

Community Conservation Resilience Initiative among Indigenous Nomadic Tribes of Iran



CENESTA and the CCRI

The Centre for Sustainable Development (CENESTA) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable community- and culture-based development. Its main area of work is Iran and Southwest Asia. CENESTA experts have also engaged in extensive activities in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and in the international arena in general. CENESTA is a member of IUCN—the World Conservation Union and is affiliated with the University of the North (Iran).

The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI) was introduced by CENESTA at a workshop held in Poldokhtar, Luristan Province, in December 2014. The aim of the workshop was to reach a common understanding of the CCRI with tribal representatives. With the communities' consent and collaboration, a host of participatory methodologies were developed including the articulation of indicators which the communities subsequently used to analyze their resilience. This bottom-up process has ensured a more involved and informed participation in the assessment.

Collaborators

- CENESTA
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- Community Collaborators
- Abolhassani:
 - Reza Salehi
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 - Fatemeh Talebi
 - Esmail Ahmadi
- Takle
 - Nasser Ahmadi
 - Shahram Ahmadi
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 - Shanbeh Farrokhvand
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 - Mahnesa Ardeshiri
- Ahmad Beiranvand, overall community coordinator

Indigenous Nomads of Iran



We are some 700 tribes of indigenous nomadic pastoralists covering most of the national territory;

Up to 2 million people (just over 2% of the population) producing about 25% of animal products of the country;

Great ethnic & linguistic diversity;

We practice seasonal migration to protect nature;

Concept of territory as nature, livelihood, identity & survival;

Customary institutions and tribal structures for management of natural resources and sustainable living;

Great indigenous knowledge of environment including climate.

Examples of ICCAs in Iran



**Inverted Tulips Plain:
Bakhtiari tribal territory**



**Tribal summering
grounds: highland
forests**



**Wetland in Qashqai
Territory**

**Forest ICCA:
in Kurdistan**



Camel ICCA in Desert

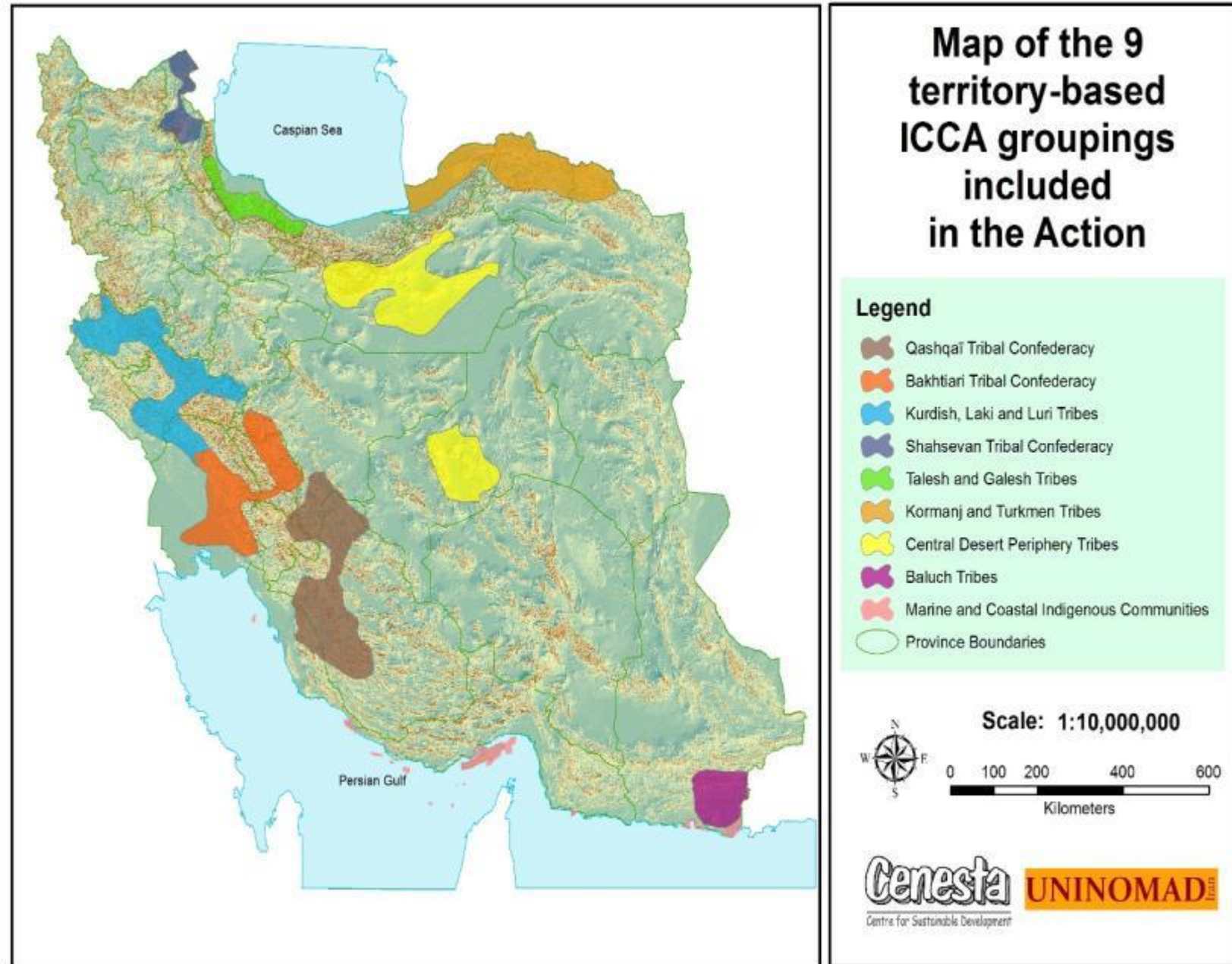


**Migration as a
conservation Strategy
in Nomadic ICCAs**



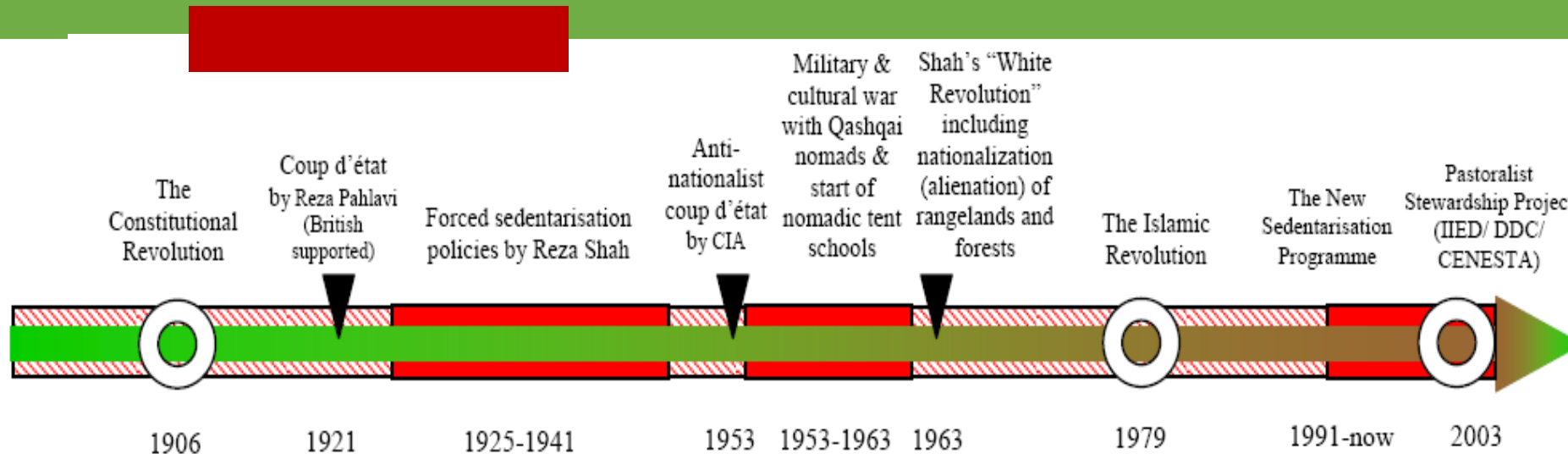
**Sustainable Trapping in
managed Bird Sanctuary ICCA**

Some 700 tribes and tribal confederacies in Iran (in the form of 100 tribal confederacies and 600 independent tribes “1.5 -2.0 million population”)



Changes in governance in the past century

The ancestral territories of indigenous nomadic tribes of Iran have been under attack since the 1920s, when the autocratic father of the Shah of Iran began sedentarisation at gunpoint. His son “nationalised” the territories by decree, and now there is massive land grabbing by both private and public sectors for refineries, factories, military bases, ecotourism and agricultural projects, large dams and roads and state-run “protected areas”....



Historic events in Iran affecting nomadic indigenous territories

What changed it?

- Development of strong central state power
- The coming of strong capitalist and statist institutions
- The influence of imperialism and colonialism
- Development of universal education with imported models unrelated to Iranian society
- Forced top-down reforms in land and resource tenure leading to confiscation of community natural assets by the Shah's regime
- Loss of a sense of responsibility and belonging towards nature in IPs/LCs due to being sidelined and marginalized.

Overview of the paradigm shift

- This paradigm was centred on:
 - Conservation as the sole responsibility of the government
 - Local communities of nomadic herders, farmers and fisherfolks largely to blame for the degradation of nature while side-lining and marginalising IPs & local communities
 - All natural resources designated as property of the state

Climatic Changes impacting nomadic tribes

1. Drought



A community-conserved wetland before and after the recent unprecedented severe droughts; long-awaited recent rains have revived much of the territory of this ICCA.

2. Floods



3. Severe melting of glaciers and permanent snow cover



4. Serious reduction in ground & surface water with climate change & ill-conceived dams & agricultural projects



5. Unprecedented regional dust-storms that destroy forests & rangelands



Response to the situation: Federating and organising—
regaining ancestral territories & community conservation
based sustainable livelihoods

- Indigenous tribes are reorganising themselves according to ***customary governance structures***
- They are registering their authentic tribal organisations and re-claiming the governance of their ***ancestral territories***
- They are claiming ***appropriate recognition***, starting with ***self-recognition***, of their ***territory-based ICCAs***.
- They have now formed UNINOMAD and UNICAMEL (***national federations***)
- As a result, they are better listened to and are ***influencing national policy*** and the ***reclaiming of their rights***

Re-empowerment process of IPs and LCs in Iran



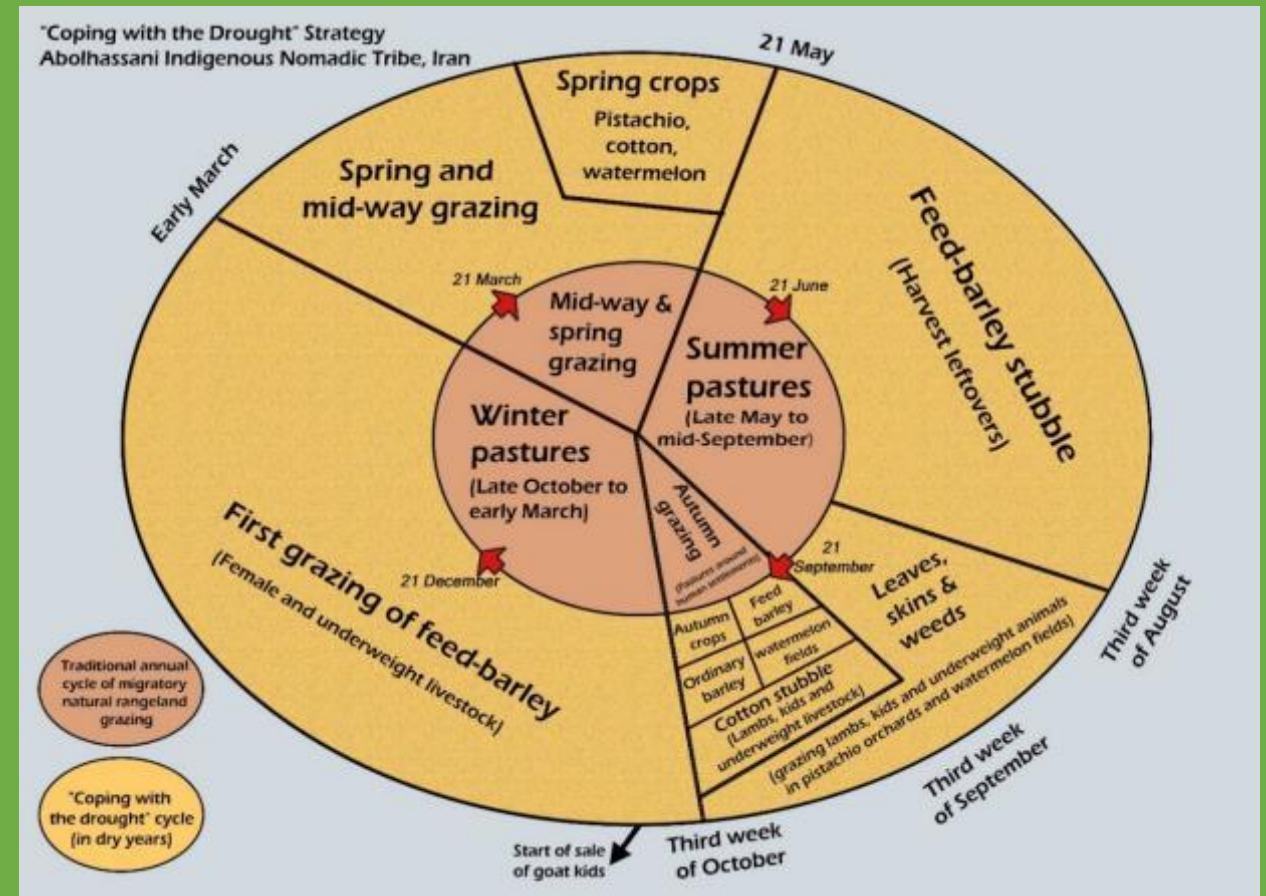
Abolhassani Tribe in Touran Biosphere Reserve region



Kheels and *Kalatehs* are among indigenous livestock management mechanisms in the Abolhassani ICCA where dairy production takes place. Photo by Ghanimat Azhdari (Cenesta)

Inventive learning and use of crops to reduce the pressure of livestock on diminishing grazing resources: pistachio, cotton, fodder barley, etc.





Ahmad Salehi explains the "Coping with the Drought Cycle" initiative. Photo extracted from video by Ramin Rouhani



Landscape of a typical village in Abolhassani ICCA. Agriculture plots and irrigation pools are important elements in Abolhassani “Coping With The Drought Cycle” initiative. Photo by Maedeh Salimi (Cenesta)



Abolhassani women showing important sites and resources of the ICCA on a map. Photo by Maedeh Salimi (Cenesta)

Taklé tribe of Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy





Taklé tribesman explaining the environmental changes during the last few years.
Photo by Cenesta



Nasser Ahmadi, above right, explains Taklé initiative of reintroducing red spotted trout to Ali Darvish River in order to rehabilitate the population of brown bear in the ICCA.
Photo by Fahimeh Seifi (Cenesta)

Reversing the cycle of degradation



Red spotted trout caught by Taklé tribespeople to be transferred to Ali Darvish River in Taklé ICCA.
Photo by Fahimeh Seifi (Cenesta)

Reintroducing the two- humped camel



The Taklé have been successfully reproducing two-humped camels in the ICCA. The Bactrian camel population which was drastically declining during the last few decades, is now recovering. Many Tribesmen believe the decline in camel numbers is also responsible for proliferation of invasive plants.

Photo by Fahimeh Seifi (Cenesta)

Farrokhvand Tribe of Bakhtiari Indigenous Tribal Confederacy in Southwest Iran.



Inverted tulips (*Fritillaria imperialis*) are among rare and important plant species which is found in Farrokhvand ICCA. Photo by Cenesta

The tribe has been developing a conservation plan in their mid-range ICCA, resulting in the rehabilitation of their mid-range territory based on the restoration of endangered species such as wild mountain celery.



The intimate relationship between Bakhtiari women and their animals. Photo by Khabar Online

Bakhtiari sheep are an important source of livelihood for Farrokhvand tribe. Photo by Cenesta



Farrokhvand tribespeople have voluntarily conserved their traditional pastures. Photo by Farrokhvand tribe



Tribal rangelands have been conserved for centuries by Farrokhvand tribe. Photo by Cenesta

Community ICCA Declaration of Farrokhvand Tribe of Bakhtiari TC

لذا اعلام می‌کنیم با همت عشایر کوچرو طایفه فرخ‌وند، علاوه بر تأیید برقراری قرق بومی عام در کل قلمرو طایفه فرخ‌وند (منجمله حدود ۵۰۰ هکتار از قلمرو میان‌بند و بیلاقی این طایفه در منطقه لید بالا - بازفت طایفه فرق بومی خاص جدیدی را در سطح ۱۵۰



هکتار در منطقه لای گل (- دره گل. رجوع به نقشه مشارکتی شماره ۲ پیوست)، با هدف حفظ، احیاء و بهره‌برداری پایدار از لاله‌های واژگون، کرفس کوهی، موسیر و سایر گونه‌های بومی و مهم منطقه را اعلام کرده است.

در راستای دستیابی به هدف‌های مذکور و تقویت و احیاء «زیرقرق» بومی ۵۰۰ هکتار از قلمرو میان‌بند و بیلاقی این طایفه در منطقه لید بالا، و به طور خاص

۱۵۰ هکتار در منطقه لای گل (دره گل) از همین قلمرو، اعلام موافقت می‌نمائیم تا کل قلمرو طایفه فرخ‌وند و منجمله این مناطق به عنوان قرق بومی این طایفه در مجامع ملی و بین‌المللی ثبت گردد.

شبه فرخ‌وند، نماینده شورای طایفه فرخ‌وند و نائب رئیس شورای معیشت پایدار عشایر کوچرو ایل بختیاری

تأیید شورای معیشت پایدار ایل بختیاری - میاوش رئیس شورای

شماره :
تاریخ :
پیوست :
بسمه تعالی
شورای معیشت عشایر کوچرو ایل بختیاری
ثبت : ۲۴۸۸۷



از: نائب رئیس شورای معیشت پایدار ایل بختیاری
به: مؤسسه توسعه پایدار و محیط زیست (CENESTA)
از طریق: شورای معیشت پایدار عشایر کوچرو ایل بختیاری
موضوع: اعلام قرق های بومی طایفه فرخ‌وند از ایل بختیاری

ما عشایر کوچرو طایفه فرخ‌وند، از باب محمود صالح، شاخه چهارلنگ ایل بختیاری، اعلام می‌کنیم کل قلمرو (بیلاقی، میان‌بندها، ایلراده و قشلاق) طایفه فرخ‌وند (نقشه مشارکتی شماره ۱ پیوست) در طول تاریخ چند هزار ساله ایل بختیاری توسط طایفه و ایل به صورت یک قرق بومی عام بشمار می‌آمده که حق دسترسی و استفاده از منابع آن تابع شرایط ویژه با قوانین عرفی و سرپچی از آن باعث عقوبت ایلی بوده است، و در درون آن بخش‌هایی از قلمرو با هدف‌ها و نیازهای مختلف قرق‌های بومی خاص به حالت فصلی، سالانه یا برای مدت نامحدود اعلام می‌شده است. هم‌اکنون نیز این عشایر قلمروهای خود را حفاظت و بهره‌برداری پایدار می‌نمایند ولی بخش‌هایی از این قلمرو در طی یکی دو دهه اخیر در معرض تهدید عوامل بیرونی و فشارهای اقتصادی فراتر از ایل قرار گرفته است. به همین دلیل شورای معیشت پایدار طایفه فرخ‌وند (متشکل از رهبران مقبول اجزاء طایفه) که بخشی از شورای معیشت پایدار عشایر کوچرو ایل بختیاری می‌باشد، تصمیم گرفته است تا با بسیج امکانات درونی طایفه و کمک‌های بیرونی (منجمله «طرح احیاء قرق‌های بومی - ICCAs») و مدیریت عرفی منابع طبیعی در دشت لاله‌های واژگون^۱ با حمایت UNDP/GEF/SGP، تشکیلات منابع طبیعی دولت، سازمان حفظ محیط‌زیست و مؤسسه توسعه پایدار و محیط‌زیست (CENESTA)^۲ و کنسرسیوم قرق‌های بومی (ICCA Consortium) و مؤسسه بین‌المللی محیط زیست و توسعه (IUED)، به احیاء بخش‌های تضعیف شده بپردازد. تاکنون نیز مبالغ قابل توجهی توسط خود عشایر کوچرو و مشارکت نیروی انسانی طایفه در چند سال اخیر به امر حفاظت از این قلمروها تخصیص داده شده است.

^۱ طبق تبصره ۳، از ماده ۱۳ اساسنامه شورای معیشت پایدار عشایر کوچرو ایل بختیاری، مؤسسه توسعه پایدار و محیط‌زیست به عنوان عضوی از مجمع شورای معیشت پایدار ایل (متشکل از ۲ نماینده از ۹ باب ایل + ۱ عضو از مؤسسه) می‌باشد و در جلسات شورا حق رأی دارد ولی در فرآیندهای حاصل از فعالیتهای شورا ذینفع نیست.

مهر و امضاء
مهر و امضاء

آدرس : لالی خیابان معلم همراه ۰۹۱۶۳۰۵۴۴۰۸

Internal Threats

- The consumption of traditional food is decreasing with the increase in consumption of fast foods.
- In comparison with the past, youth are less interested in learning indigenous skills and knowledge.
- Decline of wildlife and degradation of pastures including the invasion of woody and salty plants due to loss of two humped camels and over utilization of available pastures.
- The communities are vulnerable to prolonged and increasingly intensive droughts, soil erosion and flooding.

External Threats

- The indigenous knowledge and customary management practices of the community are not taken into account while designing systems of assessment of carrying capacity used for grazing licenses.
- Government and development agencies have little understanding of rangeland management by government and development agencies.
- There is continued denial of communal access, control and ownership over ancestral territories including vitally important migratory routes.
- The nationalisation of natural resources and rangelands and taking away the right of indigenous communities' governance of their ancestral lands. This has severely undermined the resilience of communities to cope with adverse environmental changes.

Solutions offered by the community

- More flexibility and trust from government in case of time and space restrictions of grazing licenses. The licenses should be revised according to customary practices.
- The marketing potential of local crafts, specifically women's crafts should be explored.
- Government should buy livestock like sheep and lambs and dairy products at a fair price to prevent the middlemen buying them cheaply.
- The government should offer fodder and relief to livestock and communities during periods of drought.
- The communities can benefit with technical inputs to management of livestock, orchards, fodder, maintaining water harvesting systems to complement local and traditional knowledge.

Preliminary recommendations to outsiders

- Considering traditional rangeland management as an alternative to conventional management systems.
- Building on nomadic peoples' indigenous knowledge and their initiatives should be taken seriously in development policies.
- Legal reform at the national level that provides some recognition for elders' judgements on various matters, especially those pertaining to management of natural resources.

The New Conservation Paradigm in Iran

Participation of right-holders and stakeholders (particularly indigenous peoples and local communities) in the governance and management of protected areas and habitats

- Revising of the Protected Areas System according to the IUCN Matrix of categories and governance types
- Transfer of protected areas governance to IPs and LCs where they have ancestral rights and capacity to manage
- Recognition of ICCAs, while maintaining respect for indigenous governance systems with no interference in the community customary systems
- Recognition of private sector governance on protected areas when ownership is clear
- Recognition of protected areas with multiple stakeholder governance (co-management)
- Maintaining official management on protected areas only in exceptional cases:
 - Where no beneficiary group or groups and other stakeholders are willing or able to govern
 - Military and security areas where transfer of their management to any other group is not in the best interests of the country
- **The main task of the government is "support" including financial, where appropriate**
- In the planning of new and existing protected areas, government is committed to apply the principles of PoWPA (especially Element 2: (1) participation, (2) good governance; (3) equity, and (4) benefit sharing)
- Performance of FPIC wherever impact on IPs and LCs may be envisaged
- Government is committed to apply the above guiding principles in developing the NBSAPs
- Government is determined to consider ICCAs to achieve the Aichi targets for 2020

Many thanks!



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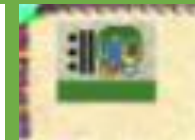
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