

# Community Land Protection Initiative

## EDITORIAL



**Yonas Mekonen**

is the Global NES facilitator of ILC and the focal point for the CLPI.

In this edition of the NES bulletin, we introduce you to the world of the Community Land Protection Initiative (CLPI), one of ILC's flagship **cross-regional partnerships** co-implemented with Namati and IIED. The CLPI builds on the **complementary strengths, expertise, and comparative advantage** of the three co-conveners, and leverages the strengths of the ILC network's wide membership to build cohorts of community land protectors' leaders.

**How is the CLPI working?** We select the best organisations, assess their potential to bring about change at scale, harvest their community land protection strategies and good practices which have proven effective in their context, and support two participants per organisation through a comprehensive one-year peer-to-peer learning journey based on the principle of "*Co-learning and co-teaching among equals*".

**Piloting Innovations** - The CLPI is designed to be comprehensive, covering all crucial areas contributing to strengthening community land, with an emphasis on "what worked", and specifically looking at the conditions under

which these strategies have translated into benefits for communities' land rights. Subsequently, we provide each organisation with a grant meant to apply innovative strategies. At the end of year 2, the partnership will have grown into a global network of 18 community land protection leaders and advocates.

**Linkages with the NES Multi-Stakeholders Platforms** is a key consideration for ILC. We encourage CLPI-ers to liaise closely with the NES facilitator and other platform members from the onset to maximise synergies, and ensure the entire platform reaps the benefits of improved community land protections programming.

These innovative projects (five in cohort 2018, four in cohort 2019) should specifically provide evidence to NES MSPs' advocacy efforts at the national level, and demonstrate the feasibility and value of community empowerment programs.

We hope you enjoy reading this bulletin and look forward continuing the discussion.

## VOICES FROM PRACTITIONERS

### Community History Mapping



**Kumar Thapa**

is facilitating the CLPI and working since 2002 with CSRC, campaigning and advocating for land and agrarian rights of marginalized communities.

Visit their [website!](#)



Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC) is currently involved in the second cohort of the Community's Land Protection Initiative (2019).

With technical support from ILC and a partnership of Dangisaran Rural Municipality, **Nepal**, CSRC is engaging around 2000 landless and small-scale producers living on, and utilizing unregistered government land. In close co-ordination with the locally elected representatives and seven facilitators, various participatory exercises were undertaken in six communities.

One of these is the **Community History Mapping Exercise**, an essential instrument to visualize how forcefully the native indigenous groups were compelled to leave their land by immigrant communities. Discussion with elderly people provided historical accounts of the settlement, land use practices and their struggle towards securing land. It provided answers to crucial questions like: How was the land made arable? How did the indigenous Tharu communities become landless? How were unregistered lands occupied by certain Groups? Through this process, younger generations became aware of past historical injustice and atrocities their ancestors faced while protecting their lands.

The involvement of authorities and community members was an important step as their presence reassured participants residing on unregistered land about the value of collecting data and mapping the community. Information and data gathered will generate strong evidence to support participatory land registration processes. The initiative is gaining momentum across the municipality, building a virtuous circle of collaboration amongst actors involved: local facilitators are instrumental to acquire factual and realistic data, and feel motivated to work as the Dangisaran Rural Municipality has taken the ownership of this programme and has allocated a budget for these participatory mapping exercises.



# How Communities Respond to Requests for Land and Resources



## Rachael Knight

is a specialist in community land protection and legal empowerment, with a strong focus on community land and natural resource governance

In many countries, communities are increasingly approached by international investors or government agencies seeking land for logging, mining, agribusiness, infrastructures or other projects. Unfortunately, consultations are often characterized by significant **power imbalances** even when the free, prior informed consent (FPIC) promoted under UNDRIP (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is applied. Indeed, when government officials are present, **communities may feel that they have no choice but to accept**. Additionally, corruption can be a factor, as external actors may seek only the consent of local leaders rather than the full community. Finally, consent for a proposed project may be requested without declaring potential negative impacts on the environment, economy, health, and wellness.

**To address such power and information imbalances**, Namati - which works on Legal Empowerment and has co-implemented the Community Land Protection Initiative with ILC and IIED - has identified a number of actions for CSOs working directly with communities:

1. Create a legal support service directly reachable by phone (advice hot line) and physically available for negotiations with companies and powerful government officials.
2. Advocate that national laws' mandates are not valid unless they have been recorded in writing and documented in a signed contract that has been reviewed and witnessed by an attorney representing the community.
3. Provide specialized trainings for local land governance bodies and increase legal empowerment of communities (with a focus on youth) about how to protect their interests and rights.
4. Prepare short, low-literacy guides detailing how communities can best protect their rights and interests when responding to investors' requests, and circulate them widely.
5. To ensure that community members don't see external investment as their only avenue to prosperity, support communities to create an action plan to themselves leverage their land to achieve long-term community growth and prosperity on their own terms.

The suggestions above do not aim to address comprehensively how to best support communities once an outside actor has arrived seeking community land and natural resources, but rather to promote preventive measures and an enabling environment to empower communities to respond to potential investors.

[Please read the full report to know more !](#)





# Participatory mapping to secure communities in Indonesia



**Imam Hanafi**

is the Head of Advocacy and Network Division of JKPP. He works on Participatory Mapping since 1990s all over Indonesia.

Visit their [website!](#) and read [JKPP's diary](#).

Jaringan Kerja Pemetaan Partisipatif (JKPP) works with communities in Banten Province in **Indonesia**. JKPP took part in the CLPI in 2018, and with CLPI support developed an integrated **participatory mapping technique** combining the (physical) mapping and geo-spatial planning process, with the wider governance arrangements (village regulations and village boundary agreements) and associated processes for the Warungbanten village. This initiative originated from the community, and stemmed from the need to better understand tenure rights to secure livelihoods, protect the natural resource base, and co-exist peacefully without any conflicts.

Firstly, JKPP created a space for dialogue among all actors involved, namely village authorities, Youth Organizations, Women's Groups, District governments and even neighbouring villages. The broad inclusion of stakeholders was an essential step to consider the diverse interests of all parties, thus ensuring consensus and a positive outcome for all.

Secondly, following an intense dialogue, a joint action plan was drafted to guide field level mapping activities. JKPP played a technical and facilitative role, providing trainings in order to empower and strengthen communities as they collected spatial and social data to produce their own village maps.

The enthusiasm of the community members as central actors in the process pushed neighbouring villages to replicate the approach, and encouraged local governments to involve communities and vulnerable groups in land-related decisions more systematically.

Until now, in addition to the Lebak district government, several other local governments have signed MoUs with JKPP for village mapping processes.

In the future, through collaboration with local governments, we expect this method to be fully recognized and adopted in policy and becoming a standard and official method in Indonesia.

Do you have  
a similar  
collaborative  
experience in  
your NES?



## How to work with corrupt community leaders?



**Christian Jitar Taku**

is a Geographer and a GIS Practitioner with 9 years experience in Land and Natural Resource Governance.

In **Cameroon**, because of social competition, fallen cultural standards and greed, traditional rulers are pushed to sell community land without consultation. Engaging these **corrupt traditional leaders** is extremely difficult because their fraudulent land deals could be exposed and provoke an uprising.

COMAID - Community Assistance in Development - however, is up to the challenge and in 2018 it took part in the CLPI, sharing an approach they developed over time to engage with corrupt traditional rulers and force them to be accountable. The methodology was piloted in Ngom and Nyurong communities in the Mbaw plain of the North West region of Cameroon where they combined participatory mapping, by-laws drafting, and legal empowerment approaches to enhance downward transparency and accountability in land and natural resource governance.

COMAID used the desire of local leaders to gain fame in their community as an entry point to promote a community-based approach, demonstrating how its outcomes suited the interests of traditional leaders and making them the project initiators themselves. As a matter of fact, the adopted by-laws reduced the power of traditional rulers from 100% to 10%. However, they could not back out because at that point proceeds from land sales were already managed by the village community members associations. In addition, the pilot initiative brought on board the voice of women and youth on rules governing land, and the participatory mapping and reorganization of land-use practices have reduced conflicts over boundaries and resources. The project also raised the awareness of local communities about the consequences of not sustainably managing their resources and empowered them to defend their rights in front of government and investors.

The innovative strategies of the pilot initiative have been shared with the whole NES to motivate replication in areas of need. The gift has been passed over and the seed has been planted within the NES platform, in the hope it will sprout into a beautiful plant in different regions in Cameroon.

The full method is explained on the [ILC learning hub](#) – visit it to learn more!

Discover as well [COMAID's diary](#), and the one from [TRNE](#), another participant of last year CLPI!

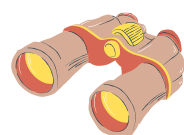


## HOW TO

The Community Land Protection Initiative is launched yearly by ILC, NAMATI and IIED. A **call is issued** inviting expressions of interest, and proposals from organizations already working on community land protection. To succeed in the selection process and secure participation in the year-long peer-to-peer learning journey, it is important to highlight how the peer-to-peer support will enhance the work organizations are already doing. Organizations that are members of NES multi-stakeholder platforms, such as ILC members, have a strong competitive advantage. Information will be publicized when the selection for the third cohort opens (website [here](#)).

## GOOD PRACTICES

Discover the last good practice about the **Land Governance Working Group** from NES Nepal that brought together government agencies and civil society organisations working on land governance (website [here](#)).



### We are looking for good practices!

In the context of promoting partnerships, we are interested in highlighting experiences of **good collaborations between MSP and IGO**. Therefore we are looking for cases you may have from your NES, if possible with a particular focus on IFAD. Please contact [j.gaudin@ifad.org](mailto:j.gaudin@ifad.org) for any stories that can be shared. **Be our champion!**

## NEXT EVENTS

The **Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty** will take place in Washington DC , from the 16th to the 20th March 2020.

On the last day there will be a session entitled "*Strategies and tools to design multi-stakeholder platforms for equitable and resilient land governance*" from 9 to 10.30am. This **masterclass** provides principles, guidance and tools for assessment, design and evaluation of MSPs, based on the joint experience of Collaborating for Resilience (CoRe), International Land Coalition (ILC), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) .

**NES Guatemala** is leading the **Land Defenders campaign** until the first week of March. Be sure to discover their videos and infographics!

**NES Nepal** is currently leading the **Tenancy Land Rights Campaign** with the Land Governance Working Group (LGWG) to help Nepali government in including the dual land ownership over agricultural land and to ensure tenure security for the tenant farmers that have been struggling since decades.



## RESOURCES



The Community Land Protection Learning Initiative is equipping ILC members with the practical skills to empower communities to document and protect their community land rights. Learn directly from their experience which key steps made this process successful (click on each link)!

- Check the first of a series of 5 **HOW TO NOTES** co-developed during the CLPI workshop in Summer 2019.
- Read about CLPI in **Peru**.
- Have a look at the six **HOW TO VIDEOS**.
- Learn from the **guide** for negotiations with community-investors.
- Discover how SEEDS strengthens resilience of Syrian Refugees in **Jordan**.

And visit [ILC learning hub](#) to discover still more tools and manuals!

Please feel free to [start a thread on Slack](#) to share about your experience with colleagues and enrich the exchange with your comments!

Likewise, feel free to suggest topics and contributions for the 6th edition, and send us information you would like to share in the upcoming Bulletin on Gender Justice.



*Rest in peace, dear Javier.*

It is with great sadness that we share with you the death of our dear compañero Javier Navarro. Javier assumed the facilitation of NES Argentina one year ago. During that period, we witnessed his commitment with peasants of the Argentinean Chaco, and his efforts to boost the work of the national platform. He showed us how important it is to work joyfully, and we will always remember him with a smile.

## CONTACT

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