



Collaboration for Environmental Evidence

Systematic Review No. 80

The effect of local cultural context on community-based conservation interventions: evaluating ecological, economic, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes

Review Summary

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Cover Sheet

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Systematic Review Summary

Background

Conservation interventions require evaluation to understand what factors predict success or failure. To date there has been little systematic investigation of the effect of social and cultural context on conservation success, although a large body of literature argues it should be important. Only one previous systematic review has studied determinants of conservation success, focusing on the use of development as a conservation tool. Here we investigate the role of local cultural context on conservation outcomes, using four measures of success: ecological, economic, attitudinal and behavioural.

Objective

The objective is to assess the role of local cultural context, particularly local institutions, and the efforts of interventions to engage with this, on the outcomes of community-based conservation projects. We also tested the effects of community participation, conservation education, benefit provision and market integration. We used five hypotheses. Success in CBC interventions is predicted by: (1) a supportive local cultural context, (2) project engagement with local cultural context, (3) high levels of local participation, (4) conservation education, (5) market integration and benefit provision by projects.

Study inclusion criteria

Studies were included if they met the following criteria:

- Type of study – primary literature
- Subject studied – any community-based conservation project with specific conservation goals to be achieved with some attention or inclusion of local people.
- Outcomes – four different measures of success were sought (ecological, economic, attitudinal, and behavioural). At least two of the outcomes had to be measured for inclusion in the study.
- Quality of evidence – no more than 25% missing information about predictors.

Scope of the search

We conducted web-based searches for peer-reviewed publications in ISI Web of Knowledge, Anthropology Plus and JSTOR electronic databases. In addition we searched Google Scholar, and accepted any relevant academic theses and NGO reports. We searched for the terms *community based conservation*, *integrated conservation and development*, *ICDP*, *CBC* and *community conservation*.

Main results

Our results supported our main interest, as the first two hypotheses were supported. Supportive local cultural context influenced intervention outcomes, whilst interventions that engaged with local institutions were also more likely to succeed. However, there was limited support for the role of community participation, conservation education, benefit provision and market integration on intervention success.

Conclusions

Cultural context appears to be a key factor shaping the outcomes of community-based conservation interventions. We therefore recommend that conservation interventions should understand the societies they work with and tailor their activities accordingly. We also note that the quantity and quality of conservation reporting should be improved, to allow evaluation of conservation evidence.