



Information Note: Understanding Poverty and Biodiversity Links

Since 2011, Darwin projects have had to provide both biodiversity and poverty benefits to host countries. We examined how projects funded before and after have understood and embedded issues of poverty and well-being in their projects.

The key findings of this study include:

- Before it became a requirement, Darwin Initiative projects were already engaging with issues of poverty and well-being.
- Most commonly, projects engaged with the human dimensions of conservation through the provision of training and capacity building activities, and through a focus on communities and participation.
- A small number of projects also considered wider issues relevant to poverty and well-being such as production, resources, trade and livelihoods. Specific issues that weren't discussed include income, jobs, gender, land rights, land tenure, governance, equality or justice.
- Since the introduction of poverty objectives, projects are also engaging with a broader range of issues related to poverty and well-being, including for example gender, governance, policy, security and equality.
- Building on the progress to date, there is potential for projects to better integrate and articulate the social and governance dimensions of well-being.

The Darwin Initiative supports developing countries to conserve biodiversity and reduce poverty. Funded by the UK Government, the Darwin Initiative provides grants for projects working in developing countries and UK Overseas Territories (OTs).

Projects support:

- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
- the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has committed over £113million to over 943 projects in 159 countries.

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Introduction

Poverty is a lack of well-being

Poverty can be defined as a lack of well-being (CIFOR 2007, Suich 2012). The links between poverty and biodiversity are widely recognised and, following the rise of community-based approaches to conservation in the 1990s, conservation initiatives have increasingly integrated both biodiversity and poverty alleviation goals (Adams *et al.* 2004).

Integrating poverty into biodiversity

Changes in the UK Government-funded Darwin Initiative reflect this wider change in conservation thinking. The Department for International Development (DFID) now contributes to this grant

fund and so all projects funded through DFID must meet Official Development Assistance (ODA) requirements. Projects must therefore contribute to poverty alleviation and demonstrate socioeconomic benefits in addition to achieving positive benefits for biodiversity.

This information note comprises some of the results of a thematic review of the Darwin Initiative, which examines how Darwin-funded projects are contributing to both biodiversity and poverty alleviation. This information note explores the extent to which Darwin Initiative projects - funded before poverty and well-being was explicitly included - considered poverty and well-being in their projects and identifies the extent to which this has changed over time.

Methodology

Using a Quantitative Content Analysis methodology (Figure 1), we assessed which poverty and well-being issues were considered by Main and Post projects from funding rounds 1-21. We searched a range of project documents for key words (table 1) to identify what poverty and well-being issues projects were engaging with and reporting on before 2011 (when

DFID started funding projects), and post 2011. All DFID-funded projects and projects scored as highly relevant were included in the sample. Searchable content was created from sections of text copied from project application forms and reports into a Microsoft Excel database. The following sections of this paper present and examine the key findings and their potential implications in more detail.

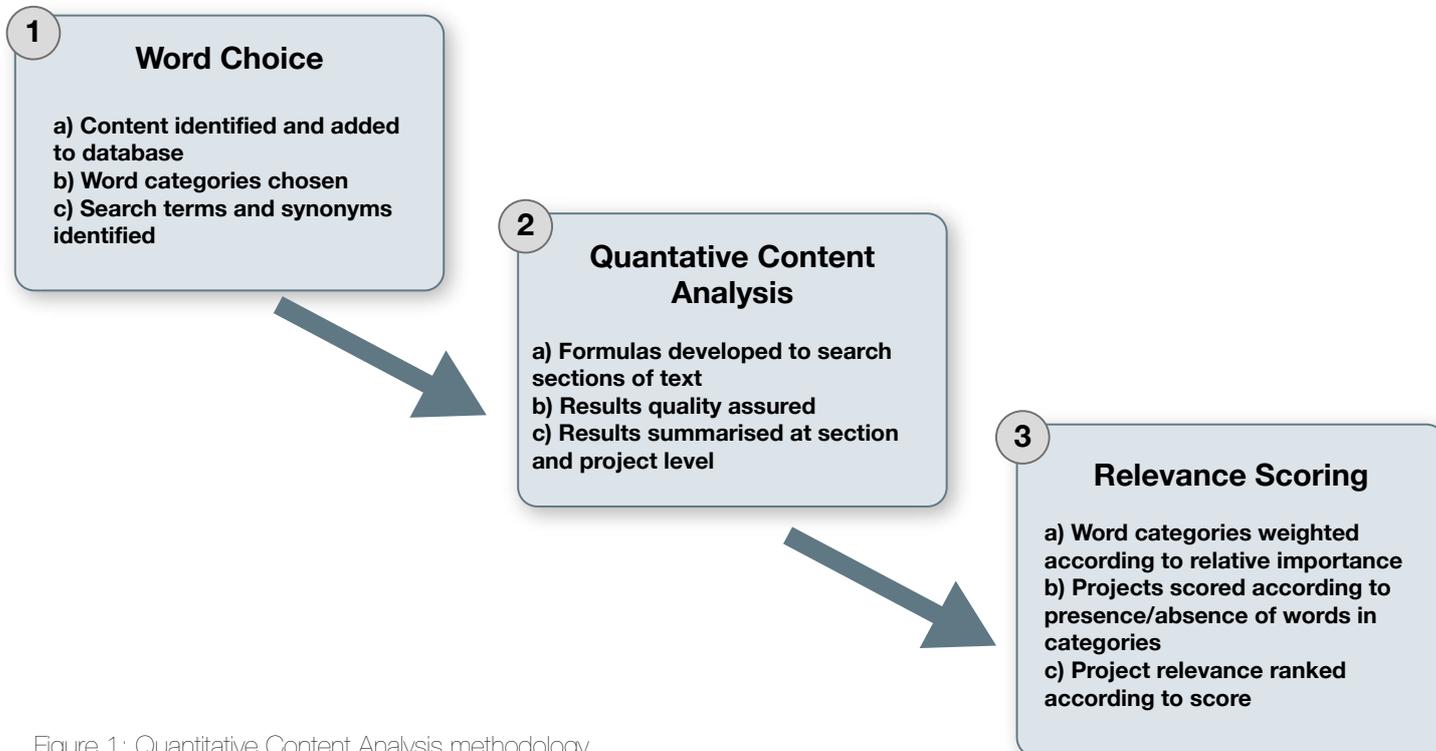


Figure 1: Quantitative Content Analysis methodology

Category	Search terms
Basic material needs	Livelihood*; food; shelter; income; asset*; resource*; agricultur*; material; job; econom*; trad*; harvest*; product*; sustainable use*; hunt*; consum*; extrac*; money; forest product*; NTFP; farm; employ; touris*
Health	Health*; water supply/water quality; air; energy; disease*; vector*; ecosystem service*; medicin*; sanitation; CLTS; ethno
Good social relations	Social; famil*; gender; communit*; friend*; women; human; conflict; _cultur/_cultural; ethnic; politic*; cooperate/cooperative*; dispute*
Security	Security; disaster; law*; rule*; polic*; legal; legislation; land title; land tenure
Freedom of choice and action	Empower*; participat*; capacit*; knowledge*; right*; freedom; power; choice*; value*; awaren*; advoca*; educat*; goverance; decision*; train*; justice; access; control; equit*/equal*

Table 1: Key Words Used. Words were searched for used wildcard characters (e.g. *) in order to capture various forms of the same word (e.g. asset and assets).

How projects talked about poverty and well-being before DFID co-funded Darwin

Projects engaged with poverty before it was a requirement

Results show that historically few Darwin projects explicitly highlighted the links between their activities and resultant wider poverty benefits. However, a number of overlaps were identified in our analysis, which demonstrates that projects were talking about issues of poverty and well-being before it became a requirement.

‘projects have increasingly engaged with issues related to poverty and well-being over time’

Projects funded by Darwin have increasingly engaged with issues related to poverty and well-being over time. Since 1997 (Round 5), more and more projects have talked about how their conservation efforts relate to poverty and well-being. This pattern mirrors the wider rise in community based approaches to conservation, which argue for the integration

of human dimensions into conservation initiatives (Barrett et al. 2011).

Most commonly, projects discussed the human dimensions of conservation through the provision of training and capacity building activities, and through a focus on communities and participation.

In the case of social relations, the dominant presence of words relating to community, is perhaps unsurprising, reflecting the rise to prominence of community-based approaches to conservation in the 1990s (Brooks *et al.* 2013), and its establishment as mainstream conservation practice (Roe 2008).

Broader understandings of poverty

We used the projects in the “high relevance to poverty and well-being” category (figure 1) as a sample for further analysis. These projects talked about a wider range of issues relevant to broader understandings of poverty and well-being, such as production, resources, trade and livelihoods. Interestingly, none of these projects talked about issues such as income, jobs, gender, land rights, land tenure, equality or justice (figure 2).

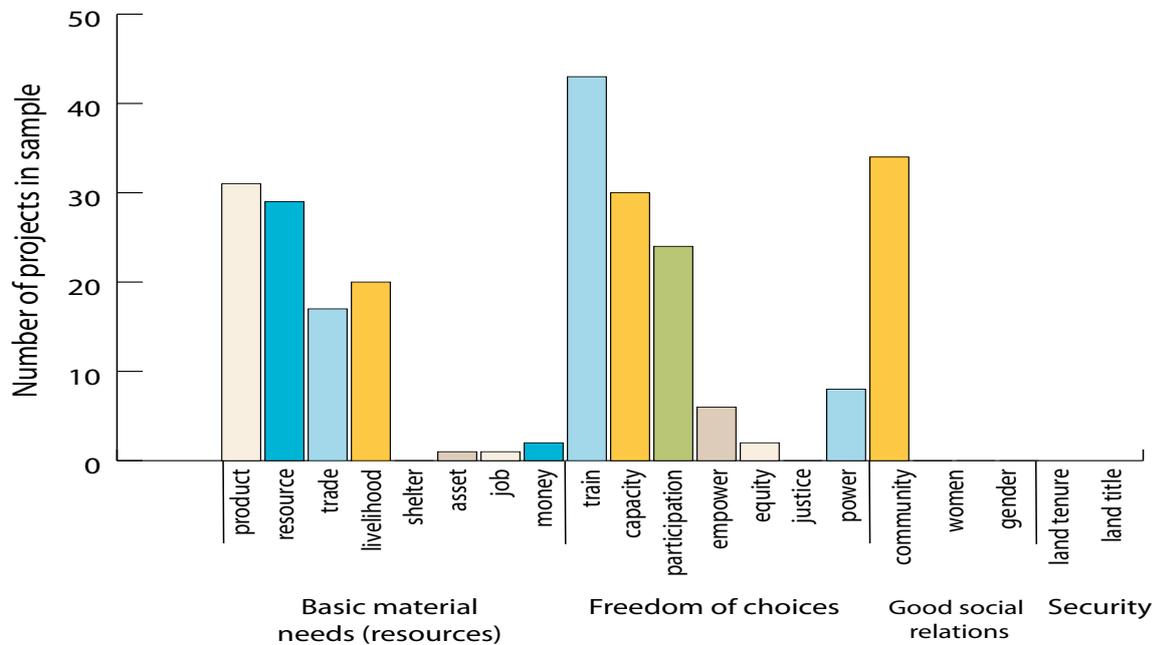


Figure 2: Number of highly relevant projects which used words within different categories in various sections of text. The number of projects indicates the number of projects that mention a particular word at least once in any section.

Words related to resources and freedom of choice were discussed by the sample and words related to health and security, although less frequent, were still commonly discussed (figure 3). This further demonstrates that prior to DFID involvement many Darwin Initiative projects were talking about issues relating to poverty broadly in line with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment’s understanding of the concept.

Even though all of the “highly relevant to poverty and well-being” projects (n=45) discussed words related to human well-being, few directly used the words “poverty” or “well-being” (only 14 and 3 projects respectively). In the case of well-being this is perhaps not entirely surprising since research into well-being and conservation, is a recent phenomenon (see for example Roe et al. 2013).

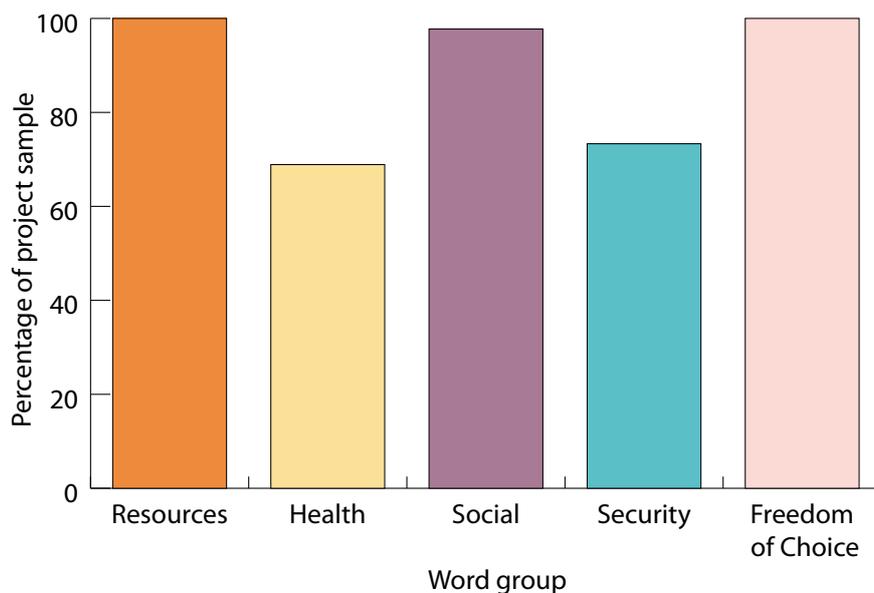


Figure 3: Percentage/number of highly relevant sample projects which use any one word within a word group in at least one section of text (application form, log frame, annual report, final report).



What has changed since 2011?

Having examined what projects talked about pre-2011 we wanted to examine the extent to which anything has changed since poverty became an explicit objective. It wasn't possible to directly compare given the limited information available for post 2011 funded projects (for example, fewer annual reports, final reports, and reviews as many projects are still ongoing) therefore results are indicative rather than directly comparable. A summary of the issues that projects have considered since 2011 is presented in Table 1.

Talking about poverty more broadly

Positively, post 2011 DFID funded projects have started to talk about a broader range of poverty and well-being issues, such as livelihoods, food, income, and ecosystem services (Table 2). They are also tackling governance issues related to policy and security. This perhaps reflects a broader shift in thinking about conservation which recognises the importance of institutional arrangements and governance context (Sheppard et al. 2010).

Opportunities for future projects

A small number of projects are also explicitly talking about women, gender, access to resources, and equality. However, the Darwin Initiative portfolio as a whole rarely talks explicitly about such issues (fewer than 5% of projects). This is somewhat surprising since the importance of gender considerations to conservation outcomes has been long established and widely documented (e.g. Agrawal and Gibson 2001, Agarwal 2009).

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of land tenure and land rights in achieving successful conservation and poverty alleviation outcomes (Roe et al. 2014), few projects appear to be explicitly discussing these issues. Concepts such as justice and power are also commonly omitted by current projects (Table 2).

	Wide Coverage (>10% projects)	Limited Coverage (<5% projects)	Notable gaps (0 projects)
Pre DFID projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capacity, education, and training • Participation and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable use, production, resources, trade and livelihoods • The economic dimensions of poverty such as income, assets or jobs • Health issues such as diseases, vector, and medicine • Governance issues such as politics, policy, and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Social issues related to gender • Ecosystem services • Freedom of choice issues, such as, access, land rights and tenure; power; equality, justice.
Post DFID projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capacity • Livelihoods, food, income • Ecosystem services • Governance issues, such as policy and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable use • Social issues related to women and gender • Freedom of choice issues, such as, rights, access and equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of choice issues, such as, justice and power • Health issues such as diseases, vectors, and medicine

Table 2: The coverage of words discussing dimensions of poverty and well-being pre and post DFID funding.

Next Steps

The method highlights what projects are talking about but not necessarily what they are doing.

For example it is possible they are discussing poverty as a driver of biodiversity loss, rather than attempting to achieve benefits in both poverty alleviation and biodiversity.

Similarly, the absence of key words from project documents does not mean that the project does not engage with such issues in practice - projects may

not articulate or report on them. This is a limitation of the methodology, and emphasises that additional, in-depth analysis of projects is needed to understand how Darwin Initiative projects have contributed to poverty alleviation and biodiversity.

Finally, the omission of key words highlights areas in which Darwin Initiative projects may need additional support to ensure that projects are effectively addressing and reporting on issues related to poverty and well-being.



Future opportunities

Learning from our past

The concept of poverty has traditionally been associated almost exclusively with measures of income (see Poverty Learning Note). Systematically reviewing project documents has demonstrated that projects were considering different dimensions of human well-being before this became a requirement for applying for DFID-funded Darwin Initiative projects. There is therefore potential to learn from these projects and support them to share experiences in order to generate further insights into the links between poverty and biodiversity.

Talk more explicitly about poverty

Positively, findings presented in this information note suggest that prior to DFID involvement in the fund, although many Darwin projects were not explicitly examining their activities and achievements through a poverty or well-being lens, they were nevertheless strongly engaging with these issues. Current projects are explicitly engaging with a wider range of poverty and well-being issues. However, the review has drawn attention to a number of issues which are not frequently discussed. Examining these issues within each of the dimensions of well-being highlights a number of future opportunities for Darwin Initiative projects.

There is potential for projects to:

1. Continue to consider human capacity, livelihoods, food, sustainable use, income, and ecosystem services.
2. Better integrate and address the health and social dimensions of well-being, such as gender.
3. Continue to engage with governance and institutional issues, such as policy and security.
4. Develop innovative ways to incorporate freedom of choice concerns related to land rights and land tenure, resource access, equality, justice and power.

Get better at integrating gender

Interestingly, few of the projects reviewed explicitly use words such as women or gender in their project documents. With the introduction of the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014, it is now a requirement of all DFID-funded Darwin Initiative projects to consider their likely contribution to reducing gender inequality. Furthermore, all projects are strongly encouraged to provide indicators disaggregated by gender where possible.

Useful References

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The Darwin Initiative is funded by the UK Government and aims to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources around the world including the UK's Overseas Territories. Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has committed over £113million to over 943 projects in 159 countries.

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For more information on the Darwin Initiative see <http://darwininitiative.org.uk>

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