



Welcome to the first Commons Digest of 2013. In this issue we have three personal essays in honor of our founding president, Elinor Ostrom. Current IASC president **Leticia Merino** opens the issue with her reflections on how reading Lin's work gave her hope – and highlights how our continued work on the commons honors Lin's legacy. An essay by **Ganesh Shivakoti** follows with his own description of his and Lin's collaboration and experiences in Nepalese irrigation management as well as his view of her pioneering work. The issue closes with an essay by **Barbara Allen** which provides an enlightening perspective into Lin's history and work. All of the authors express their loss and comment on how we can honor Lin by passing her lessons on to the next generation of researchers and practitioners. Lin is greatly missed.

Coming up in the near future, the 14th Biennial conference of the IASC: Commoners and the Changing Commons: Livelihoods, Environmental Security, and Shared Knowledge. We look forward to seeing everyone there. **Enjoy!**

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Reflection

Remembering Elinor Ostrom

Leticia Merino

President, International Association for the Study of the Commons

"We need to be able to address complexity and do not treat it as synonymous of chaos"
Elinor Ostrom

In the early 1990s while writing my doctoral dissertation and struggling with dozens of field notes about Mayan forest communities of the Yucatan, somebody handed me a book I ended up reading eagerly within only a few days -- and have read many times since. What was new and valuable about *Governing the Commons* in those days of combined disenchantment with big theories and nostalgia for lost utopias? Certainly a new sense of coherence and understanding of social processes that did not derive from pre-established laws or universal truths, but from rigorous empirical research, was new. And based on this, a fresh, new breath of rational optimism in regards to social life emerged.

Governing the Commons confirmed many of my "instincts" as a member of the "post 68" Latin American generation: the idea that local communities should be key actors in the governance of their own territories,



societies and future; that equity is crucial for society and sustainability, but also that basic respect for the other, trust and informed decision making are equally important.

Governing the Commons also provided a critical perspective against "conceptual fast tracks," ideological explanations of socio-ecological processes and consequent panaceas frequent

in all sides of the political spectrum, particularly powerful in the Latin American social sciences of the time I was formed as a sociologist.

Soon after discovering this book, I had the good fortune to meet Elinor Ostrom, spend two academic semesters at the Workshop for Political Theory and Policy Analysis, and take part in diverse academic adventures she led, particularly in the IFRI Network. For years I had taught courses on social research method, worked with interdisciplinary teams, made applied, problem-solving research on Mexican forest communities, and provided information and insights to pro-poor forest and conservation policies. In spite of this, and because of this, participation in the 1998 "Bloomington School" was an amazing discovery for me. First, because of the rich integrative framework that enabled researchers to put together in an organized explanatory field many data -and intuitions- from the field; also because of the thoughtful care that Ostrom and colleagues gave to



Elinor and Vincent Ostrom

Photo: Barbara Allen

the search of coherence between theory, methodology, data gathering and interpretation; and last but not least, to discover the Workshop of Political Theory and Policy Analysis, as a rich academic and human common nurtured by Vincent and Elinor Ostrom, where collective action and generosity were common practice

and bases of academic practice. Here, working cooperation was the base research on cooperation.

Elinor Ostrom's work is mostly known in Mexico -as in other places- for her challenge to Garret Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons." Often people think her contributions concluded with the criticism to the universal validity of the rational choice paradigm, and the production and collection of a wide evidence of successful experiences of "commons governance." From this view it is presumed that her findings lead to the promotion of communitarian utopias of "small is beautiful" type; but that her conceptual and policy proposals do not apply to larger and most complex systems and processes.

Other interpretations of Ostrom's work frequent in Mexico and Latin America propose that the criticism to ideologies and panaceas results in the absence of any social commitment. In fact the search of values such as equity, self-governance, trust, reciprocity,



cooperation have a strong place in Ostrom's framework but rather than being starting points, they have the role of guiding variables a wide empirical exploration. They are part of the theoretical questions, not the core of pre-established answers. Ostrom's findings show that trust, cooperation and self-governance are often present in social exchanges under certain conditions, but are far from constituting common features of all types of social interactions. In the same way, the search for better policies and the emphasis on "polycentric governance systems" was central to many of her (and Vincent Ostrom's) initiatives, but instead of regarding democratic polycentric systems as a "given" or as a "must," she invited us to think of public policies as developing experiments, and continuously alerted us about the danger of the imposition of conceptual and political panaceas in real, living societies.

The work around natural resources, forests, irrigation systems, fisheries, rangelands, biodiversity, most of the "commons" first "rediscovered" by Ostrom as such, led naturally to interdisciplinary research efforts. In this sense her work appeals to biologists and conservationists as well as to social scientists, and contributed to another paradigmatic shift, leading academics and practitioners to think in terms of governance of "socio-environmental systems" and to plan policy accordingly. Nevertheless the relevance of her work is not limited to the field of natural resources. Since 1970, the year devoted to the research on security in urban areas, until her work on the Knowledge Commons in the late 2000s, the concern and research on collective action and

governance included cultural and socially created "goods" conceptualized as commons.

Her 2009 Nobel Prize acceptance speech exposes brilliantly the formidable trajectory of Ostrom's work before and after *Governing the Commons*. Through the years, her understanding of collective action under different circumstances and in different contexts and scales continuously developed, fully acknowledging the need of conceptual and policy strategies capable to address the complexity and diversity of contemporary social and ecological challenges. In the concluding pages of her last published book, Ostrom and coauthors propose, as the crucial themes for further research on the commons, are those of the impacts of heterogeneity on collective action, implication of the complexity of socio-ecological systems and collective action around global commons such as the endangered oceans, the atmosphere, and the global climate process.

The continuation of academic research on the commons is one way to honor Elinor Ostrom's legacy. Through promoting the involvement young scholars, practitioners and scholars from developing countries in this effort is also a way to remember her as the generous mentor and colleague she was. Hopefully the IASC will have an active role in the survival of the legacy of her, our first and founding president.

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Elinor Ostrom: A Personal Memoire

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The sudden passing away of Professor Elinor Ostrom in June 2012 is an irreparable loss felt by academia involved in the study of self-governing institutions and diversity issues; and more so, her loss was also felt greatly in Nepal. Within a span of two weeks we also lost Vincent who was not only her mentor and partner but also supported each other in promoting their strong belief in polycentric governance will always be remembered. Lin's simple but detailed Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework and Design Principles for robust performance of Common Pool Resources (CPRs) have become one of the most widely used research framework for the scholars and practitioners studying and managing CPRs.

Lin became the first woman to win the Noble Prize in Economic Science and was one of the hardest working persons I ever knew. Despite that, she always remained humble and jovial to everyone. She is well known to have collaborated with scholars from different parts of the world over very long periods, including colleagues from Africa, Asia and Latin America – the Workshop has served as an inviting place for researchers from around the world.

I am writing this memoire to reflect Lin's

contribution during last 25 years towards policy intervention in governing and managing irrigation and forestry resources in Nepal in particular, and in developing countries in general, through effective use of results from the analysis of meta level database both cross-sectional and overtime using IAD framework during the process of which I was associated with her.

I still remember my first conversation with Lin in April 1988. I received a call at my graduate cubical at Michigan State University from Professor Elinor Ostrom, who surprisingly mentioned that she had read my dissertation proposal *Organizational Effectiveness of User and Non-user Controlled Irrigation Systems in Nepal* which was recommended by Bob Yoder and Prachanda Pradhan during a meeting at the then International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) country office in Nepal. In addition, she also mentioned that she would like to fund my dissertation field research.

Lin then asked me if I would be interested to go to Nepal with her that summer to visit irrigation systems as a consultant for the USAID/Nepal project on "Decentralization, Finance and Management." During the summer of 1988 we visited several irrigation systems in the Western mid-hill region of Nepal and Lin was so impressed with



the craftsmanship and self-governance arrangement of farmers in managing centuries old irrigation systems that the die for long term detailed research was cast with the creation of Nepal Irrigation Institutions and Systems (NIIS) database at the Workshop with a multi-disciplinary team. Several dissertations and other publications came out of this effort.

During 1991-2002, Ford Foundation offices in New York and Delhi provided a parallel grant to the Workshop and the Irrigation Management Systems Study Group (IMSSG) of Institute of Agriculture, Rampur in Nepal to develop NIIS database and add on several more irrigation systems. During the same time, Asian Development Bank (ADB) had planned a massive irrigation system construction ignoring 88 Farmer-Managed Irrigation Systems in Chitwan District of Nepal. Lin with support from IMSSG members and IIMI staff, used the NIIS data which provided enough evidence of excellent governance and management of irrigation systems by the farmers themselves to convince the ADB to re-design the intervention by improving and rehabilitating the existing FMIS. When she was later invited by the World Bank to talk about the puzzles of underperformance in the irrigation sector on a global context, she based her argument on the findings from Nepal irrigation data and case studies. This later became a pillar foundation for World Bank and ADB assisted Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) program implementation in developing countries.

During the early 1990s, the Workshop and IMSSG organized two international

workshops at Rampur on the theme "From Farmers' Fields to Data Fields and Back" and "People and Participation in Sustainable Development of Natural Resources" whereby international scholars, development practitioners, irrigation officials, academic scholars, students and farmers participated in the discussion. The successive policy documents on governance and management of irrigation systems drafted by the Government of Nepal used Lin's theory which was backed by field evidences. Subsequently, during 1996-2002 two important volumes outlining policies for irrigation governance and management improvement in Nepal were published by ICS Press based on NIIS data analysis.

My collaboration with Lin and the Workshop continued after I joined the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) as faculty in Thailand. We established a research center in joint collaboration with the Workshop and other institutes in Asia focusing our research agenda on the study of self-governing institutions in the management of irrigation and forestry resources in Asia. AIT later became an International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) Collaborative Research Center (CRC). Several doctoral dissertations, referred journal publications and two major volumes on Asian Irrigation in Transition and Decentralization, Forest and Rural Communities in Asia were published by Sage. Currently colleagues from AIT, University of Tokyo in Japan, Andalas University in West Sumatra, Indonesia and Hanoi and Hue Universities of Agriculture and Forestry in Vietnam together with scholars from other South and Southeast Asia are in the midst of drafting four dedicated volumes to Lin



on the issues of governance and management of natural resources in the Asian region.

In her Nobel acceptance speech in 2009, Lin mentioned how her experience and learning from repeated visit of field settings in Nepal remained an integral part for explaining the foundation for self-governance institutions. Lin visited Nepal in 2010 and had a hectic schedule including discussions with the Secretaries of all Ministries in Nepal and gave various lectures at research centers and academic institutions reiterating the importance of self-governing autonomous institution's roles in managing resources and fragile ecosystem in difficult terrain.

We continued our collaboration with Lin and it was during 2011 that Lin, Danny Lam, Prachanda Pradhan and I authored a book *Improving Irrigation Asia: Sustainable Performance of an Innovative Intervention in Nepal* based on a longitudinal study over two decades on innovative intervention for

sustained performance of irrigation systems which has identified key factors that can help explain the performance of interventions. In addition, two of my recent doctoral students published their papers based on the application of Lin's Design Principles and ADICO syntax which she read and sent a congratulatory note to us one week before she passed away.

All of these contributions would not have been possible without the intellectual and moral support from Lin for which we are always indebted to her. Summing up, Lin not only provided academic and innovative research leadership on examining the institutional diversity and performance of self-governing institutions and associated rules, she was also a pioneer in applying these research frameworks in the implementation of effective policy intervention in governing and managing the resource and development assistance.

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Working Together, In Memoriam: Elinor Ostrom

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Elinor (Lin) Ostrom was one of the most original thinkers of the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. Her work, which changed the profession of political science and the practice of governance profoundly, will

influence and inspire generations of practitioner-scholars on every continent. It is to be hoped that their work, building upon her orientation to human artisanship and nature, will manage to craft institutions to the benefit of the social-ecological nexus well into the



future.

These are bold statements. And Lin, who is deserving of them, would undoubtedly raise a hand and turn, in humility, from our admiration. Lin, ever ready to praise the work of her colleagues, shied away from such praise of herself. Lin, ever practical, would say it was simply “work,” and all work, when accomplished true to a given craft, was of value. Lin, ever generous, would also say that her work was accomplished as teamwork—that many colleagues contributed to her innovations. *Working Together* was not merely the title of her 2010 book co-authored with Amy Poteete and Marco Janssen. And Lin, generous, humble, fair-minded Lin, would also remind her admirers that her life and, often, her work develop in partnership with another profound innovator, the love of her life, Vincent (1919–2012).

Lin and Vincent married in 1963. For each of them it was a second marriage; according to each of them it was a marriage of true soul mates. They built a home at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana where Vincent accepted a tenured professorship and Lin began her career as an assistant professor in 1965. In one view Lin went to IU on a “courtesy” appointment for the wife of an eminent senior professor. She was given an introductory class to teach at 7:30 am Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Whatever the university may have thought, neither Lin nor Vincent saw her appointment in this way. In an era where many institutions had nepotism rules that prohibited the appointment of more than one family member in a given department they sought a university that would offer

each of them a fully vested academic position. If they could not find such a professional home, they were ready to employ their talents in other ways. Indeed, they each had many skills and a vision of cooperative enterprise that included academic teamwork as one among several ways to contribute to a community.

Together they designed their unconventional home on the ridge of the Indiana Uplands. Lin, who had learned drafting from her father, a set-designer on Broadway and Hollywood, made the architectural drawings for the house. The design, which included a great room filled with Native American art and artifacts, featured a roofline based on the Northwest coast Indian longhouse, a cooperative dwelling that housed several individual family units and their common work and living spaces.

Together they designed and built their two-story cabin on the Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron. Again, Lin drafted the architectural drawings, and Vincent, with friends on the Manitoulin, felled the trees, planed the timbers, and built the structure, which served for nearly fifty years as their summer writing retreat.

Together they worked with a Bloomington master cabinetmaker to design and build furniture for both homes. They purchased paintings, pottery, and porcupine quill baskets from Manitoulin artists to adorn their homes. They helped finance artist co-ops and a jewelry making enterprise on the Manitoulin and gave back to the Bloomington arts community by helping local musicians and artists in myriad large and small ways. Together they also designed an institution known to its



friends as “The Workshop.”

Lin and Vincent created the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis (now the Vincent and Elinor Ostrom Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis) in 1973. According to Lin, The Workshop was Vincent’s idea; she had never thought of applying the principles of artisanship directly to an academic establishment. If that is so, and not merely a case of Lin’s humility but another example of her scrupulous attention to facts and profound honesty, she brought the dimension of empirical demonstration to the Workshop’s endeavor as no one else could.

Lin’s earliest writing came in the form of articles co-authored with Vincent, which explored the ideas that would become known as a “public choice” approach to the production and provision of public goods. When the Ostroms moved to Indiana, however, Lin recruited a cadre of graduate students to examine the theories of “polycentric governance” empirically. The theory had famously been expressed in 1961, by Vincent Ostrom, Charles Tiebout, and Robert Warren, in “The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry.” That article drew on a case study of the City of Lakewood, California, to show how smaller governing units, such as a newly formed city, may contract with more encompassing governing entities such as a county, for essential services including water provision. The Lakewood study was a forerunner of research on the Southern California “water service industry” (itself a novel way of describing public goods—viewed as “public economies”) that was the basis for Lin’s dissertation. These case studies



Photo: Barbara Allen

Elinor and Vincent Ostrom on a walk

built the theory, but Lin was intent on creating a more broadly based foundation of empirical work to examine and extend the propositions suggested by the California experience. From the research Lin and her graduate students did on the provision of police services to the later analyses of data on irrigation systems, fisheries, and forests, Lin’s work did that and more.

The theoretical inquiries into public economies suggested that there were types of “goods” that did not fall easily into the conventional dichotomy of “public” and “private” goods. There were also “common pool resources” or “CPRs” in the Workshop language. It may be difficult to imagine a time when social scientists had a difficult time describing situations in which a given resource



could be relatively freely accessed, as with a public good, but which also shared at least one characteristic similar to a private good: use of the good left less behind or perhaps even prohibited further use by later potential consumers. When situations known as “a commons” were discussed, it was to reach the dismal conclusions of Garrett Hardin, the scholar who, in 1968, revived the term “commons” to apply it broadly to a presumed problem population growth and the carrying capacity of the earth writ large. Hardin, as is well known, believed that humanity faced a “tragedy of the commons” unless authority stepped in to command reductions in human reproduction. Lin did not buy the diagnosis, prognosis, or “solution.” Her empirical work demonstrated that a resource could be governed by those who used and, often, held it in common. Lin did nothing less than show that people could be self-governing.

Such findings came at a time when most everyone else was looking in the opposite direction. The primacy of the conventional wisdom and the stature of scholars who held it cannot be overstated. Lin contested with an academic opposition of tremendous magnitude. She confronted scholars who had invested themselves in the study of the top-down administrative “answer” brilliantly and collegially, understanding that researchers who have dedicated themselves to one way of thinking may find it emotionally as well as intellectually wrenching to accept views calling their life’s work into question. Undoubtedly Lin’s gracious way of expressing her differences with the existing approach made the going much easier for the many others who accepted and followed her challenge. She

steadfastly maintained that there was no “one right way.” She said so not to mollify those who opposed her, but because it was true. We need diverse institutional forms because we face diverse challenges.

To cause such a revolution in thinking as that accomplished by Lin’s work on governing the commons and understanding institutional diversity required not only courage but also creativity; as much as anything, Lin was the consummate innovator in measurement and methodology. The police studies required citizen’s perceptions to be measured. To make sure that citizen’s perceptions of anything could be validated, perception must be matched to physical measures. To demonstrate that correlation, Lin took her team into the field with physical measures of street lighting and road roughness (yes, potholes) along with dioramas showing lighting conditions on a miniature replica of the streetlights and sidewalks and surveys for the citizens to view and answer. Few know what went on behind the scenes as graduate students and Lin worked out these measure or the coding forms to create a data set from case studies of the world’s fisheries or the physical measures of trees and correlated measures of community well-being and institutional development and change.

When Lin began to test findings of field research and ways of modeling results in lab experiments, the same creativity emerged. She moved quickly to experiments based on multi-level games and rule conditions because that was the complex environment of human lives. While social science generally looked for assumptions that would help simplify our



models, she challenged all of us not to turn away from complex realities. Her work had shown that parsimonious explanations are not necessarily simple explanations. In 2009, the award committee the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel recognized the compelling lessons of Lin's institutional analysis. She, along with Oliver Williamson, was awarded the "Nobel Prize in Economics." She, a political scientist, became the first woman to win the highest honor given in the economic sciences.

Lin downplayed the significance of breaking a barrier for women, but there was little doubt among her colleagues that she was a pioneer in this sense among many others. For Lin, the breakthrough of greatest importance was for interdisciplinary, or more accurately, transdisciplinary work. She maintained that the complex problems facing us required many minds and many approaches—teamwork of a level that few in academic settings would have the courage to ask or energy to sustain. For Lin, teamwork represented only another aspect of the complex realities of life in common, including the life of an academic endeavor, an intellectual commons.

Lin tackled complexity on every front: in her theoretical writing, in the organizational life of the Workshop, in the creation of an international network of research teams, in the lab and in the field. She taught teamwork and learning-by-doing. So, when she said in her Nobel Prize lecture that this was the "Workshop's prize" she meant that. But none of us who were associated with the Workshop believed that for even a second. Lin's empirical work made the

Workshop what it became: an intellectual home for careful theory building from precisely stated propositions, exacting empirical measures, painstaking implementation of research designs, and meticulous reporting of findings.

Our loss is profound. Our challenge is to employ in our work and pass to the next generation the principles that Lin taught: honesty and humility, teamwork and learning in action, following through however the path might weave in complex, polycentric, diverse dimensions.

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Recent Publications

Emily Castle

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Announcements

Send Letters and Announcements to Alyne Delaney, Editor, Commons Digest, Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University, Nybrogade 14, Aalborg 9000, Hirtshals, Denmark. ad@ifm.aau.dk Tel: +45 98 94 28 55 Fax: +45 98 94 42 68

IASC 14th Global Conference - Commoners and the Changing Commons: Livelihoods, environmental security and shared knowledge

IASC's 14th global conference will be our first meeting sponsored by resource commoners, and also the first to be held on a commons. The two chief sponsors for the meetings are Onshirin and RIHN. The Onshirin Regional Public Organization is a federation of 11 villages – Yamanaka-ko, Oshino, and 9 villages now amalgamated into Fujiyoshida City – that have shared the 8100 hectares comprising the commons of the North Fuji or Kitafuji slope since

the early 17th century. The Kitafuji commoners have struggled mightily, particularly over the last 150 years of economic modernization and political change in Japan, to maintain their commons, and we are immensely grateful that they are now welcoming us to their commons and plan to share their experiences and knowledge with us at the conference. RIHN, Japan's Research Institute for Humanity and Nature based in Kyoto, is an inter-university consortium established by the Japanese government's National Institutes for the Humanities, founded to promote 'integrated cooperative research toward the solution of global environmental problems' and to create the field of global environmental studies.

An IASC global meeting in Japan offers the opportunity to examine both newly created commons of the digital age as well as natural resource commons with very long history, and also to consider the experience and consequences of

bringing a system of commons through the processes of industrialization into an affluent society. Some themes are also inspired by Japan's experience with natural disaster and the global protests embodied in the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement. The field trips attached to the conference will of course include the opportunity to meet with commoners, visit the Kitafuji commons, as well as trips to forests, grasslands, irrigation works, geothermal hot springs commons, and fisheries.

The conference encourages panels, papers, and posters on the following themes:

- Commons and Social Capital for Livelihood Security in Crisis
- Commercialization and the Commons
- Urban Commons
- Collisions in Law and Culture
- Mobile Resources and Fluid Spaces
- Equity and Distributive Justice within the Commons
- State-Society Relations and the Protest Politics of Commons
- Commons, Complexity, and Multi-layered Governance
- Commons and Local Energy Alternatives in Climate Change
- The Global Digital Commons
- Biodiversity and Genetic Resources as Commons
- No-Consumptive Cultural Commons
- Campaigning on the Commons: Practical Lessons and Strategy
- Advancing Research on the Commons: methods, comparable data, and theoretical research frontiers

Special Issue on Latin American Commons by the *Journal of Latin American Geography*

IASC is very glad to announce that the *Journal of Latin American Geography* has published a special issue on Latin American Commons. This special issue features the work of several of IASC members interested in how Latin American commons are used and governed.

This issue includes some papers presented at the 13th Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of the Commons, held in Hyderabad, India, as well as others based on more recent work. All of them verse upon natural resource commons, and some of them have a regional focus on Central America, as well as on Latin America in general, while others have a national approach to Mexican, Costa Rican, Brazilian and Argentinian cases.

Readers may find the following articles on this issue: "Current Trends in Latin American Commons Research", by James P. Robson and Gabriela Lichtenstein, "When the State Supplies the Commons: Origins, Changes, and Design of Mexico's Common Property Regime" by David Barton Bray, "The Impact of Trans-National Migration on Commons Management among Mexican Indigenous Communities" by Daniel Klooster, "The Dynamic Forest Commons of Central America: New Directions for Research" by Iliana Monterroso and Anne M. Larson, "Institutional Arrangements for Adaptive Governance of Biodiversity Conservation: The Experience of the Área de Conservación de Guanacaste, Costa Rica" by Xavier



Basurto and Ignacio Jiménez-Pérez, "Research and Scholarship on Natural Commons in Brazil" by Cristiana Simão Seixas, Luciana Gomes de Araujo, Fernanda Binotti Piccolo, "Indigenous Lands, Commons, Juridical Pluralism and Sustainability in Brazil: Lessons from the Indigenous Lands of Raposa Serra do Sol" by Vincenzo M. Lauriola and "Guanaco Management in Argentina: Taking a Commons Perspective", by Gabriela Lichtenstein.

This effort aims at filling some of the knowledge gaps on how Latin American commons are used and governed, on topics such as how individual country experiences compare, or the degree to which commons regimes are struggling to persist or transforming to endure in the face of globalization and other contemporary challenges.

Interested readers may find more information on the special issue on Latin American Commons of the *Journal of Latin American Geography* site: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_latin_american_geography/toc/lag.12.1.html

Training Program on the Commons - Your input needed

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) is considering developing a training program on the commons, in collaboration with Countryside and Community Research Institute of the University of Gloucestershire (UoG), the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-UNAM, and the CGIAR Program on Collective Action and Property Rights Program (CAPRI).

This course grows out of a recognition that more training on commons issues will ensure that these issues have appropriate and informed voices and that the increasing number of researchers and practitioners addressing commons issues in their work have the necessary theoretical and empirical background. A tentative list of topics to be covered may be found below.

To help inform the design of this course we have produced a short survey, which we invite you to take either in English or Spanish. Your participation in the survey will help these organizations to design a training program that is suitable and interesting to potential participants.

Take the survey in English:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/commonscourse>

Take the survey in Spanish:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/cursos_comunes

Proposed list of topics (tentative):

Introduction to the Commons.

Biodiversity and forests. Covering issues such as: ecological principles, biodiversity as a "commons", forest rights, indigenous utilization, and the capacity for multi-functional use, Valuing biodiversity and influencing policy, and Carbon sequestration and the role of forests in climate change and environmental management

Water. Covering issues such as: water as a finite and shared resource, application of commons concepts to



water management under different conditions (trans-boundary management; inter-basin movement; within catchment management), legal regimes, water rights, and 'markets' for water

Marine resources. Covering issues such as: marine resources (fisheries, energy, minerals, navigation), Law of the Sea, Fisheries as closed and open access resources (includes range of case studies from different parts of the world), Regulating inshore and offshore fisheries as commons resources (inshore fisheries as community resources; social and economic impacts of regulatory regime change)

Advanced Commons Theory and Practice. Including Alternative approaches to commons management and governance, Game theory, 'new commons' and complex systems, Analyzing political and economic structures; exploring hierarchical systems

Climate change and the management of global commons. Including climate as a shared resource, the science of climate change, international law, analyzing international institutions.

First Edition of the Elinor Ostrom Award Results Announced!

After a process in which experts and the Award Council received many candidates and carefully evaluated them in three consecutive rounds, we are very glad to announce the eight winners of the First Edition of this Elinor Ostrom Award on Collective Governance of the Commons. The laureates are:

- *Practitioners:*
 - o Foundation for Ecological Security (India), for their extensive work with both communities and the government to strengthen the local management of the commons and supportive policies for equity and sustainability.
 - o The Open Spaces Society (United Kingdom), for their long stewardship of the commons and their impact on commons policy and management both in the UK and Japan.
 - o Grupo de Estudios Ambientales A.C. (Mexico), for their work to consolidate local rules into practice, particularly with ejidos and indigenous communities on forests management.
- *Senior Scholars:*
 - o **Ben Cousins** of the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (University of Western Cape, South Africa), for his multi disciplinary approach to explore how property rights and collective action arenas interact in agrarian settings where community management of land is crucial, for actively engaging with public policy in these areas, as well as for developing a community of scholars studying aspects of the commons.
 - o **Harini Nagendra**, Ramanujan Fellow and Urban Ecology Coordinator at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE, India), for her wide diversity of work, her innovation and her use of different methodological approaches, as well as for her active participation as a practitioner on the commons.
 - o **Charles Schweik**, of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (United States of America), for his innovative use of the Institutional Analysis and Development framework,



his long term commitment and impact in public policy around the topic of knowledge commons and his development of communities of practice and learning.

- *Young Scholars:*
 - o **Eduardo Araral** (National University of Singapore), for his work on multiple sector commons, his innovative approaches to the commons, his long-term commitment to the analysis of governance institutions and his impact on policies and consultancies, both locally and internationally
 - o **Michael Cox** of Dartmouth College (United States of America), for his innovative and collaborative work on Social Ecological Systems, his revision of the Ostrom design principles, and his widely comparative approach on the meta-analyses of large scale common-pool resources.

The pool of awardees shows the wide diversity of common-pool resources and the many ways in which individuals can cooperate to create, maintain, defend and manage commons. The younger scholars have a promising career in community building and in the analysis of their governance, while the more experienced ones have shown an extraordinary commitment to their analysis, creation and defence. On their part, the awarded organizations show the different ways in which communities and groups can organize to nurture and foster the commons.

The Award Council of the Ostrom Award would like to thank each and every one who collaborated with this initiative. The Ostrom Award itself works by the spirit of Elinor Ostrom, an exceptional academic leader who challenged the

conventional vision of individuals who act only as rational utility-maximizers and who was awarded the 2009 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

The Elinor Ostrom Award Council would also like to extend a particular recognition to the Ford Foundation, for granting the majority of resources which made this possible, and the Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (Conabio, Mexico) for their administrative support.

The Award Ceremony will occur during the XIV International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) Global Conference. For more information on the Ostrom Award and the upcoming IASC Global Conference, please visit <http://elinorostromaward.org/> and <http://www.iasc2013.org/en/>