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Knowledge Alone is not Power

There’s a famous saying, “Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.” This phrase is very true especially in terms of research. If research findings aren’t put into action, then what’s the point of the research in the first place? This idea of having knowledge but not using it is called the research-implementation gap. Research projects should be set up with the intention of their findings to be acted upon or implemented. In terms of conservation biology, it’s especially important because while there is a need make environmental changes, they won’t be able to happen if research is taking place without the intentions to make use of the findings. Moving forward, we need to know if the research-implementation gap something that is occurring in the field of conservation biology.

To determine if the research-implementation gap is real, a recent study investigated the topic further through a literature review of conservation assessments and how they affect conservation planning. Conservation planning is the long-term plan to protect species and their habitats from destruction. A conservation assessment is supposed to ensure that nature is protected by identifying areas of high priority. Based on the literature review, a questionnaire was developed and sent to the authors of conservation assessments to. These actions were to identify if the research-implementation gap is real, and if researchers have the intentions of putting their research results into practice.

This study found that the research-implementation gap is real. Many research studies are happening without the intentions of implementation. In fact, many authors don’t even mention the idea of implementation at all. Of the literature reviewed, over half of the research studies were put into place to improve research techniques not help make change in our environment. This simply means, there is a lot of knowledge within the field of conservation biology, but as mentioned earlier this knowledge means nothing if it is not put into action. Though shocking at first, these findings make sense as it seems there is a lot of talk about what could be done, but no change ever taking place.

To avoid being hypocritical, this study offered solutions to bridge the research-implementation gap. Three of these recommendations stood out the most in terms of the implications it has on the public: expand conservation assessments socially, reward academics that engage society and implement action, and train students to have the skills to do conservation. The idea behind these three recommendations is that for conservation planning to be successful and make changes for the environment, is to do research that can be easily translated into the real world.

Conservation assessments have the potential to change conservation planning in a way that makes it more effective by supporting implementation. In order to achieve effective conservation planning, one must link knowing (research and results) with doing (implementation and action). A key part of successfully changing conservation assessments and planning would be to engage society with an emphasis on the future generations.

References-Original Article

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