Marine Turtle Conservation and Community Wellbeing in a Globalized Coastal town of Costa Rica: Methodological Contributions

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Abstract

I have based this paper on three years (2006-2010) of intermittent field work in the "globalized" community of Junquillal on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, where the World Wildlife Fund commissioned me to help integrate endangered Leatherback marine turtle conservation efforts with community wellbeing as a strategy to help guarantee the sustainability of wildlife conservation. We defined community wellbeing as increasingly equitable access to community capitals, such that the people could satisfy their fundamental human needs and make use of new opportunities. Our research in this community, whose history and cultural composition make it a globalized rural community, where "amenity migrants" from the Industrialized World have come to live amongst the local coastal residents, revealed the importance of identity as a motive force in the appropriate management of common property resources (CPR). Our principal contribution to advancing CPR management in this increasingly common "glocal" setting, was in the methods we employed to foster the identification and appropriation of common interests within this diverse population. Some of these methods included the participatory reconstruction of a common history, the promotion of common spaces and motives for celebration, providing a common pool of pertinent information, and startling them with common visions of possible futures. These, we feel have contributed to improving their CPR management and to their own wellbeing.

Key Words: community capitals, well-being, identity, participatory methods, marine turtle conservation

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 2005, Carlos Drews, Director of the WWF Marine and Species Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, called me to help him with a document that would consolidate a concept that his Program had already been working on for some time. "We are looking to research the link between marine turtle conservation and coastal community development," he said. "The idea behind this," he continued, "is that a better understanding of this relation will allow us to maximize the socioeconomic impact of our projects and assure their long term sustainability. But we want to go beyond the merely financial aspects of this relationship," he went on, "we want to incorporate the wider set of Community Capitals into the planning and implementation of our marine turtle conservation projects. Moreover, we want to set the stage to promote other organizations with marine turtle conservation projects in Latin America to formally document the socioeconomic impact of their projects and integrate this focus in the design and execution of their projects."

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I enthusiastically accepted the offer, and in addition to the original aim of writing up a guide to monitor and evaluate the socioeconomic impact of conservation projects, I suggested that the guide should go beyond measuring and evaluating, and include promoting community well-being as an integral component of conservation projects. Carlos was pleased with this addition, and so together we set off to synthesize a road map to link marine turtle conservation with coastal community well-being. We started work on this in December 2005.

One year later, "*Livelihoods, Community Well-Being, and Species Conservation*" by Montoya and Drews (2006) was hot off the press. During this year we had been able to construct a guide for understanding, evaluating and improving the links between community livelihoods, well-being and environmental conservation in the context of marine turtle programs. This manual was directed primarily at environmental conservation organizations seeking to incorporate goals of community livelihood improvement into their programs, as was the case of the WWF Marine and Species Program for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This moment coincided with the second edition of Alcoa Foundation's Conservation and Sustainability Fellowship Program. With urging from Carlos, and in hopes of finding a way to put our manual to test, I wrote up and submitted a proposal, outlining the purpose of an action research project that would apply a participatory methodology to link effective environmental conservation with effective improvement of community well-being. The proposal was accepted and by January 2007, along with two research assistants, we began fieldwork in Junquillal Beach.

THE SITE

The first time I set foot in Junquillal was in 1995. I went not as a researcher with a critical eye, but as a traveler of back roads looking for isolated beaches to enjoy the Christmas holidays. What I remember of the place back then was a rustic bar-restaurant *Bar Junquillal* on the beach at the end of a dirt road that wound through pastures and dry land forests away from Paraíso, the last small town before reaching the ocean. As its name in Spanish indicates, Junquillal was an out-of-the way place where only reeds grew. But as *Bar Junquillal*, gave proof to, it was also a place that had begun to be attractive to tourists. This, however, was true for Costa Rica, in general, where tourism had recently surpassed coffee as the prime earner of foreign currency.

The next time I returned to Junquillal was with Carlos in December of 2006. The dirt road was still as bad as ever. However, we passed by a gated condominium *Tierra Pacífica*, filled with luxurious villas, as well as a number of other private homes and small hotels along the road, before checking into our hotel *Iguana Azul* equipped with independent bungalows, swimming pool, panoramic ocean view, and a private walkway down to the beach. The main road to the beach ended, like it had ten years before at

Bar Junquillal. The beach was still beautiful and mostly empty of people, although some new beach-front homes intruded on the border between sand and vegetation.

To the casual visitor, Junquillal could appear to be nothing more than a simple stretch of beach, rather than an actual town, in the formal sense. Although it boasted half a dozen hotels, it still lacked the rudiments that are basic to most Costa Rican towns. It had no church, no plaza and no football field. It also lacked a health center and a community center. Nor did it have a high school. Yet, there was a community, or rather, several communities present –some might say- in search of a town. Junquillal had over 130 households and a fluctuating population of more than 220 persons. More than half of these were native to the area, descendents of the few local families that only two generations ago had been the sole owners of most of the land. The rest of the population were foreign born permanent and temporary residents with homes in Junquillal, including Europeans, Canadians, people from the United States, and South Americans, as well as Nicaraguans who mostly formed part of the itinerant work force in the construction sector, which was experiencing a boom not only in Junquillal, but in all of the coastal region of the province of Guanacaste.

Junquillal was also an important nesting site of critically endangered Leatherback marine turtles. Between 2001 and 2004, biologist Gabriel Francia undertook extensive research in Junquillal discovering this beach to be one of the most important nesting sites on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica for Leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (Francia 2004). However, he also found that illegal harvesting of marine turtle eggs affected as much as 75 percent of the Leatherback nests. In addition, beachside electric illumination reduced the arrival rates of female turtles coming to nest, further adding to the threats of extinction. In January 2005 WWF launched the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project in Junquillal headed by Francia, with the aim of creating awareness about the importance of protecting marine turtles, and of making non-consumptive uses of turtles profitable for the community as a way of having turtle conservation become a permanent feature of local livelihoods. The project in Junquillal constructed a marine turtle hatchery to relocate eggs that were vulnerable to poachers, predators and other threats such as overheating because of diminished vegetation cover, coupled with global warming. Francia also trained and hired several young members of the community to monitor and patrol the nest sites at night to reduce their extraction by poachers.

Employment opportunities in Junquillal were scarce. Local men earned a living by working in construction, as guards or gardeners, or working in hotels. Women mostly did unpaid work in their homes, but some also worked as cooks or maids in hotels. Commerce was also limited with only one small supermarket. However, Junquillal was increasingly becoming a tourist attraction, and especially a place for foreigners to build their retirement or summer homes. The link between marine turtle conservation and the possibilities for improving local livelihoods was one of the priorities of the WWF Leatherback Project. One such possibility it began exploring was community based tourism, with marine turtles as a central attraction. With this scheme the WWF Leatherback Project hoped to generate conditions where local residents could benefit

directly from the growing trends in tourism, while leading them to recognize the importance of protecting marine turtles as a guarantee to maintain their improved livelihoods.

In addition to the biological strategies of marine turtle conservation, among the social intervention strategies of the WWF Leatherback Project were environmental education at the local and nearby schools, a semester bulletin informing Junquillal and neighboring communities about the activities and advances of the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project, participation in local organizations, such as the Security and Safety Committee and the Community Development Association, and contributing to the organization of community events with an environmental focus. Within a year of the project entering Junquillal, poaching of marine turtle nests was brought down drastically and successful hatching of eggs improved with the protection of nests and the transfer of eggs to the hatchery. But these results remained contingent on the presence of the WWF Leatherback Project in Junquillal. For the establishment of a permanent strategy to protect the turtles, these types of interventions would ultimately have to be assumed by the community. By the end of 2006, with the inclusion of concepts developed in Montoya and Drews (2006), the scope of the community based marine turtle conservation project expanded to specifically and instrumentally link species conservation with community well-being, understood as including not only alternative income sources, but the satisfaction of a series of other fundamental human needs, as well.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned by Ruta, Camfield and Donaldson (2006), research on well-being or quality of life has challenged scientists from diverse fields, oftentimes many of them ignorant of the work of people from other disciplines. To a certain degree, such was also our case, and independently of other important theoretical developments in the field, we excitedly worked on creating a theoretical framework that would generate workable tools and methods for participatory community development synergistically linked to environmental conservation efforts in a positive upward spiral. Ultimately, our theoretical framework was not dissimilar to those of other experts, of whom we were unaware at the time, such as Doyal and Gough´s (1991) Human Needs approach, and Nussbaum´s (1988) Human Functioning and Capabilities approach, albeit, with important differences. We did, nonetheless, consider the theoretical contributions of such thinkers as Amartya Sen (1999) on Human Functionings and Capabilities, Manfred Max-Neef (1986) on Fundamental Human Needs, and other authors on Community Capitals and Livelihoods (Emery and Flora 2006; Uphoff 1998; Taylor-Ide and Taylor 2002; Prescott-Allen 2001). For our theoretical framework, however, we did not consider the abundant literature on common property resources (CPR) and their management. The obvious links of our research to studies of CPR were only considered in retrospect, during the analysis of our results, where we consider we have some theoretical and methodological contributions to make. Several important virtues of our theoretical framework were that it was created to be put to test on the ground, that it was to be accessible to the layperson in order to allow for its participatory

application and validation, and that it was specifically linked to environmental conservation. In other words, the theory was directly distilled into a participatory methodology for achieving improved community well-being and environmental conservation.

With the intention of establishing common ground among experts and laypersons, we begin by defining our terms simply and succinctly:

Livelihoods: These are defined as the activities, assets, capabilities and strategies required and employed as a means of living (Schuyt 2005). Livelihoods include the ways and means of satisfying peoples' fundamental needs. Livelihoods are ways of living, and not only ways of making a living.

Community Capitals or Assets: These are for the most part, what livelihood activities invest their energies in. Community capitals represent the accumulated product of invested energies which can be used to produce more community assets and satisfy community needs (Montoya and Drews 2006). Community capitals include financial and built capitals, which are commonly understood as the product of work. Social capital, being the accumulation of social ties and relationships, and cultural capital, as the collective construction of symbolic configurations such as language, knowledge, and meanings, also form part of community capitals. Human capital, or personal skills and capabilities, and political capital, as the organizational capacities for representation and access to power, both form part of community capitals. And finally, natural capital, both as a "gift of nature", and as its wise management, is the community capital from where all others ultimately arise.

Fundamental Human Needs: Using Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (1986) as a guide, we propose a universal set of ten fundamental human needs organized in a general hierarchy of needs, starting with organic needs, continuing with existential needs, and finally with transcendental needs, where the distinctions between one category and another are not clearly separated and may merge into each other. However, in general terms, the satisfaction of organic needs is indispensable before existential needs can even be fully expressed or satisfied, and transcendental needs may not even be relevant for different cultures.

Organic Needs		
1.	*Subsistence*	The need for nutritious food and drink required for body maintenance, growth and reproduction.
2.	*Protection of person and place*	The need for health, security, and safety, which include clothing, shelter, sanitary conditions, personal and environmental integrity, risk avoidance, and vulnerability reduction.
3.	*Affection and communication*	The need for social intercourse, association and communication with family, spouse, friends and community.
4.	*Liberty of movement*	The need for the freedom of physical movement and

	and expression	expression, including the freedom to travel or not, liberty of thought, speech, and other forms of expression. These needs blend into the realm of existential needs.
Existential Needs		
5.	*Understanding*	The need for acquiring, manipulating and applying information and knowledge. This includes diverse forms of education and learning.
6.	*Creation*	The need for invention and expression by the manipulation of tangible, ephemeral and intangible elements. This includes technical, scientific, artistic, and other forms of creativity.
7.	*Participation*	The need for taking control over one's condition and destiny as a person or community.
8.	*Leisure*	The need for solace, rest, or enjoyable activities, as well as the time and external conditions that permit the exercise of this need.
9	*Identity*	The need for belonging to a human group and locality, for defining one's place in the universe, for defining and finding a meaningful life.
Transcendental Needs		
10.	*Transcendence*	The need for exploration, growth and expansion beyond one's own organic and existential limitations in spatial, temporal, and spiritual terms.

Table 1. Fundamental Human Needs

Satisfiers: In our theoretical framework, satisfiers are quite different from needs. They are the means with which to satisfy needs. Contrary to our fundamental needs, satisfiers may be practically infinite, and are culturally and temporally determined.

Well-Being: As suggested above, well-being is not limited to economic indicators, as is often the case in conventional approaches to community development, but rather, is based on the increasing satisfaction of fundamental human needs. As also proposed by Sen (1999), well-being is not only a static state of being and doing, but is a dynamic process that incorporates capabilities, or the possibilities of other forms of being and doing. More than abstract possibilities, however, we consider it is the actual increasing satisfaction of needs that better defines well-being.

The proposition that there are positive synergies between environmental conservation and the improvement of community livelihoods and well-being is the foundation of the conceptual framework upon which this research was based. Our project was also based on the principle of community participation as the only viable means of activating these synergies between environmental conservation and improved community well-being. In general terms, the purpose of this action research project was to test the theoretical and methodological framework developed in Montoya and Drews (2006) in order to validate a generic procedure with widespread applicability to improve marine

turtle conservation and community well-being. The theoretical and methodological framework was based on the concepts of community capitals (Montoya 1999; Flora, Flora and Fey 2004), fundamental needs satisfaction for community development on a human scale (Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn 1986), and community appropriation of the processes (Talor-Ide and Taylor 2002; Reed and Pradeep 2004). More to the point, the general objective was to help establish the conditions that would permit the development of a Community Livelihood Improvement Program (CLIP) leading to sustained marine turtle protection and improved community well-being as initiatives in the hands of the local community.

METHODS

Originally the process was to take three months. The first month would include the application of household surveys and individual and focus group interviews. The second month would include community workshops to carry out a baseline diagnosis. And the third month would involve community sessions to establish a three-way partnership and the creation of the community management plan. A final phase would include the exchange of experiences between the community of Junquillal and other coastal communities for the validation and appropriation of the process on a wider scale.

However, once field work began, on-the-ground complexities demanded a much more intense ethnographic methodology. My two research assistants set up living arrangements with a local family where they would room and board during their stays in the field. I found a relatively inexpensive hotel for my more intermittent visits. We began by stomping the territory, discovering some of the boundaries of Junquillal. Soon enough we got bicycles, and my research assistants María José and Gloriana continued on their own, establishing the geographical limits of our study in Junquillal. With their more permanent presence in Junquillal, we were also able to establish some of the more salient cultural and social boundaries in the community by means of participant observation and non-structured interviews.

The information thus gathered, provided the foundation for designing a ***Preliminary Diagnostic Survey*** of the community of Junquillal and their perspectives on well-being. The survey was applied in January of 2007 to a sample of 69 households, 34 of which were Costa Rican and 35 of foreign residents, aimed at gathering demographic information on age, gender, nationality, profession, and residence in Junquillal, perspectives on "the Good, the Bad and the Desirable" in Junquillal, and degrees of participation in activities of environmental conservation and community well-being. The results were tabulated and presented in English and Spanish to community members.

From the community feedback at this presentation of preliminary results, as well as from information gathered during the ethnographic process of participant observation and residing with a local family, it became evident that an important sector of the community had been left out of the inquiry: the youth. As a result, we organized a workshop with the youth of Junquillal to get their perspectives on well-being in the community. In

opening up the space for their input on "the Good, the Bad, and the Desirable" in Junquillal, a group of them opted to form a more permanent structure for the youth to express their point of view and contribute to the well-being of their community. They created an informal organization called "*Juventud Activa de Junquillal*' or Active Youth of Junquillal. Our research project became the godparent –so to speak- of this new community organization that showed promises of energetic involvement in working for environmental conservation and community livelihood improvement.

Accompaniment of Juventud Activa continued while we intensified our efforts of coordination with the other organized groups of Junquillal that began to demand attention and dialogue, not the least of which was the WWF Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project, in addition to others such as the Community Development Association and the Security and Safety Committee. The planned methodology had been to call on community organizations to form part of a working group that would begin to design a Community Management Plan, along with goals, indicators, activities, etc. However, this still seemed a far way off. It was first necessary to establish a common language between our research team, the WWF Leatherback Project, the other organized groups and community stakeholders.

Our next activity was a *Workshop on Community Capitals*. The two-fold aim of this activity was first to introduce the terminology that would permit a more fluid understanding and management of new concepts, establishing common ground for discussion among stakeholders, and second and more importantly, to create awareness of the often-times undervalued assets available in the community in order to begin paving the way to creating a community Steering Committee that would take the lead in developing a Community Management Plan that could take into consideration the diverse community capitals as resources for improving community wellbeing and environmental conservation.

The next step was to carry out a *Baseline Study* of the community to establish indicators that could be monitored to reveal the changes taking place regarding the relationship between the community, its wellbeing, and environmental conservation efforts. This questionnaire would also serve as a marker to evaluate part of the impact of the WWF Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project in Junquillal after two years of operating in the community. The questionnaire was first passed by the staff of the WWF Leatherback Project who contributed to its refinement, before we applied it in August of 2007 to a representative sample of the community (66 questionnaires answered). Once the results were collected and analyzed, as always, we presented our findings to the community.

The second phase of the project, which took place throughout 2008 and the first half of 2009 was contracted by WWF. During this period the same research team executed a project that involved an *Ethnographic Study* with a much greater presence in the community, with participant observation, in-depth interviews, and the collection of life histories, all of which formed part of the ethnographic method, as well as the application of survey questions, and participatory workshops. One such workshop sought to

Reconstruct the History of Junquillal in an attempt to strengthen a collective identity for greater political potential of the community. Another highlight of this phase included participation in the community-generated **Visit to Hojancha**, another community of the same province of Guanacaste, in order to learn about the experience that community had in establishing a Protection Zone for the conservation of the watershed that provided water to their community. This visit was aimed at sparking ideas of similar options for Junquillal and the protection of their own natural resources. The discussions that ensued around alternative possibilities for Junquillal gave impetus to the development and application of a more specifically focused **Conservation Strategy Survey**, where the priorities of what to protect and how, were explored.

To conclude this section on Methods, it is important to mention that based on our intention of engaging in participatory action research, the results of this project were consistently presented to members of the community that responded to the general invitations we handed out from door to door and notifications we pasted on the grocery store notice-board and the Junquillal Bar entrance wall. Attendance to these presentations was consistently meager averaging some 15 persons, often with a proportion of the audience being exclusively English speaking temporary residents, for which the results were almost always presented in both Spanish and English. The results would be commented on by those present, resulting sometimes in our clarifying issues that were unclear to them, and other times in our incorporating elements and interpretations brought up by those present. Finally, by the end of the project, after consistently encountering a meager audience to our devolutions, we began to explore alternative methods of engaging the community in these activities, including the production of a **Comic Book and Animated Video**.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the project, the aim behind our use of various methods, besides that of gathering relevant and representative information from the community, was to facilitate the equitable appropriation of this information by the community, to convert it into common property so that it might be used by them to promote greater sustainability in the satisfaction of fundamental needs, achieve greater autonomy in their decision-making processes, and achieve a greater capacity to secure the future that they hoped for. Greater Equity, Sustainability, Autonomy and Security were the parameters by which we measured the improvements we aimed for.

Preliminary Diagnostic Survey

After an initial period of stomping the grounds, exploring the social and cultural milieu, and roughly drawing the geographical boundaries of our project site, and after establishing rapport with some key informants, and gaining a preliminary understanding of the global and local, or "glocal" composition of the "community" of Junquillal, we set off to systematically gather some baseline information from the residents, with which we hoped to present the basic information necessary for a local Steering Committee to begin constructing a Community Management Plan. The preliminary diagnostic survey

focused on the people's perspectives on "the Good, the Bad and the Desirable" in Junquillal.

More often than not, development interventions in communities –if they consider the community perspective at all- focus solely on the ***problems*** the people face and search for ways to solve these, not infrequently finding solutions that end up "throwing away the baby with the bath water". Independently, but in coincidence with the "appreciative inquiry" approach of Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), our intention was to allow the residents of Junquillal to make explicit the good things about their community, and what they valued about living there. First we hoped that by highlighting the Good in our survey, these elements would achieve the status of being worthy of consideration, that the satisfaction of needs often times taken for granted are worthy of appreciation and preservation. Secondly, we expected to find and present to the residents what might emerge as a common set of values that could contribute to a sense of community, despite the obvious socioeconomic and cultural differences among the residents. The exploration of the Bad, or needs unsatisfied, would likewise hopefully bring together the residents in their realization of commonly-felt deficiencies of their lives in Junquillal. And finally, the question of how they would like Junquillal to be in the future hoped to begin outlining a collective vision that could guide the construction of a Community Management Plan. In addition to these three guiding questions, we also included questions on basic demographics, perspectives on marine turtle conservation, as well as on the peoples' willingness to participate in activities in favor of environmental conservation and life quality improvement.

When we presented our results to the few members of the community who responded to our invitation, we prefaced the actual results with a brief presentation of our theoretical premises, explaining the possible synergies between community livelihoods, marine turtle conservation, and community well-being, as well as a brief exposition of the value of community capitals as resources to be exploited for improving community well-being. The very presentation of theory to the community was conceived of as cultural capital to be appropriated and exploited by them. As the most powerful vehicle communities have for transforming their reality is language according to Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), the appropriation of new theoretical concepts and terminology could serve as tools for change.

The demographic question of our survey confirmed our sense of Junquillal being a "glocal" community. Approximately half of the population was Costa Rican, while the other half was distributed among Europeans, North Americans, and other Latin Americans. The arrival of the first foreigners went back more than 30 years, with a continued inflow through time, and a more recent upsurge of mostly North Americans in the last five years, coinciding with the recent coastal development and real estate boom, especially in the Guanacaste province. The presence of mostly foreign temporary residents during the dry season was around 15 percent, while the presence of permanent residents who had lived in Junquillal all their lives was only slightly higher, closer to 20 percent. The youth in Junquillal was predominantly Costa Rican, while most foreign residents were within the retiree age bracket. This demographic

distribution in Junquillal differentiated it from what one might call a typical Costa Rican rural town, yet it could be increasingly more characteristic of the country's beach towns that were forming part of a growing tourism and globalized real estate industry.

With such a diverse demographic composition, not only in terms of nationality, but in socioeconomic terms, as well, the results of the subsequent survey questions on the perspectives on the good, the bad and the desirable in Junquillal, are especially interesting. The most important elements that emerged from the open ended question that asked "What do you most like of Junquillal?", were the scenic beauty of the place, its tranquility, and the quality of the people in the community, followed by work and the presence of family, and finally the component of ethnic diversity, and the generic answers of everything and nothing.

For the question "What you least like of Junquillal?" there was a predominance of liking everything as it is, followed by the condition of the road and the lack of basic services. In fourth place was the category of "other" with an array of dislikes ranging from mosquitoes and the heat, to the lack of social activities. In a fifth position was the dislike of the general attitude of some foreigners, with growing criminality and community divisiveness tying for sixth. State institutions and uncontrolled development finished off the list of what was least liked in Junquillal.

When we looked at what people of Junquillal would like for their community in the future, we found a strong sense of foreboding that the development process is inevitable and that Junquillal might become like the nearby town of Tamarindo, where uncontrolled "development" had generated a concomitant set of evils, such as contamination, crime, drugs, prostitution, and loss of traditional culture. The fear of going the way of Tamarindo, was expressed in the predominant desire for orderly development, followed by a wish to keep Junquillal as it was. Already, the symptoms of the community's "Tamarindoization" with its growing crime rate prompted people to hope for greater security in Junquillal. Yet there was also a desire for improved infrastructure, basic services, health center and education. Finally, there was a desire for more social activities. So, there was a clear disjunctive between hoping for the goods of development, while at the same time longing to keep Junquillal free from development's evils.

This survey also included questions regarding the importance for the community of marine turtle conservation. Those questioned, were overwhelmingly in favor of marine turtle conservation, considering its main positive contributions to Junquillal being, first and foremost, the protection of nature, followed by the consciousness raising effects of environmental education. Avoiding the extraction of marine turtle eggs and preserving the species for the future generations, as well as the tourist attraction the activity represented for the community, followed in importance as community perspectives. The activity of marine turtle conservation was seen to contribute to the youth, as well as to communal unity, through the marine turtle festivals organized in Junquillal. The festival had been an initiative of the Security and Safety Committee of Junquillal, one of the community organizations. The WWF Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project

contributed work power and other resources, but respondents seemed to associate the festival by-and-large with the turtle project, possibly because of its theme. Finally, the project was also perceived to provide employment opportunities. Marine turtle conservation, though seen predominantly to offer environmental benefits, was also viewed by the community as providing social and economic benefits.

The main goal of this research project was to contribute to the direct coupling of marine turtle conservation with the improvement of community well-being, as a way of making the community appropriate the conservation activities as a logical and probable final step of the WWF Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project. The next question of the survey hoped to contribute to a collective discussion of the possible directions this "exit strategy" should take. When asked what the WWF Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project could do to improve the quality of life in Junquillal, we found that the most common answer was to contribute to employment opportunities through ecotourism, followed by a less materialist option of raising awareness in the community. The third most common answer was to contribute with communal unity with activities such as the Turtle Festival that had recently been carried out in Junquillal as a community effort with great success at bringing together foreigners and nationals for a collective task. Less common answers included helping with community initiatives and with projecting a particular community image.

With the presentation of these results we hoped first to distill a set of values, preoccupations and hopes that were representative of a community perspective. By showing interests, hopes and fears that were held in common, we expected to reinforce the fragile sense of community we had already perceived in Junqnuillal, and in addition, we hoped to offer a clear set of possible community goals to pursue in a Community Management Plan. Finally, we hoped to inspire community stakeholders to take the information provided, to set up a Steering Committee and to run with the development of the Community Management Plan. In our presentation, we said as much in closing, explaining how these next steps could easily be directed toward getting funds for carrying out any one or more of an array of community projects, including a community center, an arts and crafts workshop, a community ecotourism project, a health center, English and Spanish language instruction, among others that emerged during the survey. We had expected members of the different community organizations to respond to this call, but to our surprise, it was the youth, who in fact had been underrepresented in our survey, who showed enthusiasm, although tainted with some trepidation, for taking on a communal project. This moved us on to work with what would soon emerge as the newest community organization, "Juventud Activa", made up of local male and female youth.

Community Capitals

The next planned step in our project was to train the community stakeholders, especially those who showed interest in forming part of the Steering Committee, in our conceptual foundations. It was evident to us that Junquillal had a cornucopia of community assets that simply were not being exploited, that the community's not so

hidden wealth contrasted strongly with its evident poverty in terms of basic services, infrastructure, community activities and collective initiatives. We expected, by expounding on the concept of "community capitals", to create awareness on the latent potential the community had to take its destiny into its own hands and to push its collective agenda forward. Because we still had no Steering Committee, but did have the expressed enthusiasm of the youth, we planned a Community Capitals Workshop aimed at the youth of Junquillal, where we defined the "youth" to be anyone between 8 and 80 with enthusiasm to work for the improvement of life quality in the community.

As we did when we presented the results of the survey, we made use of the small one-room school and practically the only enclosed public space in Junquillal, for our workshop. The invitation to the event was answered by some 15 people mostly in their 20s and younger, with the exception of Gabriel Francia, director of the WWF Leatherback Project in Junquillal, a mother of a young boy attending, and myself. We started out by introducing ourselves to each other, and then presenting the main goal of the workshop: To get to know the opinions of the youth in Junquillal regarding the quality of life in their community, as well as to promote the creation of a local organization involved in working for the improvement of community well-being. With this workshop we were still trying to jump start the formation of the Steering Committee for the Community Management Plan. We were also able to take advantage of the event to share our conceptual framework, not only with the community, but with our colleagues of the WWF Leatherback Project. We worked in the porch of the school providing newspapers, magazines, cardboard, scissors, markers and glue to the working groups that we formed, and had them each represent a different set of community capitals they considered existed in Junquillal.

Each group came up with a sample of different community capitals. The natural capital that a 12 year old girl and her brother emphasized was the beach, the turtles, the fish and birds, and above all, the conservation efforts in the community. However, they mentioned hunting as a continued threat to the natural capital of Junquillal. The social capital of Junquillal was represented by a mother and 10 year old son with pictures of young students, sports events, fishermen, and groups of volunteers. Interestingly, a drawing of a marine turtle was included in the section on social capital. They explained this by saying that the turtle had already served as a pretext for the recent festival that brought together the community in Junquillal. The mother-and-son team also represented their view of local political capital with newspaper clippings that mentioned the collaboration between the Municipal government and the local residents. However, they made clear that the Municipal government was not usually prone to collaborate with the community. The need for safety and rural police was included in the section on political capital as representing the expressed desire of the community and the goal of a community organization active in Junquillal. Finally, they included the possibility of peaceful meetings, and the "formation of citizens of the future" as political capital. The group that presented cultural capital showed sports as cultural activities, but also showed a picture of fishing boats in the water as a symbol of local traditions. They represented financial capital with a picture of sport fishing and fancy condominiums, both of which formed part of the reality of a certain social sector in Junquillal. Finally,

the group presenting the built capital or infrastructure of Junquillal, showed the excessive construction in beach communities, in general. In this case, what could be included as a community capital, was actually considered a liability.

As an outside observer, one source of community assets that had seemed obvious to me from practically the beginning of my research project in Junquillal, was the sector of foreign residents, who embodied a relatively well educated, wealthy, well-connected, and active sector in the community. This group could be seen as a source of human, cultural, financial, social and political capital that could be "exploited" for the common good. Yet, in the workshop, possibly in part because this sector was practically absent, but probably more importantly for reasons of greater significance, this sector was not mentioned as a source of community assets. Their social capital, in terms of possible influential connections, was ignored. Their cultural and human capital in terms of knowledge and skills was not mentioned. And finally, their financial and built capitals were seen rather as liabilities for the community, in terms of having the capacity to impose an undesired style of development in Junquillal. It became clear in this workshop that identity played a fundamental role in how local capitals were appropriated or even considered as "community" capitals. The foreign residents in Junquillal were perceived as a sector whose livelihoods and well-being revolved around centers far beyond the limits of Junquillal. Their status as "temporary" residents divorced them from forming part of the community assets. The drawing of the turtle that referred to the recently organized marine turtle festival that "brought together" the community, clearly showed the heavy presence of this division.

The other community asset that I had considered would clearly be represented were the organizations active in the community, such as the Community Development Association and the Security and Safety Committee, both of which had strong local leaders. But rather than see these as political capital of the community, the rivalries between their respective leaders were also viewed as liabilities for Junquillal.

So, out of this workshop a more accurate image of Junquillal emerged, the image of a town divided: between locals and foreigners; compounded by the division between local sellers of land, and foreign buyers of land, between those with money and those without; but also divided between long-time residents, including European foreigners, and more recent arrivals, mostly North American; a town divided between organized groups and their respective leaders.

An important next step that followed the workshop was to focus our efforts on consolidating a group that could be considered a neutral force in the community, a group with whom the different organizations would be willing to cooperate, a group with the freshness, openness and enthusiasm capable of encouraging the participation of foreigners and locals, alike. We believed that the youth present at the workshop could possibly be such a group. We suggested as much, and all of them showed a willingness to explore the possibility.

Juventud Activa

Five days later, once again at the school, we met with the youth of Junquillal with the aim of exploring their interests and the possibilities of their taking the lead in pushing forward the organization of a Community Management Plan. Attendance at this youth meeting was surprisingly high with the presence of thirteen youngsters (seven girls and six boys), as well as three children of some of the young mothers present. The first priority of the group was to give themselves a name. They called themselves "Juventud Activa" (Active Youth), and their slogan became "Mejorando Junquillal" (Improving Junquillal).   After establishing their identity, they went on to determine what they would like to do. The first wish on the list was to work towards establishing a football field in the community. Although the nearby town of Paraíso had a good sized football field and was only a ten minute walk away, no town worth its salt could be without its own. "Junquillal," they assured us "could have a sports complex with a football field and a basketball court, along with bleachers for the spectators." Second on the list was a recreational area for everyone, or a multi-functional community center to be used by all the members of the community for their different activities. A third point expressed by the group was the need to increase opportunities for women, starting with opening the group of local volunteers and monitors of the WWF Leatherback Project, the "Baula Boys", to participation of females, not necessarily in walking the beach at night, but in helping with other activities.

Following the "who" and "what", they focused on the "how", starting with how they were to organize their group. After some discussion, the majority opted for working as a committee with no internal hierarchy, much like King Arthur's Round Table. Although not a unanimous choice, they finally decided to try working first without a board of directors, and eventually opting for a model with a clear line of command, should the horizontal model not work. When I mentioned the possibility Juventud Activa had of eventually being able to opt for external funding, but that this would most likely require their formal constitution as an association, they expressed a logic that prevailed in Junquillal, saying that no one there had established a formal association so as not to compete with the Community Development Association that officially represented the community and moreover, was supposedly in charge of authorizing or not the constitution of any other formal association in their jurisdiction. While I knew this was legally not the case, it was the local perception, and it helped explain some of the local dynamics amongst the organized groups in Junquillal.

By the end of the meeting, Juventud Activa had agreed on searching out possibilities for the creation of a recreational area with a multi-functional community center. While they mentioned that the Community Development Association had been given a piece of land by the Santa Cruz Municipal government, and that the Association was planning on establishing the football field there along with a community center, Juventud Activa was not happy about the location of the donated land, it being inside the larger property of the Iguana Azul hotel and its condominiums, in their opinion, away from the "center of town" where the community center should be. Nevertheless, they all agreed on meeting with the different community organizations and finding out in more detail about their projects and plans with which Juventud Activa could collaborate, including volunteering

their labor in the construction of an eventual community center. Juventud Activa would contact the Community Development Association, the Security and Safety Committee, and the WWF Leatherback Project. In a month Juventud Activa would call a meeting inviting these groups together, first to present the youth group formally to the community, and secondly, to provide a space where these organizations could present their goals and facilitate the collaboration of Juventud Activa with them.

The environment was tense in the classroom one month later when we met with Juventud Activa along with members of some of the other community groups. The formal presentation of the youth group to the community was discarded. Already active for a month, Juventud Activa had by now been recognized in the community as an organization in its own right, no longer needing any formal introduction. The meeting proceeded directly to the brisk presentation of the initiatives of the community organizations. The Community Development Association planned on developing the recreational and sport area already mentioned, as well as constructing a kiosk for the rural police. Their information was presented by Juventud Activa as they did not send a representative to the meeting. The Security and Safety Committee arrived with three representatives and presented their plans to build a multi-use community center, as well as ensure the presence of a police officer in Junquillal by providing a motorcycle for him to travel between Paraíso and Junquillal. Gabriel Francia and Valerie Guthrie represented the WWF Leatherback Project. Their goals were to continue the nightly monitoring of the beaches and organizing the environmental education workshops in the nearby communities. Juventud Activa also presented the goals they had matured in the last month, with priority number one being the football field, and number two, the community center. With these presentations out of the way, the discussion began to circle around the thorny topic of inter-organizational conflict and lack of communication. Private meetings between Juventud Activa and each community organization were recommended in order "to avoid conflict". The inclusion of other community groups that had been left out, such as the Blue Flag Committee, the Friends of the Park, the School Board, and the Pro-Church Committee, to name a few, was pointed out as necessary in order "to avoid affecting sensitivities". Apparently, the birth of a new community organization that had among its aims coordination among already established community groups made explicit what was tacitly understood: there were strong leaders within the various community groups that did not get along, and therefore, cooperation among them, however desirable, was a thorny issue. Nonetheless, the need for coordination with all the groups was constantly emphasized, although the possibility for Juventud Activa to carry out a project on its own –maybe small at first- was also recommended. Towards the end of the discussion, Juventud Activa agreed to "differentiate itself from the other community groups" in order to "avoid repeating the conflicts that traditionally characterized them", and decided instead, "to become an example for the rest". Finally, Juventud Activa expressed the need to design a logo for their organization as well as a T-shirt for its members.

We continued to work with Juventud Activa considering it, as a relatively neutral group, the best possibility for coordinating initiatives among the active groups in Junquillal. We also thought it opportune to create organizational capacities among the youth and

possibly future leaders of the community through support of their newly formed organization. By and by, they began to discover the limitations for a football field other than that proposed by the Community Development Association, who in fact, had been instrumental in requiring Iguana Azul to concede five percent of its land -as required by the Law of Condominiums- for community use. Juventud Activa also began to aim for more modest goals, to organize activities that would satisfy its own needs for recreation, and to focus on the need to finance its organization.

The first activity Juventud Activa organized was called "El Chapuzón" ("The Splash"). This was a Football Five Tournament where they asked "friends" of Junquillal to make contributions to the event in order to finance the tournament prizes, food and beverages. Several local businesses, including a construction company, two condominium complexes and the grocery store contributed money for the prizes, two hotels contributed with financing beverages and ice, and some local women contributed with cooking and selling traditional foods, the sales of which they donated to the group. Invitations were sent to nearby communities, who brought their teams to compete in the tournament, and non-alcoholic beverages were sold to avoid the typical football brawls, especially between rival communities. Young and old participated, children played a match, and an ad hoc team of local girls mostly from Juventud Activa faced off another team of mostly foreign girls in a strongly fought match. From the neighboring towns, six teams of men came together, each player paying an inscription of 1000 colones, all fighting for a first prize of 30.000 colones for the winning team. A local fisherman took on the challenging position of umpire for the games. In the end, after an intense series of games, a neighboring community took the prize. But even more successful was Juventud Activa with its first initiative, taking home earnings of more than 100,000 colones (some US$ 210) to be destined to a community project that they would later choose. The event brought together the goals of improving the local recreational opportunities for young and old, locals and foreigners, girls and boys, men and women, of generating organizational capacities among the youth, of fundraising for Juventud Activa, and of showing Junquillal the capacity of its newest youth organization.

But the initial enthusiasm and commitment of the members of Juventud Activa, for different reasons, began to erode. The group destined the money it raised to help the Pro-Church Committee to accommodate the provisional "church" in the local cemetery, not wanting to keep any funds for their own organization, in order to "avoid local gossip". The Baula Boys that at first made up half of the members of Juventud Activa began dropping out, leaving only a membership of women in the group. A space that had begun as one for collaboration among boys and girls, eventually became a structure held up only by girls, who in turn felt the need for a more shared commitment. The dynamics of this erosion were complex and responded to multiple factors, including issues of time allocation by its members, some of whom began university studies and spent more time out of Junquillal; gender issues, that most likely had to do with leadership roles and family responsibilities; the weight of community gossip or even the fear of potential gossip about groups who manage community-raised monies or work for community-expressed ideas; and also, very possibly, this erosion, could have resulted from our strategy of standing back to wean the organization away from a dependence

on our direction and presence in hopes of stimulating it to gather strength on its own. In addition to the strategic purpose of weaning the group, our reduced accompaniment of Juventud Activa also responded to a desire not to seem partial to a specific sector of the community of Junquillal, as well as to limited time and resources we could dedicate to holding up an organization that might not have the capacity or wherewith all to do so on its own. Juventud Activa did not disappear, but it did not prosper, either.

Baseline Study

Continuing with our commitment to facilitate the process of establishing a Community Management Plan that would specifically link marine turtle conservation with community livelihood improvement, we set out to gather additional and more in-depth baseline information after our first Preliminary Diagnostic Survey that would further help both to establish priorities and set goals, as well as a means for monitoring and evaluating progress. The questionnaire we developed was designed around the concept of well-being as the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, including subsistence and employment opportunities, health and security, environmental protection, human relations and communication, education and creativity, local identity and traditions, participation and recreation. The questionnaire hoped to gather information on the **priorities** the people had regarding their own well-being, and what they considered still needed to be done to improve this.

The elaboration of the questionnaire was not a participatory process in the strict sense of the term, however, we took the preliminary information we had gathered in the diagnostic survey on "the Good, the Bad and the Desirable" in order to obtain more detailed answers on aspects the people of Junquillal had already identified as important to them. We administered the survey in mid August 2007. Although we delivered some 150 questionnaires directly to peoples' homes, only 66 were eventually filled out, the majority of them by local residents, August being in the rainy season when many foreign temporary residents are away from Junquillal. The results, therefore, were more representative of the local population, although a sufficient sample of foreigners was also present in the survey. One third of the sample were young people 30 years old or less, one third were adults between 31 and 50, and one third were older adults between 51 and 80 years of age. Two thirds were women and one third were men. One fourth were foreigners and the rest were Costa Rican. Of the foreigners, they were equally distributed between long-time residents of more than 15 years in Junquillal, residents with 8 to 14 years, more recent arrivals with 1 to 7 years in Junquillal, and those with less than a year or with only temporary residence in Junquillal. In terms of educational level of the sampled population, almost half had only primary school, all of these being locals, while almost one fourth had university education, these persons being equally distributed between foreigners and Costa Ricans.

The question "Which of the following options do you consider to be priorities for your community in the next 2 or 3 years?" was repeated for the different categories of fundamental human needs, these being: Subsistence and Employment Opportunities, Health and Security, Environmental Protection, Human Relations and Communication,

Education and Creativity, Local Identity and Traditions, and Participation and Recreation. Of these categories, the one most highly and consistently declared as being a priority was Environmental Protection. While this could be considered partially an artifact of the survey being linked to an environmental organization, it could also be attributed to the general Costa Rican ethos of being an environmentally friendly country. Whatever the case, this was a very auspicious election for the aim of the WWF Leatherback Project of linking environmental conservation with community well-being. Of the specific choices within this category, "protecting the rivers, estuary and mangrove" as well as "protecting the forests and the animals that live there" were a priority for over 80 percent of those surveyed, followed closely by "protecting marine turtles and their nests" as a priority for 77 percent, and "keeping the beach clean" for 75 percent. Of the 70 available options in all the categories, at least 18 choices had consistently high ratings and two had consistently low ratings by more than half of the people surveyed. The three choices that had over 50 percent of the respondents coinciding as to their highest or lowest priority were first "to protect rivers, estuaries and mangroves" with 54.5 percent considering it of highest priority. Next was "too create a first aid and health center" with 51.5 percent considering it of highest priority. And in contrast, the choice of "promoting development such as that in Tamarindo" was consistently considered of lowest priority by 53 percent.

The results of this survey provided important clues to possible areas in which the WWF Leatherback Project could explore concentrating its efforts. It was clear that environmental concerns occupied a privileged position in terms of local priorities. This could greatly facilitate the work of WWF in achieving its aims of making environmental conservation an integral part of local culture, local identity, local livelihoods, and local well-being. In concordance with their environmental awareness, a very clear mandate of the people in Junquillal was their rejection of Tamarindo-style "development" and large scale tourism. And linked to this rejection were their prophylactic priorities of wanting drug prevention and sex education for the youth, as well as organizing against crime and delinquency, all of which were issues that locally were seen to be related to the problems that arose with Tamarindo-style "development". Yet, there was also a clear acceptance of tourism as a source of well-being, but a different type of tourism and "development". The priorities of offering technical training for adults in languages, computers, business administration, of offering bilingual education in English and Spanish for youth and adults, and of improving environmental education for all the community, on the one hand, and on the other hand, considering it a priority to protect local traditional values and to recover the traditional knowledge of local elders, pointed to a style of development and tourism based on local environmental resources, local control, local identity, local knowledge, values and tradition. This was, in fact, one of the directions in which the WWF Leatherback Project had aimed to move forward in Junquillal. These results were a clear confirmation that this direction was an appropriate one to continue working on.

Additional clues emerged from the results of this survey as to other areas of importance to explore and develop further. The desire to improve communication and cooperation among community organizations was an important mandate of the people in Junquillal

to the organizations active in the community. There were other specific priorities that had to do more with infrastructure. These included the need to establish a local health center, the need to maintain the gravel road to Junquillal in good conditions, and the need to improve and increase spaces for sport events, such as a football field or basket ball court. All of these priorities were clear mandates of what a Community Management Plan could contain or begin considering as a collective effort. Having 20 defined priorities, rather than a universe of open options and possibilities, was a much better place to start developing a Community Management Plan.

Ethnographic Study

As we initiated the second phase of the project, we decided that a necessary shift in our methodology should include a greater presence in the community. During the first year it had become apparent that an intermittent presence hampered our lines of communication with a community where the need for greater communication and cooperation had already been reiterated by numerous stakeholders. The two research assistants María José and Gloriana agreed to carry out an ethnographic study with more permanent presence in Junquillal. They rented a house and set up semi-permanent residence in the community. They were able to establish closer friendships with the local youth and they participated in the daily livelihood activities of diverse members of the community. Being Costa Rican, but also English–speaking university students and researchers, they were also invited to celebrations and parties of both locals and foreign residents of Junquillal. They began to discover greater details about the segregation of time and space, as well as different cultural norms and values between locals and foreigners, and the implications this had for community harmony and cooperation, one of the issues that had consistently emerged as important by stakeholders. Greater awareness of this underlying segregation highlighted the significance of the yearly Turtle Festival organized by the Security and Safety Committee and its contribution to community harmony and cooperation.

Ironically, the festival that so many praised for bringing the community together, had also become a source of contention between the initiatives supported by the WWF in Junquillal and some members of the Security and Safety Committee. Specifically, the tensions had to do with the "authorship" of the festivals, as well as with the "ownership" of the benefits that were associated with it. The first festival had been planned for February 2007, but for strategic reasons having to do with a fundraising activity that WWF had pegged with a UK TV show that was to raise funds for endangered species around the world, the festival was reprogrammed for December 2006 to permit a film crew to include shots of this event in the UK TV show. This coincided with my first arrival to Junquillal linked to this project. In this context, in which the WWF was taking on a leadership role in these activities in order to secure the best shots for the show, I mistakenly assumed that the authorship of the festival was of the WWF Leatherback Conservation Project and possibly intimated as much in later comments that brought with them some feelings of resentment. The posterior monetary gains earned by the WWF associated with its participation in the show, also became a thorny issue for some stakeholders in Junquillal. The promise by the WWF had been to invest these funds in

favor of marine turtle conservation and community livelihood improvement in Junquillal, which it did precisely by funding the second phase of our project. Nonetheless, the lack of local participation in the decision-making process of where to direct these funds, provoked a temporary loss of confidence in us by at least one community leader. To repair this damage took precious time and energy. But the incident also provided important lessons. Among the most evident were (1) the need for incoming researchers or activists to take into conscious consideration the authorship of the symbolic capital in the community, (2) the need for guest organizations to specify in verifiable fashion the destiny of financial resources that might result from accessing community capitals, be they material or symbolic, and finally, (3) the growing need for community stakeholders to participate in decisions over the use of resources in their localities. These are issues that eventually may need to be incorporated explicitly into a Community Management Plan.

As part of the ethnographic study, we also carried out in-depth interviews of a wide array of key informants. These included older generations of native residents who formed part of the first settlers in Junquillal, younger generations of native Junquillal families, other Costa Rican settlers, as well as European and other foreign settlers, both long-time residents, as well as newer arrivals, in addition to temporary foreign residents and tourists. Each of these contributed to filling in the glocal socio-cultural mosaic that made up Junquillal, the knowledge of which we considered to be fundamental for the eventual construction of a Community Management Plan.

Reconstructing our History

The need to "create community" among the different sectors in Junquillal continued to loom high on our list of priorities we wanted to attend to. We still felt that despite the wealth of Junquillal in terms of community capitals, especially social and cultural, but also financial and built capital, and above all natural capital, did not do justice to the community's well-being, especially in its potential to take hold of its own destiny and materialize the vision and priorities they had already expressed for Junquillal. The overarching conditions of equity and autonomy were still weak in the community. Some community capitals were blatantly unevenly distributed, especially financial capital, transforming this absolute wealth into a relative liability for the community. This financial gap between sectors provoked social and cultural gaps, as well, making trust and cooperation scarce assets, thereby reducing participatory political capital. This translated into a limited capacity for developing greater autonomy for Junquillal as a whole. Concomitantly, what followed was a reduced sustainability and security for Junquillal.

A strategy we considered appropriate was to strengthen a collective identity from which the diverse members of the community could find common ground and justification for greater collaboration. For this we organized a workshop entitled "Junquillal Tells its Story: Reconstructing the History of our Community", celebrated on the 29th of June, 2008. The workshop was attended by some 20 people, most of whom were natives of Junquillal, although there was a handful of other Costa Rican and foreign residents of

Junquillal. In this activity we asked people to mention the most important and significant events that marked the history of Junquillal. We also asked them to mention the most important events of their own lives in Junquillal to include as well in the history of Junquillal that they were reconstructing.

One aim was to show how each and every one of them formed part of a collective history, to have them realize that their personal histories were an integral part of the collective history of the community. The overall goal of the event was to bring together a diverse and wide array of residents of Junquillal to collectively recount the history of "their" community. The act of coming to a consensus on the "facts" of a shared history and of negotiating what constituted meaningful milestones, we saw as a fundamentally political act. The construction of a common past, and hence, the construction of a collective identity, we hoped would spark the possibility of also collectively constructing a future based on a common vision or ideals. This realization could later be translated into greater cooperation, collaboration and willingness to assume the decision-making processes necessary to take hold of their community's destiny or future development. In essence, we were trying to create the conditions necessary for the people of Junquillal to eventually participate actively in a Community Management Plan.

This event was praised by most who attended. Because it was an exercise in gathering the collective memory of Junquillal, we had taken the opportunity to dedicate the event to the oldest member of the community, don Anacleto Rodríguez, as the personification and steward of the memory of Junquillal. With his 97 years *don* Anacleto attended the workshop, to the delight of all who were there. The positive response to the event confirmed our decision that we had already considered, of bringing together the history of Junquillal constructed at the workshop, along with the life histories we had gathered of numerous people of the community, including *don* Anacleto, in a book that could later be distributed in Junquillal. We had hoped to be able to celebrate that event by presenting the first copy to *don* Anacleto, himself. Unfortunately, he passed away before the book went to print, so the book was to be published in his memory.

The book ended up including five life histories that represented the diversity of the people in Junquillal, concluding with a time-line that the community had agreed on as "their" history. Eventually, we hoped, the book would contribute to generating a greater sense of common identity, thus more equitable political capital that could, in turn, contribute to greater autonomy and sustainability of Junquillal.

Visit to Hojancha

The visit to Hojancha was a multiple stakeholder-based initiative that was coordinated by the Community Development Association, the WWF Leatherback Marine Turtle Conservation Project, as well as the Regional Director of the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC). Hojancha is a small town in the Nicoya Peninsula that was settled primarily by rural immigrants from the Central Valley region of the country. Bringing with them their agricultural traditions, they dedicated the lands of Hojancha to coffee, vegetable farming, but mostly to cattle grazing. Most of the native forest was

cleared to make way for their agricultural practices. After some time the watershed that served Hojancha began to dry up and its people began to suffer the consequences of draught that affected their agricultural productivity, their economies and well-being. Some decided to abandon Hojancha, but others remained. Among those who remained, some recognized the importance of recovering tree cover to regain their water supply. The well organized community agreed to protect certain key areas of the watershed for the benefit of all by not permitting the cutting down of trees in these areas. Within a short period of time, the Ministry of the Environment offered to collaborate with this community. By the time we visited Hojancha, they had an officially declared Protection Zone, a history of participatory watershed management, their water supplies had been recovered, as well as their local economies that had expanded and diversified, including tree nurseries that served a growing demand throughout the country, continued agricultural production, income derived from the payment by the State for the environmental services provided by the reforestation and forest protection in the Hojancha watershed, as well as community controlled ecotourism, of which our group from Junquillal became clients during our visit.

From the questions of our group during the visit, it became evident that much discussion had already been going on in the community. There was already an expressed desire to consolidate sustainable measures of environmental conservation in and around Junquillal, so the questions revolved more specifically around the pros and cons of the different legal figures available for establishing protected areas, around the different levels of involvement the local community might have in each, and around the concrete steps that were necessary for getting any of these options underway. Further discussion among our group also explored the actual geographic areas that we considered should be given priority for conservation.

Among the legal figures that were mentioned were the Protection Zone, aimed mostly at protecting water resources within watersheds, and including private landholdings within the area; the Wildlife Refuge, aimed at protecting the flora and fauna, and especially endangered species, that may be of private, public or of mixed ownership; and National Parks, that are aimed at protecting entire ecosystems, and owned by the State. Other figures were also mentioned, such as Forest Reserves and National Monuments, but the first two were the most pertinent to the situation in Junguillal. Regarding the necessary steps for moving any of these options forward, were the need to document the expressed desire of a local community for establishing a protected area in their territory, a legally inscribed organization that could represent community interests, an agreed upon Management Plan for the protected area, and subsequent negotiations with the Ministry of the Environment and the SINAC to eventually establish the geographic and legal limits of the protected area. After a hike through the forest and a tour around the perimeter of the watershed and Protection Zone, along with the story of the Hojancha experience, as well as some technical information regarding the diverse options, the group returned to Junquillal to continue discussing and debating these possibilities.

Conservation Strategy Survey: What, How and Who

The final survey we carried out was based on the consideration that a possible catalyst for the people of Junquillal to work together in favor of the environment and their own well-being in a systematic way, in other words, to develop a Community Management Plan, was the effervescence that seemed to exist now around the different possibilities of establishing a protected area in or around Junquillal. An additional impetus for this survey was the requirement to document a community will around the need for a specific protection regime and a specific protected area as a necessary first step towards its eventual establishment. We also took the opportunity to include in the survey a section that inquired about the interests and the possibilities the people of Junquillal had to offer an array of goods and services in a possible community tourism project, that could eventually be intimately linked to one or another form of protected area, as we had already witnessed in Hojancha.

The survey was carried out in August 2008 during the rainy season when the number of foreign residents in Junquillal was at the yearly low. The climatic conditions also limited the planned accompaniment of respondents while they answered the questions, affecting in some cases a full and correct comprehension of the mechanics of the questionnaire. Despite these limitations, with 39 questionnaires filled out, we were still able to get a representative sample of the resident population present during this time of year. Based on previously gathered information through earlier surveys, interviews and participant observation methods, this questionnaire offered a selection of established answers, along with an open-ended option, which the respondents had to prioritize. In many cases the respondents chose one of the options without assigning a relative value to the remaining options. This reduced our ability to fine-tune the order of priorities, but it did nonetheless allow us to paint a general picture of community sentiment regarding our questions.

The results of the three major questions that asked the WHAT, the HOW and the WHO of Environmental Conservation in Junquillal can be summarized as follows: The priority in WHAT should be protected was widely distributed among the various choices, with a first predilection in favor of the Nandamojo River watershed, and then a more generalized bias in favor of endangered species. Overall, there seemed to be concern for all the environmental components, as well as a need for more information. As to HOW Junquillal should proceed to protect its environment, the priority landed squarely on an option of co-management by the community and MINAE, followed by the complementary option of engaging in a community tourism project. And finally the responses to the question of WHO should coordinate an Environment Protection and Community Improvement Plan tended toward a local foundation created specifically for the job, along with the participation of various local organizations.

To our final questions, of the 39 respondents, 31 expressed interest in participating in community tourism. Of the goods and services they were willing to offer, over half marked the option of arts and crafts, approximately a third offered room and board, one fifth marked tourist guide services in different areas as an option. In addition to this,

other options mentioned included language instruction, interpretation, child care, cooking classes, and scuba-diving, among others.

With this survey we came to the end of our queries for the second phase of our project. We felt that the results of this survey provided a springboard from which the people of Junquillal could go to the next step of organization and collective action to protect their environment and to improve their quality of life. We hoped that this information could be used to improve the road map for the way that lay ahead that seemed to be aiming in the direction of establishing some form of protected area around which a group of community organizations could collaborate, establish common goals, and fight collective battles, and in addition, around which a community tourism project could thrive. "The ball is in your court now," was the message we had wanted to project when we presented these last results to the community. But once again, assistance to our presentation was meager. The issue of how best to proceed with the feedback of information to the community could eventually become a major preoccupation for the next phase of our project.

Comic and Video: "The Future of Junquillal"

The issue of democratizing the information collected during this project concerned us from the start, nevertheless, our attempts at presenting our results back to the community consistently met with meager audiences. By the end of the project, the challenge to rectify this shortcoming became a major concern. Through a mixture of desperation and inspiration we came up with the idea of presenting the sum of our results back to the community in a way that would be accessible to all. We decided on making a comic book and video animation that would creatively bring together our most relevant findings that might eventually help the community take on the challenge of designing and implementing a Community Management Plan, or at least somehow take collective action to protect their environment and improve their well-being.

The comic and subsequent animated video was a fictionalized story of Junquillal sometime in the future, where two contrasting scenarios were presented: one where the information and recommendations presented during this project were made use of, and the other, where they were disregarded. The first resulted in a vibrant, equitable, participatory, green and prosperous Junquillal, while the second resulted in a dismal, degraded, and unsustainable "Tamarindo", to use the negative point of reference currently cited by the people of Junquillal.

The comic and video were presented to a multitudinous crowd in Junquillal, copies were distributed to each family so they could do a re-run at home and continue to receive the messages encoded in these. The impact of these final methodologies has not yet been monitored, but already the video has been requested by other organizations to present during events dealing with community development and conservation. These are positive signals that at least what we chose as the medium for the message was a step n the right direction.

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CONCLUSIONS

In terms of lessons learned, there were three areas of significant findings. The first area was methodological. Here we confirmed that participant methodologies require a time frame that accommodates "community time" which may extend the project beyond its original period. Participant methodologies also require a logical framework that is flexible and amenable to community interests and emergent situations. Moreover, simplicity in research tools and participation in community life are key factors for ensuring community participation and gathering reliable information. Similar conclusions hold true for our efforts to engage the community by consistently presenting results of our research to them in public events. As mentioned before, the attendance to these presentations was consistently meager, until we finally incorporated the entertainment component into our methodologies, making our communications more attractive to community audiences.

Another very important lesson learned had to do with the smooth progress of the project. When introducing a social branch into a predominantly biological project, constant and clear communication between the parties is fundamental in order to establish synergies between conservation and livelihood improvement. It is absolutely necessary to understand what previous social endeavors the biological staff may have envisioned or already carried out in order, first, not to duplicate efforts, and secondly, not to give the impression that professional turf is being usurped or disregarded. Care must also be taken to understand and deal with professional turf in terms of community alliances already established with project staff. Unless this is considered, difficulties arising here may make or break a Community Livelihood Improvement Program (CLIP) that attempts to complement a conservation project.

A fundamental component of a Community Livelihood Improvement Program, such as this project attempted to promote, is that of monitoring and evaluating those aspects that are relevant to the community. Ideally, monitoring changes, or the lack thereof, is the best way to foresee the direction in which one is heading, and it provides the possibility of adjusting these aspects for continued improvement. The capacity to monitor effectively is based on having reliable data and data that is locally significant. The indicators may be based on both objective data, as well as on the subjective perceptions of community members. What we found during this project, and in accordance with our theoretical framework (Montoya and Drews 2006), was that there are four major areas that impinge on community livelihoods and well-being, these being: sustainability, equity, autonomy and security.

In terms of sustainability, referring to the continued and improved stewardship of community capitals, and particularly of natural capital, as well as the continued and improved satisfaction of needs by means of satisfiers that attend multiple needs with a multiplying effect, we brought to the fore the synergistic satisfiers encoded in what the people perceived as the *"good"* of Junquillal. Scenic beauty, tranquility and the quality of the people were the aspects that grounded our action-research from the start. Because sustainability is a long-term process, monitoring of this component was something that

we could only *begin* to do. In terms of equity, which refers to the fact that community well-being is the sum of the well-being of all its members, democratization of access to needs satisfaction is one important component. Collaboration is another component that suggests equity in the agency of community members. Investment in "summatory" capitals that are not diminished by their use, such as social capital and human capital, is yet another component of equity. In Junquillal, the aspect of equity was a fundamental issue to be improved. Increased access to community capitals and investment in common property could be monitored using the baseline study and the canhing perceptions of the community. The area of autonomy implies greater decision-making capacity, on the one hand, and greater accountability on the other. This aspect showed signs of improvement with community initiatives such as Juventud Activa and the visit to Hojancha and ensuing discussions. Nevertheless, internal power struggles, continued to jeopardize advances in this regard. Finally, in the area of security, which includes the reduction of vulnerability to environmental and socio-economic threats, as well as the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances, the action-research project only helped to put the cards on the table. With a participatory methodology, relevant information was gathered, analyzed and returned to the community for them to take steps in this direction. After a period of two years studying Junquillal, we developed what was still a preliminary monitoring and evaluation grid based on the information collected and analyzed in the diverse surveys, interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the location. It is important to note that such an instrument could be useful not only for us as researchers, or for WWF as a stakeholder in the community, but also for an eventual Steering Committee or local foundation that might assume the coordination of a Community Livelihood Improvement Program. As of yet, however, this instrument is only a proposal that would still need to be validated and tested.

The second area of important lessons learned was in conceptual-theoretical terms. This research shed light on the complex nature of community capitals, revealing these to be composed not only of assets, but also of liabilities, and confirming our thesis that community wealth does not automatically translate into community well-being. For example, the presence of financial capital in a community may be concentrated in few hands and instead of promoting community well-being, may well exacerbate envies, gossip, a sense of unfairness and exclusion, promoting instead, community ill-being. In Junquillal there was clearly a high income sector whose assets did not significantly spill over into generalized community well-being. Built capital was increasingly evident in Junquillal in the form of high-scale condominiums. This private built capital contrasted strongly with the communal infrastructure that was scarce and lacking in basic services such as a health center, a community center, or a football field. This private built capital also affected property values, generating pressures for local people to sell their land, eventually limiting their capacity to maintain traditional extended family structures. Human capital in the form of academic training and leadership skills were also present in Junquillal, but priorities given to the defense of professional and social turfs over the willingness for collaboration reduced the capacities of the community for the synergistic achievement of collective goals and the improvement of community well-being. While the wealth of cultural capitals in a "glocal" community such as Junquillal has the potential of enriching the lives of all, it may also impoverish certain sectors who

compare their own culture with that of others and find their own to be at a disadvantage in the current economic context. The commonly mentioned "loss of traditional values" is often the complaint in situations where globalizing forces penetrate local realities.

The third and final sphere of lessons learned was contextual, that is, what we learned specifically about Junquillal, its people, and their relationship to marine turtle conservation. In our initial optimistic zeal we had hoped to quickly establish a baseline study where community capitals were inventoried and the satisfaction of fundamental needs evaluated, whereupon we would next be able to develop socio-environmental indicators that would then guide the process of constructing and executing a Community Management Plan to improve community well-being and marine turtle conservation. By the end of the first phase of our research project, however, while our initial zeal still remained, the reality of fieldwork lowered our optimistic sights to a new and more modest goal. Nonetheless, we were satisfied to be able to approximate the first of our goals, to establish a baseline of sorts. What we discovered of Junquillal was that its "glocal" community was justifiably complex, made up of diverse communities, each with their distinct histories, identities and distinct impacts on community and environmental well-being. Diverse community organizations, each with their own leadership, vied for their own agendas and fought for their own turfs. Community unity and collaboration remained a work in progress. While Junquillal boasted important community capitals, some of these were liabilities instead of assets.

During the second phase of the project during which we established a more permanent presence in the community and employed an ethnographic method of research, greater detail of community sentiment, identity and values emerged. In this context the efforts to have Junquillal reconstruct is own history was an effort to catalyze a collective identity and an appreciation for the contribution of each to what Junquillal has become and could become. During the second phase, perhaps spontaneously, but maybe also because of the presence and insistence of projects like ours and others, instances of greater collaboration appeared in the community. Diverse organizations and stakeholders were involved in discussions of different alternatives for more sustainable options of environmental protection. It was in this context that the visit to the Hojancha experience came about, with the participation of a wide representation of Junquillal stakeholders. Following through with this community initiative we pushed to try to define more specifically what the community at large had to say about these options. By the end of the second phase of our project, we felt that many elements were already in place for Junquillal to assume the responsibility of taking on a Community Management Plan. The nature of this plan could very likely not conform to a stereotypical notion of a group of stakeholders gathered around a single agreed-upon project, but rather might look more like an assortment of initiatives in the community moving forward in consonance toward mutually complementary goals.

If we take a look back at the main objective of this project, which was to help establish the conditions that would permit the development of a Community Livelihood Improvement Program (CLIP) leading to sustained marine turtle protection and improved community well-being as initiatives in the hands of the local community, we

can say that the project, indeed, contributed to improving the conditions necessary for a CLIP. It did so first, by bringing to light important satisfiers of well-being that were already present in Junquillal, and valued by the majority. In order to carry out any CLIP, reference to the "Good" in Junquillal, such as tranquility, the landscape and the quality of the people, becomes obligatory. Second, it revealed how community wealth was not synonymous with community well-being, the main caveat being the unequal access to community capitals, to the extent that some of the more privately held assets could be considered community liabilities. Facilitating access by the community to these capitals might then become a clear focus of a future CLIP. Finally, the project made explicit the need for cooperation and collaboration among the different community forces, including community leaders, community organizations, and NGOs operating in the community, to only mention a few. Clarity on this issue, as well as strategies to catalyze this process would be fundamental for a future CLIP.

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