

Project Update: February 2020

Introduction

In this project activity we conducted first phase of building capacity for local conservation leaders from four villages out of eight in the plan. This was done in order to address one of the persistent limitations for effective conservation in rural areas in Tanzania and sub Saharan Africa - the shortage of qualified local conservation professionals. We focused on training and providing support to the members of the Village Natural Resources Committee, which is the body of the village council responsible for conservation and protection of all natural resources in the village. In our case, due to insufficient resources, these members collaborate with government authority in conservation of Ruvu-south coastal forest reserve. We also visited and provided support to income generating groups established for the aim of providing alternative to livelihood in order to reduce forest resources exploitation pressure.

Capacity Building for Village Leaders

We conducted capacity building programme for village natural resources committee members from four villages out of eight adjacent to the forest reserve which are in plan. Capacity building was designed for 12 Village Natural Resources Committee members from each village. Four villages involved at this stage were Boko, Mpiji, Soga and Kipangege. In total, 41 members (29 males and 12 females) participated and after a needs assessment, they were trained on their duties and responsibilities in participatory forest management and conservation, forest legislation, law enforcement and community training. To ensure long lasting project impacts and sustainable outcomes they were also prepared and trained to become community trainers.



Figure 1: Project Lead (standing in left photo) and Forest Officer (standing in right photo) during the first day training for Mpiji and Boko Mnemela participants.



Figure 2: Small group work and discussions during capacity building training for Mpiji and Boko Mnemela Village Natural Resources Committee members.



Figure 3: Project lead (first right) with facilitators and participants from Soga and Kipangege villages



Figure 4: Small group work during training for Soga and Kipangeni participants



Figure 5: Forest Officers facilitating capacity building workshop in Soga and Kipangege village.



Figure 6: Project lead (standing first right) in group photo with facilitators and Capacity building participants from Mpiji and Boko villages

Monitoring and strengthening economic groups

During this period, we conducted advisory visits to monitor and support established alternative to livelihood small economic groups in villages surrounding Ruvu south coastal forest reserve. This was done in order to ensure project sustainability, contribution towards households' income and livelihood and effective management for the established income generating projects. We visited all small project provided advice to the encountering challenges and recorded their performance in terms of income generation.

Table 1. Biannual income generation level (in GBP, exchange rate 2800) in established and supported small economic groups in forest communities adjacent Ruvu-south forest reserve.

Activity	Village	2017		2018		2019	
		1	2	1	2	1	2
Beekeeping	Kipangeni	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	200	100	290
	Kipangege	<i>na</i>	200	150	190	75	0
Chicken rearing	Boko	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	80	50
	Soga	<i>na</i>	55	50	<i>na</i>	170	255
Tree nursery	Isola	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	220	210	200

**na = No data available during survey period*

Overall, we found moderate strengthening in income generation in three villages after our intervention. There were challenges facing other two villages: for example, in Kipangege village there was a problem of honeybee colony collapse that hampered size and productivity of honey. We are still working with forest specialist to address the problem.

In addition to that we managed to support a group in soga village to rehabilitate chicken coops and construct simple water harvesting system.





Figure 7: Constructed simple water harvesting system for chicken project in Soga village.

Financial support from The David Tyler Trust

As I communicated to you earlier, The David Tyler Trust, a UK based charity were impressed with our work we are doing to support forest community for conservation of Ruvu-south coastal forest reserve and they invited us to apply for small grant for community education. After scrutiny and evaluation of our application, the trustees were keen to provide financial support of £2000. We are grateful and appreciative to The David Tyler Trust for this support which we received in January 2020. We will use this fund to extend capacity building for conservation work to two primary schools within forest communities. In partnership with teachers at the schools, we will specifically:

- Provide basic knowledge of the ecological and economic importance of the reserve.
- Promote attitudes of concern for the conservation of the area.
- Provide basic training in some appropriate conservation skills, such as plant recognition, seed growing, tree planting and weed removal.

The project will introduce teachers and pupils to a participatory approach to learning, engaging them in sustainability issues relating to the forest reserve both practically and academically

Way forward and recommendations

At this stage we will be finalising our activities in the 2nd year of our conservation project. We are now working to compile and submit a completion report. In this 2nd year of the project we have managed to empower village leaders who are important stakeholders for the conservation of the forest reserve. This forms the second component of the community training after we raised conservation awareness among forest community members during first year of our project. In addition to that, during the 1st and 2nd year of our project, we have recorded continual degradation of forest habitat that provides fundamental niche for rare and endangered species such as *Anthus sokokensis*. As indicated in the satellite images below and findings from the field survey, we noted southern region of the

forest reserve being highly deforested. This region is bordered to high populated villages which are associated with its degradation.

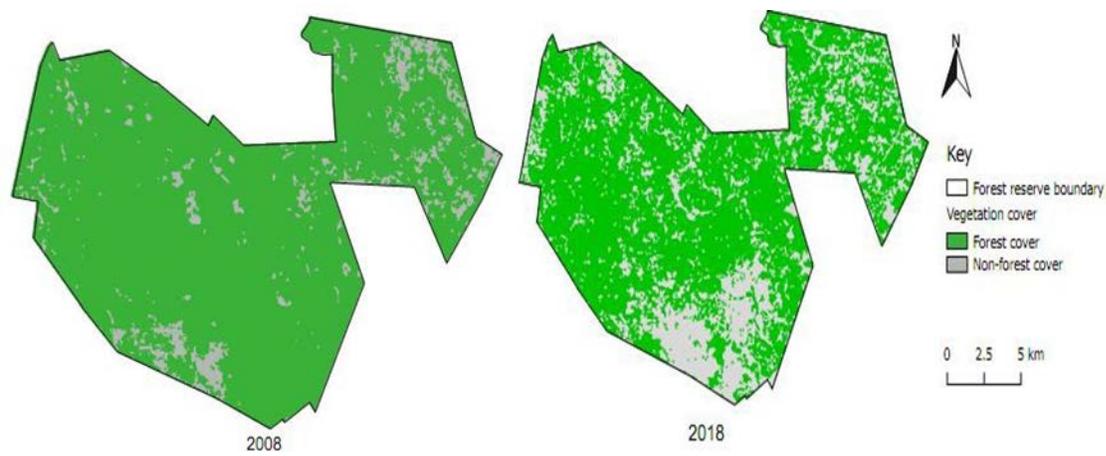


Figure 8: Vegetation cover maps of Ruvu-south coastal forest reserve for year 2008 and 2018

Having trained forest community members on conservation and alternative livelihood strategies and well trained local village leaders, the project team plan to engage in restoration and replacement of lost native tree species in order to fill forest gaps and recover degraded ecological habitat of the forest. In the upcoming year, we will be mobilising resources to replant native species such as *Brachystegia*, *Grewia*, *Salacia* and *Hymenocrdia* in order to recover fundamental niche for rare and endangered species such as *Anthus sokokensis*.