

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

19-20 JULY 2016 | THE CAPITOL HOTEL TOKYU | TOKYO, JAPAN

SESSION FIVE: YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Photo credit: Nick Hall

Watamu Marine Association

**Watamu, Kilifi County, Coast Province
Kenya**

1) What is the focus of this project?

The main focus of the **Watamu Marine Association (WMA)** project is to:

- Significantly reduce the amount of plastic and other marine debris impacting the Watamu Marine National Park and beaches in Kenya.
- Develop sustainable community based waste management capacity and create small recycling business enterprises by establishing a Waste Recycling Value Chain.
- Provide education and raise awareness on waste management best practices and replicate the project in other coastal towns and villages.

2) Which organizations and other partners are involved?

WMA comprises over 30 member groups and organizations from a cross section of the tourism, community and environment sectors in Watamu. The Association was formed in response to concerns over unsustainable marine resource use, conflicts among resource users, and threats to the marine environment.

WMA has built partnerships on a number of levels. It develops local partnerships among its membership to build capacity within community groups and, especially, connect them with members from the tourism industry, particularly hotels. Other project partners include government agencies, such as the Kenya Wildlife Service and National Environment Management Authority. Beach cleaning and recycling partners include the Ocean Conservancy, Ocean Sole - the Flip Flop Recycling Company, the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife Kenya and Friends from Ireland.

3) What activities or tools have proven successful in building capacity?

The main areas of work for WMA involve:

- Supporting marine environmental welfare and the sustainable use of marine resources;
- Developing marine conservation projects;
- Supporting sustainable tourism and community based ecotourism development;
- Developing community based groups and business enterprises;
- Operating solid waste management and recycling enterprises.

The development of a Solid Waste Recycling Facility has been the main capacity building success. This now provides sustainable waste management and recycling capacity, jobs and income to 25 community waste collectors and recyclers, and includes a center where community artists can create art and crafts from recyclable waste materials.

In addition, developing good relations between community based organizations and the local tourism industry has resulted in the long term sponsorship of beach cleaning and waste management activities. This has helped empower poor community groups and further develop community based waste management capacity.

4) What challenges have been experienced, specifically related to maintaining a focus on capacity building and/or replicating the project in other areas?

A main challenge was raising funds to purchase land and develop the recycling facility. This took four years, which delayed the project reaching full capacity.

The project has inspired other communities along the coast to clean beaches and recycle the waste produced in their villages. Training and education has been provided to several community groups along the coast, and a Waste Recycling Value Chain has been created whereby plastic waste can be sold to the Project Recycling Facility, flip flop waste can be sold to Ocean Sole in Nairobi, and community artwork created from recycled materials can be sold in hotel boutiques.

5) What are the next steps for the project?

The project plans to expand its outreach to more communities and set up a waste recycling operations and network along the coast. Regular beach cleanups will take place and major national beach cleaning events will be organized, for example on World Environment Day, World Ocean Day and International Coastal Cleanup Day. Beach cleaning will produce tonnes of recyclable waste and provide an income to coast communities.

The Watamu Recycling Facility is also demonstrating other recycling technologies including composting, and producing biogas and bio-fuel from organic waste products. All new buildings are made from waste plastic and glass bottles and the site is being branded as *Eco World Watamu*. This project component is already a popular public and tourist attraction and is generating regional and international interest as a case study for community based environmental initiatives. WMA is also inviting partnerships with government and educational institutions to create a center of learning for environmental best practices.

<http://www.watamu.biz/watamu-community.php?cid=32>

MALINDI-WATAMU COAST

