Climate change is having a profound impact on the Southern Province of Zambia, with rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events affecting agriculture, human health, and infrastructure.

Temperature and Rainfall Patterns

Studies have shown that Zambia, including the Southern Province, is experiencing rising temperatures, with an increase of up to 2°C predicted by 2050.¹ This warming trend is expected to continue, with severe consequences for agriculture, human health, and ecosystems. Rainfall patterns are also changing, with a decline in rainfall predicted in the southern region of Zambia.

Impacts on Agriculture

Agriculture is a vital sector in Zambia's economy, and climate change is posing significant challenges to farmers in the Southern Province. Changing rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and increased frequency of extreme weather events are affecting crop yields, livestock productivity, and food security. Smallholder farmers, who are the backbone of Zambia's agriculture sector, are particularly vulnerable to climate-related shocks.

Climate-Related Security Risks

Climate-related security risks, such as land conflicts and food insecurity, are having a significant impact on the values and livelihoods of communities in the Southern Province. A study by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) found that land conflicts and food insecurity are perceived to impact strongly on existing values, such as peace, preserving culture, and self-sufficiency.

Values and Climate Change

Values play a crucial role in shaping responses to climate-related security risks. By understanding the values that are most important to communities, interventions can be designed to advance or protect those values, increasing their acceptance and legitimacy. For example, in the Southern Province, preserving culture and traditional practices is a highly valued aspect of community life. Interventions that support these values, such as promoting conservation agriculture and preserving culturally important foodstuffs, are more likely to be accepted and effective.

Gender and Climate Change

Women are disproportionately affected by climate-related security risks, particularly in rural areas where they are often responsible for food production and household management. A study found that women in the Southern Province perceive the impact of land conflicts and food insecurity to be significantly stronger than men. This highlights the need for gender-sensitive interventions that address the specific needs and concerns of women.

Conclusion

Climate change is having a profound impact on the Southern Province of Zambia, affecting agriculture, human health, and infrastructure. Understanding the values and livelihoods of communities is crucial in designing effective interventions that advance or protect those values. By prioritizing values, such as preserving culture and traditional practices, and addressing the specific needs and concerns of women, interventions can increase their acceptance and legitimacy, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and sustainable future for the Southern Province.

References:

When values inform approaches to climate security: The case of Zambia’s Southern Province (Policy & Practice Brief)