|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Day 3 – Thursday 28th August*** | |  |
|  | Recap and reflections   * What is happening with this group? * Why is it happening? * Conclusions? What’s next? | 09:00 – 09:45 |
|  | Alternative pictures of conservation: What can we see? | 09:45 – 11:00 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Alternative pictures of conservation: What can we do? | 11:30 – 13:00 |
|  |  |  |
|  | OPEN SESSION – explore terrain the group deems important | 14:00 – 15:45 |
|  |  |  |
|  | OPEN SESSION – explore terrain the group deems important | 16:15 – 17:00 |
|  | Recap and reflections | 17:00 – 17:30 |

**Let’s Get Networked: Connecting Evaluation and Conservation**

**Through Systems Thinking**

***Reflections and action points from day three***

The morning started with apologies from E.J. who was not able to participate today and Andrew who would join the group later, they wished the group another productive day.

***Morning sessions:***

The group began with a re-cap of the previous day and what had been particularly useful to the participants:

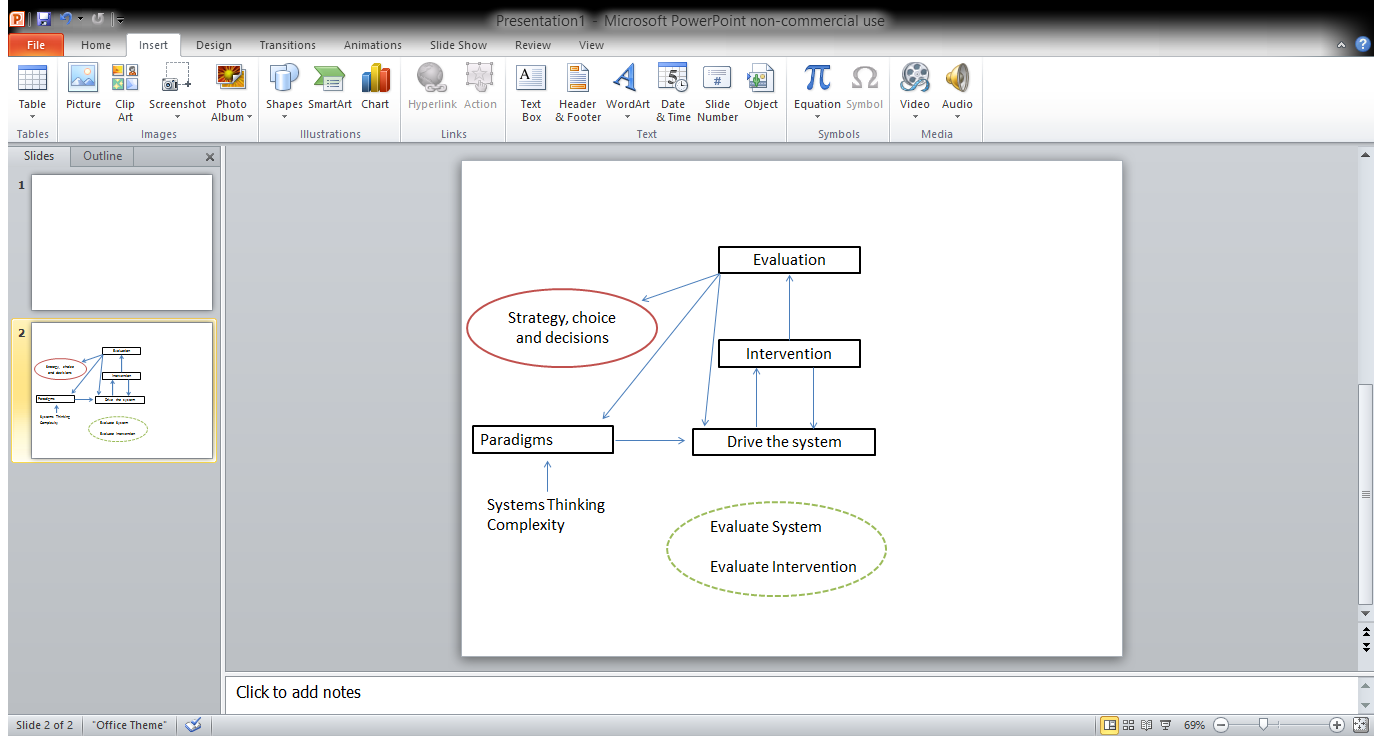
* The afternoon poster session (The authors reminded us of each poster’s key points)
* The benefits to thinking about processes
* The great discussion about controversial policy issues
* Hearing the insights of others about what kinds of research would work in certain situations

Before the next session started the group reflected on the previous sessions before Glenda started the next session on Co-Understanding, and there were several questions which were posed which seemed to help in focusing people’s thoughts:

1. To what extent is what we are doing valuable in drawing together three fields that have not yet been bought together?
2. To what extent is what we are doing valuable in creating an improved idea or action around conservation?
   * What differences make a difference in relation to drawing the fields together?
   * What differences make a difference in terms of improving conservation?
3. How do we combine the three to effect and inform conservation?
4. When you get on the plane to go home and you think ‘That was an incredible experience, what would that look like?’
   * + Matt offered two thoughts here: One is the idea of the three fields working together for the first time and the other to create something using the wisdom of all the fields to create something practical and useful that will inform decisions. But what it needs to be to meet those two goals is not yet defined.
5. An evaluation question was developed: ***How valuable has resilience thinking been to the effective development of conservation practice?*** (questions the value of resilience thinking)
6. Kent drew the group’s attention to the recognised ‘***Strategy and chain of factors in a conceptual model’*** and proposed that his personal goal for the workshop would be to make this model better by looking at ways it can take into account evaluative and systems thinking to modify or rewrite the model.
7. Carli flagged her fear that systems are incredibly complex and that you could look at a system a million different ways an never really understand it- her question was how well do you have to understand the system before you can get what you need to intervene?
8. Cameron suggested that a helpful way to look at evaluative and systems thinking is that it provides a number of ‘base layers’ on which to build your thinking on. (Without making the solution more complex!) It is useful for identifying areas where you can do something and be a littler truer in exploring the complexity and be more respectful to the problem.
   * + S&E thinking therefore helps you to shine a ‘bigger flashlight’, to look at the system and to start to spot areas where you can meaningfully begin to create a design and evaluative structure that honours the complexity and explain it better than we could before.

***Alternative pictures of conservation: what can we see?***

Glenda drew a useful diagram to capture the process the group was discussing:



**Discussing conservation issues**

The conservationists in the group noted that they always evaluate the intervention. That is very different to evaluative thinking. It was discussed that there is possibly an unwillingness to be explicit about their values and therefore the ability to be able to measure them. They recognised that often they evaluate parts of the system but rarely the entire system, or that they even employ the best systems to do these evaluations.

**Adaptive Action Map**

It was noted that “We need to know what to do in a system where there is a great deal of complexity and uncertainty”

Glenda introduced the

The **Adaptive Action Map** is a short iterative decision making cycle:

**What? So What? Now What?**

(did you see, (what does it mean, (learn from actions and do it

what happened?) what are the interactions?) again with changes)

Glenda noted that the tools that conservationists already have will fit into this system and that it is similar to adaptive management / action research, except put in a way that isn’t predictive but adaptive and scaled.

However, there was consensus that S&E have been using this process for some while and that conservation has also to a certain extent, it just needs developing taking into account S&E.

Questions were raised pertaining to this model to focus the groups thoughts:

**What** does the funder want?

**What** can I build to help them understand about the work that I need to do?

What am I going to do?

Then once we are out in the field:

**So What** is happening now? What’s working and what’s not?

**So What** do I need to do about it?

**Now What** does that do to my intervention?

It was noted that a challenge is that it is difficult for obtaining funding as funders are not open to allowing this kind of management in their cycles.

***A future vision of conservation - Group exercise***

After the break the group reconvened to discuss three key questions which were based around the **Adaptive Action Map**, given 5 minutes to think about a question and to speak to the group about their thoughts:

**Step I**

A question was designed amongst the group to help generate a debate around some of the critical issues that need to be addressed and changed to generate an ideal vision of the future of conservation.

“Conservation is successfully integrating evaluative thinking and practices. What does it feel like to be a practitioner of that, what does it look like to me and what does it feel/look/sound like to others (impacted by the conservation movement or others in conservation?)”

Discussion points to help:

1. What does effective conservation look and feel like that absorbs evaluative based thinking in 20 years and how to get funders to value that new perspective?
2. How does it integrate evaluation, systems and conservation?
3. How might ‘this’ be an alternative to Kent’s picture?

**Step II**

Each member of the group reported back their vision

**Step III**

The group pulled out key concepts and common words that they seemed to share or those that seemed to be very different, to create a list of common terms in their ‘future vision of conservation’:

**Key Vision Terminology:**

Process/ Integration/ mainstreaming evaluation

Learning

Collaborating

Share

Values explicit and debated (legitimacy)

Knowledge/Wisdom/question

Actors/people/victims

Complexity/diversity – embraced and used

Creative

Failings acknowledged

Fairness

Deliberated/reflection

Encouragingly the list showed that the group has a very positive shared vision, but the next big question is “How do we demonstrate that vision to funders?”

**Step IV**

It was proposed that the process as opposed to generating ‘*the list’* was the valuable exercise and that seeing that everyone in the room had shared goals made the process a success.

There seemed to be a lot of unity within the group; and it was proposed that “*if we are aligned should we be thinking about others who are not in the room sand how to step into their shoes to understand why they don’t see this in the same way as us”.*

An incredibly lively debate around terms being used, especially the terms ‘effective’ versus ‘evaluative’ ensued.

The next iteration was to focus on the things on the list that conservation is not already thinking about and what is getting in the way of moving forward. (Even though there may be a lot written about some of the things on the list it was discussed that doesn’t mean that they are issues which have been solved) and the question now should be:

**‘What needs to be in place to achieve evaluative conservation? And what is stopping us from achieving these goals?’**

***Post lunch sessions:***

***Alternative pictures of conservation: what can we do?***

This session was aimed at getting the group to think about what is stopping them from achieving the ‘vision’ by breaking down the ‘**Key Vision Terminology’** and addressing why they are not ‘working’ for conservation.

The group divided into three sub-groups and tackled why the following from the list are **‘barriers to evaluative conservation’:**

* Values explicit and debated, legitimacy
* Learning and collaborating
* Knowledge / wisdom / question (how do we move people from knowledge to wisdom?)

**Values**

**Group I**

What we currently do:

* Worry that is we include others we won’t ‘get our way’
* No conservation ethics group
* Natural science doesn’t have debate around advocacy v authority
* You accede your power when you accept values have importance
* It’s too difficult to accept there are values
* We don’t know why we hold them
* They are hard to communicate

What needs to change?

* Teach other how to articulate values
* Shine a light that there are values behind different approaches
* Advocate debate into values
* Accept uncomfortable compromises
* Funding for conservation ethics
* Surrender part of histories i.e. Intergenerational change
* Focus on asking questions we are bad at asking as this may make us better at asking them.

**Values**

**Group II**

What we currently do:

* Strategic to keep power by not revealing values
* We know we’re right, so why ask for other values
* Don’t’ realise that other values are available
* Not taught to discuss values
* It makes us vulnerable to put our values ‘out there’

What needs to change?

* Reflect on our values more
* We don’t mind legitimacy if we are right
* What are the processes?
* Make it easier to express your personal values – need a champion
* Being able to take collective action
* Participating in an interactive process to develop and publicise ‘a big model’
* The assumption that ‘my values’ are normative and other peoples are’ different’ and need adjusting

**Learning**

**Group I**

What we currently do:

* Don’t want to be wrong
* We haven’t fostered a culture where it is ok to be wrong
* Feel judged
* Focus on implementation versus reflection
* There is limited money so if we spend it on evaluation there is none left
* There is no time to learn
* Insight is different to an answers/learning
* We are personally involved in the answer
* The question we want to discuss is difficult to define

What needs to change?

* Change the model of learning
  + - Build a culture where it is ok to fail
    - Build a culture that is useful for science
* Teach the new generation of conservation scientists about implementation and evaluation upfront
* Teach people to expect learning
* Produce a text book
* Look to other fields – Networks, CoPs etc.
* Change funding cycles i.e. start-end- and build in time for agency objectives and evaluation
* Change conservation away from novelty to utility when producing publications

Kent loved the idea of new conservationists entering a field that is new/novel and thinks that it is ‘doable’ and could even be an “*output of the group”*

**Learning**

**Group II**

What we currently do:

* We show vulnerability if we admit we don’t know something
* People are conceptionally learning, but not acting on facts
* People are learning, but through experience

What needs to change?

* Change modes of learning
* Make space for complexity and concepts need a new environment:
  + Apprenticeships?
  + How do other fields do it?
* Does learning collaboratively = more momentum as more people are doing it together
* Get the field to talk about it and value learning
* Interdisciplinary learning

Bob mentioned that, “*People are always learning; what’s important is what they are learning, for example conservation people have learnt not to talk about their values!”*

**Moving us from data to knowledge to wisdom**

**Group I**

What we currently do:

* We believe that we will be able to understand the system if we do enough experiments
* We can move from data to wisdom with a little interpretation, then moving onwards values impact the process of developing knowledge
* We stop once values come into the equation – the data (and form) we gather is impacted by our values
* You can only get to an understanding if you get enough data
* We don’t think about different ways to do things as we don’t know any other ways
* We want control over our data and don’t want to share it
* I am the ‘expert’ if I don’t share my data
* Data is a social construct and is only useful when in context or something is done with it
* Global impact and reach – local scale case studies don’t get published and are not seen of interest on a global ‘impact’ scale

What needs to change?

* Consider values before project design
* Be explicit about assumptions
* Don’t think!
* Make conscious choice about design and data
* Who am I trying to please by using that approach?
* What am I trying to do by using this approach?
* Need to realise there are other ways to collect data
* Need a trans-disciplinary team to make data move to wisdom
* Need to teach skills to understand how to handle data
* Build collaborative team into the proposal so there is better likelihood to get funding
* Project funding needed for evaluation

**Group II**

What we currently do:

* Existing mental models are a barrier
* Don’t know how to synthesise and scale up to a systemic point of view
* Why don’t we value wisdom, which is:

Knowledge of self

Knowledge of others

How others see you

How others see the world

* We may be dumber collectively than individually
* What we gather doesn’t help us achieve wisdom
* Does data always = wisdom or go the wrong way and = ignorance
* Reflecting in a crisis is hard

What needs to change?

* Need to appreciate wisdom
* Need to collect different data to achieve wisdom
* What data do I need to be wise V data = knowledge and consider:

Assumptions

Power

Resources

Constraints

Intent

Purpose

Question

* Consider if wisdom is a currency for effective conservation; will wisdom = good conservation
* Ask if wisdom is the ability to reframe or to apply what we know to a new situation
* Borrow status and legitimacy when publicising e.g. from Attenborough
* Query if wisdom is a good thing?

What is wise?

Is it helping us conserve?

Do people’s perceptions of wisdom hinder or help?

**Simple Rules**

The third group, led by Glenda discussed ‘Simple Rules’.

She explained the theory behind having simple rules:

*Simple rules work to unite all team members as an untied force to create a pattern to generate behaviours that help people work better as a team, as all agents follow the rules.*

The simple rules are part of an adaptive action cycle so, that if the list is not correct then the group would go back and change them – they are not set in stone and create a ‘*living changing set of dynamic rules’*.

The simple rules are about eliciting a pattern from the group, doing them is not necessarily the point, but recognising that you want to move toward them and putting into place a trend rather than an outcome is the goal.

If the rules represent what is currently desired in the system and have a connection with reality as well as having people to champion them, they are more likely to succeed.

The group looked at the initial **Key Vision Terminology** list and created a list of simple rules which may guide a conservation group to implement effective evaluative conservation.

**Simple rules for systemic conservation**

1. Collaborate
2. Express your values honestly
3. Open your mind to listen to other’s perspectives
4. Challenge and investigate
5. Learn from experience
6. Act courageously
7. Reflect

The group discussed that the finish line in conservation may not be an outcome, rather a pattern, or an outcome may be not be a discrete place you pass and it’s done, but rather putting into place a trend.

***Group Exercise:***

Glenda led the group in an exercise in thinking about the simple rules above and asked the group to keep them in mind when answering the following:

1. What behaviours would these rules generate?
2. If I follow these rules how would it impact my practice?
3. Would these behaviours generate the pattern you desire?

**Feedback from group I**

* Some are easier than others to follow, i.e. expressing values is the hardest one
* Worry about the ‘and’ nature of the rules as some are harder than others to do concurrently
* Worried about the relationship between different sets of simple rules, these rules would be further down the list of other rules and would be the first to go under pressure.
* Worry about the dynamic nature of change, there would need to be a ‘boost’ to the system before the rules were put into place, so the rules would maintain the system as the actors had already done some groundwork, in shifting the culture to an enabling environment

**Feedback from group II**

* Would work very well in a close team
* Worry that they won’t work well with interactions with outside organisations as they have not adopted the same rules, it’s naïve to think people think the same way as you
* They don’t take self-interest into account
* What makes these rules unique to conservation and not to any organisation?
* How do they lead to wisdom?

**Feedback from group III**

* A lack of collaboration isn’t the fundamental problem
* Reflection is key and could help implement systemic evaluative conservation
* Expressing values is key
* Would need a the community to sign up to the rules before putting them into practice
* What’s the value of knowing and expressing values? There are still massive challenges to overcoming this first
* They expressed the value of reflection and learning from experience
* Thought that acting courageously could be a negative
* Could making values explicit polarise the conservation community?
* Knowing values isn’t a ‘rule’ as learning, thinking evaluatively and systemically means knowing values flows from this

***Group discussion:***

The entire group then went on to have a lively discussion about values; here are some of the key points:

* Why as a group are we pushing back so much on talking about values?
* How after a couple of days the non-conservationists still didn’t have sight of the conservationist’s values!
* It discussed using the term ‘**value’** or **worth** as opposed to ‘**values’** and the importance of keeping it in the discourse. i.e. “What do I value?” makes it easier to speak around the topic.
* There is a context in which our values come into play; individuals value something till it becomes difficult for work or conflictual with my peers or collides with other values at the same time.
* Bob mentioned that in his exercises to pull out criteria by which people judge the worth or value of something he draws up a set of conditions that relate to the issues they are dealing with and asks “what does this say about what I /we collectively value?” and “what is it about this scenario that I/we value?”
* How can we evaluate properly without first understanding the true values people hold first?
* Beverly asked if the conservation science field could balance the three big topics and values held around social, economic and conservation.
* It was noted by Kent that we need to be mindful that:
* Many people can’t express their values
* Many people hold contradictory values
* Values are context dependant
* Some of the group felt that values in needed to be defended, and that it’s difficult to articulate why as often as they are.
* As often they stem from childhood experiences and are loaded with attitudes, and beliefs.
* It discussed that in fact we need peoples values to be fluid as often we pay them to change their behaviour and hence their values.
* Simple rule #2 turned out to be very contentious; It was proposed that ‘Express your values honestly’ change to ‘Negotiate value’ helps make it context specific and buy people in.

*It was felt that conservation had to move from simply being accountable to.. to being responsible for…*

***Final thought of the day***

The day ended on a high note with the group embracing the new simple rule #2

‘Act for the long-term conservation of biodiversity by negotiating fairly with all stakeholders’.