

Project Update: June 2010

Activities implemented

1. Education and awareness

Education and awareness has been carried in schools and to the community with the aim of informing the entire community on the importance of environmental conservation and the consequences of environmental degradation. These schools are Kambi ya Waya Primary, Marereni Secondary, Marereni Primary, Kanagoni Primary, Kurawa Primary, Mapimo Primary and Kadzuhoni Primary.

School outreach programme

Awareness has been carried in eight schools in Marereni area; at least three visits are made every week. Over 400 children have been reached through different methodological approaches. Out of the 400 children reached, 185 were girls and 215 were boys. Their age range is between 10 – 20 years old. Methodological approaches followed included class lectures, video presentation, quiz challenge and through posters and stickers.

A. PowerPoint/Video Presentations

Two presentations were held showing different species/types of marine life. Over 120 children and teachers attended these educative presentations. Children were very happy to learn more of the types of fish and sea how they interrelate with other sea creatures.

B. Distribution of posters and Stickers

500 posters were printed to help in spreading conservation information. These posters have only information about sea turtles that are found in Kenyan waters. They highlight five turtle species: green, hawksbill, loggerhead, olive ridley and leatherback. The poster contains information about the areas they are found and threats facing every species. Also in the posters is information about what not to do when one finds a nesting turtle on the beach. Children and teachers were very happy to see such posters in their notice boards.

1000 stickers were also produced to be distributed in different sites including in vehicles. They will be stuck in public vehicles within the whole coast region. Negotiation will also be done with owners of tour companies to have stickers in their vehicles so to have awareness information reach tourists.

C. Quiz challenge

This is an educative activity as well as an evaluation tool to find out how much children have learnt and also as areas that need more emphasis. This quiz challenge was done involving all schools in the project area. 20 children from each school were facilitated to attend and participate in this activity. Participation was very alive as majority of children proved to have learnt a lot, especially about sea turtles. Through this quiz challenge, it was also seen that more emphasis needs to be done in mangroves and coral reefs and on other marine species.

Community outreach programme

The project's education and awareness is not restricted to schools only. Outreach programmes are held where the community is brought together in meetings and be informed about fishing practices that are environmentally friendly and those that have a negative impact to the environment. Two meetings have been held so far which were attended by the area chief and local elders know as village elders. Other stakeholders in attendance to the awareness meetings included Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture and a Wildlife Clubs of Kenya officer. Each of these stakeholders spoke about how their organisations are involved in environmental conservation and how the community should participate in conservation efforts for sustainable resource use.

1. Mangrove planting

Mangrove restoration is one of the core programmes of this project. The project involves every stakeholder on the ground in mangrove planting. This is one way of creating awareness about mangrove conservation and the need of protection and management of this unique ecosystem. The project has so far planted over 35000 mangroves in Marereni area. Involved in this activity included the local administration (local leaders), KWS, Fisheries, local community and local schools. A mangrove nursery of 5000 seedlings was also established for research and education purposes. This nursery will serve as a demonstration site for the project.

Beach cleaning

One beach cleaning event was held where a total of 80 people participated among them included school children, teachers and the local community. A beach of about 2 km was cleaned of debris that posed a threat not only to marine life but also to human beings. Awareness was created amongst the participants on the importance of keeping our beaches clean.

2. Nest protection and monitoring

The community patrolmen were empowered with three mobile phones and air-time so as to enable them relay information about nesting turtles. Beach patrolling is on-going and there have been no reports about nesting turtles simply because it is the windy season according the local fishermen. It is not a nesting season in such times.

Bycatch release

The project has managed to release three green turtles. Two of these turtles were juveniles where as one was a fully grown-up turtle. These turtles were caught in fishing nets by local fishermen.

