

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report Narrative

Multi-functional assessment and strengthening of
wetland biodiversity, livelihood and economic value in
Eyasi basin, Tanzania

Project ID: 13785-1

PROJECT LEADER

VERONICA CONSOLATA JENGE

Date: 24th September 2014

Introduction

Tanzania has not yet completed its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and therefore incorporating community initiatives and projects will be very essential. The information base that supports management of these valuable systems (wetlands) is uneven and in many instances totally inadequate. Importantly, knowledge of location, distribution and character of wetlands, values and uses, which is essential for the effective management, is highly required. The management of wetlands is the responsibility of many institutions in Tanzania, however not much emphasis has been given especially on wise use and its conservation. The lack of coordination between these institutions has resulted in poor management, lack of accountability, inability to respond to changes in wetlands and failure to partition responsibilities between institutions and user groups.

Furthermore there is serious lack of skilled manpower to manage wetlands. Greater interdisciplinary skills are needed by wetland managers and users to ensure sustainable utilization and protection of Eyasi basin. More and stronger conservation management plans are needed for biodiversity in Eyasi basin, together with effective community education and species protection implementation policies that seek the participation of villagers. These management plans need to be coupled with policies and activities that directly benefit local people for conservation efforts

Project Aim

Specific objectives

1. Increase of knowledge, and awareness of wetland issues by the community.
2. Capacity to defend local resources and thus livelihoods from upstream development threats.
3. Community environmental governance and management
4. Setting up of the Eyasi Village Environmental Management Plan (EVEMP)

Participatory Monitoring

The involvement of local people in gathering biological data is a popular and growing phenomenon. Data may be used to inform and reinforce environmental management, particularly in developing countries through community based natural resource management. Participation in recording activities is likely to bring benefits for participants themselves. The volunteers may benefit on a personal level by being in contact with nature and the activities associated with being outside and undertaking nature recording is linked to health and wellbeing benefits and stress relief.

The aim and principles of this participatory monitoring of the biodiversity were:

- a) To undertake a full quantitative inventory/ assessment of the wetland.
- b) To indicate change and trends of certain indicator species
- c) To improve communication between stakeholders, build confidence and capacity and enhance transparency of decision-making.

Activities included:

- a) Training of monitoring team on the basics of biodiversity monitoring.
- b) Designing of the monitoring data sheet and toolkit.
- c) Gathering of the required equipment and assigning of tasks.
- d) Reconnaissance by the group to familiarize on the site and also site training.
- e) Actual monitoring and filling the data sheets.
- f) Analysis of the data
- g) Presentation to relevant stakeholders.

Awareness and advocacy workshops

Biodiversity is a global good-but experiences of nature, and the benefits that biodiversity brings to people are mainly local. Biodiversity conservation has the potential to benefit us all. A local approach to

Activities:

Training more than 25 community members in bird identification monitoring and conservation issues. The issues that were discussed during the workshops included:

1. Strengthening wetland management institutions through developing local bylaws.
2. Delineating wetland zones for various activities.
3. Encourage alternative and sustainable use of wetlands
4. Restore and improve hillside lands through zero grazing practices and tree-planting.
5. Promote income generating activities and the formation of micro-enterprises.
6. Compile a wetland resource inventory.
7. Develop historical profiles on traditional methods of resources methods.

Wetland capacity strengthening and training strategy

Training and capacity building to improve human and technical capacity in wetlands biodiversity conservation is one of the key objectives of the Eyasi management project. Training activities were integrated into all of the project's components. The training activities were focused on the building of enabling circumstances through developing skills so that information base is built, awareness is raised and the mechanisms for the project management are developed. The second part of the training involved the planning process, implementation and management of wetlands.

Approach

The training strategy is basically designed to serve the aims of the project. These are to protect, to promote sustainable use and to integrate wetland biodiversity management into the socio-economic development context of the Eyasi Basin. This is a region where great numbers of the population are dependent on the wetland resources for their livelihoods.

The balance between on the one hand scientific and technical knowledge on biodiversity conservation and on the other the understanding of socio-economic and cultural conditions of the local areas and the peoples is vitally important. It moulds part of the strategies for capacity building at all levels. It is a strategy that aims for the development of practical skills in planning, management and implementation of the programme activities.

Thus, the approach used for the training activities was based on the following characteristics:

- The technical knowledge delivered was simplified and action oriented or geared towards application to real life and work situations.
- The method of delivery was participatory in order to encourage the learning process and active participation from participants.
- The training process was gender sensitive.

PICTURES



Figure 1: Demonstration farm for growing multi fruit trees for domestic and also for sale. This is very important as a source of food and income and therefore reduces the pressure on the wetland.



Figure 2: The community was able to learn about the best practices in vegetable farming and the best sustainable methods.



Figure 3: Shows Eyasi community members learning about simple energy technologies for energy conservation. Figure 4: Shows a demonstration shown to the community for an integrated farming involving chicken and fish rearing while.



Figure 5: Shows the purchasing done for the community to install energy conserving “jikos” for the women to use.