



## Learning Note: Impact on capacity

### Key Messages:

- Since 1992 the Darwin Initiative has funded conservation projects in 159 countries worldwide.
- In achieving conservation benefits, the Darwin Initiative has boosted capacity of these countries to manage their biodiversity better.
- Darwin Initiative funding has often been critical to the careers of conservation leaders in these countries.
- This learning note highlights some of the positive impacts Darwin Initiative has had on the careers of leading conservationists.

*The Darwin Initiative assists countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources to meet their objectives under one or more of the three major biodiversity Conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES); and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), through the funding of collaborative projects.*



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## Impact on careers

We sent 256 questionnaires to a sample of local partners from Main and Post projects as well as Darwin Fellows. These questionnaires included a series of questions aimed at documenting the impact of participating in a Darwin project on local partner's careers. From the responses it is clear that the Darwin Initiative has had a positive effect on careers and skills of staff.

Many of the respondents indicated that the impact of participating in a Darwin project was significant, as demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows that more than half the respondents indicate that the Darwin Initiative had a direct impact on their career.

The respondents who indicated that participation in a Darwin project was less meaningful were generally established in their careers when they were involved in a Darwin project. Therefore the effect of involvement in a Darwin project was less pronounced.

For example, 18 of the respondents were already in a senior position at the time they participated in a Darwin project.

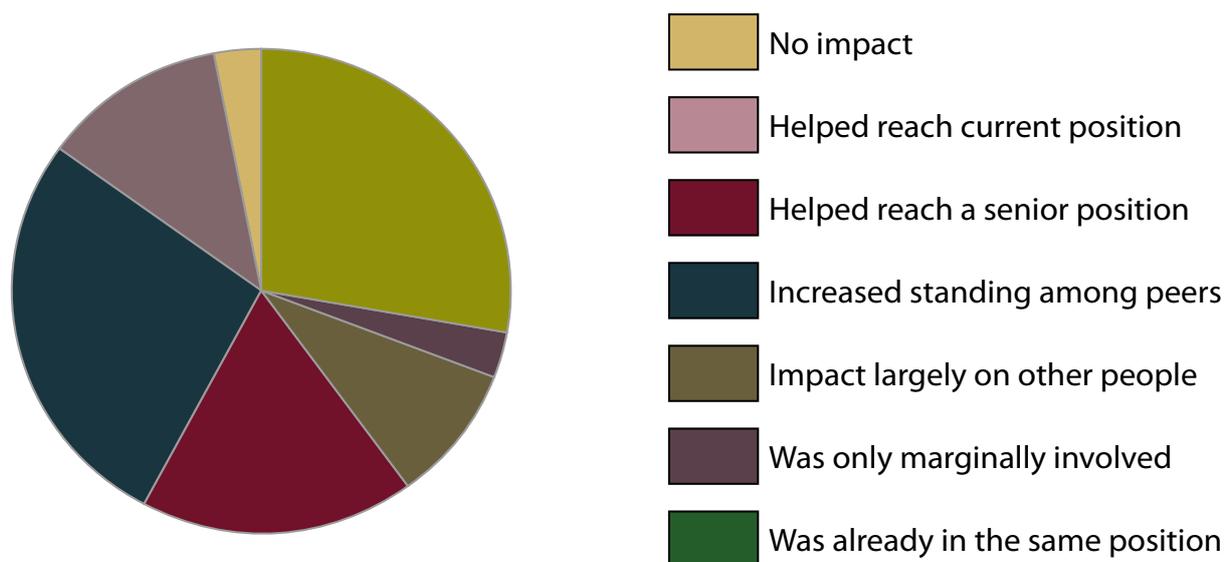


Figure 1: Impact of participating in a Darwin Project



# Case Studies

**Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka**, is a former Darwin Initiative Fellow who now directs her own conservation organization in Madagascar called *Madagasikara Voakajy*, wrote that : “Without Darwin Initiative, I would not be at my current position.” Ms. Razafimanahaka started out with the DI in 2003 as an undergraduate trainee learning essential bat conservation field techniques. During a follow-on post project where she was part of the staff, *Madagasikara Voakajy* was founded. Today, under her leadership, the organisation has a significant impact on the conservation endemic vertebrates and their habitats in Madagascar.



**Dr Paul Matiku**, Executive Director of the conservation organisation *Nature Kenya*, and collaborator on two separate Darwin Initiative projects, reported that his influence had increased: “My views are now frequently sought by government as I serve in national committees.” His increased influence has been recognised through his election to the *Birdlife Global Council* for two consecutive terms from 2004 to 2013. Collaborating on Darwin Initiative projects since 2002 has also encouraged him to qualify for a Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Planning and Management at *Kenyatta University, Kenya* in 2012.



# Lasting Local Impacts of Darwin Initiative Work

A wide range of responses were provided, and included impacts to individuals personally and legacies in country. Uygen Tshewang, a former Darwin local project leader, who is now serving as the Secretary of the National Environment Commission of Bhutan, was proud to say that the project helped conserve the unique biodiversity of his country: *“We developed the first ever Royal Botanical Garden of Bhutan.”*

From the other side of the world, Peruvian former Darwin Fellow Reynaldo Linares-Palomino mentioned the far-reaching effects of his awareness

raising work: *“Severely endangered forests have now been included in a “National fragile ecosystem list” and “several private and regional initiatives are under-way to protect them.”* He was able to do this because of his Darwin Fellowship. *“It put me on track of a scientific career by allowing me to interrelate with fellow researchers, experiencing cutting edge research in biodiversity science in the UK”*

This demonstrates the meaningful impact of the Darwin Initiative on the capacity of local partners, institutions and individuals.

The Darwin Initiative aims to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources around the world including the UK’s Overseas Territories. The Darwin Initiative projects work with local partners to help countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to fulfil their commitments under the CBD, CMS and CITES. The Initiative is funded by the UK’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and from 2011, the Department for International Development. It is administered by the UK Government’s Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has committed over £97million to over 835 projects in over 150 countries.

This learning note was produced by LTS International [www.ltsi.co.uk](http://www.ltsi.co.uk)

For more information on the Darwin Initiative see <http://darwin.defra.gov.uk>

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