This report is presented as received by IDRC from project recipient(s). It has not been subjected to peer review or other review processes.

This work is used with the permission of International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (a.k.a. World Agroforestry Centre).

Stakeholder Negotiation in Watershed Management: The Case of Ameya Village, Ginchi Benchmark Site

Tesema Tolera (EARO / AHI) and Laura German (AHI / ICRAF / CIAT)

Introduction
The African Highlands Initiative (AHI) is an ecoregional program working to develop new approaches to improve the livelihoods and natural resource management practices of farming communities in the eastern African highlands. Its aims are achieved through action- and development-oriented agricultural research in selected benchmark sites. Galessa Watershed, found within the Ginchi Benchmark Site in the central highlands of Ethiopia, is one of the sites selected for the development and testing of approaches in Ethiopia. Here, scientists from the Holetta Agricultural Research Centre work together with members of the AHI regional team to implement the program.

Key Watershed Problems
A participatory diagnosis of watershed problems suggested the following to be priority constraints to livelihoods:
- Loss of indigenous trees and limited access to wood (fuel, construction)
- Poor and declining soil fertility
- Degradation of water resources (quality and quantity)
- Loss of seed, fertilizer & soil from excess run-off.

When exploring the ultimate cause of water resource degradation, Eucalyptus was seen as a key culprit. Yet limited fuel wood makes it a particularly difficult problem to solve.

Case Study: Removal of Eucalyptus from Springs
For several years, farmers from Ameya village had tried to convince the landowner of the Ameya spring to remove his Eucalyptus from the area. The owner consistently refused, and the villagers were threatening to take him to the PA (government) court to resolve the case. As part of the watershed management activities in the area, an AHI representative also tried without success to convince the landowner, then took the case to the Watershed Committee. After some debate about the best approach to follow, it was decided to first attempt to resolve the case informally by involving the village elders. The elders were encouraged to talk to the landowner on an individual basis prior to open negotiations, a decisive factor in the landowner agreeing to attend the scheduled village meeting.

After brief introductions to the problem by PA, Watershed Committee and AHI representatives, each party was asked to present their view. When the Eucalyptus owner expressed his views on what he would lose in labor and cash if he were to cut down the woodlot, others began to attack him openly. The facilitator intervened to legitimize the landowner’s position and right to speak. Discussion of the ultimate consequences of a dried up spring on current and future generations brought the landowner to offer a concession: to remove the Eucalyptus in exchange for one tree planted elsewhere on his property by each household. The proposal was initially rejected, yet after one farmer agreed to the conditions, others followed. All parties, including the landowner, left in high spirits.

Key Challenges:
- Lack of fuel alternatives for tree owners due to limited vegetation cover, and the high demand for Eucalyptus as a source of income.
- Lack of communal land for afforestation and compensation of owners.
- The owner’s demand for replacement trees can only be addressed after nursery establishment
- Individual property rights often undermine easy solutions to problems affecting communal goods.
- Lack of awareness among the PA leaders of the long-term impact of legal enforcement mechanisms (i.e. exacerbate conflict in the long run)

Conclusions
This case study illustrates some general principles that can be employed in other cases where stakeholder negotiation is required to address natural resource management problems, namely:
- The crucial role of a third party both knowledgeable of and respected by each stakeholder (in this case, village elders) to aid in minimizing the problem in the minds of each party prior to face-to-face dialogue.
- The facilitator does not need to maintain a neutral stance toward outcomes, but must openly legitimize all stakes to seek a middle ground.
- The importance of compromise (each party making some concessions for the benefit of the other).
- If successful, community (informal) law enforcement is more effective in resolving long-standing disputes than PA (government) enforcement.

Women and Children Bear the Burden of Dwindling Water Supplies

Private Property (Individual Good)
Communal Water (Common Good)