

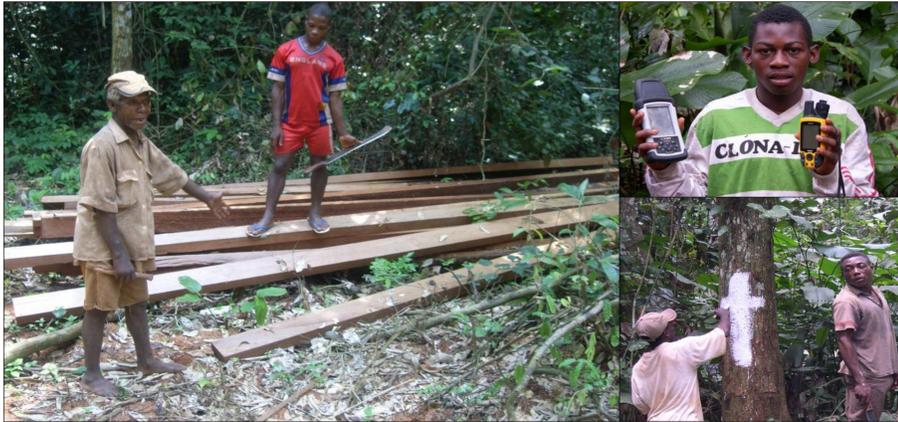
How Ecosystem Change Affects Human Wellbeing



Project leader: E.J. Milner-Gulland, Imperial College London
e.j.milner-gulland@imperial.ac.uk

Aim

- Explore how environmental change affects the wellbeing of the world's poorest people.
- Engage local perspectives to develop wellbeing measures.
- Improve conservation project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure pro-poor ecosystem service interventions are fit for purpose.

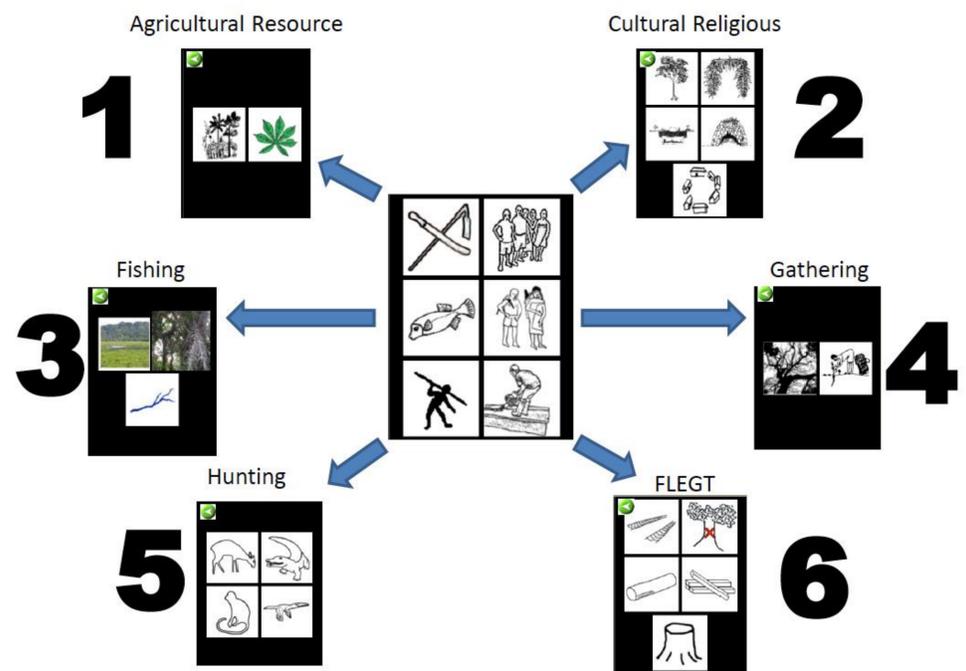


- Making use of citizen science, local monitoring of interventions can help capture and amplify differentiated local experiences of change.
- Taking a wellbeing approach has the potential to offer more holistic project evaluation.
- Real time monitoring can help various stakeholders work together, as in Cameroon where forest communities pinpoint culturally significant trees and resources as GPS waypoints so that loggers can avoid them.



Research

- Team of 6 natural scientists, 5 social scientists, and 3 economists (from Imperial, LSE, UCL, WCS, Farm Africa, ZSL)
- How does environmental change affect human wellbeing, and how can this inform policy and conservation efforts?
- Requires locally meaningful definitions, measurements, and monitoring of ecological, wellbeing & behavioural change.
- How do stakeholders' perspectives drive definitions of wellbeing?
- Use citizen science to capture local voices and experiences.



Findings

- Wellbeing entails *subjective* interpretations of *objective* circumstances, the meaning of which is socially & culturally defined.
- Thus, understanding wellbeing requires a framework that's rigid enough to permit comparisons across time and space, but flexible enough to incorporate changing local voices. WeD (Wellbeing in Developing Countries, Gough & McGregor 2007) offers one such framework.
- Definitions of wellbeing developed by powerful stakeholders can crowd out local voices. Using wellbeing in conservation entails multiple trade-offs.

Conclusions

- There is no one-size-fits-all definition of wellbeing.
- Wellbeing is objective and subjective, and placed in a social context.
- Understanding it requires qualitative and quantitative data.
- Framing social impacts in terms of wellbeing enables interveners to prioritise listening to local voices, and can empower marginalised groups to contribute towards solutions enabling them to live sustainably alongside nature.

Next steps

- Use case studies to identify best practices in defining wellbeing and monitoring ecological and behavioural change.
- Use citizen science to capture and highlight locally relevant accounts of wellbeing-ecosystem service relationships.

www.valuing-nature.net/projects/wellbeing

