

Alex Travis with guest Catherine Craig
December 6, 2011

Conservation through Enterprise

It was a pleasure to help host Dr. Catherine Craig on her return to Cornell. Dr. Craig introduced the work of the organization she founded, Conservation through Poverty Alleviation, International (CPALI). She began with a brief presentation and video introduction of the land use and policy practices that are leading to ecosystem degradation in Madagascar. Dr. Craig then described some of CPALI's efforts to achieve conservation outcomes by focusing on livelihoods and food security. CPALI is currently promoting the production of unprocessed silk products from the cocoons of various native silk moths. They are pursuing different market opportunities, but recognize that they need to scale up dramatically to reach a point of being able to maintain stable contracts.

The audience asked many questions including farm labor allocation and time of peak labor inputs, the "addition vs substitution" issue, soils, crop diversification, access to markets and control of value chain, the potential for payment for ecosystem services in developing nations, roles for women's cooperatives, the potential to develop value-added products from projected by-products (e.g. human or poultry food from chrysalids), and the impact of cyclones on production. The questions revealed strong interest in the strategy of pursuing conservation through enterprise. Although we did not tackle all of Dr. Craig's questions regarding scale and replicability across different cultures, the group discussion suggested areas of possible future synergy for CPALI with Cornell faculty and students. These topics and others were explored further in individual conversations between Dr. Craig and several faculty members.

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Guest-Catherine L. Craig, ccraig@cpali.org

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Lauren Chambliss, elc55

Helene Schember, hrs6

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Jeff Tester, jwt54

Chelsea Anderson, cea74

Drew Harvell, cdh5

Mark Lawrence, mal64

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