New routes for mainstreaming

Integrating environment with development is not just about putting ‘green’ words in national plans.

In 2002, the World Bank began assessments that looked for a shift in priorities within development. They evaluated countries’ progress in incorporating environmental protection into developing countries’ Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) — the documents where governments and donors set development goals and aid programmes to lift people out of poverty. They were aware that although PRSs had ‘sustainable growth’ as a goal, only the ‘growth’ aspect was getting attention.

But with environment and development long treated as separate and often competing issues, each having its own institutions and advocates, it is tricky to judge success in reconnecting them. Rather than probing the complex reality, the World Bank simply measured whether ‘green’ words such as ‘environment’, ‘climate’ and ‘biodiversity’ were being written into the national plans.

Many other donors and policymakers have also assumed that the business of planning is the place to start integrating environment and development. But IIED has been looking for approaches that use a wider range of tactics, tailored to each country’s context. To find out what is working — not in plans, but on the ground — we brought together learning groups of experts in finance, development, environment and poverty reduction from developing countries.

Lessons from experience

The learning group workshops — held in Malawi, the Philippines, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia — were not typical policy reviews. Rather than evaluating specific instruments for environmental mainstreaming, participants described their country’s success stories — situations where poor people benefited from environmental gains such as cleaner water or access to biodiversity. They reflected on how those successes came about, as well as on what gaps still remain. Learning group members — ranging from a former environment minister to current budget officials to the head of corporate responsibility for an African company — brought diverse perspectives and offered an eye-opening array of effective strategies.

In Uganda and Tanzania, governments added environmental questions to public expenditure reviews — recording investments in environmental assets and the returns they yield. Other IIED research has highlighted similar changes driven by the UN’s Poverty and Environment Initiative, which helps budget departments with environmental questions. Whereas there is a general tendency to postpone action on environmental issues, this practice results in decisions. Making budgets means making choices, and including natural wealth leads to greener outcomes.

In Zambia, because environment is more prominent in public education — especially in wildlife clubs active in schools for the past three decades — most mainstream decision-makers understand environmental concerns a little better than their counterparts in neighbouring nations.
documents. It is a longer-term process of institutional and behavioural change involving many pathways specific to countries. It is bottom-up as well as top-down; driven by civil society as well as government; a matter of political economy — how environment is valued and by whom — as well as technical concerns about environmental limits. Learning groups reflecting on real-world results can show how to navigate this complex landscape.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT & INNOVATIONS

- Planning tools can help environmental mainstreaming, but Poverty Reduction Strategies are not the only vehicle for this. Outcome-based planning — as opposed to priority sectors — reveals environmental contributions to health, food security and other outcomes.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) brings order and transparency to the environmental scrutiny of policy.
- The budget really counts — it is often the only point when decisions about environment are made. Public environmental expenditure reviews can help shape a budget that invests more in environment to get more out of it.
- Decision makers need to understand environment. In part this means making better economic cases for environmental investment. But it is also a matter of environmental education — from primary school to civil service training colleges.

PARTNERS’ VIEW

I like the approach of working with in-country learning groups and sense that richness in the material — the guidance on environmental mainstreaming is built on real experience and not just theory. I really appreciate the books and the website that support this learning.

Jane Clark
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IIED GOVERNANCE GROUP

The Governance Group works to secure accountable, transparent, equitable and effective governance for sustainable development at all levels — through generating evidence of processes and institutional structures that work, and how roles, responsibilities and means of engagement can best be improved.

In Vietnam, where the government is seen to impose top-down policies, environmental mainstreaming has started within local governance. Ordinary people, particularly women, connected health problems with pollution, and a few communes — at village or neighbourhood level — created their own environmental regulations and reflected them in their commune development plans. A UN Development Programme initiative has helped spread the movement to more communes.

In Tanzania, the government switched from ‘priority sector’ planning to outcome-based planning. Instead of choosing one sector, such as agriculture, as the prime object of investment, they described a desired outcome, such as improved food security. Environmental initiatives that contributed to this goal became higher priorities, and environment budgets increased several-fold.

In southern Africa, IIED-backed ‘roadshows’ raised awareness of another planning tool, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA injects environmental awareness early in policy processes, making it part of their foundation. Learning group participants said the technique had proved its worth in pilot projects and deserved wider roll-out.

Experts from the learning groups collaborated with IIED staff to produce booklets summarising their findings, which in turn fed into IIED’s 2009 book The Challenges of Environmental Mainstreaming. We also launched a website, www.environmental-mainstreaming.org, where practitioners share tools and case studies. The reports from the learning groups are gaining high-level attention in-country, and some are being invited to stay on as ‘learning and leadership’ groups offering feedback on major programmes, including the UN Poverty–Environment Initiative.

One further lesson concerns who should drive environmental mainstreaming. In Zambia, IIED had expected to co-host a group with the government’s Environment Council. But the finance and planning ministry heard the plan and asked to become a third co-host, so that finance officials could ‘own’ the results, understand and act on them. This example shows the changing face of environmental mainstreaming. Rather than environmental actors trying to push their priorities onto mainstream players such as finance and sector development, the departments on the ‘other side’ are starting to demand more information and a leadership role.

The shift reflects growing attention to environmental issues — not just in national plans, but, as the learning groups reported, up- and downstream of them as well. Recognising we’ve won the general argument that both human and environmental wellbeing are needed for sustainable development, the next step for IIED is to help with specific decisions, such as how much a country should invest in soil conservation. Here we’ll need rigorous approaches to environmental valuation and accounting, which will be a major focus of IIED’s research and partnerships going forward.

The International Institute for Environment and Development’s Reflect & act series showcases innovation and lessons learnt in selected projects from across the institute. See the IIED Group pages on www.iied.org for more.
Guidelines for Mainstreaming DRR in Early Recovery Floods 2010. Table of Contents. A DRR mainstreaming in priority sectors by initiating the process of updating seismic and flood codes for buildings, roads and bridges and calibrating the same for districts which are prone to both earthquake and floods; d) Community-Based DRR A§ Community-based participatory assessment in all flood affected districts of the proposed multi-hazard EWS, processes, evacuation routes, designated evacuation.A § Clear evacuation routes during floods or during emergency should be developed for the community. A§ Need to manage and utilize funds appropriately and effectively. Community and concerned government officials should form a committee to monitor school building construction. New routes for mainstreaming. Integrating environment with development is not just about putting â€˜greenâ€™ words in national plans. In 2002, the World Bank began assessments that looked for a shift in priorities within development. They evaluated countriesâ€™ progress in incorporating environmental protection into developing countriesâ€™ Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) â€” the documents where governments and donors set development goals and aid programmes to lift people out of poverty. How do I use routing and folder structure to pass multiple optional parameters in the URL? What folder structure should I create to handle such cases where the route is something like. user/:id/:product user/:id/product/:id. vue.js nuxt.js. Â You need to create dynamic nested routes. In order to do that you need to manage your folders as indicated in the documentation here. For your example it should be : // For user/:id/:product user/_id/_product pages/ --| user/ -----| _id/ -| index.vue -| _product -| index.vue // For user/:id/product id pages/ --| user/ -----| _id/ -| index.vue -| product -| _id.vue. Share. Improve this answer.