

Gangavazi – Building Community Resilience to Climate Change

Phase Two: September 2018

Project Report

SAFE Pwani Gangavasi Project History

In partnership with the University of Exeter, SAFE Pwani carried out phase one of their environment programme with the communities around Vanga and Gazi in Kwale County on the south coast of Kenya. S.A.F.E. created a play called Gangavazi, that looked at the interlocking risks that faced this fictional village, as the inhabitants struggled to deal with the effects of climate breakdown. These communities were chosen because they had recently been victim to a series of extreme weather events. As SAFE Pwani were finishing their first tour in December 2015, the area was hit once again by flooding.

Information collected from this initial tour was shared with academics at the University of Exeter and this fed into the paper [*The drama of resilience: learning, doing, and sharing for sustainability*](#), published in the journal Ecology and Society. Additionally, a short [documentary](#) was created.

A year after the initial outreach, S.A.F.E. returned to the communities to screen this documentary and assess the impact of the outreach in terms of how the communities were building their resilience. Over 3000 people from 7 villages attended the screenings and 167 people attended the follow up workshops.

The following key developments had been achieved by the community in between the initial outreach and the screenings:

- Increased security by the Beach Management Unit (BMU) had reduced the use of dynamite when fishing and other illegal fishing methods.
- Increased tree coverage had been achieved through strict reforestation policies which increased the soil yield as the ground retains more moisture allowing crops to thrive.
- Introduction of waste bins in the villages has increased cleanliness and hygiene in the community, with people reporting a decrease in disease.
- An increased awareness of the importance of education has increased school attendance, (additionally a government initiative to increase the attendance of girls in school through the provision of sanitary towels is proving effective).

Gangavasi Episode Two

In September 2018, SAFE Pwani carried out a follow up tour with episode two of the environment play that highlighted some of the obstacles that had become clear following the initial outreach. They also supported community environmental activists to carry out tree

planting, and beach and village clean ups. These had been two of the key initiatives requested in the target villages.

Area information

The villages targeted for this outreach were situated on or near the beach, with fishing being a main source of employment for the men. Education and employment opportunities are limited, with families usually choosing to funnel their limited resources into educating the boys in the family, leaving the girls at home to support the running of the home and often to marry early.

The key challenges facing these communities are:

- Poverty leading to a prevalence in environmentally harmful businesses e.g. Charcoal.
- Lack of knowledge of effective and sustainable farming and fishing methods
- Limited education for girls
- Prevalence of disease caused by the unclean environment.
- Vulnerability to extreme weather events.

Partners

There are several NGOs and community groups active in the south coastal region who partnered with SAFE Pwani for Gangavazi Ep 2:

Base Titanium is a mining company who have several community outreach programmes as part of their CSR initiative. These programmes are based around supporting school and community groups to educate on the importance of protecting diversity and creating business opportunities from waste management.

WWF sponsor conservation projects, concentrating on marine life and beach clean ups in order to promote protection of the coral reefs and sustainable fishing with the objective of maintaining the fish stocks.

KEMFRI (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute), focus on the marine ecosystems, particularly those within mangrove forests. They support small grassroots organisations, both with technical and financial assistance.

Project Activities

Performances

The original Ganagvasi play (2015) focused on three main issues which local communities identified as the causes of environmental destruction: irresponsible farming/fishing, a lack of emphasis on girl's education, and the lack of community cohesion to address these challenges. Audiences also explored other challenges such as the prevalence of the charcoal industry, and inadequate waste disposal systems.

Gangavasi Ep 2 featured the three main characters (Faisal, Omar and Chengo) discussing the latest environmental problems which had been revealed during the research; deforestation and plastic waste. The characters also touched on other topics such as building toilets to limit human waste from polluting the ocean, and actively promotes girls education. When Faisal's daughter Halima announces that she is planning to stand as the local youth representative it is met with roars of laughter from the old men who can't believe that a girl could ever be picked to be the youth rep.

As we leave the community, Halima has achieved her goal of becoming the youth rep and under her leadership, the youth wing had made such good progress in creating community unity on environmental matters, that the local MP has decided to invest in her projects.

Audience Feedback

- Trees must be protected as they are essential to mitigate flooding.
- Both genders must be treated equally for the prosperity of the community.
- Proper waste management initiatives must be created.
- The natural environment must be conserved.

Following the performance, SAFE Pwani led communities in tree planting and beach clean up activities.



SAFE Pwani Simbaropa team mobilise the community

Activity Results

Date	Location	Activity	Participants	Comments
11/09/18	Gazi	Beach clean up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KEMFRI - Base Titanium - Gazi Women - Baraka Conservation Group - Mikoko Pamoja - Home Sweet Home - Sea grass - WWF - Black Gold - Primary School Students - Community members 	<p>The people of Gazi were enthusiastic and happy to take part in the beach clean-up and were attentive during the performance, eager to learn more about how they can adapt to better protect their environment.</p> <p>Initiatives created after the previous Gangavazi outreach were still going strong. One success was the conservation club which aimed to tell the community about the environment, encouraging them to adopt sustainable farming, fishing and business practices. Additionally, new bi-laws which had been created were being adhered to.</p> <p>The team found that environment knowledge was high in Gazi.</p> <p>The clean-up in Gazi was carried out in partnership with KEMFRI and Base Titanium. Each group were given a different type of waste to clean up which would then be disposed of by Base Titanium, either into land fill or recycled. Participants covered 1.5 KM of beach, picking up a total of 718.14 KG worth of waste, 500 people took part in the activity.</p> <p>Black Gold – a local dance group – then performed in celebration of the end of the beach clean up.</p>
13/09/18	Vanga	Beach clean up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community members - Schools - VAJIKI Conservation group - Mwambinaje group - Mwangugu group 	<p>Vanga, one of the southernmost villages in Kenya before the border with Tanzania is one of the leading villages in the area in terms of environmental initiatives. The community have set up a group call Vajika to coordinate projects across Vanga and the neighbouring smaller villages. One of the most successful</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BMU 	<p>initiatives they have started is Mangrove propagation and sale.</p> <p>The beach clean-up in Vanga was done without the help of Base Titanium which meant that the community were left to divide and dispose of the waste themselves. The waste was divided into what could be burnt, what needed to be buried and what could be taken to the Base Titanium holding plant for processing.</p> <p>640 people took part in the activity.</p>
12/09/18	Majoreni Secondary school	Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Majoreni Secondary School - Majoreni Primary School - Bright academy Primary School - Ganda Primary School - Majoreni B.M.U - Chete Cha Kale mangrove group - Majoreni community 	<p>Majoreni secondary school was selected as the tree planting site because the Head Teacher had requested an intervention to protect the school against strong winds, which damaged the main school building. Also, there was an area adjacent to the school which had suffered from soil erosion.</p> <p>Majoreni school also has an active environment club. They are committed to working with SAFE through planting mangroves as well as educating the wider community on the importance of caring for the environment. They have been inspired by Islamic teachings which preach care of the environment.</p> <p>Teachers from the school and representatives of the environment club both emphasised the need for further girls' education, there is a high prevalence of early marriage and pregnancy which the community they said needed to stop.</p> <p>Following the tree planting activity, the head teacher also requested that</p>

				<p>SAFE Pwani find funds for a school mentorship programme.</p> <p>During the activity, 238 trees were planted, the trees are to be monitored by the school environment club. 240 people took part in the activity.</p>
14/09/18	Vanga	Tree Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community members - School students - Vajiki Conservation group - Mwambinaje Group - Mwangugu Group - BMU 	<p><i>See Vanga description above</i></p> <p>Once SAFE Pwani had mobilised the group, the the Vajika chairman spoke to the community about the importance of the Mangrove propagation project which targeting carbon emissions. He also told the community that it provided a safe place for flora and fauna to flourish. He emphasised that there is money to be made sustainably from Mangroves, such as the carbon trade and bee farming.</p> <p>A total of 230 mangrove trees were planted, contributing to the Vanga tree planting project. 160 people took part in the activity.</p>
15/09/18	Shimoni	Beach Clean up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Base Titanium - KEMFRI - Shimony Primary School - Wasini Primary School - Wasini Youth Group - BWU - MEDIA 	<p>This activity was organised between SAFE Pwani and their partners in order to celebrate International Coastal Clean Up Day started by Ocean Conservancy.</p> <p>Each of the organisations present were given an opportunity to introduce themselves. Then the community were divided into groups, given sacks and gloves to begin the clean-up – during this time, the simbaropa entertained the crowd.</p> <p>400 people took part in the activity.</p>



School children take part in the clean up



Community members planting Mangroves where the forest had previously been cleared

Conclusions

Community Achievements under the Gangavazi programme

Creation and prevalence of locally led environment groups

The team were encouraged to see that locally led environment groups were flourishing, both in the community and in schools. These groups were proving successful in providing education within the community, as was shown by the high level of knowledge on environmental matters.

Successful use of the carbon trade

Community groups have forged partnerships with carbon offsetting organisations to gain income for planting trees, this is particularly true in Vanga where they have planted over 700,000 mangrove trees – creating a reserve which can help serve other communities with seedlings to assist their own reforestation efforts.

Community recognition and pride in conservation efforts

The work of community environmental groups is beginning to gain the attention of national and international agencies who are visiting the area to study the initiatives, and capture the community's efforts. This had led to increased investment in the activities and community capacity trainings.

Challenges faced by the community

Lack of demand for sustainable produce

There is not currently a good return on investment for farmers growing seedlings, as people are not buying the young trees, and if they are, it is at a very low price. Therefore, it is hard for farmers to make money from this sustainable business, so they are returning to traditional farming. This has created a lack of diversity of seedlings, with mangroves being favoured over other indigenous trees, which could boost income generation from local eco-tourism and the harvesting of fruits, nuts and natural medicines.

Economic hardship

Economic hardship prevents the whole community from taking part in economic activities because they are busy making money for their families. This contributes to the often-low turnout at village clean ups unless people are offered financial remuneration for their participation, or external organisations spend time mobilising the community and providing clean up equipment. Therefore, when there is no longer funding for projects, the guardians will go and seek economic opportunities elsewhere, leaving initiatives to fail.

Lack of community cohesion

In each of the villages SAFE Pwani visited on this tour, there are several different groups carrying out their own activities either with external partners or within the community.

However, these different initiatives are being carried out separately, for example there are different groups giving out tree cutting permits, setting different areas where trees can be cut, leading to protected trees being cut down.

Additionally, it is difficult for the community environmental activists to mobilise the community to come together and make decisions concerning the environment, for example, where to dig a dump site for waste. This lack of decision making is preventing the community from carrying out effective clean ups because waste is being dumped in the ocean.

Over reliance on external partners

Previous NGOs and organisations working in coastal communities have paid people to participate in their programmes, meaning that often the community do not realise the benefit of the programmes beyond their immediate monetary value. It can also be hard to mobilise people who, due to poverty, need to be doing income generating activities and not voluntary work for the community.

NGOs also bring safety and protective gear to aid the community adding to reliance on external partners.

Gangavazi Episode Two Highlights

- Nearly 2000 people mobilised and taking part in environment initiatives
- Planting of 468 trees by community volunteers
- High quality drama delivered to four communities in Kwale County
- Findings from Gangavazi episode two formed the basis of a successful environment proposal, enabling SAFE Pwani to create Gangavazi episode three in early 2019.

Way Forward

During the project, the team were struck by the hard work and dedication of the community environmental groups and activists who were trying to galvanise their villages towards a more sustainable future. These environmental champions were coming up against considerable challenges.

In the first quarter of 2019, SAFE Pwani returned to these communities to provide support to these groups and individuals, both by using performance to engage people on the importance of community cohesion and to provide investment and training into their local initiatives.