Scorecards to measure WWF's impact

Background:

WWF's vision is of a world where people and nature thrive together. It's fairly easy to assess if nature is thriving, but proving that people are thriving (or not), and linking that to natural resource management, has proved more difficult. WWF-UK and WWF-Denmark, with input from worldwide offices, began to work together on defining parameters that could be used to assess change in wellbeing, in a way that could be applied anywhere in the world. They developed a scorecard of questions around the formula: "how was situation X a few years back?" and "how is that situation now?", with the aim of finding out if things had improved over the period from when WWF had started working on a project.

Problem:

WWF needed a very flexible template that would respond to changes in the questions asked, dependent on the local community and the nature of the project. Wood for Trees is an established analytics partner with WWF-UK and accepted the challenge of building a framework for collecting and analysing this data – building an Impact Reporting Tool.

Solution:

Wood for Trees developed a scorecard that allows up to 70 questions and collates information from up to 200 respondents. Importantly it allows both WWF and the local community to see the trend in the way people self-assess against each variable and reveals valuable metrics such as trends by age, gender, proximity to the project. This data is hugely useful for directing project team strategy and it provides a strong image of the impact of the project on the community.

Result:

Such was the impact of this new information that a source who has worked for WWF for years said: "We have never been able to do this before and finally we can capture as data, rather than stories, what difference our work is making for the communities we work with."

The scorecard was recently used in East Kenya. Analysis of the results caused WWF to ask questions about their

approach to working with women: the trends were positive for both men and women, but more strongly so for men, indicating that women were not gaining as many benefits from the project as were the men. They also sought to assess whether there was an improvement in access to food and water sources over the life of the project: analysis showed a positive trend in terms of food but not for access to drinking water. The project aims had been to improve both, so in this way the reporting tool flagged up an area for further scrutiny. Overall however the responses from over 200 people indicated that, in terms of access to natural resource, governance and in most well-being parameters, they were better off than before the project started working there. The evidence is not perfect, but it provides WWF with a new and unprecedented means of assessing performance.

Conclusion:

Clare Crawford of WWF said: *"Wood for Trees provided great advice and were willing to listen to what we needed. They were really flexible and easy to work with. While we knew what we wanted and had taken the steps to get the project started, it took WfT's analytical input to bring it to fruition so effectively."*