



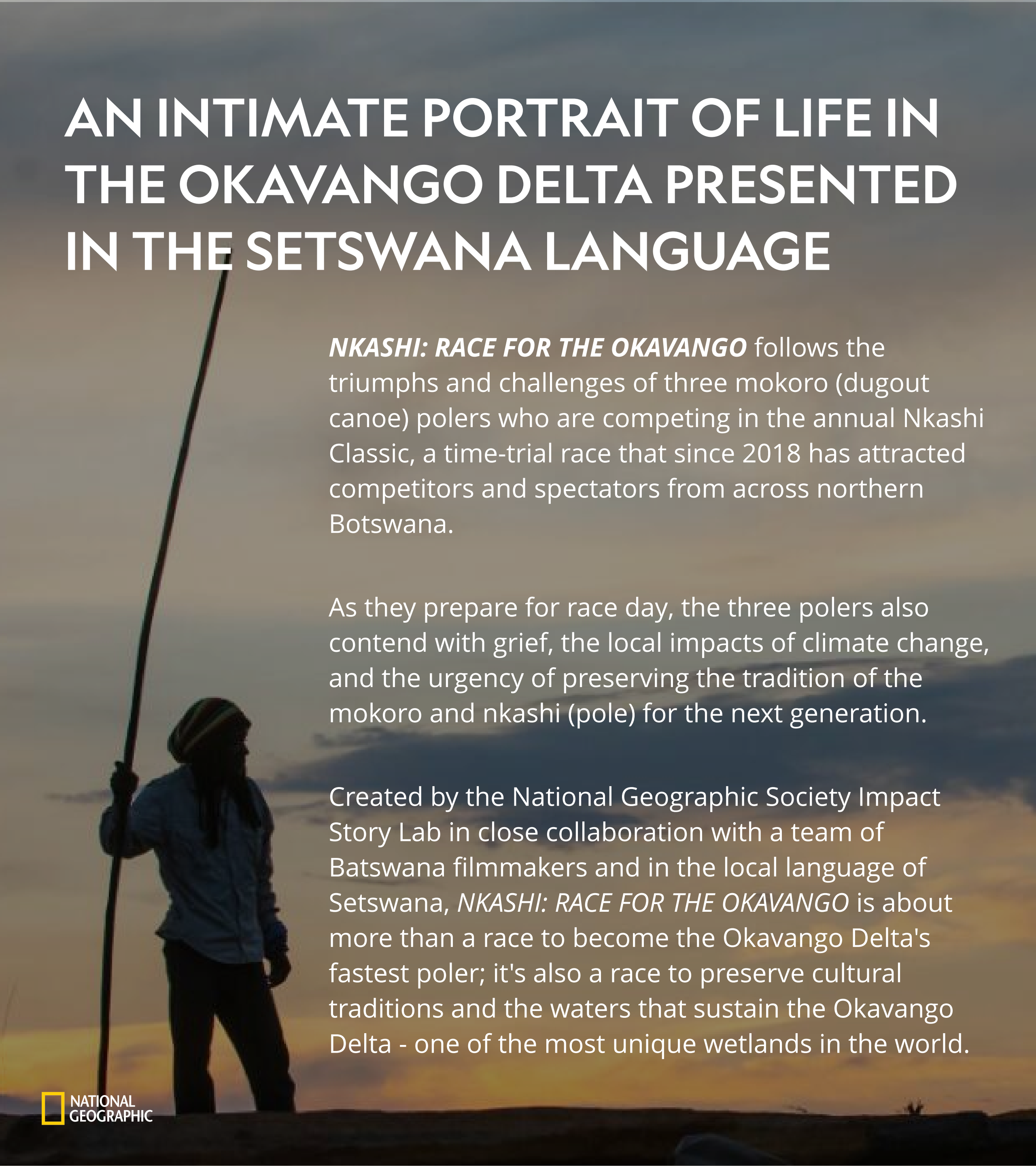
IMPACT
STORY LAB

NKASHI

RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO

IMPACT CASE STUDY



A person in silhouette is shown from the waist up, holding a long, thin pole vertically. The background is a soft, hazy sunset or sunrise sky with warm tones of orange and yellow. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF LIFE IN THE OKAVANGO DELTA PRESENTED IN THE SETSWANA LANGUAGE

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO follows the triumphs and challenges of three mokoro (dugout canoe) polers who are competing in the annual Nkashi Classic, a time-trial race that since 2018 has attracted competitors and spectators from across northern Botswana.

As they prepare for race day, the three polers also contend with grief, the local impacts of climate change, and the urgency of preserving the tradition of the mokoro and nkashi (pole) for the next generation.

Created by the National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab in close collaboration with a team of Botswana filmmakers and in the local language of Setswana, *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO* is about more than a race to become the Okavango Delta's fastest poler; it's also a race to preserve cultural traditions and the waters that sustain the Okavango Delta - one of the most unique wetlands in the world.

MORE THAN A FILM

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO is a documentary feature film and impact campaign from the National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab (ISL).

Made in collaboration with Botswana filmmakers, composers, and artists, it reveals how traditional ecological knowledge in this critical ecosystem is being preserved through community engagement, scientific endeavors, and sustainable livelihoods.

This **CASE STUDY** examines the positive impacts of inclusive storytelling, particularly its role in showcasing local talent and narratives, fostering audience engagement, and influencing perceptions of traditional knowledge and its preservation.

It also details the interventions and impact tactics the film and campaign utilized in the field to further the mission of the National Geographic Society.

IMPACT STORYTELLING refers to the art of using narratives to inspire, inform, and mobilize people to create positive change in the world. The Impact Story Lab prioritizes narrative strategies informed by peer-reviewed evidence and communications best practice.

WELCOME MESSAGE

The Impact Story Lab at the National Geographic Society is an award-winning multimedia creative unit leveraging world-class storytelling to drive positive change. At the heart of our mission are our **National Geographic Explorers**. Their endeavors around the world—from wildlife conservation to cultural preservation—are brought to life through film, video, audio, photography, VR/AR experiences, and other media produced with the National Geographic Society.

Drawing on social and behavioral science to inspire change, the Impact Story Lab builds on the National Geographic Society's legacy as a global leader in influential storytelling, and furthers our mission of illuminating and protecting the wonder of our world.

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO is a feature documentary film created *with* and *for* Batswana communities who are the keepers of Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. The film shines a light on the work of multiple National Geographic Explorers and the nexus of cultural preservation and conservation science in the Okavango Delta.

Vanessa Serrao
Vice President, Impact Story Lab



SCIENCE-LED IMPACT

As part of the Impact Story Lab's commitment to science-led strategies, media projects work to move audiences and collaborators along a continuum of awareness and engagement toward becoming change-makers. This outcomes-oriented approach to storytelling is at the heart of every Impact Story Lab project.

The Impact Story Lab moves audiences along this continuum toward action.



NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO was brought to life both on and off the screen. Working with local Explorers and community partners, ISL co-developed an impact strategy that replaced extractive storytelling with authentic collaboration, and helped move audiences, and community actor groups, toward deeper issue literacy and ongoing impact that will outlive the media project.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The *NKASHI* impact campaign was designed from the ground up *with* the community, *for* the community. To achieve its target outcomes, *NKASHI* encompassed a range of activities, including community screenings, both local and international premieres, capacity development programs tailored to uplift local talent, the esteemed Nkashi Classic event, and various other engaging initiatives.

LOCAL PRODUCER	LOCAL DISTRIBUTION
MAJORITY LOCAL CREW	LOCAL ARTISTS
LOCAL ON-SCREEN PARTICIPANTS	CAPACITY BUILDING
LOCAL LANGUAGE	ONGOING COLLABORATION
LOCAL PREMIERES	IMPACT CASE STUDY & REPORT

NKASHI IN NUMBERS

151 Million

Readers of print, online, and social media coverage (combined total for all pieces)

100 +

Countries reached across Africa, Europe & Middle East via Botswana TV, Nat Geo WILD, and Disney+

2.2 M

Reached on Nat Geo WILD in South Africa

18.9 %

Increase in traffic to [NatGeo.org/okavango](https://www.natgeo.org/okavango) following premiere

26.9 K

Trailer views across Vimeo & Instagram

9

Awards received, including Anthem, Jackson WILD, Telly, & Pridelands

4500

Local Motswana attendees at rural community roadshows

13

Roadshow screenings across local communities

50%

Batswana production crew, plus additional musicians and artists

157%

Increase in attendance to Nkashi Classic in 2023

2

Botswana premieres including the President & First Lady of Botswana

249

Local respondents to impact survey

18

Filmmakers trained through Impact Story Lab Workshop to-date

15

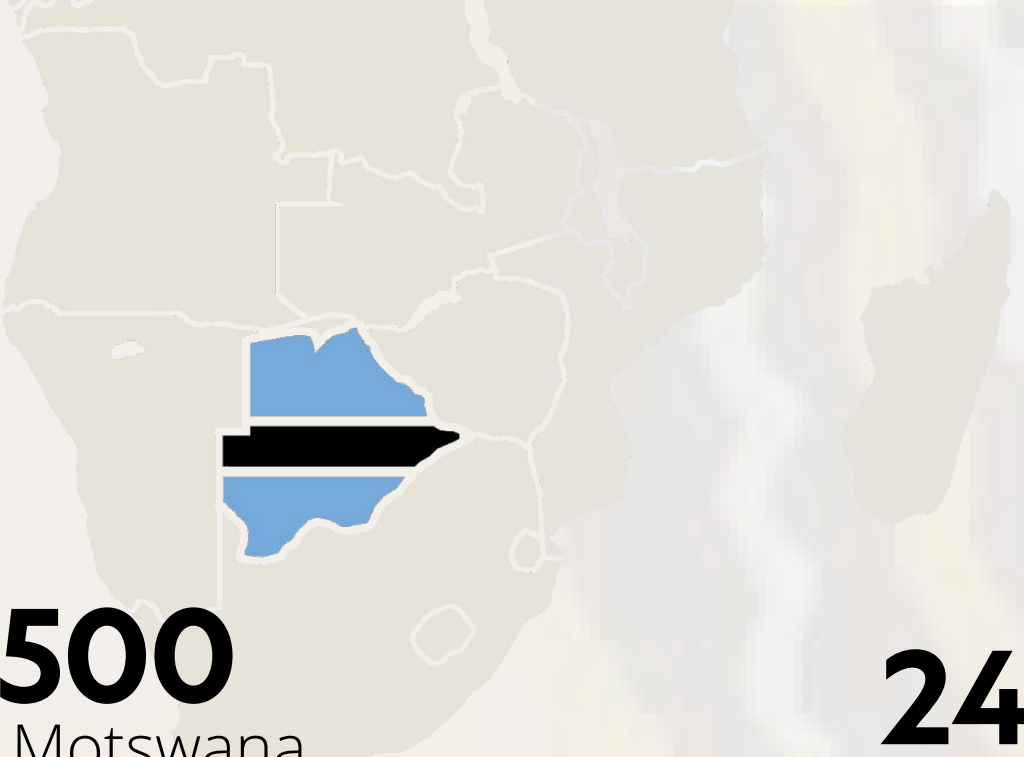
Batswana storytellers amplified through film

2

Companion short films produced and distributed in Botswana

1

Original soundtrack globally distributed via YouTube



SUMMARY

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BOTSWANA

Landlocked country in southern Africa north of the Molopo River where the Okavango Delta is located.

MOTSWANA

(Singular) person from Botswana.

BATSWANA

(Plural) people who live in Botswana.

SETSWANA

A Bantu language spoken in southern Africa and one of the local languages of Botswana.

MOKORO

Mokoro (singular) / Mekoro (plural)

The type of flat canoe used in the Okavango Delta traditionally made by digging out the trunk of a large straight tree. It is propelled through the shallow waters by standing in the stern and pushing with a pole.

NKASHI

Pole used to navigate a mokoro.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Of or relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group.

INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING

An evidence-based approach – to crafting stories, in which featured communities and individuals are authentically integrated into the storytelling process from pre-production through distribution.

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Evolving knowledge acquired by Indigenous peoples over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment and informed by cultural memory which is passed from generation to generation.

NKASHI CLASSIC

A regional sporting event spotlighting the athleticism and talent of mokoro polers who navigate the Okavango Delta in traditional wooden canoes.

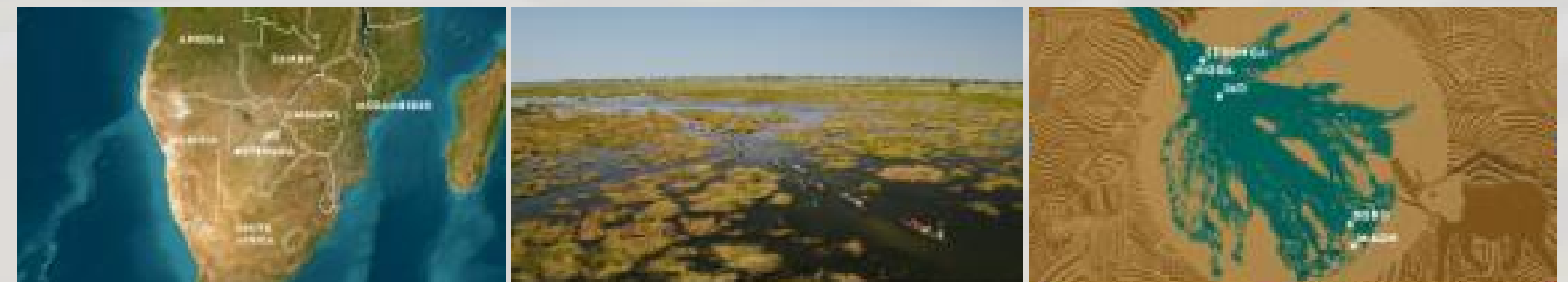
LANDSCAPE: THE OKAVANGO DELTA, ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS WILDLIFE

THE OKAVANGO DELTA

In the heart of Southern Africa, the Kalahari Desert gives way to one of the world's largest wetlands as seasonal rains from Angola's highlands flood northern Botswana's Okavango Delta. Each year, it becomes home to over 1,000 species of plants, more than 480 species of birds, 130 species of mammals, and numerous species of reptiles and fish.

The Okavango River Basin is the main water source for one million people across Botswana, Namibia, and Angola. The Delta is also a major tourist attraction and provides an important source of income and employment for people living in the communities along the river.

However, multiple challenges are arising (water abstraction, poaching, climate change, human development, harsh agricultural practices and loss of traditional knowledge among others) that are putting the Okavango Delta, its wildlife and its people under threat.



PEOPLES OF THE DELTA

Communities indigenous to the regions and rivers of the Delta—descendants of the BaYei and many other ancient cultures, hold a significant role in the identity of the Basin and are integral to its preservation. Thus, their involvement is imperative in safeguarding the Okavango Delta and fostering resilience against the various threats it faces.

Recognizing this importance, the Nkashi Trust (formerly Botswana Wild Bird Trust) has actively engaged Indigenous communities in conservation efforts. By harnessing traditional knowledge, these communities are empowered to play a proactive role in addressing environmental challenges and driving positive change. Through ongoing scientific expeditions to survey the River Basin and initiatives like the Nkashi Classic, traditional ecological knowledge is celebrated for its contributions to science, conservation, and the exploration of alternative livelihood opportunities.

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO takes that legacy and brings it forward..



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THE FILM





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO and its journey from inception to this report, represents—at least for the people involved in creating it—more than just a documentary film. From the beginning, NKASHI was meant to serve as a contrast to a long history of extractive natural history storytelling throughout Africa, particularly in Botswana. This meant, by definition, doing things differently than before. Though led by the National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab, NKASHI was filmed in the Setswana language by a predominantly Batswana crew, and created for a Batswana-first audience, largely located in remote areas. It was also filmed in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic. So needless to say, it was not without its challenges.

As both the director of the film and the Director of Impact for the Impact Story Lab, NKASHI also represented a large responsibility for me: to our local crew and collaborators; to the communities of the Okavango Delta featured in the film; and to the impact storytelling industry as a whole, to demonstrate that it's possible to hold ourselves accountable for achieving the impact we set out to create.

But perhaps more than anything, NKASHI represented an amazing learning opportunity. As the first feature-length documentary produced by the National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab and the team's first large-scale impact campaign, we certainly had room to grow. I learned how much time true impact work requires (years, not months). I learned the value of conducting surveys and focus-group discussions as early as possible in order to identify and navigate hidden biases. And I learned that while metrics matter, the most meaningful outcomes often emerge through the relationships we build along the way.

To the reader, I hope this Impact Case Study provides valuable insights, whether you are a storyteller, a conservationist, an impact producer, or a prospective funder. And to everyone who made NKASHI and its impact campaign possible: thank you for your guidance and support. The lessons we learned together will forever shape the work I carry forward.

Sarah Joseph, PhD
Director of Impact, Impact Story Lab



INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING

The National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab believes inclusive storytelling is essential for creating lasting impact. It fosters empathy, challenges bias, advocates for social change, and enriches creativity and innovation.

The National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab worked to integrate authentic representation across every facet of *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO*, ensuring that local Batswana voices, experiences, and perspectives were accurately portrayed in the film and beyond. This deepened the African audience's connection with the film's protagonists and their stories, promoting empathy, compassion, identification, and broader societal understanding, as evidenced in the impact evaluation of the film. Collaboration was a centerpiece to every aspect of producing and promoting the film, from the soundtrack to the marketing materials and beyond.

Production



Aesthetic



Music



Distribution



Impact



“The Okavango Delta is globally known as home to captivating wildlife. But films made in the Okavango Delta have rarely told the stories of its extraordinary people, who have been protecting our water, wildlife, and traditions since the beginning of time.”

*Thalefang Charles, Producer and
National Geographic Explorer*

PRODUCTION TEAM

NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO was produced by the Impact Story Lab in collaboration with local storytellers and production professionals.



Sarah Joseph, PhD
Director, Producer



Thalefang Charles
Producer



Dustin Sylvia
Producer, Editor



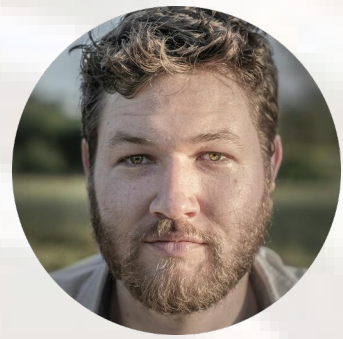
Johann Vorster "Vossie"
Director of Photography



Mmoloki Donald Sejo
Cinematographer



Bashi Kikia
Aerial
Cinematographer



Brett Kuxhausen
Additional Cinematography



MacDonald Gaorakwe
Audio Recordist



Thato Kavinja
Composer



Vanessa Serrao
Executive Producer



Kaitlin Yarnall
Executive Producer



Steve Boyes, PhD
Executive Producer

KEY ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTORS



Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho

GB is a National Geographic Explorer who works at the Nkashi Trust as the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project's lead poler and is also a member of the Seronga Polers Trust. GB has crossed the Okavango Delta every year since 2010 with project leader, Dr. Steve Boyes, as well as all the large rivers in Angola and Namibia. He is an exemplary ambassador of the Okavango Delta and the BaYei community.

GB is from the village of Seronga and has a keen interest in the culture and history of his community. He works with other members of the Nkashi Trust to capture and document traditional knowledge and culture.



Tjadza "Pretty" Tapologo

Pretty grew up in the village of Toromoja, but now calls Boro home. In Boro, she learned how to pole a mokoro and got her guide license. She is one of the few women who have a specialist guide license. She hosts tourists and gives them the mokoro experience.

Pretty is one of a group of three female polers, who in 2021, joined the Nkashi Trust team to participate in the annual National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project research transect and participated in a second transect in 2022. She encourages more women to pick up the nkashi, believing that it will change their lives.



Nkeletsang "Ralf" Moshupa

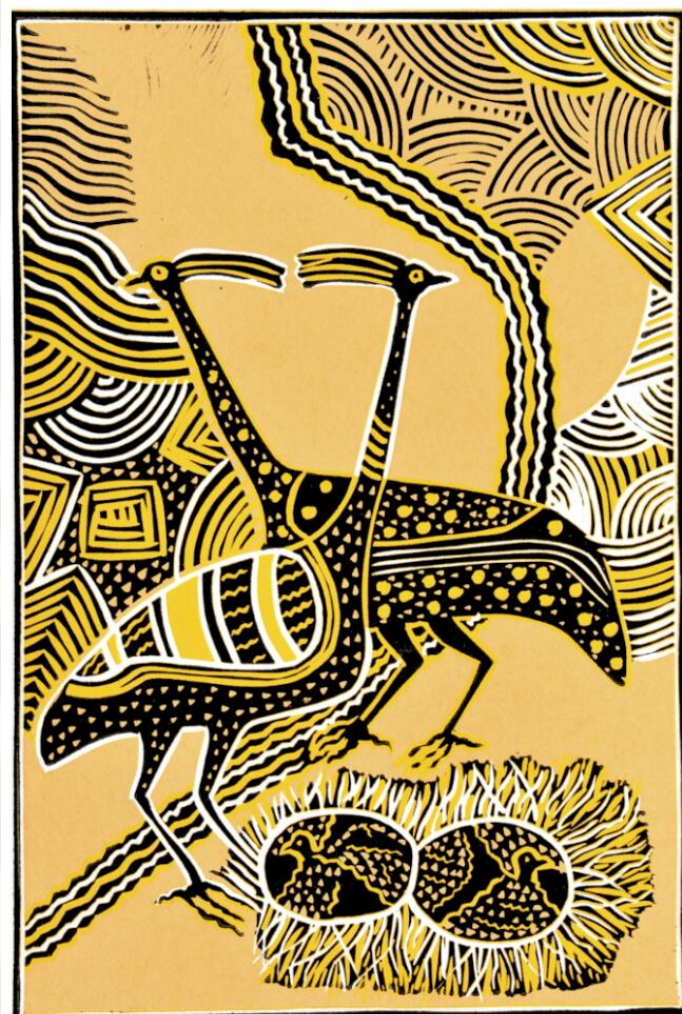
In the film, Ralf is the defending champion from the 2018 Nkashi Classic - the last time the contest was able to be held before a hiatus during Covid. He is also GB's cousin.

Ralf has used his natural mokoro piloting ability as a key member of multiple National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project expeditions, having joined every crossing since 2013, as well as several crossings in Angola. He is from Jao Flats where he lives with his partner, Keabetswe, and four children. He now works full-time for Nkashi Trust and Keabetswe also joined the Nkashi Trust team as part of NGOWP's 2022 research transect.

THE LOOK OF NKASHI

From its inception, *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO* was designed as a celebration of the art and culture of southern Africa, drawing on the creative contributions of artists to craft a film that not only spoke the Setswana language, but was equally fluent in the visual and cultural language of the Okavango.

A collaboration with the Kuru Art Project brought traditional art from regional artisans into the aesthetic of the film, creating an authentic visual language across *NKASHI*'s poster, soundtrack, and graphics. The Impact Story Lab commissioned an original piece of art (*right*) featuring a mokoro poler, while additional artwork—such as the linocut *Koribustard and Chicks* (*below*)—was licensed for additional use.



KORIBUSTARDS AND CHICKS, 2021 (REDUCTION LINOCUT)

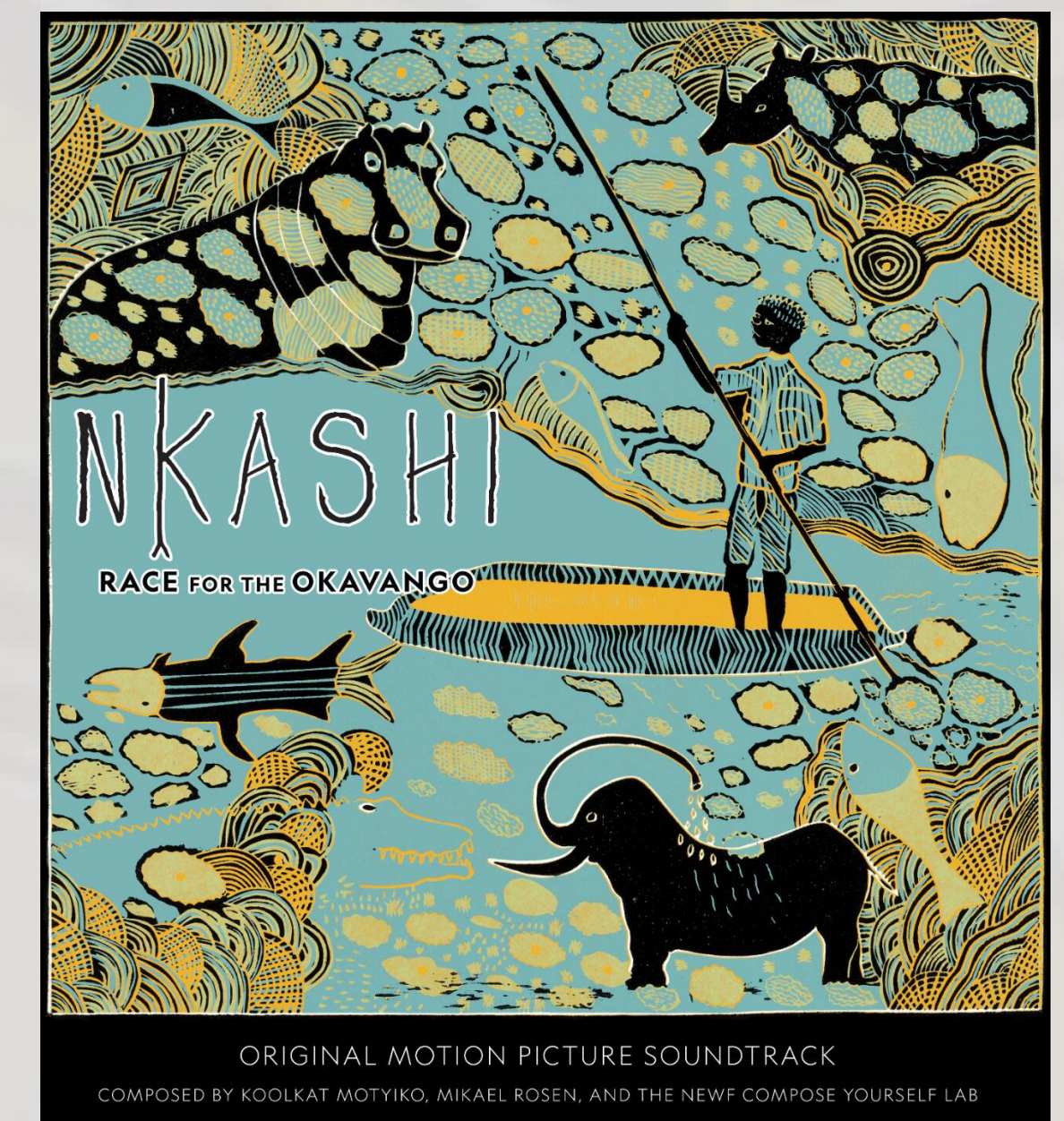




THE SOUND OF NKASHI

The film's soundtrack features traditional instruments, voices, and compositions from leading musicians across the African continent, including Thato Kavinja and Mikael Rosen. It was awarded Best Original Score at the prestigious Jackson Wild Media Awards.

Thato, AKA "Mr. Seronga" Koolkat Motyiko, is an award-winning artist who spent his teen years living around the Okavango Delta. He contributed six tracks to the film's score and performed original songs for two premieres, including for Botswana's President and First Lady. However, it was bringing his music back to the delta during the *NKASHI* roadshow that he reported was the experience closest to his heart.



COMPOSERS LAB

NKASHI brought a pan-African dimension to the soundtrack through a NEWF Compose Yourself Lab. The lab was a collaboration between the Impact Story Lab, Okavango Wilderness Project, and the Africa Refocused program—National Geographic Society's partnership with South Africa based filmmaker incubator, Nature Environment & Wildlife Filmmaking (NEWF).

Bringing together musicians from Botswana, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Morocco, Nigeria, and France for a multi-day, immersive experience in the Delta, they created two tracks for the film inspired by the Delta, using instruments from their respective countries. Participants performed their original music as part of the Jackson Wild Summit.



COMPANION SHORT FILMS

Two short films were made as companion pieces to *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO* including a behind the scenes look at the Composers Lab and a documentary about the evolving traditions of building mekoro and their persistent role in the culture of the Okavango Delta.

The companion short films helped broaden the reach of *NKASHI* to new audiences through diversified channels in Botswana and beyond. Drawing on original and never-before-seen footage from *NKASHI*, as well as scenes from the film, the short films help maximize the impact of the film's assets and relationships while creating evergreen content that will outlive the film's active campaign.



THE MUSIC OF NKASHI

THE MUSIC OF NKASHI is a 7.5-minute short film that gives an intimate, behind the scenes look at the pan-African Composers Lab. Bringing musicians from across the continent together with traditional instruments and sound, the lab created two original tracks featured in *NKASHI'S* award-winning soundtrack.

The companion film was produced by the Batswana crew behind *NKASHI*, with post-production taking place in both Africa and North America.

THE MUSIC OF NKASHI continues to be used by NEWF as part of their education and incubator programs for emerging filmmakers and media professionals. Additionally, it has been featured by the National Geographic Impact Story Lab in programs around the world as an example of inclusive storytelling and community-based production.





MOKORO wa OKAVANGO

MOKORO wa OKAVANGO is a 15-minute documentary that explores both traditional and modernized methods of building mekoro and the evolving role of mekoro in life, science, and tourism across the Delta.

In the film, Ngoma Ketshwailwe shares a lifetime of experience keeping ancient traditions alive as he transforms the perfect tree into a traditional canoe over many weeks through techniques honed across centuries.

In Maun, Galerone Pitsela makes mekoro from the most commonly used material today—fiberglass, which presents a durable and environmentally-friendly alternative to native wood. Meanwhile, National Geographic Explorer Steve Boyes explores the mokoro of tomorrow, testing prototypes made of recycled plastic.

The film began broadcast on Botswana television in March 2025, engaging national audiences in educational content about rural culture and conservation. It continues to be available on YouTube and is featured at the Nkashi Knowledge Center in Maun, Botswana.

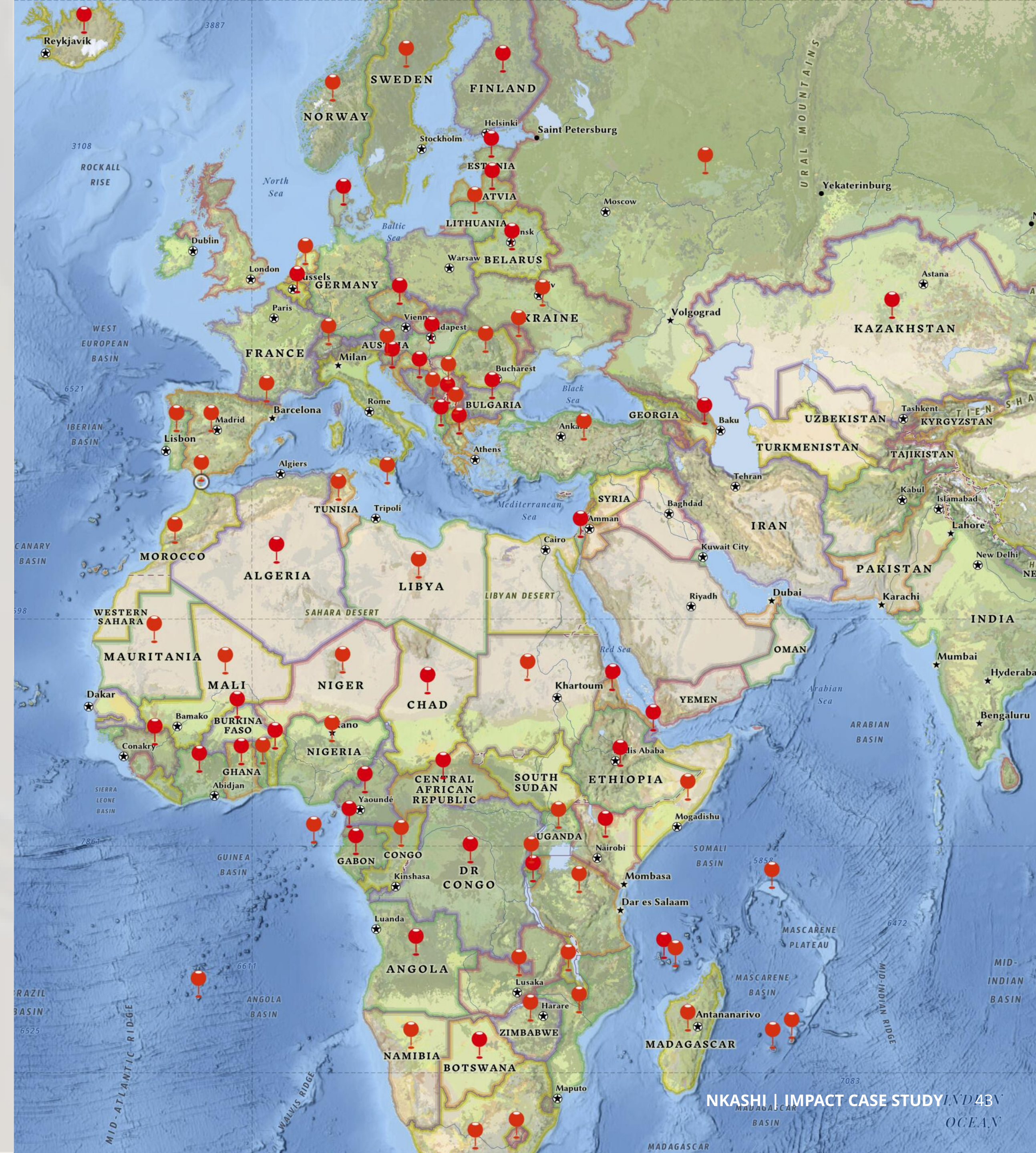


DISTRIBUTION

The reach of *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO* to regional audiences across the African continent first and foremost, presented in the Setswana language (with foreign-language subtitles as needed), was a strategic departure from traditional broadcasting which often imports African stories to the West while being inaccessible to the communities featured in the program.

The film had its world premieres in March 2023 with two live events—one in Maun and another in the capital city of Gaborone—followed immediately by its broadcast premiere on Botswana Television (BTV). The National Geographic Society provided an ongoing non-exclusive, unlimited, free license for BTV to broadcast the film. In May 2023, the Nkashi Trust brought the film to 13 villages throughout the Delta as part of a community roadshow, reaching more than 4,000 people, and that June the film was broadcast in more than 100 countries throughout Africa, Europe, and the Middle East (*right*) via Nat Geo Wild.

In 2024, *NKASHI* premiered on D+ in Africa, reaching another 2+ million viewers, and ultimately was published on YouTube, where it is freely available around the world.



THE IMPACT



IMPACT-LED STORYTELLING

The National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab curates stories with, and about, Explorers around the world to create meaningful, measurable impact. Every project begins with identifying targeted real-world outcomes. ISL then reverse-engineers the most effective story to facilitate the project's goals, resulting in impact-led storytelling that is the "North Star" of every Impact Story Lab project.

For *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO*, the Impact Story Lab collaborated with the Nkashi Trust to launch a comprehensive impact campaign aimed at not only disseminating *NKASHI*, but also fostering connection through community collaboration, sparking action inspired by conservation and Indigenous knowledge, and catalyzing change within both local and national communities.



"This documentary and all the work that is going on behind the scenes through Okavango Eternal provides vital steps toward sharing the importance of the work that is being done to protect the Delta."

His Excellency, President Mokgweetsi Masisi



CAMPAIGN GOALS & KEY OUTCOMES

IMPACT GOAL #1

Strengthen pride in community traditions in order to preserve Indigenous knowledge and the Okavango Delta for future generations.

The pre and post film surveys conducted alongside the *NKASHI* roadshow and during the 2023 Nkashi Classic race clearly demonstrate community pride and interest in indigenous knowledge.

IMPACT GOAL #2

Raise awareness about the sustainable livelihoods and benefits that maintaining traditional knowledge brings to communities in order to secure a prosperous future for the Okavango Delta and the people who live there.

Distribution of *NKASHI* on Disney+ across Africa, along with distribution of the mokoro companion film on television and via the Nkashi Knowledge Center, has raised awareness across the region.

IMPACT GOAL #3

Advance the field of impact storytelling by conducting original research, hosting workshops for the global storytelling community, and developing and implementing more inclusive storytelling practices.

To achieve its target outcomes, *NKASHI* encompassed a range of activities, including community screenings, both local and international premieres, capacity development programs tailored to uplift local talent, the esteemed Nkashi Classic event, and various other engaging initiatives. A comprehensive survey (see Appendix) collected data points and helped inform industry learnings.

SUPPORTING GOAL

Inspire more people to attend the 2023 Nkashi Classic event in order to raise awareness about the benefits of using mekoro and other traditional practices, educate people about the opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, and celebrate community pride.

The documentary film and surveys were well received across the Okavango Delta, with survey results suggesting interest in mekoro is thriving, along with race attendance.

NKASHI: IMPACT MAPPED FROM START TO FINISH



PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING

NKASHI was a project developed in and with the community it represents. It was designed from the ground up as a collaboration between the Impact Story Lab and NGS Explorers to tell the story of the Okavango Delta—both human and wild.



COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION

The film was produced by an international team comprised of more than 50% Batswana filmmakers. Local collaboration was essential to authentic storytelling in the Setswana language designed to engage local audiences.



ENGAGING NARRATIVES

NKASHI is presented in the style of an engaging sports documentary, following the lives of different race competitors as they prepare for the Nkashi Classic. This narrative approach was essential for broadening engagement beyond traditional conservation audiences.



INTERSECTIONAL CAMPAIGN

The film's impact campaign was scaled to reach and engage very different audiences. The regional roadshow ensured communities across Botswana had access to the film, while high level premieres and broadcasts across Africa reached policymakers as well as public audiences beyond the Delta.



LONG-TAIL IMPACTS & EVALUATION

NKASHI was designed to have impact far beyond the film itself, elevating community partners and efforts, and creating new pathways for collaboration. An Impact Report, as well as the more thorough Case Study, provide replicable insights for filmmakers and impact professionals.

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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Local screenings with pre+post film surveys collected valuable insights.

As part of the efforts to distribute the film to its intended audience, the Nkashi Trust led a roadshow to 13 communities within the Okavango Delta (Shakawe, Gudigwa, Beetsha, Eretsha, Seronga, Gonutsoga, Ikoga, Etsha 13, Etsha 6, Jao, Gumare, Morutsha, and Xaxaba).

The roadshow, hosted by Explorers Thalefang Charles, Gobonamang “GB” Kgetho, and Tumeletso “Water” Setlabosha, included a mobile outdoor cinema, where community members could come to a free screening of *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO*. The roadshow also included performances by three local musicians who worked on the film’s score: Thato Kavinja (aka Koolkat Motyiko), Gaekgone “Ms Gee” Lesego and Bogosi “Prince B” Tshekiso.

It is estimated that approximately 4,500 people attended the screenings. Through this roadshow, the film returned to the people of the river, giving those who use mekoro daily an opportunity to watch a story celebrating their culture and traditions.



"I feel so strong to see our culture being appreciated on the international stage through this documentary."

*Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho,
Nat Geo Explorer & Nkashi Classic Competitor*

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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Twin premieres in Botswana reached the country's President and First Lady.



Two premieres were hosted in Botswana, graced by esteemed guests such as the President and the First Lady, among other key audience members. These premieres served as pivotal moments, uniting leaders and community members alike to witness the power of storytelling in igniting change. The presence of such influential figures underscored the significance of shared missions and highlighted the collective commitment to safeguarding natural heritage and fostering a culture of conservation within Botswana and beyond. During the premiere, His Excellency, President Mokgweetsi Masisi said the documentary *“signals the beginning of efforts to conserve the country’s beautiful natural landscape.”*

He also said the documentary and all the work that is going on behind the scenes through Okavango Eternal, *“provide vital steps towards sharing the importance of the work that is being done to protect the Delta, giving a glimpse into its beauty and the resilience as well as the ingenuity of its people.”* He added that the film is another way of celebrating the country’s cultural heritage.

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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Professional development took the film's impact beyond production.

Many Batswana individuals played instrumental roles in bringing the film to life, occupying key positions ranging from field production to musical composition.

In an ongoing commitment to nurturing local talent and fostering inclusivity in documentaries, the Impact Story Lab led a 3-day workshop in Maun for 18 Batswana storytellers, which included hands-on REDucation sessions led by RED Digital Cinema instructors.

Moreover, the ongoing commitment to nurturing local talent and enhancing their capabilities extended beyond film production. This dedication resulted in a survey enumerator—who made invaluable contributions to the impact team's data collection efforts—being offered a full-time position at the Nkashi Trust.



"The knowledge and skills imparted during the sessions have not only enriched my understanding of storytelling, but have also elevated my abilities as a filmmaker."

Workshop participant, Maun

"My shared experience as a filmmaker with other local creatives from all parts of the country enlightened me more on how we should tell our African stories."

Workshop participant, Maun

My experience as an enumerator provided me with valuable insights that prepared me for the opportunity of a permanent role at Nkashi Trust. I am grateful for the growth opportunities and proud to be a part of a team dedicated to making a positive impact in our community."

Jimmy Moyevu, Field Coordinator, Community Development at Nkashi Trust

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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A post-pandemic return to the annual race brought renewed interest.

The Nkashi Classic aims to create awareness of the importance of the Okavango River System, the community it supports, and the power that it holds to effect positive change for future generations. Two events took place in 2018 and 2019 before having to be paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The race returned in 2022 (where the movie was filmed) and 2023 (where some surveys were taken), and local interest in the event continues to grow.

NKASHI honors the contribution of traditional and local knowledge to science, conservation, and alternative enterprise opportunities. Thanks to the roadshow and premieres held in Botswana, the 2023 Nkashi Classic saw a 157% increase in attendance, and film viewers surveyed at the race reported very positive feedback.



"During the competition, there are other aspects apart from mekoro. The event enlightens adults about nature, the Delta, and the wild in general."

Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho, Nat Geo Explorer & Nkashi Classic Competitor

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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Local knowledge and development will be sustained into the future.



To sustain the dissemination of knowledge about the Delta, traditional practices, conservation, and research, the Nkashi Trust established centers as hubs of inspiration for local community capacity building and training. These centers serve as incubators for small businesses, sources of inspiration for visitors, and platforms for co-creating solutions.

Leveraging these spaces, the film and impact team enhanced the capacity of survey enumerators, conducted workshops, and fostered collaboration with local talent. The center in Maun hosted a regional press event during the local film premiere, and centers across the Delta continue to offer *NKASHI*, as well as the companion documentary *MEKORO wa OKAVANGO*, for residents and visitors.



CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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Traditional practices facilitate scientific research and wildlife conservation.

Since its founding by National Geographic Explorer and conservation biologist Steve Boyes in 2015, the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project has been surveying and collecting scientific data on the river system and working with local communities and governments to secure permanent, sustainable protection for the greater Okavango Watershed.

The film contributed to showing the local communities the scientific work being done to protect the Delta and how their traditional knowledge highly contributes to navigating waterways and collecting data.



"Traditional knowledge has guided our scientific research since the beginning. Any time we've documented a new species, or uncovered a source lake that feeds the Okavango Delta, a community member has shown us the way with the mokoro and nkashi. The nkashi is truly the symbol of forward motion, and that includes propelling scientific research that plays a vital role in protecting this landscape."

Steve Boyes, PhD, Conservationist, National Geographic Explorer, & Executive Producer

CAMPAIGN OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ROADSHOWS	LOCAL PREMIERES	CAPACITY BUILDING	NKASHI CLASSIC	NKASHI KNOWLEDGE CENTER	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS	FURTHER IMPACT
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The project's impact has been felt beyond the film and campaign.

Beyond the scope of the impact campaign, the film facilitated additional outcomes that ensure long-tail impacts beyond the campaign window.

While the film shines a spotlight on the ecological significance of the Okavango Delta for global audiences, the campaign helped elevate the international appeal of the Delta for government officials and decision-makers across Botswana. This increased issue literacy—alongside the critical work the Okavango Wilderness Project is doing to protect the greater Okavango watershed—helps ensure ongoing prioritization of nature and traditional culture by elected officials.

Finally, during the filmmaking process, contributors Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho and prominent mokoro poler "Mr. Water" were recognized as National Geographic Explorers. Through the Explorers program, these important local stakeholders will continue to have access to professional development and networking for leveraging the power of conservation storytelling.



THE IMPACT

ROADSHOW SURVEY

In addition to the featured campaign highlights, the film worked with local partners to conduct pre and post-film surveys at multiple screenings across Botswana.

The survey results provided crucial feedback on the impacts of a project deeply intertwined with local culture and language, showing how the film and campaign increased local pride and interest in traditional practices, particularly among women.



Increased pride in community traditions showcased in the film.

"I have learned to preserve the culture and feel proud about it."

- Male, 28, Maun

Enhanced understanding of the advantages of employing mekoro and other traditional methods to foster sustainable livelihoods and conserve the Delta.

"I learned that mokoro can be used as a source of income and that it is important to conserve our traditional knowledge in the Delta."

- Male, 52, Maun

Increased understanding of the factors that contribute to the stewardship of the Delta.

"For someone to know how to conserve the Delta, they must have traditional knowledge."

- Female, 30, Maun

68% of women feel inspired to learn poling and utilize mekoro as a means to establish sustainable livelihoods.

"I am interested in learning to use a mokoro because of the women who were among the polers in the film."

- Female, 37, Maun

Shift in attitudes attributed to inclusive storytelling which contributed to establishing connections with the film characters and community traditions.

"The characters are interesting and I love that it showed our cultural beliefs and traditions. It can also act as one of the things young people can look up to when elders are gone."

- Male, 28, Maun



SURVEY DATA HIGHLIGHTS

72 % of those surveyed indicated a belief that traditional knowledge and the conservation of the delta are interconnected. This was a notable increase over the pre-screening data in which only **14%** of respondents mentioned traditional knowledge and conservation of the Delta.

68 % of women surveyed felt inspired by the characters of the film to explore poling.

45 % of viewers surveyed recognize the importance of the Nkashi Classic in reinforcing traditions, showcasing cultural skills, promoting local tourism, and raising awareness of the Okavango Delta.

77 % of those surveyed had positive perceptions towards mekoro (in opposition to engine boats).

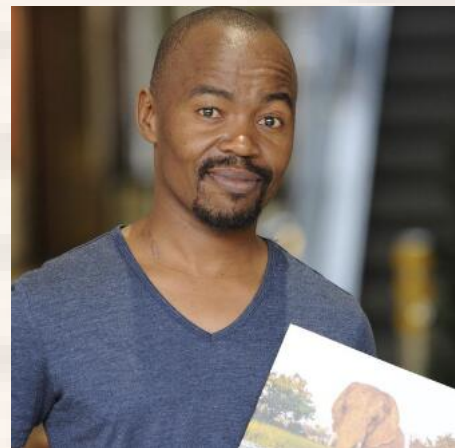
56 % of those surveyed viewed the film at a community screening, the majority of which were in rural communities.

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		
EVENTS										
		MAY 2022 NKASHI CLASSIC 2022 Filming takes place	SEP 2022 COMPOSER LAB PERFORMANCE Composer Lab performs at Jackson WILD	MAR 2023 GB Kgetho and "Mr. Water" announced as Nat Geo Explorers		AUG 2023 NKASHI CLASSIC 2023 Film screening and surveys				
THE FILM										
FEB 2021 DEVELOPMENT/ PRE-PRODUCTION BEGINS	JUN 2021 PRODUCTION BEGINS	JUN 2022 POST-PRODUCTION BEGINS		MAR 2023 BOTSWANA & US PREMIERES Maun , Mar 7 Gaborone , Mar 9 BTV , Mar 9 NatGeo Wild Africa , Jun 24 DCEFF , Mar 20		FEB 2024 DISNEY+ AFRICA PREMIERE		JUN 2024 YOUTUBE PREMIERE Feature-length film available online world-wide		
IMPACT CAMPAIGN										
			FEB 2023 ISL WORKSHOPS Trainings for local filmmakers	MAY 2023 ROADSHOW W/ PRE-FILM SURVEYS Screenings in rural communities		AUG-SEP 2023 PRE & POST FILM SURVEYS Maun & Nkashi Classic			MAR 2025 MOKORO SHORT FILM BROADCAST Airs on Botswana Television	DEC 2025 MUSIC OF NKASHI and Soundtrack NGP YouTube

MEET THE EXPLORERS

The Impact Story Lab worked closely with four National Geographic Explorers to meaningfully deliver the documentary film and Impact Campaign to both African and global audiences.



Thalefang Charles: Renowned photographer and travel writer from Botswana who has traveled extensively throughout Botswana and Africa. A journalist by trade, he works for local media houses writing content. Charles has joined the team on expeditions taking him to the source waters of the Okavango and through the beautiful Delta.



Koketso "Koki" Mookodi: Conservationist, educator, community mentor, and managing director for Nkashi Trust. A citizen of Botswana, she works closely with communities in the Okavango Delta to educate and empower them on issues of conservation and sustainability.



Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho: The main protagonist of *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO*, and head mokoro poler for the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project, which is locally implemented by the Nkashi Trust. GB has crossed the Okavango Delta every year since 2010, and all the large rivers in Angola and Namibia, alongside National Geographic Explorer Steve Boyes.



Tumeletso Setlabosha "Mr. Water": Wilderness guide in the Okavango Delta for 22 years, and has been with the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project (NGOWP), since the beginning. He was born in the Delta and deeply understands the complexity of the river system. His traditional knowledge has been instrumental in strengthening and facilitating NGOWP's scientific work, including biodiversity surveys, species identification, and its annual Delta crossing.





THE IMPACT TEAM



Sarah Joseph, *Director of Impact, Impact Story Lab*

As Director of Impact for the National Geographic Society Impact Story Lab, Sarah helps tell inspirational stories that produce tangible results, from fundraising to education to policy change. She is passionate about elevating diverse perspectives in media and creating a more inclusive industry through mentoring and training others.



Mireia Villalonga, *Conservation Impact & Evaluation Lead*

Mireia works at the intersection of conservation, storytelling, and behavioral science, collaborating with conservation organizations, communities, and documentary teams to drive impactful outcomes. With experience across Eastern and Southern Africa, she uses social science insights and strategic storytelling to address conservation challenges and foster lasting connections between people and landscapes. She prioritizes collaboration with local communities, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and supporting local teams through capacity-building in social science, impact evaluation, research, and strategic impact thinking.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

Lisl Bennet

*Impact Director
Wild Bird Trust*

Manga Motho

*Community Coordinator
Nkashi Trust*

Karabo Moilwa

Tjipo Keaikitse

*Translators & Focus Group
Discussion Facilitators
Nkashi Trust*

Poloko Kefithile

*Survey Translator
Independent Consultant*

Khumo Samati

Goitseone Motonto

Thobo Ketikilwe

Otlhe Moruti

Jimmy Moyevu

Tlanelo Mpho

Keipele Moswweu

Tshegofatso Lekolwane

Nomsa Meedza

Survey Enumerators

Ru Mahoney

Samantha Adler

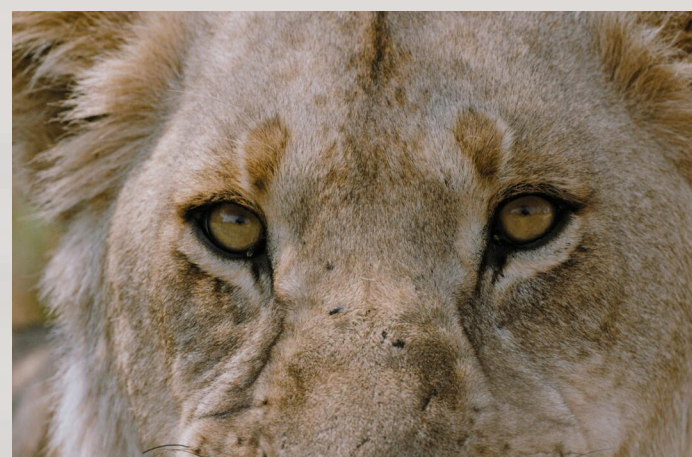
NGS Impact Consultants

PARTNERS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



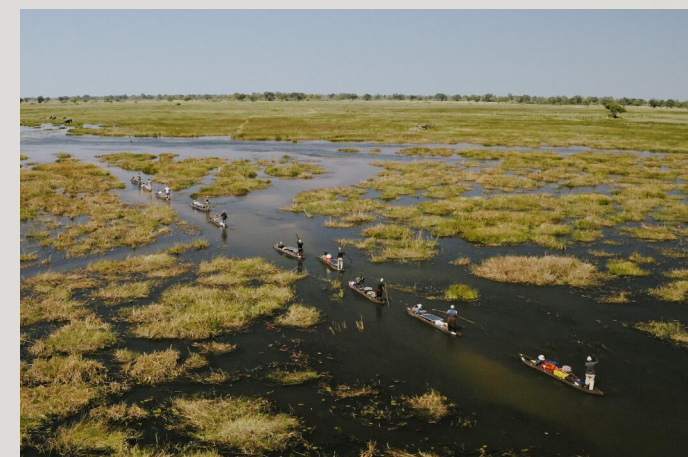
IMPACT STORY LAB

The Impact Story Lab is an award-winning creative unit that combines world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science to drive positive change for our Explorers. Our interdisciplinary team collaborates with National Geographic Explorers to produce film, video, audio, photographs, virtual and augmented reality experiences, and other media to help accomplish the goals of their programs. We also conduct research, publish our findings, and host workshops to advance the field of impact storytelling. The Impact Story Lab builds on National Geographic's legacy as a global leader in influential storytelling and furthers our mission of illuminating and protecting the wonder of our world.



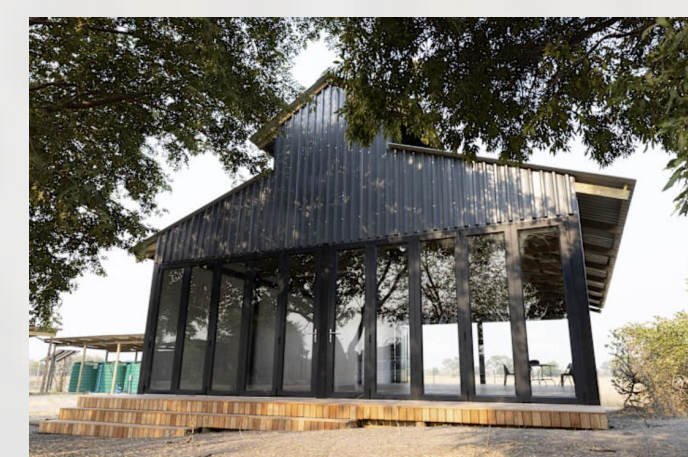
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The National Geographic Society is a global nonprofit organization that uses the power of science, exploration, education and storytelling to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. Since 1888, National Geographic has pushed the boundaries of exploration, investing in bold people and transformative ideas, providing more than 15,000 grants for work across all seven continents, reaching 3 million students each year through education offerings, and engaging audiences around the globe through signature experiences, stories, and content.



OKAVANGO WILDERNESS PROJECT

Since its founding by National Geographic Explorer and conservation biologist Steve Boyes in 2015, the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project has been surveying and collecting scientific data on the river system and working with local communities; NGOs; and the governments of Angola, Namibia, and Botswana to secure permanent, sustainable protection for the greater Okavango Watershed. Steve is now joined by an expanding group of scientists, researchers and storytellers, including five other Explorers, and the support of the Okavango Eternal partnership to further their shared vision.



NKASHI TRUST

The Nkashi Trust—formerly called the Botswana Wild Bird Trust—was founded in 2016 with the mission to conserve wild birds and their habitat through exploration, research and monitoring, conservation action, partnerships, awareness-raising, and support for local citizen-led organisations. Research expeditions undertaken have always included baYei guides and mekoro as a means to explore the narrow and winding waterways of the Delta. The footprint we leave on the environments we traverse, as well as what we leave on the world as a whole, governs our decisions on everything we do, including selecting a self-propelled mode of transport.



OKAVANGO ETERNAL

The Okavango Wilderness Project is working in partnership with De Beers on Okavango Eternal—a project to elevate community, government, and NGO efforts to safeguard the entire Okavango Basin.

While the Okavango Delta is protected within Botswana, the critical headwaters that supply it through Angola and Namibia are not, putting the future of people and wildlife living there at risk. De Beers has joined National Geographic to help with one of the biggest conservation challenges in Africa: preserving the source waters of the Delta and the lives they support. Together, they work with local communities to protect wildlife and build sustainable livelihoods across the region.



AFRICA REFOCUSED

While African people have been sharing stories about Africa's wildlife and natural heritage for centuries, the dominant storytellers in global conservation about Africa's environment have historically been people who are not native to Africa. National Geographic Explorers Noel Kok and Pragna Parsotam-Kok created Nature, Environment and Wildlife Filmmakers (NEWF) to refocus these stories—to ensure the stories of Africa are told by and from the perspective of African people. The Africa Refocused program expands the reach and impact that Noel and Pragna have achieved through NEWF to further train and elevate African nature, environment, and wildlife storytellers.

IMAGE CREDITS

All images provided by **the crew** of *NKASHI: RACE FOR THE OKAVANGO* and **Karabo LaBronpeter Moilwa** for the Nkashi Trust, except for the following:

- Studio Headshots of National Geographic staff by **Mark Thiessen**
- Image of Steve Boyes (pg 71) by **Randall Scott**
- Images pg 87 (L to R) by **Karabo LaBronpeter Moilwa, Jo Munnik, and Anthony Ochieng Onyango**
- Image (*right*) pg 88 by **Moses Maruping**
- Artwork by **Kuru Art Project**
- Poster and cover designs by **Tyler Dinley**



APPENDIX

IMPACT METHODOLOGY



IMPACT GOALS

Building on the Nkashi Trust's long-term collaboration with Okavango Delta communities since 2016—and informed by insights from National Geographic Society Explorers (Thalefang Charles, Koketso "Koki" Mookodi, Gobonamang "GB" Kgetho, and Steve Boyes)—the team identified key impact goals to advance their work and that of the Impact Story Lab.

Each impact goal included strategic communication objectives, outlining key messages used in storytelling as both impact indicators and pathways to addressing core challenges. These objectives helped shape a behavioral goal—what local communities in the Okavango Delta should feel, think, or do to achieve the intended impact.



GOAL AREA

SHORT-TERM KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES

from film exposure alone

BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

IMPACT CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Strengthen pride in traditional ecological knowledge and culture

- 1.1. Local communities understand that preserving Indigenous knowledge will increase community pride.
- 1.2 Local communities understand that their traditional practices are good for the environment and future generations.
- 1.3 Local communities understand that being a poler carries important skills for the community that both men and women can take on.

Communities celebrate, share and practice traditional knowledge and identity.

Increased cultural pride empowers communities to protect the Okavango Delta for future generations.

2. Raise awareness and inspire engagement in traditional livelihoods (e.g. poling, crafts)

- 2.1 Local communities understand that the mokoro polers know the waterways better than any technology and are helpful to conservation efforts and scientific research, which helps build an income.
- 2.2 Local communities understand that learning to pole will benefit them in the future, securing sustainable livelihoods and natural resources.
- 2.3 Local communities understand that their traditional crafts can be sold to tourists (basket weaving, wood carvings, traditional paintings, etc).

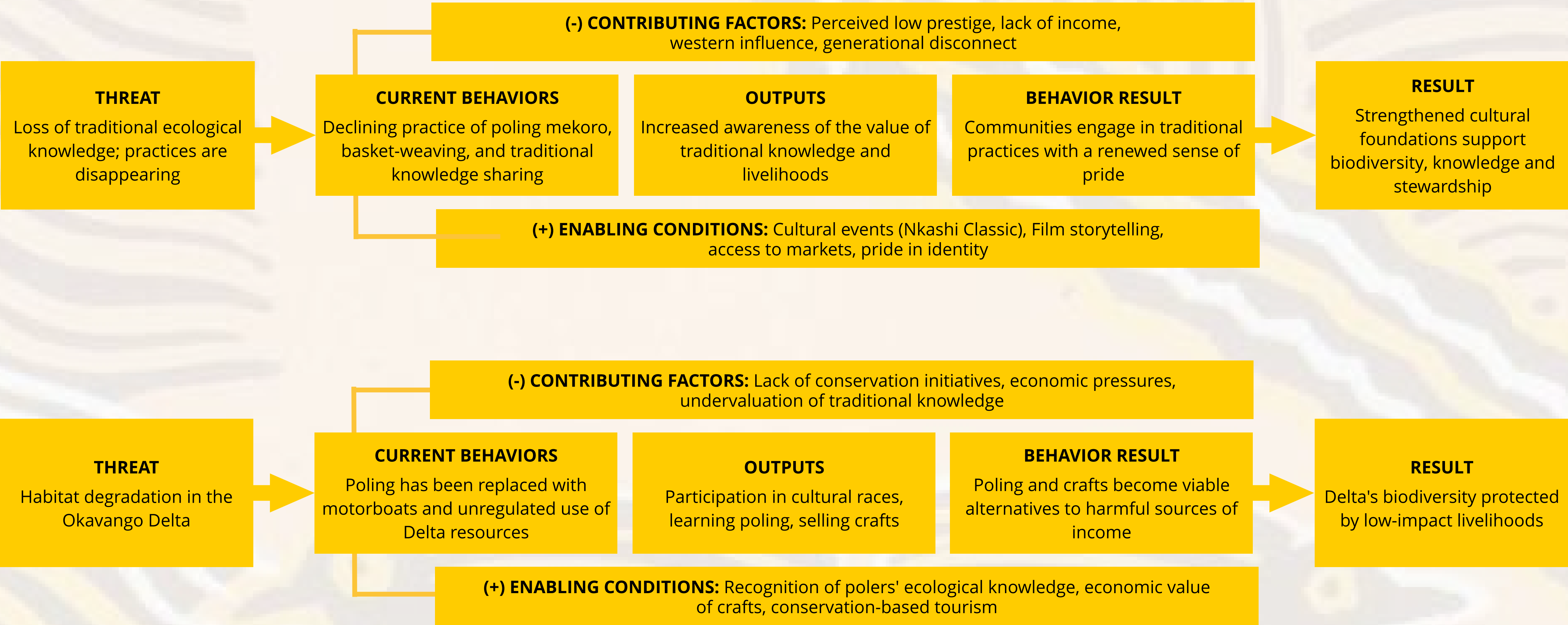
Communities engage in poling and traditional craft-making for income and conservation.

Sustainable livelihoods tied to heritage promote environmental stewardship.

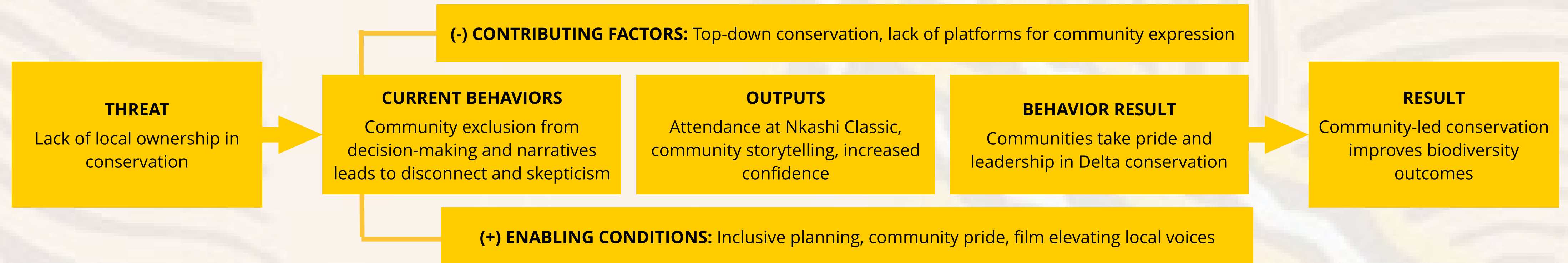
GOAL AREA	SHORT-TERM KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES <i>from film exposure alone</i>	BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES	IMPACT CONTRIBUTIONS
3. Advance the field of impact storytelling by strengthening community agency and participation in storytelling	3.1. Local communities experience positive on-screen representation of their culture, identity, and stories. 3.2 Local communities learn that films can be created in their language and shown even in remote locations, showing that media is accessible and can help preserve culture. 3.3 Youth and young professionals understand that there are opportunities to participate in storytelling careers in Botswana.	Communities continue to engage with locally produced media that benefits their culture and traditions.	More media production is led within Botswana, increasing creative livelihoods and reinforcing community pride through authentic on-screen representation.
Supporting Goal: Inspire attendance at the 2023 Nkashi Classic	S.1 Local communities are aware of 2023 Nkashi Classic. S.2 Local communities understand that attending the Nkashi Classic helps maintain their cultural identity and traditions, which can lead to sustainable livelihoods. S.3. Local communities feel confident that attending the race helps showcase to the world their exceptional poling skills, which generates a sense of pride.	Men and women attend the Nkashi Classic as a celebration of culture and identity.	Community participation reinforces cultural resilience and visibility to wider audiences.

THEORY OF CHANGE & ASSUMPTIONS

APPENDIX



THEORY OF CHANGE & ASSUMPTIONS



ASSUMPTIONS

- Cultural pride leads to increased motivation to preserve traditions.
- Visibility of tradition, like the Nkashi Classic, creates positive feedback loops.
- Economic incentives reinforce behavior change (poling, crafting, etc).

HOW THE FILM SUPPORTS THE THEORY OF CHANGE

APPENDIX

Contributing Factors

- Counters cultural erosion by elevating the voices of elders, women, and youth.
- Challenges the notion that tradition is outdated by making it aspirational and beautiful.
- Highlights environmental changes and community insights, giving local context and urgency.

Enabling Conditions

- Provides a shared narrative around which community members can rally.
- Acts as an accessible educational tool in areas where formal resources are limited.
- Builds cultural pride by showing local people as experts, heroes, and storytellers.

Outputs

- Sparks conversations, workshops, school programs, and community screenings.
- Promotes the Nkashi Classic as more than a race - as a symbol of resilience and tradition.
- Encourages intergenerational dialogue and documentation of knowledge.

Behavior Result

- Increases confidence in cultural practices as viable and respectable livelihoods.
- Inspires men and women to pick up the nkashi or weaving needing with purpose.
- Changes what people aspire to: from outside jobs to skilled, meaningful local traditions.
- Humanizes conservation: no longer "them protecting the environment" but "us protecting who we are."
- Reduces disconnect between conservation and culture by showing them as intertwined.

Result

- Empowers community-led stewardship of the Okavango Delta.
- Strengthens social cohesion, which is a predictor of long-term conservation success.
- Drives behavioral shifts that are culturally embedded and environmentally beneficial.



ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

To measure the impact of the film and contribute to advancing the field of impact storytelling, the Impact Story Lab designed surveys to capture attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, as well as how the film contributed to influencing them. The surveys allowed the Impact Story Lab to:

- Build a better understanding of the environment.
- Inform which engagement and content could be most effective.
- Establish a baseline to know whether impact goals have been achieved.
- Distinguish general population patterns from individual's perspectives.
- Compare the perspectives and effects of an intervention on different sets of individuals.

The team conducted surveys with 249 community members throughout the Delta, as well as focus group discussions. The surveys were split into two phases: Phase 1 (prior to film screenings) and Phase 2 (post-film screenings).



SURVEY QUESTIONS

PRE-SURVEY

The pre-film questionnaire was designed to explore key unknowns, such as:

- Do communities take pride in maintaining their traditions?
- Are there gender biases associated with poling skills prior to watching the film?

In consultation with Nkashi Trust, eight questions were drafted to assess the status of impact goals.

POST-SURVEY

The post-film questionnaire was created by comparing pre-film responses with the film's messages and communication goals. This helped identify key attitude and perception shifts. In consultation with the Nkashi Trust, ten key questions were chosen to assess the film's impact on attitude shifts and progress toward the goals.

Questions

Training

Enumerators - students and early-career professionals - were trained to conduct surveys and focus group discussions, take notes, record sessions as needed, and mitigate biases, including social desirability, demand, neutral responses, voluntary, and cognitive dissonance.

Sample

Survey: A random stratified sample of 136 individuals from different Okavango Delta communities was selected, ensuring gender and demographic representation across age groups (19 and under, 20-34, 35-44, and 45+) and geographic backgrounds (rural vs. urban).

Focus groups discussion: Participants were selected upon voluntary random invitation, with 5-10 individuals per group. To our knowledge, survey respondents did not participate in focus groups.

Survey: A random stratified sample of 113 individuals from different Okavango Delta communities was selected, ensuring gender and demographic representation across age groups (19 and under, 20-34, 35-44, and 45+) and geographic backgrounds (rural vs. urban).

Focus groups discussion: Two focus group discussions were conducted with 20 individuals—10 women in one group and 10 men in the other. Participants were selected upon voluntary random invitation. To our knowledge, survey respondents did not participate in focus groups.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

PRE-SURVEY

Survey: Surveys were conducted face-to-face, with respondents selected as they entered screenings.

- Phase 1: Conducted in three remote communities (Seronga, Ikoga, and Morutsha) during the film roadshow.
- Phase 2: Conducted in Maun a few months later to include more urban representation.

Focus group discussion: Community coordinators selected and gathered participants for face-to-face discussions in Seronga, Ikoga, and Morutsha.

POST-SURVEY

Survey: Surveys in Maun were conducted face-to-face with respondents selected at the event gate, while respondents in rural communities were gathered by community coordinators.

Phase 1: Conducted in Maun during the Nkashi Classic.

Phase 2: Additional surveys conducted in rural communities (Beetsha, Eretsha, Gudigwa, Gunotsoga, and Seronga) to enhance representation.

Focus group discussion: Community coordinators selected and gathered participants for face-to-face discussions in Maun.

Data Collection

Analysis

To enhance validity and credibility while mitigating biases, three triangulation methods were used:

- Data triangulation: collected data from different times, locations, and demographics
- Investigator triangulation: multiple enumerators supported data collection
- Methodological triangulation: combined surveys, focus groups, and observations

Furthermore, the main research repeatedly moved between reading, coding (generating new codes and categories as needed), reflection, and rereading.

Ethics

All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. Verbal consent was obtained prior to any data collection. Participants were assured their responses would remain confidential and used solely for research and impact evaluation purposes. No personally identifiable information was collected. Special care was taken to create a respectful, inclusive, and culturally appropriate environment, with sensitivity to local customs and traditions. Enumerators were trained to uphold ethical standards and mitigate any form of coercion, bias or discomfort during data collection.

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 1

Do you know how to attend and register (if you wish to participate) in the Nkashi Classic?

SUMMARY

Young men and woman across all locations (Seronga, Ikoga, and Morutsha) demonstrated familiarity with the race registration process. However, older individuals—both men and women—faced challenges in understanding the procedure, leading to fewer accurate responses from this group.

DATA EXCERPTS

"If you want to participate, you bring your national identity card, make sure you are over 18 years old, and know how to row a traditional oar." - Female, 31 Seronga

"No, I don't know. But I would like to learn so I can register next time." - Male, 45 Maun

QUESTION 2

Why do you think some people want to participate and attend the Nkashi Classic?

Winning the prize money was the most common motivation cited by respondents across all locations. However, in contrast to respondents from Seronga, Maun, and Morutsha, respondents from Ikoga appeared more attuned to their cultural traditions. More participants from this community highlighted the celebration of heritage and the transfer of skills across generations as key benefits of the race.

Beyond financial incentive, respondents—regardless of age or gender—also cited "learning," "entertainment," (especially noted by Maun respondents, likely influenced by their attendance to the Nkashi Classic) and "recognition" as additional motivators.

"They participate to win the prize [money] so they can cover basic needs." - Male, 28 Seronga

"We come to showcase the skills our grandfathers gave us. They long taught us how to use the nkashi." - Male, 46 Ikoga

"It allows us to benchmark. It also allows us to learn about the Nkashi Classic competition." - Male, 35 Seronga

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 3

When you think about your community traditions, what emotions and feelings do you have towards them?

SUMMARY

All respondents expressed feelings of pride, happiness, and joy toward their community traditions. These sentiments were shaped by their appreciation for the abundant natural resources of the Okavango Delta, its peaceful environment, and the exposure their unique culture provides to the broader country and world.

The sense of pride and joy was consistent across locations, genders, and age groups. However, a small number of respondents voiced concerns about the erosion of traditions.

While most respondents shared their response from a personal perspective, only a few recognized culture and Indigenous traditions as vital to sustaining livelihoods.

DATA EXCERPTS

"I appreciate my culture because I learned to use the natural resources found in my area." - Female, 18 Seronga

"I am very content because we live peacefully." - Male, 59 Morutsha

"I feel very happy because that's our way of life in this part of the country. Nkashi helps us put food on the table, take our children to school, and have a better source of income." - Male, 35 Seronga

"Our traditions are deteriorating. In the olden days, people lived on the island (inside the Delta) where they grew crops and fed on them. But because of failure to follow our Setswana traditional customs and beliefs, people ended up moving out of the island and settling along the Okavango River." - Male, 64 Seronga

"My desire is that we should continue to follow our culture and traditions." - Male, 38 Morutsha

"We should preserve our traditions in Botswana and we should also showcase our culture to the world so that we are able to live a better life." - Male, 29 Seronga

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 4

In your opinion, is there any activity you can do to contribute to the stewardship of the Delta and its protection for future generations?

SUMMARY

Opinions on traditional livelihood activities and stewardship varied across age groups. Most respondents, regardless of age, identified traditional livelihoods in the Delta, such as basket weaving, wood carving, fishing, and gathering waterlily tubers. However, few mentioned livelihoods directly contributing to the Delta's stewardship.

Among those who did mention stewardship activities—primarily young males—responses included reforestation, learning about natural resources, keeping surroundings litter-free, reporting poaching, reducing fish consumption, advocating for stronger law enforcement on Delta access, teaching younger generations about the Okavango Delta, and engaging in seasonal harvesting.

Respondents from Maun also referenced activities such as writing articles, creating documentaries, and educating children about the Delta's significance. Many recognized the importance of cultural events like the Nkashi Classic, likely influenced by the survey's location.

DATA EXCERPTS

"As Batswana, we make a living from weaving baskets and carving wooden boats. We sell the baskets to tourists." - Female, 30 Seronga

"Report everything: veld fires, poaching, and pollution of land and water." - Male, 19 Seronga

"Documentation of history through writing up some articles to preserve it for the future before it gets lost." - Male, 39 Maun

"I suggest the Nkashi Classic race should continue to be conducted as the young ones will get to learn the traditions where they get to participate too and encourage the use of mokoro to avoid using boats which use diesel." - Female, 37 Maun

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 4 cont'd

In your opinion, is there any activity you can do to contribute to the stewardship of the Delta and its protection for future generations?

SUMMARY

Interestingly, older men across locations expressed different perspectives, emphasizing the revival of "lost" cultural practices as a pathway to conservation and sustainability.

Overall, less than 10% of interviewees identified nkashi as a key activity for Delta stewardship, with most of these respondents coming from Ikoga.

DATA EXCERPTS

"To revive cultural practices that were based on sustainable harvesting so that plants and trees are not wiped out. So that habitats are not wiped out." - Male, 37 Seronga

"Use aloe plants to make fishing nets and ropes. Traditionally, we made them like that." - Male, 64 Seronga

"I would like to discourage people from cutting trees and burning the bush because we carve mekoro from them." - Female, 18 Ikoga

"Engaging in mekoro business." - Female, 38 Ikoga

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 5

How do you feel about women using a nkashi to engage in economic activities such as guiding?

SUMMARY

Most respondents expressed happiness at seeing women participate in poling mekoro, highlighting its empowering effect. Many saw the shift from women using mekoro for household chores to income-generating activities—such as guiding tourists—as beneficial for the community's well-being. However, fewer than 10% voiced strong opposition, primarily from Seronga.

Those opposed expressed concerns about women's capacity, strength, and entitlement to the task, citing perceived dangers.

DATA EXCERPTS

"I am happy because it is our culture and there is also women's representation. It shows their potential and encourages them not to rely on men. It also inspires their children to participate." - Female, 32 Seronga

"Happy to see women standing for themselves and appreciating the importance of nkashi in their lives." - Male, 35 Seronga

"We are not the same as men. We face various challenges, such as aquatic animals. We do not know how to protect ourselves against them." - Female, 27 Morutsha

I don't want women to participate in Nkashi. They don't know how to use it and they are not strong." - Male, 18 Seronga

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 6

In your opinion, are there any economic activities you can engage in to build a sustainable livelihood in the Delta?

SUMMARY

Across all locations, respondents shared similar perspectives on economic activities that support sustainable livelihoods across the Delta. Regardless of gender or age, traditional harvesting—such as collecting waterlily tubers, papyrus reed, thatch grass, and fishing—along with handicrafts like basket weaving and carving, emerged as the primary income-generating activities, mainly for selling to tourists.

Only a minority of young individuals and respondents from Maun provided additional insights, mentioning activities like photography, while a few older men mentioned the importance of storytelling, traditional instruments, songs, and dances.

Compared to other communities, Maun respondents were more likely to highlight the role of technology and media in economic opportunities.

In Morutsha, over 50% of respondents mentioned harvesting thatch grass and stressed the importance of sustainable harvesting methods.

Only respondents from Maun mentioned mokoro-based tourism as a sustainable livelihood opportunity.

DATA EXCERPTS

"We can weave baskets and sell them to tourists."
- Female, 59 Ikoga

"Photography and documentation." - Male, 16 Maun

"One can be a correspondent for outside media, sourcing information for them. You can also work as a local guide for international expeditions like National Geographic." - Male, 21 Maun

"I harvest thatch grass without burning it so it does not destroy its seed." - Female, 48 Morutsha

"Owning boats or mokoro and using them to transport people across the river and guide them around." - Male, 18 Maun

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 7

How do you feel about living within the Okavango Delta?

SUMMARY

Respondents expressed deep feelings of pride and happiness, drawn from various aspects of life in the Okavango Delta. Many highlighted the joy of coexisting with wildlife, the appreciation of natural resources that sustain their livelihoods, the economic opportunities from tourism, and the international recognition of the Delta. A shared sense of belonging and community unity was also evident.

Despite the overwhelming positive sentiment, some respondents voiced concerns. These included challenges in accessing basic needs and perceived difficulties of living in the Delta.

DATA EXCERPTS

"Living in the Delta is exciting because we learn a lot about how wild animals live and how we can coexist with them." - Female, 20 Seronga

"Honestly, we were not aware that the Okavango Delta could be this useful and important as we now see, but it's worth noting that the tourism industry helped us realize its value." - Male, 64 Seronga

"I feel happy because our Delta provides us with thatch grass, a variety of wild animals, and boats, which improve both our lives and the Delta itself." - Female, 24 Maun

"The Delta gives us everything we need to improve our lives." - Male, 21 Maun

"I am content, because I am able to row and canoe and harvest thatch grass." - Female, 31 Morutsha

"Life in the Delta is hard. Unless you have cash, it's difficult to access the basics." - Female, 32 Seronga

PRE-SURVEY

SURVEY QUESTION

QUESTION 8

What are your perceptions of the tourist industry? Do you feel like you have access to it?

SUMMARY

Overall, there is a positive sentiment towards tourism, with most respondents recognizing its beneficial impact on the economy and community development.

However, a small number of respondents, particularly from Seronga and Maun, expressed dissatisfaction with tourism. These individuals felt that the benefits were largely directed elsewhere.

While rural communities like Seronga, Ikoga, and Morutsha felt they could access the tourism market, by selling crafts and harvests, respondents from Maun (who preferred guiding tourists on mokoro trips) expressed a sense of exclusion.

Additional suggestions from respondents included:

DATA EXCERPTS

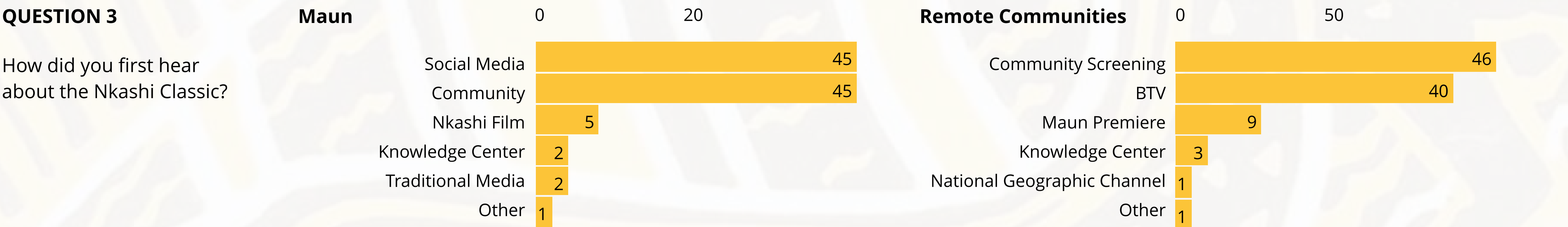
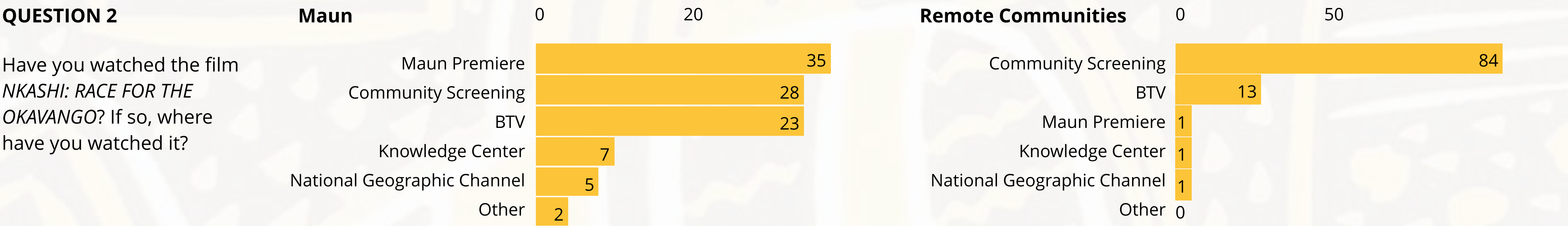
- "Helps conserve animals and natural resources."** - Female, 44 Seronga
- "Brings development, like clinics and schools."** - Female, (no age) Seronga
- "We can sell things to tourists."** - Male, 18 Seronga
- "I think tourism has changed our lives."** - Female, 23 Morutsha
- "The tourism industry should be protected at all costs so that it's not lost."** - Male, 42 Morutsha
- "We do not get anything here. All the developments are done in Gaborone city. It is difficult to construct a road for us, yet the government makes a lot of money from the Okavango Delta."** - Female, 36 Seronga
- "The process is quite expensive and mostly foreign-owned with only a few locals having partnerships with foreigners."** - Male, 39 Maun
- "More activities like the Nkashi Classic would help mark the Delta as a tourism destination."** - Male, 49 Seronga

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 1

Since most of the post-film surveys were done at the Nkashi Classic in Maun, this question was added to ensure a geographically diverse sample among respondents.

Where do you currently live?



POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 4	Maun	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Remote Communities	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
In your opinion, why do people want to participate in the Nkashi Classic? Could you give three reasons in order of importance?	Money	50%	20%	3%	Money	42%	36%	12%
	Enforce Culture & Traditions	17.5%	12.5%	14%	Enforce Culture & Traditions	8%	11%	5%
	Show Skills & Talent	15%	12.5%	20%	Show Skills & Talent	18%	20%	22%
	Entertainment	2.5%	25%	20%	Entertainment	5%	4%	26%
	Promote Local Tourism/Recognition of the Delta	5%	17.5%	17%	Promote Local Tourism/Recognition of the Delta	19%	14%	28%
	Sport & Competition	0%	5%	16%	Win	0%	7%	2%
	Other	10%	7.5%	10%	Other	8%	8%	5%

QUESTION 5

What are your main takeaways from the film? What have you learned?

Responses highlighted various key themes, with 6% mentioning human-wildlife coexistence and positive relationship with natural resources, 10% emphasizing community unity, and 20% recognizing the importance of culture and preserving traditional knowledge. Additionally, 25% of respondents acknowledged that women can also engage in poling, while 30% saw nkashi as a means to build a sustainable livelihood. Notably, in the baseline survey, 10% of respondents strongly opposed women's participation in poling activities.

Responses From Maun

Nkashi and livelihoods: The film deepened awareness of the connection between poling and income generation, reinforcing how mekoro can support sustainable livelihoods.

"I learned that mekoro can be used as a source of income and that it is important to conserve our traditional knowledge in the Delta." - Male, 52 Maun

"I realized that people can make money through mekoro and take tourists along." - Female, 45 Maun

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 5 cont'd

What are your main takeaways from the film?
What have you learned?

Culture, traditional knowledge, and the Delta: Many respondents felt a stronger sense of pride in their culture and a greater responsibility toward conservation and preserving traditional knowledge.

Women in poling: The film had a particularly powerful effect on women, empowering them to see poling as both an economic opportunity and a cultural tradition they can take part in.

Human-wildlife coexistence: The film reinforced the importance of living in harmony with wildlife and preserving natural resources for the long-term well-being of the Delta.

"I have learned that people have such a close connection with the Delta." - Female, 16 Maun

"I learned that women can also drive the mokoro. As a woman, I used to be scared of water, but now I feel I can take my chance and drive a mokoro." - Female, 20 Maun

"I have learned the women can also participate in local tourism with a nkashi." - Male, 47 Maun

"I am interested in learning nkashi because of the women who were among the polers in the film." - Female, 37 Maun

"I learned how wildlife lives and how to live with them."
- Female, 29 Maun

"Human-wildlife coexistence is the key to the preservation of the Okavango Delta ecosystem." - Female, 35 Maun

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 5 cont'd

What are your main takeaways from the film? What have you learned?

Like their urban counterparts, rural communities also highlighted learnings related to livelihoods and the inclusion of women. However, they added another layer: community unity and prosperity.

Responses From Rural Communities

Income and economic opportunities: The film shed light on how traditional knowledge and mekoro can create economic opportunities for rural communities.

Women in poling: Unlike in urban areas, there was no apparent stigma against women poling in urban areas. However, many were unaware that women could engage in poling for economic purposes. The film helped shift this perception, opening new possibilities for women.

Community unity and prosperity: Beyond individual opportunities, the film sparked a realization that unity within the Okavango Delta is key to preserving culture and ensuring sustainable livelihoods.

"I have learned that people can make money from poling as tour guides and it's important to promote or traditions to tourists visiting the Delta." - Male, 48 Jao

"I have learned that you can also use mekoro to transport tourists and make an income." - Female, 32 Beetsha

"It is very interesting to learn about the Okavango Delta. The Nkashi Classic can be a source of income. Women can also take part to show and stand for themselves." - Female, 19 Boro

"I have learned that even as women we can use the mokoro to guide tourists and make a living." - Female, 22 Eretsha

"The community needs to work together to achieve goals, as seen when they were traveling to Maun." - Male, 27 Seronga

"We should work together to keep this tradition for future generations." -- Female, 22 Shorobo

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 6

After watching the film, do you think you have a role to protect the Okavango Delta? If yes, what role is it? If no, would you want to have one?

In Maun, there was widespread acknowledgment of personal responsibility in preserving the Delta. Respondents identified several key roles they could play in conservation efforts, including:

- Picking up litter from the rivers
- Practicing seasonal and sustainable harvesting
- Raising awareness in their communities and schools
- Storytelling to pass down knowledge

Unlike more urban respondents, respondents from remote communities of the Okavango Delta have long integrated seasonal harvesting and fishing into their cultural practices. Many expressed pride in these traditions and identified additional conservation roles they could take on:

- Educating younger generations through school clubs
- Using a mokoro as an eco-friendly alternative to motorboats
- Keeping the environment clean, including removing litter

The responses indicate a growing awareness of the mokoro not just as a means of transportation, but as a tool for sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation.

"Making use of natural resources with care and not depleting them, as well as teaching people about fishing seasonally."

- Male, 52 Maun

"I would partake in educating people about the importance of protecting the Delta." - Female, 45 Maun

"To encourage other community members to conserve natural resources in the Delta." - Male, 47 Maun

"If I see someone littering, I will go and talk to them." - Female, 16 Maun

"To educate my community not to litter and to protect the water in the river." - Female, 25 Boro

"By conserving the tradition of the mokoro." - Female, 41 Seronga

"Use mekoro so you don't contaminate the water with motorboats." - Male, 36 Boro

"To educate youngsters on the importance of using and protecting natural resources around our area." - Male, 45 Jao

"Forming a conservation group in primary school that will promote conservation initiatives in the community." - Female, 34 Beetsha

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 7

What are your thoughts on traditional knowledge and the well-being/conservation of the Delta? Do you think they are connected or not connected? Why?

The majority of respondents in Maun recognized a deep connection between traditional knowledge and the conservation of the Okavango Delta, with many emphasizing that one could not exist without the other.

Others reflected on the wisdom passed down by their grandfathers, acknowledging their role in protecting the Delta and sustaining livelihoods.

Similarly, respondents from remote communities expressed a strong belief that preserving their culture directly contributes to the conservation of the Okavango Delta. They highlighted that the more their traditions are shared and understood, the greater the chances of safeguarding the Delta for future generations.

"For someone to know how to conserve the Delta, they must have traditional knowledge." - Female, 30 Maun

"Our grandfathers educated young generations about traditions and taking care of the Okavango." - Female, 28 Maun

"Traditional knowledge help us to understand how to manage these systems." - Female, 32 Maun

"They are connected because the Delta is the source of life and brings income." - Male, 38 Maun

"Knowing the traditions of our grandfathers will automatically empower the protection of the Delta." - Female, 30 Maun

"The way we preserve our culture is the way we preserve conservation." - Female, 28 Seronga

"Knowledge about the Delta and its traditions helps protect the Delta as you understand its importance." - Female, 30 Ikoga

They are connected because people in or area have realized the importance of conserving the Delta from the *Nkashi: Race for the Okavango* film." - Make, 49 Jao

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 7 cont'd

What are your thoughts on traditional knowledge and the well-being/conservation of the Delta? Do you think they are connected or not connected? Why?

Key insight: 72% of respondents believe that traditional knowledge and the conservation of the Okavango Delta are interconnected.

In contrast, the baseline survey found that only 14% of respondents made this connection when asked broadly about their feeling on living in the Delta. The disparity may be influenced by the differences in survey framing, as the baseline question was open-ended, while the impact evaluation questionnaire was more specific. Although it is challenging to isolate the film's exact influence, the findings suggest a clear increase in awareness of the link between traditional knowledge and conservation.

"Because people are using Indigenous knowledge to protect the Delta, such as using a mokoro." - Male, 20 Boro

QUESTION 8

What are the qualities you see in a traditional mokoro (as opposed to modern boats) that benefit the Delta?

77% of respondents expressed positive perceptions toward mekoro, particularly in contrast to engine-powered boats.

A sustainable and practical choice: Across both urban and rural communities, respondents overwhelmingly recognized the benefits of using mekoro. The most frequently mentioned advantages were their environmental friendliness—they do not pollute the water with fuel—and their minimal disturbance to wildlife, unlike motorboats.

"Traditional mekoro don't pollute the water or disturb the animals, while modern boats do." - Female, 41 Etsha

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 8 cont'd

What are the qualities you see in a traditional mokoro (as opposed to modern boats) that benefit the Delta?

Mekoro and livelihoods: While mekoro are widely valued, only a small number of respondents from remote communities acknowledged their role in economic activities, such as harvesting water lily tubers and fishing. In contrast, people from Maun frequently highlighted mekoro as an essential tool for sustaining livelihoods.

Addressing concerns about sustainability: Despite the positive perceptions, a few respondents expressed concerns about deforestation, believing mekoro contribute to tree loss. This suggests that some viewers may not have fully grasped the film's mention of modern mekoro being made from fiberglass rather than wood. Clearer communication on this aspect could have helped reinforce the sustainability of mokoro use. This was later addressed through the release of the companion short film *Mokoro wa Okavango*.

Connection to nature: The primary distinction between more urban and remote respondents was that remote communities more frequently acknowledge the mokoro's deep connection to nature and its ability to navigate the Delta's narrow, shallow waterways, where motorboats struggle.

"Mekoro help people fish and collect seeds." - Female, 20 Maun

"Mekoro promote deforestation since they are made from trees." - Male, 24 Gunotsoga

"The mokoro allows one to have a closer relationship with nature." - Male, 37 Francistown

"Traditional mekoro can be used anywhere in small parts of the Okavango. They can go even when the water is shallow compared to modern boats." - Female, 63 Ikoga

POST-SURVEY

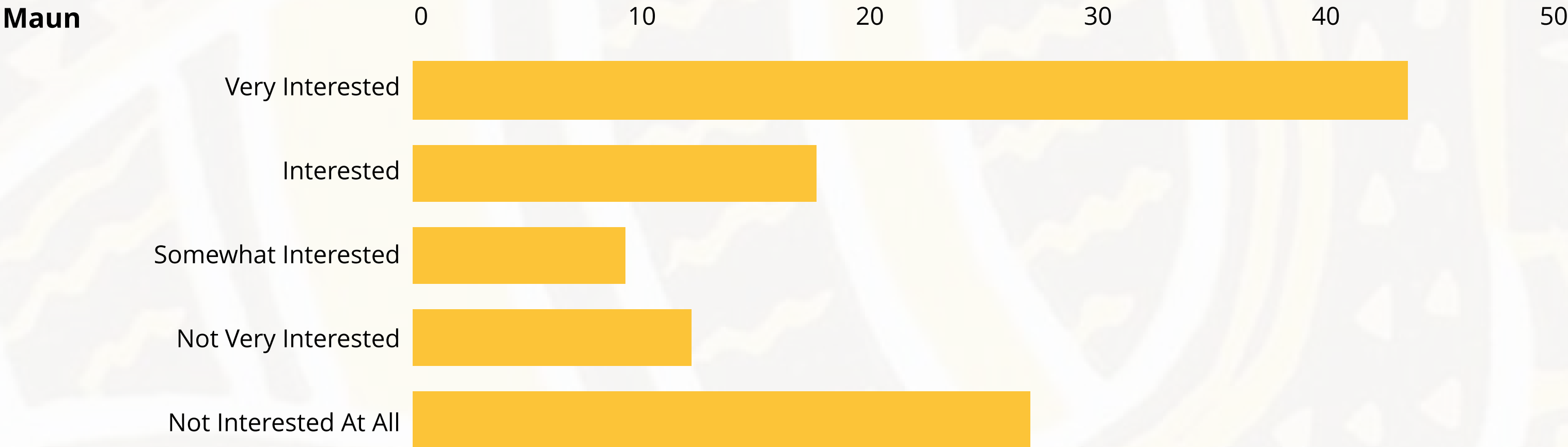
QUESTION 9

After watching the film, are you interested in becoming a poler to engage in economic activities such as scientific research, guiding, and other new ways to make a sustainable living? What has contributed to that?

Impact of the film on interest in poling and economic opportunities:
After watching the film, respondent from Maun expressed varying levels of interest in poling as a means of generating income, particularly through guiding. When asked to rate their interest on a scale from 1 (not interested) to 5 (very interested) the responses were as follows:

Responses From Maun:

Over 56% of respondents in Maun developed a positive perception of poling after watching the film, indicating a shift in how they view the tradition as an economic opportunity.



"I want to guide people around as shown in the film." - Male, 30 Maun

"The way polers are able to make a living as well as preserve the culture." - Male, 32 Maun

"I love guiding, and poling can give me the opportunity." - Male, 34 Maun

"I liked the connection to the water and seeing animals in their natural environment." - Female, 16 Maun

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 9 cont'd

After watching the film, are you interested in becoming a poler to engage in economic activities such as scientific research, guiding, and other new ways to make a sustainable living? What has contributed to that?

Responses From Remote Communities:

When the same question was posed to respondents from remote communities, the result showed an even greater impact with 84% expressing a positive attitude toward poling as a means of economic engagement, particularly guiding.

The significant difference suggests that remote communities see poling as a way of life and a viable livelihood. More urban communities, by contrast, have access to alternative economic opportunities, which may explain their lower interest levels.

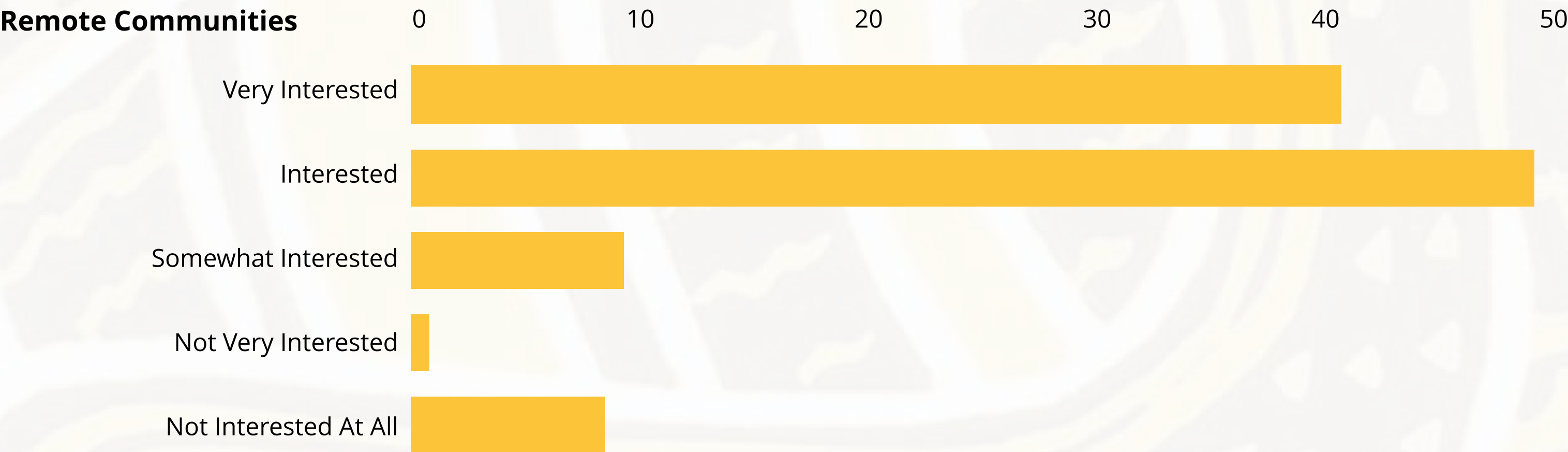
Overall, 68% of women were inspired the film's characters to learn poling.

"To promote local tourism and self-help through participating in such activities as a source of income." - Female, 43 Gunotsoga

"I want to engage in poling to contribute to scientific research about trees and birds to educate the upcoming generation."
- Female, 28 Seronga

"The film taught me that I can benefit from natural resources and mokoro to build an income and fight unemployment." - Female, 32 Beetsha

"Mokoro can help fill the gap of unemployment in the community." - Male, 36 Beetsha



POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 10

This is the first time a film has been made in Setswana with local characters and local filmmakers. What are your thoughts on this type of film?

All respondents surveyed in Maun expressed enthusiasm, pride, and gratitude toward the film. Many expressed appreciation that it was presented in their local language, making it more relatable for elders, and reinforcing self-identity among younger generations.

Similarly, all respondents from remote areas praised the film with many expressing a strong desire for a sequel to explore other aspects of their culture. They also suggested incorporating more tribal languages to enhance inclusivity.

"I have loved the fact that the film has brought people together and will eventually help younger people with self-identity."

- Male, 29 Maun

"The characters are interesting and I love that they show our cultural beliefs and traditions. It can also act as one of the things young people can look up to when elders are gone."

- Male, 28 Maun

"It is something beautiful because it is something that has not been seen before."

- Male, 45 Maun

"Helped people who don't speak English relate to the film and learn more."

- Female, 29 Maun

"I recommend a second film as it promotes the lifestyle of the Delta."

- Male, 37 Gudigwa

"It is very good to use Setswana because it is our local language. Everyone, young or old, can learn easily."

- Female, 19 Boro

"It was my first time seeing a film that was made locally and promoting our traditions."

- Male, 41 Etsha

POST-SURVEY

QUESTION 10 cont'd

This is the first time a film has been made it Setswana with local characters and local filmmakers. What are your thoughts on this type of film?

Remote communities also recognized the significance of local characters in preserving Indigenous knowledge, which many respondents emphasized as a critical need.

Overall, remote respondents praised the value the film brings both locally and internationally, highlighting its role in recognition, cultural documentation and improving lives.

"This is nice, seeing our local characters involved in such things, and it also inspires us to do films." - Female, 32 Seronga

"This film is more approachable, and preserved Indigenous knowledge, which is needed." - Male, 37 Francistown

"The film taught us our culture. We were able to understand that we can sustain our lives through mekoro, as we saw people in the film going miles with a mokoro." - Female, 63 Ikoga

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTION 1

In the film, you saw the environment of the Okavango Delta and some of the communities that live there. What do you think about the protection of the Okavango Delta?

Women's Perspective

The women's groups expressed strong positive views on protecting the Okavango Delta. They recognized the dependence of local communities on the Delta, and viewed conservation as essential to their survival.

Women also acknowledged the exchange of knowledge between scientists and Indigenous communities as a key factor in conservation efforts.

Men's Perspective

Men were highly impressed with the film and emphasized that outsiders pose a greater threat to the Delta than those living within it. They believed people outside the Delta were more likely to exploit and pollute it.

They also praised the local way of life, noting that traditional practices help preserve the Delta.

"Their lives hinge on the Okavango Delta, and therefore, if your life hinges, you cannot bite the hand that feeds you - so there is a need to protect it and keep it." - Female, Maun

"Everybody seems to respect this university (scientists and Indigenous people) and this learning from each other. I think somehow that is the way to protect the Delta." - Female, Maun

"People living in the Delta clearly understand that they depend on their environment. If anybody is going to pollute or degrade the Delta, it won't be the people in the Delta - it will most likely be outsiders. I'm a capitalist. I see the beauty of the environment and I think, 'I should make money here.'" - Male, Maun

"I saw traditional huts, which are non-permanent structures, and these biodegradable materials, as well as mekoro and nkashi. As far as I am concerned, I didn't see anything in the film that speaks to degradation." - Male, Maun

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTION 1 cont'd

In the film, you saw the environment of the Okavango Delta and some of the communities that live there. What do you think about the protection of the Okavango Delta?

"I think the Nkashi initiative helps polers conserve the environment because they realize the importance of water and vegetation. Some are not educated, but they can earn a living through the water and understand the importance of the environment and animals so they can try to preserve them."
 - Male, Maun

QUESTION 2

In the film, several distinct parts of Batswana culture were highlighted. Discuss some of the things you saw that felt unique or special to you as Batswana.

The film highlighted many cultural aspects of Batswana life, including mekoro for ecotourism and fishing, weaving baskets, carving nkashi, and cooking and selling traditional foods.

Women's Perspective

The women's group was particularly drawn to cultural elements such as the BaYei traditional dances, the thick reed of the Okavango, and traditional cooking pots.

"That dance is unique to the BaYei people and you find them in the Delta." - Female, Maun
"The unique thick reeds from the Okavango." - Female, Maun
"The pots when GB went home." - Female, Maun

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTION 2 cont'd

In the film, several distinct parts of Batswana culture were highlighted. Discuss some of the things you saw that felt unique or special to you as Batswana.

Men's Perspective

Men focused deeply on the mokoro tradition, recognizing its cultural significance and the threat modernization poses. They expressed concern that fiberglass canoes are replacing carved wooden mekoro, eroding traditional knowledge.

"I think Nkashi shows the culture of the people in the Delta. That is unique. But I wonder how preserved it is now with modernization. It would be nice to see that knowledge passed from father to son, mother to daughter." - Male, Maun

"I also think Nkashi Classic contributes greatly to the preservation of the poling culture." - Male, Maun

"In recent years, poling has been dying as a culture. Tourism kept it alive, but it was not deliberately passed down. The Nkashi Classic reignites that tradition. Suddenly, the older generation wants to teach and share knowledge and kids can make money from it." - Male, Maun

"People can buy fiberglass mekoro for fishing, but for the competition, we should stick to traditional ones. That will encourage learning the skill of making mokoro, which is a dying art." - Male, Maun

QUESTION 3

After watching the film, do you think elements of traditional lifestyle are good for the Delta? How so?

Women's Perspective

Women acknowledged that modern science and research could complement traditional knowledge in protecting the Delta.

"Researchers give communities knowledge about sustainable practices. [...] communities just need education. What they're doing is what their grandparents have told them." - Female, Maun

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTION 3 cont'd

After watching the film, do you think elements of traditional lifestyle are good for the Delta? How so?

Women also shared traditional conservation methods, such as deciding fish depth based on seasonal water levels and selecting trees carefully for nkashi and mokoro carving.

"New technology, like analyzing water quality, provides insights that traditional knowledge alone might not. Some newer tools can be interesting." - Female, Maun

"What grandfather would do - he would tell us, 'This season, we fish at this depth, where we will find this kind of fish.' And they wouldn't allow us to fish at certain depths." - Female, Maun

"You select trees carefully for nkashi or mokoro. Some species are used for poling sticks, some for canoes. This method help preserve the environment by preventing random tree-cutting." - Female, Maun

Men's Perspective

This question was skipped in the men's focus group discussion.

QUESTION 4

After watching the film, what actions do you feel you can take to contribute to the protection of the Delta?

Women's & Men's Perspectives

Some participants suggested that polers should be assessed on their ecological knowledge before being licensed.

Participants also emphasized the importance of passing down Indigenous knowledge to children.

"Before we give them a license, we should assess their ecological knowledge. If they have a different mindset that is not conservation-focused, what will they tell their clients?" - Female, Maun

"We must educate children in the Okavango Delta about their environment. Elders' knowledge is vanishing. We should ensure that kids watch this film every year in school." - Female, Maun

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTION 4 cont'd

After watching the film, what actions do you feel you can take to contribute to the protection of the Delta?

The men's group discussed engaging in decision-making processes to push for policies that protect the Delta.

They also proposed seasonal access restrictions to allow wildlife to recover.

Participants suggested engaging in clean-up activities to reduce pollution in the Delta.

They also stressed the need to create space for wildlife and limit human activity in the Delta.

The discussion ended with a powerful reflection on the film's impact and authenticity.

"Lately, I have been feeling compelled to join decision-making teams so that I can influence policies." - Male, Maun

"We should prohibit people from entering the Delta until summer, so species have time to settle. The Delta will return to how it used to be." - Male, Maun

"I would give lessons on clean-up activities. When I visit villages like Seronga and Shakawe, I encourage them not to throw food waste in the river." - Male, Maun

"In winter, when the Delta floods, we should allow time for species to settle before entering." - Male, Maun

"There are too many people in the Delta, forcing animals to flee into villages. We need to limit the number of people going in and avoid building homes in the Delta." - Male, Maun

"This is a great film. I was emotional fro start to finish. It took me through a whole journey - not just showcasing the Delta but also the people who live in it. The relationship they have with their environment is real. People in the Delta love their environment. They appreciate it for what it is." - Male, Maun

CONCLUSION: IMPACT GOAL 1

Strengthen pride in traditional ecological knowledge and culture

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE	PRE-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	POST-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	RESULTS
Local communities understand that preserving Indigenous knowledge fosters community pride.	Strong feelings of pride, happiness, and joy toward traditional knowledge and its visibility to the world.	<i>Not explicitly included in the surveys.</i>	Despite the lack of direct post-film data, existing responses indicate strong community pride in Indigenous knowledge.
Local communities recognize that traditional practices benefit both the environment and future generation.	Weak connection between traditional practices and conservation, beyond selling handicrafts.	Strong recognition that traditional practices, especially the use of mekoro, support environmental preservation and future sustainability.	Increased awareness of how traditional practices contribute to conservation, particularly the use of mekoro.
Local communities acknowledge that poling is a valuable skills for both men and women.	Fewer than 10% recognized poling as an important skill; women using mekoro was somewhat accepted.	Greater acknowledgment of the specialized skills required for poling, with increased acceptance of women engaging in mekoro-related activities.	Improved understanding of poling as a valuable skill and growing support for women in the practice.

CONCLUSION: IMPACT GOAL 2

Raise awareness and inspire engagement in traditional livelihoods (e.g. poling, crafts)

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE	PRE-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	POST-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	RESULTS
Local communities recognize that mokoro polers have unmatched knowledge of the waterways, which benefits conservation and scientific research.	Limited understanding of the broader value of mokoro polers beyond transportation.	Stronger appreciation for the role of polers in conservation, scientific research, and sustainable livelihoods.	Increased recognition of polers' expertise and the synergy between traditional knowledge and modern science.
Local communities understand that learning to pole can secure sustainable livelihoods and protect natural resources.	Weak recognition of poling as a sustainable profession.	About 70% expressed interest in learning to pole as a way to sustain their livelihoods and protect the Delta.	Significant shift in perception, with many now seeing poling as a viable and sustainable livelihood.
Local communities understand that traditional crafts (basket weaving, wood carvings, traditional paintings, etc) have economic value.	Crafts identified mainly as items for tourist sales.	<i>Not analyzed in the post-film survey</i>	No post-film data, but pre-film responses confirm awareness of traditional crafts' economic potential.

CONCLUSION: IMPACT GOAL 3

Advance the field of impact storytelling by strengthening community agency and participation in storytelling

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE	PRE-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	POST-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	RESULTS
Local communities experience positive on-screen representation of their culture, identity, and stories.	There is no known history of inclusive on-screen representation prior to <i>NKASHI</i> .	Strong recognition that seeing local culture and traditions on screen reinforces pride, identity, and cultural values.	Established the value of local storytelling and its role in reinforcing community pride and cultural heritage.
Local communities learn that films can be created in their language and shown even in remote locations, showing that media is accessible and can help preserve culture.	There is no known history of locally accessible filmmaking prior to <i>NKASHI</i> .	Strong recognition that using Setswana and hosting local screenings makes media inclusive, engages communities across generations, and supports cultural preservation.	Established that creating films in Setswana and hosting local screenings is inclusive, reaches diverse communities, and supports cultural preservation across generations.
Youth and young professionals understand that there are opportunities to participate in storytelling careers in Botswana.	There is no known history of storytelling capacity-building and opportunities for Batswana youth and young professionals prior to <i>NKASHI</i> .	Strong recognition that local films inspire youth and young professionals to develop skills and explore opportunities in storytelling and filmmaking.	Established youth and young professional engagement in filmmaking by creating pathways to develop skills and participate in local storytelling.

CONCLUSION: SUPPORTING GOAL

Inspire more people to attend the 2023 Nkashi Classic event

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE	PRE-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	POST-FILM SURVEY ANSWERS	RESULTS
Local communities are aware of the 2023 Nkashi Classic event.	General awareness of the race and registration process.	Increased awareness through social media and community outreach.	Attendance grew from 700 in 2022 to approximately 1,800 in 2023, demonstrating increased engagement.
Local communities understand that participating in the Nkashi Classic helps preserve cultural traditions and fosters sustainable livelihoods	Prize money was the primary motivator, with little focus on culture.	Prize money remained a key motivator, but cultural preservation, skill showcase, and local tourism also became important factors.	Growing recognition of the event's cultural significance, though its link to sustainable livelihoods remains weak.
Local communities feel that the Nkashi Classic highlights their poling skills and fosters pride.	Less than 10% acknowledged the event as a platform for showcasing their skills.	Increased recognition of the race as a way to display poling expertise and talent.	Stronger sense of pride and appreciation for the event's role in celebrating traditional skills.

SUMMARY

THE FILM'S IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The findings from the post-film survey indicate a significant shifts in community awareness, appreciation, and engagement with traditional ecological knowledge, practices, and sustainable livelihoods.

For Impact Goal 1, there is strong evidence that the film reinforced community pride in Indigenous knowledge, particularly in relation to traditional practices like poling. While the pre-film survey already reflected positive feelings towards traditional knowledge, post-film responses show an increased understanding of its role in environmental conservation and sustainability. Notably, recognition of poling as a valuable skill—especially for women—grew considerably.

For Impact Goal 2, the film contributed to a deeper appreciation of the expertise of mokoro polers, highlighting their role in conservation, scientific research, and economic sustainability. The most notable shift was in recognition of poling as a viable livelihood, with 70% of respondents expressing interest in learning the skill to support themselves and protect the Delta. While traditional crafts were acknowledged as marketable items, their role in sustainable livelihoods was not further analyzed in the post-film survey.

For Impact Goal 3, the film strengthened community pride by representing local culture, traditions, and stories on screen. It demonstrated that media produced in Setswana and distributed to remote communities is accessible across generations and can help preserve cultural knowledge. Youth and young professional respondents also reported feeling inspired to participate in storytelling and filmmaking, highlighting emerging opportunities in Botswana's creative industry.

For the Supporting Goal, the 2023 Nkashi Classic saw a dramatic increase in attendance, growing from 700 attendees in 2022 to approximately 1,800 in 2023. While prize money remained a strong motivator, there was also a growing recognition of the event's cultural importance and its role in showcasing traditional skills. However, the link between the event and sustainable livelihoods remains an area for further engagement.

Overall, the survey results suggest that the film successfully contributed to strengthened cultural pride, raised awareness about the value of traditional practices, and inspired greater engagement in poling. While progress has been made in shifting perceptions and behaviors, continued efforts are needed to further establish the connection between traditional knowledge, conservation, and economic sustainability.

The image is a complex visual composition. In the foreground, a silhouette of a person wearing a beanie and holding a long pole stands on the left. Behind them is a large, semi-transparent circular frame that contains a photograph of a sunset over a river. In the river, several small canoes with people are visible. The background of the entire image is a warm, orange-toned field of traditional Aboriginal art patterns, including concentric circles, wavy lines, and stylized bird figures. The text "THANK YOU" is centered within the circular frame in a white, sans-serif font.

THANK
YOU