and resentment.

57 Wear "casual" non-military uniforms for community visits and events and most public interactions. Reserve the paramilitary gear for where it is genuinely needed. *The Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers have different uniforms to distinguish between the law enforcement and community rangers.*[71]

Think about the image rangers present and how this may impact trust building. There is a tendency to portray rangers in "military" stance, in uniform often with weapons. There is a need, worldwide, to think about this imagery. Rangers have multiple roles and having more imagery around community involvement and showing rangers are part of the community could help change attitudes.

59 Ensure opportunities for positive interactions between rangers and communities; if interactions are only over issues such as enforcement then relationships are likely to be negative.

Avoid intimidating and dominant infrastructure and imagery. "Conservation castles" signify occupation and are also intimidating for people to visit. Create friendly, welcoming, sympathetic designs for infrastructure; use/adapt existing/local buildings and styles. When developing interpretation centres do not focus imagery on rangers arresting someone but include more positive ranger and community interactions.

Make ranger vehicles and posts attractive and welcoming, to encourage people to approach rangers, ask questions and discuss issues and problems.

62 Link up with local community radio stations and encourage rangers to communicate information relevant to conservation and the educational, developmental, social and cultural needs of a community, broadcast in local languages or dialects "from the field".[72]

Being a good neighbour

Ensure rangers are encouraged and mandated to assist if it is obvious that local people need help (e.g., minor first aid); a small act of kindness can go a long way in building relationships.

64 Be alert to current/rising issues in communities, i.e., lack of health care, domestic abuse, food shortages, etc. and be flexible to assist communities in the ways they need. *The Covid-19 pandemic saw an increase in domestic abuse in Mongolian communities, in response, rangers were trained in how to respond to domestic abuse reports and bring in relevant government authorities.*

65 Do not drive fast and aggressively through communities; such actions are anti-social in many ways, raising dust and sand is unpleasant and can destroy crops. Fast driving also endangers people, especially the young and old, livestock, pets and wildlife.

66 Arrange community meals and share in food growing, cooking and eating.

Try to source ranger rations from local communities; if rangers on-site need food rations (e.g., when posted in the field) local sourcing can provide important direct financial benefit.[73]

68 Take part, and assist where possible/appropriate, in local celebrations,[74] ceremonies and prayer. *Park managers and rangers in Jordan pray in the same mosque as the community. They also help find resources for repairs of the building, which made a huge difference to community relations. Monks in Cambodia are actively engaged in park management and help with blessing animal releases, sacred trees, etc.*

69 Be patient, it can take a long time for relationships to develop; understanding and trust do not emerge overnight.

70 Share protected area management resources such as providing safe spaces for meeting and networking, which may be particularly important for women's groups, etc.

Ensure rangers have the training, equipment and mandate to provide emergency services (e.g., medical care, emergency transport, disaster relief) and are insured as necessary in case of any problems.

Ensure rangers have the capacity to act as first responders after natural disasters such as hurricanes, volcanic eruptions and pandemics, e.g., helping clear roads and watercourses, checking properties, rescuing people, providing triage and emergency medical care, sharing resources such as food, water or off-grid power sources (see box 17).

Train rangers in first aid to help rangers become community first responders, in addition to increasing their security and well-being (see box 18). Rangers should be trained and prepared to use first aid knowledge in non-conservation related emergencies where appropriate, e.g., accidents, women in labour, responding to domestic abuse problems.

74 **Rangers trained in treating injured wild animals can also help out community animal husbandry emergencies** if local veterinary services are not immediately available, and ensure communities know who to contact if they find wild animals in need of rescue (this is particularly important for predators who are more likely to attack wildlife and people if injured).

Support rangers who want to volunteer for local response units, e.g., ensure they have time to contribute to mountain and sea rescue.

Direct ranger monitoring efforts to problems that also support local communities, particularly in terms of health impacts. *In the Colombian Amazon, National Park rangers have supported analysis of impacts on health for Indigenous communities from mercury contamination coming from illegal gold mining. As a result, they have contributed to awareness raising, supported law enforcement and supported communities in identifying the level of mercury in fish.*[78]

Ensure community appeals for help are responded to promptly and positively, for example, set up rapid response teams to deal with human-wildlife conflict (see box 19).

BOX 17: Rangers and Covid-19

The wider role of rangers worldwide has been highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic with rangers supporting a wide range of duties including conducting international border patrols to control virus spread; delivering essential goods (e.g. rations) to communities and vulnerable groups; enforcement of social distancing and use of masks among park visitors and communities; creating awareness (e.g. posting signs, educating the public) among communities; providing emergency medical assistance; supporting authorities in track and tracing; and distributing health kits (e.g. masks, sanitizers) to local communities.[79]

BOX 18: Medical training for rangers

LEAD Ranger provide medical training and equipment to rangers to treat tactical conditions (injuries, wildlife conflicts, road accidents, etc.). In this way, rangers become lifesavers for themselves, surrounding community members and their loved ones. With each treatment, word gets out that rangers can be relied upon for help and communities see rangers as a positive force.[80]

BOX 19: Rapid responses to human-wildlife conflict

Where human-wildlife conflict is a major issue, Rapid Response Teams which focus on reporting, crisis management, mitigation and compensation can help build confidence in management and confidence that people's well-being, safety and human rights are a priority.[75]

Response Teams can be made up of specially trained rangers or Community Guardians who are trained in skills such as tracking, use of radiotelemetry, GPS data collection and conflict mitigation techniques. The Lion Guardians scheme in East Africa has been successful in increasing support for lion conservation and decreasing human-lion conflict.[76] Greater presence of teams in villages particularly affected by human-wildlife conflict and clear communication channels ensures conflict situations are quickly addressed, preventing escalation and retaliation, and leads to more trusting relationships between communities and conservationists.[77]

Respecting colleagues and neighbours

78 Communications between all protected area staff should be based on principles of fairness and transparency.

79 Develop visual communications methods, e.g., pictorial documents/signs, etc., if necessary, to help make communication with one another more effective if language/literacy is a barrier, and ensure they are accessible to different groups of people (for example, place them in locations where both men, women and children go).

80 Share management plans, project and financial reports, etc. with the public, through display boards, village meetings, putting the plan and summary material online, short videos on social media, discussion on local radio, etc.

81 Seek to promote community cohesion through targeted activities. Community cohesion[81] recognizes the differences between and within communities, but encourages understanding and cooperation by focusing on, and trying to resolve, the problems between communities through tackling disadvantage and inequalities. It may be useful to map these differences to develop different strategies and protocols for community engagement.

82 Build strong personal relationships with the community's formal and informal leaders, both male and female, particularly if they have been elected. Mayors/local elected leaders are often very close to their communities. They have credibility with park staff and local communities. Linking conservation objectives to this credibility and leadership is important.

83 Recognize and account for local customs and expectations when planning meetings.

84 Hold consultation meetings in communities and at the convenience of local people in a setting of their choosing, rather than expecting people to travel to park management buildings/venues.

85 Be sensitive to the needs and timetables of community members (who often have little time for or cannot afford to attend many meetings, workshops, etc.). Think about timing (e.g., safety of travel at certain times of day, not holding meetings during planting/harvest times, think of tides/weather impacts in marine areas, etc.), and take into account the different schedules of different groups within communities (women/men, youth/the elderly, etc.).

Nolkidotu Nkuito of Lower Loita, Kenya © Ami Vitale / WWF-UK

Establish protocols for communities to report any issues and concerns to rangers and managers. Communities should be aware of grievance mechanisms (see box 10) but note that formal systems may not always be needed, and rangers should be prepared to listen to and discuss any problems communities have. Every grievance should be taken seriously and dealt with, however small.

Develop protocols for managers and rangers to report community related issues to local government councils and/or tribal councils who can then help address any issues.

88 **Do not overpromise and under-deliver**. Do not falsely raise expectations and be very clear about what the protected area managers and rangers can and cannot do when discussing issues and grievances.

89 **It is better to acknowledge you do not know an answer to a question and commit to trying to find out the answer (where feasible) than making something up**. It is worth having guidance readily available to rangers on what other authorities can be approached for enquiries that are out of the scope of the ranger's responsibility.

Recognize and respect different stakeholders' viewpoints and expectations when reporting on project objectives; and when projects fail or expectations are not met, be clear and open in discussing why this happened and ensuring that lessons learned are captured and inform future actions.

And finally, **encourage collaboration and peacebuilding** (see box 20).

BOX 20: Environmental peacebuilding: Nurturing an ecosystem for peace

The recently published "White Paper on the Future of Environmental Peacebuilding"[82] aims to deliver a strong, cogent message about the relevance, evidence and promise of environmental peacebuilding to the Stockholm+50 forum in June 2022. Below is a direct quote from the paper which is worthy of attention for all those involved in protected areas.

"*The field of environmental peacebuilding still tends to see women, Indigenous peoples, youth, and other marginalized groups as passive targets for aid rather than as change-makers and knowledge-holders in their own right. Environmental peacebuilding, in common with environmental action in general, tends to suffer from Western centricity, which perpetuates the paternalistic idea that ecosystems and people in the non-Western world require 'saving' through interventions from the West. This mindset also tends to blame the non-Western world for being poorly governed and underdeveloped, and glosses over its own responsibility in causing these problems.*"

Section 3: Using the good practices

This report marks the first phase in what we know needs to be a longer and more inclusive process, to provide a stronger basis for collaboration between protected area rangers, Indigenous peoples and local communities. The good practices assembled here have been developed in collaboration with a range of rights-holders and stakeholders including rangers, Indigenous people and local communities, but further work is needed both to identify more practices and to ensure that a wider range of voices are heard in this process.

Over the next period, we will be investigating how to get these and other lessons out to as many people as possible and to build capacity. Initially, in addition to this report, we will be investigating the use of social media, WhatsApp, posters and other forms of communication, but the development of a more complete capacity building programme is an important next step. Although this work has been aimed primarily at protected area rangers, it is important that the messages reach other concerned groups including particularly Indigenous peoples and local communities.

Developing national, regional or even site-specific versions of the good practices will be important along with methods of implementing these good practices (and other IRF and URSA initiatives such as the Ranger Code of Conduct) will be an essential part of this process. One additional idea is to publish an expanded version of this guidance through IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas with wider inputs from stakeholders.

This is therefore just a start.

Portrait of Musa with his father and son, Musa is a senior community ranger at Loita conservancy, bordering the Maasai Mara in Kenya © Ami Vitale / WWF-UK

Acknowledgements

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADVC	Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation, Mexico (Áreas Destinadas Voluntariamente a la Conservación)
CEESP	IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
CONANP	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas, Mexico
CRA	Community Responsible Area, Mongolia
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GAPA	Governance assessment for protected and conserved areas
GPAP	IUCN's Global Protected Areas Programme
GPS	Global Positioning System
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IRF	International Ranger Federation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IPLC	Indigenous people and local communities
MGL	Maya Golden Landscape, Belize
MWKL	Mae Wong and Khlong Lan National Parks, Thailand
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NR	Nature Reserve
OECMs	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
PA	Protected area
PA-BAT+	Protected Areas Benefits Assessment Tool Plus
PAPACO	IUCN's Programme on African Protected Areas and Conservation
PCA	Protected and Conserved Areas
SAGE	Site-level assessment of governance and equity
SAPA	Social Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas
SLCF	Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation, Mongolia
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SULi	IUCN's Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UOBDU	Ugandan Batwa organization
URSA	Universal Ranger Support Alliance
USA	United States of America
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas

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