

## Funding Initiatives, Research Results, and Policy Recommendations

The 1990s were marked by United Nations sponsored international conferences that set norms on major global issues, two of these were the summits on population (ICPD) and the environment (Earth Summit). All of these conferences garnered extraordinary attention and galvanized scientific research and policy debates prior to and following the events. There was, however, surprisingly little interaction between the ICPD and the Earth Summit as evidenced in the Programs of Action, that show limited overlap. This was not due to a lack of interest, but rather a lack of scientific and political agreement on the exact linkages between the two concerns.

From 1995 until 2000, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation sought to contribute to research and policy discussions about population, consumption, and the environment (PCE) by sponsoring a research competition on this topic. During that time more than 28 research projects were supported under a special funding initiative with 24 focused specifically on coastal and marine resources. The grants program supported projects that satisfied several criteria. Projects were multidisciplinary, originated from Southern institutions or were collaborations between Northern and Southern institutions, and were useful for policy formation at the local, national or regional level. Proposals were reviewed by an advisory committee that provided guidance and recommendations to Foundation staff. In the course of this six-year funding program, the committee grappled with numerous issues, such as, the role of the donor in providing technical assistance, how to extract lessons across projects, whether standard protocols should be used, how to encourage greater interest in this topic, and how to gauge the quality of collaborative relationships. At the heart of many of the discussions was the issue of how to conduct good research to answer the many questions we have about the relationships between human populations and their environments. Findings from these studies and reflections on lessons learned from the projects form the content of this special issue of *Ambio*.

This special issue of *Ambio* begins disentangling the complexities of the population-environment relationship by focusing upon migration and settlement dynamics, the organization of consumption and produc-

tion, and resulting variation in coastal resource outcomes. Key themes for understanding the complexities of these relationships are common property resource management, knowledge systems and new technologies, and markets and economic crowding. It is these three themes which provide the substantive framework for the organization of this issue of *Ambio*.

The issue includes: (a) an introduction to the issue, with a discussion of population dynamics, coastal resources and the linkages between them and a discussion of how consumption in more developed countries disrupts potential for sustainable development in less developed countries; (b) thematically organized case studies with synthesis articles by the guest editors of the issue; and, (c) a discussion about research and policy implications. The thematically organized case studies range from Africa to Central America to Asia. They cover concerns about mangrove deforestation, shrimp farm production and its consequences, as well as overharvesting of a variety of marine resources. One aspect unites many of the studies as they all incorporate a particular human demographic dynamic, that of migration. Migration in these cases is not simply counting the additional people and evaluating their impact, but understanding the way in which migration can take many different forms and can either disrupt or augment current social relations with significant consequences for marine and coastal resources. Each case study concludes by highlighting key findings and drawing connections to other research and policy concerns. Comparative analysis across these disparate avenues of research move us beyond acknowledging the complicated nature of the population-environment interactions, to the beginnings of an understanding of how and why human behavior ultimately affects coastal ecosystems and the goods and services they provide.

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