

FINAL REPORT



PROJECT TITLE:

**THE STRATEGIC CONSERVATION OF THREATENED PARE MOUNTAINS
FOREST RESERVE, TANZANIA**

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THE STRATEGIC CONSERVATION OF THREATENED PARE MOUNTAINS RESERVE, TANZANIA

Executive Summary

The Pare Mountains (PM) is part of the Eastern Arc of Africa; one of the threatened world's twenty-five biodiversity hotspots. Pare Mountains Reserve has the greatest biological and catchment's role. They are also the source of the water supply for the Same District. One of the conservation problems in the PM is the lack of awareness of the values of the mountains within the local communities. The project intended to educate on the importance of conservation of the PM Reserve and mobilize the community in integrating conservation activities in their daily lives via providing environmental education to PM communities, Primary and Secondary schools in Same District, initiate conservation clubs, groups and reforestation programmes and encourage the above groups to take control and responsibility for the safe guarding the reserve.

Progress in attaining Objectives

During the first year, we set up the base with the district council, school teachers and village leaders to support us in the implementation of the project. We started by organizing lectures, drama, essay writing and art competition, in four primary schools, four secondary schools and three villages. Once the student awareness of environmental conservation of the reserve was raised, we formed conservation clubs in those schools. These clubs then started nurseries for seedling of indigenous plants and transplanting seedlings.



SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THEIR TREE NURSERY

During the second year conservation clubs members formed part of the resource personnel in disseminating and initiating awareness of environmental conservation of the reserve to the local community. The last process was formation of conservation groups in selected villages.

An education and awareness campaign was also launched in the local villages and schools to make them aware of the importance of the Pare Mountains

Personnel

Six educated village leaders, five primary and secondary school teachers were appointed as local volunteers. They spent an average of 5 hours every week for carrying out the assigned duties including, community awareness, School quizzes, taking care of nurseries etc.

Training

Two days training each month was held for each village and schools, the facilitator for the training was Miss Tumaini Mnyamala a community Development officer from the Ministry of water; who explained the project objectives and the biological and catchment's role of the Pare Mountains. They were trained how to mobilize the local community through their village meetings or public campaigns for protection of pare mountains reserve.

Duties of the local volunteers included

- Mobilizing the target community through door to door campaigns to be active partners to support our efforts for conservation of pare mountains reserve.
- Distributing information brochures and stickers among the villages.
- Arranging local and school meetings and rallies for education and awareness
- Putting up posters, banners with conservation messages.
- Encouraging villagers and school children to plant new trees to conserve environment.
- Carrying out periodical observations of all awareness and conservation activities.

The Supervisor regularly visited the field and ensured that the animators were carrying out the assigned tasks. She also conducted the public meetings held in the local schools and closely monitored the effective implementation of the project objectives.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN THE FIELD

❖ Transact walk

We walked with the forest dept officials and villagers, along the forest to know the present status of the forest. In the transact walk the different plant species, water storage structures, springs, paths, cultural properties etc., were identified. The important plant species of trees, shrubs, herbs, animals and birds were identified. In this way during the transact walk the present status of the forest was studied and documented. The villagers conferred that the forest has been destructed a lot. After the transact sensitization started at different groups.

We conducted this type of preliminary survey because conservation efforts would have had less impact if the socioeconomic and cultural background of the society is not well understood. We have collected some basic background information on people's dependency on forest resources, pattern of resource exploitation and their perception. This information helped in better understanding of the local community and the smooth implementation of the project's activities.

❖ **At the level of Secondary School**

Meeting with school teachers to explain the importance of the project, during the explanation phase we tried to bring out clearly the following facts

- The importance of the forest and the need to maintain this ecosystem;
- The values of the forest particularly Pare mountains reserve forest.
- The pressures which is imposed to the forest
- National water and forest policies.
- And the importance of participatory forest management approach.

The meeting ended by the principals saying that they will do their best to see the success of this project, and pointed out teachers to work with us.

❖ **Activities at the level of Primary School**

We moved from one primary school to the next having meetings with the teachers of each school. During the meeting we distributed to them guides on Environmental Education Programme which we had simplified to be at the level of understanding of these teachers. These guides carried the same message as that which we prepared for secondary school except for the fact it was simplified. This guide was to help them in improving on their skills and knowledge on forests and to raise awareness on their conservation ideas. This guide looks at the forest in general with much reference to the Pare mountain forest reserve and how to insist the pupils to live in harmony with the forest as they grow up. Teachers in each school were taught on how to guide pupils understand the message of conservation, the level of understanding was to be known from the quality of articles they were to come up with for publication in a booklet prepared by students. The Headmasters of various schools promised to lend us the necessary support to see the programme succeed. They appreciated the project materials on environment saying that it was going to help them to develop good environmental lessons as one of the subject in their school curriculum.

❖ **Activities carried out at the level of traditional and other leaders**

The capacity building on environmental lessons for leaders of the locality especially the traditional rulers was to have an important role to play in stopping poaching and over exploitation of the forest resources. A meeting was organized at their localities and the turn up was very good. The meeting was aimed at sensitizing these leaders on the importance of the forest, the need to protect it, the impacts that could arise if we fail to protect the forest, the laws that are there to protect the forest and the need to adopt a participatory approach in order to manage the forest sustainably. The leaders were also trained on communication skills, methods and strategies that were going to help them pass this message to

their population to see the need to stop poaching and over exploitation of forest resources and engage in sustainable forest management activities. Many questions were brought up. The question on alternative way of livelihood to the forest kept up coming up, the greatest fear was what next will they do to earn a living? The question kept coming from one meeting to another. We explained them clearly on ways in which they can earn their living without destructing the forest. These alternative livelihoods should include the drilling of the population on modern agricultural methods, introduction of high quality breeds of animals in the region, domestication of wild plants and animal species of economic value and access to credit facilities to engage in to business activities. Most of them showed positive response and were ready to change their ways of living.

With the help of village leaders, Forest Department officials and the villagers we managed to make the village by laws in which they put clearly what action was going to be taken if someone caught destructing the forest. They all agreed and every one was ready to make sure no one goes against the laws.



A GROUP OF WOMEN IN A MEETING

❖ **OBJECTIVE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

The objective of environmental sensitisation campaign which was carried out was to build the capacity of primary and secondary schools teachers on how to include in their lessons the environmental and conservation issues for sustainability of our Pare mountain reserve. The environmental education lessons were meant to help teachers insist in the pupils and students of primary and secondary schools to promote sustainable forest resource use by living in harmony with nature. This was aimed at bringing up the young generation in such a way that they do not engage in the same activities that the older generation of the region have been

carrying out which are not environmentally friendly. The main concern was bringing up a new generation that will be friendly to nature.

The environmental sensitisation campaign for traditional leaders and other leaders of the region was also aimed at increasing their knowledge on the impact of the threat they pose to the forest and their role in remedying the situation by engaging them in sustainable forest management and use. Building the capacity of these leaders was a strategy we adopted to help them understand the impacts of unsustainable forest resource use like poaching and over exploitation of forest resources so that they could now sensitise their people on the need to stop these unsustainable activities. We told them that a participatory forest resource management was the best approach to be adopted especially now that the forest was suffering from degradation and over exploitation due to increase in pressure exerted to the forest.

❖ **COURSES DELIVERED IN ALL GROUPS COMPRISE OF THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS:**

- Environment education and community-based conservation
- Community outreach techniques
- Communication skills
- Environmental journalism.
- Concept of sustainable development and its linkages with forest resources,
- Natural resources and environment protection/ management
- Tree nursery and woodlot establishment and maintenance,
- Alternative sources of income such as bee and poultry keeping, as well and sunflower and groundnut cultivation.
- The importance of trees in soil conservation,
- Rain catchments, medicinal value, aesthetic value, fodder, soil fertility improvement and the general land cover

❖ **MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

• **Formation of conservation committees**

A total of three Conservation Committees, each comprising of 6 members, drawn from the formal and traditional leaderships, have been formed in all of the target three villages. The Committees have been equipped to conserve the forest through social sanctions, cultural mechanisms, community education, etc.

Other duties of the conservation committee were:

- Regular patrolling to the forest reserve.
- Raise conservation awareness for conservation of Pare mountain forest reserve.
- Punish those who work against the rule and regulation of Committee.

- **Essay Competition**

Essay writing Competition was organized in all the four primary and secondary schools. There essays covered various topics namely ‘Development of forest conservation’, ‘Water is life’, ‘Relationship between forest and water etc.

In this competition 40 students participated and there was no word limit, the participants came up with some really good essays and judged by the team members of the project. The language used was Swahili in both primary school and secondary schools students. The result of the Essay Competition and prizes they won are as follows:

<i>1st – Winner-</i>	School bag, Pen and pencil with a pair of compass
<i>2nd - Winner-</i>	Pen and pencil with a pair of compass.
<i>3rd – Winner-</i>	Two pens and two pencils.

All others who participated were given one pen each.
Essay competition was done once every term.

- **Art Competition**

The Project organized an art competition where the students with their exceptional artistic talent competed for an attractive first prize of Tsh 100,000 on the theme “**Water every where but no drop to drink!**” Altogether 16 students participated from schools. The result of the Art Competition and prizes they won are as follows:

<i>1st – Winner –</i>	Tshs 100,000
<i>2nd - Winner -</i>	Tshs 50,000
<i>3rd – Winner -</i>	Tshs 20,000

All other who participated were given Tshs 5,000 each

- **Local Meetings**

A total of 12 local meetings were held in the area and 24 meetings were held in schools; through local meetings, conservation committees and conservation groups were formed. We introduced this group to district forest department and they are also working together. The district authority promised to take them through short conservation courses.

- **Distribution of posters, leaflets, stickers, banners, etc**

We prepared 500 paper posters, 1,000 leaflets and 500 stickers for distribution. Posters have been put up on school walls, electricity poles, shop walls and government offices. Stickers were used on vehicles and buses. Banners were used at local meetings and school quizzes.

- **School Quizzes**

We conducted quizzes on the role and importance of pare mountains, environmental protection, pollution control etc to local schools and prizes were awarded to the winners.

- **Tree Nurseries**
A total of 500 tree nurseries were planted by school children and locals at the target villages around water sources, schools and in open spaces. All the planted trees have been provided with protection fences. Around the water sources the species planted were those which does not have high water requirement.



TREE NURSERIES

Challenges faced and Solutions adopted

At the beginning people were very reluctant to attend meetings, but with the emphases and education given out with time the attendance were very good. The contribution from the community was very helpful to us on setting the strategies for conservation.

There was a challenge from the community on what they will use for cooking in substitute of firewood. In this case we started a group of locals who were taught on how to make energy saver stoves so as to reduce pressures to the forest, it was successful and almost in every house the started to use energy saver stoves. With the use of such stoves they are using few woods/charcoal than before.

Changes to the project arising during the year

There were no changes in our project plans. Apart from completing all proposed work items, we encouraged planting nursery trees and transplanting to different areas.

WAY FORWARD AND FUTURE ACTION

We aim to apply for a booster grant from Rufford Foundation this year to carry out the project on a much larger scale in future.

There is a need to protect the intellectual property right of the unearthed local knowledge from the perspective of national and international levels. This is yet another area where we need some serious input and follow up from Rufford as we take this initiative to the next level.

Encourage and sensitize or educate women/men self help groups including youth groups to start their own tree nurseries and have the government support, if we are to play a more significant role now and in future. This will be made possible by assurance of seedlings and necessary farm inputs at a subsidized cost. Women have closely relation to the nature, so I believe working with women will have positive and quick impact to Pare mountain forest reserve. Women groups formed at community level are responsible to many kind of development activities. They have to perform day to day household works including cleaning and feeding livestock, so they collect firewood, grasses and forage from vicinity of the forest and marshes of forest areas. The project aims to mobilize these groups for sustainable management of Pare mountain forest reserve.

I personally strongly feel that the youth are our future. As such mobilizing and encouraging young people to plant the foregoing noted indigenous plants and trees will help ensure continuity and right attitude to environmental conservation for our present good and for the posterity.

To that end therefore, there is need for financial support in making the above initiatives a reality on the way forward.

Conservation Committees will work with their district offices to establish local educators, which they will then train and assist in implementing conservation education activities in cooperation with other district departments.

CONCLUSION

The schools and communities have been organized and capacitated to conserve the depleting forest in an effective manner. The target groups are made aware concerning the significance of this crucial resource and motivated to conserve the forest. Various issues concerning forest depletion have been addressed. The schools and communities have been imparted with the skills and knowledge to conserve and restore the forest habitats for their present and future generations.

The meeting in the villages around the forest was all about benefit-sharing between the local people and conservation. Gender issues were at the priority. Women were tasked on their role in conservation and livelihood activities. Through the meetings, the women got to know that several opportunities existed for developing micro-enterprise activities with support from District councils (the main government authority at the district level).

Education on the use of energy saver charcoal stoves were given to the villagers especially women who are largely involved in cooking process.

As part of the awareness component of our project, a meeting with opinion leaders as held as it was revealed that the community leaders have a lot of influence to their people.

What the project has greatly achieved for encouraging women participation and also getting them to contribute.