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Knowledge, parks and cultures – Transcultural exchange of knowledge in protected areas: case studies from Austria and Nepal

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The fifth book of the series *Proceedings in the Management of Protected Areas* (series editors Jungmeier, M. & H. Egner) reports findings from the project Transcultural Exchange of Knowledge About Sustainability, which was funded by the research programme proVISION of the Austrian ministry of Science and Research.

The project aimed at identifying and facilitating ways of knowledge transfer about sustainability between the Alps and the Himalaya-Hindu Kush region. All four authors have close links with the international master programme Management of protected areas at the University of Klagenfurt and the results of the project should also clarify if the concept of the master programme, which attracts students and experts from Europe and beyond, are also applicable outside of Europe.

The international master programme is based on the 27 *fields of activity*, which cover all aspects and tasks of protected area (PA) management. The same 27 fields of activity are the basis of the evaluation on how knowledge is transferred. This was done by interviewing protected area professionals and local representatives in the four case study sites of the project, two of which are in Austria and two in Nepal. Additionally, a survey among current and former students of the master programme was carried out to evaluate the relevance and effects of the programme. Both approaches, as well as a literature study, helped to answer the outlined research questions: relevance of the fields of activity for PA management; transferability of an individual field of activity and the need for adaptation; knowledge barriers for the transcultural exchange of knowledge between PAs and the organizational setting, and impulses for a transcultural exchange of PA knowledge.

The book starts with a theoretical introduction on sustainability, knowledge, culture and the transfer and exchange of knowledge and explains the fields of activity. It goes on to detail the methods applied and introduces the four case study sites. The chapter on the

results starts with a comparison of Austria and Nepal on different cultural aspects e.g. history, gender and diversity, economic system, followed by the results of the knowledge assessment as well as a qualitative comparison of the fields of activity. The synthesis demonstrates a successful transcultural exchange and results in the Charta of Klagenfurt, which, according to the authors, shall serve as a starting point for an international discussion about principles and guidelines for intercultural cooperation in the field of protected area management.

The book is written in a very scientific way and as such the target audience is a select group of people. Most of the figures and maps presented are not self-explanatory and detailed legends and captions are largely missing.

Yet the publication offers a path on how knowledge exchange may work successfully in a globalized world, where intra-cultural knowledge exchange becomes more important every day.

Valerie Braun