



# SHARING POWER

Learning by Doing in Co-management  
of Natural Resources throughout the World

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# **SHARING POWER**

## **Learning by doing in Co-Management of Natural Resources throughout the World**

Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Michel Pimbert, M. Taghi Farvar, Ashish Kothari and Yves Renard  
with Hanna Jaireth, Marshall Murphree, Vicki Pattemore, Ricardo Ramirez and Patrizio Warren

with a preface by Juan Mayr Maldonado

Conserving the highly endangered Asiatic Cheetah in Iran required months of talking to pastoral communities... their own social organisation, the rangeland problems, the government interference with their migration times and stocking rates – all this had to be dealt with before even mentioning issues with the cheetah... Communities surrounding Mount Elgon National Park signed contracts with the Wildlife Service of Uganda... they can continue harvesting bamboo shoots and other forest products in return for a shared responsibility for protecting the Park... Fisherfolk, tourist guides, scientists and government authorities worked together to avert disaster in the Galapagos marine reserve... they developed a collaborative management plan on the basis of a Special Law they have also crafted together...

At the heart of 'co-management' of natural resources is a process of collective understanding and action by local communities and other social actors. The process brings about negotiated agreements on management roles, rights, and responsibilities, making explicit the conditions and institutions of sound decentralised governance. De facto, co-management is about sharing power. When successful, it spells out the peaceful and intelligent ways by which communities and other actors overcome environmental challenges, take best advantage of nature's gifts and share those in fairness and solidarity. When it fails, it ushers conflict, human misery and environmental damage.

This book is designed to support professionals and citizens at large who wish both to better understand collaborative management processes and to develop and enhance them in practice. It begins by offering a variety of vistas, from broad historical and equity considerations to in-depth co-management examples. The understanding accumulated in recent decades on the appropriate starting or entry points for co-management, pre-requisites for successful negotiations (such as effective social communication and internal organisation of the parties) as well as rules, methods and conditions of the negotiations themselves are illustrated in detail. Methods and tools, such as practical checklists distilled from different situations and contexts, are offered throughout. Examples of specific agreements and pluralist management organisations are discussed. The experience of social actors learning by doing and improving their management practices on an on-going basis has informed this book, together with the complex and inspiring ways by which the surrounding socio-political conditions can be improved through participatory democracy.