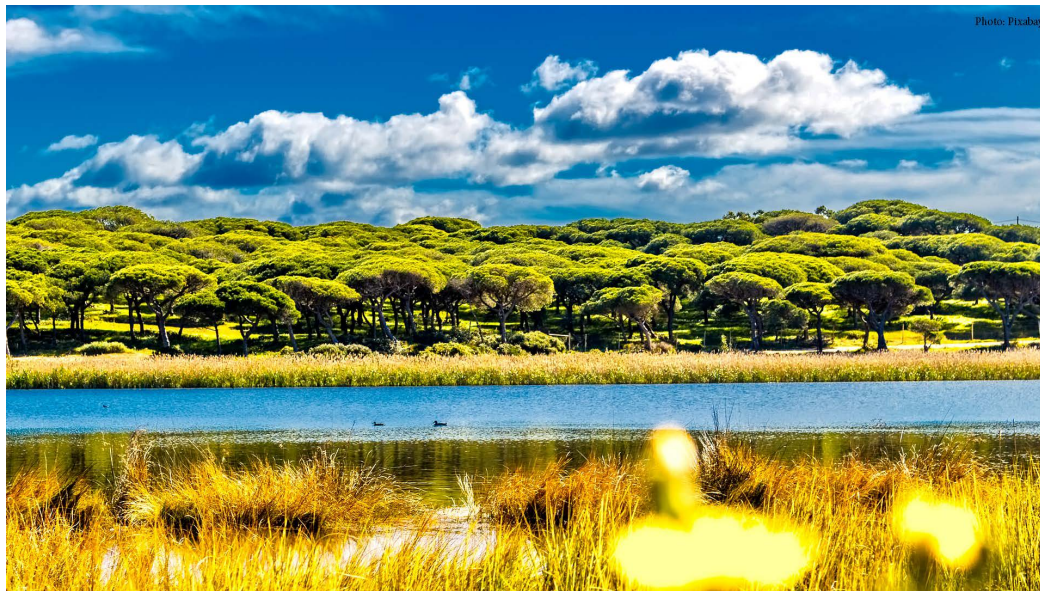




## Issue No. 2 – December 2018



# McGill Partnership with UN Environment for Tracking Environment-Related Risks

**We are pleased to announce a new multidisciplinary partnership between McGill University and the UN Environment on a research to practice agenda on natural resource conflict mediation and prevention.**

With global trends such as population growth, biodiversity loss and climate change, competition over scarce resources is intensifying and consequently creating new conflicts or exacerbating existing ones. By combining McGill researchers' and the UN's expertise and resources, this collaboration has potential to influence global policy and reduce environment-related risks. The partnership seeks to establish a process that will enhance capacity to identify environment-related threats to human security and monitor the interaction between environmental factors and political or social tensions at regional, national and global levels.

For more information, click **here!**

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## Linking conservation and poverty reduction: an ambiguous relationship with strong policy implications

By Marie-Eve Yergeau

Poverty reduction and environmental conservation in developing countries are two major issues recognized by the international community and integrated in sustainable development agendas. Certainly, in recent years, significant progress has been achieved in the fight against monetary poverty. According to the World Bank, the world extreme poverty rate (rate of people living on less than 1.90 US\$ per day) fell from more than 35% in 1990 to nearly 10% in 2013. However, this decrease has not been evenly distributed at the geographic level. For instance, the extreme poverty rate in China passed from 70% in 1990 to less than 5% in 2013 while it only decreased from 55% to 41% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, progress against environmental targets have been less successful. For example, the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss has not been met. And while 13 million hectares of forest are lost every year, nearly 1.6 billion people depend on its resources for their subsistence<sup>1</sup>.

Since the United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972, programmes that have been developed to meet the goals of poverty reduction and environmental conservation show that these issues are not only priority, but they're also recognized as being linked. For instance, the programme Agenda 21 adopted in 1992 during the UN Conference on Environment and Development claims that an efficient poverty alleviation strategy is critical for environmental conservation:

While managing resources sustainably, an environmental policy that focuses mainly on the conservation and protection of resources must take due account of those who depend on the resources for their livelihoods.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/>  
<https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation>

Otherwise it could have an adverse impact both on poverty and on chances for long-term success in resource and environmental conservation. Equally, a development policy that focuses mainly on increasing the production of goods without addressing the sustainability of the resources on which production is based will sooner or later run into declining productivity, which could also have an adverse impact on poverty. A specific anti-poverty strategy is therefore one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable development.

Furthermore, the Convention on Biological Diversity, adopted during the same Conference, acknowledges that poverty reduction remains the first priority in developing countries. The necessity to develop policies that contribute to both environmental conservation and local welfare/poverty reduction has been reiterated during the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the Rio UN Conference on Sustainable Development (2012), among others.

However, while the existence of a link between environmental conservation and poverty reduction is widely recognized, there is no consensus on the nature of this relationship. Indeed, whether this relationship is positive or negative remains a matter of debate among scientists and practitioners. Complicating matters, the direction of causality is ambiguous: conservation policies influence poverty reduction while development programs affect the natural environment. The diversity of perspectives and the resulting debates influence the development and implementation of policies and institutional programmes. We illustrate this debate through three points of view.

The first point of view is that environmental conservation curbs poverty reduction. Indeed, the use of natural resources is often one of the main sources of income for the poorest populations. According to this logic, conservation policies that constrain resource access would thus limit the income of the poor. For instance, the establishment of a protected area that forbids firewood collection or agricultural development may significantly negatively affect the welfare of the poor. Defenders of this point of view will thus not



support the implementation of conservation policies that do not include compensation mechanisms, that is, means of generating an alternative income for those who are constrained by the policy. However, recent case studies conducted in Costa Rica, Bolivia, Thailand, and Nepal have shown that under certain conditions mostly geographical, protected areas do contribute to poverty alleviation.



The second point of view is that development projects are a driver of biodiversity loss. Therefore, poverty reduction has a harmful effect on the natural environment. Development projects such as roads or urban infrastructures construction are criticized on the ground that they contribute to environmental degradation. In addition, when individuals get richer, they are likely to increase and orientate their consumption towards products and services with a higher ecological footprint, and to produce more greenhouse gas. They may, for instance, increase their transportations or buy a car, consume more meat or transformed products, or increase their energy needs. According to this point of view, the natural environment is threatened by development programmes, and only strict environmental policies have potential to limit biodiversity loss. Conservation and poverty reduction are thus considered as totally conflicting goals.

These two points of view illustrate the case of a negative relationship between conservation and poverty reduction. Therefore, are these two goals irreconcilable? Not necessarily. Indeed, a third point of view

contends that the relationship between environmental conservation and poverty reduction is a positive one, where conservation policies and development strategies are mutually reinforcing. To see this, consider a conservation policy that generates an increase in biodiversity stock. More resources become available for the poor who depend on them, which may lead to an income increase. Then, as poor people increase their income, they are likely to modify their consumption behaviour and adapt to become less dependent on natural resources. For instance, studies have shown that when poor people increase their income they substitute firewood as their main energy source for another one such as kerosene or electricity.

According to this point of view, policies that have potential to contribute to both environmental conservation and poverty reduction should be developed and implemented. Among existing initiatives, Payments for Environmental Services (PES) directly compensate individuals or an organization for preserving an ecosystem or an environmental service. For instance, a government can allocate a certain sum to individuals for preserving a parcel of forest. Therefore, conservation actions allow for an income increase. Another initiative aiming to meet both conservation and poverty reduction goals are the Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP). ICDPs refer to a set of specific activities that aim to combine a sustainable use of resources inside or around protected areas, with economic and social development. Various social benefits can emerge from these projects including local institutional capacity building for protected areas management, awareness campaign, the implementation of education and health programmes, and infrastructures improvement. Conservation is thus combined to social and economic development.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is no consensus on the nature of the relationship between environmental conservation and poverty reduction. These conceptual debates are critical as they influence the policies and institutional programmes that are developed and implemented. Indeed, different perspectives will lead to different policies that may be contradictory and hinder the success of development strategies. This





discussion thus highlights the need to conduct more evidence-based studies with robust data and rigorous methodological frameworks to better understand the relationship between environmental conservation and poverty reduction. Developing and coordinating environmental and poverty reduction policies around strong empirical analysis is crucial for the success of global development strategies.

*Marie-Eve Yergeau is a Research Associate at the Institute for the Study of International Development, McGill University. She holds a PhD in Development Economics.*

## A new interactive tool linking migration and the Sustainable Development Goals

### Interview with Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Senior Research Fellow Migration, from ODI

In October 2018, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) launched an interactive tool to improve understanding of the relationship between migration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is based on two years of research into how migration affects development outcomes.

#### Q: How did you come up with the idea of this interactive tool?

Over the last two years, we have been working with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to show the links between migration and development, and the impact of those links on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through a series of 12 briefing papers, we showed that only by considering how migration affects development outcomes can policy-makers hope to achieve the SDGs.

In doing so, we realised that the links between migration, development and the SDGs are numerous and inter-connected. Some links between migration and development affect the same SDG, and some SDGs affect a variety of links, demonstrating the importance of thinking and working across sectors. Obviously, this was difficult to communicate using text alone, so we

turned to more visual methods. We explained our idea to two design agencies, Soapbox and Sociopúblico, who came up with the design.

#### Q: How does the tool work?

It shows how the links between migration and development affect the achievement of the SDGs. To explore, click on either a SDG (around the outside of the wheel), or a critical development issue (inside the wheel). If you click on a SDG, it shows you which migration and development links are crucial to achieving it. If you click on a critical development issue, it shows you which SDGs it is crucial for. In total there are 67 links to explore, as well as numerous case studies and the 12 briefing papers.

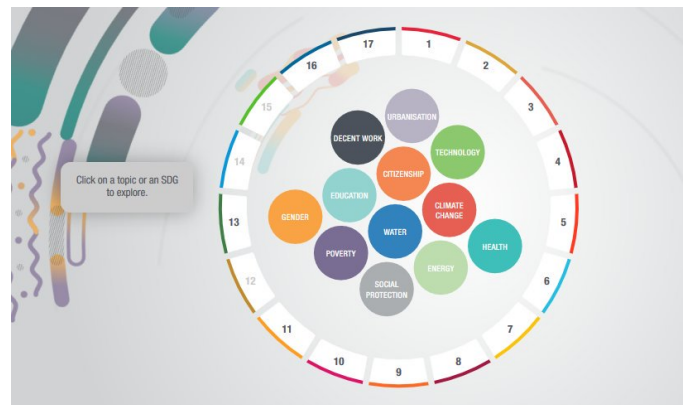


Photo: The interactive tool – ODI

#### Q: I'm a policy-maker trying to regulate migration. Can this tool help me to make the best decisions for my community?

Yes, it can play a part in decision-making. Migration matters for all aspects of development. The tool allows policy-makers to explore the ways in which migration impacts different sectors, both positively and negatively. Going beyond the tool, the 12 briefing papers include a more detailed discussion and case studies exploring the policies and factors which explain these impacts. Each briefing also contains concrete and action-oriented policy recommendations.

#### Q: The tool is based on two years of research on the relationship between migration and development outcomes. Can you tell us about a few key results and policy insights that emerged from all this work?



Our work resulted in five key findings:

1. **Migration is a powerful poverty reduction tool**, for migrants themselves, their families, and their origin and host countries. However, these benefits are often lost due to high migration costs and the lack of access to decent work.
2. **Migrants can contribute to the provision and delivery of services** and to greater development in host countries. Migrants contribute to better service provision and make vital contributions to host countries as workers and consumers. These potential benefits are stifled when access to basic services is denied or limited.
3. **The specific risks and vulnerabilities of migrants are often overlooked.** Migrants experience both migration-specific vulnerabilities (like exploitation, trafficking, abuse and the impacts of climate change) and migration-intensified vulnerabilities (like lack of access to services and precarious work).
4. **The implementation of existing programmes of support for migrants is often weak.** Access to basic services, such as health, education, social protection, water, sanitation and energy, are key for migrants' livelihoods and development prospects. But while in some cases migrants can access such services through existing or specifically designed interventions, the implementation of such programmes is often weak and levels of uptake low.
5. **There are major data gaps.** Data is often not disaggregated by migrant status or comparable across different groups and countries. This limits understanding of migrants' needs and reduces the accountability of governments and service providers.

More explanation of our findings, including their relationship to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Migration is available online.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/>

*Jessica Hagen-Zanker is a Senior Research Fellow Migration at the Overseas Development Institute.*

## S/he is Like Me: Fostering Social Healing through Restorative Justice

*A project in collaboration between: The Caux Scholars Program, IofC USA, IofC India and Towards an Inclusive Peace*

**By Keshab Dahal**

Between 1996 and 2006, Nepal experienced a decade-long civil war that caused 17,000 deaths and 1,300 disappearances, and left 10,000 injured<sup>2</sup>. In 1996, a political group, the Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist, initiated the armed struggle with an aim of overthrowing the monarchy and establishing a People's Republic. Caste and ethnicity-based discrimination, oppression, social exclusion, poverty and inequalities were all contributing factors to the conflict, as was the thought that these issues could only be addressed through a change in the political system. The conflict ended in 2006 with the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Thirteen years after the end of the conflict, war-era enemies are still living in hatred and animosity. The project "Fostering Social Healing through Restorative Justice" is aimed at tackling this persistent resentment among communities. Restorative justice is a method in which convicted criminals are urged to accept responsibility for their offences by meeting and making amends to victims and communities through non-judicial measures. It focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with those they have harmed. In order to meet these goals, we invited victims and alleged offenders to the same table to discuss who has been harmed, how they have been harmed, and how harm could be repaired. We did not focus on offenders' punishment but on holding them accountable for their actions and engaging a healing process for the victims. All participants had the chance to be heard and express their needs of acknowledgement, validation and repair



of the harm.

Our project took place in the districts of Rolpa and Bardiya in Western Nepal. Rolpa is a remote district lying in the mountainous range of the country, while Bardiya is a neighbouring district of India in the plane belt of Nepal. These districts were selected because Rolpa was the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency where the most deaths occurred, and Bardiya is the district that counted the highest number of enforced disappearance victims. The country has experienced several significant political changes since the end of the conflict: it transitioned from a Monarchy to a Republic, from Hindu to Secular, from unitary to federal, and from an exclusionary to an inclusive regime. But how do populations in Rolpa and Bardiya who were most affected by the conflict view these changes? How do they live together with their war-era enemies? What is the socioeconomic status of the victims? To understand the answers to these questions and foster social healing through a restorative justice approach, we organized workshops in Liwang, the headquarter of the Rolpa district on October 27-29, 2018 and in Gulariya, Bardiya district, on November 1-3, 2018. We selected participants so that all parties involved in the conflict were represented, i.e. victims, alleged perpetrators, journalists and those who work in the area of post-conflict peace and justice.

The two-day programme for the workshops was organized around several sessions. Some of the activities conducted during the sessions are described below. We started the programme with different group work activities to engage participants in a dynamic and participatory way. For instance, we conducted an interactive introductory session asking participants to find a person whom they have never met/spoken before and share each other's name, where they were from and their experience of the conflict. Partners were then instructed to introduce one another to the rest of the group. This session served the purpose of establishing personal connections among participants. We then conducted activities to promote the sharing of personal stories and experiences. The first activity aimed at demonstrating how one can achieve personal transformation. At the beginning, the facilitator shared

a personal story about perceived disputes and conflicts he had with his neighbours and the consequences it generated. Then, he explained his personal endeavour to resolve the issues, and ended by sharing how he has benefitted from the conflict resolution. Participants were then invited to contemplate how they can bridge the existing gaps between themselves and their friends, relatives and neighbours, and on each other's roles in responding to problems in their community or district.



Photos: Workshops / credit: Keshab Dahal

The next activity aimed at showing how one can grow stronger from experiencing pain, suffering and trauma. The facilitator shared his personal story using a flow diagram recalling events that were turning





points in his life. He explained how he managed to turn his weaknesses into challenges, and showed how pain, suffering and trauma can be opportunities for self-awareness and to realize one's highest potential. He then told the participants to make their own flow diagram depicting major events that occurred in their lives. Afterwards, participants were organized into small groups of five or six each to share their stories with the other members. By exchanging their personal stories, the participants realised they all had similar pain and sufferings despite contextual differences and regardless of the party that harmed them during the conflict. This activity was very effective in building understanding between participants.

Finally, we conducted a sharing circle during which participants were asked to answer different questions related to their own experiences during the conflict. They could speak only when they had the 'talking stone' in their hand. The facilitator practised empathetic listening and consoled the speakers if and when they started grieving. Each participant was requested to make a resolution for peace and fraternity in their community when they returned home. Most of them said they would carry the message of restorative justice to their community. This session was felt to be very powerful in terms of participants agreeing to accept one another in their community.

At the end, programmes in both Rolpa and Bardiya were deemed to be successful by both the participants and the project team. Participants said they would apply the new ideas they learned from the programme in their lives. Many claimed that they have attended other programs, but that this one was different and gave them new insights. The participants concluded they would unite under a single banner for conflict victims' rights. The journalists who participated in the workshop have promised to cover victims' plights in the news. As a matter of fact, one of them quickly published news about the programme in a national weekly newspaper.

Participants acknowledged that as they heard the painful stories from their fellow participants they realized that everyone has been harmed by the conflict. Regardless of whether the hurt was inflicted by the government side

or by the rebels, all who has died is a Nepalese. Many also said that learning that everyone is suffering and hurt helped to relieve their own pain to some extent. Regardless of which side of the conflict they supported (government or rebel), all participants have agreed to stand together for change and for the rights of the victims. This two-day programme helped participants to unite under a common agenda. Participants agreed that Nepal cannot bear another insurgency, and so they want to forget the past and become agents of reconciliation in their communities. Many of the participants also claimed that they will share what they have learned from the program with their family and friends.



Photo: Group of participants / credit: Keshab Dahal

Unlike retributive justice system which focuses on who did the harm, what rules were broken and how criminals should be punished, restorative justice seeks to repair the harm by urging the offenders to take responsibility for their actions. During this two-day workshop, alleged perpetrators repeatedly accepted responsibilities and shared their willingness to make amend for the harm they may have caused. In the long run, this project could create a platform where people are encouraged to exchange in order to find ways to restore balance among communities, and redress issues that persist since the end of the conflict.

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