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Abstract(en) : Mangroves are severely threatened ecosystems, with loss rates exceeding those of rainforests and coral reefs, stressing the need for large-scale rehabilitation programmes. Not only are ecological evaluations of such planting efforts scarce, but studies of local stakeholders' perceptions and valuation of planted areas are also virtually non-existent. This paper assesses how resource users value natural versus planted mangroves and how they perceive plantation initiatives. Semi-structured interviews with 48 resource users from two Kenyan villages show marked mangrove dependence. Respondents identified 24 ecosystem goods, and ranked a variety of food items, traditional medicine, fuel and construction materials as very important resources. Natural mangroves (11.1 +/- 2.5) were rated more highly than plantations (4.8 +/- 2.7) in terms of the number and quality of products, except for mangrove poles. Nine ecosystem services were acknowledged, with significant differences between natural (5.2 +/- 1.1) and planted (4.1 +/- 1.6) mangroves. Most respondents (71%) were positive towards the plantations, and negative attitudes were entirely based on the perception of limited information given to the community prior to planting. Multivariate analyses show distinct patterns among user groups (based on

gender, occupation and locality) with respect to recognized goods and services, knowledge of mangrove species and plantations, and attitudes towards threats, community management and existing plantations. Homogeneity of responses within defined user groups accounts for these patterns. Perspectives of local users were analysed in relation to information from interviews with six managers and researchers responsible for existing plantations, as well as scientific studies on the return of ecosystem functions in planted mangroves of the area. Findings are discussed in the context of ecological knowledge, learning within social groups, village setting and history, and primary economic activity. Communication of plantation goals may be fundamental to project success and sustainability, and community participation should take into account the heterogeneous nature of stakeholder groups, in terms of perceptions and valuations of ecosystem goods and services, to avoid conflicts in future plantation use.

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