

**Conservation of the montane rain forest through  
rehabilitation of degraded agricultural landscapes, water  
sources and degraded road sides at Yoghoi and Mayo  
village in Lushoto district, Tanzania.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ACTION  
**Weltweit e.V**

**FIELD REPORT**

**Project supported by:** Stiftung Ursula Merz

**Project implemented by:** Environmental Conservation Action, Yoghoi Pentecoste  
Church and Shembekezo Environmental Conservation Group

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## **1. Background**

Conservation of the montane rain forest through rehabilitation of the degraded agricultural landscapes, water sources and road sides in Yoghoi and Mayo villages/Shembekezo villages is a joint project implemented by three community groups namely Environmental Conservation Action, Yoghoi Pentecostal Church and Shembekezo Conservation Group in Tanzania. The project involves also collaboration from the Weltweit e.V. in Germany.

The project is carried out in two villages of Yoghoi and Mayo villages located in Lushoto district in Tanga region. The villages are located in the sloping areas making them vulnerable to soil erosion causing agricultural landscape degradation which results in a reduced agricultural production, hence food insecurity and poverty are major threats. Soil erosion and other environmental problems have also resulted to degradation of the water sources forcing women to walk long distances especially as from 4am to fetch water. Absence of water sources in these villages has led to adverse social (e.g. increased health problems, unsafe walks for women to reach the water sources) and economic effects (e.g. increased poverty). The loss of agricultural land through erosion and degradation of fertility forces the farmers to claim new land through deforestation. Thus the last remaining patches of natural montane rain forest are further diminished threatening wildlife and plants that are unique to the Usambara mountains and already on the IUCN red list.

Hence this project is an intervention to contribute to the conservation of the natural montane rain forests by rehabilitating the degraded agricultural landscape and water

sources. Besides, the projects aimed also to conserve the degraded roadsides by planting trees along the local roads located in these two villages to support the communication between the villages.

## **2. Objectives & Activities of the project:**

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to the conservation of the natural forests. The project aim is to conserve the degraded agricultural landscape, water sources and roadsides in Yoghoi and Shembekezo/Mayo villages. Specific objectives of the project include,

- To scale-up tree nurseries to yield 30,000 seeds at Yoghoi and Mayo tree nurseries respectively (15.000 in the first year).
- To support beekeeping activities by providing beehives
- To raise community awareness on forest conservation and restoration of the degraded water sources.

The first phase in the first year of funding of this project started in January, 2018 whereby the following proposed project activities were undertaken. They include:

- i) Sensitization and awareness creation on tree planting and beekeeping.* The project conducted one seminar, two workshops and one meeting in Yoghoi and Shembekezo/Mayo villages. The events involved introduction of the project, awareness raising on the issues addressed and providing of the necessary equipments to support the project activities.



ii) *Introduction and the establishment of the tree nurseries activities in Yoghoi and Mayo villages.* Two tree nurseries that yielded 30,000 seedlings have been established. Each tree nursery has an estimated size of 10 meters width and 15 metres of length. Species of *albizia* (16,000 seeds), *grevilea* (4000), *cyprus* (5000) and *pinus* species (5000) were sown in which the main activities included, site preparation, manure collection, irrigation and weeding of the nursery.



Seedlings were also given to schools and people in the villages as part of the project's environmental education program. The seedlings were transported to the schools and other areas of planting in Mayo and Yoghoi villages. Others were collected by students from schools located in the two villages and Mbelei Secondary School. Mbelei school received 3,500 seedlings that will also be planted in the school farms and the school roads. The schools showed their great appreciation in a letter thanking for the reception of the seedlings which were planted in the school farms with the area totalling 6 acres and the school roads of about 2 kilometers. Other schools both primary and secondary schools in Shembekezo received about 4,000 seedlings which will also be planted in the school farms of an estimated 8 acres of land and the school roads of an estimated four kilometres.



The Yoghoi church distributed seedlings to the people for free to plant in their own farms for the purpose of conservation of the agricultural landscape and the areas around the water sources for conservation and boundaries demarcation.



iii) *Introduction of the beekeeping activities in Yoghoi and Shembekezo villages.*

40 beehives were made and are managed by Yoghoi Pentecostal Church and the Shembekezo Group. 40 people were also trained on beekeeping where 20 came from Mayo and 20 came from Yoghoi village.



### **a. Project progress**

The exercise on seedlings distribution from the two tree nurseries has been going on up to the time of this reporting. This is also the good time for planting as it is expected to rain towards the end of the year, which is November and December. Yoghoi Pentecostal Church and Shembekezo Group have continued to support the coordination of the activities on the ground.



Particular areas of the community farms which have been affected by erosion will be planted with the trees from the two nurseries. The same will apply to the degraded water sources and road sides in Yoghoi and Shembekezo villages. Farmers who participate in planting trees on communal ground are rewarded with free saplings for their own farm. Both Yoghoi and Shembekezo tree nurseries that yielded 30,000 seeds will be maintained to yield other 30,000 seedlings or even more when the second phase comes.



So far we have 40 beehives already installed, 20 in Yoghoi and 20 in Kizanda/Shembekezo village. These beehives were placed on the community farms of which other are part of the water sources. It is expected that other 80 beehives will be made in the second year of the project funding.



The criteria used in deciding to give the farmers the beehives is based on their long term engagement and motivation in forest conservation and having their farms close to the water sources and this is managed by the leaders of the Pentecostal Church in Yoghoi and the leaders of Shembekezo Group in Mayo.

## **b. Links with other organization**

This project is linked up with schools in the villages that received the seedlings and planted in their farms and along the roads. The Yoghoi Pentecostal Church is already collaborating through its presence in the tree nursery activities and beekeeping.

In the Coast Region the project has attracted collaboration with another Community Group in Kidogozero which is doing beekeeping and about 10 beehives were made and placed in the community farms which is also good for the conservation of the miombo woodland. The Environmental Conservation Action has supported this and raised awareness on environmental conservation through supporting the ART work and football. The chairman of ECA (Mr.Ibrahim) has also received a certificate of appreciation on environmental conservation in Kidogozero village and Mwambisi Secondary School. ECA had also hosted a soccer league in Kidogozero village as part of awareness creation.



### **c. Description of the activities for the next period**

The following activities will be undertaken in the second year of the project funding. They include:

Sowing of other 30,000 seedling that is 15,000 at Yoghoi and 15,000 at Kizanda in Shembekezo making a total of 60,000 seedlings so far from the two tree nurseries. The main activities will involve collection of the necessary materials, site preparations, watering of the tree nurseries, weeding, and transportation of the seedlings and eventually planting in the desired areas.

Construction of other 80 beehives, that is 40 in Yoghoi and 40 in Shembekezo will be the next activity for the second year of this project. With the beehives already placed on the trees near the water sources and along the community farms, there will be a need for more awareness creation and monitoring of the beehives to be followed by workshops and a meeting to discuss the progress of the project and future/ way forward for the project. The project will also prepare a group visit among the two villages for knowledge sharing on environmental conservation and beekeeping.

Addition of extra activities for awareness creation will be an important focus to counterweigh carelessness and the desire for logging. Sports activities among the villages will be an important part for consideration.

#### **d. Expenditures**

For the first phase the project has spent about 20,000 Euros equivalent to 50,000,000 Tanzanian Shilling to continue with the project activities that included expanding the tree nursery activities, beekeeping and awareness creation. Other activities will continue when there is the second phase of the project funding. Activities that were primarily planned for the second year have been anticipated already in the first year. Those included mainly the nursery activities. Instead of raising 30.000 seedlings in the nursery of Yoghoi village the project leaders decided to start the second nursery at Shembekezo in the same year and evenly split the amount of seedlings to be raised to 15.000 at each nursery site. This somehow meant additional costs for nursery site preparation and explains why the target of 75 beehives for this year was only met by 40 hives. Concerning the entire 3-year project it was more cost effective to start both nurseries more or less simultaneously, but more important than this, it caused a stronger and more immediate exchange of experiences between the two implementing partner organizations, which highly improved the efficiency of the nursery operation and the ambitions/motivation of the groups' members.

#### **e. Challenges**

A few challenges were encountered during the project implementation though they had little effect on the project activities. One of these challenges included lack of understanding the importance of the project logic on imagery (photos) representation of the project activities. The two groups tended to pay more

attention on the field activities rather than the recording of the activities by photos and as a result some activities are not well covered on the photos for the project reporting, for example the actual planting activities of the seedlings.

There was a challenge of the difficult terrain in Shembekezo plus the rainy season which made it difficult for transportation of the materials such as those used in making the beehives.

Also doing all the activities for the two sites at the same time was somehow a challenge to the project implementation. The project has initially planned to start for one site (Shembekezo) and to proceed with the Yoghoi in the next phase. But due to mobilization and seasonality, the project started in both sites at the same time. This resulted to workload and eventually to challenge the project implementation. But in retrospect we can say that the results for the first year were well worth the extra workload.