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HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED CONSERVATION: THE INTEGRAL ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTOR IN THE CONSERVATION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Historically, many conservation organizations operated without a dedicated focus on human rights, lacking a systematic approach to ensure compliance with global human rights standards. This oversight led to practices that inadvertently disregarded fundamental human rights principles. Recognizing the pivotal role of communities and Indigenous rights in resource management, there has been a paradigm shift. Conservation organizations now acknowledge the need for a Human Rights Director, a role catalysing a community-centric approach and aligning initiatives with human rights principles. While this shift is in its early stages, it signifies a crucial step towards more responsible and sustainable conservation practices. The Human Rights Director, often underestimated, plays a vital role in navigating the delicate balance between biodiversity conservation and community well-being. This paper explores the responsibilities, challenges, and impact of individuals in this position, emphasizing their role as stewards of ethical practices and advocates for social justice. Through a comprehensive review, case studies and best practices, the paper sheds light on the intricate intersections of human rights and conservation. It underscores the indispensable contributions of Human Rights Directors and their teams to conscientious and sustainable conservation strategies. The discussion contributes to the broader discourse on the synergies between human rights advocacy and effective conservation, emphasizing the imperative for organizations to prioritize the creation of a Human Rights unit. This unit can empower teams to achieve socially responsible conservation outcomes, marking a transformative journey towards ethical conservation practices.

Keywords: Human Rights Director; Conservation organizations; Indigenous rights; Ethical practices

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Human Rights-Based Conservation: The Integral Role of Human Rights Director in the Conservation Sector

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context of Human Rights in Conservation

The intersection of human rights and conservation is a complex and multifaceted issue that involves the balance between preserving the natural environment and respecting the rights and livelihoods of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.[1] This topic emerged as a response to the potential conflicts that arise when conservation efforts disregard or infringe upon the rights of the people who inhabit and depend on the areas being conserved.[2] The concept of human rights in the context of conservation refers to the recognition and protection of the rights of individuals and communities in relation to natural resources and environmental conservation efforts. It highlights the interconnectedness between environmental well-being (stewardship) and the well-being of human beings, acknowledging that the conservation of nature should not come at the expense of human rights and social justice. The background and context of human rights in conservation are rooted in several key factors as elaborated in table 1.

Table 1: Key factors shaping the background and context of human rights in conservation

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities	Many conservation areas, particularly in biodiverse regions, are home to Indigenous peoples and local communities who have lived in harmony with their environments for generations, and have traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to sustainable resource management. These communities often have deep cultural, spiritual, and economic connections to the land and its resources. Ignoring their rights and traditional knowledge and establishing protected areas without consulting or involving these groups can lead to displacement, loss of livelihoods and access to resources, and cultural disruption. Human rights in conservation recognize the importance of respecting and safeguarding these communities' rights to land, resources, and cultural heritage.

[1] Colchester, M., "Conservation policy and Indigenous peoples" (2004) 7 (3) Environmental Science & Policy 145-153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2004.02.004>.

[2] Adams, W., & Hutton, J., "People, parks and poverty: political ecology and biodiversity conservation" (2007) 5 (2) Conservation and Society 147-183. Retrieved from <https://journals.lww.com/coas/Fulltext/2007/05020/People,_Parks_and_Poverty__Political_Ecology_and.1.aspx>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

Traditional Knowledge	Indigenous peoples and local communities possess valuable traditional knowledge about their ecosystems, which has often been refined over generations. This knowledge can contribute significantly to effective conservation strategies. Failing to recognize and incorporate this knowledge can hinder conservation efforts and perpetuate a lack of respect for human rights.
Displacement and Land Rights	In the name of protecting wildlife and ecosystems, conservation initiatives have sometimes led to the displacement and forced eviction of local communities from their ancestral lands, disrupting their way of life and undermining their rights. This has raised ethical and legal concerns regarding the violation of people's rights to housing, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. Recognizing and protecting land tenure and property rights is crucial to ensuring that conservation efforts respect human rights.
Access to Resources and Livelihoods	Many communities depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as hunting, fishing, and agriculture. Conservation efforts that restrict or ban these activities without providing alternative sustainable livelihood options can lead to poverty and social unrest. Human rights in conservation emphasize equitable access to natural resources and benefits derived from conservation efforts. This includes ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable groups have a say in decision-making processes and receive fair compensation for any limitations placed on their resource use.
Environmental Justice	Conservation can lead to conflicts between various stakeholders, including governments, conservation organizations, local communities, and businesses. Addressing these conflicts requires a rights-based approach that considers the needs and perspectives of all parties involved. Environmental conservation efforts can disproportionately impact marginalized and disadvantaged communities, leading to environmental injustices. Human rights principles seek to address these disparities and ensure that conservation actions do not perpetuate or exacerbate social inequalities.
Human Rights Frameworks, International Agreements and	The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other international agreements recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities in

Declarations	relation to natural resources and conservation. These international agreements provide a foundation for understanding the importance of respecting human rights in conservation efforts; and act as frameworks that emphasize principles such as non-discrimination, participation, and the right to an adequate standard of living. Many countries have enacted laws and policies that recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the importance of community-based conservation initiatives. These legal frameworks provide a basis for integrating human rights principles into conservation practices.
Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments emphasize the importance of obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from affected communities before implementing conservation projects on their lands. FPIC is a principle recognized in international law that emphasizes the importance of involving Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes that affect their lands, resources, and rights. Obtaining genuine consent ensures that conservation initiatives are aligned with the wishes and needs of the affected communities.
Conservation and Development Balancing Act	The relationship between conservation and development is complex, often involving trade-offs between preserving ecosystems and promoting economic growth. Human rights considerations aim to strike a balance between conservation goals and the rights of people, seeking sustainable solutions that benefit both.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals emphasize the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues. Conservation efforts that align with these goals consider both ecological integrity and human well-being.
Collaborative Conservation	A more holistic and rights-based approach to conservation involves collaborating with local communities and Indigenous peoples. This includes engaging them in planning, management, and decision-making processes to ensure that conservation initiatives are sustainable, equitable, and culturally sensitive.

It is globally acclaimed that successful and sustainable conservation efforts require collaboration, inclusivity, and a respect for the rights and well-being of all individuals and communities affected by conservation initiatives.[3, 4]

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition within the conservation community of the need to integrate human rights considerations into conservation strategies.[5] This includes acknowledging and respecting the rights, needs, and perspectives of local communities and Indigenous peoples. It's important to strike a balance between conservation goals and the protection of human rights, while also seeking innovative ways to achieve both simultaneously. The ethical considerations of balancing rights, cultural sensitivity, and benefit distribution collectively underscore the intricate decision-making processes that conservation organizations must navigate to ensure a harmonious integration of human rights within their initiatives.[6, 7]

1.2 Significance of the Role of Human Rights Director in Conservation Organizations

The role of a Human Rights Director in conservation organizations holds significant importance due to the intricate connections between environmental conservation and human rights. This position is of paramount importance, as it bridges the gap between conservation efforts and the protection of human rights and focuses on ensuring that conservation efforts are conducted in a manner that respects, protects, and promotes the rights of individuals and communities, particularly those who are directly impacted by conservation initiatives.[8]

The jurisdiction of the Human Rights Director spans across a global context, as environmental conservation and human rights issues often transcends national boundaries. In this role, the director works on a global scale to address and mitigate the potential negative impacts of conservation projects on local populations, ensuring that internationally recognized human rights standards are upheld. Additionally, the Human Rights Director may also collaborate with local, regional, and international stakeholders to tailor approaches to specific country contexts. While the overarching goal is to safeguard human rights globally within the realm of

[3] Michael B. Mascia, J. Peter Brosius, Tracy A. Dobson, Bruce C. Forbes, Leah Horowitz, Margaret A. McKean, & Nancy J. Turner, "Conservation and the social sciences" (2003) 17 (3) Conservation Biology 649-650. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2003.01738.x>

[4] IUCN, "*World Conservation Congress Resolutions*", (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/congress/resolutions>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[5] UNESCO, "*World Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Role of Local Communities*" (2012). Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/907/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

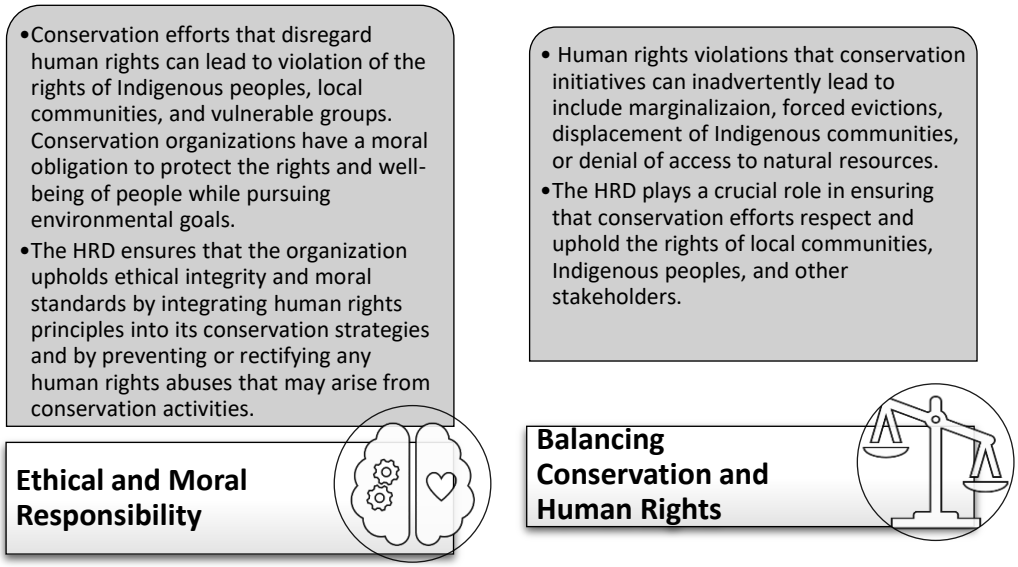
[6] William M. Adams, Ros Aveling, Dan Brockington, Barney Dickson, Jo Elliott, Jon Hutton, Dilys Roe, Bhaskar Vira, & William Wolmer, "Biodiversity conservation and the eradication of poverty" (2004) 306 (5699) Science 1146-1149. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1097920>

[7] Igoe, J., "Human rights, conservation, and the privatization of sovereignty in Africa–a discussion of recent changes in Tanzania" (2007) 15 (276) *Policy matters* 532-34.

[8] Büscher, B., Dressler, W., & Fletcher, R., "*Environmental conservation in the neoliberal age*" (2014) University of Arizona Press.

conservation, the director may need to adapt strategies and interventions to the unique social, cultural, and legal frameworks of different countries. This adaptability is crucial for effectively navigating diverse landscapes and fostering sustainable conservation practices that prioritize both environmental integrity and human well-being. This role holds major significance due to several reasons as depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1: Significance of the role of Human Rights Director in Conservation organizations



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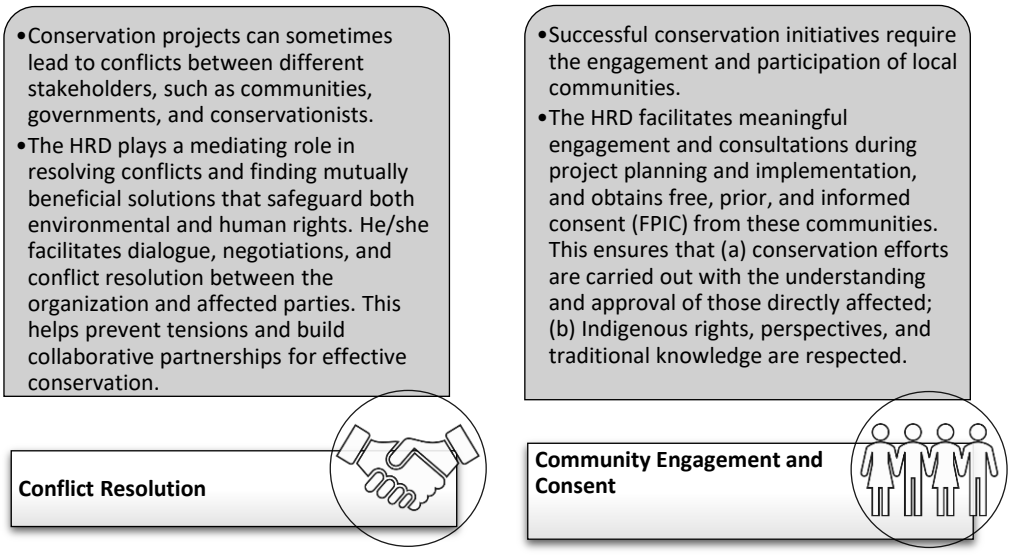

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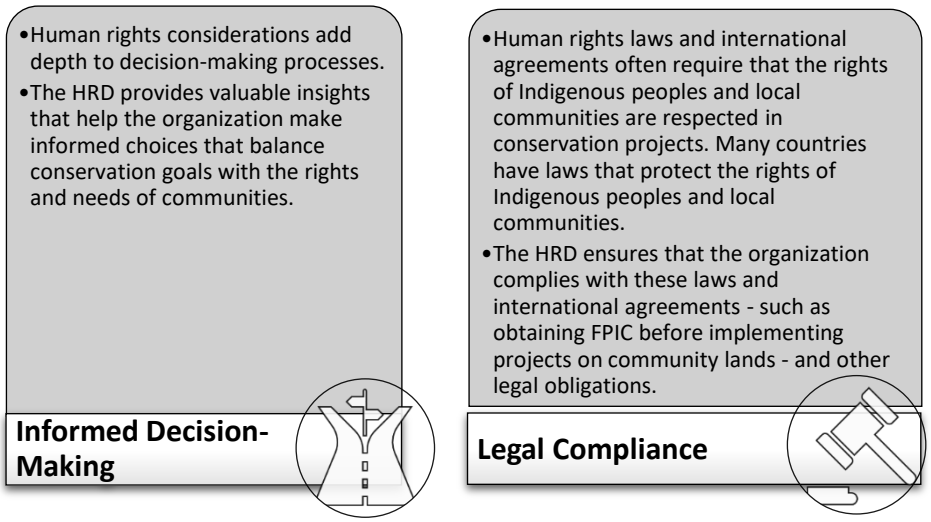
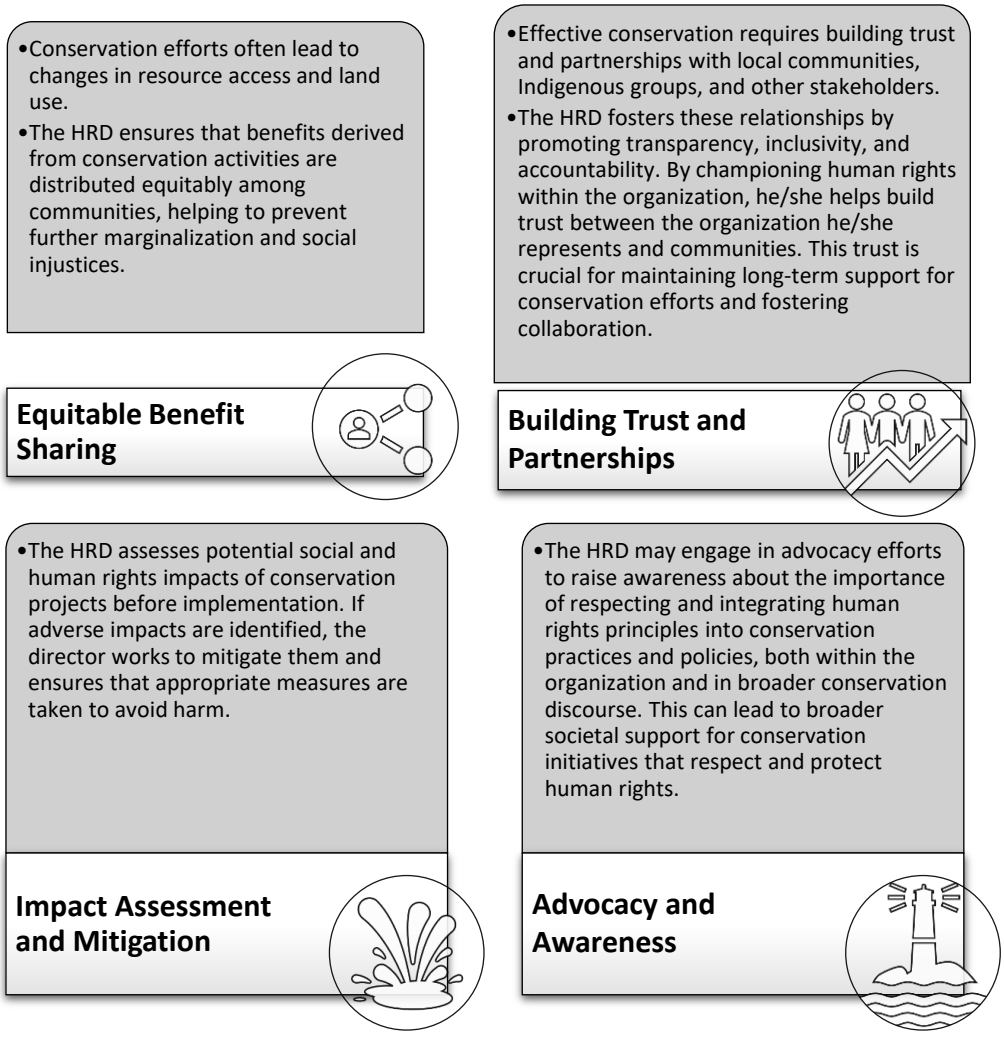


Part Figure 1c



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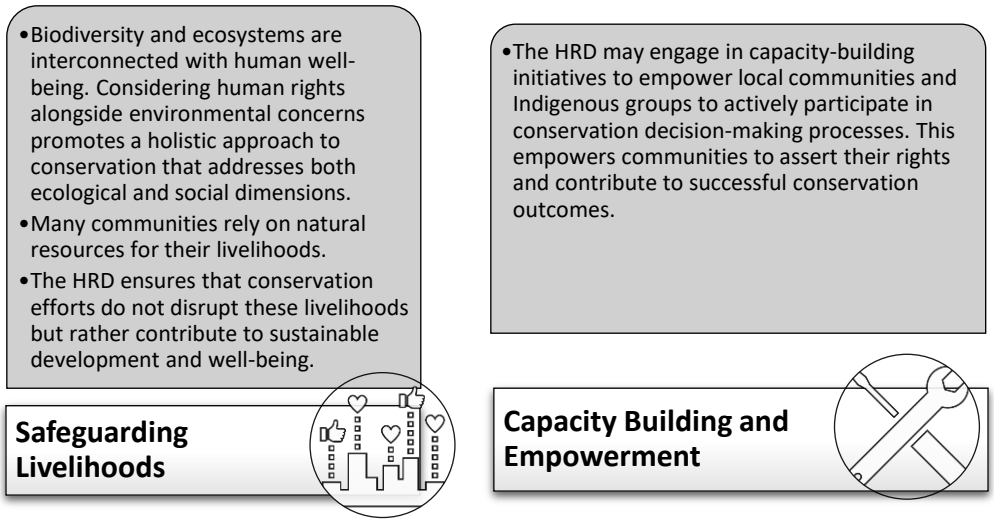

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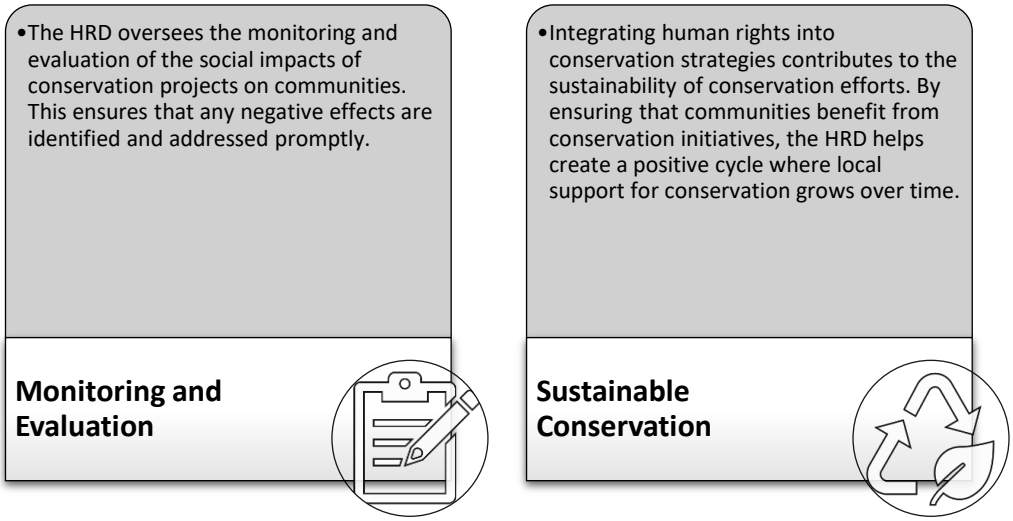

Part Figure 1f

In essence, the role of a Human Rights Director in conservation organizations is crucial for fostering ethical, inclusive, and sustainable conservation practices that prioritize the well-being and rights of all stakeholders involved. It is also a crucial role for ensuring that environmental conservation efforts are carried out in a manner that respects, honours, upholds, and promotes the rights, dignity, and well-being of all individuals and communities involved. This holistic approach contributes to more effective conservation outcomes.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Paper

This paper provides both an in-depth examination and a comprehensive exploration of existing knowledge, research, and theoretical frameworks relevant to the intersection of human rights and conservation. It can equally substantiate as a literature review. The paper aims to enhance

understanding in the subject matter, enabling professionals to effectively catalyze positive change at the juncture of human rights and conservation. Beyond expanding knowledge and broadening awareness of relevant practices, the purpose is to strengthen the role of a professional, specifically the human rights director within conservation organizations. This not only seeks to empower individuals in this position, but also endeavours to equip them with innovative approaches at the nexus of human rights and conservation.

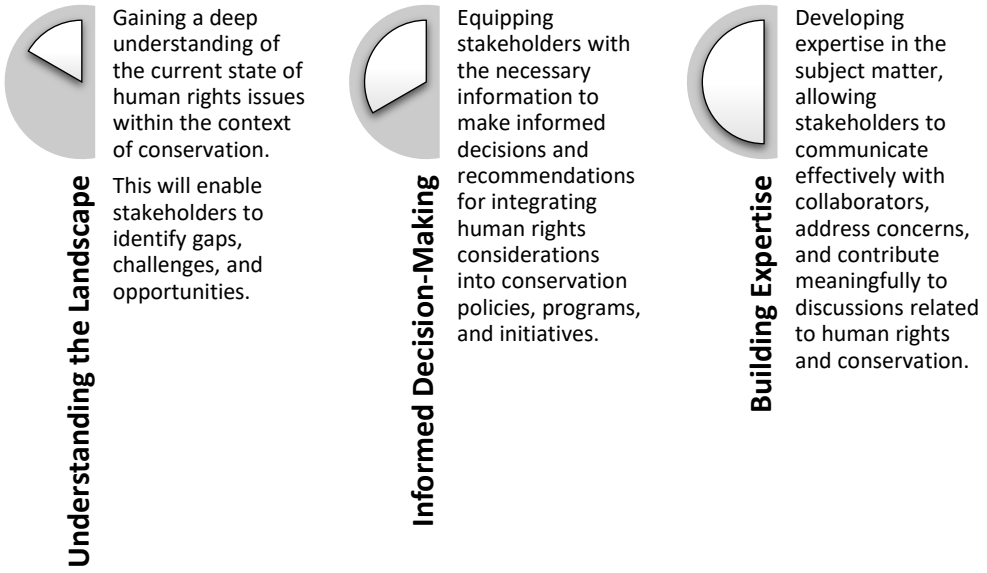

Figure 1: Purpose and objectives of Human Rights in Conservation studies

Different objectives of the paper can be illustrated as under:

1. To identify relevant concepts, theories, and frameworks related to human rights and conservation. This could include understanding concepts like the right to a healthy environment, Indigenous rights, and the impacts of conservation activities on local communities.
2. To examine case studies from various regions and contexts that highlight successful or problematic examples of integrating human rights considerations into conservation efforts. Learn from these cases to inform your approach.
3. To explore the legal and policy frameworks at the national and international levels that relate to human rights and conservation. Understand how these frameworks can guide human rights in conservation work and what gaps might exist.
4. To identify some stakeholders involved in conservation initiatives, including local communities, Indigenous peoples, NGOs, governments, and more. Understand their perspectives, concerns, and expectations regarding human rights and conservation.

5. To synthesize best practices for promoting human rights while pursuing conservation goals. This could involve strategies for community engagement, informed consent, benefit-sharing, and conflict resolution.
6. To address ethical considerations and dilemmas that may arise when balancing conservation objectives with human rights concerns. Develop strategies to navigate these challenges while upholding both ethical principles.
7. To identify opportunities for collaboration between conservation organizations, human rights advocates, and other relevant stakeholders. Collaboration can lead to more effective and holistic approaches.
8. To inform strategy development: use the insights gained from the literature review to shape your strategy as a Human Rights Director in Conservation. Develop a roadmap for integrating human rights principles into conservation programs and initiatives.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper is the synthesis of a pre-consultancy conducted for a key organisation in the conservation industry. It encapsulates the preliminary investigative stage that preceded the formal research and development of the consultancy. It integrates insights gained during the pre-consultancy phase with the findings from the cases to create a comprehensive understanding of the role of Human Rights Director. The process that led to the decision to explore the role of Human Rights Director in conservation organizations included:

- Needs assessment: interactions with conservationists, community leaders, and organizational leaders allowed the authors to identify the specific challenges or gaps in conservation practices that led to the recognition of the need for a Human Rights Director.
- Stakeholder consultation: informal consultations with relevant stakeholders in the field in Southern Africa allowed the authors to gather insights into the perceived intersections between conservation and human rights. This included internal discussions within conservation organizations in Namibia and South Africa, discussions with community representatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, and expert opinions.
- Document analysis was conducted to understand the experiences and practices of organizations in integrating human rights considerations.
- Comparative analysis was conducted of the data collected from cases to compare the practices of organizations with and without dedicated Human Rights Directors.

- Finally, actionable recommendations were discussed based on the integrated findings to guide conservation organizations in their approach to incorporating human rights principles.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONSERVATION: THE INTERSECTION

3.1 Overview of Human Rights Principles and Frameworks

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that every person is entitled to, regardless of race, nationality, sex, gender, religion, or other characteristics. These rights are enshrined in various international treaties and declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)[9] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[10]. Some key human rights principles include the right to life, liberty, security, freedom from discrimination, torture, and slavery, the right to participate in cultural, social, and political life and the right to a healthy environment. These principles serve as the foundation for understanding the intersection of human rights and conservation.

The Human Rights Director plays a critical role in translating these principles into action within the conservation sector, ensuring that environmental initiatives are not only ecologically sound but also ethically and socially responsible. By upholding these universal human rights standards, the director contributes to the development of conservation practices that not only preserve the planet's biodiversity but also respect the dignity and well-being of all individuals, irrespective of their geographical location or socio-cultural context.

3.2 Application of Human Rights to Conservation Contexts

Applying human rights to conservation contexts involves ensuring that conservation initiatives respect and protect the rights of all affected parties (mainly local communities and Indigenous peoples). This may include conducting thorough impact assessments to identify potential human rights violations, seeking the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous and local communities, and providing mechanisms for redress when rights are violated (e.g., providing fair compensation or alternative livelihood options). It also involves recognizing and respecting the cultural and spiritual ties that communities have to their lands and resources.

The Human Rights Director takes on the responsibility of implementing these practices globally, working collaboratively with conservation teams and local stakeholders to integrate human rights considerations into the fabric of conservation projects. By fostering partnerships built on mutual respect and understanding, the director ensures that conservation efforts not only safeguard ecosystems but also

[9] <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.
[10] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

contribute to the empowerment and well-being of communities, fostering a sustainable and inclusive approach to environmental conservation.

3.3 Integration of Human Rights Considerations into Conservation Policies and Practices

In the evolving landscape of environmental conservation, the recognition of the interconnectedness between human rights and conservation has become increasingly crucial. The intricate dance between preserving our planet's biodiversity and respecting the fundamental rights of individuals and communities has given rise to a paradigm shift in conservation strategies. Acknowledging that conservation initiatives have profound implications for local populations, particularly Indigenous communities, has prompted a re-evaluation of the ethical dimensions inherent in these efforts. Before delving into the specifics of how human rights intersect with conservation policies and practices, it is imperative to understand the broader context in which these considerations unfold. The delicate balance between environmental sustainability and the well-being of communities requires a nuanced approach that respects the dignity, autonomy, and cultural integrity of those directly impacted by conservation initiatives. This recognition lays the groundwork for a holistic understanding of the integration of human rights into conservation policies, emphasizing the imperative to navigate the complexities of ecological preservation with a commitment to social justice and human dignity.

The integration of human rights into conservation policies and practices involves five steps:

1. Assessment: Identifying potential human rights impacts of conservation activities through assessments and consultations with affected communities.
2. Mitigation: Developing strategies to mitigate and minimize negative human rights impacts while maximizing positive contributions.
3. Inclusion: Ensuring the meaningful participation of local communities and Indigenous peoples in conservation decision-making processes.
4. Adaptation: Adapting conservation plans and activities based on feedback and changing human rights circumstances.
5. Accountability: Establishing mechanisms for accountability and redress when human rights violations occur.

3.4 Conceptual Framework for Integrating Human Rights into Conservation

Integrating human rights into conservation requires a conceptual framework that involves recognizing the interdependence of environmental protection and human rights and considers the aspects highlighted in figure 3.

Human Rights-Based Conservation: The Integral Role of Human Rights Director in the Conservation Sector

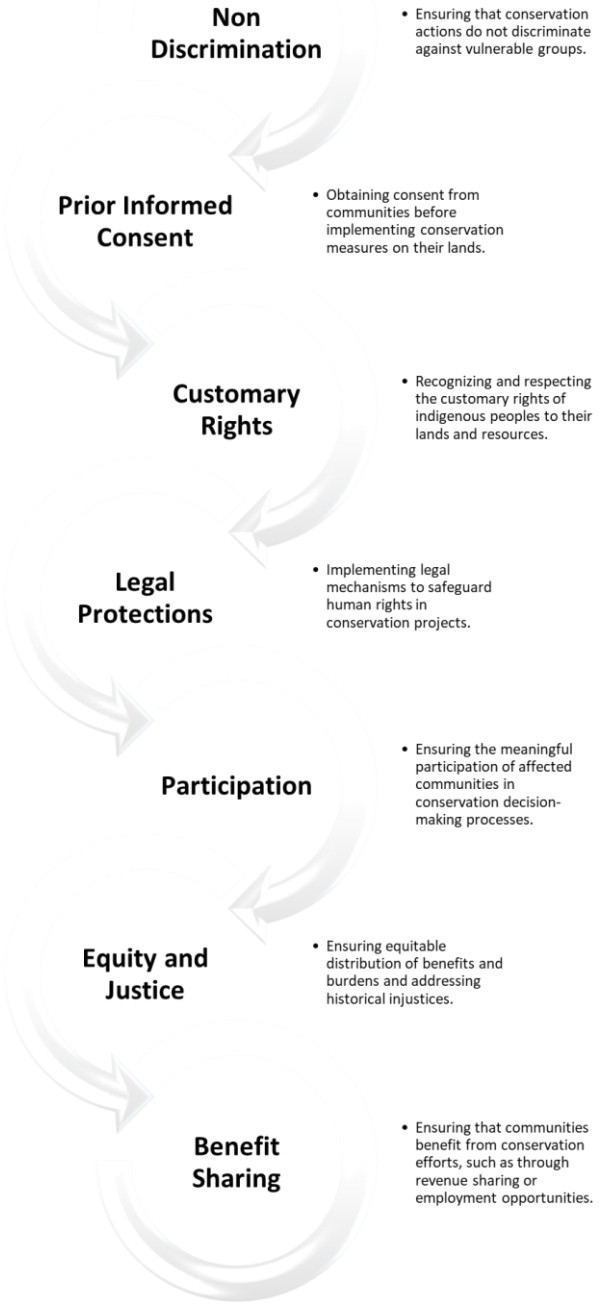

Figure 3: Framework for integrating Human Rights into Conservation

The sequence of boxes in figure 3 reflects a logical flow of considerations in a process that involves the interaction between a community or group of people and external entities, such as governments, organizations, or other stakeholders.

Starting with the principle of non-discrimination emphasizes the importance of treating all individuals or groups fairly and without bias. This sets a foundational ethical standard for the entire process. Following non-discrimination, obtaining prior informed consent is crucial. This stage

involves ensuring that affected individuals or communities are fully informed about any proposed actions or changes and can provide their consent before these actions occur. This respects the autonomy and rights of the affected parties. Recognizing customary rights comes next, as it acknowledges and respects the traditional practices, land use, and cultural rights of the affected community. This recognition is fundamental for fostering a relationship built on mutual respect and understanding. Establishing legal protections comes after recognizing customary rights. This stage involves formalizing and codifying the rights of the community through legal mechanisms. Legal protections provide a framework for enforcing and safeguarding the recognized rights. Fostering participation follows legal protections, emphasizing the importance of involving the affected community in decision-making processes. This stage ensures that the community has a voice in how policies are implemented and how resources are managed, contributing to a more inclusive and effective governance structure. Ensuring equity and justice is a critical stage that runs parallel to other stages. It involves addressing historical injustices, promoting fairness, and creating conditions where all individuals or groups have equal opportunities and access to resources. Addressing benefit sharing comes last, as it builds on the principles of non-discrimination, consent, recognition of customary rights, legal protections, participation, and equity. This stage involves ensuring that the benefits derived from any activities or developments are distributed fairly among the affected community, aligning with principles of justice and sustainability.

It's important to note that the optimal order of these stages[11] can vary based on the specific context, cultural considerations, and the nature of the relationship between the involved parties. In some cases, certain stages may need to be revisited or adjusted based on ongoing feedback and evolving circumstances. The goal is to establish a comprehensive and respectful process that promotes the well-being of the affected community while achieving broader societal objectives.

3.5 Key Human Rights Issues in Conservation

The conservation of natural resources and ecosystems often intersects with various human rights issues.

1. *Land and Resource Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs):* Many conservation efforts take place in areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. These groups often have deep-rooted, traditional land and resource rights that form the foundation of their cultural identity and sustainable livelihoods. However, these rights are frequently susceptible to infringement by conservation initiatives that are not people centred. Recognizing the significance of safeguarding the land tenure rights and unfettered

[11] The sequence follows a logical progression, beginning with the principle of non-discrimination, moving on to informed consent, recognizing customary rights, establishing legal protections, fostering participation, ensuring equity and justice, and finally, addressing benefit sharing.

access to natural resources for IPLCs becomes pivotal in addressing the intersection of conservation and human rights. The Human Rights Director plays a central role in advocating for and implementing measures that respect these rights. This involves conducting comprehensive impact assessments to understand the potential consequences of conservation activities on local populations, engaging in meaningful consultations to obtain free, prior, and informed consent, engaging in collaborative decision-making processes, incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into conservation strategies, implementing measures that prevent the displacement or marginalization of these communities, and developing strategies to mitigate any adverse effects on IPLCs, such as ensuring fair compensation or providing alternative livelihood options. By prioritizing the protection of land and resource rights, conservation initiatives not only become ethically grounded but also gain the essential support and collaboration of the very communities they aim to benefit. This holistic approach ensures that the pursuit of environmental conservation aligns seamlessly with the principles of social justice and human rights.

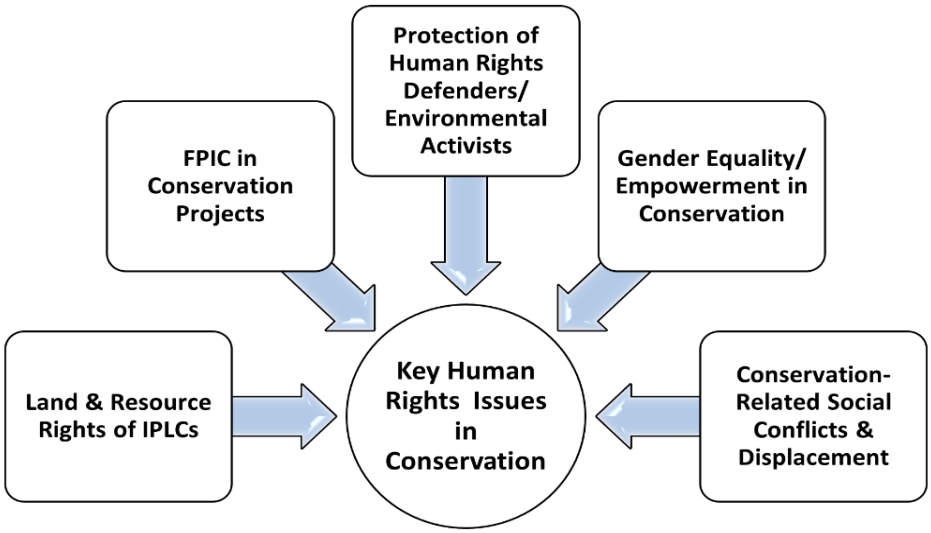

Figure 4: Key Human Rights issues in Conservation

2. *Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Conservation Projects:* FPIC serves as a cornerstone principle in the ethical execution of conservation projects, particularly in areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples. This fundamental phase requires obtaining the consent of affected communities before initiating conservation projects on their lands. Ensuring that they are fully informed and have the autonomy and right to make decisions about activities on their lands is essential for respecting their rights. The Human Rights Director is tasked with ensuring that FPIC is not merely a procedural formality but a substantive process that involves comprehensive information

sharing, transparent dialogue, and genuine partnership. By upholding FPIC, conservation projects can be developed and implemented in a manner that respects the sovereignty, freedom, and cultural integrity of communities, fostering a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between conservationists and local populations.

3. *Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Environmental Activists:* The advocacy for environmental protection and human rights in conservation often involves individuals and groups who put themselves at risk by challenging unsustainable practices. They can face threats, harassment, and violence. Ensuring the safety and protection of human rights defenders and environmental activists is essential to maintain the integrity of conservation efforts. The Human Rights Director plays a crucial role in creating an environment where human rights defenders and environmental activists can operate without fear of reprisal. This involves monitoring and responding to threats, ensuring legal protections, and collaborating with relevant authorities to address any incidents of harassment or violence. Protecting these defenders is not only a human rights imperative but also vital for maintaining the diversity of voices and perspectives necessary for effective conservation decision-making.
4. *Gender Equality and Empowerment in Conservation Efforts:* Recognizing the pivotal role that women play in resource management and conservation is essential for the success and sustainability of conservation initiatives. It is important to address gender inequalities, empower women, and ensure their full participation in decision-making processes related to conservation. The Human Rights Director advocates for gender equality by actively promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities, and addressing systemic gender disparities. Empowering women in conservation not only enhances the overall effectiveness of projects but also contributes to the broader goal of achieving social equity and justice.

These issues highlight the complex interplay between conservation efforts and human rights, emphasizing the importance of a rights-based approach to conservation that considers the needs, interests, and rights of local communities and marginalized groups. Balancing conservation goals with human rights protections is a critical challenge for sustainable and ethical conservation practices.

3.6 Addressing Social Conflicts and Displacement Associated with Conservation Initiatives

Conservation initiatives, while aiming for ecological preservation, can inadvertently lead to social conflicts and displacement. Conservation-led displacement and eviction emerge as significant challenges within the national parks of developing countries. While the overarching goal of these

parks is often the preservation of biodiversity and the protection of fragile ecosystems, the methods employed may, at times, obscure ulterior motives aligned with private extractive industries collaborating with the government. This can result in the compelled relocation of indigenous communities or local populations, revealing a hidden agenda that contradicts the purported conservation goals, and creating a complex dynamic where conservation efforts, while crucial for environmental sustainability, intersect with the fundamental rights and livelihoods of those residing in or dependent on these regions. In some cases, the implementation of conservation policies may lack sufficient consideration for the social and economic impacts on these communities, leading to a poignant ethical dilemma at the crossroads of environmental preservation and human rights.

Conservation-led displacement and eviction are pressing issues across various regions, exemplifying the complex intersection between conservation efforts and the well-being of local communities. In Africa, the Baka people in the south-eastern rainforests in Cameroon, northern Republic of the Congo, northern Gabon, and south-western Central African Republic were expelled from their ancestral lands in the 1960s. They faced forced eviction and displacement not only at the hands of the departing French colonial administration but also from the emerging independent government. Subsequently, pressures exerted by the World Bank compelled their relocation to facilitate logging concessions and the establishment of national parks. This forced migration subjected the Baka to persistent violence, including instances of forced labour imposed by their newly settled neighbours (IWGIA, 2020).[12] Preserving a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, this displacement disrupted their traditional ways of life, posed threats to their cultural heritage, and continued to raise questions about the equity and ethics of conservation strategies in the region (Kweli, 2021)[13].

In Latin America, the indigenous communities of the Gran Chaco region, spanning Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay, have experienced displacement due to the expansion of conservation areas. The creation of national parks and reserves has resulted in the loss of land essential for their sustenance, impacting their livelihoods and traditional practices (Chisleanschi, 2019)[14]. The conflict between conservation goals and the

[12] IWGIA, "*Indigenous peoples in Cameroon*", (2020, June 26). Retrieved from The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs <https://www.iwgia.org/en/cameroon/3791-violence,-corruption,-and-false-promises-conservation-and-the-baka-in-cameroon.html#:~:text=Forced%20from%20their%20forests%20by,labour%20by%20new%20sedentary%20neighbours.>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[13] Kweli, N., "*Denial of Legal Recognition for Baka in Cameroon*", (2021, November 18). Retrieved from StoryMaps: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e318bb915b404aa38a651d22ed990ab7>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[14] Chisleanschi, R., "*Gran Chaco: South America's second-largest forest at risk of collapsing*", (2019, September 17). Retrieved from Mongabay: <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/09/gran-chaco-south-americas-second-largest-forest-at-risk-of-collapsing/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

rights of these communities underscores the need for nuanced approaches that consider both ecological preservation and human well-being.

In Asia, the establishment of protected areas in the name of conservation has led to the displacement of Indigenous communities in India. For instance, the Dongria Kondh people in the Niyamgiri Hills have faced eviction due to mining and conservation activities (Survival International, 2017).[15] These displacements disrupted social structures and has resulted in the loss of traditional knowledge linked to sustainable resource management.

The issue is exacerbated by factors such as insufficient stakeholder engagement, inadequate compensation mechanisms, and a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities for those displaced. As national parks become battlegrounds for the preservation of biodiversity and the protection of cultural heritage versus the rights and well-being of local communities, finding a balance that ensures both ecological sustainability and social justice becomes imperative. Addressing conservation-led displacement necessitates a comprehensive and inclusive approach, involving collaborative efforts between conservation authorities, governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and affected communities to develop strategies that reconcile the dual objectives of conservation and the protection of human rights.

Highlighting conservation-led displacement and eviction as a flagship issue is crucial for several reasons. First, it brings attention to the ethical dimensions of conservation practices, emphasizing the potential violations of human rights in the pursuit of environmental preservation. Second, it underscores the need for inclusive and participatory approaches that prioritize the voices and well-being of affected communities. Third, by highlighting these issues separately, it allows for a more nuanced examination of regional variations and challenges, acknowledging the diversity of contexts across Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Finally, addressing conservation-led displacement as a distinct flagship issue fosters a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between environmental conservation, human rights, and social justice, prompting a collective effort to develop sustainable and equitable solutions on a global scale.

Respecting the rights of displaced individuals and communities[16] is essential and it is crucial to mitigate social conflicts and provide adequate compensation and resettlement options for those affected by conservation projects. The Human Rights Director takes a proactive stance in mitigating these negative impacts by conducting thorough social impact assessments, facilitating community engagement, and developing strategies to address conflicts. Respecting the rights of displaced individuals and communities involves providing fair compensation, offering alternative livelihood

[15] Survival International, "*Indian authorities harass tribal leaders*". (2017, May 10). Retrieved from <https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11682>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[16] Paige, W., Igoe, J., & Brockington, D., "Parks, and peoples: the social impact of protected areas" (2006) 35, Annual Review of Anthropology 251-277. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123308>

options, and ensuring that resettlement processes are conducted in a manner that upholds human dignity and minimizes adverse social consequences. This holistic approach ensures that conservation efforts not only protect the environment but also contribute positively to the well-being of affected communities.

3.7 Importance of Integrating Human Rights Considerations into Conservation Practices

The intersection of human rights and environmental conservation is a critical area that requires attention and research. Incorporating human rights considerations into conservation practices is crucial for reasons that have been listed and discussed above. Conservation efforts often intersect with the lives, livelihoods, and rights of local communities, and failing to address these aspects can lead to negative social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Recognizing and upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples - as outlined in international agreements like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) - when designing and executing conservation projects is essential.[17] International human rights frameworks, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, outline the rights and freedoms that all individuals should enjoy.[18] Many of these rights have relevance in conservation contexts, including rights to land, water, food, shelter, education, and a clean environment. Integrating the considerations of national legal frameworks that protect the rights of Indigenous and local communities, and international agreements that emphasize the importance of respecting human rights in conservation is not only ethically responsible but also legally mandated in many cases.[19] The importance of FPIC as a fundamental human rights principle in conservation efforts must be emphasized, especially when projects impact Indigenous territories or traditional lands (UNDRIP, Article 32). Also, biodiversity conservation and the protection of cultural heritage, including traditional knowledge and practices, are often intertwined with conservation goals and local communities' way of life. Integrating human rights considerations respects the cultural identity of communities and helps preserve their traditions, languages, and practice contributing to the overall well-being of communities.[20]

Conservation initiatives can impact local economies and livelihoods, especially when communities rely on natural resources for their sustenance.

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17 UN, "*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*" (2007). Retrieved from United Nations: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf>

18 UN, "*Universal Declaration of Human Rights"* (1948). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

19 Campese, J., "Rights-based approaches: Exploring issues and opportunities for conservation" (2009). Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR and IUCN.

20 ILO, "*Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*" (1989). Retrieved from International Labour Organization <https://tinyurl.com/4jp5hrjp>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

Integrating human rights ensures that people's economic well-being is considered, minimizing negative impacts on their ability to earn a living. Ensuring that the rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples to access and manage natural resources are respected while implementing conservation measures is thus the way to go.

Conservation efforts should not disproportionately burden marginalized or vulnerable groups. Integrating human rights helps ensure that decisions are fair and just, preventing the exploitation of vulnerable populations. The pursuit of environmental justice and equity in conservation, including efforts to rectify historical injustices against marginalized communities[21] affected by conservation policies is encouraged. Conservation efforts that ignore human rights considerations may face resistance from communities, legal challenges, and public backlash.[22] For conservation efforts to be successful in the long term, they must be embraced and supported by local communities. Integrating human rights from the outset builds trust and cooperation, which are essential for the sustained success of conservation initiatives.

Poorly planned conservation projects can result in the displacement of communities from their ancestral lands, leading to conflicts and human rights abuses,[23] especially the rights of Indigenous peoples to their lands and resources. Balancing conservation goals with human rights requires recognizing the interdependence between nature and people. Integrating human rights principles helps prevent such negative outcomes and promotes peaceful coexistence between conservation efforts and local populations. In parallel, addressing human rights issues related to climate-induced displacement, including the rights of people who are forced to relocate due to environmental changes caused by conservation initiatives is worth highlighting. Disregarding human rights in conservation projects can lead to conflicts[24] between conservation organizations, local communities, governments, and other actors in the conservation supply chain. Incorporating human rights principles can mitigate these conflicts by promoting dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding. It can also foster accountability among stakeholders, ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent, and potential negative impacts are identified and addressed.

Moreover, including local communities in conservation planning and decision-making empowers them to become stewards of their own

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21 Colchester, M., "*Salvaging Nature: Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas, and Biodiversity Conservation*" (2003), Forest Peoples Programme and World Rainforest Movement.

22 Dowie, M., "*Conservation refugees: the hundred-year conflict between global conservation and native peoples*" (2011), MIT press.

23 FPP, "*Indigenous Peoples and the World Bank: Experiences with Participation*" 2011. Retrieved from Forest Peoples Programme <https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2011/08/wbipsandparticipjul05eng.pdf, accessed on 23 November 2023.

24 Dowie, M., "*Conservation refugees: the hundred-year conflict between global conservation and native peoples*" (2011), MIT press.

environments.[25] This participatory approach has repeatedly proven to lead to more effective and sustainable conservation outcomes. Human rights-based conservation can (and has) support(ed) sustainable development by promoting community involvement, capacity-building, and income-generating opportunities.[26] This approach has led to the empowerment of marginalized groups and improved local well-being. By engaging with local communities and considering their perspectives, conservation practitioners have made more informed decisions.[27] Local knowledge about the environment, species, and ecosystem dynamics has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of conservation strategies. Therefore, ensuring that conservation decision-making processes actively involve local communities, respect their rights, and include mechanisms for their meaningful participation is essential.[28]

In summary, the intersection of human rights and environmental conservation is dynamic and complex, requiring ongoing research, policy development, and practice improvement to ensure that both conservation goals and human rights are effectively and ethically addressed. Integrating human rights considerations into conservation practices is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for achieving effective and sustainable conservation outcomes. It requires collaboration, respect for local knowledge, ensuring fairness, respecting cultural diversity and a commitment to balancing environmental protection with the well-being and rights of the communities that inhabit these areas.

3.8 The Role of International Human Rights Law in Guiding Conservation Practices

Balancing conservation goals with the rights and well-being of local communities and Indigenous peoples requires a thoughtful and inclusive approach that recognizes the principles of human rights and incorporates them into conservation practices. International human rights law provides a framework for guiding conservation practices and serves as a model to ensure that these principles are upheld in the context of conservation efforts. Relevant treaties and conventions such as the UNDRIP and the 1972 Convention emphasize the rights of Indigenous peoples to their lands and resources. Nevertheless, in as much as Conservation organizations and governments should align their policies and actions with these international human rights standards to ensure that conservation efforts are carried out in a manner that respects and upholds human rights at the universal level, it is

[25] Berkes, F., "Rethinking community-based conservation" (2004) 18 (3), Conservation Biology 621-630. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2004.00077.x.>

[26] McDermott, M., Mahanty, S., & Schreckenberg, K., "Examining equity: a multidimensional framework for assessing equity in payments for ecosystem services" (2013) 33, Environmental Science & Policy 416-427. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2012.10.006>

[27] Reed, M., "Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review" (2008) 141(10) Biological Conservation 2417-2431. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2008.07.014>

[28] Agrawal, A., & Gibson, C., "Enchantment and disenchantment: The role of community in natural resource conservation" (1999) 27 (4) World Development 629-649. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(98)00161-2>

paramount that they also create balance by adapting these standards to the local, cultural and traditional realities on the ground, as the way of life in a Namibian community located in the Kunene region may differ from that of one located in the Zambezi region, or in an African community located within Morocco, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Chad or Burundi. The same applies to other geographies[29].

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTOR IN CONSERVATION

4.1 Definition and Scope of the Human Rights Director Role in Conservation

The role of a Human Rights Director in a conservation organization involves ensuring that the organization's activities align with and respect human rights principles. This includes both the rights of the people directly impacted by conservation projects and the broader societal implications. The scope of this role typically includes the steps in figure 5.[30]

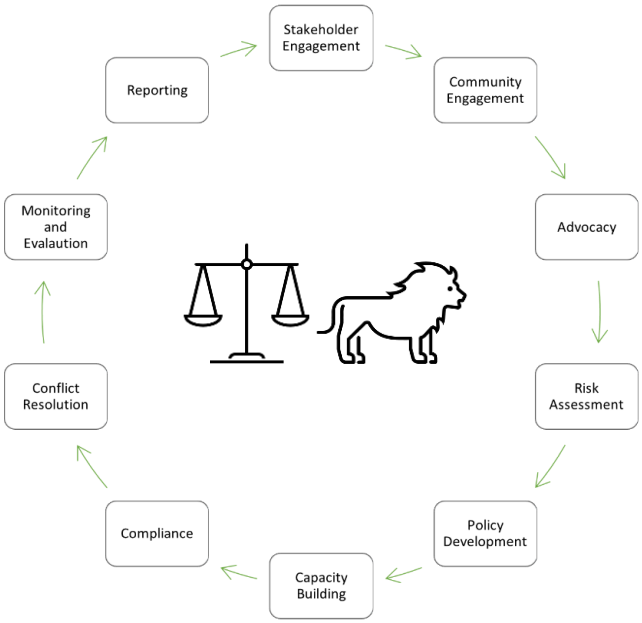

Figure 5: Scope of the HRD role in Conservation

The sequence of boxes in figure 5 represents a logical and systematic approach to a process that involves community or organizational

[29] Moreover, the integration of factors associated with or resulting from various "Geographies of" thematics within these cultural geographies introduces increased complexity.

[30] This sequence attempts to follow a logical progression, starting with engaging relevant stakeholders and the community, advocating for the cause, assessing associated risks, developing policies, building capacity, ensuring compliance, addressing conflicts, and finally, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the outcomes of the implemented policies and initiatives. Keep in mind that the specific context and nature of the process might influence the optimal order of these steps.

development, policy implementation, and evaluation. Hereunder an explanation of the sequence and the rationale behind the order needs to be added.

Initiating the process with stakeholder and community engagement ensures that the perspectives, needs, and concerns of those affected by the policies are considered from the outset. This inclusive approach helps in building trust and obtaining valuable input. Following engagement, advocacy is crucial for promoting the cause and gaining support. This stage involves communicating the importance and benefits of the proposed policies, garnering support from stakeholders and the community, and creating a conducive environment for policy development.

Before developing policies, it's essential to assess the risks associated with the proposed actions. Identifying potential challenges and risks allows for the development of more informed and resilient policies. With a clear understanding of stakeholder perspectives and associated risks, the development of policies comes next. Policies are designed to address specific issues, set guidelines, and provide a framework for action. Capacity building is positioned after policy development to ensure that the stakeholders and the community have the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to implement and adhere to the policies effectively. Once capacity is built, ensuring compliance with the established policies becomes a priority. This stage involves monitoring adherence to the policies and addressing any deviations or challenges that may arise. Conflict resolution is strategically placed in the sequence to address any conflicts or disputes that may arise during the implementation of policies. This stage ensures that potential barriers to successful policy implementation are identified and addressed promptly. The final stages involve ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implemented policies. This includes assessing their impact, effectiveness, and any unintended consequences. Reporting on these outcomes is essential for transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. The rationale behind this sequence is to follow a logical progression from initial engagement and advocacy through the various stages of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. However, it's crucial to recognize that the optimal order may be influenced by the specific context, nature of the policies, and the dynamics of the community or organization. Flexibility is key, and feedback loops should be integrated to allow for adjustments based on evolving circumstances and feedback from stakeholders.

The responsibilities/functions of a Human Rights Director in a conservation organization are highlighted in figure 6.

4.2 Key Considerations for Establishing the Role of Human Rights Director in Conservation Organizations

Establishing a cohesive framework for the Human Rights Director's role begins with the paramount importance of clearly defining responsibilities within the organization. This clarity lays the foundation for effective collaboration and synergy. Moving beyond delineation, integration

with conservation goals becomes a pivotal step. It is imperative that the Human Rights Director collaborates closely with conservation teams to align human rights objectives seamlessly with the broader conservation goals. This synergy ensures a unified approach, where the protection of human rights becomes intrinsic to the success of conservation initiatives. Complementing this integration is the commitment to capacity building. Providing the necessary training and resources for Human Rights Directors and their team is essential for cultivating the expertise required to navigate the complexities of human rights integration effectively. This holistic approach, encompassing role definition, integration with conservation goals, and capacity building, forms a cohesive strategy to foster a symbiotic relationship between human rights considerations and conservation objectives within the organizational framework.

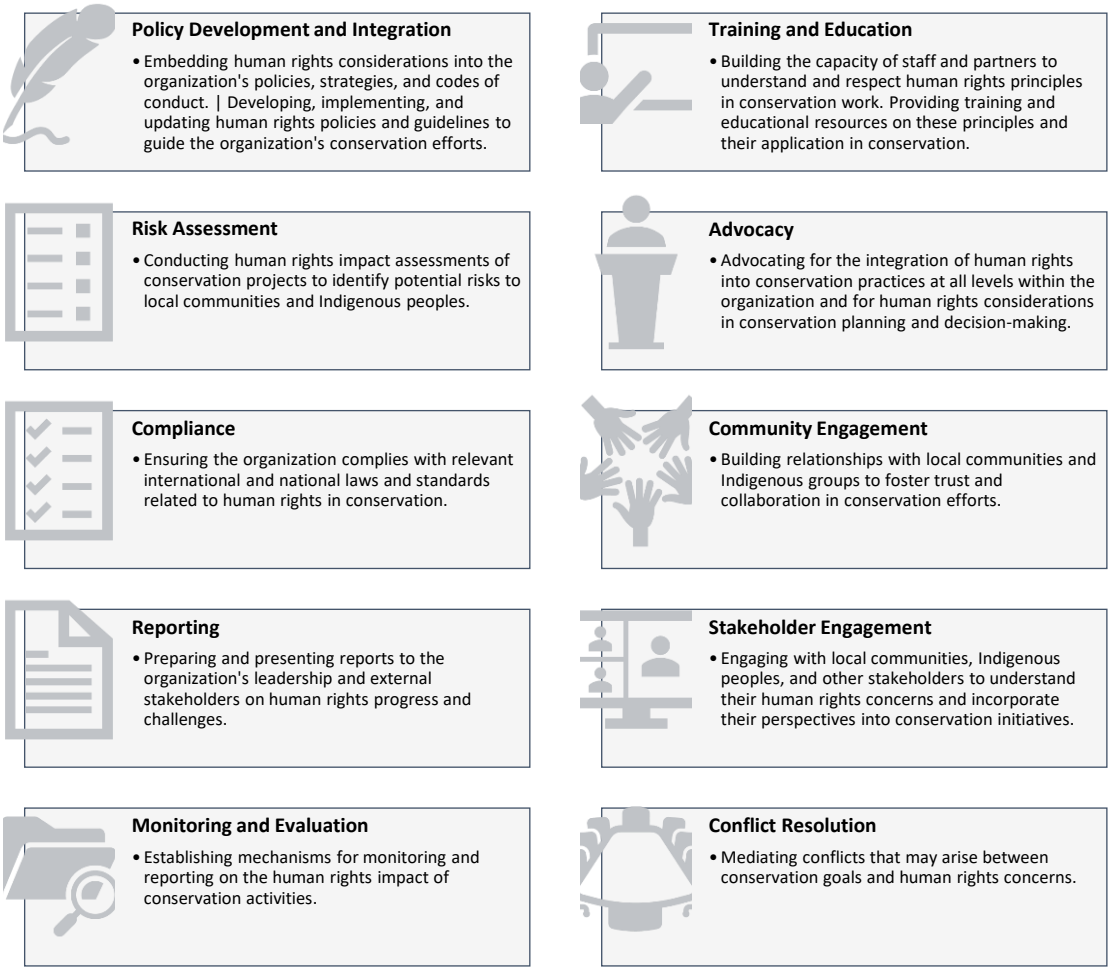

Figure 6: Responsibilities and functions of the HRD and strategies for mainstreaming Human Rights in Conservation policies & practices

4.3 Review of Successful Models and Case Studies of Human Rights Director Positions in Conservation Organizations

The role of a Human Rights Director within a conservation organization is critical in ensuring that the organization's operations and initiatives are aligned with human rights principles and ethical standards. This review will analyse successful models and case studies of Human Rights Director positions in conservation organizations, focusing on key strategies and approaches employed by these directors and their collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

This involves studying existing Human Rights Director positions in various conservation organizations to identify successful models and case studies that demonstrate the positive impact of integrating human rights into conservation efforts.

4.3.1 Successful Models and Case Studies

a) The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is committed to upholding human rights principles and practices and commissioned its first human rights policy in February 2022. As part of its commitments, TNC through its Human Rights and Safeguards central unit, helps establish and implement a Human Rights Due Diligence (HRRD) framework[31]. The HRRD helps ensure that adverse human right impacts of its initiatives are identified, prevented, mitigated, and remedied.

b) The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member organizations and the input of some 16,000 experts grouped in its six expert Commissions: Species Survival, Environmental Law, Protected Areas, Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, Ecosystem Management and Education and Communication.[32]

c) The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) recognizes human rights as central to achieving effective, equitable conservation and development outcomes, and works to strengthen mainstreaming of human rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights and empowerment of local communities and civil society. The organization has an Environmental and Social Safeguards and Social Policies Team, comprised of positions including the Director of Safeguards and Human Rights.[33] It equally has a Conservation Quality Committee that oversees and considers all potentially high-risk proposals; a Human Rights Director and an IPLC Coordinator.

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[31] TNC, "*Human Rights Guide for Working with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.tnchumanrightsguide.org/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[32] IUCN, "*IUCN Expert Commissions"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/our-union/expert-commissions>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[33] WWF, "*WWF's commitment to embed human rights in nature conservation: Updates and voices from the WWF network"* (2021, June 30). Retrieved from World Wildlife Fund: <https://t.ly/krMxR>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

d) Rainforest Foundation US is known for its strong commitment to human rights in the context of rainforest protection. They have a dedicated Human Rights and Conservation Program Manager[34] who plays a pivotal role in ensuring that Indigenous rights are respected in all conservation efforts. This organization's success can be attributed to their clear mandate for the Human Rights Director and a robust system for monitoring and reporting human rights violations in the regions they operate.
e) Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has integrated human rights into its conservation efforts, exemplified by the appointment of an Executive Director of Rights & Communities Program.[35] WCS collaborates with local communities to protect wildlife habitats while respecting their rights to land and resources. Their success lies in the director's ability to establish trust with Indigenous communities, ensuring they are not displaced or harmed in the pursuit of conservation goals.
f) Conservation International (CI) has demonstrated a commitment to human rights through its Community and Conservation; and Global Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion divisions.[36] CI's success can be attributed to their focus on community-based conservation[37], where they actively involve local stakeholders in decision-making processes. This approach empowers communities to protect their environment while safeguarding their rights.
g) BirdLife International is one of the seven members of The Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, aimed at promoting the integration of human rights in conservation policy and practice.[38]
h) Fauna & Flora International significantly contributed to the development of INTRINSIC (Integrating Rights and Social Issues into Conservation: A Trainers Guide),[39] and has a long history of working with communities in biodiversity-rich landscapes to enable

[34] RFUS, "*2022 Annual Report"* (2022). Retrieved from Rainforest Foundation US: <https://rainforestfoundation.org/about/financials-transparency/2022-annual-report/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[35] WCS, "*Sushil Raj Joins WCS as New Executive Director of Rights & Communities Program"* (2022, February 3). Retrieved from Wildlife Conservation Society: <https://t.ly/wtxAn>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[36] CI, "*Senior Staff"* (2023). Retrieved from Conservation International: <https://www.conservation.org/about/senior-staff>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[37] CI, "*Respecting Human Rights"* (n.d.). Retrieved from Conservation International: <https://www.conservation.org/priorities/human-rights>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[38] CIHR, "*The Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR)"* (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.thecihr.org/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[39] Cambridge Conservation, "*INTRINSIC: Integrating rights and social issues in conservation"* (n.d.). Retrieved from Cambridge Conservation: <https://www.cambridgeconservation.org/project/intrinsic-integrating-rights-and-social-issues-in-conservation/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

them to act as effective custodians of their precious, yet threatened, natural resources.[40]

4.4 Analysis of Key Strategies Employed by Human Rights Directors

Human Rights Directors play a critical role as catalysts for change within the conservation industry, employing various tools and methods to ensure ethical and socially responsible outcomes. This section categorises approaches they use to effectively integrate human rights considerations into the fabric of conservation practices, shedding light on the nuanced methodologies they utilize, spanning community engagement, advocacy efforts, training initiatives, and impact assessments. Some key strategies are illustrated in figure 7.

1. Community Engagement: Human Rights Directors actively engage with local communities to understand their perspectives, needs, and concerns. By fostering open dialogue and collaboration, they work towards co-designing conservation initiatives that respect and incorporate community values. This participatory approach ensures that conservation efforts are culturally sensitive and inclusive, thereby promoting sustainable outcomes.

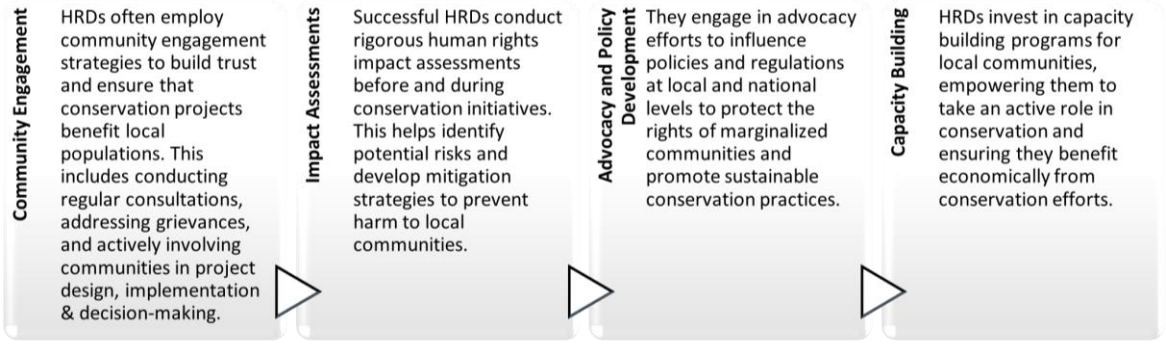

Figure 7: Four key strategies and approaches of Human Right Directors

2. Advocacy Efforts: Champions of human rights within the conservation sector, these directors advocate for policies and practices that prioritize the well-being of both ecosystems and local populations. Through partnerships with governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies, they work to influence legislation and promote frameworks that uphold human rights standards within the context of conservation activities.

3. Training Initiatives: Human Rights Directors play a crucial role in developing and implementing training programs for conservation professionals. These initiatives focus on building awareness and understanding of human rights principles, emphasizing the importance of

[40] Fauna & Flora, "*Livelihoods Governance"* (n.d.). Retrieved from Fauna & Flora: <https://www.fauna-flora.org/expertise/livelihoods-governance/>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

respectful collaboration with local communities. By enhancing the skills of conservation practitioners, they contribute to a workforce that is well-versed in ethical and socially responsible practices.

4. Impact Assessments: Employing rigorous impact assessment methodologies, these directors evaluate the social consequences of conservation initiatives. This involves examining how projects affect local communities, considering factors such as livelihoods, cultural practices, and access to resources. The insights gained from these assessments inform decision-making processes, allowing for the refinement of conservation strategies to better align with human rights principles.

5. Figure 7 (above) illustrates some of the key strategies employed by Human Rights Directors in the conservation industry. These strategies encompass community engagement, advocacy efforts, training initiatives, and impact assessments, showcasing the interconnected nature of their multifaceted approach. The figure visually encapsulates the interconnected nature of these strategies, demonstrating how they work synergistically to create a holistic framework for integrating human rights into conservation practices. It serves as a visual guide, emphasizing the collaborative and interdependent relationships between these key strategies. In summary, Human Rights Directors in the conservation industry serve as architects of positive change, employing a strategic blend of community engagement, advocacy, training, and impact assessments. Their efforts contribute to the development of conservation practices that not only safeguard ecosystems but also respect and uphold the fundamental rights of the communities intertwined with these environments.

4.5 Collaboration with Internal and External Stakeholders

Collaboration is essential for the success of a Human Rights Director in conservation organizations. This includes working closely with internal teams such as conservationists, researchers, and policymakers, as well as external stakeholders like local communities, Indigenous groups, private actors, government agencies, and NGOs to ensure a holistic and rights-based approach to conservation. Figure 8 depicts the notions of collaborations.

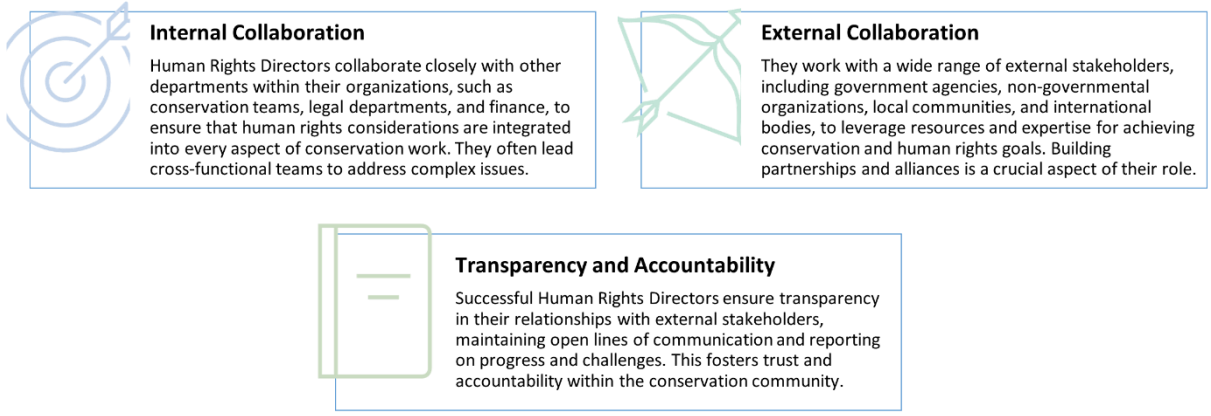

Figure 8: Types of Human Rights related collaborations in Conservation

In conclusion, the role of Human Rights Directors in conservation organizations is vital for harmonizing conservation efforts with human rights principles. Successful models and case studies demonstrate that a holistic approach, including community engagement, impact assessments, advocacy, and collaboration with stakeholders, is essential for achieving sustainable conservation outcomes while respecting human rights. The effectiveness of Human Rights Directors is not only in their strategies but also in their ability to bridge the gap between conservation and human rights, ultimately leading to positive outcomes for both. Overall, the role of a Human Rights Director in conservation is multifaceted and requires a strong commitment to human rights principles, collaboration, and a deep understanding of both conservation and human rights issues.

5. BEST PRACTICES AND CASE STUDIES

5.1 Successful Models for Integrating Human Rights in Conservation Projects

In the dynamic landscape of conservation, the synergy between environmental sustainability and the rights of local communities has become a focal point of progressive approaches. Recognizing the limitations of traditional conservation models, and the intrinsic link between the well-being of local communities and the success of conservation initiatives has led to the development of innovative models that integrate human rights into the very fabric of conservation practices. The shift towards community-centred approaches not only acknowledges the rights of individuals and communities but also taps into the wealth of traditional knowledge that has sustained ecosystems for generations. The paradigm shift that has occurred emphasizes collaboration, empowerment, and shared responsibility in achieving sustainability and win-win conservation outcomes. Within this framework, several models have emerged as successful strategies for harmonizing conservation goals with human rights principles. This includes community-based conservation, co-management agreements, and the adoption of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a central

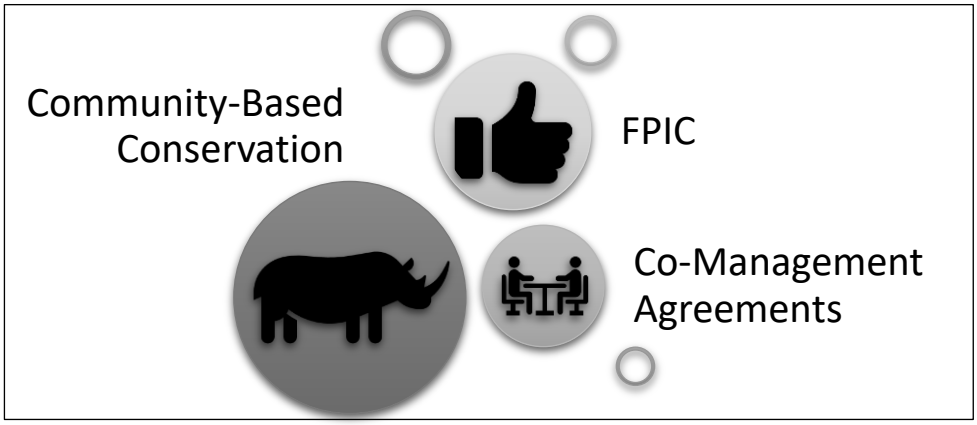

Figure 9: Top 3 practices for integrating Human Rights in Conservation initiatives

element in conservation projects. Each of these approaches serves as a testament to the transformative power of inclusive, rights-based conservation practices that foster mutual respect and cooperation among diverse stakeholders.

Examples[41] include the creation of community-managed bio-diverse areas where the rights of these communities are respected while achieving conservation goals. Other examples[42] include the (a) establishment of co-

[41] Uganda: UWA, "*Bwindi Impenetrable National Park"* (2018). Retrieved from Uganda Wildlife Authority: <https://ugandawildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Bwindi-cc-2018-2.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; UNDESA, "*State of the World's Indigenous Peoples - ST/ESA/328"* (2009). United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/node/1046/pdf?year=2020>, accessed on 23 November 2023; India: <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Community-forest-management_an-Opportunity_EN.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; JICA-MoEF, "*Joint Forest Management: A Handbook"* (2012). India's Ministry of Environment and Forests <https://ifs.nic.in/Dynamic/pdf/JFM%20handbook.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; JPS Associates, "*Joint Forest Management (JFM)"* (2015). JPS Associates (P) Ltd. <https://www.mpforest.gov.in/img/files/HRD_HandBook_E.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Cameroon (1): IIED, 2017 <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G04191.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Moutoni, L., "*Community Forestry in Cameroon – an overview of the community perspective"* (2019). Forest Peoples Programme, London; Vukenkeng A. Wujung, Cornelius M. Lambi, Dobdinga Fonchamnyo, Forbe H. Ngangnchi & Ibrahim M. Muafueshiangha, "Community Life around Protected Areas in Cameroon: Conservation Story of Erat and the Resettlement Communities around the Korup National Park" (2018) 6 (9). Universal Journal of Management 295-303; Peru: Lozano, R. M., "*Forests with History: Exploring the Social Effects of the Creation of the Cordillera Azul National Park on the Chzutino People of Amazonian Peru"* (2013). Retrieved from PhD Dissertation - University of Florida <https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/UF/E0/04/52/08/00001/MENDOZA_LOZANO_R.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; The Field Museum, "*Parque Nacional Cordillera Azul"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/rapid-color-guides-pdfs/117_Azul-Landscapes_0.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Ethiopia: Kamski, B., "*The Kuraz Sugar Development Project (OTuRN Briefing Note 1)"* (2016). Lansing, Michigan: Omo-Turkana Research Network <https://www.canr.msu.edu/oturn/OTuRN_Briefing_Note_1.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Demeke, A., "*The Omo-Kuraz Sugar Development Project"* (n.d.). Retrieved from Aiga Forum <https://www.aigaforum.com/articles/The-Omo-Kraz-Sugar-development-Project-English.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

[42] Cameroon(2) & Philippines: WWF, "*Embedding Human Rights in Nature Conservation: From Intent to Action"* (2022). Retrieved from World Wildlife Fund <https://www.wwf.de/fileadmin/fm-wwf/Publikationen-PDF/WWF/WWF-INT-Human-Rights-and-The-Environment-Report-2022.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Schultz, T. "*Tubbataha Reefs Primer: 7th Edition"* (2017). Retrieved from <https://tubbatahareefs.org/>, <https://tubbatahareefs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/TRNP-7th-Edition-Primer.pdf>; Mozambique: "*Quirimbas Archipelago Hope Spot"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/70f22595f3524efba056cb384309ec0c?play=true&speed=medium>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Kenya(1): Pertet, F. "*Kenya's Experience in Establishing Coastal and Marine Protected Areas"* (n.d.), USAID <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnaat749.pdf> accessed on 23 November 2023; USAID, "*COMFISH Project"* (2014), <https://www.crc.uri.edu/download/COMFISH-FY2014WP-FINALEnglish_508.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; USAID, "*Senegal Biodiversity and Tropical Forests Assessments"* (2008), <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadl464.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Gabon: UNEP, "*Mangroves of Western and Central Africa"* (2007) UNEP-Regional Seas Programme/UNEP-WCMC; Carl, C., Trettin, Zhaohua Dai, Wenwu Tang, David Lagomasino, Nathan Thomas, Seung K. Lee, Marc Simard, Médard O. Ebanega, Atticus Stoval, & Temilola E. Fatoyinbo, "Mangrove carbon stocks in Pongara National Park, Gabon" (2021) 259: 107432, *Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science*; Ecuador: IIED, "*Markets for Watershed Services-Country Profile"* (2006-2008), <https://watershedmarkets.org/documents/Ecuador_Pimampiro_E.pdf>, accessed on

management agreements, which are collaborative agreements between governments, conservation organizations, and local communities that have shown success in integrating human rights and conservation. They ensure that the rights of IPLCs are respected, and they often involve revenue-sharing mechanisms from tourism or resource use; and (b) incorporation of FPIC as a central element in conservation projects. As seen in various initiatives and already discussed above, FPIC helps build trust and respect for human rights.

Table 2: Examples of community-based conservation models

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES):	• Programs compensate communities for maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services. • For instance, the Pimampiro watershed project in Ecuador pays local communities for reforestation efforts, which contribute to water conservation and quality improvement. • The Mau Forest Complex in Kenya(3) has witnessed PES initiatives where communities are compensated for protecting water catchment areas. This helps ensure the maintenance of vital ecosystem services, including water provision and biodiversity conservation. • The Chyulu Hills landscape in Kenya(4) is part of a REDD+ project where communities receive payments for carbon sequestration efforts. This initiative contributes to both climate change mitigation and community development.

23 November 2023; Kenya(3,4) Chyulu Hills REDD+, "*Annual Report"* (2022), <http://maasaiwilderness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2022-CHRP-Annual-Report_KEN-FINAL.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Government of Kenya, "*Rehabilitation of the Mau Forest Ecosystem"* (2009), <https://www.kws.go.ke/file/1446/download?token=xDBvXH_o>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Joram K. Kagombe, Joshua K. Cheboiwo, Alfred Gichu, Collins Handa, & Jane Wamboi, "Payment for environmental services: status and opportunities in Kenya" (2018) 40 *Journal of Resources Development and Management Journal*; Namibia: Lendelvo, S., Suich, H., & Mfune, J. K., "Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Outcomes of Translocated Eland in Nyae Nyae Conservancy" (2022) 3 *Frontiers in Conservation Science*, 783951; Helge Denker, Namibian Association of Community-Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations, "*Living with Wildlife: The Story of Namibia's Communal Conservancies"* (2011) NACSO, Windhoek, Namibia, <https://search.worldcat.org/title/756058205>; UNEP, "*Torra Conservancy"* (2012) Equator Initiative Case Study Series. New York, NY, <https://www.equatorinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/case_1348261012.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; NACSO, "*State of Conservation in Namibia Reports"* (n.d.), <https://www.nacso.org.na/resources/state-of-community-conservation>, accessed on 23 November 2023; Nepal: NTNC, "*Sustainable Tourism Enhancement In Nepal's Protected Areas"* (2020). World Bank/National Trust for Nature Conservancy, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/868261557894835773/pdf/Environmental-and-Social-Management-Framework.pdf>, accessed on 23 November 2023; NTNC, "*Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://ntnc.org.np/project/annapurna-conservation-area-project-acap>, accessed on 23 November 2023.

Community-Managed Protected Areas (CMPAs):	• In this model, local communities play a central role in the management and protection of designated conservation areas. They actively participate in decision-making processes, enforcement of rules, and sustainable resource use. The Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, where local communities are involved in managing gorilla conservation, is an example of a successful CMPA. For instance, revenue generated from gorilla trekking permits is shared with local communities, creating economic incentives for both conservation and community development.
Community Forest Management (CFM):	• CFM involves local communities in the sustainable management of forest resources, combining traditional knowledge with modern conservation practices. India's Joint Forest Management (JFM) program is a notable example, where communities collaborate with government agencies to manage and protect forests, ensuring both ecological health and local livelihoods. In Cameroon(1), initiatives such as the Community Forest Management approach involve local communities in the sustainable management of forests. The Korup Rainforest Conservation Society works with local communities to protect the rich biodiversity of the Korup National Park.
Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs):	• ICCAs recognize the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystems. These areas are often managed based on traditional practices and local governance systems. The Quechua Lamista community's conservation efforts in the Cordillera Azul National Park in Peru showcase the effectiveness of ICCAs. In Ethiopia, the ICCA in the Lower Omo Valley is home to several Indigenous communities. This area is culturally, and ecologically significant, and local communities actively engage in conserving their land, preserving biodiversity, maintaining traditional practices, and sustaining livelihoods through initiatives such

	as the Omo-Kuraz Sugar Development Project. Finally, the Baka people in Cameroon(2) are involved in the management of Lobéké National Park. This ICCA is not only a prime example of integrating traditional knowledge and community involvement into conservation practices, but it is also one of resilience and self-determination, as they sought rectification of past injustices for decades. Like the Noongar people of Australia, the Baka are a benchmark for Indigenous self-government and autonomy.
Marine Protected Areas with Community Involvement:	• In some coastal regions, community-based marine conservation efforts involve local fishing communities in the management of marine resources. The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines incorporates the knowledge and involvement of local communities in protecting coral reefs and marine life. In Mozambique, Vamizi Island is part of the Quirimbas Archipelago National Park. Local communities are involved in sustainable tourism and marine resource management, ensuring the protection of coral reefs and marine biodiversity while benefiting economically. Local communities around Kenya(1)'s Watamu Marine National Park actively participate in its management and community members are involved in coral reef monitoring, sustainable fishing practices, and tourism activities, promoting both conservation and livelihoods. In Senegal's Joal-Fadiouth Community Marine Protected Area, local communities are engaged in fisheries management, mangrove conservation, and ecotourism, showcasing the importance of community involvement in coastal conservation. Least but not the last, in Gabon, parks situated in the bay of Mono, mouth of Como, Pongara, Loango, Moukalaba-Doudou National Park, Ivindo, and la Lobe are theatres of mangroves conservation initiatives.
Community Conservancies:	• Namibia has been at the forefront of implementing various community-based conservation models, including its flagship and globally acclaimed community

	conservancy program, which involves local communities in the management of wildlife and natural resources. By giving communities the rights to manage and benefit from wildlife, the model has led to increased conservation efforts and economic opportunities. Examples among many others in the Kunene region include the Nyae Nyae Conservancy and the Torra Conservancy, where traditional land and resource rights are respected. In Kenya(2), community-based natural resource management initiatives empower local communities to conserve biodiversity and manage their natural resources sustainably. The Maasai Mara Conservancies, where local communities are involved in wildlife conservation and eco-tourism, is a notable example.
Ecotourism Initiatives:	• Community-based eco-tourism projects involve local communities in the sustainable use of natural resources while providing economic benefits. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project in Nepal involves local communities in managing tourism activities, ensuring that the environmental impact is minimized, and the benefits are shared with the community. Several community-based projects in South Africa focus on sustainable tourism as a means of conservation. The Grootbos Private Nature Reserve is an example where local communities are involved in eco-tourism initiatives, emphasizing the conservation of the fynbos biome. In Malawi, the management of Liwonde National Park involves collaboration with local communities. This includes anti-poaching efforts, community-based resource management, and revenue-sharing from tourism activities to support local development. The Khama Rhino Sanctuary in Botswana is a community-based conservation project focuses on the protection of rhinos and involves local communities in tourism-related activities. The revenue generated supports both conservation and community development initiatives.

Table 3: Examples of co-management agreements and FPIC implementation

Co-Management Agreements: Involving local communities in decision-making processes and benefit-sharing arrangements has been a successful model. Examples include the following:	• In Zimbabwe, a pioneering co-management initiative - the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) Program - has allowed local communities to benefit economically from wildlife conservation. Through revenue-sharing mechanisms, communities benefit from ecotourism, hunting, and other resource-use activities. It demonstrates how conservation can respect local rights and provide economic incentives. • In Zanzibar, the co-management of Jozani-Chwaka Bay National Park involves collaboration between the government, local communities, and NGOs. The park is known for its rich biodiversity, including the endangered Zanzibar red colobus monkey. Revenue-sharing mechanisms from tourism activities contribute to community development and conservation efforts. • NGOs such as African Parks and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) co-manage African parks with African governments. • In Venezuela, the co-management agreement in the Imataca Forest Reserve involves Indigenous Peoples, the government, and NGOs. This agreement aims to balance conservation with the traditional practices of Indigenous communities, ensuring their rights are respected while supporting sustainable resource use. • The co-management agreement in Yaeda Valley involves the Hadzabe and Datoga Indigenous communities. These communities actively participate in the management of the Yaeda Valley, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and respecting their traditional rights. Revenue-sharing from tourism activities supports community well-being and conservation. • The Mara Naboisho Conservancy in Kenya is an example of a co-management agreement between local Maasai communities, the government, and conservation organizations. The conservancy allows for sustainable

	wildlife management and tourism activities, with revenue-sharing arrangements benefiting local communities and supporting conservation initiatives. • The Sengwer Indigenous Peoples in Kenya's Embobut Forest have been involved in a notable case regarding Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). The Kenya Forest Service and other stakeholders sought to evict the Sengwer from the forest for conservation purposes. However, the Sengwer argued that their FPIC was not adequately sought before such actions, emphasizing the importance of respecting the rights and consent of Indigenous communities in conservation initiatives. • Namibia has incorporated FPIC into its community-based natural resource management initiatives. The conservancy model, such as those in the Namibian Protected Area Network, involves obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of local communities before establishing conservation areas. This approach aims to balance conservation goals with the rights and needs of Indigenous and local communities. • The Bougainville Conservation Initiative, which focuses on marine conservation in Papua New Guinea, incorporates FPIC into its framework. This initiative works with local communities on the island of Bougainville to obtain their consent before implementing marine conservation strategies. This ensures that the conservation efforts align with the needs and preferences of the local communities. • Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), while not a specific project, is an example of an organization that promotes FPIC in forestry and conservation. The FSC certification standards require that forest management activities, including conservation initiatives, respect the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. This involves obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent for forest management practices.

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):	• Organizations that obtain FPIC before implementing conservation activities tend to have more positive outcomes.

The transformative perspectives discussed in tables 2 and 3 exemplify[43] the evolving landscape where conservation and human rights are not mutually exclusive but rather intricately linked components of a harmonious and ethical approach to environmental stewardship. This shift is not just a conceptual change but a practical one, demonstrating tangible success in achieving both conservation goals and safeguarding the rights of those directly affected.

5.2 Case Studies Highlighting Effective Approaches to Respecting Human Rights in Conservation

In Australia, the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPY Women's Council)[44] has successfully combined traditional Indigenous knowledge with modern conservation techniques to manage natural resources sustainably, respecting the rights and roles of Indigenous women. In South Africa, the

[43] South Africa: CAPE, "People Making Biodiversity Work" (2006). Cape Action for People and the Environment (SANBI Biodiversity Series 4). <https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/fynbos_fynmense.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Malawi: USAID, "*Community Based Natural Resource Management Stocktaking Assessment Malawi Profile"* (2010), <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JRSD.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Botswana: UNEP/GEF, "*Communities Conserving Wildlife"* (2021). <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF_SGP_Communities_Conserving_Wildlife_2021.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Zimbabwe: King, L., "*Inter-Organisational Dynamics in Natural Resource Management"* (n.d.). Retrieved from USAID <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnabx926.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Zanzibar: GEF, "*The Nature and Role of Local Benefits in GEF programme Areas: Case Study Tanzania – Zanzibar"* (2014). <https://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/documents/lb-case-study-tanzania-zanzibar.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; African Parks, "*Travel Africa and Visit the Parks"* (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.africanparks.org/visit-parks>, accessed on 15 November 2023; AWF, "*Where We Work"* (n.d.). Retrieved from African Wildlife Foundation <https://www.awf.org/where-we-work>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Venezuela: FAO/GEF, "*Sustainable Forest Lands Management and Conservation under an Ecosocial Approach"* (2021). Retrieved from https://docplayer.net/222301167-Fao-gef-project-implementation-report-2021-revised-template-1-basic-project-data.html#google_vignette>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Mara Naboisho: EduAfrica. (n.d.). *Mara Naboisho Conservancy Case Study: Nature vs People*. Retrieved from <https://edu-africa.com/students-abroad/mara-naboisho-conservancy-case-study/>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Swenger/Embobut Forest: Amnesty International, "*Families Torn: Apart Forced Eviction of Indigenous People in Embotut Forest, Kenya"* (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AFR3283402018ENGLISH.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; Papua New Guinea: Papua New Guinea Conservation and Environment Protection Authority, "*National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan: 2019-2024"* (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/pg/pg-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023; FSC, "FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)" (2021). Forest Stewardship Council <https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/retrieve/e3adfb1d-f2ed-4e36-a171-6864c96f0d76>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

[44] NPY Women's Council, "*NPY Women's Council is led by women's law, authority and culture to deliver health, social and cultural services for all Anangu"* (n.d.). Retrieved from Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation <https://www.npywc.org.au/>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

Makuleke Community[45] regained their ancestral land and established the Makuleke Contractual Park, where they have partnered with a private company for ecotourism. This partnership respects the rights and benefits of the Makuleke people while conserving biodiversity. Scalise's 2012 report on Indigenous women's land rights in Africa[46] and the WWF et al.'s 2020 technical review on the state of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' lands and territories[47] further highlight additional case studies that underscore the importance of recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous women in conservation and land management. The examples presented in these reports likely showcase diverse approaches that involve Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes, emphasizing the intersectionality of gender, culture, and land rights.

5.3 Challenges Encountered in Implementing Human Rights-Based Conservation Initiatives

Navigating the intricate balance between conservation objectives and the rights of local communities presents a formidable challenge, often entailing conflicting interests and potential cultural clashes. The effective engagement of communities is hindered by resource limitations, both in funding and skilled personnel, exacerbating the struggle to harmonize conservation efforts with human rights principles. Amidst these challenges, addressing legal and policy barriers and empowering local communities are imperative for fostering a harmonious coexistence between conservation initiatives and human rights.

Table 4: Challenges encountered in implementing Human Rights-based conservation initiatives

Complex Stakeholder Dynamics	• Conservation projects often involve numerous stakeholders with diverse interests. Balancing these interests while respecting human rights can be challenging, requiring skilled negotiation and diplomacy.
Capacity Building	• Local communities may lack the capacity to engage effectively in conservation projects. Providing training and support is crucial to ensuring that they can fully participate and benefit from these initiatives.

[45] De Villiers, B., "*Land Claims & National Parks"* (1999). The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Retrieved from <https://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/books/land-claims-national-parks>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

[46] Scalise, E., "Indigenous Women's Land Rights: Case Studies from Africa" (2012). In *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples.* <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/old-site-downloads/download-1117-Indigenous-womens-land-rights-case-studies-from-Africa.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

[47] WWF, "*The State of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' lands and Territories"* (2021). Gland, Switzerland: WWF, UNEP-WCMC, SGP/ICCA-GSI, LM. <https://wwflac.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/report_the_state_of_the_indigenous_peoples_and_local_communities_lands_and_territories_1.pdf>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

Long-Term Commitment	• Sustainable conservation efforts often require long-term engagement, and maintaining support and funding over time can be difficult.
Adaptation and Flexibility	• Conservation strategies must be adaptable to changing circumstances, including climate change and evolving human rights standards.
Monitoring and Evaluation	• Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to assess the impact of conservation projects on human rights and adjust strategies accordingly.

Overall, best practices in integrating human rights into conservation projects often involve meaningful engagement with local communities, a commitment to long-term partnerships, and flexibility in adapting to changing conditions and needs. Case studies can provide valuable insights into how these practices are applied in real-world scenarios.

6. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDELINES

6.1 Relevance of International Conventions and Agreements to the Role of Human Rights Director

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) sets out fundamental human rights principles, including the right to life, liberty, and security, which are directly relevant to the role of a Human Rights Director in conservation. Ensuring that conservation projects do not infringe upon these rights is a fundamental responsibility. Also, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) treaties outline a wide range of human rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to participation in cultural life, and the right to an adequate standard of living. A Human Rights Director must consider these rights when planning and implementing conservation projects. On one hand, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognizes the importance of respecting the rights and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation. Human Rights Directors can draw from the CBD's principles to guide their work. On the other hand, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) explicitly addresses the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including their right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in matters affecting them. A Human Rights Director must ensure that conservation initiatives respect the rights enshrined in UNDRIP.

6.2 Guidelines and Standards for Integrating Human Rights in Conservation Practices

The IUCN's (a) guidelines for recognising and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)[48] and (b) principles and guidelines on Indigenous and traditional peoples[49] and protected areas[50] provide a framework for recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conservation, including FPIC principles. Other principles, such as the Equator Principles[51] provide a framework for financial institutions to assess and manage environmental and social risks in project finance, including conservation projects. Human Rights Directors can use them to ensure that conservation initiatives meet international human rights standards. Finally, the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR)[52] developed a set of principles to guide conservation organizations in integrating human rights into their work. These principles provide practical guidance for Human Rights Directors.

6.3 Examples of Initiatives and Tools that Support Human Rights-Based Conservation Approaches

Several resources and initiatives offer valuable tools and approaches for Human Rights Directors engaged in conservation planning. The LandMark Initiative,[53] launched by the World Resources Institute (WRI), provides an online platform mapping and tracking the collective land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities globally. This tool proves instrumental for Human Rights Directors seeking to comprehend and respect land and resource rights during conservation planning. Additionally, various CBNRM models, exemplified by CFM applications in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, illustrate how local communities can actively participate in and benefit from conservation efforts while safeguarding their rights. Another noteworthy approach is the Sustainability Transformation Approach[54] of the FAO, grounded in the interconnected pillars of social, environmental, and economic sustainability. This approach, comprising nine expected transformations relevant for climate change sustainability, integrates gender and Indigenous people's rights and knowledge as cross-cutting issues, addressing policy, governance, and practical decisions. Furthermore, the World Bank

[48] <https://www.iucn.org/news/protected-areas/201911/iucn-publishes-new-guidance-recognising-reporting-and-supporting-other-effective-area-based-conservation-measures>

[49] <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/indigenouspeoples/sr/callforinputcovidrecoverysubmissions/2022-07-28/IUCN_%20SubmissiontoOHCHRProtectedAreasandConservation.pdf>

[50] <https://files.worldwildlife.org/wwfcmsprod/files/Publication/file/4d021q9e2_WWFBinaryitem6053.pdf>

[51] <https://equator-principles.com/>

[52] <https://www.thecihr.org/publications>

[53] WRI, "*RELEASE: New LandMark Data Measure Impacts of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Forests and Climate"* (2017, December 2020). Retrieved from World Resources Institute <https://www.wri.org/news/release-new-landmark-data-measure-impacts-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-forests-and>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

[54] <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/news/news-detail/en/c/1635568/>

Environmental and Social Framework[55] outlines policies and procedures for assessing and mitigating environmental and social risks in projects, providing valuable insights for Human Rights Directors involved in conservation initiatives. The UNDP Social and Environmental Standards[56] also offer guidance on integrating environmental, social, and human rights considerations into development and conservation projects. These diverse resources collectively equip Human Rights Directors with a comprehensive set of tools and frameworks to navigate the intricate intersection of conservation and human rights. As further discussed in table 5 below, incorporating these international frameworks, guidelines, and tools into conservation practices is essential for Human Rights Directors to ensure that their work aligns with global human rights standards and principles while striving for effective conservation outcomes.

7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

7.1 Importance of Engaging with Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Other Stakeholders

Respecting rights and knowledge stands as a foundational principle in effective conservation practice. Indigenous Peoples and local communities bring profound knowledge of their environments, crucial for successful conservation outcomes. By engaging with them, not only are their rights respected, but their expertise is leveraged, fostering more sustainable conservation approaches. Building trust emerges as a key component in this process, particularly with stakeholders directly impacted by conservation projects. Inclusion in decision-making processes and recognition of their rights, including the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), are instrumental in establishing trust and cooperation. Additionally, legal, and ethical obligations underscore the importance of involving Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conservation initiatives, as mandated by international agreements and national laws. Neglecting this engagement can lead to legal and ethical complications. Finally, recognizing the significance of local support emphasizes that engaging with communities not only garners their support for conservation efforts but also increases the likelihood of their active participation in and protection of natural resources. In this cohesive narrative, these principles intertwine to advocate for an inclusive, ethical, and legally compliant approach to conservation that ensures the well-being of both communities and the environment.

Table 5: Collaborative approaches for integrating Human Rights perspectives in Conservation

Co-Management and Governance:	• Collaborative approaches involve shared decision-making and management

[55] <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>
[56] <https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-social-and-environmental-standards>

	responsibilities between conservation organizations, governments, and local communities. This allows for the integration of human rights perspectives and ensures that all stakeholders have a voice.
Community-Based Conservation	• Empowering local communities to actively participate in conservation planning and implementation can help ensure that human rights are respected. This often involves developing sustainable resource management plans in collaboration with these communities.
Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	• Establishing mechanisms for addressing conflicts and grievances is essential. Collaborative approaches should include dispute resolution processes that respect the rights of all parties involved.
Capacity Building	• Building the capacity of local communities and stakeholders to engage effectively in conservation efforts and advocate for their rights is a critical element of collaborative approaches.

7.2 Partnerships with Human Rights Organizations, Academic Institutions, and Other Relevant Actors

Engaging in collaborative efforts with a variety of stakeholders and forging partnerships with organizations and institutions with expertise in the subject under scrutiny can significantly enhance the human rights dimensions of conservation initiatives. Human rights organizations, as valuable allies, bring expertise and advocacy support, ensuring that conservation projects align with human rights standards and raising awareness of potential violations. Academic institutions, through research and data-driven insights, contribute to a more informed understanding of the human rights aspects of conservation, aiding in the development of best practices and evidence-based approaches. Their scholarly contributions help refine strategies for addressing human rights concerns within conservation frameworks. Local NGOs, intimately familiar with cultural and social contexts, are crucial partners for effective engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive conservation approach. By actively involving these organizations, conservation initiatives can benefit from on-the-ground knowledge and community perspectives, ensuring a more comprehensive and people-centred strategy. Collaborating with Government agencies responsible for human rights, environmental protection, and Indigenous affairs ensures that conservation projects align with national policies and legal frameworks. Such partnerships facilitate a coordinated and cohesive approach that adheres to regulatory requirements and national priorities,

strengthening the overall impact of conservation efforts. In addition to these partnerships, involving civil society organizations is vital for creating a broader societal awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights in conservation. These organizations serve as intermediaries between communities and conservation projects, helping to bridge gaps and address concerns that may arise during the implementation phase. Furthermore, the private sector can play a significant role in supporting human rights-based conservation. Partnering with businesses that adhere to ethical and sustainable practices fosters responsible environmental stewardship and contributes to the overall success and longevity of conservation initiatives. Lastly, donor organizations play a pivotal role by providing funding and guidance that prioritize human rights principles, thereby promoting the integration of human rights into conservation practices. This collaborative network, comprising human rights organizations, academic institutions, local NGOs, government agencies, and donor organizations, creates a holistic and synergistic approach to conservation that respects that respects the rights and dignity of all involved parties and fosters sustainable outcomes.

7.3 Capacity Building and Collaboration

Fostering effective collaboration and communication (figure 10) is pivotal for conservation organizations aiming to uphold human rights principles. Initiating regular consultations and dialogues with human rights organizations, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples (figure 11) serves as a foundation for staying well-informed about evolving human rights concerns and perspectives. This continuous engagement establishes an open channel for mutual understanding and responsiveness.

Furthermore, developing internal policies and guidelines (figure 12) within the organization and forging partnerships with human rights organizations prove instrumental, offering a symbiotic relationship that brings valuable expertise, advocacy support, and additional resources. By uniting efforts through strategic partnerships, conservation organizations can more effectively integrate human rights considerations into their initiatives, ensuring a harmonious alignment between conservation goals and the protection of human rights. In this integrated approach (figure 13), regular consultations and partnerships synergistically contribute to a comprehensive and ethical framework for conservation practices.

By investing in the skills and knowledge of staff and forging partnerships with relevant stakeholders, conservation organizations can better protect both natural ecosystems and the rights of the people who depend on them.

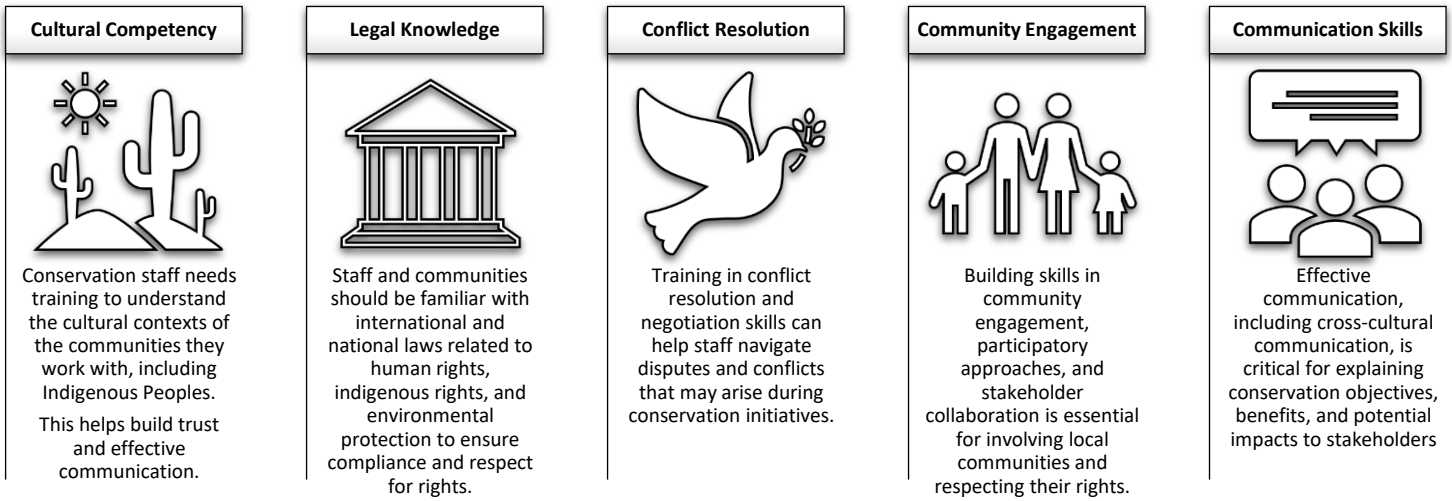

Figure 10: Capacity building needs and approaches for conservation staff

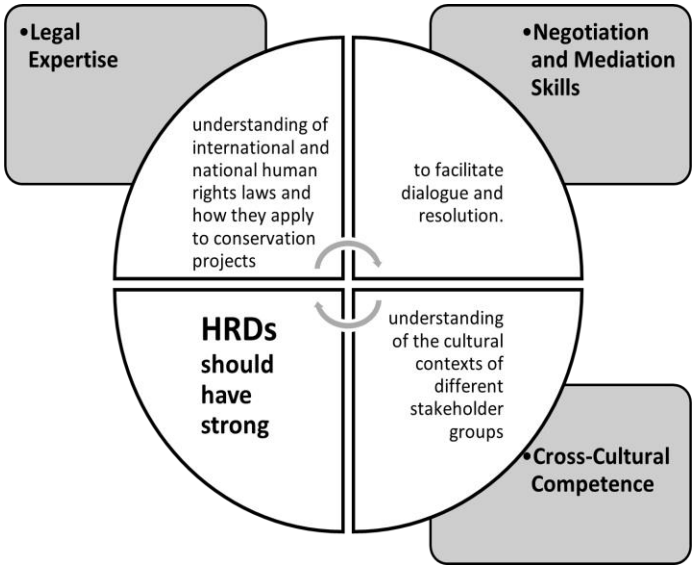

Figure 11: Some guidelines and tools for Human Rights implementation in Conservation

Figure 12: Capacity-building needs for Human Rights Directors in the conservation sector

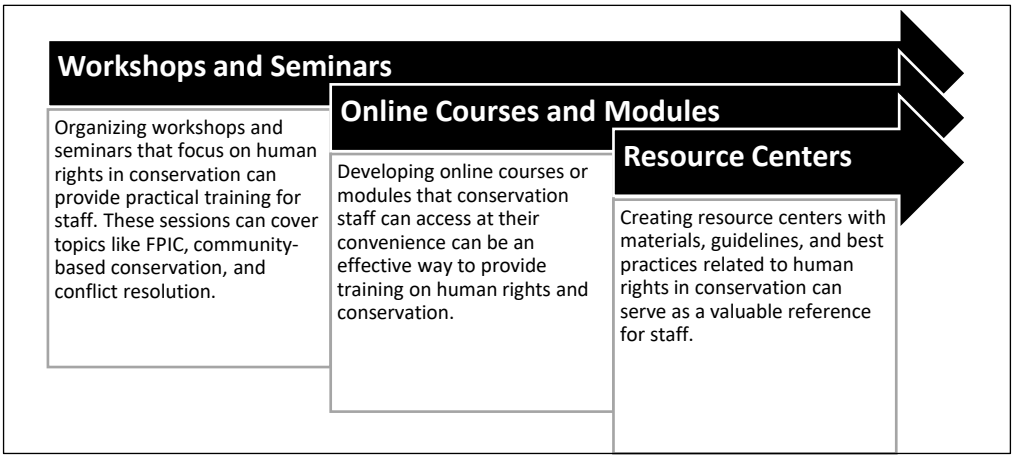

Figure 13: Training programs and resources for integrating human rights into conservation practices

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

8.1 Frameworks for Monitoring and Evaluating Human Rights in Conservation

Adopting monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) frameworks is pivotal for the effective integration of human rights principles into conservation projects. The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) offers a systematic methodology that extends beyond mere monitoring and evaluation, emphasizing key principles such as participation, non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency. In parallel, there is the UNDP's Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Programming. Initially designed for development initiatives, it proves adaptable and relevant to conservation efforts. It guides the integration of human rights into development initiatives and underscores the importance of assessing the impact on human rights, ensuring meaningful participation, and addressing vulnerabilities within the context of development initiatives. By intertwining these principles, the integration of human rights into both development and conservation becomes a holistic and impactful endeavour.

Table 6: MEAL and Human Rights in Conservation

Indicators and Metrics for Assessing Human Rights Impacts	*Indicators and Methodologies for Monitoring and Evaluating Human Rights in Conservation Projects*
Participation Metrics: These indicators assess the extent of involvement and influence of local communities and stakeholders in conservation decision-making	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) Compliance: Monitoring whether FPIC processes are followed and whether communities grant consent for conservation activities.

processes.	
Non-Discrimination Metrics: Indicators related to non-discrimination evaluate whether conservation projects have adverse impacts on marginalized groups or exacerbate existing inequalities.	Benefit-Sharing Mechanisms: Evaluating whether revenue-sharing mechanisms are effectively implemented and benefit local communities as intended.
Access to Resources Metrics: Assessing changes in local communities' access to and control over natural resources can indicate the impact on their livelihoods and rights.	Social Impact Assessments: Conducting assessments to measure the social impacts of conservation initiatives on local communities and Indigenous Peoples.
Conflict Resolution Metrics: Metrics related to the resolution of conflicts and grievances can measure the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms in protecting human rights.	Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs): Implementing HRIAs to identify and mitigate potential human rights risks associated with conservation projects.

Table 7: Reporting Human Rights in Conservation

Reporting Mechanisms and Frameworks to Document Progress and Challenges	*Reporting Mechanisms and Transparency in Human Rights Implementation*
Regular Progress Reports: Conservation organizations can issue regular reports that document progress, challenges, and achievements related to human rights integration in their projects.	Community Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing channels for local communities and stakeholders to provide feedback on conservation projects and their human rights impact.
Annual Sustainability Reports: These reports can include sections dedicated to human rights, detailing how conservation initiatives align with human rights principles.	Public Disclosure: Providing access to project documents, impact assessments, and reports to ensure transparency and accountability.
Project-Specific Reporting: For individual conservation projects, organizations can create specific reporting mechanisms that outline human rights goals, actions taken, and outcomes.	Third-Party Audits: Engaging independent third-party organizations to conduct audits and assessments of human rights integration in conservation efforts.

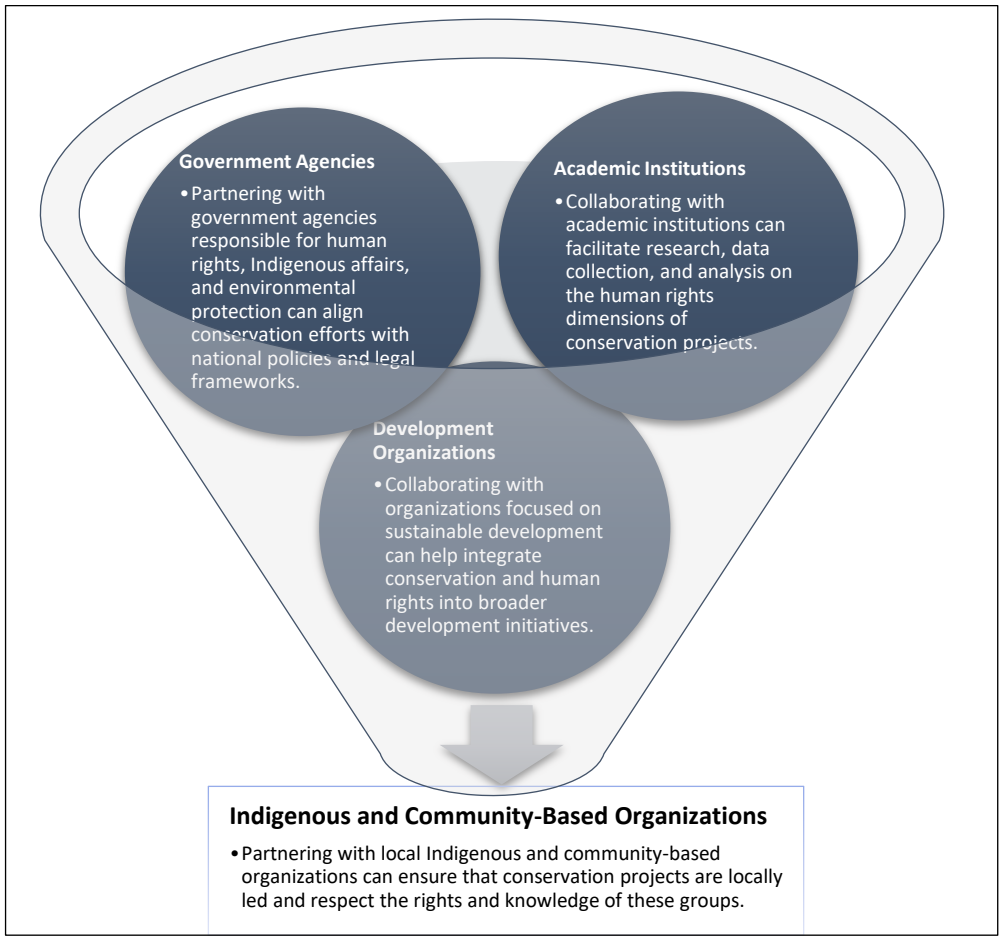

Figure 14: Opportunities for cross-sectoral partnerships to promote Human Rights in conservation efforts

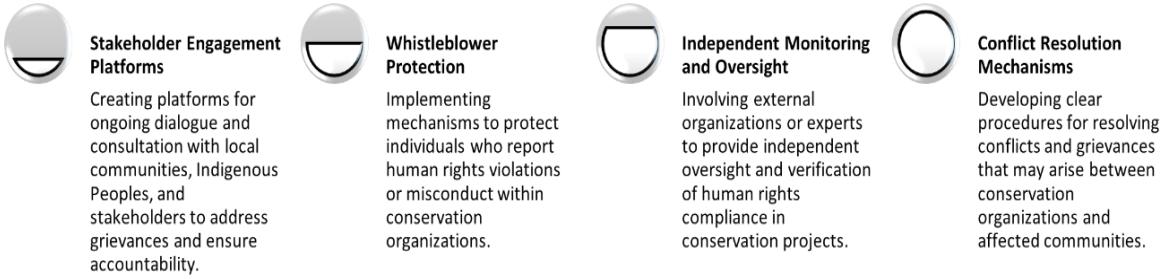

Figure 15: Enhancing accountability and transparency in Human Rights-Based Conservation approaches

Finally, annex ii of the document titled - Rights-based approaches to conservation - provide more examples of HRIA and RBA models and tools (Campese, 2009).[57] Effective monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms are essential for ensuring that human rights are upheld in

[57] Campese, J., "Rights-based approaches: Exploring issues and opportunities for conservation" (2009). Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR and IUCN.

conservation projects. They help organizations identify areas for improvement, address challenges, and demonstrate transparency and accountability to stakeholders and the public.

9. GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

9.1 Emerging Issues and Trends in the Intersection of Human Rights and Conservation

In the evolving landscape of conservation, several interconnected trends are reshaping the discourse. First and foremost, the concept of climate justice is gaining prominence as the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.[58] This intertwining of climate justice with conservation efforts reflects a growing recognition of the need to address environmental issues in a socially equitable manner. Secondly, there is a notable shift in perspective with the emerging trend of recognizing the rights of nature, exemplified by the consideration of legal personhood for ecosystems.[59] This trend prompts a re-evaluation of how conservation initiatives should be approached, challenging traditional paradigms, and encouraging a more holistic perspective that includes the intrinsic rights of the environment.[60] Additionally, the integration of technology in conservation, such as remote monitoring and data collection, brings to the forefront the importance of digital rights.[61] As conservation efforts become more technologically advanced, concerns related to data privacy and the rights of communities involved in these initiatives become increasingly significant.

In essence, these three trends—climate justice, rights of nature, and digital rights—converge to shape a dynamic and multifaceted landscape that demands a nuanced and comprehensive approach to contemporary conservation challenges.

9.2 Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas in Human Rights-Based Conservation Approaches

In navigating the complex landscape of conservation, organizations frequently encounter challenges that demand a delicate equilibrium between various considerations. Balancing the rights and needs of local communities with the overarching goal of conserving biodiversity presents a recurring dilemma for these organizations. This intricate balance is further complicated by the ethical challenge of ensuring cultural sensitivity. Respecting the cultural values and practices of Indigenous Peoples and

[58] UNEP, "*Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: Background Report*" (2018).United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/towards-pollution-free-planet-background-report>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

[59] Stone, C., "Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects" (1972) 45(2). Southern California Law Review 450-501.

[60] Cullinan, C., "*Wild law: A manifesto for Earth justice*" (2015). Chelsea Green Publishing, London.

[61] IUCN, "*Guidelines for applying the IUCN Global Standard for NbS"* (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/theme/nature-based-solutions/publications>, accessed on 15 November 2023.

local communities while implementing conservation initiatives requires a nuanced approach, acknowledging the diversity of perspectives at play.

Moreover, ethical dilemmas surface in the realm of benefit distribution, where decisions on how the rewards of conservation, such as revenue from ecotourism, are allocated among different stakeholder groups become critical. Striking a fair and inclusive balance in benefit-sharing mechanisms is essential to avoid exacerbating existing social inequalities. Furthermore, fostering genuine community engagement becomes pivotal, as local stakeholders must be active participants in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and considered in the formulation and implementation of conservation strategies.

Amidst these challenges, organizations must navigate a path that not only protects biodiversity but also upholds the principles of justice, equity, and respect for human rights. Achieving this delicate equilibrium demands continuous collaboration, transparency, and a commitment to understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges that arise at the intersection of conservation and human rights.

9.3 Recommendations for Future Research, Policy Development, and Practice Improvement

Creating a comprehensive strategy for the seamless integration of human rights into conservation initiatives involves a multifaceted approach. First, conducting research to meticulously assess the long-term impact of human rights-based conservation initiatives serves as the foundational step. This research would aim to comprehensively evaluate the effects on both conservation outcomes and the well-being of local communities. Parallel to this, advocating for the development and implementation of legal frameworks is crucial, with a specific focus on explicitly addressing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the context of conservation. Building robust partnerships further strengthens this approach, fostering collaboration among conservation organizations, human rights entities, and academic institutions to develop and implement best practices. Simultaneously, investment in capacity building and training programs for both conservation staff and local communities becomes paramount, ensuring the effective integration of human rights principles. To navigate the ethical complexities that may arise, developing ethical guidelines is imperative, emphasizing principles of fairness, respect, and justice. Additionally, sustaining advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the intersection of human rights and conservation, while continually advocating for policies prioritizing human rights in conservation practices, completes this comprehensive strategy. In concert, these interconnected steps form a holistic framework that aligns research, legal advocacy, partnerships, capacity building, ethical considerations, and ongoing advocacy to promote the harmonious integration of human rights within conservation initiatives.

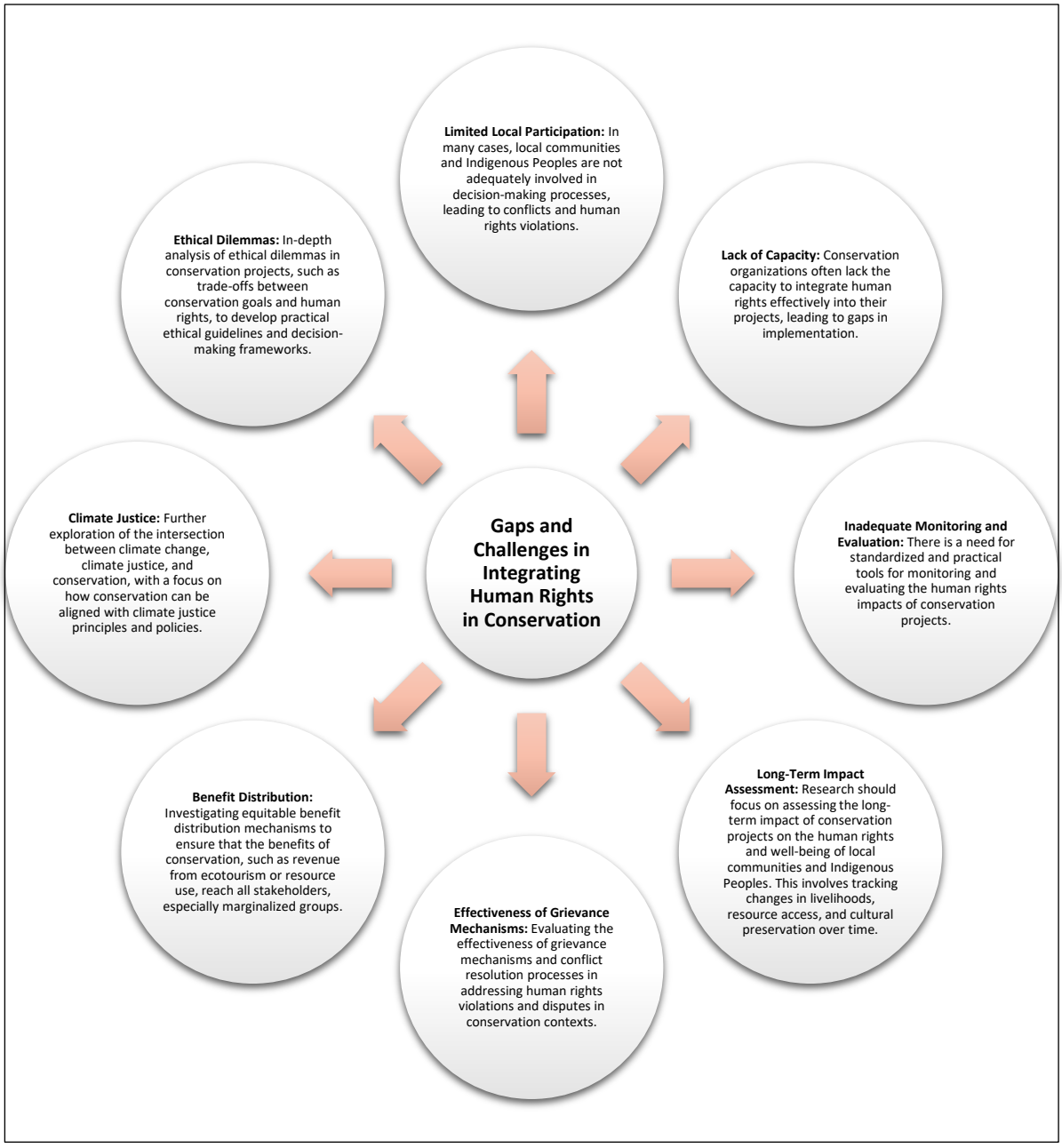

Figure 16: Gaps and future directions within Human-Rights based Conservation

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Summary of Key Findings from the Literature Review

Navigating the complex terrain of integrating human rights into conservation efforts involves addressing a spectrum of challenges outlined in the literature. Among these hurdles are limited local participation, organizational capacity constraints, and the imperative for effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Despite these challenges, the

evolving landscape reveals promising emerging trends that reshape the discourse. Noteworthy among these is the convergence of climate justice with conservation, an increasing acknowledgment of the rights of nature, and the growing recognition of the role of digital rights in shaping conservation strategies. Amidst these shifts, the pivotal role of stakeholders becomes evident, underscoring the critical need to engage with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and various stakeholders. This engagement is not only pivotal for the success of conservation initiatives but also fundamental for the protection of human rights within these contexts. Yet, within this intricate web of considerations, ethical dilemmas surface, creating a delicate balance between conservation objectives and the rights and needs of communities. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the nuanced negotiations surrounding benefit distribution and the imperative for cultural sensitivity, where ethical decisions become crucial in charting a course that respects both conservation goals and the diverse rights of communities involved.

10.2 Implications for the Role of Human Rights Director in Conservation

In defining the responsibilities of a Human Rights Director within the realm of conservation, it becomes evident that a multifaceted approach is essential. Acknowledging the challenges and complexities outlined in the literature, the role should extend beyond mere oversight to actively integrate human rights into the fabric of conservation policies, practices, and decision-making processes. Capacity building emerges as a pivotal aspect of this role, as Human Rights Directors should not only recognize but also address capacity gaps within conservation organizations. Equipped with the necessary skills, these directors should play a crucial role in facilitating training programs and awareness initiatives, fostering an environment conducive to effective human rights integration. Moreover, at the heart of this responsibility lies the imperative for meaningful community engagement. The Human Rights Director should champion initiatives that ensure local communities' rights are not just acknowledged but actively respected, thereby promoting a harmonious relationship between conservation goals and the well-being of the communities involved. In essence, the role of a Human Rights Director encompasses a holistic and proactive approach, ranging from policy integration to capacity building and community engagement, all crucial elements for the successful integration of human rights into conservation practices.

10.3 Importance of the Human Rights Director Role in Advancing Conservation and Human Rights Agendas

Establishing a seamless alignment of objectives stands as a fundamental responsibility for the Human Rights Director, a role that bridges the realms of conservation and human rights. This pivotal function ensures that conservation initiatives extend beyond the preservation of biodiversity to actively incorporate the protection of the rights and well-being of communities affected by these efforts. In tandem with this

objective alignment, the role enhances accountability within conservation organizations. By promoting transparency and adherence to international human rights standards, the Human Rights Director becomes a catalyst for fostering an environment of responsibility and ethical conduct. Beyond the proactive stance of aligning objectives and enforcing accountability, the director also serves a crucial role in conflict resolution. Armed with the capacity to facilitate mechanisms for resolving disputes and addressing grievances, the Human Rights Director plays a central role in ensuring that conflicts arising in the context of conservation are dealt with in a fair and just manner. In essence, the Human Rights Director operates as a linchpin, weaving together the goals of conservation and human rights, while simultaneously promoting accountability and providing a mechanism for resolving conflicts within the complex landscape of conservation efforts.

10.4 Synopsis of the Paper in 19 Key Points

Expanding the role of the human rights director in conservation organizations involves recognizing the interconnectedness of human rights and environmental conservation. Throughout the paper, several suggestions have been made to enhance and broaden the responsibilities of the human rights director. By implementing these suggestions, summarised in the following into 19 points, conservation organizations can elevate the role of the human rights director, fostering a more holistic and socially responsible approach to conservation that respects human rights and promotes sustainable practices.

1. *Integrate Human Rights into Conservation Policies:* Collaborate with organizational leadership to ensure that human rights considerations are integrated into the core policies and practices of the conservation organization.
2. *Develop Cross-Disciplinary Training Programs:* Design and implement training programs that bridge the gap between human rights and conservation, equipping staff and communities with a comprehensive understanding of both fields. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration between the human rights director and experts in environmental science, law, technology, psychology, entrepreneurship, biology, ecology, anthropology, marketing, and other relevant fields to promote a holistic approach to conservation that integrates human rights considerations.
3. *Public Awareness Campaigns:* Develop and lead public awareness campaigns on the interconnectedness of human rights and conservation, fostering a broader understanding and support for ethical conservation practices
4. *Facilitate Community Engagement Initiatives:* Empower the human rights director to lead community engagement programs, ensuring that local communities are actively involved in conservation efforts and that their rights are respected.
5. *Advocate for Social Inclusion and Equity:* Promote inclusive decision-making processes within the organization, ensuring that diverse

voices, including those from affected communities, are considered in conservation strategies. Advocate for social inclusion and equity within conservation projects, considering the impact on marginalized groups and working to address any disparities. Integrate a gender-responsive approach into conservation practices, with the human rights director leading efforts to address gender disparities and promote equality in conservation projects.

6. *Monitor, Evaluate and Report on Human Rights Impact:* As the human rights director playing a key role in assessing and improving the organization's performance, establish mechanisms to monitor and report on the human rights impact of conservation initiatives, providing transparency and accountability.
7. *Collaborate with Indigenous Communities:* Foster partnerships with Indigenous communities, recognizing their unique relationship with the environment and unique perspectives on conservation and respecting their rights to land and resources. Advancing Indigenous rights by involving them as key stakeholders in conservation efforts.
8. *Address Human-Wildlife Conflict Responsibly:* Develop strategies to address human-wildlife conflict that prioritize both human safety and the well-being of wildlife, respecting the rights of affected communities.
9. *Crisis Response Planning:* Empowered with the mandate to lead effort, develop crisis response plans to address emergencies in a way that respects human rights. Enhance the human rights director's role to include conflict resolution skills, addressing disputes that may arise between conservation efforts and local communities, respecting diverse perspectives.
10. *Implement Ethical Supply Chain Practices:* Work towards ethical supply chain practices, ensuring that conservation efforts do not contribute to human rights abuses in the sourcing of materials or resources.
11. *Promote Environmental Justice:* Conservation is often tagged as a field for the privileged. Championing environmental justice initiatives would emphasize the right of all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, to benefit from and participate in conservation initiatives and respect the rights of Indigenous peoples by ensuring that conservation practices do not disproportionately impact marginalized communities.
12. *Engage in Policy Advocacy:* Actively advocate for policies at local, national, and international levels that impact both human rights and conservation efforts and promote the integration of human rights principles into conservation practices.
13. *Empower Local Leadership:* Support and empower local leadership within conservation projects, recognizing the importance of local knowledge and involving community members in decision-making processes.

14. *Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:* Align conservation efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to poverty alleviation, equality, and climate action.
15. *Educate Stakeholders on the Interconnectedness:* Develop educational materials and campaigns to raise awareness among stakeholders about the interconnectedness of human rights and conservation, fostering a culture of responsibility.
16. *Ethical Fundraising:* Collaborate with the fundraising team to ensure that funding sources align with human rights principles, avoiding support from entities with questionable human rights records.
17. *Establish Grievance Mechanisms:* Implement effective grievance mechanisms for communities affected by conservation activities, ensuring a responsive and fair process for addressing concerns.
18. *Rethink Legal Compliance:* Naturally, the human rights director is tasked with ensuring legal compliance in conservation projects, including adherence to international human rights standards and environmental regulations. However, reconsidering legal compliance is crucial, as it is important to acknowledge that international norms may carry inherent biases that may not always align with the diverse and nuanced realities on the ground in specific contexts. While international standards provide a broad framework for guiding ethical behavior, they may not comprehensively address the unique social, cultural, and environmental factors influencing specific societies. In this light, legal compliance should involve a nuanced understanding of local contexts, recognizing the potential limitations and biases present in international norms. This approach encourages a more inclusive and adaptable interpretation of compliance, ensuring that conservation initiatives respect the diverse perspectives and needs of the communities directly affected by them.
19. *Collaborate with Human Rights Organizations:* Collaborate with human rights organizations to leverage expertise, resources, and networks in addressing shared concerns at the intersection of human rights and conservation and ensure that conservation initiatives align with human rights standards that are adapted to the context within which action is envisioned.

10.5 Call for Continued Efforts to Prioritize and Integrate Human Rights in Conservation Practices

Delving into the literature review reveals a clear imperative for the advancement of research and evidence to navigate the complexities of human rights-based conservation initiatives. To this end, there is a pressing need for further studies that not only assess the immediate but also the long-term impact of such initiatives, fostering the development of evidence-based practices. Simultaneously, the advocacy landscape should persist in its efforts to champion legal frameworks explicitly recognizing the rights of

Indigenous Peoples and local communities within the conservation domain. As these frameworks evolve, a parallel commitment to continued investment in capacity building and training programs emerges as an essential component. This investment is deemed crucial for the successful integration of human rights principles into conservation practices, requiring a collaborative effort that extends to both conservation staff and local communities. Moreover, as the landscape of conservation projects invariably presents ethical challenges and dilemmas, the development of comprehensive ethical guidelines becomes paramount. Such guidelines serve as a compass, navigating the intricate terrain of conservation with an emphasis on fairness, respect, and justice. In this interconnected framework, research, legal frameworks, capacity building, and ethical guidelines harmoniously converge, collectively shaping a pathway toward more ethically grounded and effective human rights integration in conservation practices.

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AUTHORS' DECLARATION AND ESSENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLIANCES

Authors' Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

Contribution	*Author 1*	*Author 2*
Conceived and designed the research or analysis	Yes	Yes
Collected the data	Yes	No
Contributed to data analysis & interpretation	Yes	Yes
Wrote the article/paper	Yes	No
Critical revision of the article/paper	Yes	Yes
Editing of the article/paper	Yes	Yes
Supervision	Yes	No
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The author(s) solemnly declare(s) that this research has not directly involved any local community participants or respondents belonging to non-Indigenous peoples. Neither this study involved any child in any form directly. The contexts of different humans, people, populations, men/women/children and ethnic people are only indirectly covered through literature review. Therefore, an Ethical Clearance (from a Committee or Authority) or prior informed consent (PIC) of the respondents or Self-Declaration in this regard does not apply in cases of this study or written work.

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