

## **GRASS ROOTS MODEL OF CONSERVATION**

The Grass Roots Model of Conservation is a community-driven approach to preserving natural resources and the environment. It involves empowering local communities and stakeholders to take an active role in advocating for ownership, protecting their resources, identifying and addressing environmental issues and challenges in their own areas. This model emphasizes the importance of local knowledge and expertise, and seeks to build long-term and sustainable solutions that are rooted in local culture, values, and practices. To establish community power, participatory decision-making processes, local capacity building, advocacy and lobbying strategies are important. Additionally, reclaiming the power of citizens through economic democracy involves creating community-based economic institutions, engaging in local and regional planning processes, supporting political candidates and policies that prioritize economic democracy, and engaging in community organizing. **READ MORE (THEN GO TO THE FULL ARTICLE)**

A Grass Roots Model of Conservation is a bottom-up approach to preserving and protecting natural resources and the environment. It involves mobilizing local communities and stakeholders to take an active role in protection of resources and identifying and addressing environmental issues and challenges in their own areas. It also involves giving communities and citizens back the power, through ownership of their environment and natural resources and opportunities of economic empowerment.

This approach emphasizes the importance of local knowledge (*INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS*) and expertise, and empowers individuals and communities to develop and implement solutions that are tailored to their specific needs and circumstances by engaging and involving them in decisions regarding the using of their environment and natural resources. The Grass Roots Model of Conservation seeks to build long-term and sustainable solutions to managing the environment that are rooted in local culture, values, and practices.

This model of conservation recognizes that the health of the environment and the well-being of local communities are interconnected and interdependent, and that effective conservation efforts must take into account the social, economic, and cultural factors that shape the relationships of the people with the natural environment.

### **Establishing Community Power in Building a Grass Roots Model**

To establish community power in building a grass roots model of conservation, it is necessary to shift the balance of power from the status quo or corporate

power structures to local communities and stakeholders. This can be achieved through the following steps:

**Participatory decision-making processes:** Create a culture of community engagement and participation that encourages and empowers people to become active agents in shaping their own futures. By involving all stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of conservation projects, everyone has a say in how natural resources are managed, and the benefits are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

**Local capacity building:** Build local capacity through education, training, and skills development programs that empower people to take on leadership roles and make informed decisions about the management of their natural resources. This can include providing access to technical and financial resources, as well as building social networks and alliances that enable communities to work together to achieve common goals.

**Advocacy and lobbying strategies:** Develop advocacy and lobbying strategies that challenge the status quo and corporate power structures, and advocate for policies and practices that prioritize community empowerment and sustainable development. This may involve forming coalitions and partnerships with other groups and organizations that share similar values and goals.

### **Reclaiming the power of citizens through economic democracy**

Reclaiming the power of citizens through economic democracy in the arena of our natural resources involves establishing a more equitable and democratic system of resource management that prioritizes community empowerment and sustainable development. Here are the steps that can be taken to achieve this:

**Educate citizens about economic democracy:** Educate citizens about the principles of economic democracy, which emphasize democratic decision-making and the equitable distribution of resources. This can be done through community education programs, public events, and other forms of outreach.

**Create community-based economic institutions:** Develop community-based economic institutions such as cooperatives, community land trusts, and worker-owned businesses that are democratically managed and owned by local communities. These institutions can help to keep resources and wealth in the hands of the community, and provide opportunities for economic self-determination and empowerment.

**Engage in local and regional planning processes:** Participate in local planning processes to ensure that community interests and values are represented in decisions about the management of natural resources. This includes advocating for policies and practices that prioritize environmental sustainability and social justice, and challenging the influence of corporate interests in resource management.

**Support political candidates and policies that prioritize economic democracy:**

Support political candidates and policies that prioritize economic democracy and community empowerment in the management of natural resources. This may include advocating for policies such as community-based renewable energy programs, land use planning that prioritizes community needs, and stronger regulations to protect natural resources.

**Engage in community organizing:** Engage in community organizing to build or join social movements and coalitions that advocate for economic democracy and community empowerment. This involves building relationships with other community members, forging alliances with other organizations, and using a variety of tactics such as advocacy, protests, direct action, and media campaigns to raise awareness and build public support.