



Kontento nga pangabuhi kag panimalay: Local Notions of Well-being for Natural Resource Management

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Abstract

Social and cultural dimensions in natural resource management have been overlooked in assessing the potential for economic development for agricultural and coastal resources. Following this, sustainable management of resources requires better information on how people value these resources and whether these values reflect in their 'well-being.' This paper examines key aspects of the concept of 'well-being' that were self-reported by residents working in either agriculture and/or fisheries as well as by those working in non-agriculture/fisheries sectors. We were interested in a sample of participants who represent the variety of residents in terms of occupation, level of exposure/experience with regards to the environment, and socio-demographic characteristics. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants in six focus group discussions (FGDs). Results from FGDs show that key aspects of 'well-being' include five general categories. These are natural capital (e.g., land), financial capital (e.g., work/employment), manufactured capital (e.g., marketplace), social capital (e.g., security in the community), and others (e.g., education). Respondents also rated the importance of these aspects, and resource-dependent households value the environment and bequest values as the most important aspects of their well-being. As expected, these factors reflect and coincide with the various types of capitals listed in the initial review of literature. The results present empirical evidence based on the voices and experiences of both fisheries and agriculture workers and their non-fisheries and non-agriculture counterparts. From these self-reported understanding of 'well-being,' policy makers and other key stakeholders like nongovernmental organizations working with fishing and agricultural communities could potentially base their conservation and development priorities in the Metro Iloilo-Guimaras region.