

FINAL REPORT

RSG Project Reference: 17.07.07

Organisation: Together Rural Development Solidarity (Torudes)

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Country: Ghana **Date:** 30TH October 2008

Title: Community Involvement and Empowerment in Marine Turtle Conservation in Two Coastal Districts of Ghana

Introduction

The community turtle conservation education and advocacy in all the six project communities was carried out and the communal clean- up exercises was institutionalize to keep the beaches clean and tidy.

The community turtle protection volunteers were formed and developed their capacities to be able to educate their local communities' members and the fishermen on the socio-economic and ecological significance of the marine turtles and the need to protect them to sustain their fisheries productivity. In all thirty five community turtle volunteers were trained from the six beneficiary coastal communities on wildlife laws and identification and monitoring of the marine turtles.

The project acquired working tools for the community volunteers to empower them to sustain the activities.

The overarching project objective:

To sensitize the coastal fishing communities so as to positively influence their attitudes towards the conservation of marine turtles and the protection of the coastal zones in general.

Project Objectives:

1. To organize community advocacy and awareness campaign on the conservation of marine turtles
2. To establish community turtle protection volunteers and build their capacity in the area of marine turtle monitoring

3. To monitor marine turtles along the six coastal communities and possible release of bycatches from the fishing nets back into the sea
4. To organize communal beach cleaning exercises in the project areas
5. To organize Participatory monitoring and evaluation of the project activities

How is the project meeting its objectives?

All the project objectives indicated in the proposal have been met systematically through active participation from all the stakeholders.

Breakdown of major goals and their outcomes

- a) Community advocacy and focal groups' discussions were organised to educate the public on the conservation of marine turtles and to give more insight into the socio-economic and ecological significance coastal ecosystems. Prohibitive information sign posts were developed and erected at vantage points to educate the general public in the project communities on the need to protect the marine turtles. Posters and T-Shirts were also printed and distributed in the communities to help sensitize the general public on the subject matter.
- b) The thirty- five member community turtle protection volunteers were established in the project communities and their capacities were developed in the turtle identification and monitoring.
- c) The community turtle protection volunteers were actively involved in the monitoring activities along the beaches and facilitated releases of accidental catches from the fishing nets back to sea.
- d) Communal clean up exercises were organised in the respective communities to help institutionalize the activity and to keep the beaches tidy from pollution.

What mistakes have been made? What changes needed?

There is no known mistake made so far.

How the money from RSG was spent

Activity	Input	Cost (£)
Community turtle conservation advocacy(awareness)	Resource persons	200
	Sign post	300
	T-shirts	200
	Posters	150
	Digging Axe	50
Formation and capacity	resource persons	200

building of community turtle protection volunteers	refreshment T&T	200 400
Marine turtle monitoring	Torch lights Wellington boots Shovel	300 800 400
Communal beach cleaning exercise/ release of accidental catches back to sea	Rake Hand gloves Rope Spade Mattock	300 100 50 200 100
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	Refreshment for Monitoring team Stationery	200 100
Transportation	Fuel	600
Total	-----	4,850

RSG Aims to Support Sustainability

How has the project been sustainable?

The involvement of the traditional leaders, the fisher folks and the community members as volunteers are the strengths and opportunities that ensures project sustainability.

How is the community working towards this?

The community volunteers are poised and have agreed to continue the marine turtle conservation activities on their own during the ensuing years or next breeding seasons even after the lifespan of this project as they have understood the socio-ecological significance of conserving the marine turtles and the coastal zones in general.

How many community members are involved in monitoring and evaluating this project?

As a community project eleven member team from the communities were actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the project activities participatorily.

Which Topics remain unclear to the project participants?

To the best of our knowledge there is no known topic which remains unclear to the project participants.

What existing community resources or assets were utilised?

Communal labour from the community employed during the beaches cleaning exercises and that of community turtle protection volunteers. The community's chairs and tables were used for the advocacy programs. The erection of prohibitive information sign posts were done by the community volunteers.

Were additional resources needed?

Additional resources will be required to embark on the holistic and integrated coastal zone management. This project has helped us to understand and appreciate the need for coastal zone management approach to address all the teaming threats to the coastal ecosystems.

How were the people and organisations in the community linked together?

The relationships between the organisation and the people in the community and other stakeholders have been very cordial and healthy and this really contributed and enhanced the project success and sustainability.

Did the project have a positive effect on the community?

YES! The communities stand to benefit from ecotourism in the immediate future as the marine turtle numbers and nesting sites increase along the beaches. This will go along way to promote fisheries productivity in the coastal areas. The communities have gained more insights into coastal zone ecosystem conservation and positive ecological linkages with their fishing activities as their main source of livelihoods.

Recommendation

The livelihoods issue has been the main socio-economic problem affecting the coastal communities, which render the marine turtles so vulnerable. For this reason project ideas have being developed to focus on strengthening and promoting sustainable livelihoods in an integrated approach that will help reduce pressure on the marine turtles and the coastal natural resources in general.