OneNature

WELL-BEING REPORT

LAOS JANUARY 2025

Association Anoulak

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the Wild Happiness Survey conducted in four villages of the Thaphaibanh cluster within Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, Laos. The assessment provides crucial insights into community well-being and its relationship to conservation efforts, identifying both community strengths and immediate support needs as Association Anoulak transitions from the area.

Note: All satisfaction percentages in this report are converted from a 5-point scale, where 1=0% and 5=100%. Full details of this conversion can be found in Appendix B.

Key Findings

1. Strong Foundation for Conservation

- Overall environmental satisfaction (80%) shows strong community appreciation for natural resources
- Very high willingness to contribute to conservation (86%)
- Life satisfaction (70%) exceeds both Laos national average (48%) and regional averages (52%)
- All villages maintain strong conservation support (>75%)

2. Village-Level Variations

- Tha Phaiban shows highest environmental engagement (89% satisfaction, 95% willingness)
- Kebong demonstrates strongest social networks (90%)
- MarkPhueng maintains balanced performance across domains
- Songleak needs targeted support (particularly in health and livelihood domains)

3. Community Resources

- Highest domain score is in social support (83%)
- Strong family relationships (87%)
- Traditional ecological knowledge, especially among elderly residents
- Established mutual aid systems for community projects

4. Immediate Attention Areas

- Livelihood satisfaction varies significantly (49-60% across villages)
- Psychological well-being needs support (47% overall)
- Time management challenges affect conservation participation (60%)
- Traditional knowledge transfer needs documentation

Recommendation:

1. Document Current Successes

- Map successful forest product enterprises
- Record traditional harvest practices and seasons
- Document effective village conservation committees
- Capture elder community members' ecological knowledge

2. Strengthen Existing Systems

- Formalize village conservation leadership roles
- Establish resource monitoring guidelines
- Support inter-village learning networks
- Reinforce successful bamboo craft initiatives

3. Address Critical Gaps

- Provide additional support to Songleak village
- Document successful practices from stronger villages
- Create basic sustainable harvest guidelines
- Establish resource management boundaries

This assessment reveals strong foundations for community-based conservation while highlighting immediate actions needed before transition. The high social support scores and environmental commitment provide a robust base for continued conservation efforts. By focusing on documentation and system strengthening, Association Anoulak can help ensure these communities maintain their strong environmental connections while managing resources sustainably after the transition.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Purpose

This well-being assessment focuses on communities within Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, one of the largest remaining forest blocks in the Indochinese peninsula. The park faces increasing pressure from illegal hunting and unsustainable resource use, while local communities maintain deep traditional connections to the forest. Association Anoulak initiated the "Resilient Communities for Healthy Natural Ecosystems" program to address these challenges through community-based approaches.

The assessment specifically examines four villages in the Thaphaibanh cluster:

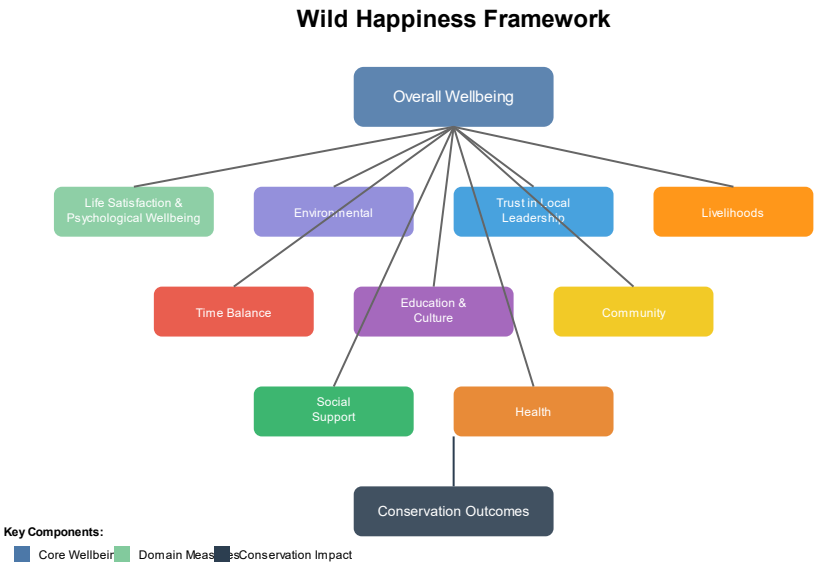
- MarkPhueng village (including Nawa and Peung hamlets)
- Kebong village (including Singthong hamlet)
- Vangtheunkham (including Soklek and Vangchang hamlets)
- Tha Phaiban village (including Thaphaiban and Nakang hamlets)

These villages, home to the Makong/Brou ethnic minority, represent a critical intersection of conservation needs and traditional forest-based livelihoods. The assessment aims to:

- Understand how conservation efforts affect community well-being
- Identify sustainable approaches to alternative income generation
- Support preservation of traditional craftsmanship and cultural practices
- Support the development of Non-Timber Forest Products initiatives
- Inform village-level Natural Resources Management Plans

1.2 What is Wild Happiness?

Wild Happiness is a holistic approach developed by OneNature, aiming to harmonize community well-being with conservation goals. It draws inspiration from Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) model, which emphasizes a multidimensional understanding of well-being. The Wild Happiness framework assesses how conservation initiatives impact not just the environment but also the social, cultural, and economic aspects of the communities involved. The approach recognizes that successful conservation outcomes depend on community well-being across multiple domains:



1.3 Survey Structure and Methodology

The assessment used culturally adapted methods to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Full survey questions can be found in Appendix A

Survey Design

- Questions in both Lao and English
- Mix of scaled (1-5) and open-ended questions
- Face-to-face interviews respecting local customs
- Coverage of eight well-being domains

Sample Characteristics

- 284 respondents across four villages
- Balance of men (152) and women (128)
- Ages ranging from 15 to over 61 years
- Representation from all major household types

Quality Measures

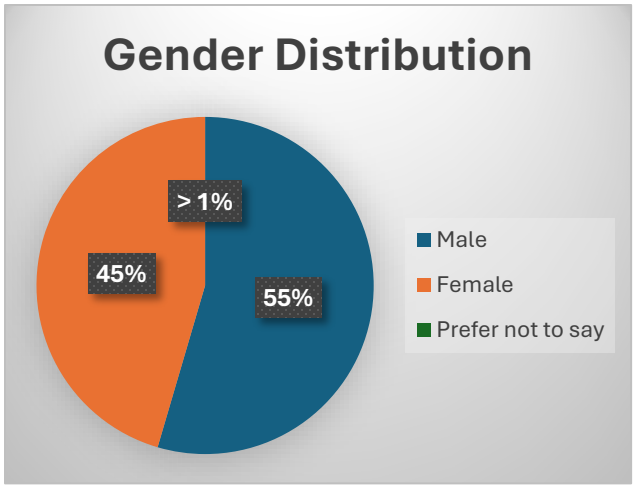
- Trained local interviewers
- Questions in local language
- Careful data verification
- Recommended to have Community input on findings

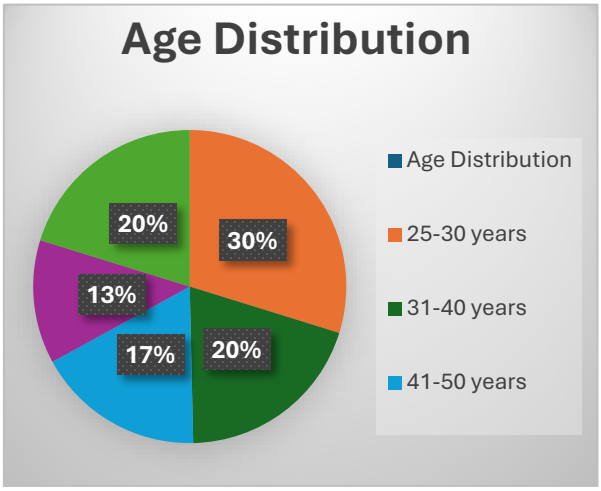
This comprehensive approach provides insights to guide both conservation and community development efforts while respecting local cultural contexts.
A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix A, with more information about the Wild Happiness method in Appendix B.

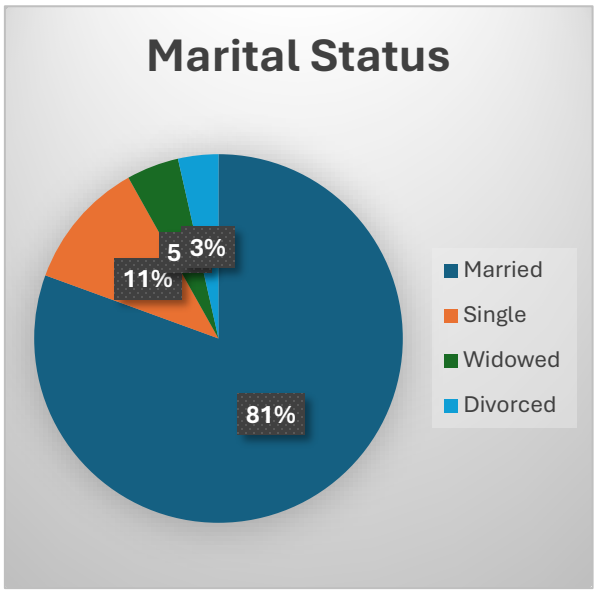
2. Demographics

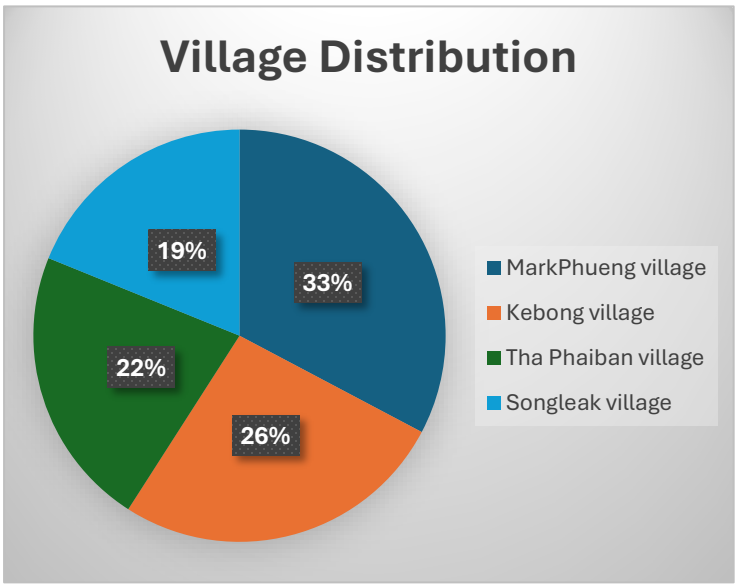
Survey Participant Overview

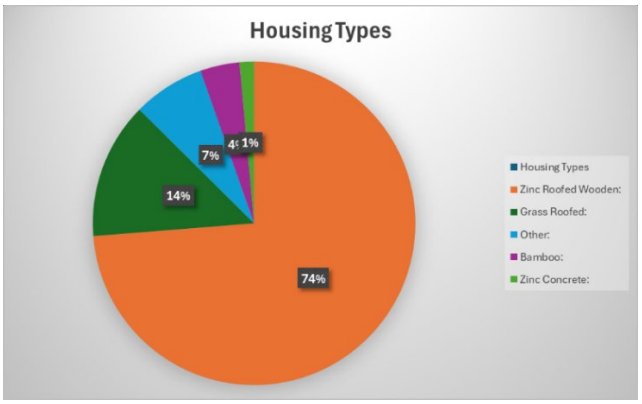
The survey included 284 participants across four villages in the Thaphaibanh cluster of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park. The sample represents a diverse cross-section of community members across different ages, genders, and marital statuses.

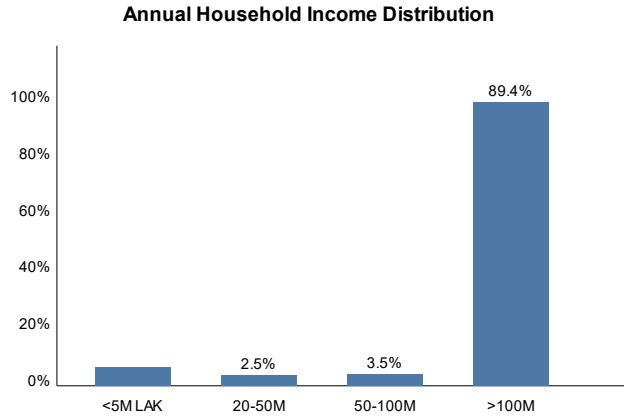












Note: 1 USD = approximately 20,500 LAK (January 2025)

3. Overall Well-being Overview

The Wild Happiness Survey provides a comprehensive view of community life in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, examining how different aspects of well-being interact and influence each other. This holistic approach reveals both community strengths and opportunities for enhancing conservation outcomes.

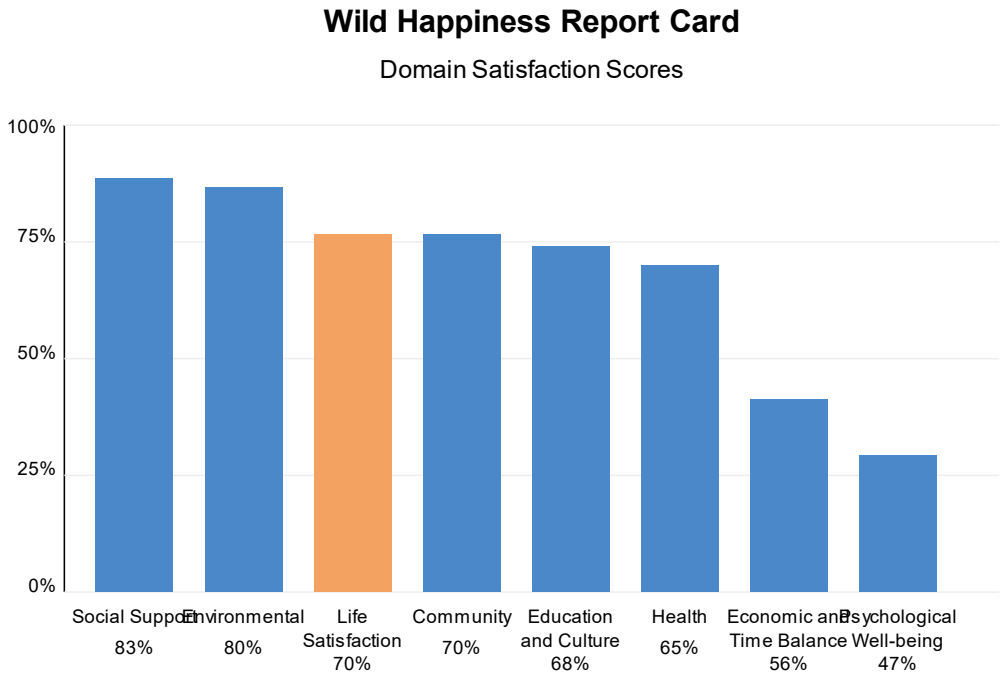
3.1 Understanding the Scores

The survey uses a 5-point scale converted to percentages for easier understanding:

- High Scores (75-100%): Strong satisfaction and positive perception
- Moderate Scores (50-75%): Generally content but room for improvement
- Lower Scores (<50%): Areas requiring attention and support

Note: All percentages are converted from a 5-point scale where 1=0% and 5=100%. Full details of this conversion can be found in Appendix B.

3.2 Domain Analysis Overview



Note: Life Satisfaction (shown in orange) represents people's general satisfaction with life.

Table 3.2 shows the average satisfaction scores across all domains, providing a snapshot of community well-being.

Areas of Strength (>75%)

- Social Support (83%): Strong community bonds exemplified by collective action
- Environmental (80%): High appreciation of forest resources and their direct benefits

Community Voices on Strengths: "Working together harmoniously in constructing a school and
developing a road… helping with ceremonies and festivals by providing rice, money…" - illustrating the strong social bonds that can support conservation efforts.

Moderate Performing Areas (60-75%)

- Education and Culture (68%): Traditional practices remain strong while education systems develop
- Health (65%): Access varies significantly by village

Areas for Support (<60%)

- Psychological Well-being (47%): Concerns about economic transitions and future opportunities

- Livelihood (53%): Basic resources exist but need for income diversification

Community Voices on Challenges: "I want to trade, worried about not having money. I do not want to do farming and gardening anymore." - reflecting concerns about economic opportunities and lifestyle changes.

Overall Life Satisfaction (70%): (Above regional average despite challenges)

The community's overall life satisfaction score (70%) compares favorably to broader regional and global benchmarks from the most recent Gallup/World Happiness Report (2023-2024):

- Laos national average: 48%
- Southeast Asia regional average: 52%
- Global average: 55%

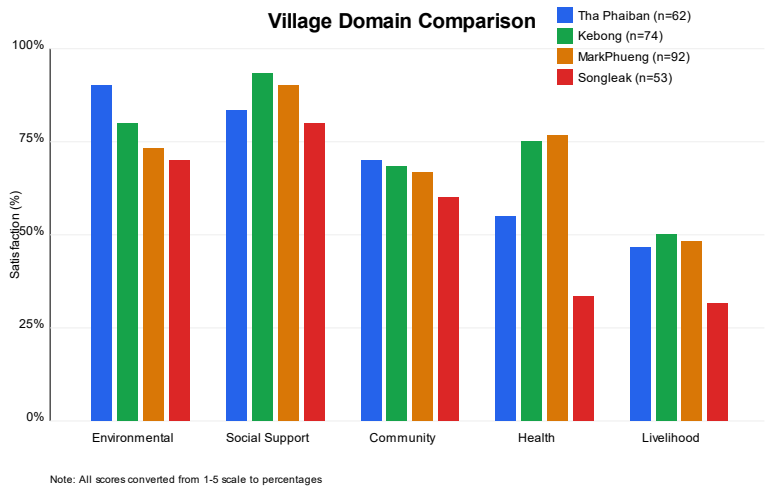
This higher satisfaction level may be attributed to several factors identified in our survey:

- Strong social support (83%)
- High environmental satisfaction (80%)
- Strong community bonds (70%)

The Wild Happiness Survey provides a comprehensive view of community life in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, examining how different aspects of well-being interact and influence each other.

3.3 Village Level Analysis

Understanding village-level variations is crucial for tailoring conservation and development initiatives to local contexts. Our analysis reveals distinct patterns across the four villages in the Thaphaibanh cluster, each showing unique strengths and challenges.



The Wild Happiness Survey provides a comprehensive view of community life in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, examining how different aspects of well-being interact and influence each other. This holistic approach reveals both community strengths and opportunities for enhancing conservation outcomes. Table 3.3 above highlights village-level variations in key domains where local differences are most pronounced: Health, Environmental, Livelihood, and Social Support satisfaction. These domains show the most meaningful variation between villages (ranging from 11-27% difference) and are particularly relevant for conservation and development planning.

Village Profiles:

Tha Phaiban Village (62 households)

- Highest environmental satisfaction (89%) and willingness to contribute to conservation (94%)
- Strong education and cultural preservation scores (76%)
- Lower health service satisfaction (63%) suggests need for improved healthcare access
- Moderate livelihood satisfaction (58%) indicates economic development opportunities

Kebong Village (74 households)

- Highest social support satisfaction (90%)
- Strong environmental satisfaction (82%)
- Balanced performance across most domains
- Highest livelihood satisfaction among all villages (60%)

MarkPhueng Village (92 households)

- Strong social support (88%) and health service satisfaction (76%)
- Consistent environmental engagement (78%)
- Shows potential for community-led initiatives due to strong social bonds

Songleak Village (53 households)

- Faces more challenges across domains
- Notably lower scores in health (50%) and livelihood (49%)
- Maintains strong environmental awareness (80%) despite challenges
- Needs targeted support while building on environmental commitment

Key Patterns and Implications

1. Conservation Readiness

- All villages show strong willingness to contribute to conservation (81-94%)

- Environmental satisfaction remains high (76-89%) across all communities
- Strong foundation for community-based conservation initiatives

2. Social Structures
- High social support scores (82-90%) indicate robust community networks
- These networks can be leveraged for conservation and development programs
- Traditional support systems remain strong across all villages

3. Development Needs
- Livelihood satisfaction shows the most variation (49-60%)
- Health service access varies significantly (50-76%)
- Suggests need for targeted development support

4. Strategic Considerations
- Village-specific approaches needed while maintaining cluster-wide coordination
- Opportunity for inter-village learning and resource sharing
- Build on strong environmental commitment while addressing development gaps

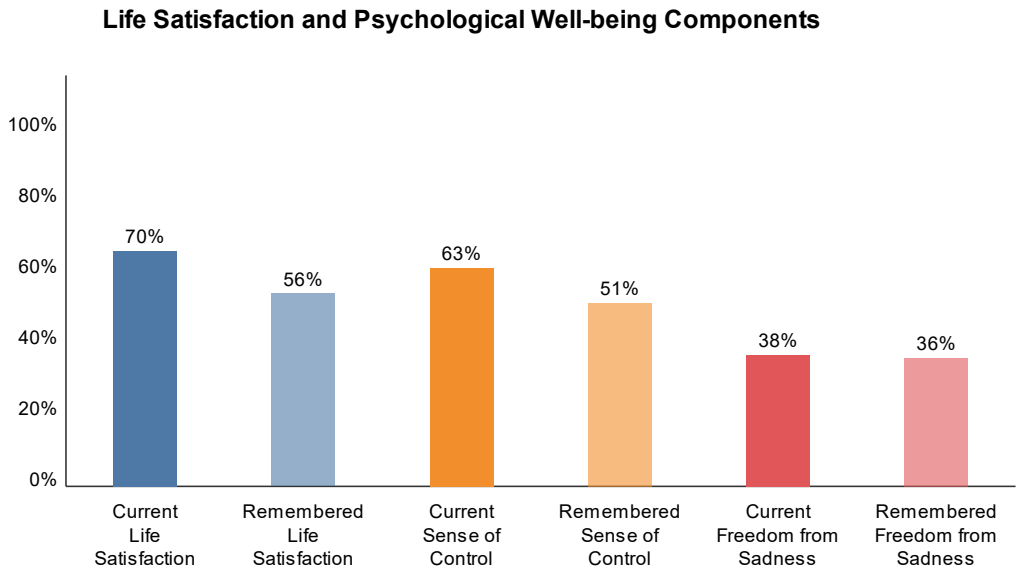
The following sections examine each domain in detail, exploring how these overall patterns manifest in specific aspects of community life. This deeper understanding helps identify targeted interventions that can preserve community strengths while addressing key challenges during the transition period.

4. Detailed Analysis by Domain

Each domain analysis is based on specific survey questions designed to capture different aspects of community well-being. The complete set of questions can be found in Appendix A.

4.1 Combined Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being

Overall Life Satisfaction (70%)
Current Psychological Well-being: 47%



Note: Lighter bars represent how people remember feeling 5 years ago

An overview of life satisfaction scores was presented above. The contrast between Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being presents an important insight for conservation planning. While overall life satisfaction is relatively high, lower psychological well-being scores suggest underlying stressors that could affect long-term community engagement in conservation initiatives.

Key Findings:

- Life satisfaction has improved from remembered past (70% now vs 56%)
- Current sense of control over life (63%) shows improvement from five years ago (51%)
- Persistent challenges with sadness (only 38% report freedom from sadness)
- Low variation in sadness levels over time (38% now vs 36% past)

Community Voices:

Current priorities for satisfaction:

- Focus on family support: "My children have grown up enough to help with the work"
- Basic infrastructure: "Having a hospital, and a school... happy that my grandchildren have a place to study"
- Collective action: "Work together with family members"

Current worries reveal ongoing psychological stressors:

- Economic aspirations: "Want to be wealthy and rich"
- Health concerns: "Worried about health"
- Desire for livelihood change: "I want to trade… I do not want to do farming and gardening anymore"

Key Correlations: Strongest positive relationships with life satisfaction:

- Livelihood satisfaction (0.34)
- Sense of control (0.34)
- Environmental satisfaction (0.32

See Appendix D for more details on understanding correlations.

Demographic Patterns:

1. Age Variations
    - Higher life satisfaction: ages 31-60 (79%)
    - Lower satisfaction: ages 15-30 (72%)
    - Peak psychological well-being: ages 31-40 (76%)
2. Village Differences
    - Highest scores: Kebong village (81% satisfaction, 77% psychological well-being)
    - Lowest scores: Songleak village (73% satisfaction, 64% psychological well-being)
3. Gender Patterns
    - Slightly higher life satisfaction among females (77% vs 75%)
    - Similar psychological well-being across genders

Implications for Conservation Planning:

1. Economic and environmental factors strongly influence life satisfaction
2. Village-level disparities suggest need for targeted support
3. Lower satisfaction among younger community members may affect long-term conservation engagement
4. Strong social bonds help maintain satisfaction despite challenges

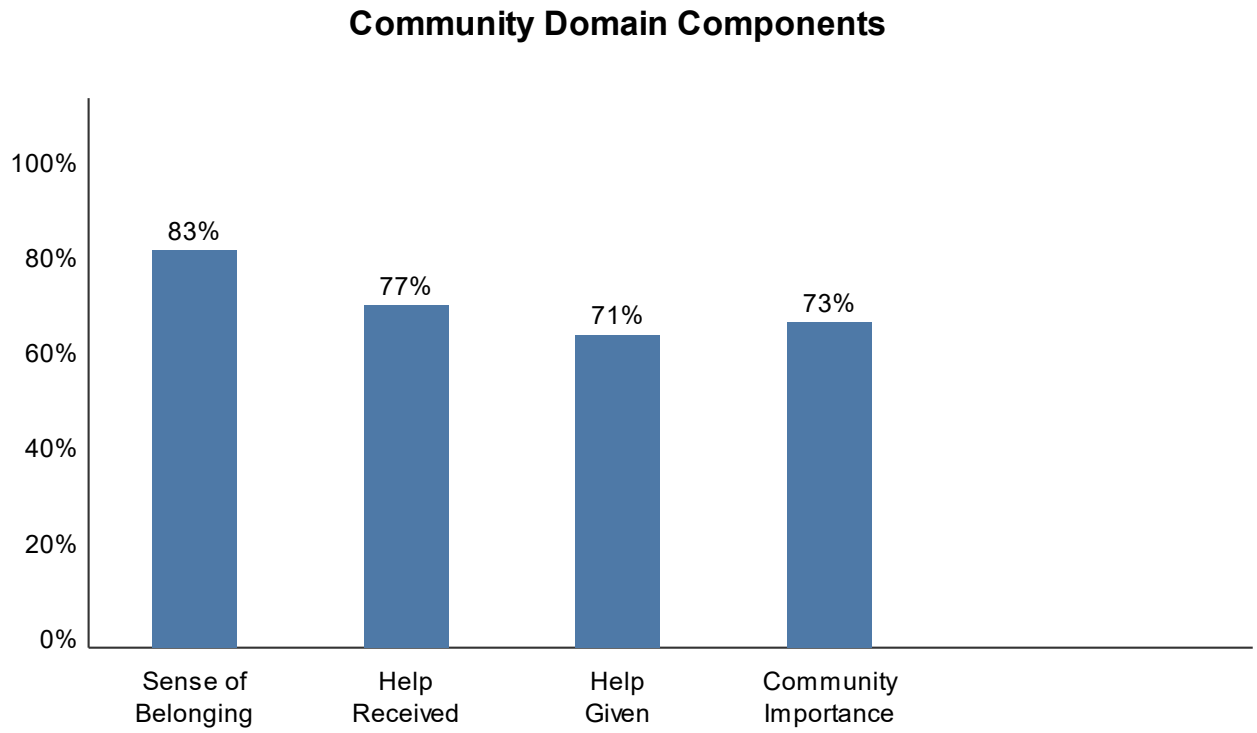
The relationship between life satisfaction and psychological well-being highlights the importance of community support systems. With overall life satisfaction bolstered by strong social connections despite lower psychological well-being scores, understanding the Community domain becomes crucial. This domain reveals how traditional social

networks and collective action not only support individual well-being but also provide essential foundations for successful community-based conservation initiatives.

4.2 Community Well-being

Overall Score: 70%

Community well-being in the Nakai-Nam Theun communities reflects strong social connections and mutual support systems. This domain shows particularly high scores in sense of belonging and reciprocal help, suggesting robust social networks that could be valuable for supporting conservation efforts and sustainable resource management.



Overall Community Domain Score: 70%

Key Findings:

- Very high sense of belonging (83%)
- Strong reciprocal support system (77% help received, 71% help given)
- High perceived importance of community (73%)
- Moderate correlation with life satisfaction (0.22)
  See Appendix D for guidance on interpretation of correlation values.

Community Voices:
On belonging: "Because of being generous, have children and grandchildren, friends" "Due to having an owned shelter and place for living"
On mutual support: "My neighbors help me by giving me money for hospitalizing and buying medicine when I'm sick and by looking after my house when I'm away" "I rely on my community and the community relies on me"
On community importance: "The community is important because they live together, help each other according to tradition"

Patterns and Trends:

1. Historical Changes
    - Current sense of belonging compared to remembered sense of belonging increased slightly (83% vs 79% past)
    - Current help received compared to remembered help received shows significant increase (77% vs 31% past)
    - Current help given compared to remembered help given remains stable (71% current vs 70% past)
2. Support Networks
    - Strong traditional mutual aid systems
    - Community cooperation in infrastructure development
    - Collective problem-solving approaches

Implications for Conservation:

- Existing community networks can support conservation initiatives
- Traditional mutual aid systems could be leveraged for resource management
- Strong sense of belonging suggests potential for sustained engagement
- Collective action patterns indicate capacity for community-based projects

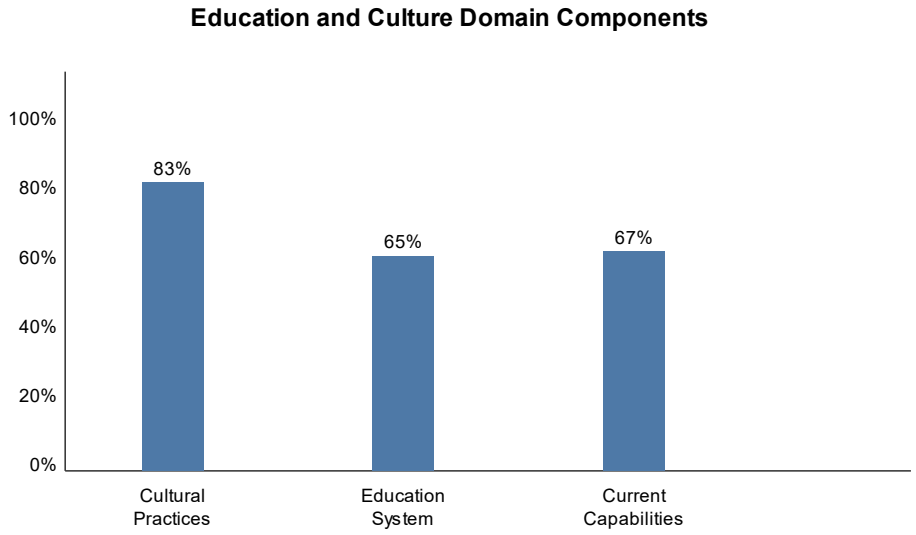
While community bonds provide a crucial foundation for well-being, they are closely intertwined with cultural practices and educational opportunities. The Education and Culture domain reveals how these community connections are maintained and transmitted across generations.

4.3 Education and Culture

Overall Score: 68%

The Education and Culture domain combines assessment of traditional practices and formal education systems. While cultural satisfaction scores are notably high, educational

satisfaction shows room for improvement. This domain is particularly important for conservation as it reflects both traditional ecological knowledge and the community's capacity for adapting to new conservation approaches.



Overall Education and Culture Domain Score: 68%

Key Findings:

- High satisfaction with cultural practices (83%) Moderate satisfaction with education system (65%)
- Improved sense of capabilities compared to 5 years ago (67% vs 58%)

Community Voices:

On Cultural Practices: "Makong's New Year (Kin Seang) is important. Kin Seang is conducted before starting conducting clearing forests and farming" "Wedding ceremony, arm binding ceremony, meeting, gathering"

On Educational Development: "Now, there is a Grade 7 of Secondary School" "There has changed as now there is Grade 7, but in the past, there was only a primary school"

Key Patterns:

1. Traditional Knowledge Systems
    - Cultural practices aligned with agricultural and forest management cycles
    - Traditional ceremonies adapting to current context
    - Strong integration of cultural practices with community gatherings

2. Educational Development
    - Expanding formal education infrastructure
    - Growing access to secondary education
    - Increasing community capabilities

Implications for Conservation:

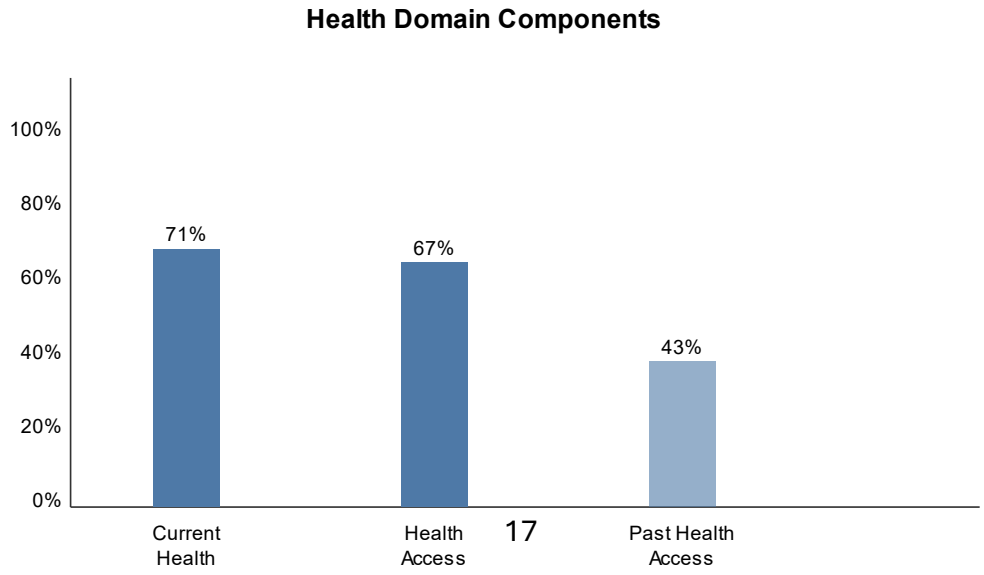
- Traditional ecological knowledge provides foundation for sustainable resource management
- Cultural ceremonies offer opportunities for conservation education
- Improving education infrastructure could support conservation training
- Integration of traditional and modern knowledge systems could strengthen conservation efforts

While traditional cultural practices and education shape community knowledge and capabilities, the Health Domain reveals how community members experience and access essential health services that support their overall well-being. The intersection of traditional and modern healthcare systems plays a particularly important role in these forest-dependent communities.

4.4 Health Domain

Overall Score: 65%

The Health Domain reveals moderate satisfaction with both personal health and healthcare access, with notable improvement in access to health services compared to remembered conditions five years ago. Health services accessibility has particular relevance for conservation work as it affects community members' ability to participate in forest-based activities and conservation initiatives.



Overall Health Domain Score: 65%

Key Findings:

- Current health satisfaction (71%)
- Health service access (67%)
- Significant improvement in healthcare access from remembered past (67% vs 43%)

Community Voices:

- ***On Current Health:*** "Still strong but not much" "Poor health due to old age"
- ***On Healthcare Needs:*** "I want to have more nurses, and to have more medical equipment" "I want them to have a comprehensive range of medications to avoid the need for trips to the city"

Key Patterns:

1. Healthcare Development
    - Significant improvement in access over past five years
    - Growing healthcare infrastructure
    - Challenges with specialized care access
2. Village-Level Variations
    - MarkPhueng and Kebong show higher health satisfaction (75-76%)
    - Tha Phaiban reports moderate access (63%)
    - Songleak faces greatest challenges (50%)
3. Current Challenges
    - Aging population health needs
    - Limited medical equipment
    - Distance to specialized care
    - Medication availability

Implications for Conservation:

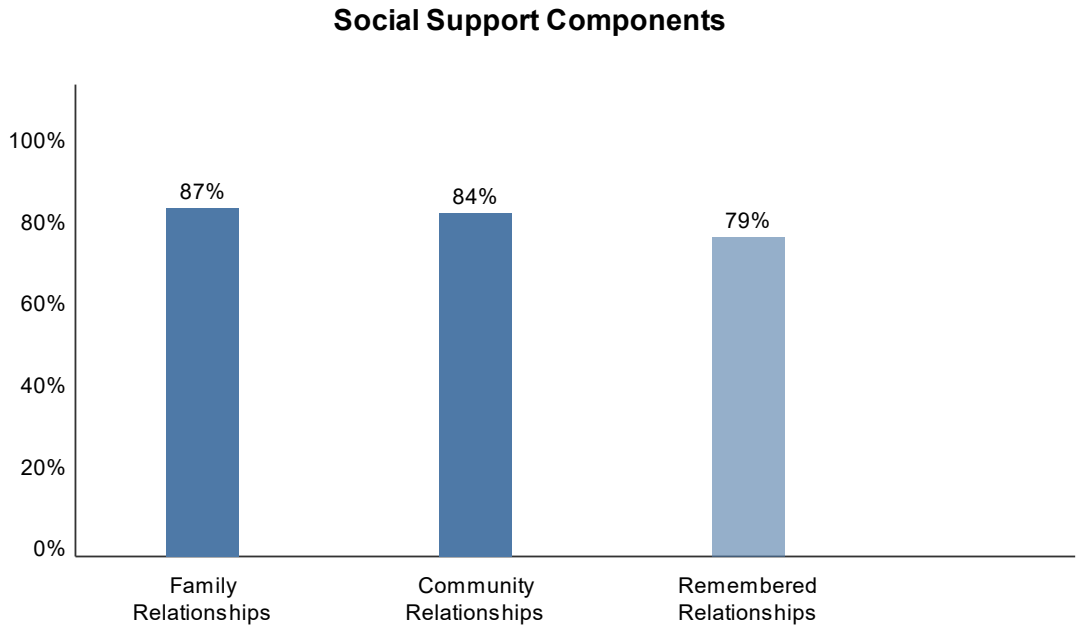
- Health service access may affect participation in conservation activities
- Village-level health disparities should inform activity planning
- Travel requirements for healthcare could impact forest resource use
- Community health needs may influence conservation priority setting

While health services continue to modernize and expand, traditional social support networks remain vital to community well-being. The Social Support Domain reveals how family and community relationships contribute to overall life satisfaction.

4.5 Social Support Domain:

Overall Score: 83%

The Social Support domain shows the highest satisfaction scores across all domains, revealing strong family and community bonds that contribute to collective well-being. These traditional support systems, while adapting to changing circumstances, provide essential foundations for community-based conservation initiatives.



Overall Social Support Domain Score: 83%

Key Findings:

- Very high family relationship satisfaction (87%)
- Strong community relationship satisfaction (84%)
- Improvement from remembered past relationships (79%)
- Consistent high scores across villages and demographic groups

Community Voices:

On Family Bonds: "Harmony among family members" "A loving relationship with my family because both my children and wife respect me"

On Community Cooperation: "Working together harmoniously in constructing a school, and developing a road" "Holding ceremony wedding, and festivals helps by providing rice, money by tying on the wrists during the wedding" "Have harmony among village members in farming, building a school, and other communal activities"

Key Patterns:

1. Traditional Support Systems
    - Ceremonies maintain social bonds
    - Mutual aid for everyday needs
    - Family-based support networks

2. Community Development
    - Collective action on infrastructure projects
    - Shared responsibility for public facilities
    - Integration of traditional and modern activities
3. Village-Level Strengths
    - Kebong shows highest satisfaction (90%)
    - MarkPhueng demonstrates strong networks (88%)
    - All villages maintain robust support systems (>80%)

Implications for Conservation:

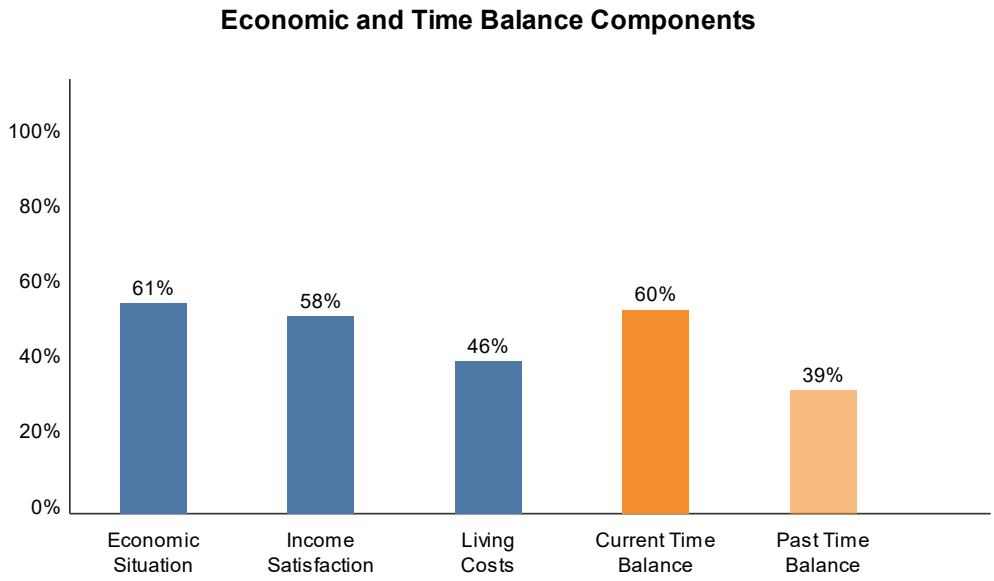
- Strong social networks can support conservation initiative implementation
- Traditional ceremonies provide platforms for conservation education
- Collective action patterns suggest capacity for community-based resource management
- Family-based support systems could strengthen sustainable practice adoption

While social support provides crucial emotional and practical foundations, economic stability directly impacts daily life and future opportunities. The Livelihood Domain reveals how communities balance traditional and modern economic activities.

4.6 Combined Economic and Livelihood/ Work and Time Balance Domains

Overall Combined Score: 56%
Economic Satisfaction: 61%
Time Balance Satisfaction: 60%

This domain reveals the challenges of balancing economic activities with personal time, particularly in the context of agricultural livelihoods. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing sustainable conservation approaches that align with community needs and capacities.



Combined Economic and Time Balance Score: 56%

Key Findings:

1. Economic Indicators
    - Economic situation satisfaction (61%)
    - Income satisfaction (58%)
    - Living costs concerns (46%)
2. Time Management
    - Current time balance satisfaction (60%)
    - Significant improvement from past (39%)
    - Higher satisfaction among elderly

Community Voices:

On Current Livelihoods: "I have a cassava garden, a rice field, a house, and kitchen garden" "I live within the means or have something to eat, and live with family"

On Time Pressures: "Work a lot but have little time to rest" "There is a lot of work, but low income, and rest less"

On Future Aspirations: "I do not want to do farming or gardening. I'd prefer to do other kinds of work, such as selling things"

Key Patterns:

1. Agricultural Dependency
    - Heavy reliance on traditional farming
    - Limited income diversification
    - Seasonal work pressures
2. Village-Level Variations
    - Kebong shows highest livelihood satisfaction (60%)
    - MarkPhueng and Tha Phaiban moderate (58-59%)
    - Songleak faces greater challenges (49%)

3. Generational Differences
    - Elderly report better time balance
    - Younger generations seek alternative livelihoods
    - Growing tension between traditional and modern aspirations

Implications for Conservation:

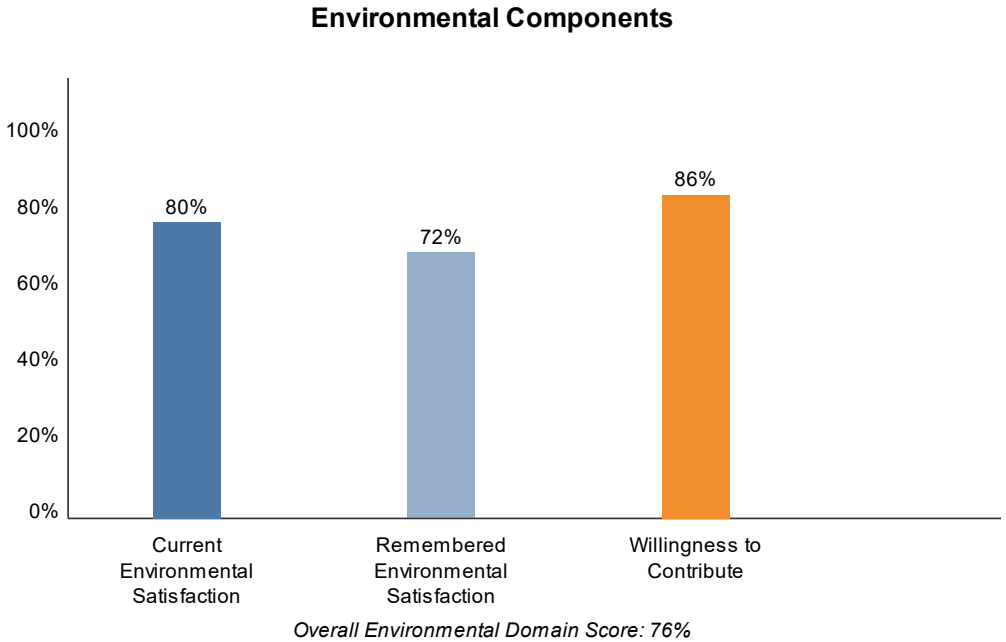
- Economic pressures may affect conservation participation
- Time constraints could impact resource management activities
- Livelihood diversification needs should be considered in conservation planning
- Traditional agricultural practices provide foundation for sustainable resource use
- Village-specific approaches needed for economic support

The Environmental domain reveals how economic pressures and time constraints interact with communities' strong commitment to conservation and sustainable resource use.

4.7 Environmental Well-being

Overall Score: 80%

The Environmental domain reveals strong appreciation for Nakai-Nam Theun National Park and high willingness to participate in conservation efforts. This domain is particularly significant given the community's direct dependence on forest resources for both subsistence and income.



Overall Environmental Domain Score: 76%

Key Findings:

- High current environmental satisfaction (80%)
- Very high willingness to contribute to conservation (86%)
- Perceived improvement from remembered past (72%)
- Strong connection between forest resources and daily life

Community Voices:
On forest benefits: "Because of the availability of young bamboo and wild vegetables, we were able to collect them" "Collect wild vegetables for cooking and selling some amount"
On conservation desires: "I want them to preserve wild vegetables to ensure year-round availability and promote tourism" "To conserve bamboo to make green forest, and shadow in order to create the materials needed" "I want the forest to remain"

Key Patterns and Correlations:

1. Resource Use and Dependency
    - Food Security: Wild vegetables and bamboo shoots most frequently mentioned
    - Income Generation: Small-scale selling of forest products
    - Traditional Uses: Bamboo for crafts and construction
2. Village-Level Variations
    - Tha Phaiban shows highest engagement (89% satisfaction, 95% willingness)
    - All villages maintain strong commitment (76-82% satisfaction, >85% willingness)
    - Geographic and access factors may influence satisfaction levels
3. Demographic Patterns
    - Highest environmental scores among older residents (61+ at 90%)
    - Strong willingness to contribute across all age groups (83-91%)
4. Important Correlations
    - Strong link between environmental satisfaction and conservation willingness (0.50)
    - Moderate connection with cultural practices (0.36)
    - Positive relationship with overall life satisfaction (0.32)

    See Appendix D for more details on understanding correlations

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

Build on Existing Strengths: The assessment reveals strong foundations that can support continued conservation after transition:

- High environmental satisfaction (80%) and willingness to contribute (86%)
- Strong social support networks (83%) and cultural traditions
- Established village-level variations in capacity and needs

1. Document Current Success Patterns: Preserve knowledge of what's working for future initiatives

Priority Actions:

- Record successful small-scale forest product enterprises, especially in Kebong (highest livelihood satisfaction)
- Document traditional harvest practices and seasons from elder community members
- Map existing resource management approaches in Tha Phaiban (highest environmental satisfaction)
- Catalog current mutual aid systems that support conservation

2. Strengthen Existing Systems: Reinforce structures that can continue independently

Priority Actions:

- Formalize roles in village conservation committees
- Document operational guidelines for community resource monitoring
- Strengthen connections between village leadership networks
- Support handover of ongoing bamboo craft initiatives

3. Knowledge Transfer: Ensure critical information remains accessible to communities

Priority Actions:

- Create simple, accessible guides for sustainable harvest practices
- Document successful conservation initiatives in local language
- Record traditional ecological knowledge, particularly from elderly residents
- Develop resource management guidelines based on current practices

4. Support Vulnerable Areas: Address critical gaps before departure

Priority Actions:

- Provide additional resource management support to Songleak village
- Document successful practices from stronger villages for future reference
- Establish connections between stronger and weaker villages
- Create basic guidelines for sustainable income generation

Conclusion

This Wild Happiness assessment reveals a community at the intersection of traditional values and conservation needs. With strong environmental satisfaction (80%) and exceptional social support networks (83%), the villages of the Thaphaibanh cluster demonstrate remarkable resilience and commitment to their natural heritage. While each

village shows distinct strengths - from Tha Phaiban's outstanding environmental engagement to Kebong's robust social networks - all maintain a powerful connection to their forest home. The high willingness to contribute to conservation (86%) across all villages provides a strong foundation for sustainable resource management. As Association Anoulak transitions from the area, the priority is to document and strengthen these existing systems, ensuring that traditional ecological knowledge and successful conservation practices remain accessible to future generations. The assessment shows that by building on current community strengths, respecting village-level variations, and supporting vulnerable areas, these communities can maintain their vital role as stewards of the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park's unique biodiversity. Their story demonstrates that community well-being and conservation success are deeply intertwined, each supporting and strengthening the other.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Complete Survey Questions by Domain

Overall Satisfaction with Life
1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current life?
2. How satisfied were you with your life 5 years ago?
3. What will make you more satisfied with life?
4. What can you contribute to improve the quality of your life?

Psychological Well-being Domain
5. How often do you feel that your life is under your control?
6. 5 years ago how often did you feel that your life was under your control?
7. Is there anything you have been constantly worrying about?
8. How often are you bothered by sadness?
9. 5 year ago how often did you feel bothered by sadness?
10. How satisfied are you with yourself (self-esteem/confidence)?

Community Domain
11. Currently, how satisfied are you with the feeling of belonging in your community?
12. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with the feeling of belonging in your community?
13. Currently, how satisfied are you with your contributions to the community?
14. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with your contributions to the community?
15. Currently, how often do you receive help from your community when needed?
16. 5 years ago, how often did you receive help from your community when needed?
17. Currently, how often do you help members of your community?
18. 5 years ago, how often did you help members of your community?
19. How important is community or village to your life?

Social Support Domain
20. How satisfied are you with your family relationship?
21. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with your family relationship?
22. Currently, how satisfied are you with the quality of the relationships between you and the people in your community?
23. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with the quality of the relationships between you and the people in your community?
24. What is the social support domain important to your life and what would you like to see change?

Education and Culture Domain
25. How much satisfaction do you get from your cultural practices?
26. What are the cultural practices that are the most meaningful/important to you?
27. In the past 5 years, are there any cultural aspects that you think have been changed?
28. Currently, how satisfied are you with your education and the education system in your community?
29. How has education changed in the past 5 years?
30. How confident/satisfied do you currently feel in your capabilities?
31. 5 years ago, how confident/satisfied did you feel in your capabilities?

Health Domain
32. Currently, overall, how satisfied are you with your health?
33. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with your health?
34. How satisfied are you with access to health services in your community?
35. 5 years ago how satisfied were you with access to health services in your community?
36. What would you like to see improved in the future for health services in your community?

Livelihood Domain
37. Overall, how satisfied are you with your economic situation?
38. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with your economic situation?
39. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job and income?
40. Overall, how satisfied are you with living costs in your community?

Work and Time Balance Domain
41. How satisfied are you with the balance in your relaxing time versus time for income-generating?
42. 5 years ago, how happy were you with balancing your relaxing time versus time for income-generating activities?
43. Are there activities you are not satisfied with to do?

Environmental Well-being Domain
44. How satisfied are you with the efforts being made to preserve the natural environment in my community?
45. 5 years ago, how satisfied were you with the efforts being made to preserve the natural environment in my community?
46. How does the conservation of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park affect your well-being?

47. How does the conservation of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park affect your income and wealth?
48. To improve your well-being or income, what would you like the conservation of Biodiversity and forests in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park to be?

Willingness to Contribute
49. How much are you willing to follow the regulation of protection of the forest, and biodiversity in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park?
50. How are you going to contribute? Or why not?

Demographic Information
51. Age
52. Gender
53. Marital status
54. Responsibility
55. Household Size/Type of House
56. Village/area
57. Average income (Lao KIP/Year)
58. Name of enumerator
59. Date of interview

Note: All scaled questions use a 5-point scale (1=Completely Dissatisfied to 5=Completely Satisfied) unless otherwise noted.

Appendix B: Wild Happiness Methodology

The survey utilized in this project is adapted from the validated well-being measurement instrument created by the Happiness Alliance. This instrument is based on the OECD's guidelines for measuring subjective well-being, ensuring robust, globally recognized metrics. The Happiness Alliance's methodology is further enriched by incorporating elements from the Gallup World Poll and the Better Life Index, making it a reliable tool to measure both individual and community well-being.

Why Validation Matters
Using a validated tool is critical for ensuring the reliability, consistency, and credibility of data collected. Validation means that the survey questions have been rigorously tested to accurately capture complex aspects of well-being across diverse contexts. The benefits of using a validated instrument include:

1. **Consistency Across Contexts**: A validated framework allows for consistent measurement across different communities and countries, making it possible to compare results reliably over time and across regions.
2. **Robustness of Data**: The survey's structure, which has been refined based on empirical research, ensures that data collected is both accurate and meaningful. This robustness is crucial when using these data to inform policy, allocate resources, or design community interventions.
3. **Global Comparability**: By aligning with established international standards (e.g., Gallup World Poll and the Better Life Index), the survey results can be benchmarked against global and national well-being indicators. This comparability helps contextualize the results for stakeholders who are familiar with these global metrics.
4. **Actionable Insights**: The rigor behind the validation process means that findings can be confidently used to guide decision-making, whether for community projects, conservation efforts, or policy recommendations.

By leveraging this validated approach, the Wild Happiness Survey ensures that the well-being metrics we gather are reliable, comparable, and actionable. This foundation allows OneNature and its partners to develop evidence-based strategies that genuinely improve community well-being and conservation outcomes.

Methodology

The Wild Happiness Survey uses a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative questions (rated on a scale of 1 to 5) and qualitative, open-ended questions to capture deeper insights. Participants are asked about their satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, social relationships, cultural engagement, and interactions with their environment. Surveys were conducted in-person by trained enumerators to ensure data accuracy and cultural sensitivity. All responses were anonymized, and the data were securely stored. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their rights to withdraw at any time.

Scoring Methodology:

The Wild Happiness Survey uses a 5-point satisfaction scale that is converted to percentages for clearer understanding: Original 5-point Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied 2 = Slightly satisfied 3 = Moderately satisfied 4 = Very satisfied 5 = Completely satisfied

Converting Scores to Percentages: To make the results more intuitive, we convert the 1-5 scale to percentages (0-100%): - Score of 1 = 0% satisfied - Score of 2 = 25% satisfied - Score of 3 = 50% satisfied - Score of 4 = 75% satisfied - Score of 5 = 100% satisfied For

average scores that fall between these points, we use the formula: Percentage = ((Score - 1) / 4) × 100

Example Calculations: If a domain has an average score of 4.28: ((4.28 - 1) / 4) × 100 = 82% - If a domain has an average score of 3.5: ((3.5 - 1) / 4) × 100 = 62.5% This conversion allows us to: - Present results in an easily understood format (0-100%) - Maintain statistical validity of the original responses - Make fair comparisons across different domains - Track changes over time consistently All percentage scores in this report use this conversion method. When you see a satisfaction level of 75%, this corresponds to a score of 4 on the original 5-point scale, indicating participants were "Very satisfied" with that aspect.

Survey Design

1. **Adaptation Process**
    - Cultural context integration
    - Language adaptation
    - Pilot testing
    - Community feedback incorporation
2. **Sampling Methodology**
    - Population mapping
    - Stratified sampling approach
    - Demographic representation
    - Geographic coverage
3. **Data Collection**
    - Enumerator training
    - Quality control measures
    - Data verification processes
    - Response validation
4. **Analysis Framework**
    - Quantitative analysis methods
    - Qualitative coding approach
    - Cross-validation techniques
    - Statistical significance testing

Wild Happiness Approach

Deep Listening: Engaging with community members to understand their priorities, concerns, and aspirations. This step ensures that the survey tool is contextually relevant and culturally sensitive.

Setting a Baseline: Conducting the Wild Happiness Survey to gather baseline data on community well-being. This report represents Step 2, capturing initial well-being metrics in the surveyed communities.
Sharing & Sensemaking: Presenting the survey results back to the community through participatory workshops to promote collective understanding and sensemaking. This process helps communities reflect on their well-being and prioritize areas for action.
Co-creating Project Metrics: Collaboratively developing metrics and action plans to address identified well-being gaps, ensuring that subsequent conservation projects are community driven.
Resurveying & Evaluation: Conducting follow-up surveys after 3-5 years to measure progress and adapt strategies based on new insights.
These five steps create a continuous feedback loop, fostering community-led conservation that aligns with local well-being priorities.

Appendix C: Demographic Data Analysis

Understanding the demographics of survey respondents is crucial for interpreting well-being data. Different demographic groups often face unique challenges that can significantly impact their overall well-being. For example:

- **Gender**: Women and men may have different levels of access to resources, social support, or healthcare, which can influence their satisfaction with life or economic stability.
- **Age**: Younger and older adults may experience varying levels of psychological well-being, access to education, or community support due to differences in life stages and priorities.
- **Socioeconomic Status**: Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may have limited access to healthcare, clean water, or stable income, which can negatively impact multiple well-being domains.
- **Occupation and Location**: The nature of one's work or the area where one lives (e.g., urban vs. rural) can affect livelihood stability, access to services, and even environmental well-being.

By analyzing demographic data alongside well-being scores, we can identify disparities among different groups and tailor recommendations to address the specific needs of these populations. This ensures that interventions are equitable and effectively support those who might be facing greater challenges.

Appendix D: Understanding Correlations in Community Well-being

What Are Correlations and Why Do They Matter?

Think of correlations as patterns that show us how different aspects of community life tend to move together. For example, we found that when people feel strongly connected to their environment, they also tend to maintain strong cultural practices. Understanding these patterns helps us plan better support for communities during transition.

Key Things to Remember About Correlations

1. Relationships, Not Causes

Just because two things happen together doesn't mean one causes the other. For example:

- We found that people with higher economic status tend to report higher life satisfaction
- But this doesn't mean money alone creates happiness
- Other factors like strong community bonds and environmental connections also play important roles

2. Context Matters

What's true in one community might not be true in another. For instance:

- The connection between environmental appreciation and cultural practices might be stronger in communities with long-standing traditions
- Local history, values, and circumstances shape how these relationships work

How Strong is Strong? Understanding Correlation Numbers

- 0.0-0.3: A weak connection (like a loose thread)
- 0.3-0.6: A moderate connection (like a handshake)
- 0.6-0.8: A strong connection (like links in a chain)
- 0.8-1.0: A very strong connection (like fingers on a hand)

Using This Information Wisely

1. Look for the Whole Picture

- Consider multiple connections together
- Listen to community perspectives
- Remember local context matters

2. Think About Hidden Factors

- Other unmeasured elements might be important
- Local knowledge helps explain patterns
- Community insights add crucial context

3. Plan for Change

- Relationships may shift during transition
- Regular monitoring helps track changes
- Community feedback guides adjustments

Conclusion
While these patterns help us understand community well-being, they're just one piece of the puzzle. The most effective planning combines:

- Statistical patterns from our survey
- Community wisdom and experience
- Local knowledge and context
- Regular feedback and adaptation

By understanding these relationships while remaining open to community input and local context, we can better support communities through transition while preserving what matters most to them.

Appendix E: Best Practices for Community Engagement

The Wild Happiness Project emphasizes that sharing results with the community is as important as collecting these data. The following best practices are recommended:

1. **Presenting Findings Transparently**:
    - Organize community meetings where survey results are shared using easy-to-understand visuals (charts, graphs) and local language.
    - Use participatory methods such as storytelling and group discussions to make these data more relatable.
2. **Sensemaking Workshops**:
    - Conduct workshops where community members can interpret the results themselves, discuss implications, and identify priority areas for improvement.
    - Utilize tools like **participatory mapping** or **radar charts** to visualize domain scores and facilitate discussions on possible interventions.
3. **Co-designing Projects**:
    - Engage communities in designing initiatives that address the identified gaps in well-being, ensuring these projects are culturally aligned and sustainable.
    - Develop indicators for tracking the success of these projects, based on the community's own definitions of success.

Appendix F: Glossary of Terms

Baseline Survey A survey conducted at the beginning of a project to establish initial data on community well-being. This serves as a point of reference for measuring changes over time.
Better Life Index An international index developed by the OECD to measure well-being across countries based on various dimensions such as housing, income, education, health, and environment.

Community Sensemaking A participatory process where community members review and interpret survey results together, helping to contextualize data within their own experiences and priorities.
Community Well-being The collective satisfaction and functioning of a community across multiple domains including social, environmental, economic, and cultural aspects.
Correlation A statistical relationship between two variables, where changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. Correlation does not imply causation.
Conservation Readiness A community's capacity and willingness to engage in conservation efforts, measured through environmental satisfaction scores and expressed willingness to contribute.
Cultural Transmission The process by which cultural values, practices, and knowledge are passed from one generation to the next within a community.
Deep Listening A method of engaging with community members to understand their values, concerns, and priorities. This involves open-ended discussions to gather qualitative insights that inform survey design.
Demographic Data Information collected on the characteristics of survey participants, such as age, gender, occupation, and socioeconomic status. Demographic data helps contextualize survey results.
Domain Scores Numerical values (0-100%) representing satisfaction or well-being levels in specific areas of life, such as health, community, or environmental connection.
Environmental Well-being A measure of community members' relationship with and access to natural resources, including both practical and spiritual connections to the environment.
Gallup World Poll A global survey conducted by Gallup that measures well-being, economic conditions, and other social indicators across various countries.
Gross National Happiness (GNH) A holistic approach to measuring progress, first introduced in Bhutan, which emphasizes the importance of non-economic aspects of development, such as psychological well-being, culture, and environmental sustainability.
Happiness Alliance An organization that developed a validated well-being measurement tool, which aligns with international standards like the OECD guidelines. The tool is used to assess subjective well-being.
Indicator A specific measurement used to assess performance or well-being within a particular domain, such as "life satisfaction" or "access to healthcare."
Life Satisfaction A subjective measure reflecting an individual's overall assessment of their quality of life based on their personal criteria.
Natural Resource Management Plan A structured approach to managing and protecting natural resources while considering community needs and traditional practices.
Non-Timber Forest Products Forest resources other than timber that can be harvested sustainably, such as bamboo shoots, wild vegetables, and materials for traditional crafts.
OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) An international organization that provides guidelines for measuring various indicators of well-being and economic performance.

Participatory Mapping A method that involves community members in creating visual representations of their environment or well-being priorities. This process enhances community engagement and ownership.
Psychological Well-being A domain that assesses an individual's sense of purpose, optimism, and general satisfaction with life. It includes factors like emotional resilience and fulfillment.
Resurveying The process of conducting a follow-up survey after a certain period (e.g., 3-5 years) to assess changes in community well-being and the impact of interventions.
Social Support - The networks and systems within a community that provide practical, emotional, and cultural support to community members.
Subjective Well-being An individual's self-reported assessment of their own happiness, life satisfaction, and emotional state.
Time Balance The satisfaction with how time is divided between income-generating activities, rest, and other life activities.
Traditional Ecological Knowledge Local knowledge and practices related to environmental management passed down through generations, particularly valuable for conservation efforts.
Validated Instrument A survey or measurement tool that has been tested and proven to reliably capture the information it is designed to measure. Validation ensures the tool's accuracy and consistency.
Village Conservation Committee A local governance structure responsible for overseeing and implementing conservation initiatives at the village level.
Well-being Domains Specific areas of life assessed in the survey to understand overall well-being, such as health, economic stability, community support, and environmental well-being.
Well-being Report Card A visual summary that presents average scores across different well-being domains, providing an overview of community strengths and areas for improvement.
Wild Happiness Approach A holistic methodology developed by OneNature that measures and integrates community well-being with conservation outcomes.