







Using Photovoice to Elicit Socio-Cultural Values of Ecosystem Services in a Rural Community, Namibia Emily Mutota¹ and Stephanie Domptail¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

The valuation of nature (ecosystem services) often focus on economic values and do not sufficiently measure the plural socio-cultural values that people attach to nature. A poor understanding of socio-cultural values weakens any attempt to develop natural resources management plans or

policies at the community level. For instance, values that



2. OBJECTIVES

 \Rightarrow To identify the socio-cultural values that people attach to nature, and understand how those values influence the management of natural resources.

This poster examines the cultural beliefs that impact how

inform shared decisions and actions toward nature remain unknown in many communities. Efforts are ongoing in the scientific and policy agenda to better assess the socio-cultural values that people attach to nature. This study demonstrates improved socio-cultural valuation methodologies in order to better inform local natural resource management systems.

people in northern Namibia relate to and value their nature.

3. STUDY AREA

⇒Small community located between the Okavango River and a forest ecosystems.

Subsistence, but undergoing changes including intensive selling of river and forest products.

4. PHOTOVOICE METHODOLOGY

Photovoice is a participatory method that combines photos and narratives to reflect shared values.

5. ANALYTICAL PROCESS

From belief to value and management of nature

Ekongoro myth

Ekongoro is a supernatural snake, the provider and

the ruler of water and water resources.

6. FINDINGS

1. The relationship between people and nature



"As traditional healers, we

do not just value the

plants, but also the areas

where we collect them'

"Nature defines our culture and us.

⇒Use photovoice to collect qualitative data.

Sample: 20 participants of different age and sexes.

Process of photovoice

Step 1: Photo taking Participants personally select what to photograph in the community.

Step 2: Narrative through interviews Participants explain the photos and their importance to the community and nature.

Identifying meanings attached Ekongoro is valued but feared for its role in governing and managing water resources.

Identifying plural values expressed

Symbolic

Heritage Sacredness

Connection to management articulated Associated with provisioning services (e.g. fish), and support ecosystems functional (e.g. water flows).

7. MAIN MESSAGES

We belong to the river, and the river belongs to us"





"We perform our healing, cleansing and good luck rituals along the river"

Step 3: Prioritizing photos Selection of photos that best reflects values and how people connect to nature.

Through photovoice, participants remembered cultural beliefs, which have been suppressed by the alternative value systems of Christianity, modernity and other factors.

Photovoice enabled us to identify socio-cultural values and their relevance to managing natural resources.

⇒Single beliefs, such as the Ekongoro myth, are associated

2. Knowledge of cultural beliefs

