

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

EA Theoretical Criteria	Practical application in CSD		What's been done?	Criteria satisfied (Y/N)
A. Selecting focus areas (cause prioritization)				
ITN Framework	Importance	Scale	UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets	Incomplete
	Tractability	Solvability	UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets	Incomplete
	Neglectedness	Resources currently invested	UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets	Incomplete
B. Deciding on interventions to pursue				
Cost-benefit analysis	Monetary costs and benefits (\$)	Monetary costs and benefits (\$)	Copenhagen Consensus' Nobel Laureates Guide to Smarter Global Targets to 2030	Y
Cost effectiveness analysis	Non-monetary costs and benefits	Non-monetary costs and benefits	UN's recommended indicators for SDGs and targets	Incomplete
C. Compiling relevant data / evidence				
Evidence / data	Empirical evidence	Randomized controlled trials, etc.	Variable	Incomplete

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

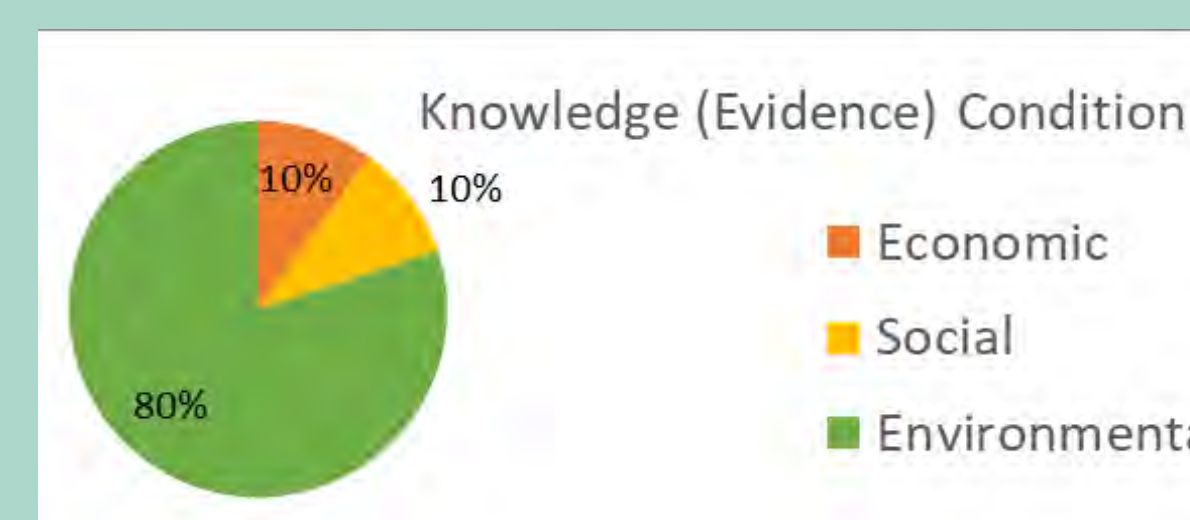
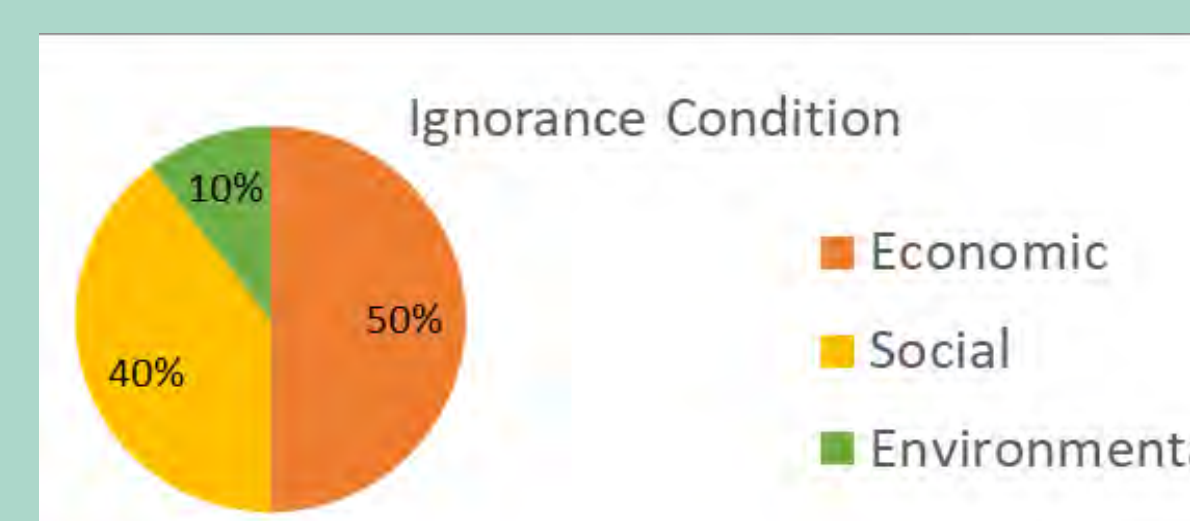


Socioeconomic profile of Lucerna community

- ✓ ~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

Objective 2: Assess the state of current mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of CSD projects in Madre de Dios

Institutional Infrastructure for Conservation and Sustainable Development effectiveness				
Cause prioritization	Setting GIs & Targets	Leading & facilitation	Ground level interventions	Evaluation & Auditing
Centre for Effective Altruism	UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	UN Development Program	CSD nonprofits (ARCAmazon)	Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development
		Peruvian Government	Independent researchers	Agencia Peruana de Cooperación Internacional (APCI)
		Madre de Dios Regional Government		Independent Auditors
		Local organizations and associations		



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

The community made different decisions about hypothetical development projects when provided with more evidence

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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