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Tiivistelmä – Referat - Abstract			
<p>Madagascar is one of the megadiversity countries of the world and its highly endemic flora and fauna is under threat from a rapidly growing population. Over the past few years many conservation projects have combined development goals with conservation, thus supporting the conservation goal by attempting to ease human pressure on the protected area.</p> <p>The objective of this study is to investigate the views and opinions of local people with regard to Ranomafana National Park, Madagascar. This study examines the changes the park has brought to peoples' lives, general attitudes towards the environment and conservation as well as opinions about the park management.</p> <p>The main information presented in this study was obtained from 121 interviews completed in six villages. Three of them are situated close to the park and they have received intentional development interventions from the authorities. Another three lie further away and have no official connections with the park. The study will investigate how distance and interventions affect peoples views and opinions. The information obtained represents independent opinions from a random sample of the resident population. All the schools of each village were visited and over 400 pupils responded to a questionnaire about the environment. In addition to this the NGO's, local authorities, health centres, churches and a family planning clinic, were consulted in order to gain a thorough picture of the communities views.</p> <p>People in the villages closest to the park have obtained employment through tourism and research. Other positive effects include assistance with new farming methods, the introduction of alternative livelihoods and environmental education. Villagers further away from the park mentioned the slowing down of environmental degradation as the major achievement of the park. The major negative effect is restrictions on usage of the natural resources people depend on. Adequate alternatives are not available and direct compensation for economic losses has not been offered. This study presents people's suggestions on improving education, management of the park, livelihoods and environment. More efficient development projects that geographically reach further would help the park to achieve its development goals and through that the conservation objectives.</p> <p>The results of this study emphasise the importance of education, which increases people's awareness of the environmental processes. This enables them to understand the consequences of human activities and gives them an awareness of the consequences of continuing unsustainable use of resources. Decreasing poverty near protected areas is also essential in order to reduce pressure on the environment. A third important issue is the slowing down of population growth. Successful combination of conservation and development requires constant reassessment and responses to changing situations. The survival of Madagascar's rain forests is a global concern so responsibility and costs must be borne globally, too.</p>			
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