

Neil Dawson

Neil Dawson (Scotland, UK) is a social scientist in the School of International Development at the University of East Anglia in the UK. He specializes in poverty, wellbeing and environmental justice research among rural populations in developing countries, primarily those living alongside some of the world's biodiversity hotspots and is a member of The Global Environmental Justice Group, an interdisciplinary group of scholars interested in the linkages between social justice and environmental change.

Neil uses innovative mixed method approaches to understand the dynamic political, social, environmental and economic processes which impact people, particularly poor and marginalized social and ethnic groups. His work, in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and South America, covers three interlinked themes: biodiversity conservation and protected areas; agriculture, and; climate change mitigation and adaptation.

His diverse background spans quite different, though now handily complementary disciplines: years each as an ecologist (specializing for some time in seabirds), as a protected area warden and also previously as an economist and chartered accountant. Various projects have taken him to areas where natural resource management has strong implications for local livelihoods: looking at fisheries in Alaska, wetland management in Belarus, forest-based payments for environmental services in Rwanda. These experiences fueled an interest in the depth of social, economic and ecological understanding actually required to realize meaningful, sustained development for the rural poor at the same time as preserving important biodiversity.