

Poverty Alleviation That Works: Informing conservation practice from development experience

Report of a DEG – PCLG Roundtable, 22 December 2011, IIED, London

Summary

This report documents discussions from the “Poverty Alleviation That Works” roundtable held in London on the 22 of December 2011 at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) office. The meeting brought together 15 participants from development and conservation organizations to exchange experiences regarding what work and what does not work for poverty reduction in rural areas.

The presentations and discussions revealed a number of enduring tensions between conservation and development policies and practices but also many common challenges and opportunities for a more integrated approach. One of the key questions of the meeting was “what kinds of interventions work best for poverty reduction?” There were a number of common strategies – locally based/community driven initiatives, market mechanisms, building and strengthening community institutions, agricultural improvements, policy advocacy and reform. Targeting was also noted as a key issue by both conservation and development organisations – including targeting the poorest (development organisations) and targeting those who most affect conservation outcomes (conservation organisations). The development organisations tended to focus more on recognised dimensions of poverty however – cash, assets, food, social welfare, public services. A second key question “was how do we know these interventions work – ie how do organisations measure their poverty impacts?” Perhaps not surprisingly there is no standard approach to measuring poverty impacts amongst either conservation or development organisations. Both highlight this as a challenge. However the development organisations tended to have more empirical tools focussed on getting data at a household level.

Common challenges focussed around understanding poverty; balancing short and long term objectives, scaling up, the weak evidence base for interventions, tensions within organisations on mission, values and ways of working, finding good partners, and reaching the poorest. However there were a number of areas where either agendas are already beginning to merge or could be better integrated including specifically addressing environmental issues in development tools such as vulnerability assessment, household economic analysis and social protection measures.

The meeting agreed a set of next steps including opportunities for joint advocacy opportunities, further exploration of concrete steps to integrate agendas and follow up discussion topics.

Introduction: participants and objectives

Organisations concerned with biodiversity conservation are increasingly aware of the need to address poverty in combination with conservation efforts and have adopted a number of different approaches from income generation and enterprise support to provision of social services, local empowerment and capacity building. Despite these efforts, experience to date has been very mixed and poverty impacts – on the rare occasions that they have been monitored and documented – appear to have been limited. Development organisations have already tried many of these same approaches and discarded some while investing in others. Further there are many other approaches that development organisations employ that are potentially transferable to a conservation context. Conservation organisations could therefore potentially learn a lot from closer engagement with development organisations in terms of not repeating past mistakes and/or overlooking promising approaches.

Against this backdrop, IIED organised a roundtable involving representatives from UK based conservation and development NGOs to share experience on what does and does not work for poverty reduction in rural areas. The meeting focussed on the following questions:

- 1) What are the key challenges faced in trying to address poverty in rural areas?
- 2) What kinds of poverty interventions “work” and why?
- 3) How are poverty impacts measured?
- 4) What are the barriers to scaling up successes?

The meeting was held under the Chatham House rule in order to encourage free and open discussion. The summary of the discussion below does not therefore include any attributions to specific individuals or organisations except for the individual presentations of experience.

Participants

Name	Organisation
1. Dilys Roe (Organiser)	IIED
2. Steve Bass (Chair)	IIED
3. David Thomas	BirdLife International
4. Matthew Hatchwell	Wildlife Conservation Society
5. Mike Morris	WWF - UK
6. Neva Frecheville	WWF-UK
7. Joanna Elliot	African Wildlife Foundation
8. J. Allister McGregor	Institute for Development Studies
9. Christophe Béné	Institute for Development Studies
10. Abisha Mapendembe	UNEP-WCMC
11. Richard Ewbank	Christian Aid
12. Louise Davis	CAFOD
13. Helen Schneider	Fauna and Flora International
14. Nidhi Mittal	Save the Children
15. Helga Rainer	Arcus Foundation
16. Kate Munro (Organiser)	DEG/IIED
Apologies:	
17. Colin McQuistan	Oxfam
18. Karl Deering	Care International

Session 1: Challenges to achieving poverty reduction in rural areas

1. Limits to organisational missions

Is poverty alleviation part of organisational missions? For many conservation organisations it is not and most stick to a “do no harm” (as opposed to actively seek to reduce poverty) policy. It is therefore very important to distinguish between organisations that see poverty reduction as a direct goal, as means to an end, or who simply take a “do no harm” approach. Similarly development organisations can struggle to see where biodiversity conservation fits into their objectives.

There is a limit to how much organisations share the same goals and values. These limits need to be understood to move the discussion forward. We should begin to recognise the distinctive contributions of particular organisations –assuming that one organisation cannot do everything for everybody in one place and at all levels of the system. What are the different points of engagement, and where do organisations have particular strengths, focus and leverage?

For those working in the field, poverty and conservation are often not considered as separate issues – regardless of organisational mission. An example was given of an unbroken expanse of forest in Congo which is now being divided into forest and mining concessions with a great impact on people living in those landscapes (e.g. on nomadic indigenous people). This change is as significant for pygmy communities as it is for wildlife and a concern for both development and conservation organisations.

2. Reaching the poorest

For development organisations the key challenge is trying to deliver equitably but accepting that they rarely manage to reach the very poorest. Some organisations tend to be too hopeful about delivering equity and need to be clear about what is achievable. They can face a trade-off between “maximum reach” vs “targeted reach” – especially when it comes to reporting on impacts. Conservation organisations also expressed concern about how to reach the poorest but it was pointed out that they do not necessarily need to do so in order to achieve their objectives, unless the principle of ‘do no harm’ is one of their core objectives. In most cases it is actually the “better – off” people who perhaps have the capacity and resources to undertake activities that threaten the environment. In such situations, it is better to target the better off in order to achieve conservation goals (and this may be a very limited number of people so the poverty impacts seem minimal).

Development organisations tend to have a sound understanding of the communities they are working with – more so than conservation organisation. A key challenge for conservation organisations is the degree to which they have to understand the local communities with whom they come into contact and the amount of preparatory work that this takes – over and above their core business of conservation. Different interventions are needed to reach different groups of people. Conservation organisations need to better understand the communities they work with in order to understand what kinds of interventions are appropriate. One development organisations uses a twin track approach - a combination of interventions for those who are economically active, and social protection interventions for those who are poor.

3. Trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation goals

Addressing poverty does not always deliver positive outcomes for conservation. For communities that are dependent on natural resources for livelihoods, their frame of reference dictates that they will still look at natural resources to increase incomes further. Investing in development can thus increase pressure on natural resources. For example, in Congo, local people invest cash in shotgun shells for hunting. Development projects have started to provide employment but the additional income generated could be used to further invest in shot guns and more hunting. Conservation

organisations can potentially undermine their own conservation objectives if their development work is too successful and increases pressure on natural resources. This raises an ethical issue – should conservation organisations seek to limit development in order to achieve conservation goals? Or, given the problems with this approach, how do conservation organisations and development actors work together to ensure that ‘development’ is ecologically as well as economically sustainable, and socially acceptable?

At the other end of the spectrum, when conservation groups offer alternative livelihoods they need to address questions such as are they just creating poverty traps, condemning people to make a living out of a small piece of poor land or from unproductive land? There are many examples of created poverty traps or short term commodity booms dependent on particular export markets.

Another point of disagreement between some conservation and development groups is around land and land rights. One (development) participant pointed out that land acquisitions for conservation (including REDD+) are viewed by local people no differently to land acquisitions for any other use. Conservation is simply viewed as just another external agenda and may result in short term-ism at the expense of local investments in environment assets that increase natural capital or resilience.

4. Opportunities for integrating agendas

The humanitarian –development continuum provides an opportunity for identifying different entry points for linking conservation and development agendas. For example the importance of attention to environmental issues might be more obvious within disaster risk reduction than in some economic development activities because of some of the trade-offs already mentioned. For example, it is important to understand how social vulnerability can affect ecosystems and how ecosystem vulnerability can affect people. Climate change adaptation is another hook for linking conservation and development agendas: ecosystem based adaptation and community based adaptation both focus on people and on integrated approaches. The difference is primarily one of language. The notion of resilience also brings the environment and economic agendas together. For the green economy and green growth agendas, the ultimate economic test is resilience. For some, resilience to climate change and environment sustainability, are two sides of the same coin.

Session 2: What works?

Participants described their experiences of defining, measuring and monitoring success in tackling poverty within their organisations, as well as overcoming barriers and creating enabling conditions. Presentations are summarised in Annex 1 and those that were provided as powerpoints are available at: www.povertyandconservation.info . Key issues emerging from the presentations and discussions are summarised below.

1. Measuring poverty impacts

There is no standard approach to measuring poverty impacts amongst either conservation or development organisations. Both highlight this as a challenge. Some organisations take their poverty measures from the communities they work with, so they are not standardised. Quantifying impacts is particularly challenging, as is the cost of monitoring and evaluation, and the limited funding available to do this properly. Some expressed concern over what they ought to be measuring. With regards to poverty, measuring income is not enough because it does not capture how people assess their wellbeing and distorts what the policy options are. Wellbeing has to be self-defined but employ general principles about relationships and quality of life. Material, subjective and relational wellbeing are the three dimensions and the environment can be a core part of all dimensions. A

concern that was raised several times was over the ambiguous definitions of key terms. For example value for money (VFM) is being heavily pushed by DFID but it is not clear exactly what this means, particularly as value ought to be locally defined.

Different methods and tools highlighted are summarised below:

<i>Conservation Organisations</i>	<i>Development Organisations</i>
Social impact assessment (various methods)	Household economic analysis
Theories of change	Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
Participant observation	Household reports on improved livelihood security
Outcome mapping	Longitudinal impact assessment
	Wealth ranking
Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)	Participatory learning and action (PLA)

1. Poverty Interventions that work

A wide range of interventions were noted. There were a number of common strategies – locally based/community driven initiatives, market mechanisms, building and strengthening community institutions, agricultural improvements, policy advocacy and reform. Targeting was also noted as a key issue by both conservation and development organisations – including targeting the poorest (development organisations) and targeting those who most affect and are affected by conservation outcomes (conservation organisations). The development organisations tended to focus more on recognised dimensions of poverty however – cash, assets, food, social welfare, public services. The different interventions identified are summarised below:

<i>Conservation Organisations</i>	<i>Development Organisations</i>
Building community institutions	Long term locally driven initiatives
Value chain enterprises	Value chains
Practical policy engagement	Lobbying for better access to services
Targeting resource managers	Targeting women and the poorest
Conservation agriculture	Agricultural initiatives
Community based natural resources management	Protect assets
Tourism	Cash for work programmes
Strengthening civil society	Social protection and food distribution
Influencing macro-economic policy	Access to energy
Payments for ecosystem services	

2. Common Challenges

1. Understanding poverty: Different people have different interpretations of their wellbeing, ambitions and aspirations. Livelihoods are about ways of life not just where money comes from so successful support for sustainable livelihood outcomes demands recognising how ways of life can change.
2. Balancing short and long term needs: Both conservation and development organisations identified this as an issue. For both there was a recognition that effective interventions required long term engagement which was out of line with donor project cycles of 3-5 years. In the case of development organisations it was highlighted that it was difficult to balance

the need to address immediate survival issues with long term ecosystem and environmental impacts.

3. Scaling up: This was noted as a challenge for both but particularly for conservation organisations which tend to be more focussed at the site level. There is need to look beyond local level interventions and examine the drivers of both poverty and biodiversity loss including – macro-economic policies, private sector investment patterns and so on. Up-scaling is also challenging because of the context specific nature of communities and ecosystems – projects that work in one place and time will not necessarily work in another. Tackling poverty and undertaking biodiversity conservation both entail working with complex, dynamic and non-linear processes of change
4. Weak evidence base for interventions: Need for more evidence to back poverty impact claims made in project proposals and need to adapt practices to learn from past mistakes.
5. Organisational challenges: Regardless of the mission of the organisation there is a huge degree of variation amongst staff in terms of interest in people or conservation. In particular there can be tensions between field and HQ staff and those who work on practical projects compared to those who work on policy.
6. Finding good partners in remote rural areas and other challenging environments. Once partners are found, building capacity to tackle different agendas is particularly challenging.
7. Reaching the poorest: Targeting the poorest people is not necessarily the best entry point for broad-scale poverty reduction – it might be better to target labour endowed and more economically productive households that can produce a surplus. However this has implications for how success is measured.

Session 3: Scaling up success

Both conservation and development organisations are dealing with issues of scaling up but with different approaches and objectives. A key issue for conservation organisations in particular is how to scale up while remaining sustainable. Conservation organisations are not interested to scale up for maximum poverty benefits beyond an optimum environmental outcome. Development organisations on the other hand are seeking maximum poverty outcomes – but at what environmental cost? The question was asked, is the environmental bottom line of development organisations different to that of conservation organisations?

Most conservation projects are relevant to a particular site, time and place. When a conservation project is only concerned with a species at that site, scaling up is not necessarily an issue. On the other hand, we cannot ignore that consumption growth is driving high rates of habitat destruction. In this regard the focus should perhaps not be on scaling up projects but on addressing the drivers of habitat destruction, primarily Northern consumption patterns. Similarly in development, scaling up rarely means focussing on a particular income generating project to the point that engages in large mainstream markets, except when there is high demand for a particular product. More often it is about scaling up the approach; the actual technologies used are very context specific but the systems, frameworks and policies needed to up-scale will have common elements. It was noted that NGOs are good at ambassadorial/diplomatic advocacy and finding where there are opportunities for influence and impact. One problem with this, however, is that often NGOs do not have evidence in the right form to help national policy makers to make rational decisions. NGOs tend to tailor evidence to donor requirements.

In general scaling up conservation and poverty reduction outcomes was felt to require a focus on improved national frameworks, rather than on the replication of projects. It was noted that the Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) is trying to get to the heart of where decisions are made

(e.g budget decisions). The initiative is trying to get the ministries of finance to take environment seriously in budgeting and expenditure review processes. The green economy dialogues organised by the Green Economy Coalition were also highlighted as a means of engaging national level policy makers in issues of competitiveness in new markets for environmental goods and services. National competitiveness can be a good driver of good behaviour, as with Bhutan, where the government is keen on quality, not quantity investments.

Both conservation and development sectors are facing growing challenges in the future, particularly because of climate change and increased private sector land and asset acquisition. Private sector investments are growing at a rate of 40% per annum in Africa. The issue is less about scaling up existing activities but rather how to work at scale at a level commensurate with the challenges we are facing.

Next Steps

Participants agreed that the roundtable had been interesting and useful. It was noted that for large NGOs it can be a substantial challenge just to develop common programmatic frameworks, principles and goals internally, which limits the capacity to engage in collective efforts. However there appear to be a number of opportunities for joint work:

1. There is clear recognition that we need a shift in the conservation-development paradigm given the scale of the shared challenges we face. Rather than fighting each other we should be combining forces to challenge the whole current economic development model. Neither conservation nor poverty is the main challenge the key problem is economic and market misgovernance. Advocacy opportunities such as the Rio+20 Summit were are good opportunities for collaboration.
2. Explore how we can engage conservation organisations better in the different communities of practice already working together on climate change, sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk reduction etc., as focal points for an integrated agenda and develop a more comprehensive framework to guide, monitor and evaluate our work.
3. Environmental indicators could be included in *Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment and household economic analysis*
4. Social protection could be expanded to incorporate mitigating the risk of harm from environmental shocks on resources such as grazing land. Biodiversity provides an important safety net; it's a natural form of social protection so can be framed as a poverty prevention measure.
5. Land use planning, done well, can accommodate multiple agendas. It was suggested that all NGOs should push for principles for good investment in land from governments.
6. Ecosystem services are another unifying concept. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) describes the various different types of services that ecosystems provide and how these relate to human wellbeing (www.maweb.org). This is an area where the group could explore win-win and multiple benefits (e.g. a forest conserved can benefit disaster risk reduction (DRR) and livelihoods and biodiversity).

Immediate activities identified were:

- Write up and circulate extended minutes of the meeting (this report)
- Post the meeting presentations and report on the Poverty and Conservation Learning Group website (once agreed with participants)
- Explore how to engage with joint advocacy opportunities eg Planet Under Pressure, Rio +20

- Provide a short summary document for John Carstensen, DFID's new Environment Head. Could promote the idea that DFID should use its role as Co-Chair of the working group on Green Growth to advocate for people's green economy.
- Explore opportunities for developing a joint discussion paper that highlights commonalities and differences between the conservation and development sectors and highlights opportunities for better integration (based on the meeting discussions and presentations)
- Explore opportunities for developing a shared advocacy agenda on enabling conditions
- Engage more conservation and development groups to share their experiences
- Explore organising a number of follow up discussion sessions focussing on:
 - What is success in terms of assessing, identifying and achieving well being?
 - How do we achieve success at scale in a world of land grabs and climate change?
 - How do ecosystem services address conservation and poverty reduction – is this the right framework to help move things forward or is it just more jargon/repackaging old material?

Annex: Presentations

Joanna Elliott (AWF): Jo Elliott highlighted that the challenges and constraints of integrating conservation and development are not consistently agreed upon internally within organisations. Consumption is a key problem so changing Northern behaviour patterns can do a lot of good. For example, economic mechanism such as subsidies given to food imports and food production in the North can transform conservation in the South.

There is a great deal of opportunity to do more at a policy level. Everyone has a different perception of their own level of poverty so it's hard to find a reliable measure of it. Interventions found to work best for livelihoods include:

- 1) *Building community institutions* (e.g. land trusts, conservation covenants, transparent governance, and equitable benefit sharing). Conservation covenants – spell out what each side is required of. Very small projects and activities and most of them have a very low level of replicability.
- 2) *Value chain enterprises* (e.g. livestock, coffee, trade facilitation).
- 3) *Practical policy engagement* (e.g. zoning for intensive use).

Targeting those most responsible for resource management improves the success rate of these interventions. The private sector is driving land use change in developing countries so addressing this is paramount to future conservation and land use work. The next ten years will be challenging for conservation work in Africa as FDI in Africa overtook aid for the first time in 2010; to prevent the NGO sector becoming irrelevant, it needs to engage with the private sector.

Mike Morris, WWF-UK: Within large INGOs ensuring that in-country teams and the multiple teams working at head office work together effectively and coherently is a challenge. In country staff seem to have a more instinctive concern for poverty in a conservation NGO than some of their Northern physical scientist colleagues. Increased policy work may be taking the focus away from the field and a problem with the policy focus is that conservation NGOs are largely engaged with environment ministries, not ministries for finance and planning.

Understanding the drivers of change is key – theories of change often do not reflect the reality on the ground. But it's hard to conceptualise things in a way that's a true reflection of the situation of the ground because different people have different ways of thinking. Working across scales is challenging. Policy work in isolation does not reflect work on the ground and there is still some focus on making local NGOs in the image of Western NGOs.

They have been advised to improve the social analysis of the impacts of their projects (e.g. socio-economic analysis of WWF livelihoods work). There seem to be a reluctance to do that. Project proposals tend to provide strategies but these are not backed with evidence where they have worked. NGOs need to learn from past failures where they have failed to make change.

Some key approaches to addressing conservation and poverty links are: strengthening civil society to engage with natural resources management and governance, but it's important to avoid setting the agenda or creating organisations; influence production, trade and consumption regimes through multistakeholder processes; supporting user groups through conservation agriculture; income is a too narrow a focus for achieving poverty reduction – building social capital is key.

Richard Ewbank, Christian Aid: Finding good partners in remote rural areas and other challenging environments can be difficult. Partnerships and programmes with most impact are those where there has been a certain degree of persistence. Planning cycles do not always work as some projects take a long time to bear fruit. A key challenge is that donors want to see the work plan in advance but the work plan can only really be determined by local teams as part of the project. Long term thinking is very important to the success of projects.

Horizontal and vertical integration; governance is always a problem. Wealth ranking is important in trying to reach the poorest in society. If this is not addressed then we will not develop a sustainable solution at the local level. Having a very strong gender focus is essential. Women are more central in the food security realm.

The energy issue is missing from a lot of work on diversification of local livelihoods. Lack of access to energy is a major barrier to economic diversification. It is very hard to diversify if communities do not have access to energy. Grids will never get to the ground in a cost effective way. There are some good technical win-wins there. Having local solutions that are managed locally is essential. Small scale farmers are often seen as passive receptors of external wisdom who need to be dragged into a realm of modern development. Recently agricultural services have collapsed as it has become unfashionable. Agricultural biodiversity is even more complex than natural biodiversity.

Long term thinking is very important to the success of project - technical competence and social development competence are still very important and have huge livelihoods benefits for people.

David Thomas, Birdlife International: Successful interventions have included: tourism and recreation, picnic sites and non timber forest products linked to clear markets. Several examples were given of projects linking economic activity based on tourism and use of public space to the sustainable management of the resource base. It is difficult to guarantee that it is not leading to environmental degradation but making the livelihood dependent on sustainable use, means it should not. With ecotourism, the right monitoring mechanisms in place can help increase carrying capacity by hardening infrastructure and improving footpaths. With most of the products described, the economic and livelihoods improvement depends on sustainable use and maintaining the resources. There is no limit to development – it is human nature to want to keep on accumulating more wealth. Measuring both the livelihood and biodiversity impact of interventions can be a struggle.

Helen Schneider, FFI: FFI is a biodiversity conservation organisation. Its primary aim is not poverty reduction. They have what is basically a 'do no harm' position statement with regard to effects of

conservation activities on local people. But they struggle with monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work on local communities i.e. they can't provide rigorous evidence of whether they 'do know harm' or 'do no harm'.

FFI recognises multiple dimensions of wellbeing: not just food and income security, but also cultural and spiritual values, social relations, self-esteem, equity - including gender equity - and having a say in decisions that affect lives and livelihoods. They believe that 'what works' is following a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – taking a participatory, holistic approach to better understand the complex range of assets that women and men draw upon for their livelihoods, and the factors that affect access and use of those assets. In recent years, linking biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and wellbeing has become an increasingly used rationale for FFI's engagement with livelihoods and natural resource governance issues.

Challenges include working with complex, dynamic and non linear processes of change; limited organisational capacity of FFI and partners in terms of skills, time, cash, attitudes/interest in livelihoods issues; trade-offs between priorities of different stakeholders at different scales; and measuring systemic social change (e.g. 'empowerment'). In terms of systemic change in economic/market systems, the challenge is understanding what 'crowding in' means for biodiversity and for equity.

FFI has been experimenting with a mixed methods approach for social impact assessment, based on more explicit theories of change which are regularly tested in order to ensure learning feeds into adaptive management. They aim to take a more empowering, rather than extractive approach to analysis, planning, action and learning with communities using methods such as stories of change (adapted MSC), community defined indicators, household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, PRA/PLA tools, participant observation and outcome mapping.

Incentives for better socio-economic M&E within FFI include interest in Payments for Ecosystem Services, including REDD, as potential sustainable financing mechanisms that require 'net positive social benefits' to meet current voluntary standards. Climate Change Adaptation work is also helping staff and partners to recognise the importance of understanding and recognising how social vulnerability affects biodiversity (and vice versa).

Nidhi Mittal, Save the Children: SCF are developing an overarching resilience framework across their programmes which they hope can bridge humanitarian work and the environment. They are thinking of including more environmental indicators into *PVCA (Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis/Assessment)*. They also use household economic analysis, which involves creating baselines, mapping across livelihoods zones, wealth ranking, seasonal calendars and using forms of qualitative and quantitative analysis around income and livelihoods at household level. In terms of the baseline work, there is room to integrate environmental resources and assets at a household level.

Their Outcome analysis work is based on doing a projected impact assessment of shocks and stresses at a household economic level. This has been effective and helped to inform government social protection programmes in countries such as Kenya. Social protection (short term and longer term safety nets) can incorporate mitigating the risk of harm from environmental shocks on resources such as livestock grazing land.

They are also concerned with determining the cost of a nutritious balanced diet for people in different livelihood zones, and grasping what kind of agricultural initiatives should they support on this basis.

It was suggested that it would be interesting to explore how local adaptive capacity is linked to environment and conservation. It was noted that there is room to include more conservation in, e.g., sustainable farming projects. Social protection programmes include cash for work based on participatory natural resources management (NRM). She noted that this came out strongly as an area of opportunity in a recent workshop. For a humanitarian organisation it is a challenge to balance immediate life saving support with long term ecosystem and environmental impacts. Measuring impacts and not outcomes is also a challenge.

Matthew Hatchwell, Wildlife Conservation Society: This presentation focused on a 12 year project in Madagascar. In 1999, despite the rhetoric, conservation and development were not integrated; a top down approach was taken which was costly and led to internal polarisation. Madagascar was not well suited to an integrated development and conservation approach, as conservationists are very nervous about any discussion of sustainable use. Further challenges were high levels of terrestrial endemism and low levels of marine endemism; and human settlements not suited to classic conservation.

So they used community based natural resources management (CBNRM). His conclusion was that we have to trust the tool rather than shape it to a specific outcome. Seems successful but results need to be confirmed. The communities seem to be pushing hardest for protected areas to be established. They were not using ecosystem service language at that time but definitely saw the links between deforestation and water supplies. There is an outstanding need to assess the extent to which CBNRM has delivered for conservation and poverty reduction in the area.

Allister MacGregor, IDS: Up-scaling is challenging because we need to focus on the specifics of particular ecosystems, particular interactions and particular communities. If one intervention worked, it is important to understand what is it about these particular communities and ecosystem interactions that made it possible and may not apply in another context? Some projects are not replicable.

The way we look at poverty is a problem; we need to focus on what people mean when they talk about their well being, ambitions and aspirations, the current focus on measuring is not constructive. Losses to wellbeing and threats to ways of life add to a sense of injustice resulting from conservation policy failure. Extractive activities provide not just livelihoods but a way of life. Successful creation of new livelihood sources demand recognising how ways of life can change; livelihoods are about more than just where money comes from.

With regards to local knowledge there are some things that local people do not know but we need to constructively engage the poor rather than dismiss them as lacking knowledge. Consumption driven development was also criticised.

Louise Davis, CAFOD: The term 'livelihoods' is applied to a wide range of projects at CAFOD and there is variation between programmes on 'livelihoods' where the term covers use as an approach, strategy or sector. The focus on reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged communities creates a challenge to ensure that interventions are sustainable in the longer term. Is the best point of entry to engage the poorest people or to target labour endowed and more economically productive households that can produce a surplus that can be sold to the poor?

Coming from humanitarian roots, many of the organisation's projects start with a short term focus and strive to protect people's assets during a crisis rather than to develop longer term livelihoods strategies. To move beyond this, some markets work is being done, in particular enabling communities to access value chains. It's an area that needs further research. CAFOD provides support to build the capacity of local partners to incorporate several dimensions, such as gender, policy influencing, HIV/AIDS and accountability to strengthen sustainability of livelihoods work. It can be a struggle for partners to work on all these issues simultaneously. Rights to land and environmental governance are areas of growing importance that they need to address. From experience they've found that when projects are successful it's because they're locally specific, participatory and responsive.

The organisation has only recently begun to measure impact in livelihoods work systematically, at a global level. They have global overarching objectives but programmes take diverse approaches to achieving them. Approaches have included cash for work programmes, food distribution, providing agricultural inputs, and lobbying for access to better services. They are currently pulling together different indicators used in different projects to provide the evidence base. They are also developing longitudinal impact assessments examining the ability of the project to move people from a livelihood survival threshold to a livelihoods protection threshold, and if they are already at a livelihoods protection threshold to move them to a livelihoods promotion threshold. This approach covers how their livelihoods are composed and what their income sources are.

Helga Rainer, Arcus Foundation: Arcus has three main goals; to reconcile conservation and environment; support holistic approaches to conservation; and support traditional protection areas. Building long term relationships was identified as a challenge, due to short term funding cycles. Monitoring impacts is also a challenge because they are a global organisation working across several continents. Though they have been developing a monitoring and evaluation framework and have been looking at how to integrate sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods. They have taken a focus on key landscapes and asking organisations working in these areas how they interpret the impact of their work. They are also trying to understand the drivers and threats to conservation in the landscapes they are working in, strategies to address them and other things happening in the landscape to address those drivers. They are not trying to compare landscape but see each landscape on its own and try to predict future trends.

Generally the drivers are either agriculture and hunting, or industrial development; both results of the economic paradigm. So they ask questions over how to respond to these drivers and what level of land use change they can live with, versus when it becomes an overwhelming threat to conservation. This requires engaging with long term sustainable development plans and identifying acceptable trade offs.