

Article

Intergenerational Dialogue, Collaboration, Learning, and Decision-Making in Global Environmental Governance: The Case of the IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability

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Abstract: This article provides evidence and a rationale based on adaptive governance studies for why creating meaningful youth engagement should be understood in terms of intergenerational dialogue, collaboration, learning, and substantive decision-making in global environmental governance. We have centered our discussion on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as the largest global conservation organization. Through an organizational ethnography approach, we have demonstrated how generational concerns within the IUCN have been framed in terms of participation, and then present the IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS) as a case study of a grassroots movement that is focused on transforming the IUCN towards being a fully intergenerational global governance system for nature conservation. We have described the development of intergenerational thinking and action within the IUCN, and discussed intergenerational governance as being essential for addressing nature conservation challenges faced by local communities in times of increasing global uncertainty. We conclude by providing recommendations for enhancing intergenerational dialogue and building intergenerational governance structures within global conservation organizations.

Keywords: global environmental governance; intergenerational collaboration; intergenerational decision-making; intergenerational dialogue; intergenerational learning; international; IUCN; biodiversity conservation; nature conservation

1. Introduction: Global Environmental Governance and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Global environmental governance organizations are currently vexed by increasingly rapid environmental change and conservation issues that are confounded by large-scale, protracted conflict and humanitarian crises such as war and the global refugee crisis [1,2]. Leadership within nature conservation organizations is struggling to respond to such complex challenges and new forms of support are required towards developing long-term strategic planning and on-the-ground action [3]. Connected to this is a significant policy and planning gap within conservation literature and practice regarding the role of intergenerational collaboration in global governance processes [4,5]. This gap exists despite ongoing acknowledgements by global organizations of the importance of considering “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, as was famously articulated in the United Nations Brundtland Report “Our Common Future” (1987) [6], which, despite critiques and updated thinking, continues to be a touchstone for sustainable development discourse and practice [7]. In referring to future generations, the Brundtland Report forms a key foundational document for the emerging recognition of intergenerational governance as a principle of governance of global resources. Other important global environmental governance movements and frameworks such as the Earth Charter (2000), initiated by the United Nations (UN) and carried forward by over 6000 diverse organizations and individuals (including IUCN and UNICEF), include language explicitly stating a shared responsibility to youth and future generations [8]. More recently, the UN Secretary-General’s Report on Intergenerational Solidarity and the Needs of Future Generations (2013) emphasized the importance of focusing on environmental management and stewardship with regards to the needs of future generations [9].

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the largest global conservation organization (by number of members), has also made efforts to focus on young and future generations, motivated especially by the former South African President Nelson Mandela’s address to the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban, which challenged conservationists to engage more meaningfully with young people.

It is well known that, among those who are preoccupied with the future of protected areas, there are a great many grey heads and far too few youthful ones. I am told that under-representation of the youth is a widespread phenomenon in many fields associated with protected area management. This is of course a matter for concern because without the involvement of the youth, the future cannot be secured [10].

The IUCN’s organization structure is composed of 1300 member organizations and states, six Commissions of experts working in different focus areas, and a decentralized Secretariat accountable for the administration of the IUCN Global Programme [11]. Since Durban, young IUCN Commission members have been making efforts to engage youth (defined by the IUCN as being up to 35 years of age) and make intergenerational connections throughout the Union via supporting young professional networks and activities led by IUCN Commissions [12]. However, despite such efforts, the IUCN continues to struggle and has been criticized for not institutionalizing youth engagement in the structure of the IUCN. For example, the WCPA Young Professionals Pact, which emerged from the 2013 IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, noted a lack of intergenerational equity within environmental governance and called for youth to be “engaged in decision-making in every level”, including at the global level [13]. The response of the IUCN to the ongoing push for intergenerational collaboration has been to put “engaging the next generations” back on the agenda for the IUCN World Conservation Congress to be held in Marseille in 2020, which will set the global conservation

agenda for the following four years [14]. Furthermore, the IUCN 2017–2020 Programme emerging from the 2016 IUCN WCC in Hawai'i states:

Over the long term, IUCN's Mission, and the global agenda for 2030, depend as much on people caring today as caring tomorrow; it depends as much on the leaders of today as the leaders of tomorrow. IUCN will ensure that young people can find their place in the 2017–2020 Programme, and challenge all parts of the Union to inspire youth to take forward the cause of conservation and sustainable development, but also to be inspired by the energy, passion and commitment of a new generation In particular, there is a need to inspire and engage youth and to promote stronger intergenerational partnerships. IUCN's Commissions have a critical role to play in attracting and inspiring young people to value nature and to become involved in nature conservation and sustainability issues. [15].

Statements like the above demonstrate a clear intent by the IUCN to make significant efforts to create intergenerational collaboration in conservation; however, it remains unclear whether institutions like IUCN are willing to change their governance structures to institutionalize intergenerational collaboration and meaningful engagement of young people at all levels of decision-making.

This article uses a framework based on adaptive governance to critically present the experiences of an intergenerational, grassroots initiative's journey and achievements towards formalization within the IUCN. The framework and our organizational autoethnographic approach allowed us to explore youth engagement within global environmental governance in terms of dialogue, collaboration, learning, and substantive decision-making. Through our organizational autoethnography, we present the IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability as a case study of a grassroots movement that is focused on transforming the IUCN towards being a fully intergenerational global governance system for nature conservation, and demonstrate how generational concerns within the IUCN have been framed in terms of participation. We discuss intergenerational governance as being essential for addressing nature conservation challenges faced by local communities in times of increasing global uncertainty. We conclude by providing recommendations for enhancing intergenerational dialogue and building intergenerational governance structures within global conservation organizations.

2. Framing Intergenerational Collaboration: Dialogue, Learning, and Decision-Making in Global Environmental Governance

Identity and sociohistorical contexts are inextricably linked, and understanding personal identity and intergenerational dynamics requires an awareness and accounting of macrosocietal changes and political, economic, and cultural variations within governance systems [16]. In particular, compared to previous times in history, younger generations have increasingly begun to play a stronger role in civic engagement and are demanding new roles and new governance systems [17]. The desired role of youth has shifted from having "their voices be heard" to youth being able to have a more direct impact on the development of policy and other guiding frameworks that may affect their communities and global issues. For instance, in October 2019, millions of school-goers across the world marched in the Global Climate Strike in order to demonstrate solidarity and demand action to address climate change [18,19]. Spearheaded almost entirely by youth leaders, especially Greta Thunberg, a teenage activist from Sweden, the movement is characterized by large numbers, peaceful demonstrations, and young protestors [20]. Greta Thunberg's speech at the 2019 UN Climate Summit in New York illustrated the desired shift of power in the youth environmental movement.

You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you. We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not. [21]

Despite standing to benefit immensely by drawing on intergenerational platforms, multilateral systems have engaged only partially with the youth climate action movement and have continued to fail to involve youth leaders substantially in decision-making forums. For instance, the UN Climate Summit hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations engaged Greta Thunberg and other leaders of the climate marches during the Youth Climate Summit. This was the first time that the UN had convened a summit for young people [22]. However, although the Youth Climate Summit included events with appearances by leaders of both sides, the events only superficially involved youth to “showcase their solutions” [23], and there was limited strategic engagement or policy dialogue including youth. It can be argued that the isolation of the Youth Climate Summit from the UN Climate Summit created limited outcomes for both in terms of creating tangible outcomes for fighting climate change. A more strategic engagement between the two (as alluded to in our framework of intergenerational governance) could have created advantages for all.

The shift towards leadership and grassroots action by youth has led to the need to develop frameworks for critically understanding the integral components of intergenerational governance and how they might interact as a complex and adaptive governance system. Broadly, “intergenerationality” refers to relations and interactions between generational groups [24–26]. There is a strong link between environmental governance and the concept of intragenerationality, with intergenerationality as either an enabler or precondition to sustainability. For example, Trovato and Guiffrida referred to the concept of “intergenerational solidarity” as the commitment of one generation to another to “guarantee the freedom of choice about the availability of natural and cultural resources” [27] (p. 2). Sovacool and Bulan stated that equity, including intergenerational equity, is one of the seven principles of sustainability (among prudence, responsibility, precaution, justice, governance, and compatibility) [28]. Other scholars have made critical links between intergenerationality and how a governance system might adapt to take on qualities that are necessary for adaptive governance and resilience [29–31]. Berkes and Ross provided a set of essential qualities that are necessary for community resilience [29], which have been related to intergenerational governance [29]. These qualities are: (i) “people–place connections”, (ii) “values and beliefs”, (iii) “knowledge”, (iv) “skills and learning”, (v) “social networks”, (vi) “engaged governance (involving collaborative institutions)”, (vii) “a diverse and innovative economy”, (viii) “community infrastructure”, (ix) “leadership”, (x) and “a positive outlook, including readiness to accept change” [29].

In the face of the global environmental issues that are hallmarks of the Anthropocene, such as climate change and alarming losses of biodiversity, approaches to management that include intergenerational participation and adaptive learning will be essential [32–34]. For example, Isogai et al. identified the disruption of intergenerational knowledge transfer as a source of vulnerability in the face of a changing climate, and stated that “the loss of knowledge, coupled with an accelerated rate of environmental change, has made it challenging for northern Indigenous communities to adapt, and has the added potential to increase Indigenous youths’ vulnerability to climate change impacts” [33] (p. 45). Such challenges indicate the clear need to build support for environmental governance systems to adapt, such as frameworks that demonstrate pathways for intergenerational collaboration, dialogue, and learning. It is clear that intergenerational governance and the inclusion of youth is recognized as being essential for resilience at the local/community level [29–31], and it is also well acknowledged that community-level participation in global environmental governance is essential for developing equitable and effective policies and guiding frameworks [35,36]. Therefore, the link between intergenerationality and global environmental governance is an important one that remains unclear in the literature, requiring the development of a new guiding framework within which to critically understand the movement towards intergenerational global environmental governance.

In order to frame how systems for global environmental governance can include intergenerational collaboration and learning, we must work with a definition for governance that can account for groups of people, such as young people, who might be marginalized and working outside of organizational decision-making processes. We found that Kooiman’s definition of governance as

“the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities” [37] is suitable for this purpose. Kooiman’s definition creates the space to consider how processes such as collaboration and learning work towards overcoming structural barriers towards meaningful intergenerational participation and adaptive governance. How institutions are defined is also important to understanding how they might be transformed through adaptive processes, such as learning [37]. To this end, we used Crawford and Ostrom’s characterization of institutions as the structures, rules, norms, and shared strategies that manifest in a variety of formal (e.g., the IUCN) to less formal (e.g., an ad hoc community group) social–political organizations [38].

Figure 1 illustrates our framework for global environmental governance as an adaptive intergenerational system. The framework highlights the intergenerationality of communities, as well as their qualities of resilience. Such communities are affected by global (e.g., climate change) and regional (e.g., deforestation) environmental degradation and crises, and in turn respond through various forms of physical, social, and/or political action. Global organizations that play central roles in directing and suggesting pathways for environmental governance (e.g., the IUCN) can benefit from the qualities of intergenerationality and resilience intrinsic to communities by engaging them in processes that also lead to two-directional dialogue and learning (e.g., learning by people in communities and global conservation organizations). However, in order to create outcomes for environmental governance, including meaningful outcomes for communities, participation, dialogue, and learning must result in substantive decision-making, which often includes institutional transformation to support such new forms of decision-making [39,40].

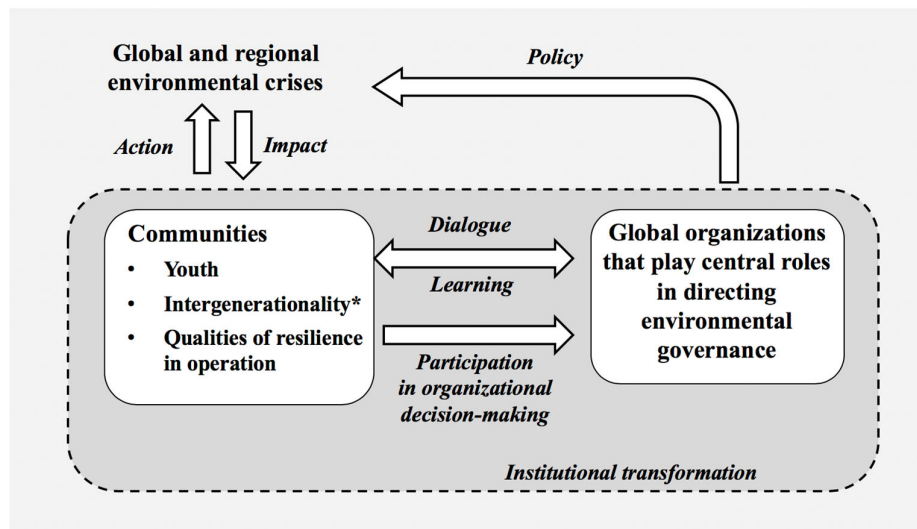


Figure 1. Global environmental governance as an adaptive, intergenerational system.

Guided by this framework, the following section focuses on the case of intergenerational partnership in the IUCN.

3. Approach: An Organizational Autoethnography

The authors of this manuscript were a global team of IUCN Commission members and environmental professionals (e.g., professors, NGO managing partners, government scientists, private environmental consultants): the Co-Conveners of the Task Force for the IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS). The IPS is a case study well suited for generating knowledge relating to intergenerational global environmental governance because it is an example of a grassroots intergenerational movement that has become formally recognized as an IUCN working group. We used an organizational autoethnography approach to our self-study [41,42], which has high potential to contribute to understanding of organizational development and

the development of new governance systems [41]. The autoethnographic approach has roots in qualitative anthropology and sociology, and involves people being able to reflect on and describe their own experiences according to their own perspectives—an approach that has proven to be particularly important for accounting for the perspectives of people who are often marginalized in sociopolitical systems [42]. Boyle and Parry qualified the organizational autoethnographic approach as having three main elements: (i) “has the ability to connect the everyday, mundane aspects of organizational life with that of broader political and strategic organizational agendas and practices”, (ii) “is more likely to unearth and illuminate the tacit and subaltern aspects of organization”, and (iii) “is effective for exposing the vulnerable self through autobiographical processes [which] can be fraught with personal and professional risk” [41]. An organizational autoethnographic approach extends the self-reflection beyond the individual to the organization [41,42]. This approach therefore enabled us to be reflective about our experiences through the sharing of key moments (e.g., IUCN Resolutions) in the organizational development of the IPS along with the narrative (including meta-narrative, in particular around challenges) of our collective experiences. We highlighted dialogue, collaboration, learning, and decision-making through our organizational autoethnography according to the guiding framework for intergenerational global environmental governance as an adaptive system (Figure 1). We have used a third-person style to report the results of our co-constructed organizational autoethnography, into which relevant literature and policy events are also woven to provide richness and credibility to the IPS narrative [41].

4. The Emergence of the IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS)

4.1. The IUCN IPS: Toward Intergenerational Decision-Making

Overwhelmingly initiated by young people in partnership with members of more senior generations, the IUCN has passed important resolutions on youth engagement and intergenerational partnership and has, to a certain extent, included young people in intergenerational dialogue and decision-making, including on IUCN Commission Steering Committees and on the IUCN Council. The IUCN has not, however, transformed itself as an institution to fully integrate an intergenerational approach in environmental governance processes. While a movement for youth engagement and intergenerational partnership is alive and well within the IUCN, structural changes have not been forthcoming.

As mentioned in the introduction, there was a strong call at the 5th IUCN World Parks Congress in 2003 in Durban, South Africa for greater youth engagement and intergenerational partnership in the Union [43]. Resonating from Mandela’s strong words was the development and commitment by the IUCN Council to Outcome 6 of the Durban Action Plan, “Younger generations are empowered in relation to protected areas” [43]. This outcome represented the first step for young leaders within and engaging with IUCN Commissions and programmes of work to be officially recognized. Furthermore, Outcome 6 called on the Council to establish an “inter-Commission task force on intergenerational integration within IUCN” to develop “a comprehensive programme of work to encourage institutions and organizations to engage younger generations (as well as older people) in decision-making” and “monitor the participation of younger people” [43]. Inspired by Durban, Resolution 3.029 was passed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in 2004, calling for the “capacity-building of young professionals within the Union” [44]. Furthermore, the Declaration of CIVICUS’s first ever Youth Assembly, held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2007, was titled a “Call for Intergenerational Collaboration—Make Change Happen” [45]. With contributions from the International Youth Coordinator at Earth Charter International at the time and future member of IUCN’s intergenerational movement [46], the Declaration called for intergenerational dialogue and action on key, interrelated social and economic challenges, as well as on ecological crisis.

Young people are those who are currently feeling and will continue to feel the brunt of the depletion of natural resources, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity. Although some steps have been taken, the current economic and political system has shown almost no commitment to finding meaningful solutions to the ecological crisis. If trends continue at

current rates, ecological disaster will devastate life on Earth, rendering all development efforts futile [45].

Taking up this momentum, the current youth and intergenerational movement within the IUCN started in earnest leading up to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain in 2008 with the participatory development of a “Framework for Forming Intergenerational Partnerships for Sustainability” at the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education in Ahmedabad, India and at the 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development at UN Headquarters in New York City, United States [47]. The framework informed the drafting of the Earth-Charter-inspired Resolution 4.098 on “intergenerational partnership: Fostering ethical leadership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world,” which was sponsored by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the UN-mandated University for Peace, and the Center for Environmental Legal Studies at Pace University and was adopted by the IUCN Members’ Assembly at the 2008 Congress [48]. Conceptualized in Ahmedabad and leading up to the same Congress in Barcelona, a “Buddy Experiment” was organized by Earth Charter International and the Hect Consultancy in collaboration with the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC; see Section 4.2).

In parallel with supporting the development and adoption of such resolutions, young people across the IUCN, with the support of some of their senior counterparts, were taking action to get involved in IUCN decision-making processes. The IUCN’s six volunteer commissions were a natural entry point, with more young people becoming members and even serving on Commission Steering Committees, for example on the 2008–2012 Steering Committees for the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) and the World Protected Areas Commission (WCPA). These young Steering Committee members purposefully focused simultaneously on youth engagement and intergenerational partnership, forming Young Professionals Networks (YPNs) within their respective Commissions that worked across generations to help deliver on the Commission’s mandate. Other Commissions followed suit with increases in youth membership, appointment of young leaders to Steering Committees (e.g., the Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP), the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), and the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)), and development of Young Professionals Networks [49]. This process was strongly supported by articulate advocacy from young and senior members within the respective Commissions.

Momentum for youth engagement and intergenerational partnership continued to grow through concrete dialogues and partnerships (see Section 4.2) as well as further resolutions and publications, such as Resolution 8 on “Young professional involvement in Nature Conservation and the IUCN WCPA”, passed at the 9th World Wilderness Congress in Merida, Mexico in 2009 with leadership from WCPA YPN members [49], and a featured article the same year on “Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability” in the Soka Gakkai International Quarterly, putting forward the emerging principles and spirit of the growing intergenerational movement [50]. Members of CEC’s YPN connected youth and climate in articles entitled “Children’s Climate Forum in Copenhagen: Let’s engage in intergenerational partnership!” in 2010 [51] and “We’re in This Together: Five reasons why young people are needed to solve the climate crisis” in 2011 [52]. The CEC’s YPN also conducted and published a survey of Commission Chairs in 2011 on the value of “Youth Engagement and Intergenerational Partnership across IUCN Commissions” [53]. This was intended to encourage greater and more meaningful participation of young people on Commissions, collaborating across generations to deliver on both Commission mandates and the IUCN’s vision of biodiversity conservation.

Leading up to the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, South Korea, and led by the CEC and CEESP YPNs, many of these same young people convened an informal task force on Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS Task Force) with their guiding principles taken from Resolution 4.098, which that they had co-written: “fostering ethical leadership for a just, sustainable and peaceful world” by recognizing and affirming that “many young persons have well-informed, insightful, and innovative contributions to make towards conservation research and decision-making processes, strategic planning and policy-making, and effective action projects and programmes” [47]. Though the IUCN Council had committed to establishing such a task force

through the Durban Action Plan eight years before [43], it took a grassroots, intergenerational movement to do so. The task force has sought to influence the highest decision-making level of the Union (Figure 2), particularly influencing implementation of its programmatic work and governance. In 2011, in its first publication, the task force surveyed over 250 young professionals from across all IUCN Commissions in order to contribute to the design of the IUCN programme for 2013–2016, which was open for review by IUCN Members and Commissions [54].

The 2012 Congress was a major success in positioning intergenerational partnerships in the IUCN, e.g., through Resolution 008 on “Increasing youth engagement and intergenerational partnership across and through the Union” [44]. This resolution was collaboratively sponsored by over 10 IUCN members, including state and non-governmental organizations, and drafted by a diverse team of young professionals and their senior colleagues. The Congress also saw an unprecedented level of engagement with and by young people, including multiple action-oriented workshops, publications (e.g., *Community Voices* by Zurba et al. 2012) [55], and a logo competition and launch for the IPS movement. The IPS Task Force organized an intergenerational engagement workshop through which a strategic, Union-wide plan on mainstreaming intergenerational partnerships in IUCN programmes was shared and further developed. An YPN member from India who had dedicated himself to working on coastal conservation was honored with the first-ever CEC Chair’s Youth Award. Additional youth awards were subsequently organized by more Commissions, e.g., CEL, CEM, and WCPA. Though ultimately unsuccessful, the Congress also saw a young woman from Canada running on a youth engagement and intergenerational partnership platform for a seat on the Council. Given the renewed focus and momentum, the 2012–2016 Council appointed a young Kenyan woman, a Co-Convener of the IPS Task Force, to the Council within the year.

Following the Congress, members of YPNs from across Commissions remained active in environmental governance processes. Intergenerational partnership was a cross-cutting theme at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney in 2013, when the WCPA YPN led the development of “Our Pact for Parks, People, and the Planet,” an urgent, rousing call to intergenerational action [13]. The 2013 World Wilderness Conference in Salamanca, Spain adopted Resolution 9 on co-creating “a new generation of conservation”, supporting young conservation leaders and Resolution 10 on “The critical importance of youth and young professionals as rising leaders in successful nature conservation and human development” [50].

In less than a year after its establishment, the IPS Task Force was led by a young team of Co-Conveners representing all Commissions and had 100 members of different ages representing more than 40 countries [49]. The 2012 Congress had helped to solidify the vision of the IPS Task Force to “Develop and strengthen intergenerational dialogue, learning, and collaboration between established and emerging sustainability leaders across and through the Union that increase critical thinking, creativity, and strategic action for biodiversity conservation.” The central goal of the IPS movement is to “Contribute to enhancing current and emerging leadership—especially within and through the IUCN—to help address complex global challenges, especially climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, and gender inequity” [49]. The IPS is a model of collaboration based on “respect and care for the community of life, the Earth, and future generations” (Earth Charter, 2000, [8]). It consists of exchange of experiences and new ideas, collaboration, and action between women and men of different generations and cultures, working toward the common vision of a “just, sustainable, and peaceful world” (Earth Charter, 2000 [8] and IUCN Resolution 4.098 [48]). The “IUCN Task Force on Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability” was formally recognized by the IUCN Council in 2014, in large part due to the efforts of the IPS Task Force Co-Convener who had been appointed to the Council. The leadership of the Task Force embraces intergenerationality by seeking advisors from the various Commissions, Council, and Secretariat. It embraces inclusivity, ensuring a representation of each active Commission and continent where IUCN has a presence. This allows for the inclusion of diverse issues relating to intergenerationality and biodiversity conservation.

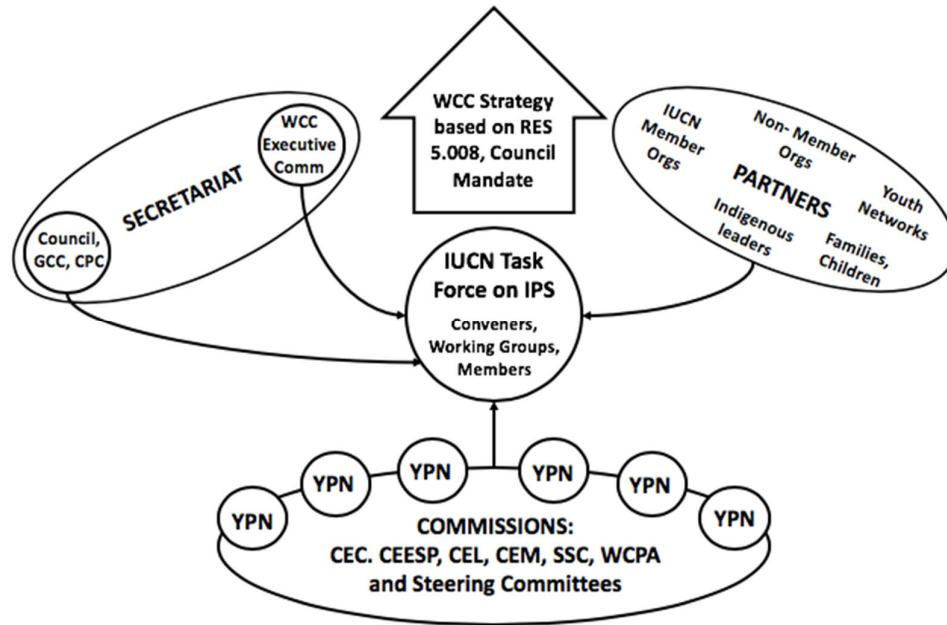


Figure 2. Diagram of the IPS movement in and beyond the IUCN. WCC: World Conservation Congress; YPN: Young Professionals Network; IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature; IPS: Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability; CEC: Commission on Education and Communication; CEESP: Commission for Environmental, Economic and Social Policy; CEL: Commission on Environmental Law; CEM: Commission on Ecosystem Management; WCPA: World Commission on Protected Areas.

The IUCN IPS Programme for the 2014–2018 period included three areas of work. Under the first area—increasing youth participation and intergenerational partnerships across and beyond the IUCN—the IPS Task Force and YPNs advocated for the inclusion of young persons in substantive decision-making through IUCN leadership roles in the Commissions and in the Council. A limited number of intergenerational capacity-building activities and internships were designed and implemented. The IPS movement also continued to advocate for the participation of young people in strategic conservation events with, for example, the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in 2016 highlighting intergenerational partnership as a cross-cutting theme. Under the second area of work, the IPS Task Force collaborated with IUCN Members, Secretariat, Commissions, and other partners to establish stronger partnerships. Several of these partnerships, for example with Parks Canada, funded the participation of young people in environmental governance events. Though unsuccessful, the IPS Task Force also worked closely with the IUCN Secretariat to establish an Intergenerational Fund through IUCN, its member organizations, and partners to fund participation of youth in conservation decision-making processes, as well as concrete, intergenerational projects for biodiversity conservation. Under the third area of work, the IPS Task Force worked on enhancing knowledge and action on conservation of nature across generations. The main activity relating to this area of work was the successful implementation of the iAct Dialogues for Sustainability (see Section 4.2). This increased outreach and awareness led to creative communications and publications, e.g., the IUCN Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) publication for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Despite having been recognized by the IUCN Council in 2014, the IPS Task Force and YPNs have never had a budget or a formal role in the IUCN governance processes. The appointment of YPN members to Commission Steering Committees and of IPS Task Force members to the Council has remained ad hoc. The IPS movement operates on the sidelines. Aside from occasional project-specific funds, the Task Force’s leadership and YPN members have worked on a voluntary basis with no dedicated, paid staff to support their initiatives. A precedent for truly integrating IPS across the full

Union is the way in which the IUCN's dedicated Global Gender Office integrated a gender-sensitive approach in all IUCN Programmes.

All the same, the IPS Task Force has made considerable achievements because it remains committed to the benefits that can be realized by engaging in intergenerational partnership within and beyond the IUCN, e.g., as stated in its online literature:

- improving communication and understanding between different generations;
- sustaining values in society, while allowing flexibility for change;
- enhancing decision-making related to sustainability;
- improving intergenerational equity; and
- ensuring better outcomes for sustainability projects.

There has been increased engagement of young people within the IUCN Commissions, Secretariat, and Member Organizations. Dialogue on the meaningful engagement of young people in conservation has continued at the Council level, with some elected Councillors choosing to dedicate themselves to this agenda.

4.2. Examples of Intergenerational Dialogue and Learning

While most of the work of the IPS Task Force has been conducted at the international level with a focus on governance (see Section 4.1), the individuals involved have often been drawn from or work with local communities. Efforts at the global and local levels have proven to be mutually supportive, with one bringing meaning to the other. A key result of advocating for youth engagement and intergenerational partnership has been the intergenerational dialogue that started to take place in the governance processes and programmatic work of IUCN member organizations and other partner organizations, focused from the global to the local levels. Such advocacy also led to increasing numbers of IUCN Commission members coming from marginalized groups, such as Indigenous communities. Young Commission members who engaged in IPS dialogues and projects were often empowered by the experience to lead conservation initiatives in their home countries, an indication of the inspiration they received from these dialogues and of the benefits of having more senior partners in the conservation movement.

Since 2008, YPNs and, since 2011, the IPS Task Force have implemented multiple projects in collaboration with partners. These have modeled different forms of intergenerational partnership, originally identified at the first workshop on "Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability" organized by Earth Charter International at the 4th International Conference on Environment Education in Ahmedabad, India in 2007, including:

- pairing individuals from different generations in "buddy" relationships to enhance exchange and learning on conservation;
- supporting young people to engage in pertinent scholarship and providing a platform for disseminating and applying their research;
- advocating for and co-designing meaningful internship opportunities for young people in the IUCN Secretariat, as well as in NGOs, governments, and businesses;
- advocating and securing funding for young people to be included in NGO and/or country delegations at global governance events for sustainability;
- encouraging youth organizations to engage in exchange and mutual learning with more senior professionals on projects and programs;
- encouraging networks and organizations from different generations to co-manage sustainable development and peace building projects; and,
- highlighting local and Indigenous communities in which exchange and learning is encouraged and practiced between generations, as well as highlighting parents and children living intergenerational partnership within and through their families.

The remainder of this section describes two examples of projects that modeled specific forms of intergenerational partnership.

4.2.1. The Buddy Experiment

An early initiative in intergenerational dialogue, the Buddy Experiment was organized by Dominic Stucker of Earth Charter International, Frits Hesselink of the Hect Consultancy, and the CEC in collaboration with the Global Youth Action Network, TakingItGlobal, Peace Child International, Peace Child Peru, Youth Action for Change, and UNEP's South Asia Youth Environment Network in 2008. The Buddy Experiment paired young people from these networks who were new CEC members or aspiring to become CEC members with senior CEC members for exchange, mutual learning, and, in some cases, collaboration. The 80 pairings bridged sectors, countries, cultures, and, of course, generations. Organizers sent a monthly prompt to participants to encourage different topical exchanges over the five months leading up to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain that same year, at which some buddy pairs had the chance to meet in person. Participants communicated mostly by email (78%), but also by phone (8%) and online text chats (7%).

Varied programmes matching seniors and juniors for the purposes of learning have demonstrated that both individuals learn from the process and that attitudes towards the other generation can shift for the better. This kind of model is ideal in diverse conservation institutions intending to include young people as new players in conservation science, governance, and collaboration. Core conservation values can be retained and passed down to younger generations, while fresh questions and solutions can encourage concrete action. Indeed, 92% of surveyed Buddy Experiment participants said that they would participate again. Participants reported benefits in the form of new inspiration (55%), new ideas (55%), contact with a new culture (49%), strengthening of capabilities (30%), new skills (28%), working together on a joint project (26%), and increasing their level of confidence (26%). At least 50% of surveyed participants reported that the Buddy Experiment is a useful model for:

- learning for young professionals (83%) and senior professionals (50%);
- exploring a career for young professionals (64%);
- professional development for young professionals (61%);
- stimulation of intergenerational partnerships (60%);
- improving mutual understanding between generations (58%);
- introducing young professionals to IUCN (55%);
- identifying new talent among young professionals (55%); and,
- attracting new members to IUCN and the Earth Charter (51%).

Furthermore, participants reported these benefits: “a reality check for senior professionals and decision-makers” (43%), “improving sustainable development decision-making” (35%), and “professional development for senior professionals” (24%) [56]. There is high potential to continue such Buddy Experiments in the IUCN; however, this will only be possible if the Secretariat, Commission Chairs, and/or Member Organizations draw on their budgets to financially support the organization and facilitation of such intergenerational partnership.

4.2.2. The iAct Dialogues for Sustainability

Running from 2013–2015, the iAct Dialogues for Sustainability were a series of online and in-person, action-oriented, intergenerational dialogues on key sustainability topics. The IPS Task Force partnered with Sustainability Leaders Network and Earth Charter International to organize these events, describing them as “... interactive, global webinars [and events] that inspire intergenerational discussion and collaboration on sustainable planetary futures. The “i” stands for intergenerational, interactive, insightful, and inspirational, with a focus on action, literally ‘I act for sustainability.’” [45]. Each event included: (1) an introduction to the topic by selected experts, practitioners, and community leaders from across generations, (2) breakout groups for discussion, and (3) reconvening the group to share insights and action steps. iAct’s stated goals are to:

- “Stimulate intergenerational dialogue on sustainable planetary futures,
- Connect a global, intergenerational network of dialogue participants; and

- Inspire informed and innovative action among network members for sustainability outcomes.” [57]

Core partners collaborated with the WCPA YPN, CEESP YPN, CEC YPN, GENERATE Network, and Sibthorp Trust to organize various dialogues, with sponsorship from the Sibthorp Trust, as well as from IUCN, UNDP, and the Global Environment Facility through the “GEF—Inspiring Protected Area Solutions” program.

The launch dialogue was a webinar on “Development and Conservation Conflict” that attracted 30 participants who, after hearing from speakers, identified key challenges and questions and proposed solutions for increasing resilience of natural and social systems at multiple levels. The speakers were Roger Crofts, Chairman of the Sibthorp Trust from United Kingdom; Mama Aleta, Indigenous Mollo Leader and 2013 Goldman Environmental Prize Winner from Indonesia; Alicia Jimenez, Project Coordinator at Earth Charter International from Costa Rica; and Barkha Mossae, Second Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration, and International Trade and Curator, Port Louis Hub of the WEF Global Shapers Community from Mauritius.

A series of three events was then organized leading up to, during, and following the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia in 2014. The pre-Congress webinar was focused on “Global Contributions to the New Social Compact: Towards effective and just conservation of biological and cultural diversity.” After learning about the New Social Compact from speakers—Nigel Crawhall, Director of the Secretariat for the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee from South Africa and Meher Noshirwani, Consultant and Researcher on gender and environment issues and Technical Advisor to the Trust for Conservation of Coastal Resources from Pakistan—the 23 participants engaged in discussion groups on the key World Parks Congress themes of climate change, extractive industries, and governance, equity, and rights. Participants offered solutions-oriented ideas to help ensure that biodiversity conservation and social justice are mutually supportive.

Building on these outcomes and integrated into the “Inspiring a New Generation” stream at the Congress that was co-led by the IPS Task Force and Commission YPNs, an iAct Dialogue was organized at the Congress itself titled “Intergenerational Dialogues for Protected Areas Management.” The 35 participants from different generations engaged in dialogue through three concrete case studies: A New Generation of Marine Conservation; Global Youth Biodiversity Network; and Seniors’ University. Discussion groups focused on how intergenerational learning and collaboration can advance conservation and protected areas management. These speakers set the context for and also facilitated discussions: Mariasole Bianco, Founder and Director of WorldRise from Italy; Shailyn Drukis, Founding Member of Global Youth Biodiversity Network from Canada; and Dr. Anna Kalinowska, Director at University of Warsaw, Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainable Development from Poland. The session provided a safe and creative space that inspired transformative dialogue on how intergenerational exchange, mutual learning, and collaboration advances conservation and leadership in protected areas management. Based on feedback, participants left inspired and confident that they could initiate intergenerational dialogues in their own institutions and spaces of work and life.

As a follow-up to the Congress, an iAct Dialogue was organized on “Our Pact for Parks, People, and Planet” to raise awareness about Our Pact, inspire action, and generate ideas for wide dissemination. The pact itself was developed at the Pre-Congress Young Professionals Capacity Building Workshop in Australia, organized by the WCPA YPN. Speakers were Elaine Hsiao, PhD candidate (at the time) at the University of British Columbia from the United States and Taiwan and Rebecca Koss, Partner at Dalton Koss HQ from Australia.

In addition to very positive feedback from event participants, the iAct Dialogues for Sustainability concept were named a finalist in Sustainable Silicon Valley’s “Planetary Sustainability Competition” and—of 108 entries—came second place in the popular vote. Jury Members stated that “iAct is a valuable platform for fostering intergenerational dialogue, pairing youth with mentors, and working to promote improved understanding of sustainability concepts” [57].

4.3. Challenges to Active Engagement in Substantive Decision-Making

The development of the IPS as an official entity within the IUCN has led to significant opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and learning, as is detailed in the above sections. In this section, we address our learning as it relates to challenges. In particular, we highlight the challenges in linking our successes with dialogue, collaboration, and learning to substantive decision-making within the IUCN. This level of decision-making, which occurs at the levels of the Commissions and the Secretariat, is essential for formalizing youth decision-making and institutionalizing intergenerationality into global environmental governance through the IUCN [38–40]. The IUCN Secretariat hires young professionals on a regular basis, and thus provides youth with opportunities to train and connect to the world of conservation. However, rarely do these positions provide a space for innovators to act as “disruptors” and to open doors to change. In addition, time-limited, project-based positions often limit continuity of a person within the organization over time. Finally, for those operating from the outside, as in Commissions or in member organizations, the modes of communication—most often online rather than in person—are not suitable to support internal critical reflection and change. IPS has advocated on several occasions for structural changes to how young professionals are formally integrated into the Union through direct communication with IUCN leadership and through IPS events (e.g., iAct Dialogues, Congress events), and have met limited success. Efforts to effect structural change have resulted in further invitations to participate in dialogue sessions that were geared towards youth and had limited engagement with senior IUCN officials. During IPS meetings, the members of the Task Force for the IPS have acknowledged that the participation in substantive decision-making remains as a significant structural barrier to IPS (and other intergenerational/youth movements) becoming a significant contributor to global environmental governance. Furthermore, the lack of inclusion in substantive decision-making has prohibited learning at the level of governance [58] where rules, norms, and principles are formed [30–32].

5. Discussion and Recommendations

Intergenerationality is fundamental to the discussion on global uncertainty. In the last ten years, the challenge of global uncertainty has seen the emergence of young and intergenerational leaders, such as Greta Thunberg, who have asserted the need to focus on intergenerational equity in global governance [20]. For the youth and intergenerational movements, engagement with multilateral governance systems can provide sophistication, access to networks, increased resources, clear articulation of needs and aspirations, and increased organization. The potential benefits for multilateral systems are far higher. Full integration of an intergenerational approach can provide them with enhanced local knowledge, legitimacy, social capital, visibility, and political currency. Intergenerational approaches to global environmental governance also increase the potential to contribute significantly to the local achievement of global targets and frameworks [59], such as the Sustainable Development Goals. It has been observed that when generations are brought together it challenges the conventional approaches to governance and helps to build bridges between individuals of different generations from the local to global levels [4]. For example, in most developing countries, where the youth population is increasing, there is a need to continually provide spaces for inspiration and collaboration towards supporting the development of young people’s identities and livelihoods. Intergenerational collaboration supports this kind of work, whereby generations work towards shaping their respective identities and pursuing collaborative projects to address conservation, sustainability, and livelihood priorities [60].

Despite an obvious interest in youth and intergenerational exchange, the institutions that are involved in global environmental governance are often large bureaucracies that are slow to change [60], and often seem impenetrable to those on the outside [61]. These characteristics run counter to their roles in developing approaches and solutions to a rapidly changing world. Transforming institutions to be inclusive of intergenerational collaboration, dialogue, and learning holds great potential for enhancing the resilience and efficacy of global, multilateral environmental governance processes [29–31].

The IPS movement has made several important strides in intergenerational collaboration, dialogue, and learning. However, the institutional behaviour of the IUCN has not changed fundamentally, and the IUCN as a multilateral system for global environmental governance has not adapted in response to intergenerational collaboration. Through our work in the IPS, we have identified several structural barriers to intergenerational governance, and have assembled the following set of recommendations for moving forward in creating intergenerational global environmental governance:

1. ***Institutionalize meaningful ways for youth to contribute to the mission of the IUCN by creating and funding positions for young professionals.*** In order to have an influence on global environmental governance through the IUCN, it is necessary for there to be concrete and meaningful roles for youth to contribute to the shaping of the structures, rules, and norms that are behind such institutions [38]. As a first step, create official positions for young people within the IUCN Secretariat (including regional offices), on the Council, and on Commission Steering Committees. Through such roles, youth can collaborate with senior colleagues and mentors and play various roles in the Union, including participating in substantive decision-making relating to IUCN programmes and other governance forums, such as IUCN World Conservation Congresses. Formal institutionalization of youth roles within the IUCN holds great potential for enhancing the sustainability outcomes of programs delivered through the IUCN [28], as well as for enhancing the organizational adaptive capacity and resilience of the IUCN [29–31].
2. ***Establish consistent and long-term financial support for the engagement and participation of youth and for intergenerational collaboration.*** Movements and formal organizations such as the IPS Task Force often struggle financially, work on highly limited capacity, and are often supported solely through volunteer hours (see Section 4). This type of financial inequality marginalizes youth and their allies from other generations and stifles intergenerational collaboration [62]. Organizations like the IUCN work within specific funding streams and budgets, and need to be accountable for their staff time. We recommend that the terms of reference for all IUCN Secretariat staff (including regional office staff) integrate responsibilities for engaging young people and collaborating across generations. Appropriate positions across all programmatic areas should strongly encourage and seriously consider applications from young professionals. We recommend that youth engagement and intergenerational collaboration be embedded in the Union by transforming the IUCN IPS Task Force into a permanently funded “Office for Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability” in the Secretariat and Regional Offices. IPS should be embedded as a priority strategy in each four-year IUCN Programme, accompanied by related budgetary items, and/or receive a permanent budget line that is not susceptible to changes in the IUCN Programme. The latter could take the form of the IPS Fund proposed in past resolutions.
3. ***Implement official and continuous mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue, collaboration and two-directional learning.*** Mechanisms that support intergenerational dialogue, collaboration and two-directional learning will be essential for supporting adaptive governance and the resilience of global environmental governance [29]. The Buddy Experiment and the iAct Dialogues for Sustainability are two key examples and road maps for other mechanisms which, if supported financially and otherwise, will enhance intergenerational collaboration across all programmatic areas of the IUCN. Such mechanisms connect generations through iterative processes that provide foundations adaptive governance, which is essential for multi-lateral organizations like the IUCN that are tasked with responding to and developing solutions at times of global environmental crisis [4,33].
4. ***Integrate approaches that link conservation frameworks at the local level to global environmental governance processes.*** Intergenerational dialogue, collaboration, learning, and substantive decision-making at the global level will only create positive outcomes for environmental sustainability if such processes are informed by local-level knowledge and realities and lead to action on the ground. Therefore, it will be important that local people, including Indigenous peoples and people of different genders, races, cultures, and countries be

involved in intergenerational global environmental governance. By creating stronger intergenerational links between the global and local levels, the potential for place-based knowledge to enter governance and for governance to affect local action will increase [4,60].

The above recommendations have the potential to (re)build a sense of intergenerational responsibility towards biodiversity conservation that can address global concerns in a manner that is more equitable and sustainable [62,63].

6. Conclusions

Intergenerational participation in substantive decision-making has not yet been realized and youth continue to be marginalized in global environmental governance. Participation in substantive decision-making will be essential for global organizations to continue to be adaptive and enhance their resilience in the face of ever-worsening environmental crises. Several lessons about the potential for intergenerational collaboration and institutional adaptation can be gleaned from the journey of the IUCN IPS. Our autoethnography revealed that the IPS has been most successful in facilitating dialogue across generations, an essential aspect of the work being conducted by the conservation and sustainability communities. Before the IPS, networks of young professionals struggled to fit into the IUCN, but the IPS dialogue platforms created a space for listening across generations with respect, suspension of judgment, and a desire to collaborate. Several mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue for sustainability have been modeled and documented. These should be shared and adjusted to reflect the needs in communities around the world in which dialogue is key to moving forward on sustainability aspirations. Our recommendations for structural changes to the institutional constraints to intergenerational global environmental governance within the IUCN are grounded in the IPS experience, which has involved global intergenerational participation over several years. We acknowledge that in addition to institutional constraints, policy barriers have also been identified as common constraints for communities in their decision-making, potentially impairing adaptive capacity [64]. Therefore, policy will also need to reflect a transition to intergenerational governance and priorities, and information from the local level must also be applicable and actionable again at the local level so that communities and organizations may confront environmental crises through governance systems reflected in broader policy. This is an additional area where the IPS could focus future work and provide leadership. Finally, such global processes must remain closely linked to the local level with unwavering commitment to collective leadership and collective action for bringing about a more sustainable future [65–67].

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