



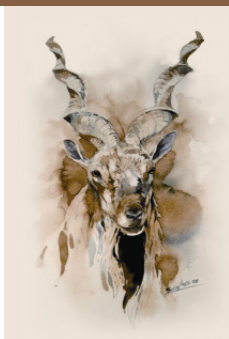
Convention on  
Biological Diversity



International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation

# CIC Markhor Award

for Outstanding Conservation Performance



LUC BELLON:

## A Treasure in My Backyard: Suleiman Markhor

Ownership and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources  
in North Balochistan, Pakistan





Convention on  
Biological Diversity



International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation

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THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION, CIC was founded more than 80 years ago and has members in 84 countries today. It is an intergovernmental organisation, working in the public interest, worldwide active as advisory body.

The 'MARKHOR AWARD' recognizes and celebrates outstanding conservation performance by personalities, private and government institutions, enterprises or conservation projects that link the conservation of biodiversity and human livelihoods through the application of the principles of sustainable use, in particular hunting, as part of wildlife and ecosystem management.

The name 'MARKHOR' comes from Pakistan's threatened mountain goat species, which population numbers have been multiplied 25 times in recent years through sustainable hunting tourism. Hunting income benefits the local population and arouses its interest in conserving wildlife.

The price was awarded for the first time at the occasion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP9) in Bonn in 2008. The 'MARKHOR AWARD' is given every two years at future CoPs.

## MARKHOR AWARD 2008

The winner of the first CIC MARKHOR AWARD was the SELOUS-NIASSA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR in Tanzania and the NIASSA NATIONAL RESERVE in Mozambique.



The Niassa National Reserve is Mozambique's largest conservation area, funded through sustainable hunting tourism. The Selous-Niassa Wildlife Corridor links the Niassa Reserve with Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve.

ANA PAULA SAMO GUDO CHICHAVA, Deputy Minister for the Coordination of Environmental Affairs, Mozambique, welcomed the Markhor Award as recognition of her country's efforts to meet international obligations, including the expansion of their protected areas to 15.5% of the land base.

CIC President (now Honorary President) Dieter Schramm presented the CIC Markhor Award to GILBERTO VINCENTE of Mozambique, and DAVID MGALLA of Tanzania, and stressed the importance of peace in order to achieve conservation. 'In many African countries, sustainable hunting and hunting tourism have increased populations of wildlife and secured species diversity.

Hunting bans have achieved the opposite.' He called upon African governments to use revenue from hunting tourism to benefit the local people who live side by side with wildlife, and to reinvest in game conservation. 'Only then will hunting really become sustainable!'

The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, AHMED DJOGHLAF expressed his appreciation for the newly created award. 'The CIC Markhor Award for Outstanding Conservation Performance is a unique award [...] which link the conservation of biodiversity and human livelihoods through the application of the principles of sustainable use including hunting.'



## SELOUS - NIASA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

The Corridor with its own size of approximately 10.000 km<sup>2</sup> connects the largest elephant ranges of Africa. Although there is a number of corridor and trans-frontier conservation initiatives worldwide, it is unique that this entire corridor is not only located on communal land but also under the management of communities. Dependent on natural resources and wildlife for protein supply these communities realised that the forests and wildlife were rapidly diminishing from over-utilisation in combination with uncontrolled landmanagement. In order to conserve their natural environment the 29 villages of the Corridor organised themselves in 5 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and created their own conservation areas. Located in a remote area hunting tourism is their first option to gain economic benefits from conservation in the corridor. However, the creation and management of communal Wildlife Management Areas also involves many sacrifices and efforts of the communities.

Primarily the communities perceived the Markhor Award as an acknowledgement of those conservation efforts and are proud of the international attention.

The award money was equally shared between the five CBOs and was very much appreciated. According to the CBOs' budget plans it will be used for various purposes, ranging from patrol food rations for the village game scouts, equipment like axes and bush-knives, ammunition, office rehabilitation or construction, savings on hunting rifles, stationeries to run their offices or other small investments.

With the award the Selous - Niassa Wildlife Corridor gained an increased international recognition and hunting firms and associations committed to sustainable hunting tourism are showing their interest to send hunters to the corridor area – who will contribute with hunting to conservation and economic development.

Since the CIC is already known in the corridor area because of its previous contribution to the production of local music for conservation, the local communities associate with the CIC a partnership, whereas the CIC can represent their common interest on the international platform.

## NIASSA NATIONAL RESERVE

For many years the team in the Niassa Reserve has been slowly developing an approach to manage the vast Niassa National Reserve, and on many occasions they have learnt hard lessons through trial and error. But they have always firmly believed that their approach to conserve Mozambique's largest conservation area, funded mainly through sustainable hunting tourism is the best option available under the trying circumstances.

The CIC Markhor Award is now proudly displayed at the headquarters of the Reserve as a reminder to all that the job is not yet done, but the efforts to secure the Reserve and its unique biodiversity are appreciated.

With the award came a small donation. But this also presented a challenge as to how to use this donation. The Niassa Reserve is huge, 42,000 km<sup>2</sup> with 35,000 people residing inside the Reserve, and the problems it is facing are many. In discussing what to do with the money it became obvious that it had to do with something that would have the greatest impact over a large area.

In the end, four potential themes have been identified:

- Prepare T-shirts for school children that carry a conservation message and raise the awareness of the Reserve.
- Identify Women's Groups that can be assisted in some way with equipment (sewing machine, water dispensers, and mosquito nets for example).
- Use the money to prepare a number of sign boards that advertise the Reserve, or promote a conservation message, that can be placed at strategic points along the main access roads to the Reserve.
- Use the money to support local Community Associations involved with conservation. There are approximately 30 such associations in the Reserve, all of which need assistance of some sort.

The Award continues to promote the Reserve in the eyes of decision makers in the country, and we will always be proud to be associated with the Markhor Award and what it stands for.



## OBITUARY GILBERTO VICENTE



The CIC mourns the death of GILBERTO VICENTE, the Warden of the Maputo Special Reserve in Mozambique. He was murdered by unknown assailants on July 25, 2010. The 39-year-old Mozambican wildlife officer was on duty travel in the late evening from his Reserve to Maputo, when six criminals ambushed his car and killed him with eight shots from pistols and assault rifles. A fellow traveler, Carlos Nunes, was injured. The attackers left the scene in several vehicles without stealing anything. This supports the assumption of the police that it was a contract killing, as Vicente was a thorn in the flesh of organized groups of poachers.

Vicente joined the Wildlife Department in 1998. He worked as Warden of Limpopo National Park before he became the Warden of the Niassa Game Reserve. In that position Vicente was closely connected with the Selous-Niassa-Corridor development.

The CIC got to know Gilberto as a highly committed warden and conservationist, a dedicated and hard worker and an upright personality of highest integrity. And Gilberto always had a smile on his face. For some of us who collaborated with him in the development of the Selous-Niassa Corridor he was not only a colleague, but also a dear friend. We express our heartfelt condolences to the family, in particular to his wife and his three children. May he rest in peace. The CIC also extends its best wishes to Carlos Nunes for a fast and complete recovery.

Game scouts and wardens in many parts of Africa fight poaching and other threats to conservation under hard conditions and often with very limited means. Just recently two scouts were murdered in Ethiopian conservation areas. The CIC appeals to African Governments to give scouts the best possible equipment, legal support and to train them well for their dangerous and demanding work amongst the African wildlife.

Dr. Rolf D. Baldus  
President CIC Tropical Game Commission

# MARKHOR AWARD 2010

The 2010 winner is:

THE TORGHAR CONSERVATION PROGRAM (TCP) OF THE SOCIETY FOR  
TORGHAR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (STEP) IN PAKISTAN .

The award ceremony takes place during the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 where stock is taken about the 2010 Biodiversity Target and where nature conservation sets a new target for the world.

## **Members of the international selection committee:**

DR. AHMED DJOGLAF, CBD Executive Secretary

DR. WOLFGANG E. BURHENNE, UN Environment Prize (SASAKAWA) recipient, Member Steering Committee, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, Executive Governor, International Council of Environmental Law toward Sustainable Development

GERALD BIGURUBE, Programme Manager, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Tanzania; Former Director General of Tanzania National Parks TANAPA

PROF. SHANE MAHONEY, Executive Director of Sustainable Development and Strategic Science, Department of Environment and Conservation, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Founder and Executive Director of the Institute of Biodiversity, Ecosystem Science and Sustainability at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

DIETER SCHRAMM, CIC Honorary President

KAI WOLLSCHIED, CIC Director General

DR. G.R. (DICK) POTTS, Chairman of the CIC Division Applied Science

PROF. COUNT TROSTEN MÖRNER, Chairman of the CIC Division Policy and Law

DR. ROLF D. BALDUS, President of the CIC Tropical Game Commission.



Hereby the CIC would like to acknowledge its appreciation to SUSG-C Asia, Quetta, Pakistan and its chair, Mr. Sardar Naseer Tareen to allow us to reproduce Luc Bellon's book , A Treasure in My Backyard: Suleiman Markhor in order to present to the world the enourmous efforts and work STEP is making in the sustainable use of natural resources.



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'Markhor'

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# **A Treasure in My Backyard: Suleiman Markhor**

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Ownership and Sustainable Use of  
Natural Resources in North Balochistan, Pakistan

A Case Study

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**SUSG-C Asia, Quetta, Pakistan**



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## List of acronyms

<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
<b>ESA</b>	Endangered Species Act (USA)
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Area
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GGP</b>	Game Guard Programme
<b>GoB</b>	Government of Balochistan
<b>GoP</b>	Government of Pakistan
<b>IUCN</b>	The World Conservation Union
<b>NCCW</b>	National Council for Conservation of Wildlife – Pakistan
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NWFP</b>	North West Frontier Province.
<b>PATA</b>	Provincially Administered Tribal Area
<b>SSC</b>	Species Survival Commission, IUCN
<b>STEP</b>	Society for Torghar Environmental Protection
<b>SUI</b>	Sustainable Use Initiative (SUSG - IUCN)
<b>SUSG</b>	Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SSC, IUCN)
<b>SUSG-Casia</b>	Sustainable Use Specialist Group, Central Asia
<b>TCP</b>	Torghar Conservation Programme
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>US-FWS</b>	United States Fish and Wildlife Services

## Foreword

Torghar – the “black mountain” range in north eastern Balochistan, has become an icon of conservation and sustainable use in Pakistan. Conservation efforts in Torghar – an initiative of the local tribal leaders and tribesmen, were already bearing fruits at a time when there was not even a silver lining on the horizon in Pakistan for community based conservation. While the U. S. Fish and Wildlife experts were surveying and reporting growth in populations of Urial and Markhor, and the biologists of British Museum of Natural history were discovering new species in the area, conservation efforts in Torghar were being viewed with skepticism by national wildlife professionals. However, it was not until The World Conservation Union (IUCN) selected the founder of the Torghar Conservation Program (TCP), Sardar Naseer Tareen, to head its Sustainable Use Specialist Group for Central Asia in 1997, that achievements of TCP began to receive some official recognition in Pakistan.

This in depth case study explores how the programme evolved over the last two decades, combining conservation of biodiversity, social and economic enhancement in the mountain, and financial sustainability. Local hunters and representatives from all local sub tribes are involved in the program, and many are hired to work as Game Guards. The income from limited sport hunting of Markhor and Urial pays for the salaries of Game Guards, is used for social services such as health cover for local population, and covers management overheads. The hunting is based on internationally recognized scientific principles which ensure the normal reproduction and growth of the animal population.

It did not take long for the community to realize the economic benefits of conservation and voluntarily make adjustments to their pastoral practices so as to reduce livestock-wildlife competition. However, coping with the forage scarcity in drought years, and increase in livestock numbers for subsistence of new households added to the area due to population growth pose serious challenges for the

Programme. Other challenges include the volatile geopolitical situation in the area, bureaucratic hurdles and legal constraints concerning hunting and export of trophies.

While the conservation and sustainable use components of the programme are well managed, the social organization for the purpose of conservation and sustainable use is still in formative stages. The local sub tribes are still struggling to determine a formula for equitable distribution of benefits of common resource management. Luc Bellon is a French national who has done extensive field research on Pashtun and Baloch culture and social organization. His ability to speak Pashto puts him in an advantageous position to live and directly interact with local people and gather first hand knowledge. He has done an excellent job of analyzing power relations and the social under currents that have prevented consensus on the equitable access and distribution of resources, decentralization of authority and assumption of responsibilities by the people living in Torgar. He has also documented the history of the programme and how its management and operations evolved over past 20 years.

Torgar continues to be a unique example of conservation in the private sector without any financial or technical support of the government. The experience of Torgar and the lessons learnt should help both the conservation and development organizations working in Balochistan and in the region. The design and implementation of natural resource management programmes especially for the management of common property resources should draw heavily on the experiences of Pakistan.

April 29, 2008

**Javed Ahmed, Ph. D.**



## Acknowledgements

The present case study focuses on the achievements of a 20 years old programme for sustainable use of natural resources. In year 2002, for a period of 13 months, I was hired by STEP to assess the social issues, needs and demands raised by the mountain inhabitants, and to compile the information to facilitate the reshaping of the organization.

I conducted a series of field studies over a period of 12 months, collecting a wide range of quantitative data and mapping the social and political intricacies which were directly or indirectly linked to the program. A total of 150 hours of discussions involving Torghar inhabitants and the STEP management, were taped, transcribed and translated. This data has been essential to the formulation of the present case study.

Thereby, I can only claim little more than to have converted in writing the work, knowledge and efforts of many others. First and foremost are the inhabitants of Torghar who have tirelessly come forward to explain, over and over, their point of view and understanding, opening themselves to the extent of delivering details of their lives and relations which would normally not be shared with outsiders.

This study would not have been finalized without the continuous and intensive support of STEP office, namely Paind Khan, Nawabzada Aurangzeb Jogizai, Naeem Ashraf Raja; Zahir Khan whom have shared their knowledge, spared a tremendous amount of time and most of all offered their kindness and friendship. I warmly thank Jamashed for his hard work, especially in helping me to make the genealogies.

I am particularly grateful to Jamil Afridi for his relentless commitment to this work, not only for designing this book, but also for editing and proofreading, and for the valuable comments and suggestions.

Of course, this study could not have been undertaken and published without STEP's, UNDP/GEF, the Forest Department Balochistan and SUSG's financial support.

Last but not least, none of this would have seen the light without Naseer Tareen, Chairman of STEP, who initiated this study, coordinated the field trips, conducted a countless number of discussions in the mountain, sat for hours to translate them word by word, and, above all, putting up with my moods and incessant demands.



Photo 1 - Sardar Naseer Tareen and tribesmen, Tanishpa camp office

July 21, 2008

Luc Bellon



## I. Introduction

- **Many aspects of the conservation programme in Torghar run contrary to the accepted wisdom by which sustainable conservation interventions are usually designed and implemented.**

From the beginning, the programme has been a process, not a procedure. In other words, its foundation was not based on the applications of “recipes” in the shape of concepts such as ‘community empowerment’, ‘capacity building’, ‘awareness raising’, or ‘stakeholder analysis’. To this date, the implementing NGO - STEP - has not directly involved women through specific consultation mechanisms nor systematically held independent discussions with other stakeholders; ‘transparency’ as recommended in the form of written rules and regulations was only considered 12 years after the programme started, and is still in the making today; the equitable access and distribution of resources remains a contentious and, to some extent, unresolved issue; and both decentralisation of authority and assumption of responsibilities by the people living in Torghar have yet to be achieved.

- **Yet, it remains one of the most successful programmes of its kind in Pakistan.**

More than twenty years on, the forging of a strong relationship between STEP and the people of the area has led to an increase of the Suleiman Markhors from 56 in 1986 to more than 1600 in 2000, and during the same period the Afghan Urial population increased from less than 100 to over 1700. In absolute terms, it means the highest concentration of straight horned Markhor in the world, and of Urial in Pakistan. Remarkably, this has been achieved with almost no donor or external funds.

The programme has prioritised financial, social and economic benefits for the inhabitants of the mountain; and the latter have been granted full participation in all decision making processes.

- **The success of the programme lies mainly in the fact that the seeds of conservation were planted, both, by the inhabitants of the mountain themselves, and by concerned outsiders.**

Their working together has been a participatory process – rather than being based on predefined procedures. The problems and paradoxes in the implementation of the programme which emerged have been recognised and discussed openly by every actor, while the solutions drawn always resulted from wide scale suggestions.

- **The case of Torghar shows that sustainability, even when set as a goal, should primarily be regarded as a process, rather than an achieved outcome.**

Indeed, many of the emerging issues and problems in the programme today read like text book problems for conservation interventions; however, this report shows that these issues could not have been foreseen before they arose. Situations have been discussed and addressed only once they have become concrete; if they had been abstractly considered at the outset, it is likely that the programme would never have reached the level of sustainability and internalisation it knows today.

- **Although the lessons from Torghar look simple on paper, their application requires skill, patience and dedication.**

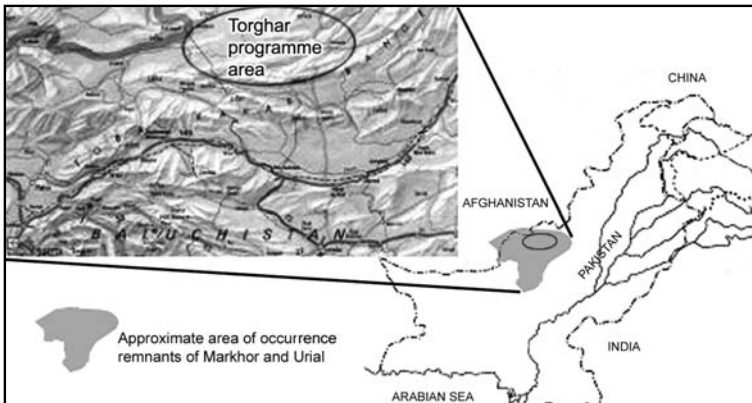
These lessons could be summarized as: start a simple programme, keep the organisation simple, be open to change, and institute structures and procedures as and when the need arises, conduct third party surveys in order to ensure credibility, have a clear guiding principle, keep your ear to the ground. But the present case study shows how intricate and complicated such a process can become. Its replication in other contexts has still to be tested. Based on the experience of Torghar, Sustainable Use Specialist Group Central Asia (SUSG-CAsia) has initiated a donor driven project in Chagai desert and Surghar (northern Balochistan) in collaboration with STEP, GEF, UNDP and GoB.

## II. General Presentation of the Programme

This chapter highlights the context in which the sustainable use programme has evolved.

### THE PROGRAMME AREA

This programme takes place in Torghar, a mountain forming the northern most part of the Toba Kakar Range. It is situated in Killa Saifullah District, Balochistan Province, Pakistan.



Map 1 - Pakistan and Torghar Programme Area

The mountain area is approximately 90 km long and 25 km wide. It is formed of rugged sandstone. It is bounded on the north by the Kundar River Valley and on the south by the Khaisor Valley. The project has a "core" area, which is directly protected under the programme, and a surrounding "buffer" area, which hosts human settlements and domestic herds. The project area is a rectangle approximately 35 km. long by 20 km. wide. The western limit is a location called Churgai, while Shin Naray forms the eastern limit. The buffer area extends 15 km further to the west and east of the core area. The altitude varies between 2,500-3,300 meters.

## CLIMATE, FLORA AND FAUNA

The climate is semi-arid. The summer is warm with mean temperatures ranging from 21°C to 32°C. June is the hottest month when maximum temperatures exceed 32°C but do not rise above 38°C. The winter is cool and lasts for about 7 months (October-April). In winter the mean temperature is below 10°C, the coolest month being January<sup>1</sup>. The average annual rainfall ranges between 125 to 500 mm, most of which is concentrated in winter from the western depressions. A considerable part of winter precipitation comes as snowfall. The rainfall is less than potential evapotranspiration<sup>2</sup>. Winter rainfall provides water for Rabi crops, i.e., wheat, barley etc.

The area is characterized by steppe vegetation. The forest type varies from dry temperate to alpine steppe. Major tree species include Wild Pistachio (*Pistacia khinjuk*), Juniper (*Juniperus macropoda*), and Wild Ash (*Fraxinus xanthoxiloides*). The area is also rich in herbs and shrubs, mainly used as medicine and fodder.

Animal, bird and reptile species are diverse. In case of birds, it is an important breeding ground for species like Chakur, See-see Partridge, Imperial Sand Grouse and many songbirds.

The Torghar Hills are the last stronghold for Straight-horned Markhor (*Capra falconeri jerdoni*), and one of the few safe havens for the Afghan Urial (*Ovis vignei cycloceros*)

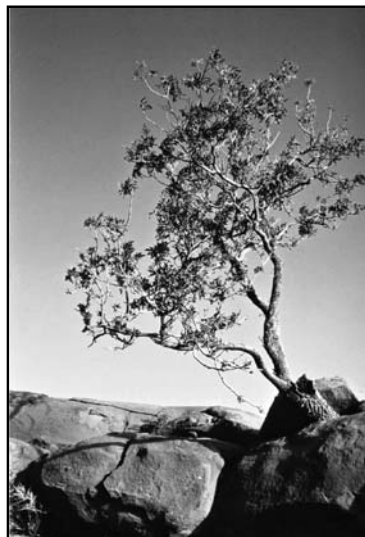


Photo 2 - A wild pistachio tree

<sup>1</sup> Khan, F. K. (1993). A Geography of Pakistan: Environment, People and Economy. Karachi, Oxford University Press. p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Pakistan (1990). Atlas of Pakistan. Rawalpindi, Survey of Pakistan, GoP. p. 55

## BASIC AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme aims at safeguarding from extinction two animal species: one of wild sheep known as the Afghan Urial (*Ovis vignei cycloceros*); the other of wild goat known as the straight horned/Suleiman Markhor (*Capra falconeri jerdoni*). Both species inhabit a limited area (see map 1 above) that ranges from the mountains of north western Balochistan, Pakistan (Takatu and Toba Kakar Ranges) and some parts of Afghanistan (Roberts 1997).

The wilderness of northeast Balochistan has long been famous for its abundant and diverse wildlife. Its mountains once contained abundant populations of Sulaiman Markhor, Afghan Urial, leopard, and, in some places,



Photo 3 - A male Urial



Photo 4 - Markhor male (7 years old)

black bear. Torghar was considered one of the most important wildlife areas of the District. Since the late 1970s, the Afghan war initiated a steady flow of refugees, weapons, and ammunition. With modern weapons (mostly Kalashnikov) and, the ready availability of ammunition, seasonal migrants and local residents increased their hunting of local wildlife. By the early 1980s; the Suleiman Markhor and Afghan Urial populations were drastically decimated, while species like leopards became extinct in the region.



## ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Torghar is situated in an area which was, until recently, constitutionally defined as a Provincially Administered Tribal Area (PATA). In Pakistan, this unique status of “tribal areas” – whether provincially or federally administered – gives the concerned territories some autonomy from the state institutions. In fact, it establishes a mixed governance between the Provincial and Federal administration on one hand, and the local tribal institutions on the other (Bellon 2002) <sup>3</sup>

Since 2001, the Pakistani Government is reforming the legal status of PATA. But bringing these areas into the mainstream legal framework is a lengthy process; in fact their marginality is still effective today. As a result, government institutions may still be faced with difficulties in enforcing some specific national laws, such as those which concern hunting and hunting permits.

## SOCIO ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The northern part of Balochistan is for the most part inhabited by Pashtuns. The Pashtuns are the world’s largest tribal group. The bulk of the Pashtun population lives in Pakistan, while a substantive portion lives in Afghanistan (Although no proper surveys have been conducted, it is estimated that 14 million Pashtuns live in Afghanistan, while 24 million inhabit Pakistan) <sup>4</sup>.

The Pashtuns of Torghar are members of the Kakar tribe. More specif-

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<sup>3</sup> Within these Tribal Areas, a further division is made between ‘A’ and ‘B’ zones, the latter – under which Torghar falls – being jointly administered by government institutions and local tribal elite. This status is a direct inheritance of the colonial administrative system (Bruce 1900 pp.125-146). In short, it implies marginality regarding the executive (law and order is maintained by a local militia known as ‘Levies Force’) as well as legal powers (specific laws and fiscal rights). The people in the PATA have, as other citizens of the country, the right to vote, access to “normal” judiciary institutions and laws, but are also ruled by the Civil Procedure (Special Provisions) Ordinance I of 1968, the Criminal Law (Special Provisions) Ordinance II, 1968, the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas Civil Procedure (Special Provisions) Regulation I, 1975 and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas Civil Procedure (Special Provisions) Regulation II 1975. The purpose of these special laws was to create judicial forums for the settlements of disputes while denying people access to the ordinary courts of the land ” (Ali and Rehman 2001 p.54).

<sup>4</sup> Sources: Population estimated for Afghanistan by Bureau of South and Central Affairs, US Department of State. May 2007. For Pakistan, estimated population by Ministry of Economic Affairs & Statistics, GoP



Photo 5 - Tent ("Kazhdai") made of goat wool

ically, Jalalzai – a branch of the Kakar – and are further divided into sub-groups, each being divided into smaller branches.

The population living in the project area ranges from 2000 to 4000 individuals. The people are, for the most part, semi-nomadic pastoralists tending large Herds of sheep and goats. In Tanishpa where limited cultivable land and perennial water is available, people have small agricultural fields and orchards, the latter including apples, almonds, apricots and mulberries.

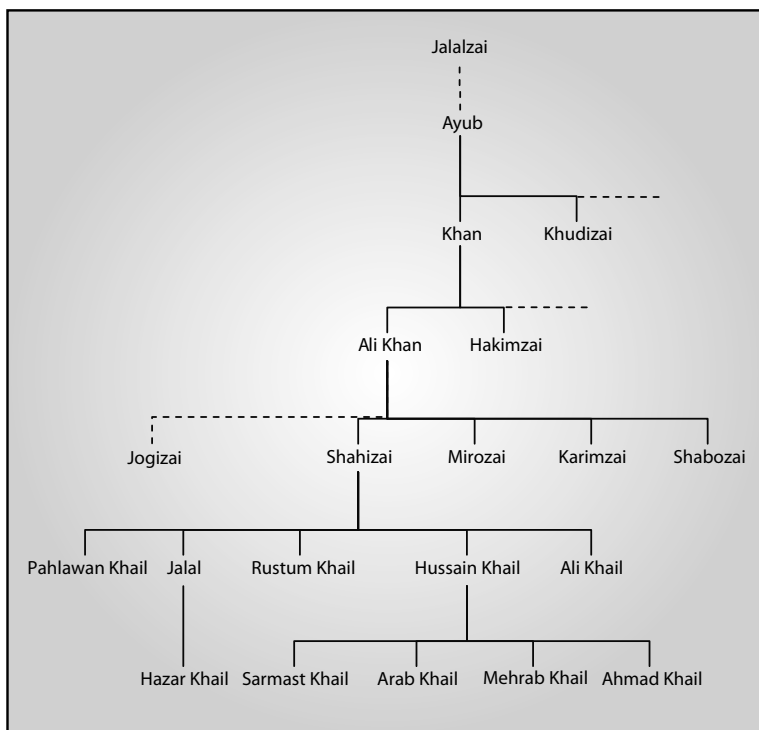
Some of the families of this area have become permanently settled, using stone masonry houses as shelter. Agricultural products are limited but provide both for local and market consumption. Wild pistachios, resin from various wild trees, and medicinal plants are also collected by the people to supplement their income. In Torghar, the main economic activity remains animal husbandry. The majority of the herds are composed of sheep and goat.



Photo 6 - A few families live in mud houses

Consequently, the 1998-2001 drought has badly affected the regional economic dynamics.

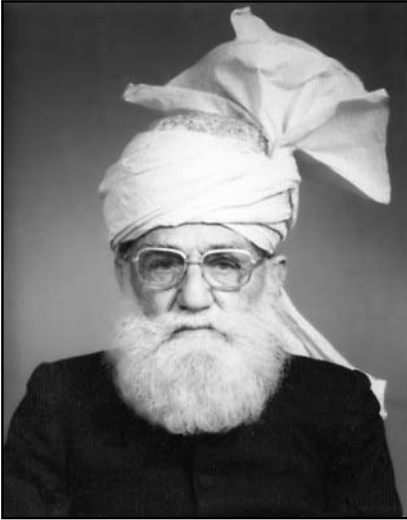
Affiliation of groups and sub-groups living in Torghar  
Programme Area



The diagram above shows, figuring in bold, the different tribal groups to which the inhabitants of Torghar belong. As shown, all the groups are Jalalzai (themselves a branch of the wider Kakar tribe). Each group also claims members outside the mountain. The Jogizai are the ruling branch of the Jalalzai, but none of them live in Torghar.

### III. Trophy Hunting and Self-Sufficiency

As said in the previous section, the Torghar mountain is situated in the Provincially Administered Tribal Area (PATA). Hence, local tribal leaders have considerable power. The TCP itself was initiated by one of the most charismatic leaders from the region: late Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai.



**Late  
Nawab  
Taimur Shah  
Jogizai**

Himself a hunter, Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai became a privileged witness to the depletion of wildlife. After noticing the near extinction of Markhor and Urial in many of the adjacent mountains, the Nawab decided to ban the hunting of animals in Torghar, one of the last strongholds of these species. The TCP was born under his auspices. The initial enforcement of the ban was enabled by both his tribal authority, as well as his official status within the government.

## OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS AND HUNTING PERMITS

The tribal leader had enforced the ban on hunting without any facilitation from government institutions. That itself induced a drawback when it came to hunting permits: the administration not being involved, did not initially deliver any official hunting permits to the interested Trophy hunters.

In 1986 TCP applied to the Government of Balochistan (GoB)<sup>5</sup> for Urial hunting permits. These permits being mainly destined for foreign hunters, TCP suggested raising the fees from the original Rs.750 (equivalent to less than US\$100 at that time) to US\$1000. TCP's main argument for doing so was to curtail the well known trafficking of local permits being ceded to foreign hunters without any official permission. The suggestion to create a specific trophy permit for export would enable a check on this practice. Yet, the request was rejected by the then Minister of Forest & Wildlife (GoB).

Between 1987 and 1989, in the absence of government permits, hunts were conducted through "tribal permits"; i.e., a letter signed by Nawab Jogizai certifying that the trophy animal had been hunted in "his" area. At that time, permits were not needed to export trophies to Europe; while the US-FWS<sup>6</sup>, to facilitate the infant conservation programme, agreed to make an exception by accepting the validity of the Nawab's letter<sup>7</sup>.

It was only in 1989 when the Province's new Chief Minister, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, ordered a survey of the Torghar animal population that the procedure for official permits was re-established. It was conducted by Forest Department Rangers in the shape of a "sample survey"; meaning an estimation of animal population based on

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<sup>5</sup> The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a Federal State composed of four provinces – Balochistan, Sind, NWFP and Punjab. Each province has its own government, while the Federal Government of Pakistan (GoP) is in charge of policies at national level. The Republic is further composed of special status territories such as Northern Areas, Azad Kashmir or Tribal Areas.

<sup>6</sup> The approval of the US-FWS was required for importing trophies to the USA.

<sup>7</sup> In 1988, after an incident in which Dr. Richard Mitchell was accused of helping a hunter import the trophy of an endangered species from China into the United States., the American government became strict regarding the rules for importing trophies and required regular official export permits. The "tribal permits" from Torghar thus became invalid.

observation of animals in limited areas of their habitat. The results satisfied the Government, and 10 Urial permits were issued to TCP for the first time. As suggested by TCP, \$1000 fee was paid to the Government for each Urial permit. The 10 permits issued by the GoB were not utilized in one go due to TCP's policy of limiting the number of hunts. As a result this quota was used over a period of several years.

In legal terms, issuing hunting permits is the prerogative of the Provincial Government. But export permit can only be granted by the Federal Government through its Scientific Management Authority called the National Council for Conservation of Wildlife (NCCW)

Upon request of TCP, the GoB demanded NCCW to issue export permits against the permits granted by the provincial government. NCCW turned down the request on legal grounds. The matter was referred to the Law Department of the GoB, which supported TCP's contentions. After years of meetings and discussions, NCCW finally agreed, in 1998, to issue export permits for Urial trophies.

In Pakistan, the first step towards legislation to protect biodiversity was introduced in 1968 with establishment of the Wildlife Enquiry Committee (WEC). This Committee drafted conservation legislation which was later adopted through various provincial acts and ordinances. A national Council for Conservation of Wildlife (NCCW) was established in 1974 within the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The NCCW has an advisory board and is responsible for coordinating, formulation and implementing wildlife policies at the federal and provincial levels, coordinating activities with international agencies and promoting conservation generally. The first piece of legislation to consider environment as a whole was the Environmental Protection Ordinance 1983. The National Conservation Strategy (NCS) marked a further shift away from simple regulation and protection measures towards a holistic view of environmental concerns.

(See: <http://www.wildlifeofpakistan.com/WildlifeBiodiversityofPakistan/initiatives-to-conservewildlifeinPakistan.htm>

and <http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/environmentdivision/departments/nccw.jsp>)

The hunting of Markhor remained banned because of it being listed on Appendix-I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora) <sup>8</sup>. The situation only changed in 1997 during a Conference of Parties of CITES, held in Zimbabwe. There, the Government of Pakistan, supported by SUSG-CAsia petitioned for allowing a limited quota of Markhor trophies from community based conservation programmes to Pakistan. The citing of Torghar as a successful example of conservation through trophy hunting played the leading role in convincing the delegates.

**SUSG** ([www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/susg](http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/susg)) is part of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of The World Conservation Union (IUCN). SUSG is further divided into sixteen Regional Groups, of which the SUSG for Central Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) with its secretariat in Quetta, Pakistan, was established in February 1996, after receiving \$27,000 for NORAD through SUI (Sustainable Use Initiative) secretariat in Washington D.C. Mr. Naeem Ashraf a biologist and field scientist was hired as project Manager. The aim of SUSG-Central Asia is to enhance the likelihood of sustainability in uses of wild-living natural resources. It operates through a network of experts and volunteers to establish models of best practices and sector learning for the benefit of IUCN, resource managers, government policy makers, involved communities, and the public generally. SUSG-C Asia is chaired by Mr. Naseer Tareen, the Chief Executive of STEP. A number of initiatives are undertaken jointly by SUSG and STEP in Torghar.

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<sup>8</sup> CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora) is an international agreement to which States (countries) adhere voluntarily. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). The text of the Convention was finally agreed at a meeting of representatives of 80 countries (of which Pakistan) in Washington DC., United States of America, on 3 March 1973. Governments that have agreed to be bound by the Convention ('joined' CITES) are known as Parties. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words they have to implement the Convention – it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework to be respected by each Party, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level. For more details, see [www.cites.org/](http://www.cites.org/)

CITES eventually granted Pakistan with six permits for sport hunted Markhor trophies. Out of these, NCCW of the federal government granted 2 permits to Torghar and the rest to NWFP and Northern Areas. This quota of two permits to Torghar continued for four years until 2003 when CITES increased Pakistan's quota from 6 to 12 Markhor hunting permits. These permits both facilitated the export of the trophies for foreign hunters, and created an opportunity for direct involvement of the Pakistani government <sup>9</sup> at the federal level.

## A SELF-SUFFICIENT PROGRAMME

(1) During the two initial years, TCP relied exclusively on external funds. With the sole exception of year 1997-1998 – when the funding received by TCP constituted 91% of its income – the income generated by trophy hunting made up for 63% to 99% of TCP's budget.

(2) The trophy fees have increased, between 1988 to 2006, from US\$15,000 to US\$40,000 for Suleiman Markhor, and from US\$8,000 to US\$10,000 for Afghan Urial. The rates are agreed upon by NCCW. Out of the fee, 20% is paid to the Provincial Government, while the remaining is used to fund the programme. A successful hunt has to be reported to the Provincial Wildlife Department which then approaches the NCCW; it is only then that the latter provides the export permits.

The revenue collected through trophy hunts enables the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources Programme in Torghar to be entirely self-funded. Occasionally, finances have been released to TCP for pursuing development works, which have proved value added to the Programme, rather than activities on which its survival depends. In 1995, The GoP's Environment and Urban Affairs Division NCS granted Rs. 100,000 (close to \$US 2000) for the construction of water tanks. In 1996, WWF-Pakistan gave Rs. 158,000 for developing irrigation channels. The Houbara Foundation gave Rs. 412,500 in 1997 to help breach an asset gap due to the absence of

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<sup>9</sup> In the wildlife sector some of the proposed species are either covered by international CITES convention or by the Balochistan Wildlife Act, 1974. In addition, the use of existing available fuel wood is also covered by some Forestry Transit rules, even if they belong to private owners.



hunters that year; this funding provided for the payment of game guard salaries and the purchase of medicine.

STEP also approached UNDP-Pakistan twice. Once in 1996 for a project aimed at global biodiversity conservation of Torghar. The grant awards amounted to Rs. 505,000 (around \$-US 10,000). A second time in 1997 when UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme was granted to STEP for financial and technical help in order to improve the agro-pastoral yields in the mountain, while focusing on environmental friendly practices. The work included clearing of springs, lining of irrigation channels, construction of water tanks and mini dams, construction and maintenance of link roads, and help in developing orchards in order to decrease the dependency on livestock.

Despite receiving 20% of the permit fees, the GoB has never offered any financial contribution to the TCP.

Overall, these funds – apart from the Houbara Foundation's – have been marginal as far as the survival of TCP is concerned.

For a period of ten years, these funds have amounted to approximately US\$73,000. This funding helped the programme to re-

Photo 8 - Game Guards, members of STEP, a hunter and his trophy





Photo 9 - Nursery in Tanishpa

inforce the linkages between the natural resources and well being of the local population. Furthermore, the UNDP Small Grant created awareness among the people of Torghar that their conservation efforts were recognized and appreciated.

The expenditure table shows that, throughout the years, the majority of the money spent has been devoted to salaries (amongst which, that of game guards) and programmatic activities, thus illustrating the field orientation of the TCP management. Not only self sufficient, TCP has proven itself to be financially sustainable, as the yearly balance has been positive for 9 consecutive years.

Of course, this financial self-sufficiency is a choice which offers limitations. By opting for financial autonomy, STEP also had to accept some restrictions in its scope of actions. In fact, since many years, the STEP Management Team has been keen to adopt a more holistic approach regarding environmental protection. Considering the ecosystem's fragility, many actions to ensure its biodiversity and sustainability have been envisaged. For example, the wild pistachio trees of Torghar have been under threat of the proliferating porcupines; the latter menacing the survival of the trees by eating the bark at their base. This issue has been talked about for many years, but STEP never had the resources to launch an effective conservation campaign.

Recently, through SUSG for Central Asia, the TCP has been included in a five year GEF <sup>10</sup> / UNDP <sup>11</sup> Medium Sized Project (MSP) funding for work on conservation and sustainable use. This project includes both Torghar for the conservation of Markhor and Urial, and an area in the Chagai and Noshki Districts of Balochistan for the conservation of reptiles. The overall cost of the project is anticipated to be US\$1,192,000. In Torghar, the project will benefit from 20 years of efforts and help enhance and improve the undergoing conservancy while initiating new programmes such as education. It is worth noting that the TCP does not depend on this funding for its regular functioning and, in fact, is co-funding this project with US\$215,000.

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<sup>10</sup> The Global Environment Facility (GEF), established in 1991, helps developing countries fund projects and programmes that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants (<http://www.gefweb.org/>).

<sup>11</sup> The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on global and national development challenges (<http://www.undp.org/>).

## IV. Torghar Biodiversity and Sustainable Use

The TCP was launched in 1985, for the conservation of Markhor (*Capra falconeri jerdoni*) – a wild goat – and Urial (*Ovis orientalis cycloceros*) – wild sheep – in Torghar. Both species are listed on the Third Schedule of the Balochistan Wildlife Protection Act 1974<sup>12</sup>, as “protected animals, i.e., animals which shall not be hunted, killed or captured” except as permitted under specific circumstances (Government of Balochistan Agriculture Department, 1977).

The Markhor subspecies, Suleiman or Straight horned Markhor, inhabits a limited area that includes the mountains of western Pakistan (Takatu, Toba Kakar and Suleman Ranges) and some of Afghanistan. It is listed as “endangered” under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA)<sup>13</sup> and is included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora<sup>14</sup>. The Afghan Urial is more widespread but not abundant (Roberts 1977), and included in Appendix II of CITES. Both the Suleiman Markhor and the Afghan Urial are listed as a threatened species in the IUCN Red Data Book<sup>15</sup>.

### SUSTAINABLE USE

The TCP was founded on the principle of sustainable use of natural resources. This concept was defined by IUCN (The World Conservation Union)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [www.environment.gov.pk/eia\\_pdf/g\\_Legislation-NEQS.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.pk/eia_pdf/g_Legislation-NEQS.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 8 for details

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.redlist.org/> for more details.

<sup>16</sup> IUCN - The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948 and brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 760 NGOs, 37 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. Within the framework of global conventions IUCN has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national

### Sustainable Use of Natural Resources - as defined by IUCN -

- IUCN recognizes that the economies, cultures, and well-being of all human societies depend on the use of biodiversity.
- Conservation must address the way that we use biodiversity, rather than construct artificial distinctions between people and nature.
- The concept of sustainability is central to conservation but it embodies social dimensions – including distribution, values and equity – as well as an understanding of the intrinsic limitations of the supply of biological products and ecological services.
- The goal is to adopt uses of biodiversity that are sustainable.

The concept of sustainable use initially faced opposition by many conservation organisations, as it meant killing the species which were the subject of conservation. Yet, after many years of gradual implementation, sustainable use is now recognised world wide as one of the most efficient means to save the Biodiversity. In the Case of the TCP, the idea was immediately seen as the only viable way to save the two animal species. Through regulated Trophy Hunting, the project was to achieve substantial resources and create incentive for the local population to protect their animals.

## TROPHY HUNTS

The hunting season for Markhor and Urial starts in November and goes on until March. The animals sought by hunters are exclusively older males with the largest horns. Hunting those animals means leaving the female and younger males at peace, therefore not interfering

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conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN has approximately 1000 staff, most of whom are located in its 42 regional and country offices while 100 work at its Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland. For more details, see <http://www.iucn.org/>

in the reproduction cycles. The growth rate is thus undisturbed. It is the responsibility of the game guards to identify the appropriate animals. However, the hunter is free to select the animal to be hunted.

In the rut season, which usually commences in early November and lasts until late December, the mature male is usually more visible, venturing from one herd to another, seeking mating partners. During this period, fights and duels take place when males challenge each other for exclusive control over females. The herds are composed of females and young animals.

Photo 10 - A Markhor herd during the rut season



After the rut, mature males gradually form the exclusively all male herds. During winter and spring, the larger males tend to become solitary and nocturnal, spending long summer days in caves and other hiding places, venturing out just before sunset and hiding before sunrise. They remain solitary during spring, while the females begin to isolate from the group in preparation for lambing. After the lambing season the females, once again go for herd formation.

The first trophy hunt took place in 1986 for the Afghan Urial and in 1989 for the Suleiman Markhor. In 1986, the trophy hunter did not

succeed in his hunt because very few trophy sized Urial were present in Torghar. On top of that, communication links were difficult, most areas were only accessible by foot or camel back, and knowledge of biodiversity was limited. The TCP decisions makers having favoured cautiousness over income raising, it was not before 1996 that the hunts became regular.

## SURVEYS

The sustainability of Trophy hunting is dependent on the allocation of quotas for each species and ensuring their enforcement. Hence, the first requirement to initiate such projects is to survey the animal population and assess the maximum number of specimens that can be harvested without disrupting the reproduction cycle. In 1985, Dr. Richard Mitchell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (US-FWS) visited Torghar for that purpose<sup>17</sup>.

Dr Mitchell conducted the first two Markhor and Urial census in 1985 and 1987. Unlike the later surveys, these were not conducted scientifically, as the data collected was primarily based on verbal information. The final figures in 1988 survey stood at observation of 56 Markhors and 85 Urials.

Further censuses were conducted in 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002 and 2005. They include surveys of Urial and Markhor population, range conditions, livestock, diseases, small mammals, and flora.

The most significant and unexpected are the rediscovery of the Afghan mole-vole (*Ellobius fuscocapillus*) by Dr. Charles Woods of Florida Museum of Natural History; and confirmation of breeding of Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes*, *coccothraustes*).

## SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

The main characteristics of Markhor and Urial are: relatively long life span, relatively high reproductive rate for a species of its body size,

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<sup>17</sup> In the 1980s USAID and the US-FWS were active in Pakistan. For information about their Endangered Species program, see <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>



Photo 11 - Close up of an Afghan Urial head

polygamous mating system, relatively high survival of adult age classes, relatively low susceptibility to predators, and adaptation to rugged and fluctuating conditions (e.g., unusual cold or blizzards in winter, drought in summer (Schaller 1980). These suggest that the Markhor and Urial populations are relatively tolerant to conservative harvest rates and have the capacity to rebound from overharvest. In such species there is normally an "excess of males whose loss has little effect on population levels" (Schaller 1977 p. 134)<sup>18</sup>

According to Dr. Johnson, the limited trophy hunting has not affected the increase in the population of Markhor and Urial. As he states himself, "The simple fact that both populations have continued to grow

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<sup>18</sup> Although it is difficult to assign an operational definition to the term "healthy population," it is normally associated with a population that is: (1) large enough to be minimally threatened by random demographic and genetic processes; (2) at or near "carrying capacity" or with a high rate of increase; and (3) widespread enough or close enough to other populations to be buffered from drastic environmental fluctuations and catastrophes.

It is likewise difficult to assign an operational definition to "healthy habitat," but the term is normally associated with a habitat that; (1) allows a wildlife population to achieve its maximum population size and/or growth rate; and (2) has suffered little or no degradation.





Photo 12 - A hunter, game guards and a Suleiman Markhor trophy

steadily while subject to a strictly controlled trophy hunt is ample evidence that harvest levels have been conservative” (Johnson 1997).

Mike Frisina recommended that “Trophy hunting has not impacted the ability of Markhor and Urial population to increase. For the male population segment a sustainable annual trophy harvest for Markhor should be up to 18. A sustainable trophy harvest for Urial should be up to 13 (Frisina 2000).

Despite these recommendations, TCP has allowed an annual trophy hunt of only 1-2 Markhor and 4-5 Urial until 2004, even though the estimated “sustainable harvest” based on surveys would allow many more. For the first time, the trophy hunt was increased to 5 animals in 2005-2006.

## V. A Gradual Implementation

The Programme is based on the basic principle aligning conservation with local small scale economics. This simple idea has proved its efficiency, as Torghar is now cited as one of the most successful projects of its kind in Pakistan. But making it work has been anything but easy. After more than 20 years of existence, the programme is still faced with the question of sustainability. The following will describe the various stages through which the TCP has become what it is today.

### A FILM MAKER ON THE SCENE

While producing a film on wildlife commissioned by the Government of Balochistan (GoB) in 1984, Sardar Naseer Tareen realised that wildlife in his home province had depleted significantly, and that the Suleiman Markhor was near extinction. One of the major causes was the common availability of automatic weapons and ammunition resulting from the recent wars in Afghanistan. Discussions ensued with: tribal representatives of the area who, being hunters themselves, recognised the pace and nature of depletion; conservation experts in the US-FWS; and the GoB Wildlife Department.

From these discussions emerged the idea of setting up a Conservation Plan. This was initially promoted by the tribal leader Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai. The Nawab's son, Mahboob Jogizai, identified the Torghar mountain to be the best place to implement the project<sup>19</sup>. After discussing the problem with Mr. David Ferguson of US Fish and Wildlife Service (US-FWS) in June 1984, Mr. Tareen asked for some help in this respect. In December 1984, Dr. Richard Mitchell of the US-FWS's Office of Scientific Authority travelled to Pakistan; he was accompanied by Dr. Bart O'Gara, then professor at Montana University

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed account by Naseer Tareen, see Tareen, N. (2002). Tribal leadership paves the way. *Green Pioneers. Stories from the grassroots*. M. Abidi-Habib. Karachi, UNDP / GEF: 113-121.

and head of the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, and Dr. Bruce Bunting of World Wildlife Fund-US.

They travelled to Quetta to discuss opportunities for initiating wildlife conservation activities in Balochistan with the provincial officials. When the then Chief Conservator, Mr. Mohammad Rafiq expressed his inability to start a meaningful project to save the dwindling Markhor population in areas outside effective Government control, the visiting team turned to Sardar Naseer Tareen to initiate a private Conservation Plan.

Although the idea was favourably received by the provincial Wildlife Department, they were unable to offer any financial or technical assistance. Indeed, its knowledge of the condition of wildlife and natural resources on one hand, and its capacity to intervene on the other, was limited and constrained by a number of legal and administrative factors. Earlier, Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai had twice approached the government to request a conservation intervention based on hiring game guards, but without success.

### A SELF RUN PROJECT: THE GAME GUARD PROGRAMME (GGP)

As a result, it was determined that the programme would be funded through the proceeds generated by a limited, controlled trophy hunt of the Afghan Urial.

The TCP was created in 1985. Its first step was to enforce a total ban on hunting of Markhor and Urial. For this purpose, those devising the programme (namely Naseer Tareen, Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai, his

The Game Guard Programme (GGP), developed by Richard Mitchell and Bart O'Gara as an integral part of TCP, stipulated that tribesmen were to be recruited from the local population as game guards.

It recommended that wildlife surveys be undertaken regularly, establishing the number of Markhor and Urials that could be hunted. The hypothesis was that the development of local livelihood based on trophy hunting would demonstrate to the local tribesmen that managing the area for wildlife protection could be an economically viable use of the land and its resources.

son Mahboob Jogizai and Richard Mitchell) decided to hire game guards composed of proficient hunters from the mountain. Simultaneously, a system of trophy hunts was established in order to generate income to pay for the programme and provide benefits to the owners of the mountain. This also ensured a direct link between effective regulation and benefits.

The GGP was launched in 1985 and seven local tribesmen – former hunters – were hired as game guards to control illegal hunting and to assist in wildlife surveys <sup>20</sup>. Initial funding for salaries of the game guards was provided by the then owner of the US-based Pizza Hut food chain <sup>21</sup>, a keen trophy hunter. Since then this number of game guards has increased to 93 in 2007.

## THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF HUNTING

Traditionally, hunting for food and pleasure was practiced by the inhabitants of Torghar and individuals from outside. Initially, the primitive weaponry and the scarcity of ammunition limited the number of animals that were killed. Although the most efficient hunters could claim to have killed more than 1000 animals in their life long career (Samad Aka) <sup>22</sup>, the required outstanding skill limited the number of such hunters to merely a few. In the whole mountain – with a population ranging from 2000 to 3000 people– amongst the last generation of hunters, no more than 12 people are cited to have been outstanding hunters.

Within the mountain, hunting involved a well recognized and admired know-how. On one's part, this knowledge concerned the behaviour of the animals and the capacity to hunt; i.e. to track and shoot. But it also implied braving super-natural creatures (called "perai") which are believed to own and guard the herds of wild sheep and goat. A

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<sup>20</sup> See the case study written by Javed Ahmed, Naseer Tareen, and Paind Khan at [www.biodiv.org/doc/case-studies/suse/cs-suse-iucn-thorgar.pdf](http://www.biodiv.org/doc/case-studies/suse/cs-suse-iucn-thorgar.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> An initial and nominal amount (10 000 US dollars, half of which in Binoculars, Mountain shoes, Jackets, Back bags and sleeping bags.) was lent to initiate the GGP. The rest of the funds received were used for game guard salaries.

<sup>22</sup> Interview conducted in Torghar, February 2002, by the author.

hunter, therefore, must know his limitations (what to hunt and when) and how to dodge the vigilance of the perai (mostly through cunningness). Some hunters are said to have been killed as a result of the perai's wrath – the last such reported case took place 30 years ago.

The admiration for the hunter's skills, bravery and powers did not only affect the status of the individual, but also benefited the group to which he belonged. It is not rare to hear a person justifying the superiority of his own group by asserting that it has produced the finest hunters. More pragmatically, the skilled hunters were capable of hosting and guiding influential game hunters from outside. Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai and his son Mahbub Jogizai, well known experts in hunting, regularly came to Torghar, as did other members of the Jogizai clan. Other influential tribesmen as well as government officials would also be invited to do the same, either by a Jogizai or directly by some residents of Torghar.

This last type of hunting was not relevant to any subsistence need. But allowing influential people to hunt played a dominant role in the patron-client relationship prevailing in the region. Skilled hunters would be requested to help in hunts or collect trophies. Not only has "hunting always been linked to politics" (Aurangzeb Jogizai, pers. com., April 2002), but its importance increased as the animals progressively became rare. Hence, much of the social status and power relations in the mountain were derived from hunting. Abandoning such practice signifies a loss of a much greater scale than the kilos of meat which the hunt used to provide.

## FROM HUNTER TO GAME GUARD

Once a ban was imposed on the hunting of the Suleiman Markhor and the Urial Sheep in 1985, the salary from the game guard programme became regular and significant, source of income for some of the inhabitants in the mountain. It had, as a result, a strong impact on the existing social relations.

The implementation of the ban was extended to all individuals, including those belonging to nomadic tribes. Indeed, Torghar lies across one of the traditional migration routes between the Afghan plains and parts of Pakistan. These tribes are numerous; indeed some of the

nomads belong to the same tribal group as those living in Torghar (Jalalzai within the larger Kakar tribe) while others do not <sup>23</sup>.

The discussions with nomads regarding the ban on hunting was an initiative undertaken directly by local people living in the mountain, rather than dictated by TCP managerial team.

Photo 13 - Salam Aka, Ex-hunter, elder of one of the tribes of Torghar



The success of the project can be gauged from the fact that people like Samad Aka, who claimed to have killed more than 1000 animals in his lifetime, had been convinced of the necessity to safeguard the mountain's animal population. In the later stages of his life, he had become one of the most dedicated advocates for STEP's project.

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<sup>23</sup> (Abdullahzai, Batozai, Mardanzai, Andan, Maryanai, Kharoti, Safi, Dotani, Shinwari, Mallah Khail, Aka Khail, Tor Nasser, Hajigai, Nizam Khail, Niazi, Babozai, Suleiman Khail etc.). For more details on the nomadic patterns of these tribes, see Mayne 1955, Robinson 1978, Spain 1963. Nearly 20 tribal groups pass through Torghar twice a year. They travel from Afghanistan to the warmer plains of Pakistan in the autumn, and turn back north during early spring to Kakar Khorasan and beyond the Durrand Line to spend the summer in Afghan territories.



## VI. From TCP to STEP

In the formative years, TCP was administered through a loose and informal structure. For several years, it remained roughly divided in two groups, one based in Quetta and the other in Qilla Saifullah. The members of both groups would meet in the mountain when the hunter(s) came.

- In Quetta, Mr. Tareen and his associates (namely Mr. Paind Khan and Nawabzada Mirwais Jogizai) were primarily responsible for dealing with Government Departments, for marketing, and arranging hunts.
- In Qilla Saifullah, Nawabzada Mahboob Jogizai was in charge of hiring, regulating duties and paying salaries of game guards, consulting the elders from Torghar, conducting trophy hunts, setting up hunting camps, and managing general affairs of Torghar and its people.

While the Quetta office was somewhat distant from the people of Torghar – both physically and in the matters it dealt with – the office in Qilla Saifullah and the game guards continued to function on pre-existing power relations. The authority and personal relations of Nawab Taimur Shah Jogizai and of his son Mahboob Jogizai, contributed greatly to the legitimacy of the enterprise. Over the years, those working for the organization but sitting outside Torghar would visit the mountain frequently; while both the Quetta and Qilla Saifullah offices were often hosting visitors from the mountain, especially game guards.

### OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIBAL AUTHORITY

The inhabitants of Torghar have long been reluctant to outside intervention in their affairs. The direct involvement of their tribal leader, Nawabzada Mahboob Jogizai, in the initial stages of the programme, was an important factor for their acceptance and participation.



In retrospect an interesting logic to the programme emerged. The structure of the conservation initiative was based on a ban on hunting, implemented by local game guards, and exercised through existing power relations, for which Mahboob Jogizai was a key figure. The presence of Nawabzada Mirwais Jogizai and later his brother Nawabzada Aurangzeb Jogizai, both direct cousins of Nawabzada Mahboob Jogizai, played an important part in establishing the credibility of the programme.

The enactment of tribal authority in the Programme management is one of the primary reasons for the overall success of the programme.

But, it also introduced power competition and the attempt on the part of some inhabitants to use the programme in order to increase their own power base. As benefits from the trophy hunts increased, various individuals and/or groups working with the programme started utilizing their new power (financial and authoritative as protectors of the mountain) to improve their position within the social setup of Torghar. This new dimension had a strong impact on socio-economic relationships and the balance of power, created numerous hurdles and led to the need of establishing a formal system of governance. Suggestions to formalise the distribution of benefits came from within the mountain, and the general structure of STEP had to go through several metamorphosis – as it is no doubt bound to undergo further ones in the future.

## THE CREATION OF STEP – TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Over time, the intricacies related to rights, equity and distribution of benefits emerged and gained weight. These tensions led to an increasing pressure for jobs. As a result, the nature of responsibilities and tasks multiplied and were reconfigured.

In 1994, for practical purposes TCP was registered under the 1860 Societies Registration Act as a non-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO) under the name of STEP (Society for Torghar Environmental Protection).

In 1996 the SUSG Central Asia, chaired by Mr. Tareen, was established in Pakistan, adjacent to the STEP office. The Torghar Conservation Pro-

gramme was included in SUSG-C Asia's activities, thus becoming part of a wider sustainable use agenda. Although the TCP did not benefit from any funding, it was cited as an exemplary project from which lessons could be learned and replicated elsewhere in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The same year, Mirwais Jogizai decided to leave the organisation. His post as Manager for range-management was transformed into Manager for Torghar Affairs and led by his brother Aurangzeb Jogizai. In 1998, Mr. Naeem Ashraf, Project Manager SUSG-CAsia, voluntarily assumed the added responsibility of Director of Resource Management, STEP. The same year, Sikandar Jogizai, son of Mahboob Jogizai, was designated as Field Supervisor, based in Qilla Saifullah, in order to increase efficiency and communication between the different actors of the Programme. This structure was followed till 2005.

STEP's activities have rapidly evolved from giving financial compensation in the form of salaries to game guards, to a programme addressing issues ranging from irrigation to agriculture, range management and medical assistance. The latter drawing a substantial proportion of STEP's global budget. Indeed, the nearest medical facilities available to the people of Torghar are located 90 KM away. STEP has a policy of providing medical assistance to all needy bona fide "owners" of Torghar regardless of their residency. In this respect during 2006, STEP spent an amount of over 33,000 U.S. dollars on the medical expenses of nearly 1100 individuals from Torghar. The organization has also extended financial help, on regular basis, to vulnerable individuals and families in Torghar, and provided assistance to hardship cases. In the year 2006, 35 such individuals received help amounting to over 1, 00,000 rupees.



## VII. STEP and the “Community”

As said earlier, the main tensions with which STEP has been faced evolve around the issue of the equity principle commanding the distribution of benefits. In 1998 one of the sub-tribes of Torghar (Hussain Khail) decided, through a written document, to spell out a logic according to which benefits from the programme – mainly the attribution of jobs – should be distributed. This agreement was of great significance in many respects, but most importantly it showed the will of these inhabitants to take the programme into their own hands. The main tool to implement this empowerment was the decision to form a local Committee

### DEVOLUTION OF POWER AND GRASSROOTS OWNERSHIP

For the Quetta office, this was seen as a window to decentralise management. As a result, a lengthy process was launched in order to draw up new bye-laws, with the first draft written in 2002, and the final version completed in 2004; in parallel, the organisation underwent structural changes mentioned in the previous chapter. The Quetta office had to ensure that the new structure of the programme would be owned by the people living in the mountain.

#### (1) The Participatory Approach Enhanced

The building of a camp in 1999 on the Tanishpa plateau was an important marker in this process. The camp is a permanent structure made to host the hunters in better conditions than what the tents had allowed until then. It was followed by the construction of another camp in the Torghberg valley, in 2001. These camps became a permanent and neutral place to hold meetings about programme issues. The camps being open to all, whenever STEP representatives are in the mountain, inhabitants know where to find them. To have fixed meeting places within the mountain facilitates discussions and negotiations, including those who were either unfamiliar with the members

of STEP themselves, or rarely visit the offices in Quetta or Qilla Saifulah. It is during these informal meetings (majlis) that most of the emergent issues have been discussed. As information and reports no longer emanated from only a few game guards, the collective participation and transparency were enhanced.

## (2) Committees: a structure for participation

Although discussions were undeniably fruitful in terms of relationship, they could not be sufficient to reach a general consensus regarding Programme decisions. After several years of negotiations (1998 - 2001), the creation of Mountain Committees was kept as a leading idea to establish a collective decision mechanism for the mountain inhabitants. The shape and form of these committees were discussed from the middle of 2001 to the end of 2002.

A Field Sociologist was hired to initiate and follow the discussion regarding that matter. Taking into consideration the intricate social repercussions of the programme meant an increased complexity of management. When, in the middle of 2002, the final shape of Mountain Committees was proposed to the inhabitants, it triggered a strong reaction on behalf of all groups. The stronger tribal groups in Torghar insisted on the committees to be exclusively composed of individuals living in the mountains whereas the weaker groups wanted some of the more influential kin residing outside Torghar to be included in these committees. Many threatened to leave the programme. The main reluctance was due to the mistrust from within the mountain, and the fear that a greater responsibility to the inhabitants would be taken advantage of by the stronger groups or individuals at the expense of the weaker ones. New negotiations had to be undertaken, some of which are still ongoing<sup>24</sup>. Although the creation of Committees has been accepted on principle by all, its application revealed far more difficult than expected.

The long awaited “community empowerment” and local ownership of the project, thought to be the milestone for the sustainability of TCP, was more complex and more dangerous than expected. Increas-

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<sup>24</sup> These negotiations were not always smooth as they required, at times, the Quetta office of STEP to threaten the suspension of game guard salaries, which it eventually did – the longest period they have remained suspended is 18 months. In all cases game guards are to be paid retroactively.

ing the direct decision making powers of the inhabitants led to new tensions and fears, within the mountain itself, and threatening the programme as a whole. The 2002 draft of the new bye-laws laid out in detail the responsibilities of the different committees within the mountain. The objective was, first and foremost, to increase the decision making power of those living in the mountain, emphasising the fact that they are the ones who deal, on a day to day basis, with the consequences of the programme. More ideally, the Committee system was to ensure the basis for the gradual “empowerment” of actors within the mountain (those usually designated as The “Community” in NGO jargon)

Photo 14 - Discussions in Tanishpa camp, Decemeber 2002



Photo 15 - Discussions in Torghberg Camp, Sept. 2002



### Defining “community”

Looking at, or working with, a “community” assumes, by definition, this community to be bounded by common interests. Yet, analysing the nature of the conflicting interests brings us to the basic question as to what exactly a “community” is.

Upon realizing the need for more “grass root” or “local level” involvement to ensure successful development programmes, many researchers or NGO activists have advocated carrying out development works through the direct participation of “communities”. But as methods and methodologies oriented towards community involvement multiplied, the concept of “community” itself diluted in a nebula of definitions referring to almost as many different realities as there are projects. A community can be defined according to criteria – whether separately or combined – as diverse as geographic, economic, social, political, administrative, cultural etc.

If “community” is merely a pragmatic category, and not a heuristic and substantial concept, only then can its reality find some echoes within Torghar. Communities are identified according to specific goals or proposed actions (conservation plans, development programmes, area rehabilitation, education development... etc.), and within constraints (limitation of time, availability of finances for specific issues, budget lines, accessible infrastructure, existing know-how, etc.). Communities are circumscribed according to an activity’s needs or scale; but the communal dynamics effectively at play are generally more complex and may challenge the “community” as a unit, either by fragmenting it (different interest groups emerge from within the community) or enlarging it (the interest groups are actually of a larger scale than that of the defined community).

The hence defined communities may well be pragmatic and match specific collective interests, but may also – and more probably – only partially cover the existing social ties or may even oblige the actors themselves to create a new criteria for self-identification.

## RELEVANCY OF THE “COMMUNITY” CONCEPT

In order to define the people of Torghar as a “community”, the TCP has, depending on the context, alternated between several criteria. These have been:

- 1) geographical: all the people who live in and own the mountain;
- 2) economical: inhabitants have livestock and share the available pasture land;
- 3) environmental: they all depend on the natural resources of the mountain;
- 4) administrative: the mountain falls within an administrative boundary;
- 5) political: they are Jalalzai and subject to the Jogizai clan’s authority;
- 6) cultural: they are all Pashtuns and practice the same customs;
- 7) social: they interact, intermarry, and share the burden of protecting the mountain from poachers.

Furthermore the inhabitants of Torghar were responsive to the project. As the benefits became apparent, their willingness to work at its sustainability increased; and they soon became aware of the importance to conserve the mountain’s biodiversity as a whole through concerted actions and regulated behaviours. They can therefore be said to have reacted – and to still react today – as a “community” regarding the programme.

Yet, to the same extent, forces and power relations challenging this unity can be identified just as clearly. The reactions to the creation of committees within the mountain, and the consequences of sharing responsibility regarding the programme, show how conflicting different interests can be. Despite recognizing the common interest in safeguarding the mountain biodiversity, the Torghar inhabitants may face difficulty in effectively coming together because of internal differences.

In fact, the people living in the mountain form distinct tribal groups and sub-groups which, on many issues, may not be in agreement amongst themselves due to conflicting interests.



Each group:

- 1) strongly identifies itself as different from another and oppose themselves through territorial conflict;
- 2) claims members outside the mountain who consider themselves as co-owners of the land, are thus entitled to the same rights as those living within the mountain;
- 3) considers itself belonging to an area far wider than the mountain range.

These differences are such that, one wonders if the “community” would even exist at all if it was not for the TCP. When looked at from a certain angle, the single “mountain community of Torghar” becomes “different Jalalzai groups of northern Balochistan and south-East Afghanistan”. This is not only a matter of angle, but a reality with which people live daily.

## COUNTER FORCES TO COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Concretely, this situation triggers contradicting reactions which revealed themselves when ‘Mountain Committees’ for grassroot management were created. Opposition arose from:

- influential people living outside the mountain area but who are members of one of the Torghar sub-tribal groups;
- groups laying claim to a portion of the mountain but who are not living there;
- people living in the mountain fearing to loose certain privileges;
- groups from the mountain wanting to reverse inequalities in their favour.

At the same time, all people opposing the creation of the Committees agreed on their coherence, necessity and beneficial aspect for the Project. In that sense, the contradiction is not one which involves the conceivers of the Programme on one hand (STEP’s Board of Management) and the people of Torghar on the other: it is an internal contradiction to both.

The principles according to which the “Torghar Community” is singled

out are accepted by all, while it is impossible for actors to reduce their identity and common interest to this “community”.

In this, the community can not be isolated as a single, uniform, autonomous and coherent entity (*Khotari, Pathak et al. 1998*). With this reality in mind, we understand the fact that it took years for the TCP (and later STEP) to understand and grasp the complexity of social relationships within Torghar. Although STEP promotes the idea of collective, uniform, just, non-hierarchical action; it cannot ignore the fact that people follow individual or collective interests which may challenge the unity of the same “community”.

## THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

The understanding developed as the issues unfolded and revealed unprecedented stakes. With its ear to the ground, STEP follows different strands of discussions which are taking place in the mountain. Random issues often trigger discussions on fundamental aspects of the social relations which can gain momentum and become central concerns. Information is not systematically collected but is a reactive process based on different talks and the temporal importance of issues.

As the intricacies of the social relations in the mountain became apparent, the programme has become an important element of social relations in Torghar. Thus STEP became more of an “insider” (actor) within the social setup than it had been so far.

This has been achieved through constant discussion and negotiation which evolve less according to a fix set of principles, than along the lines of ever emerging events. It has therefore required a constant presence and adaptation to newly formulated requirements. This, again, shows the nature of TCP to be managing a fragile equilibrium, a constant re-balance and awareness of social realities. It also partially explains the violent reaction against the ‘fixed’ by-laws, the main aim of which was to check the power games.



## VIII. Clash of Logics: *Conservation v/s Tribal Rights*

Once again, the TCP is undeniably a successful programme. Yet, its success relies on an uneasy cohabitation of two sets of logics: one based on conservation issues, the other focused on tribal relations. This cohabitation has revealed to be particularly efficient as far as controlling poachers is concerned. It shows many more sore points with regards to the issue of equity in the distribution of benefits.

### EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF POACHERS

Throughout the implementation of the project, one predicament has continuously been encountered: what to do in cases of poaching?<sup>25</sup> This remained a thorny procedure to tackle for different reasons. One was the difficulty of establishing proof of the poaching: the only material evidences are foot prints or parts of the animal killed. Another was to find the basis of punishment and to determine who would implement it<sup>26</sup>. Also, the problem of denouncing a fellow tribesman to outside authorities and the mixing of personal grudges in accusations has remained a factor of great tensions. The fact that the Quetta office could only rely on reports from game guards, random conversations and collective meetings often led to status quo when several conflicting versions were being spelled out.

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<sup>25</sup> Poachers may belong to different pressure groups: people within the mountain using poaching as their only means of pressure to make their claims heard; motivated by internal tribal disputes or competition, members of the Kakar tribes have poached in the hope that the program would cease and discredit those who claim ownership to it; other cases involve influential people wanting to by-pass the law against illegal hunting for personal pleasure.

<sup>26</sup> One option is to go to government courts since hunting is officially allowed only upon obtaining hunting permits. But, this solution conflicts with the general reluctance of the Torghar inhabitants to see an active involvement of the government over an issue perceived as highly internal to the mountain. Another option is for a member of the Jogizai Nawab clan to make use of his authority and power, but such interventions have been more than once felt as being politically motivated or unjust. The system of proof remains, to this day, a complex matter to deal with and is subject to all kinds of problems such as a person accusing another on the grounds of personal grudges rather than effective acts.

On the whole, each case of poaching was treated separately with as many solutions as there were cases. In the absence of a systematic approach, almost no poachers have been punished, while many ended up employed as game guards – which has effectively stopped their hunting activities. In 20 years, a total of 19 people have been accused of poaching. Some accusation are most likely unfounded; some accused are guilty of a one-time hunt; while others have been found guilty of regular poaching. In fact, only 13 people have been investigated upon. Out of those, 8 have been punished (ranging from public humiliation to national prison).

It is noteworthy that despite the absence of a system, poaching has been drastically reduced. The regulation relies, once again, on a loose and constant monitoring as well as the multiplicity of interests at work making poaching more of a disadvantage than an asset. An intricate network of active forces and relationship – authority, fear and power – is at work in this regulatory process. This, without following a fixed set up of administrative rules, or repressive institutions.

This fact is all the more remarkable that illegal hunting in National Parks by influential people of the country is not uncommon. Whereby Torghar came under important pressure from some very high placed individuals who, when refused the hunt (several times from the local game guards themselves and without the intervention of STEP Board of Management), left with little or no sympathy for TCP or other such programmes.

The main drawback of this situation is the negative effect on transparency and the difficulty to deal with numerous unfounded accusations. In this respect, STEP has been demanding a clearer system for the management of poaching, which the Committee system – and decentralised management – is meant to address.

## THE QUESTION OF EQUITY

On the other hand, the inhabitants have come forth with their own demand and conception of establishing a clear and transparent system. Initially, the salaries were distributed as compensation for performing a duty. But it was also known that those originally designated to guard the mountain were close to Mahboob Jogizai in one way or

the other. Their employment was soon perceived as the result of a patron-client relationship. As the pressure from the unemployed increased, Mahboob Jogizai multiplied the number of people hired and soon ended up with more jobs than required for the guarding task. In the meantime, many people from within Torghar who were not employed continued to express frustration over the logic of employment and advocated that they had an equal right to benefits from the trophy hunts as anybody else.

Although initially indirectly involved in managing the game guard team, the Quetta office was gradually dragged into the controversy. In trying to ease the tension, it also contributed to it by 1) enabling the distribution of more jobs and 2) advocating for an “equal share” of benefits. Given the fact that the salaries from game guards were the only regular income directly derived from the trophy hunt, it soon became impossible to dissociate the salaries from effective benefits, to a point of becoming almost synonymous with the benefits. Discussions ensued, as everyone recognised both the need to regulate and control poaching, and the need to distribute benefits in a fair manner.

Obtaining a job was soon perceived as a ‘right’ (haq) rather than based on skills or merit. In other words, the attribution of jobs became disassociated from the responsibility of the game guard. This was true to a point because some of the people hired were physically incapable of performing their duty.

The juxtaposition of the two stands (salaries for duty/ salaries as rights) became one of the major points of contention for managing the programme. The challenge was to find a way to give weight to both stands. How does one make sure that those entitled to claim “ownership” of the programme also were capable of assuming the job of a game guard? How does one justify both the claim to equal and fair distribution of benefits, while at the same time demanding that those receiving a share should be ones with specific skills?

### **COUNTING POPULATION (NAFARI) OR TRIBAL GROUPS (PLAR)?**

In line with everything else, the programme did not have any pre-conceived solution and carried on the process of discussions and negotiations to obtain the most satisfying answers. This question of “right”

was all the more significant because of an increasing demand to fine tune the logic of distributing benefits. The main point of contention was, again, two fold, each equally valid in the value system at work in the mountain:

- 1) The first is that everyone “of the mountain” – meaning ‘owners’ living in it <sup>27</sup> – should benefit equally from the programme.
- 2) The second is that the programme belongs to the mountain, meaning that it is linked to the rights of those living within its boundaries. The benefits should therefore follow the system of land distribution and tribal rights.

Those two logics are summarized in pashto by the words “nafari” (population) and “plar” (father or lineage of a tribal group). A distribution following nafari would take in consideration the number of individuals; while one based on plar would be based on the number of tribal groups. Both bear their own problems:

- 1) “nafari” is egalitarian on the basis of individuals but ends up benefiting those groups who have more population while smaller groups – even if they may own a larger territory – are weakened;
- 2) the “plar” in a way counterbalances the excess of power a group gains by being more numerous, but can end up giving more benefits to a group whose population is very small.

The difficulty is therefore both pragmatic and a question of principle. All actors of the programme recognize the value of each stand. What determines their position is the extent to which they benefit or lose.

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<sup>27</sup> Keeping in mind that all the tribal owners of the land do not necessarily live in the mountain.

## IX. Lessons and Conclusions

STEP has traveled a long way from its initial main concern for the survival of the two high profile ungulate species of markhor and urial, to a programme striving to make the conservation of wildlife part of the people of Torghar's daily life.

Today, Torghar boasts the highest concentration of straight horned Markhor in the world, and that of Afghan Urial in Pakistan. Through its realization, the programme has brought a substantial aid to its inhabitants in the shape of regular jobs, infrastructure development, access to health care and livelihood improvement. Yet, the main question remains as to whether this project will continue to grow and benefit both the environment and the inhabitants of Torghar for generations to come, or does it risk to be short lived?

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

With a limited dependence on external/ donor funds, the programme has remained financially sustainable. This has also meant that none of the programme activities or outputs have been donor driven or based on donor priorities. External funds were used for discrete and easily identifiable activities – census, infrastructure works, purchase of medicine etc.

► However, relying solely upon internally generated funds from trophy hunting has made the programme vulnerable to natural disasters, social unrest and the geo-political instability. On a few occasions, the political tensions in the area discouraged trophy hunters from abroad. Parallel to that, the last six years of drought (1997-2003) resulted in a drastic depletion of fodder in the mountain, fuelling grazing competition between the wildlife and the domestic herds; the threat to the Markhor and Urial population was further increased by diminishing water supplies. STEP managed to bridge this period of financial uncertainty through private loans, rather than depending on donor grants. Its goal – still to be attained – is to cumulate enough resources to be self-sufficient for 5 years.



Despite this vulnerability, during its short period of existence, TCP has brought more benefits in cash and kind to the people of the mountain than all the benefits received from government institutions in the history of Torghar. The salary received through this programme has been an important source of income for some of the residents of Torghar, especially during the drought years.

## ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Organisational sustainability has been ensured through investing in an organic process while remaining relevant to programmatic requirements. The organisation has evolved, mainly in reaction to changing needs and events that have acted as a catalyst. The structural complexification of STEP, which ultimately led to the creation of mountain committees, was a response to growing stakes within the social structure of Torghar: an increasing number of people have been employed by the organisation as game guards, a number of development works have been carried out, and STEP's understanding of tribal composition and issues has become more acute.

► It is the Toghar inhabitants themselves who have brought problems and contradictions to the notice of STEP management. In the process, they realized the necessity of structural modifications, thus suggesting the creation of committees. This truly participatory process is a major stepping stone to sustainability. Even though the functionality of these committees is still to be put to test, having obtained a general consensus ensures that this solution, because it is emanating from the mountain, strengthen ownership and sustainability of the programme.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND GRASS ROOT OWNERSHIP

The institutional sustainability is mainly derived from an attentive and flexible approach. Through these qualities, STEP was able to grasp the social intricacies with more accuracy. It evolved from the preconceived idea of a unified "mountain community" to establishing an effective and complex relationship with the "Torghar inhabitants". This meant realising that its actions had repercussions on issues as far from its original focus as land ownership, individual conflicts, domestic relations, political stands, economic activities and choices, educa-

tion, etc. Taking into consideration and understanding group conflicts, land tenure issues or individual's stakes, STEP came to blend into the social structure of Torghar, becoming involved in much more than preserving and conserving animal species. Reciprocally, the people of Torghar have come to share their understanding of internal issues with the management, despite the fact that the latter is composed – though at different levels – of “outsiders”. This achievement means much more than a pleasant anecdote: it signifies the effective appropriation, or “ownership” of the programme by the mountain inhabitants (“community ownership” being one of the most sought after, but rarely achieved, goals of development programmes). The main outcome is, beyond individual or collective trust, the establishment of a ‘relation’ between the inhabitants and the institution.

► Year after year, the Programme gradually became the concern of an increasing number of people within the mountain, henceforth requiring more participation, transparency, accessibility and accountability. These were assured by STEP through continuous advocacy and discussions held with the mountain inhabitants. Many important organisational outputs – such as imposing a check on the passing nomads, advocating for the programme within the mountain, identifying and dealing with poachers, negotiating unwanted impacts of the programme's activities, etc. – were directly managed by the game guards, as well as other concerned people of the mountain, without involvement of the STEP administration.

One of the motivations for maintaining the focus on financial and organizational sustainability is that it contributes fully to the grassroots ownership of the programme. In fact, the majority of the income generated by STEP can rightfully be claimed by the Torghar inhabitants to be their own. This guiding principle and foundation is one on which Mr. Tareen calls frequently when discussing disputes and problems – “We just want the rights to be with the mountain: the programme has to be in the hands of the owners and I consider the owner to be the man who lives and sits there. All I'm saying is that this is their home and they must have authority over it because only they can know what is just and what is not. Also, at the end of the day, it is the man in Torghar who can let the wildlife survive or vanish.”

## THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FACTORS

-- Drought: the unprecedented drought, which affected the region for nearly six years (1996-2002), enhanced the people's appreciation of the programme. With this catastrophe, the ecosystem revealed its fragility – scarcity of fodder and water led to drastic losses of livestock, as well as numerous other fauna and flora species used for food, fuel, medicine, etc. – and some households came to rely solely upon the salaries given to game guards. The scale of this catastrophe revived the inhabitant's interest and appreciation for the program's contributions to their daily lives.

-- Geography: the structure of the mountain itself has considerably eased the conservation efforts. On one hand, its harsh geography limits the number of entry points, therefore facilitating the control of any individual (i.e. potential poachers) penetrating or wanting to escape the mountain. At the same time, once inside the range, the slopes are sufficiently gentle and accessible to always allow the passage from one point to another, allowing the animals to move freely on a continuous habitat, and trophy hunters to approach them at a sufficient distance.

-- Underdevelopment: Overall, the extreme poverty and lack of social services (the closest medical facilities are two days away by foot or camel, and the schools in the mountain have either absentee or incompetent teachers) meant that the benefits introduced by the programme, however small their scale, have been substantive in relative terms. Moreover, the Markhor or Urial have never weighed heavily on the fragile equilibrium on which the humans depend: the inhabitants have never depended on them for their daily diet, and the wildlife could never sustain the competition for fodder with domesticated animals. Had STEP aimed at conserving wolves or leopards<sup>28</sup> which are considered to be an immediate threat to livestock – i.e. the economic backbone of the mountain population – the organization would have most certainly been opposed with a firm refusal.

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<sup>28</sup> "Leopards have become extinct from the area due to systematic killing by local hunters. The people of Torghar were not aware of the fact that extermination of leopard will lead to increase in porcupine population. They realized it when I told them. The constant reminder of this fact of adverse effects on Shnay trees of Torghar has convinced them to an extent in favour of reintroduction. I don't think that the opposition will be strong at all. Wolf? It is another story". Sardar Naseer Tareen.

► In this configuration, who will be the successors becomes a key issue. The structural flexibility imposes tremendous responsibilities on individuals to abide by shared principles. Whether the program will survive once new individuals will take its lead will depend on their ability to maintain and create collective consensus. The conservation programme of Torghar has often, and rightfully, been cited as one of the most successful of its kind in the country<sup>29</sup>. Yet, the praises for STEP's achievements fail to underline the difficulties it has faced and still faces to this day.

## LIVESTOCK & WILDLIFE COMPETITION ISSUE

Livestock, mostly sheep and goats, is the main source of livelihood in Torghar. While the population of wildlife is constantly increasing due to effective conservation efforts, the numbers of livestock is also on the rise due to the comparative increase of the tribesmen's income. The threat of grazing competition between the two is obvious even to the people of Torghar. STEP has devised a two phased plan to address this problem.

1. The first calls for reducing large quantities of low grade animals to a smaller number of animals of good quality. This will decrease the pressure on the habitat without decreasing the financial returns from livestock. This phase will include providing veterinarian support and technical assistance to undergo a 'lamb fattening' programme. Ten young men from Torghar are already trained as 'foot vets' by the experts under UNDP's Habitat & Species Project in Torghar.
2. The main objective of the second phase is to attract live stock herders to Kundar and Khaisor – valleys adjacent to Torghar – and move away from the core zone of wildlife protected area. STEP is developing the valleys for grazing and small scale agricultural activities. Small dams, check dams, irrigation channels, wells, and rehabilitation of spring sources have already been built in the different parts of Torghar. This type of small scale water conservation measures are planned to be replicated throughout the area.

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<sup>29</sup> See, amongst others, the following:

<http://www.iucn.org/bookstore/bulletin/2000/wc2/content/page30torghar.pdf>

<http://www.wildlifeofpakistan.com/Projects/projects.htm>

<http://www.un.org.pk/undp/sgp/trophy-hunting.pdf>

## THE RISKS INVOLVED IN NEVER-ENDING NEGOTIATIONS

The organisation's empirical approach is undoubtedly a key factor to its success; but the same approach has also engendered a situation of constant (re)negotiations, whereby creating an unsteady equilibrium. In other words, its viability depends on all actors to consider the survival and development of the programme a priority. The existence of STEP – a body for which the programme is the only concern – enables this orientation to be kept; but there is little evidence, if any at all, that the programme would continue to exist if this organisation was to withdraw, leaving the inhabitants (mountain committees) as the only managers. STEP has proven itself to be outstandingly adaptable and alert to actual situations; thus showing that the programme can work best if considered a process, not a goal-oriented formula. The administrative aspects of the programme will go through several more stages of metamorphosis until a definite linkage between survival of the species and economic benefits is established.

Apart from this structural instability, efforts still need to be made for environmental conservation. Although the inhabitants of the mountain have changed their range management habits, a number of pre-existing practices still have to be re-examined, and issues related to optimum carrying capacity of livestock remain outstanding.

## A SCARCE ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE

It has been underlined that the generation of benefits is not constant, as there have been years when a few trophy hunters, or none at all, came to Torghar. The income is thus not consistent enough to expand the programme's activities or become a real economic alternative. The relative importance, above mentioned, of the earnings for the mountain inhabitants is unfortunately too little to promote their lifestyle. While sustainable conservation can be satisfying when it comes to fauna and flora, human activities have higher demands; and the gap between 'conservation' and 'development' may be wider than expected. In order for Torghar not to become a sanctuary for poor people, the introduction of activities that are not directly related to conservation of the two mammals, in order to diversify income, is under consideration.

## A WEAK INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Another challenge that lies ahead is the engagement with the government institutions, to work on conservation and reform of the legal, policy and procedural framework. Up to now, the engagement with the government has been difficult for two reasons: 1) the government's lack of interest in the programme 2) the direct involvement of the government would not have been acceptable to the inhabitants of Torghar who, to this day, live in fear of being dispossessed of their ownership of the mountain. The rumour that the TCP was a disguised plan from the government to "take over Torghar" has remained dormant and is invoked by people in the mountain regularly.

Hence the sustainability of the programmes also relies on sustainable and constant efforts. STEP is considering various options for increasing the programme's sustainability in the absence of a permanent support mechanism. Amongst those, the creation of an endowment (trust) fund; initiating other community managed conservation programmes; to further increase knowledge about the biodiversity and environmental impacts of activities; to promote a legal framework that could protect and legalize the informal arrangements which have proven to work well so far.

## REPLICABILITY?

The project has potential for replication, in particular, within tribal set ups. STEP and SUSG-CASia are increasingly keen on using the Torghar experience for launching other similar Sustainable Use Programmes. For that purpose, the two organisations aim at increasing the production of scientific reports (biological and social data), film documentaries, presentation booklets and leaflets. Through these tools, comparing notes with other project and evaluating the impact of specific activities may be facilitated. However, this replicability is subject to changes and modifications made in view of local conditions and ground realities. As Naseer Tareen emphasizes, "it is the concept of Torghar that can be replicated and not the entire project." (Cited in Haider and Husain. 2002 p.17).

Although the lessons from Torghar look simple on paper – start a simple programme, keep the organisation simple, be open to change,

and institute structures and procedures as and when the need arises, conduct external surveys in order to ensure credibility, have a clear guiding principle, keep your ear to the ground – the application of these has required great skills and patience. Its replication in other contexts has still to be tested. Members of STEP are on the anvil of initiating a donor driven project, in collaboration with the SUSG – CAsia, GEF, UNDP and GoB, based on the experience in Torghar: Chagai desert and Surghar.

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A programme called **STEP** has been operating in a Pashtun inhabited mountain north of Balochistan Province, Pakistan. **STEP** is one of Pakistan's pioneers in applying the principles of Sustainable Use of Natural Resources. Indeed, to save from extinction two endemic animal species – a wild sheep known as the Afghan Urial, and a wild goat known as Suleiman Markhor – **STEP** is mostly financed by a sustainable trophy hunting harvest. This principle of “using” natural resources in order to preserve them initially aroused many criticisms and objections. It is now believed to be one of the most sustainable ways to actually ensure conservation. Focusing on the accomplishments of a 20 year old programme, and the importance of the active participation of the mountain inhabitants, this case study demonstrates how this can be achieved.

In year 2002, for a period of 13 months, **Luc Bellon**, anthropologist, assessed the social issues, needs and demands raised with regards to the programme by the inhabitants of Torgar. Doing so, he also analyzed the process, evolution and continuous efforts of all the actors that made this programme possible. The collected information is compiled in this book, highlighting the major stepping stones by which the project was materialized.

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