

Disentangling the links between conservation and poverty reduction in practice

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Appendix

Definitions of livelihoods and poverty

Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines poverty as 'the inability of people to meet economic, social and other standards of well-being' (OECD, 2001). The DAC/OECD definition defines five core capabilities that enable people to rise out of poverty; economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective:

Economic capabilities mean the ability to earn an income, to consume and to have assets, which are all key to food security, material well-being and social status.

Human capabilities are based on health, education, nutrition, clean water and shelter. These are core elements of well-being as well as crucial means to improving livelihoods.

Political capabilities include human rights, a voice and some influence over public policies and political priorities. Deprivation of basic political freedoms or human rights is a major aspect of poverty.

Socio-cultural capabilities concern the ability to participate as a valued member of a community. They refer to social status, dignity and other cultural conditions for belonging to a society that are highly valued by the poor themselves.

Protective capabilities enable people to withstand economic and external shocks. Thus, they are important for preventing poverty. Insecurity and vulnerability are crucial dimensions of poverty with strong links to all other dimensions.

These capabilities encapsulate the same elements contained within the Sustainable Livelihoods framework of the UK Department for International Development (DFID, 2000). DFID defines a livelihood as comprising 'the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base' (DFID, 2000).

The Sustainable Livelihood framework is likewise based on five capabilities or assets (human, social, physical, financial and natural), which form the building blocks upon which livelihoods depend, together with consideration of the external environment (including other stakeholders, structures, processes and vulnerability) that influence livelihoods opportunities, strategies and outcomes. Livelihoods outcomes include increased income, food security, sustainable natural resource management, reduced vulnerability (the impact of shocks, trends and seasonality in the external environment, over which people have little or no control), and increased well-being (which encompasses all of the above and more: self esteem, sense of control and inclusion, physical security, health, access to services, political voice, maintenance of cultural heritage).

Clearly the concepts of poverty and livelihoods described above are interlinked. People need secure and sustainable livelihoods to avoid poverty, and many of the capabilities that poverty act upon are also the assets that form the basis of a sustainable livelihood. For the purposes of this analysis we considered whether projects were likely to have an impact on any of the five assets directly, on underlying structures or processes that influence the enabling environment for livelihoods and poverty reduction, or on empowerment and voice, which are not explicit elements of the Sustainable Livelihood framework but which are an important part of the wider definitions of poverty. We then considered the likely (or actual) livelihoods outcomes, in terms of increased income, food security, sustainable natural resource management, reduced vulnerability and improved well-being.

Poverty levels in project locations

Of the 22 countries where projects in the more detailed part of the analysis occurred, all but five countries are in the bottom half of the table for the Human Development Index (World Bank, 2008), with six countries in the bottom 25 of the list. The same pattern is revealed if countries are ranked by per capita GDP or level of corruption. However,

national indices mask significant internal variation, and an understanding of poverty at the local level, the scale at which conservation projects operate, is necessary. Secondary data and local surveys suggest that, in both poor and less poor countries, the rural areas where projects focus are sites of particular disadvantage and marginalization. For example:

Belize Toledo district is the poorest in the country, where c. 79% of the predominantly Mayan population lives below the poverty line (E. Caddy, pers. comm.).

Rwanda/DRC One of the poorest parts of Africa; 91% of the populations around protected areas engages in subsistence agriculture. There are few opportunities around parks, lots of migration, high mortality, and the marginalized, hunter-gathering Batwa community displays a demographic structure and indicators of wealth (house structure, ownership of assets) that are characteristic of the very poor.

Kazakhstan Surveys suggest that those hunting saiga are the poorest and do so through lack of alternative opportunity; it is a difficult, dangerous and illegal activity that most would rather not engage in.

Cambodia As well as being isolated, fragmented, and traumatized by years of conflict, communities in the Cardamom Mountains struggle to find food for up to 7 months of the year.