

Chapter 6:

NEGOTIATION

Community-based conservation partnerships require negotiations for arriving at robust joint agreements and for increasing ownership. However, unlike market transactions, these are not negotiations where bargaining and shrewdness lead to the best results. Personal relationships facilitate effective negotiations, and developing mutual trust as well as discussing interventions individually with key community members should precede formal community negotiations.

The negotiations are best done in an integrative manner – rather than through positional bargaining – based on sharing of information and interests, use of objective standards, and building incentives and tangible stakes in the interventions for the community. Agreement, once reached, must be formalized in the form of signed working documents that record program details and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. Unlike the market, where we have the option of shopping elsewhere if we don't like a deal, walking away is not an option in community-based conservation of landscape species such as the snow leopard. If negotiations do not progress, greater investment in communication and relationship building is recommended, as is third party mediation, a concept that local communities are usually familiar with.

Conservation goals often come into conflict with the goals and aspirations of local people, their livelihoods, traditional resource use, and their desire for development projects. Recognizing that this dichotomy is a shared problem, and that sustainable solutions can best emerge through engagement, dialogue, and negotiation is an important step in effective conservation and human development (Redpath et al. 2013).

Community-based conservation efforts focus on such shared problems. These include, for example, the desire to conserve biodiversity on land owned or used

by people, or the desire to conserve species that are the cause of economic losses to the local people.

The problem may be shared, but it is a problem in the first place because there is almost never a perfect match between the interests and expectations of the community, and those of the conservationist. Effective negotiation, therefore, is central to community-based conservation.

Patience and persuasiveness

Before the actual negotiations on conservation interventions, however, it is important to create suitable conditions to begin them. This requires time and effort, especially if they are to effectively lead to biodiversity conservation, and especially for those interventions that rely relatively more on trust and social capital. It requires active listening. As discussed earlier, building relationships and establishing trust is critical (see Chapter 1: PRESENCE). It can only happen through sustained interaction.

Conservationists are an impatient lot, especially when young. I was no exception. Many years ago, I had set out on a trip to initiate community-based conservation efforts in a remote Himalayan site. Having completed some field surveys and done a threats assessment, the following year I decided to visit some of the communities with the idea of starting a conservation partnership.

I remember sitting around a fire and talking with the head and two local leaders of one of the larger communities in the region. I was telling them about our desire to start a conservation partnership. I was viewing this as an initial introductory interaction, which I had hoped would be followed by a meeting with the representatives of all households in the village, which in turn would eventually lead to the conservation partnership.

This group of local leaders, meeting me for the first time, missed several nuances that I had tried to prematurely and hurriedly communicate regarding our potential long-term conservation partnership. But they clearly understood the main purpose of my visit: that I wanted to start a livestock insurance program.

I have to admit that I did introduce them to the livestock insurance program that communities in other regions with similar problems were running in partnership with us. However, not even once in the course of the conversation had I directly asked them whether or not they were interested in starting one.

Their interpretation of my intent, however, wasn't inaccurate.

Even before the trip, based on the earlier knowledge we had gathered, I had decided that a community-based insurance program would be useful for them and the carnivores in the region. The intervention had, after all, helped in other areas faced with similar issues. And indeed, I had made it my personal goal for the trip to start this intervention in one or two communities.

Our conversation ended abruptly, as did the plans for a conservation partnership. There was no community meeting. The leaders thanked me for visiting them, and said they were not interested in starting a livestock insurance program.

I had just reached this village a couple hours before, after traveling for three days by public transport and another day on foot.

Thinking back, almost every step I took was in contradiction to what I have written in this document. I was too focused on the intervention, and I had already decided on my own what it would be. Rather than concentrating on communication, I was in a hurry to start the intervention, before even beginning to build a relationship with the community, let alone trust.

How often have we turned away sales representatives arriving unannounced at our door? Including insurance sellers. Why shouldn't we expect communities to do the same?

In community interactions, when we say things matters as much as what we say and how we say them. Therefore, striking the right balance is important.

While conservation threats are usually urgent and require rapid action, pushing for urgent decisions or action is usually a deal-breaker in community-based efforts. In community interactions, when we say things matters as much as what we say, and how we say them. Therefore, striking the right balance is important.

Moving away from positional bargaining

Negotiation is a pervasive fact of life and everyone engages in it most of the time. The most common and obvious form of negotiation involves haggling over the price of something, and is called positional bargaining (Fisher et al. 1991). Both parties state and defend their position, usually starting from relatively extreme opposing points, and discussions lead to potentially finding a mutually acceptable solution.

This is perhaps an appropriate negotiation strategy for one-time interactions, where the parties do not need to engage any further. Although commonly employed, it is only partly useful for specific issues like price negotiation, where one party's loss is another party's gain.

Because it is such a common form of negotiation, one occasionally faces or ends up engaging in positional bargaining attempts in community engagement, especially initially when the relationship with the community is new. Bargaining might take place, for instance, over the amount of funding to be received from the conservation organization to strengthen the insurance corpus, or over the purchase price of handicrafts in Snow Leopard Enterprises, or even in general negotiations.

There was an interesting experience in our first visit to a village in an important, relatively remote Trans-Himalayan valley. This village lies near important snow leopard habitat. Because this was the first visit, it was aimed only at making initial contact with the community, and to introduce our work.

After the initial introductions and discussions during the day, we had nearly ten community representatives visiting us in the evening, in one of the village houses where we were staying with a family. After politely thanking us for our interest in engaging with them, they placed an unexpected demand.

We were asked to hire 3-4 young people from the village. We were told frankly, albeit with utmost politeness, that should we not be in a position to employ their youth, we were not welcome to work in their area.

Their demand, which was made within a few hours of us reaching their village for the first time, was uncharacteristic and surprising. It was evident that it was an attempt at positional bargaining. Presumably, their hope was that in the negotiations that would follow, we would mutually agree to support at least one person's employment. Indeed, I had just been talking to them a lot about the biodiversity importance of their area, and the need to work there, which perhaps to some extent encouraged them to take this stand.

Although surprising, their position was understandable. Employment opportunities are scarce in this remote village located in a faraway side valley, compared to some of the other villages where tourism has begun to flourish, alongside other external livelihood sources. The idea of employment itself may have been motivated by the fact that our team included staff members and temporary assistants from another village where we had been working for many years.

It is also possible that others like us, interested in collaborative work of some kind, may have visited the village, and, deliberately or inadvertently, created expectations in the community that remained unmet. Through positional bargaining, the community was perhaps trying to secure at least some tangible gain – or at least a commitment – from our interest in their area. Who knows if we would otherwise ever return?

One is occasionally confronted with such situations in community engagement.

Positional bargaining can be inefficient, and has the potential to harm the relationship between communities and conservationists. Because effective positional bargaining involves withholding information, it is not transparent, and therefore ethically unsuited for community-based work.

How does one respond when faced with such positional bargaining during community engagement? By changing the game, in the words of Fisher et al. (1991).

Towards integrative solutions

While positional bargaining involves distributive solutions, and is best served by withholding critical information, enhanced communication can help create integrative solutions (Smutko 2005). By expanding the scope of the initial bargaining and creating joint value, integrative strategies aim for mutual gain. They rely on sharing of information, truthful and open communication, and focus on the actual interests of the parties rather than their positions (Fisher et al. 1991, Smutko 2005).

Let's get back to the Trans-Himalayan village, where we sat with a group of community representatives, facing the ultimatum of providing employment to village youth or being banished from the area. We had three choices. We could refuse to negotiate, walk away, and find other communities to work with. We could agree to their terms or bargain for fewer staff positions. Or we could take an integrative approach and change the terms of negotiation.

After hearing their demand patiently, we engaged the community representatives further, trying to understand their interests better, and to communicate our interests more clearly.

We expressed that we understood their concerns, especially regarding the

inadequacy of existing employment opportunities for their youth. We reiterated that our main interest was to conserve wildlife with their support. We were upfront in communicating that though we understood their concerns, our relationship with them would be a non-starter if they were to view us as a source of employment, even if some of our programs could help with livelihood enhancement over the longer term.

We were to leave the next morning. I requested the representatives to explain our interests to the entire community once again the next time they all met. I reiterated our desire to build a long-term relationship with them, and indicated that irrespective of the position they had taken, we would continue to visit and interact with them. It was late evening, the meeting concluded with the representatives assuring us they would communicate our views to the entire community, and we said our goodbyes.

As surprising as their demand for employment had been, even more unexpected was what followed after they left. As we prepared to curl up inside our sleeping bags for the night, barely half an hour later, all the community representatives streamed back into the room again, some of them betraying hints of embarrassment on their faces.

They were back with a new message for us. The message was that the community understood our point of view, and that they were retracting their demand for employment. They would not be imposing any conditionality on our work. They requested us to come back and begin working in their area.

Our team went back. We started by monitoring wild ungulates and camera trapping snow leopards in the area for three years. Our engagement then grew to include predator-proofing of the community's corrals, and the creation of the largest village reserve amongst all our partner communities, protecting c. 240 sq. km. of prime snow leopard habitat. Six young people from the village are getting trained in wildlife monitoring. Two of these six youth serve as paid village reserve guards at any given time, the positions rotating amongst all six of them. The community is now discussing with our team the possibility of initiating a livestock insurance program, an intervention that relies relatively heavily on trust and social capital (Chapter 11).

On our first ever evening in this village several years back, people had come at us with a hard positional bargaining stance. We were faced with three negotiation choices. We could have walked away from the village, and lost a huge

opportunity for conservation. We could have agreed to their premature demand for employment. While that would have helped a couple of their youth, it would have forever created a mismatch of expectation between the community and us. It would have based our relationship on pressure and positional bargaining, rather than on empathy, trust, and cooperation. We took the third path. Honest and integrative negotiations served conservation well, as they did the community and ourselves.

That first evening, years ago, I had expected the community to change its position, but only over time, through further discussions during subsequent trips. An almost instant turnaround, though, was completely unexpected. Such can be the power of truthful discussion and an integrative approach. In community-based conservation, one is served well by assuming that most people one has to interact with are fundamentally decent, and fundamentally smart.

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Negotiation and ownership

The resilience of conservation partnerships and interventions relies heavily on the extent of ownership people feel over the program. The sense of ownership over a program comes not just from being responsible for running and managing interventions, but also, importantly, from the people's role in actually designing or tailoring the interventions.

In one instance, two small neighboring communities jointly expressed an interest in participating in the livestock insurance program. Because they were too small individually or collectively for an insurance system to become self-sustaining, we helped facilitate their participation in the ongoing insurance program of a nearby larger village.

This seemed to work well, until, during one particular year, these two communities faced relatively high livestock losses to wild carnivores. As most of the livestock was insured, the owners were able to get compensated. Once they received their compensation amounts, however, members of both the communities stopped paying further premium, effectively exiting the program.

What went wrong here? Although it is difficult to know for sure, looking back, it is clear that the members of these two communities felt little sense of ownership over the program, which was seen as belonging to the larger village. They had joined a pre-existing program. There had been no negotiations with them, and no mechanisms followed to seek their inputs into designing the program. In the absence of negotiations, and, therefore, ownership, these community members were, perhaps understandably, predisposed to maximizing immediate return while discounting the future costs and benefits. Although they decided to walk away from the insurance program, we obviously did not walk away from them. Our interactions continued, and after a few years of engagement, they rejoined the program.

Contrast their approach with that of the participants from the larger village, whose program they had joined. At one point, the insurance committee members, who change on rotation, themselves raised a concern regarding the erosion of their insurance corpus. They realized that a lot of funds were being used up to compensate the carnivore-caused mortality of yak calves. However, because the premium amounts till that point had been based solely on the market value of livestock, and not on their risk of mortality, the amount being contributed by people for insuring yak calves was relatively low.

The community readily agreed to fix this mismatch between premium and compensation rates, mediated by the risk of mortality, by increasing their premium contribution for yak calves by some five times. Such is the value of building ownership of the community over any program.

Fair standards

Fisher et al. (1991) underscore the importance of using objective criteria when negotiating the terms of any agreement. In our case, we may again use the example of deciding the compensation amounts in insurance programs according to the market value of livestock while at the same time correcting the premium amounts people contribute based on the risk of mortality.

Fair standards, apart from market value, can also be based on expert opinion, laws, or customs, or a combination of criteria. For instance, the purchase price of handicrafts produced by women involved in Snow Leopard Enterprises is negotiated based on a combination of raw material, time and skilled labor involved in each product, and the market value (Chapter 10).

Not following objective criteria can lead to problems in the future. When we set up the first village reserve, we capitalized on the fact that the local community had been traditionally leasing out their land for a grazing fee to migratory pastoralists, but had discontinued the practice due to fears of land degradation. While negotiating the terms for the village reserve, we used the payment they used to receive from the migratory pastoralists as a benchmark.

We failed to follow any objective benchmark while negotiating with another community for one of the village reserves we subsequently established. There was a sense of urgency while setting-up this reserve, dictated by the need to help arrest the imminent local extinction of the Tibetan gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*. We ended up in a situation where, for a small but critical area to be freed by the community from livestock grazing and other forms of resource use, we agreed to a relatively large amount to be paid annually as offset.

This was many years ago, but even today, the problem hasn't fully gone away. After a recent round of negotiation, the community has tentatively agreed with our suggestion to link the protection of this reserve with a new livelihood-linked conservation initiative called Snow Leopard Friendly Cashmere that we are piloting.

Respectful negotiation

Following rational approaches and fair standards in community-based negotiations is valuable. However, the importance of relationships and respect in negotiation is not to be underestimated at any cost, and must be reiterated. Perhaps it is again best done with an example.

The agreement with the community pertaining to our first ever village reserve, which had been expanded to three times the original size during the first renegotiation after the initial five years, had come up for extension for the third time. The reserve had been in existence already for a remarkable 15 years, and we were to renegotiate the terms of extension for another five years.

It came as a surprise, considering our long association and partnership with this particular village, when I learnt over phone that the negotiations with the community, being conducted by some of our team members, had failed. It wasn't clear why, but based on a request that I passed on over the phone, the community representatives agreed to defer their final decision till I arrived.

A few months later, I reached the field and met the community representatives. Surprisingly, this time, the discussions proceeded without any hitches, and the agreement to renew the village reserve for another five years was reached smoothly, over casual conversation and cups of tea.

It turned out that during the earlier round of discussions, our team members, at some point during the negotiation, had ended up communicating that if the community was not interested in renewing the agreement, there were always other options available to us; other communities in the region that we could choose to work with. The community representatives felt disrespected, and the negotiations were suspended.

Many local communities, and indeed, cultures, view people and relationships as being central to negotiations and partnerships. While communities will obviously be inclined to be involved in interventions that benefit them, it isn't just a mercenary cost-benefit analysis that motivates people.

The village reserve, by helping this community access funds for community development, had been – and continues to be – viewed as being beneficial. But the disrespect that the community representatives presumably perceived because of a few words that were used during the negotiation was enough for them to nearly call off the agreement. The words, clearly, seemed to have been used out of impatience, or used as a negotiation tactic, neither being contextually appropriate.

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Communication and third party involvement

We tend to view the implementation of interventions as success, and not being able to do so as failure. Such an intervention-focused, win-lose approach with communities usually comes at the cost of inadequate investment in the relationship, and is counter-productive for conservation.

Relationship building is not about winning or losing. Sustained communication with the community collectively, and discussing motivations and proposals

individually with community members are rather useful in aligning peoples' thoughts for generating effective conservation interventions.

It is invariably helpful to discuss the intervention ideas individually with key community members, before making formal proposals and initiating negotiations with the entire community. I have also found it useful to seek out and discuss the ideas individually with people who are, for some reason or the other, expected not to be supportive.

These steps, especially when taken before formal community meetings, help to get insights regarding the kind of concern and opposition one might face, and to think through ways to address them, thereby better preparing the conservationist for the negotiations. Some of the ideas obtained in this way help make the intervention more apt. Such discussions also help in generating support for the idea and promoting ownership, especially amongst people whose inputs have been sought and considered in advance.

After barely a few months of immersion as a researcher, when I first broached the idea of setting up a village reserve – our first one discussed above – with the community, there was understandable skepticism among village elders. They had concerns about their land. Could getting into an agreement with us be the first step in losing rights over their land, and for it to be eventually acquired by the Government for wildlife conservation? Given the global history of coercive conservation, it wasn't an unfounded concern.

I had happened to discuss the idea with some of the village youth earlier, not as a negotiation tactic, but simply because seeking their inputs was a natural thing to do. I used to interact with them much more, join them in volleyball and cricket contests, and occasional impromptu contests over consumption of locally brewed alcohol.

As the discussions with the elders unfolded in my first-ever formal community meeting, something fascinating happened. As the elders voiced their rather legitimate concerns, unexpectedly and without any prompting, many of the youth decided to take upon themselves the challenge of convincing their elders. I distinctly remember largely becoming a mesmerized spectator, speaking only occasionally when clarifications were sought. The negotiations soon culminated in an agreement.

However, there will be situations when the negotiations do not move forward

despite all the effort, and patient and respectful communication. Under such situations, third-party mediation is recommended (Fisher et al. 1991).

If there is a neutral mediator that community members can trust, such as a respected member from another community in the same region, it can to some extent help circumvent any trust deficit that might exist between the community and the conservationist. A good mediator is able to understand and help better communicate the interests of both the parties to each other, and assess any hidden fears and concerns more accurately.

Third party mediation is not an alien concept amongst local communities. It is commonly employed in negotiation and conflict resolution within and between communities, which are often mediated by a group of neutral elders. When conservation negotiations with the community reach a stalemate, this is a useful option to consider.

BATNA and when to walk away

Negotiation strategists underscore the importance of thinking through what they call the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement in any negotiation (Fisher et al. 1991). BATNA is the course of unilateral action in case there is no joint agreement. More importantly, it is a useful benchmark against which to compare the cost-benefits of any potential joint agreement. Doing so prevents one from accepting terms that may be too unfavorable, or from rejecting terms that may be useful to accept.

In standard negotiation strategy, if the best potential agreement is poorer than the BATNA, walking away makes sense. However, when it comes to community-based conservation, even though we do often tend to walk away, it is not a straightforward and rational calculation, or a desirable option, as I will explain.

Our typical response when discussions with a community seem to indicate a lack of interest, or when there is lack of progress in being able to implement a conservation intervention, is the walk away alternative. The decision is often guided by our desire for efficiency, and the reality that there are usually more communities than one could possibly work with, and that many of them are much more forthcoming. There is also the pressure of having committed to funding agencies that interventions would be implemented in a time-bound manner.

As a general rule of thumb for landscape level-conservation, however, walking

away is problematic, and it must be considered a least favored or non-existent alternative. While we might walk away, the threats to conservation in a landscape, or the threats to a landscape species, do not. If the threats are internal and emerge from the community, walking away can actually intensify the problem.

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Indeed, it is prudent to concentrate the interventions in situations where the community involved is forthcoming in establishing conservation partnerships. However, that should not come at the cost of neglecting communities that are less inclined to form conservation partnerships. From a conservation perspective, it may be important to invest more time, rather than less, in such communities. Instead of interventions, the main investment in such situations needs to be on communication and relationship building.

Walking away, or quitting, therefore, is really not an option in community-based conservation of landscape species such as the snow leopard.

Written agreements

Community-based conservation must be approached in an à la carte fashion. Innovation, site specificity, and flexibility are valuable. It is important that one does not feel bound by rules while developing creative interventions with the communities. Both time and flexibility are required for accommodating the constraints and using the opportunities, for addressing the course of events, for building trust, and for designing contextually appropriate and creative interventions.

Flexibility, however, does not mean a lack of order. When there is broad agreement on the need and scope of any intervention, clear identification and distribution of responsibilities and regulations is essential. Written agreements must be employed for recording them, and can help address a variety of issues. They can especially help in keeping in focus the important nuances of any program that may be easy to forget or overlook.

As in any other relationship, misunderstandings and a mismatch of expectations is often a problem in community-based conservation, despite constant communication. Many participants initially thought, for instance, that in the livestock insurance program, they would get back their entire premium contributions if they did not lose any livestock.

Recording the details of any intervention in the form of a signed agreement has a valuable role in helping both the community and the conservationists develop a similar understanding of program details, as well as of their respective responsibilities and privileges.

Agreements also play a role in helping bring more equity among the participants. We have faced situations, for instance, where, in Snow Leopard Enterprises (Chapter 10), the distribution of orders wasn't equitable, and instead, became biased due to favoritism of the local coordinators. Sharing a copy of the agreements and contracts with all households, or additionally signing individual contracts with each participant, can help address such problems, and bring more equity and transparency (see Chapter 5: TRANSPARENCY).

Interventions usually aim at changing behavior and garnering community support for conservation. A formal set of interventions, recorded in the agreement, helps formalize the system to positively influence conservation behavior and community welfare.

Social dilemmas, or the conflicts between individual and collective interests (Karp, 1996), tend to influence both the conservation related behavior of individuals and the outcome of community-based efforts. Building sanctions and incentives into the intervention can help encourage conservation-friendly behavior and address social dilemmas. This is best done through community discussions, and recording mutually acceptable clauses into the signed agreement. As a rule of thumb, because of their positive connotation, incentives for conservation-friendly behavior are to be preferred over sanctions for non-compliance.

When participants have a stake in the proper running of an intervention, it is more likely to run well. Cost or effort sharing is one of the ways to increase this stake. Because people also contribute premiums to build the insurance fund, cases of false claim attempts are few, far between, and not tolerated. On the other hand, preventing fraud would be a major concern were it a compensation program set up entirely with Government, NGO or private funds.

In Snow Leopard Enterprises, communities commit to preventing poaching in their area, and ensuring that the commitment is honored enables all participants to get a bonus in addition to the purchase price of the products they produce (Chapter 10).

Generally, when a livestock predator such as a snow leopard or a wolf gets killed, one cannot really expect herders to complain about it. In their view it may even be a cause for quiet celebration, as it means one less “enemy” to deal with. In SLE, however, should any instance of poaching of a snow leopard or prey be detected, all participants lose their bonus, thus creating a positive incentive – rather than punitive action – and peer pressure towards conservation-friendly behavior.

When one of our radio-collared snow leopards in the Gobi-Altai was trapped and killed by a herder, the community was upset. The herder happened to belong to a community involved in Snow Leopard Enterprises. The SLE participants insisted to the local governor that in addition to the herder being made to face the legal consequences of his action, he must be made to pay the bonus SLE amount that the community had lost due to his violation of the community’s conservation contract.

SLE thus ensures that people have a financial stake in conserving. Agreements that ensure tangible stakes for the community in the program process and impact combine powerfully with the sense of ownership and pride to strengthen conservation programs.

An agreement – best written in a positive tone – should clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of the parties, suggest the course of action in cases of violation, and state that it has been arrived at as a result of discussion and negotiation between the parties. In the absence of such agreements, the interventions are unlikely to have the desired impact on biodiversity. Further, the resilience of both the intervention and the relationship with the community can especially be threatened if there is no pre-agreed mechanism to respond to breaches and instances of conservation-unfriendly behavior that the program is designed to address.

The resilience of both the intervention and the relationship with the community can especially be threatened if there is no pre-agreed mechanism to respond to breaches and instances of conservation unfriendly behavior that the program is designed to address.

Sometimes, serious offences get

committed; the law of the land is broken, such as when the snow leopard was killed by the herder. This can create a dilemma for the conservationist, especially if the offence is committed inadvertently.

If a law enforcement agency, such as the Forest Department, happens to be one of the partners in the community-based effort, this is easier to handle. If that is not the case, the conservationist feels compelled to report the instance to the agencies, but that can come at the heavy cost of losing the relationship with the entire community. Under such circumstances, detailed discussion with the community regarding the incident and the course of action must precede the lodging of formal complaints.

During general negotiations and drafting of agreements, it is also helpful to convey to the community that the agreements are not carved in stone, and that, in fact, it is useful to modify the agreement with mutual consent as we learn from our experiences and mistakes to jointly and adaptively improve the interventions.

Apart from its practical value in facilitating adaptive improvement, projecting the agreement as a working document also helps in putting the community at ease from any concerns arising out of entering into an agreement whose full consequences they might not immediately understand.

Agreements generally help to ensure that both the conservationists and the community jointly take responsibility, especially when things go wrong. This implies jointly investigating any breaches of agreement, not necessarily with the idea of finding individuals and sides to blame, but finding solutions.

Problems are potentially valuable opportunities to improve community-based programs, as we shall see later (Chapter 8: RESPONSIVENESS). Agreements provide a useful platform for such improvement.

Dos:

- Engaging in integrative negotiations with communities that focus on interests rather than positions
- Employing transparent, objective criteria or fair standards in negotiations with communities
- Bringing third-party mediation if negotiations aren't moving forward
- Discussing potential conservation interventions individually with

community members before formal negotiations with the entire community

- Involving community members in the design of interventions
- Recording details and nuances of community-based interventions through written agreements
- Including mechanisms that allow for revisiting and making changes to signed agreements
- Building in incentives and tangible stakes against social dilemmas or violation of conservation agreements

Don'ts:

- Engaging in positional bargaining for a bigger piece of the pie
- Pushing the community to make urgent decisions
- Withholding information
- Walking away from the community if negotiations aren't moving forward