



Projects Aimed at Controlling and Naming Invasive Alien Plants into Indigenous Languages

Invasive Alien Plants Control

Research has confirmed Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) as one of the factors that impact both the composition and balance of native species within an ecosystem, thus altering the provision of ecosystem services. In South Africa, the value of ecosystem services from the restoration of alien plant invasions was estimated to be around US\$6.6 billion (Stafford et al 2017). The Working for Ecosystems Programme is aimed at controlling IAPs within eThekweni Municipality and this is achieved through chemical, mechanical and biocontrol application methods and is implemented through the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department (EPCPD). The implementation of the WFE Programme also provides training on IAP Identification and Control, not only for beneficiaries employed on the Programme but any other stakeholder involved in the control of IAPs, within the boundaries of eThekweni Municipality. In addition to the Training, there is also an Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) project solely focused on controlling the establishment of emerging weeds (i.e. plants not yet categorized as IAPs but showing tendencies to be invasive).

Communicating about the Invasive Alien Plants to communities

The propagation of Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs), dominantly for medicinal-use as well as for ornamental purposes, have been identified as key factors which unintentionally promote the spread of IAPs. The IAPs outcompete indigenous species and compromise the functionality and vigour of ecosystem services. As the invasion level of IAPs increases, people are becoming more accustomed to their existence. Over time, people begin to gradually, and unintentionally, associate IAPs with traditional systems.

The lack of isiZulu names for most of IAPs results in communities giving them names that are similar to those of indigenous plants, which have positive names. This unregulated naming of IAPs results in unwanted plants (negative plants), having positive names. In addition, this creates confusion not only in terms of which plant is being used, but also leads to active propagation of some IAPs by traditional communities. This suggests a need to give IAPs appropriate isiZulu common names, which differentiate them from indigenous plants, and which clearly indicates these plants are unwanted. This is necessary in order to protect the cultural knowledge and names of indigenous plants. As a case study, isiZulu language was chosen as the language of choice solely because the focus of this work was within eThekweni Municipality where isiZulu is dominantly spoken language.

To address regional names of IAPs, which is common in KZN, a team was put together involving members from different parts of the province and who are employed by eThekweni Municipality, South African National Biodiversity Institute and the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs. The examples of the names that were renamed are below and the extensive list can be found on the peer reviewed paper that was published in 2019, through the Journal of Biodiversity Management & Forestry, 8:1 https://www.scitechnol.com/peer-review/naming-invasive-alien-plants-into-indigenous-languages-kwazulunatal-case-study-south-africa-gsOF.php?article_id=9288

Invasive Alien Plant	Photo	Current isiZulu Name	Corresponding Indigenous Plant	Photo	Comments
<i>Albizia lebbek</i> (Lebbeck tree)		Usolo	<i>Albizia adianthifolia</i>		Both plants have somewhat similar leaf arrangements, which might have contributed to the common isiZulu name.
<i>Caesalpinia decapetala</i> (Mauritius thorn)		Uboboluncane	<i>Adenopodia spicata</i>		Both plants, invasive and indigenous, belong to the Family Fabaceae and pinnated leaves.
<i>Campuloclinium macrocephalum</i> (Pom pom)		Indlolothi	<i>Morea spathulata</i>		Unclear why communities called Pom pom Indlolothi when it has far less resemblance to <i>Morea spathulata</i> .
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> (Leucaena)		Ubobo	<i>Adenopodia spicata</i>		Both plants, invasive and indigenous, belong to the Family Fabaceae and pinnated leaves.
<i>Pereskia aculeate</i> (Pereskia)		Uqwangingi	<i>Capparis tomentosa</i>		No striking similarities between the two plants, but maybe medicinal value was a common factor and hence the same name.
<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i> (Brazilian pepper)		Isibhaha	<i>Warburgia salutaris</i>		No striking similarities between the two plants, but maybe medicinal value was a common factor and hence the same name.

To encourage participation from all ecosystem beneficiaries, the naming of IAPs in indigenous languages may facilitate more awareness and thus more appreciation of conservation of indigenous biodiversity. One of the benefits of initiatives of this nature is the integrity of natural ecosystems as well as the safeguarding of ecosystem services that proceed from those ecosystems. Ecosystem restoration should not be regarded, or promoted, as a role of a select few and the naming of IAPs in indigenous languages broadens and encourages participation. Factors that limit participation, such



as language barriers, should be identified and addressed. It is the intention of the authors of this article (Naming IAPs in Indigenous Languages), that objectives of this project, are rolled out to other provinces across the country. A wholistic approach in controlling IAPs can improve the provision of human livelihoods, whose value far outweighs the costs of restoration (Stafford et al 2017).