During more than two and a half decades of engaged scholarship in northern Ecuador, I have documented ways multi-ethnic racial actors have confronted and helped shape strategies for development.\(^2\) In the early 1990s, global and national policies facilitated extrac- tive development and economic restructuring, which contributed to monetary changes, including the dollarisation of the Ecuadorian economy in the year 2000. At the same time, the final decade of the twentieth century marked a global era when scientists called attention to the importance of biodiversity and rain- forest conservation. Ecologists and conservation organisations prioritised the preservation of Intag cloud forests for their endemic biocultural diversities and vast hydrology resources. Intag’s culture and landscape became ground zero for debates about political ecology: many local citizens formed alliances with advocates of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation, while others backed projects for industrial copper extraction and a more centralised approach to governance. During 1995–2012 the rural population reorganised and halted two transnational corporations from gaining a foothold in the region, opting for sustainable alternatives (CMI 2007). Elected to office in 2007 with support of a broad coalition, Rafael Correa first instituted a moratorium on industrial mining and focused on integrative development. In 2008 the Constitution of Montecristi recognised rights of its pluri-national peoples and of Nature. Since 2009, the Correa administration pushed through a Mining Law and restricted civil liberties, while at the same time increased funding for social assistance programmes for the poor.

In this article, I discuss sustainability literacy as it first evolved in opposition and as an alternative rhetoric to mining. I document processes Inteña(o)s employed to increase their civic participation. They created a social movement built upon innovative synergies that linked communities of practice across cultures. Not only were individual women and men empowered and able to collaborate in new ways, collectively they began to make structural changes in their society. As primarily subsistence farmers managing fragile subtropical zones, Intag women and men had to ‘read the landscape’ in ways that guaranteed them livelihood and cultural rights, while considering...
future generations. To do this many of them applied specialised knowledge, skills and social cooperation to cultivate a living on the steep subtropical Andean slopes. In general, residents based their socioeconomic worldview on fundamental concepts that equated healthy forests with clean and abundant water, pure air, and held communities and hillsides intact.

‘Sustainability’ at first was a foreign construct; however, notions about protecting water resources were integral to local sustenance and culture, while being conversant in development rhetoric opened political and economic spaces. Active citizens have since constructed a working ‘sustainability literacy’, which consists of social inclusiveness in political processes, priorities of economic justice, and effective stewardship of forest ecosystems. Their actions reveal ways that an eco-dialogic (that acknowledges cross-species interactions) broadened their lexicon about rights, while creating practices for watershed conservation and biodiversity conservation. Their knowledge sets have led to new forms of social and political organisation, and nested communities of practice that are concrete and virtual, local and global. Even so, environmentalism continues in Intag to be a contested arena, where arguments for ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ sustainability play out (Whitehead 2014). The examples below illustrate how individual and collective actions have created a fluid concept of sustainability, adapted to specific contexts.

After a brief discussion of the social and ecological contexts of Intag, I focus on ways that rural citizens generated innovative institutions. First, I describe the emergence and work of the Asociación Agro-artesanal de Caficultores de Río Intag (AACRI) (Intag River’s Association of Small Scale Coffee Farmers) and ways that agro-ecological knowledge promoted sustainability through possibilities for increased and sustained income. Second, I briefly describe the history of the community newspaper Periódico Intag as it evolved into a vehicle for sharing information among communities of practice, while tracing and guiding the evolution of Intag’s vision of sustainability. Third, I explore the history of the Coordinadora de Mujeres de Intag (CMI) (the Intag Women’s Coordinating Committee) and our collaboration in envisioning, designing and implementing a household survey that quantifies and qualifies some of the local population’s priorities, definitions of sustainability, progress made and goals for the future.

Social and Ecological Contexts

The Intag-Manduricasos (Intag) region (150,000 hectares) is located in northwest Ecuador and covers six sub-tropical western parishes in Cotacachi County and one parish in Otavalo County, all within Imbabura Province. Intag is situated on the steep occidental flanks of the Andes that extend from 650 metres above sea level (in the western-most subtropical region) to 4,000 metres (in the Andean region). In addition to human settlement, the slopes and valleys are covered with remnant cloud forests, abundant rivers and streams, agricultural lands and degraded lands, a marble rock pit, a lime/cement quarry and an underground gold mine. Ecologists identify Intag-Manduricasos as one of the planet’s most biologically diverse areas, where two of the planet’s thirty-four conservation hotspots intersect (Meyers 1997; Wilson 1992). Andean cloud forest landscapes consist of micro-ecosystems with endemic species adapted to particular altitudes, gradients, location on the mountain (southern and northern exposures differ with regard to the amount of sunlight and/or soil type), and rainfall. These subtropical forests, some of the wettest places on earth, cover vertiginous slopes that are subject to frequent landslides, particularly in the rainy season from November through May. Transportation is slow along the two secondary and multiple tertiary dirt roads and footpaths that connect hundreds of farms, approximately ninety hamlets and six parish seats, or towns, to municipal seats in the Andean zones.

Intag families live in dispersed rural communities, in small hamlets or on isolated farms. According to the 2010 census, the area’s population (in Cotacachi County) was approximately 12,000 people or 2,800 households. Most families’ economic base included small-scale agriculture and cattle-raising, and often depended upon remittances from relative(s) who migrated to cities in Ecuador or as far away as Spain. The 2010 median household income in Intag was 234 dollars per month – based on sales of mostly agricultural products (including primarily cattle, corn, beans, sugar, coffee and fruits). This figure is complemented by the value of subsistence foodstuffs (cassava, beans, fruits, chickens, eggs, milk, pigs and myriad other agricultural products), home/farm ownership, other unremunerated services (López Oropeza 2011) and the Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH) (the government’s social welfare payment to vulnerable families – $50 (U.S.) in 2013). A diversified livelihood portfolio requires knowledge of various crops, the seasons, the rural topography, changing climate and markets; as well as organising/participating in work groups, labour, transportation and local culture. It most likely also includes at least one family member working in an urban centre in Ecuador or abroad. A 2012 survey indicates that most families (97.2 per cent) indicate
relative satisfaction with their lives and an openness to new ideas.

The Emergence of a Glocal Approach to Sustainability

Conflict is the midwife of consciousness. (Paulo Freire)4

In the early 1990s, after a World Bank sponsored geological mineral study identified copper and other minerals in soils of primary forests of the Toisán Range, Bishimetals, a junior partner of Mitsubishi Corporation was granted a mining concession and set up initial explorations adjacent to the community of Junín. While the minerals resources (less than 1 percent) attracted extractive capital and industry, the primary forests that buffer the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve attracted global conservation groups. The community of Junín became ‘ground zero’ for a conflict between extractive and sustainable development. Continued steps towards extraction – and resistance to these has ensued: in 1998 local activists pressured Bishimetals to exit the region, and in early 2007 responding to local concerns the national government cancelled the Canadian company Ascendent’s concession after paramilitaries attempted to establish a mining camp.

Most residents did not accept the extractive narrative as fait accompli. Faced with the prospect of mining, they began to redefine their roles as forest stewards who had rights to clean water and adequate livelihoods. External attention and funding provided residents with tangible economic alternatives, training and workshop funding, and organisational support. The influx of global conservation interests, NGO support, students, nature tourists and academic researchers also helped highlight Inteña(o)s’ roles in their communities and the value of their culture. These cross-cultural collaborations evolved into local ideologies of social justice, livelihood rights and water security.

Indeed, through these processes, local organisations emerged that were linked to global ideas about cultural rights and the value of forest conservation. These combined with rural knowledge regarding sustenance and social organisation to create a new definition of sustainability. In the early 2000s, several Intag activists commented that the initial mining threat had ‘awakened them to revalue their culture and biodiversity’. At meetings, workshops and other activities, Intag citizens voiced visions for the future, and they co-created innovative social and operational structures that spanned across communities and cultures. Not unlike Freire’s theory of literacy where learning is built upon continual active and reflective processes (1970), many Inteña(o)s began to transform their understandings of themselves, their communities and the world. They improved upon agro-ecological techniques and procured skills to deliver community ecotourism services. As they did so, they gained scientific insights and relied upon their traditional ethos of social reciprocity to get things done. In Intag, the lexicon of ‘sustainability’ was new, but principles of collaborative protection of the commons and mutual respect were already fundamental to socio-ecological survival.

As Intag’s social movement emerged, charismatic leaders expanded political openings for direct participation, and county residents experimented with decentralised notions of governance (Ortiz Crespo 2004). The municipality of Cotacachi County won global awards for participatory democracy5 and international support poured into Intag for conservation and ‘sustainable’ development. Village councils in more than forty-four communities took on greater responsibilities to oversee watershed reserves that had been purchased and titled in the community’s name with the coordination by grassroots environmental organisations and outside funds. Regionally, Inteña(o)s were also active in parish and county/municipal governance through the Asamblea de Unidad Cantonal de Cotacachi (AUCC) [Cotacachi Assembly for County Unity]. Intag citizens’ actions for environmental protections contributed to the 2000 Ecological Ordinance (EO) of Cotacachi County, a precursor to Ecuador’s 2008 Constitution of Monticristi, which was internationally acclaimed for guaranteeing the rights of nature and Pachamama as well as universal rights to sumak kawsay, or well-being.6
Local and Global Interests Converge: GLOCAL Prescriptions for Sustainability

I resided in Andean Ecuador for nearly nine years with my children (1989–1997). We began visiting the Intag region in 1989 and became friends with an expansive family who made Intag their home. They had a nascent ecotourism business, stewarded primary forests and did some small-scale farming. After a poacher targeted the habitat of the Andes spectacled bear on their land to harvest its gallbladder for Asian markets in the early 1990s, my engaged-scholarship began. Since then, I have documented and been involved with ways diverse perspectives have merged and been infected with environmentalism in Intag.

The impact of experiences living in Intag has been substantial—through leadership roles in organizations, bringing visibility to Intag’s struggles and forming alliances with outside organizations, international visions (volunteers, peace observers and other activists) that provide knowledge, collaboration and support. Eco-tourists and others show how much the world cares about Intag’s biodiversity, and revenues from their stays provide income and prove that eco-tourism is a viable social. As of 2017, 20 percent of survey respondents from a representative sample of foreigners indicated that they had interacted with foreigners, of those most liked the experience, which included financial support for high school student transportation, eco-tourist residencies and educational assistance.

The convergence of discourse and actions from the inside and outside of has created intensities in the form of social, political and productive innovations, which add up to more than the sum of their parts. For example: German residents who choose green energy for their homes have the opportunity to contribute funds (on their electric bills) to promote sub-tropical forest conservation. These funds are managed by GLÖ-Landes Regionalverwaltungen, and in Intag with coordination from DECOIN and other NGOs. The German contributions have facilitated, among other projects, the purchase of community forest and watershed reserves; restoration of community-managed tree nurseries; environmental education in the school; and the construction of eco-tours in Intag. One tale from old German boy was so moved by stories from Intag that he collected recyclables for a year, which he cashed in for more than five hundred dollars to provide fruit trees of an elementary school in Vielgrüne Parish.

Similarly, Rainforest Concern, a registered charity in the UK works on collaborative projects for biodiversity conservation in Ecuador and around the globe. The director commented regarding donors’ motives in 2010, ‘You may or may not have been in paradise, but one thing for sure is that you can help to save a bit of paradise on earth’. Rainforest Concern has funded the purchase of community forest reserves and education projects.

The Sixth Club, located in Japan, supports ‘low alternates’ in Japan and Ecuador and has offered assistance to AACRI and local handicraft producers of CMI. In 2009 the Club invited two Intag women to give seminars on their work in Tokyo and other Japanese cities. Moreover, the Sixth Club works with the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia and supports an ‘integrated lifestyle model’ in Intag, in part by assisting volunteers with skills in permaculture and other appropriate technologies.

These and other organizations have brought professional biologists, NGO workers, students, academics and volunteers from all across the globe. Young adults who visit Intag are generally captivated by the local culture and biodiversity, and inspired by the power of civil society for the common good.

Figure 2

Intag’s Glocal Expressions of Sustainable Development:

This is imagination. This is the possibility to go beyond tomorrow without being naively idealistic. This is Utopianism as a dialectical relationship between denouncing the present and announcing the future. To anticipate tomorrow by dreaming today… (Paulo Freire)7

Defining Glocal Sustainability through Coffee? AACRI and How Apuela became the Coffee Capital of the Region

In March 1998, leaders from DECOIN helped form the Asociación Agroartesanal de Caficultures Río Intag (AACRI), whose mission as stated on its website is ‘to encourage agro-ecological practices through the production of organic coffee and endemic forest species in order to create fair trade certification and access fair trade markets’. Based in Apuela, AACRI successfully links farm families across scales through extension agents, community workshops and to Ministerial, bilateral, transnational NGO support and fair-trade markets. In recent years, many farmers have increased their coffee production through access to credit for inputs and extension consults. An AACRI storage centre in Apuela provides farm services, where coffee collection, quality control and processing take place in preparation for distribution to local, national and export markets.

Global narratives about rainforest conservation and sustainability (including sustainable development) first became prominent in the 1990s. In 1987, the UN Brundtland Commission had published Our Common Future, which injected ‘sustainable development’ into the global lexicon. It boldly promoted an integrated approach to development: or ‘a way of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This ethos, complemented by the United Nations 1992 Rio Environment Summit and the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, redefined ‘development’ to change practices on the ground. Sustainable development was envisioned as intertwining economic security with environmental protection and social equity. These priorities were further developed through the compilation of the United Nations Millennial Development Goals in 2000.

AACRI put this lexicon of sustainable development into action: shade-grown coffee has meant diversified agro and non-agro forestry management. With approximately 400 families as members and 150 families as active producers (as of 2012), AACRI has played a regional role in disseminating precepts of sustainability, gender inclusiveness and strategies for organic crop diversification. This has appealed to many local men and women who have expanded their kitchen gardens. As one of AACRI’s first hired extension agents pointed out following five years of work, AACRI had challenged prevailing gender norms by opening up socioeconomic spaces for women. She noted that USAID and other funders had required membership accounting for gender and differently abled persons’ participation; adding that women now had ‘voice and vote’ at AACRI assemblies, previously the exclusive domain of men.
Figure 3

AACRI has contributed to a new model for sustainability in Intag even as many coffee farmers still approach coffee production with a critical eye. In summer 2013 one hundred pounds of their organic high-quality shade-grown coffee sold for $200 (U.S.) compared to $150 (U.S.) for non-pedigreed coffee. Even so, some farmers complained, ‘That price doesn’t leave the producer any profit’. Although Río Intag Coffee offers a special niche price compared to the commodity price on the New York Mercantile Exchange, coffee production leaves most families with only a small supplemental income. They are not convinced that coffee farming will yield utopia; however, it has increased in the region, and helped to diversify family incomes and promote social rights and agro-ecology.

Periódico Intag: Codifying and Communicating Global Sustainability

In summer 2000, local activists met in Apuela to identify communication gaps in their social movement. In order to strengthen their message and broaden their reach, they started Periódico Intag (2000–2011), a community newspaper. The masthead ‘El Primer Periódico Independiente del Rincón más Bello y más Verde del Ecuador’ [the First Independent Newspaper from the most beautiful and greenest corner of Ecuador] framed its mission, which documented the evolution of and helped define sustainability in Intag for over a decade. An expatriate writer and historian (originally from the United States) volunteered as editor. She collaborated with and trained local reporters at weekly interactive workshops. The editorial board included members of local civic organisations and held reporters to high standards ‘to communicate truthful and verifiable content’ (PI 2000). In their first issue, they explained their objectives, which included critical approaches to development, enhanced opportunities for literacy and the importance of free speech and a free press. The newspaper played both an instrumental and generative role in the movement’s definition.

Periódico Intag encouraged local literacy by offering information and opinions pertinent to local realities. Concurrently, it was a potent symbol that reaffirmed the worth of local actors, their discourse and their right to dissent. Editorials often took a critical view while discussing local education and exposing boondoggle development projects (projects that are valuable in appearance only). Investigative reporting brought debates into the public square: for example, in 2004–2006 Periódico Intag reported details of how the Canadian...
mining company Ascendant had illegally purchased homestead lands in Junín and utilised heavy-handed tactics in their attempt to initiate exploratory activities. In response the company tried (unsuccessfully) to sue the editor for a million dollars in a libel suit.

*Periódico Intag* promoted participatory democracy by advocating water and food security and economic justice through concentric circles of involvement. I, like scores of others from the U.S., Europe and Japan, subscribed to stay informed about events and activities. Young Germans in their gap year, U.S., Italian and Spanish students and volunteers contributed their energy and commitment for periods of up to a year, and sustained interest and support upon returning home. Beginning in 2007, the newspaper helped link political and other socio-environmental institutions via online Spanish and translated editions sent to English- and German-speaking readers. *Periódico Intag* communicated ideas and encouraged dialogue – an iterative creation of glocal activism – and concurrently documented and facilitated the development of other ventures for sustainability. However, according to its former editor, *Periódico Intag* folded in 2011 as funds for print media dried up. While the newspaper closed, it left behind a legacy of challenging outside interventions, public transparency and a staff of trained reporters who now apply those skills in community radio and other outreach activities.

*Sustainability as Participation and Inclusion: Women’s Rights as Human Rights*

Gender equity entered the glocal discourse through new opportunities for civic participation and challenged local gender norms. Most women assisted their partners in small-scale agriculture production, while provisioning food and water security to their families. Domestic work kept them on the frontline of public and community health, and they often were the first to experience detrimental environmental impacts. In particular, their preoccupation for clean water was linked to their priority of human health and forest stewardship. Women were opening political spaces civically and advocated for economies of care that were socioecologically inclusive. In the mid-1990s, national legislation in Ecuador for the first time provided legal protection against domestic violence and highlighted the value of women’s contributions to and positions in society. At the county level, the Cotacachi Women’s Coordinating Committee formed to advise the municipal/county government. In Intag, women formed the *Coordinadora de Mujeres de Intag* (CMI) in 2002 to serve as an umbrella for local groups, and to advise the municipal coordinator. Both groups received financial and technical support from Spanish non-profit (food-security aimed) *XARXA de Consum Solidari* and the municipal government of Barcelona, Catalonia. CMI brought together ten grassroots women’s groups in the subtropical Intag zone. They focused on food security issues linked through their ‘gendered perspectives, solidarity, diligence and optimism’ (CMI 2007). Collaborators from Barcelona supported community participation within municipal and parish governments. Each of CMI’s ten women’s groups (sisal artisans, aloe soap makers, ecotourism operators, agro-ecologists and others) asserted their presence in regional, local and household politics as they stepped into new social roles.

As an umbrella organisation, CMI’s member organisations (and their members) were proactive in defining sustainability on their own terms and in using their definitions to guide the future of the Intag region. In 2007 with technical and financial support from *XARXA* and drawing on experience of its members, CMI’s leadership completed and published a Plan de Vida 2007–2011 (Life Plan), which gave a brief socioecological overview of the region, a history of the CMI and, importantly, outlined CMI’s socioeconomic goals. I met with CMI’s leadership in early 2012 and members expressed interest in learning more about women’s rights and in finding ways to improve their households’ economies. Through a series of informal and later formal conversations, we decided to design and conduct a survey – as a means to reflect upon progress and gaps made since the 2007 Plan. One leader pointed out, ‘Rural women have the right to live in peace’. According to her ‘peace’ meant ‘living at home without violence, in the community without strife and within natural systems without degradation’. One leader reiterated that to be heard, one has to participate: ‘Democracy is the faith in something that can be done, to be free to debate and/or express oneself, and to be represented. Concerning the economy’, she added, ‘we organise for mutual assistance and harmony, food security and sovereignty, clean water, and the democratisation of buen vivir [living well]’. The 2012 survey was designed to build upon local knowledge and concerns, and was conceptually guided by the CMI research team and upon Inteñas’ visions initiated in 2006–7.

**Quiénes Somos: Cómo Estamos: CMI 2012 Survey Results**

The survey highlights local values both in terms of how the questions were designed and the responses
gathered. Inteñas’ focus upon questions linked to socioecological wellbeing demonstrates their priorities. Generally, the responses (83.7 per cent) show that understandings of sustainability and environmental care have grown in recent years. Their participatory approach with new technologies of local governance, including discourse and development projects, has been particularly successful in linking communities of practice to watershed management and forest conservation.

We trained a local research team, which conducted extensive interviews with women (oftentimes with their partners) from 592 households in six parishes, or 20.41 per cent of Intag’s families.6 The CMI research team recorded responses to the eight-page survey on paper. Later, a team of Winona State University (WSU) students and a statistics class helped process the quantitative and coded-qualitative data into graphs. I compiled and synthesised results and we published those in a booklet (CMI 2013) distributed among CMI members and parish and county officials.

Survey results show that mutual respect, clean and abundant water are key cultural values linked to household, community and forest health – consistent with CMI’s particular concerns for peace and sustainability. Respondents’ nuanced views reveal their regard of forests for long-term human wellbeing and biodiversity. Overall the results tend to show that environmentalism (as promoted by civic and other groups such as DECOIN, AACRI, Periódico Intag and CMI) has resonated and taken hold. More than two-thirds (67 per cent) of respondents indicated that their community owns its watershed reserves, from which we may infer that women and their families were directly involved in community forest management in some capacity – as is traditional with regard to community projects concerning common resource properties. Almost 60 per cent of respondents reported having participated in local and regional assemblies, which points to their involvement in local governance.

More than 97 per cent of respondents to the question ‘Do you enjoy living in Intag?’ report satisfaction: despite conflicts over development models and economic challenges, Intag women chose to live there (as stated by several respondents) for the ‘tranquility and rich family life’. Reading the landscape for long-term sustenance corresponded to participation in their communities. Of all respondents, 98.8 per cent believed they should conserve forests. They correlated healthy forests with water security, purified air, a place for humans and animals to live, timber, firewood, ecotourism and recreation. More than 70 per cent of respondents indicated they did not approve of industrial mining as a regional development initiative for a variety of reasons – including the fact that extractive development creates social divisions in communities, adversely impacts health and degrades water quality and agricultural lands. Of the remaining respondents, 8.5 per cent were ambivalent to the question of mining, less than 5 per cent did not have an opinion, and 14.23 per cent supported mining as an opportunity to earn wages.

Conclusions

Intag women and men have evolved a modus operandi that is collaborative and intercultural with an emphasis on socioecological wellbeing within contexts of mutual influence. Since 1996, regional actors such as DECOIN, Periódico Intag, AACRI, CMI and others have promoted innovative narratives of sustainability, participation and social equity in Intag. In 2011 the newspaper was dissolved and the staff transformed its mission as the Casa Palabra y Pueblo to provide access to information through community radio, Internet, library and education facilities. AACRI and CMI maintained outreach activities that involve women and men in sustainable practices. DECOIN continued prioritising forest conservation and environmental education. Such communities of practice are nested and stem from basic household concerns about water and food security. Those priorities are linked to global conservation issues. Inteña(o)s’ proactive and generative approaches to environmental rights offer creative solutions and solidarity across scales.

In spite of all these changes, as a concept alone sustainability does not resolve the social and ecological issues in Intag and problems exist within each institution, including funding challenges, transparency and leadership development. New pressures have arisen as Ecuador’s current national government granted the Llurimagua mining concession to a Chilean company in 2012, while insisting that ‘responsible mining’ was possible and that Ecuador should not act like ‘a beggar sitting on a bag of gold’. Nevertheless, the examples discussed above show that after more than a decade and a half of increased civic participation in Intag, community-based and regional environmentalism have endured with practices infused with intercultural and gendered ideologies.
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Notes

1. Glocal is the connectivity and co-presence of local and global people, ideas and institutions.

2. My engaged work began in the early 1990s and I was a founding member of DECOIN. I have assisted in grant writing on various projects and volunteered as a journalist and supporter for the community newspaper. I have attended scores of meetings and assemblies, and engaged U.S. and Ecuadorian university students in civic outreach and intercultural exchange projects.

3. Intag-Manduriacos is the western-most part of the subtropical zone of Cotacachi County. Manduriacos is located in the lowest altitudes of García Moreno Parish and is differentiated by its relatively recent human colonisation, tropical climate and a ‘wild west’ type atmosphere. The AgroIndustrial gold mine is located near the village of El Corazón, where illegal logging of primary forests in not uncommon, and a large hydroelectric dam on the Guayllabamba River is being built near the village of Cielo Verde.

4. According to biologist Norman Meyers (1997), much of the world’s biodiversity is located in small areas of the planet. As much as 20 per cent of the plant species and a still higher proportion of animal species are confined to 0.5 per cent of Earth’s land surface. These species are endemic to their areas, so if the local habitats are eliminated, these species will suffer extinction. The Intag region is threatened with habitat destruction.

5. The bono or social welfare payments of $35 per month subsidised households in need and was increased to $50 per month in mid-2012 prior to the 2012 presidential elections when Correa won a decisive victory. However, for provincial, county and parish elections on 17 February 2013 Correa lost in all ten of Ecuador’s largest cities (the office of mayor) and half of the provinces. Cotacachi County elected a candidate from the alternative Buen Vivir Party, and in Intag, the Parish Presidents and Boards had mixed results with both Buen Vivir and Alianza País members elected.


8. During his three terms as mayor, Tituana’s administration won international awards, including the International Prize Dubai, UAE, for ‘Best Practices’ in 2000; the InterAmerican forum via the ‘Dreamer Prize’ in 2001; and UNESCO’s ‘Cities for Peace Prize’ in 2002.

9. The 2008 Constitution of Monticristi was ushered in by the Correa era of the ‘Citizen Revolution’ and hailed internationally for guaranteeing respect for the rights of nature, or the Pachamama (a multi-
cultural nod to the Kichwa Mother of the Cosmos), universal rights to *sumak kawsay* (another nod to Kichwa ideology referring in this case to an integrated well-being). However, in 2012 many citizens were wary of what they termed the administration’s ‘double discourse’: the contradictions were clear in the supposition that industrial mining was the path to *sumak kawsay*/well-being as political authority was re-centralised.

11. The survey was conducted in the six subtropical parishes of Cotacachi County: Apuela, Plaza Gutiérrez, Peñaherrera, Cuellaje and García Moreno. We did not include the Selva Alegre parish in Otavalo County.

**References**


