

# 65

## participatory learning and action

### Biodiversity and culture: exploring community protocols, rights and consent



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This special issue of *Participatory Learning and Action* explores two important participatory tools that indigenous peoples and local communities can use to help defend their customary rights to biocultural heritage, natural resources and land:

- **Community protocols** – or charters of rules and responsibilities – in which communities set out their customary rights to natural resources and land, as recognised in customary, national and international laws; and
- **Free, prior informed consent (FPIC)** processes, in which communities decide whether or not to allow projects affecting their land or resources to go ahead, and on what terms.

The issue reviews the experiences of communities in Asia, Latin America and Africa in developing and using these tools in a range of contexts, including: developing mechanisms for access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for genetic resources and traditional knowledge; confronting threats from mining and protected areas; and improving forestry partnerships. It also looks at some government experiences of establishing institutional processes for FPIC and benefit-sharing. It identifies practical lessons and guidance based on these experiences.

It aims to strengthen the capacity of a range of actors (eg. local organisations, practitioners, NGOs, donors and governments) to support these rights-based tools effectively in practice, and to highlight the need for bottom-up processes designed by communities, rather than pre-defined processes and procedures imposed from outside.

This issue also aims to provide guidance for those implementing the Nagoya Protocol and other natural resource and development practitioners, and to raise awareness of the importance of community designed and controlled participatory processes.



NATURAL JUSTICE



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