Effective Altruism as a Framework for Assessing the Effectiveness of Conservation and Sustainable Development (CSD) Projects in Madre de Dios, Peru

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Context
✓ “Peru’s Biodiversity Capital”
✓ Many vulnerable human groups, including Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation (PIAVCI)
✓ Major issues include high levels of poverty & deforestation
✓ New methods of intervention are being developed using a more evidence-based, data-driven approach
✓ A paradigm example of this method is Effective Altruism (EA)
✓ This research seeks to apply the EA framework to assess the effectiveness of CSD projects in Madre de Dios, Peru

Methods
✓ Literature review
✓ Analysis of APCI (Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation) project database
✓ Case study in Lucerna Community
  • Value surveys
  • Discrete Choice Experiment (DCE)
  • Community questionnaire

Question
Experts agree that the Madre de Dios region of Peru is a major priority for current CSD initiatives. Are today’s conservation and sustainable development projects in this region effective?

Analysis and Results

Objective 1: Determine what effectiveness means in the CSD context and how it is measured

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EA Theoretical Criteria</th>
<th>Practical application in CSD</th>
<th>What’s been done?</th>
<th>Criteria satisfied?</th>
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<td>A. Selecting high-impact areas (value prioritization)</td>
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<td>IPF Framework</td>
<td>High impacts</td>
<td>Low impacts</td>
<td>Socio-environmental impacts</td>
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<td>B. Deciding on CSD projects</td>
<td>Cost-benefit analysis</td>
<td>Cost effectiveness</td>
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Objective 2: Assess the state of current mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of CSD projects in Madre de Dios

- Inadequate prioritization of goals and targets, leading to ineffective allocation of limited resources
- Inadequate evaluation and auditing of CSD projects due to weakness in APCI data collection and reporting

Objective 3: Determine to what extent these mechanisms influence the development decisions of local communities

- Socioeconomic profile of Lucerna community
  - ~2:1 ratio of men to women
  - Average ages are 25-45 years
  - Economy based on agriculture and local commerce
  - Main crops are cocoa, plantains, and citrus
  - Speak Quechua, Spanish, and Ashaninka

Conclusions

Objective 1:
✓ There is no single, standard definition for effectiveness recognized by the entire CSD community
✓ The metrics for measuring effectiveness are still not clearly defined

Objective 2:
✓ The analysis indicates that there are gaps of knowledge within the institutional infrastructure for effectiveness in CSD. This will affect more the national and local levels than the highest (international) levels

Objective 3:
✓ The information suggests that there is not a strong influence of the mechanisms measuring and monitoring effectiveness in the decision making of local communities like Lucerna

Future Work
✓ Revise methodology to obtain more reliable data
✓ Make recommendations for strengthening infrastructure to better facilitate the measuring of CSD projects’ effectiveness
✓ Develop an “EA toolkit” to facilitate future EA-styled research and CSD projects in Madre de Dios, Peru

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