

WATER, PEOPLE AND NATURE IN A TANZANIAN COASTAL WATERSHED: FOSTERING ECOSYSTEM AND SOCIAL TIES

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Whether or not there will be clean and abundant water, fertile soils and healthy villages for the 1.8 million people in the Wami river sub-basin depends a great deal on what is done right now to take care of water and forest resources. Each village needs to ask three important questions: “will we have enough water at the right time and in the right place for all of our needs?”, “are we are keeping the water clean enough so it can be safely used?” and “are we keeping ourselves clean enough to ensure that the people in each village, especially children stay healthy?” Tanzania's Wami Ruvu Basin Water Office (WRBWO) joined together with the Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP) to learn the answers to these questions and begin to address the most important problems. Initial financial support is through the Water and Development Alliance (WADA) comprised of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), USAID Tanzania, the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation and the Coca-Cola Atlanta Foundation. The original plan of action and the team's preoccupations were presented at CZ '07. The successful results after two years of effort reveal the benefits of integrating themes and building networks of collaboration.

Latrines, hand washing and rain water collection units were installed in five high need public schools with active local collaboration, benefiting 8,923 persons and serving as both model facilities and a model capacity building process. An environmental flows assessment brought together university experts, international volunteers and the staff of the WRBWO to determine whether there is enough water for nature and for livelihoods including the Wami estuary. The environmental profile of the Wami River basin as well as the dry season flows assessment are among the first documents of their kind in Tanzania. Fourteen staff members of the WRBWO improved their GIS skills. Several villages also took an interest in land care, with tree planting work carried out with much enthusiasm by local leaders, teachers and children. Environmental management systems proposed for sugar and sisal production facilities are leading to improved water use and wastewater management practices on a voluntary basis by the firms involved.

The integration of many facets of the large scale issue of water, people and nature, addressed through the activities of a small but coherent program, and combined with strengthening social capital and ties among authorities, experts and local leaders, has sparked enthusiasm and attracted substantial additional funding. USAID Tanzania has awarded an additional \$550,000 in the near term to complete priority projects and extend the effort to several coastal villages. This will involve villages on the mainland adjacent to Tanzania's only terrestrial/marine park in Saadani, and two in Zanzibar's Fumba peninsula adjacent to the Minai Bay marine conservation area. Training will be extended to 300 more people, along with capacity building of 90 members of water and sanitation committees, as a complement to constructing seven additional sanitation and water access facilities to benefit an additional 7000 people.

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