

DEVELOPING A BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

WITHIN INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIES AND REFLECTIONS FROM LESOTHO





Making a Difference with Behavioral Science

Ever wonder why people do what they do?

That's where behavioral science comes in. It takes a systematic approach to gather evidence that can explain why humans make the decisions they do. It's not just about what people say they will do (their reported behaviors), but what they would actually do (their revealed behaviors). Understanding human behavior is key when it comes to tackling conservation issues like climate change or environmental degradation. This is because we can only encourage desired behaviors and practices once we know why populations of interest act the way they do.



Beyond Theory: Applying Behavioral Science To Conservation

Understanding the concepts of behavioral science, while useful, is just the beginning to applying behavioral insights effectively to Integrated Catchment Management (ICM). We must integrate behavioral science as a core part of how we approach projects. In doing so, we will be able to choose from a toolbox of strategies and techniques in order to design and test solutions that leverage the findings of behavioral science research, and have a greater chance of being effective in the real world.



What's in Our Toolkit?

Enter the AUDAS framework. AUDAS is our roadmap for creating solutions that are not just based on theory, but also fit the real world sufficiently and stand up to rigorous testing.



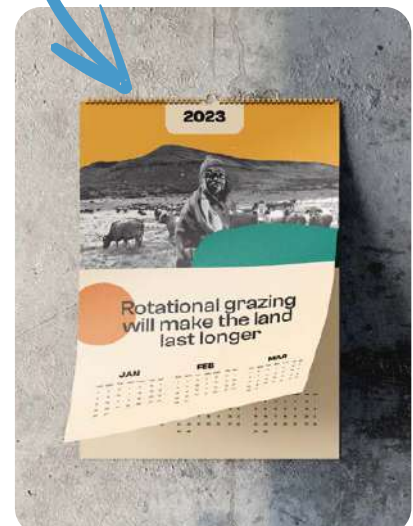


Our [Dissemination Toolkit](#) is your guide to integrating behavioral science into your projects. It takes a deeper dive into AUDAS, offering specific strategies you can use. We, further, provide [Recommendations](#) that lay out our studies in detail, outlining our interventions, findings, and actionable insights.

Key Recommendations



We pinpointed some key behavioral science concepts through an extensive desk review of the literature, and validated their relevance using qualitative and quantitative methods in the field. This approach allowed us to thoughtfully develop interventions, carefully aligning each with our handpicked behavioral science concepts. Our goal was to harness the synergy of multiple behavioral science concepts, to maximize the potential effectiveness of our ideas.



Social Identity as a Standout Idea

Across all three studies, a key behavioral concept we found and recommend continuing to leverage is social identity. Whether someone is a farmer, a herder, or a Basotho community member, connecting their identity to conservation goals and making this top-of-mind could be quite effective. Social identity can be made more salient, or 'primed,' through the repeated use of a phrase: an example of this in our study was using the phrase 'Rangeland Protectors' throughout our intervention to engage herders.

Other Ways to Look Beyond Monetary Incentives

Some of our other recommendations include incorporating creative non-monetary incentive systems, feedback loops, and sustaining engagement over the long-run. Creative non-monetary incentive systems are important because these can redirect the focus from monetary or cash rewards (extrinsic) to personal values (intrinsic), which in turn increases the likelihood of efforts sticking and effects sustaining. Think along the lines of recognition or awards for those who actively participate in conservation activities. Feedback loops are also crucial. It's one thing to tell people about the benefits of sustainable behaviors, but it's another to show them the actual results of the community's action.

Finally, sustaining engagement over the long-run is key, and communities themselves highlighted the value of having regular interactions. We found that having shorter, more frequent engagement sessions on more specific and niche topics can keep community members invested. This can help maintain a sense of commitment to the shared goal of conservation.

Assessing Impact: Blending Frequency with Different Methods

Continuous assessment is vital. We recommend continuing to collect data on how communities' feel and think about interventions, to constantly refine future endeavors and achieve the best results. By using experiments with control and treatment groups, like ours, you can really see what's working and what isn't. For a quantitative assessment, you can start with surveys that are tailored to the specific cultural and linguistic nuances of each community. To complement this, detailed methods like focus groups and semi-structured interviews for a deeper insight into the community's experience and feelings towards interventions. These help us uncover the 'how' and 'why' behind the effects of an intervention.

Additionally, conducting observational studies during and after interventions can track actual behavioral changes. A combined methodology ensures a comprehensive evaluation, blending quantitative and qualitative methods for a holistic understanding of an intervention's impact.