Reference No. 1

Responsibility for the preparation of this research summary rests with the authors of the MCEETYA report *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures: CAEPR Policy Research 1990–2007* and not the original author(s) of the summarised material.

Title of Research:
Innovative institutional design for sustainable wildlife management in the Indigenous-owned savanna

Research Publication:
CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 247/2003

Name of Researcher(s):
J.C. Altman and M. Cochrane

Time period:
The paper draws upon cumulative experiences of both researchers during years prior to 2003 when working in Northern Australia.

Geographic location:
The tropical savanna of the Northern Territory (NT)

Methodology:
This paper is a case study of the institutional framework which operates for sustainable economic development, based upon wildlife management, in the tropical savanna of the Northern Territory. The case study focuses particularly upon the role of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), which is responsible for promoting economic development among outstation communities situated in the Maningrida region of Central Arnhem Land (NT). BAC has a special interest in community-based wildlife management.

The paper draws upon cumulative experiences of both researchers and information collected during many site visits, interviews and conversations with key stakeholders at State, regional and local levels and with both ‘town’ and ‘outstation’ communities.

Aims:
This paper examines a particular form of cooperative wildlife management. In so doing it:
• Identifies governance issues at State, regional and local levels which impact upon sustainable development;
• Describes the notion of ‘hybrid economy’ which operates in remote regions such as the tropical savanna;
• Seeks to identify the relative roles of particular forms of knowledge in the sustainable management of wildlife; and
• Identifies the policy challenges ahead for institutions involved in the sustainable management of wildlife for economic purposes.

Selected findings and insights:
There is increased recognition among Indigenous people of the importance of property rights in commercially valuable resources for sustainable economic development; these include Indigenous customary rights in wildlife.
In remote regions where a **hybrid economy** operates, comprising customary, market and state economies, there is often overlap between customary use of resources and commercial use. Most commonly this is seen in respect of arts and cultural artefacts, but there is growing commercialisation of wildlife for the food, pet and medicinal industries. The paper highlights the following benefits of commercialising aspects of the customary sector: maintaining ecological knowledge, enhancing engagement with the market, and reducing overall welfare dependence.

Sustainable wildlife use and management for commercial purposes is dependent upon:

- A solid 'hybrid' knowledge base, comprising traditional ecological knowledge, western science biological knowledge and knowledge from the social sciences such as anthropology and economics.

Sustainable wildlife use and management for commercial purposes can become part of the overall natural resource management for a region.

The institutional framework for wildlife management, including wildlife harvesting for commercial purposes, in the tropical savanna is highly complex. The paper addresses the tensions inherent in the framework and identifies particular tensions between state management regimes and Indigenous community-based interests represented by Indigenous organisations at the local and regional levels, and emphasises the need for extensive collaboration and possible changes to currently held institutional responsibilities. Such changes could include:

- The state devolving commercial rights in wildlife;
- The state recognising the important role played by Indigenous organisations in natural resource management and funding that role accordingly; and
- Capacity building among Indigenous organisations such as BAC to ensure strong governance of wildlife management.

The case study of BAC demonstrates key aspects of wildlife harvesting enterprises. A strong feature of BAC involvement in wildlife harvesting commercial enterprises is its development of **partnerships** with a wide range of educational institutions in order to develop the above solid hybrid knowledge base necessary for the establishment of a sustainable and commercially viable wildlife harvesting industry.

**Educational implications:**

Education is vital to the success of such programs. Firstly, local educational institutions can provide training in the skills necessary for sustainable wildlife management in areas such as environmental and biological sciences as well more technical skills associated with the use of scientific and other equipment. However, as CAEPR research has pointed out, low levels of literacy and often numeracy must be addressed as part the training. Furthermore training delivery will need to be practically based and grounded ‘in country’. This type of training, tightly related to employment across both the market and customary economy, and culturally aligned with the community is extremely relevant to those secondary students most likely to leave school early as well as young Indigenous adults. [training]

Secondly, success in sustainable wildlife management for commercial use is dependent upon educational institutions building the capacity of Indigenous organisations to establish viable commercial enterprises, placed within an overall regional or at least community development plan. [regional development] [business enterprise development]
Relevance:

Domain 5: Pathways to training, employment and higher education

Pathways and strategies for remote locations

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