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**Madagascar and Western
Indian Ocean Programme**

Successful Communities from Ridge to Reef project

Introduction

Southern Madagascar is home to some unique biodiversity and forest habitats of the world. Embedding extremely high levels of local endemism, makes it a high priority for conservation efforts. As communities of these parts totally depend upon natural resources, the threats to the biodiversity and natural habitats, from evolving unsustainable use of natural resources, jeopardize the maintenance and viability of those richness.

Objectives

The above untitled-project, also called PHE (Population Health Environment) project, targets the alleviation of threats against biodiversity that are the result of population behavior, particularly in relation to natural resources, especially the forest resources. In the field, the project wants to bring up some behavior change towards management and use of natural resources at the level of local communities. Therefore, small doable actions as family planning, tree planting,are promoted. If they provide short term results, they are contributing to long term impacts.

This project contributes to the Biodiversity Goals and metagoals of WWF since it helps preservation of biodiversity while promoting increased population responsibility towards natural resources management and wise use. Moreover, it contributes to footprint alleviation while promoting saving of energy.

Project description

The PHE project initiated by WWF and NGO partner ASOS (Action Santé Organisation Secours) is a pilot component and social approach of the larger Dry Forest Ecoregion Program catalyzed by WWF to address threats against biodiversity. ASOS implements field activities and provides expertise on reproductive Health and Health component. WWF coordinates and monitors the project, gives support to ASOS on any topic related to natural resources management.

WWF and ASOS work together to carry out small doable actions that fulfill the above-mentioned long term goal. Activities include :

- Promotion of Family planning, to decrease demographic growth
- Promotion of Tree planting to make available more potential source of firewood and woods for building
- Use of fuel saving stoves to slow down the need of firewood at the level of households
- Community based natural resources management, community self-rules for a better forest management and use
- Promotion of income generating activities,

The project implementation started in 2004 and targets about a total population of 20000 or 3300 households. There are 23 intervention sites, with, distributed throughout the 4 communes of 3 regions in the southern part of Madagascar, which are Androy, Anosy, South West. The 4 communes are Ankilioaky, Beahitse, Tranomaro and Behara. These sites neighbor priority conservation areas identified in the Spiny forest ecoregion.



Achievements/ Impacts

Some quantified results show that, within all sites :

- The increase of use of family planning between June 07 and June 08 is more than 200% (506 to 1101 women of reproductive age).
- The increase of fuel saving energy adopters between June 07 and June 08 is also more than 200% (346 to 912 adopters).
- About 10000 trees were planted during the tree planting campaign of 2007-2000. All of them resulted from pure household efforts without any external and financial support (communities successfully could cope with 20 plants per household).
- The project partnered with the WWF Ala Maiky Ecoregion Program and so far, gave support to 11 ongoing processes of Community based of natural resources management under an area of more than 100,000 ha
- 96 community volunteers, successfully implemented various income generating activities such as vegetable gardening, little business, ...

In summary, the project resulted in a clear positive trend of behavior change following enhanced buy-in of PHE activities by communities.

Challenges

Now that the project is about to meet its end, after four years and a half of implementation, the challenges are :

- To hold the project activities more sustainable when the project team had gone
- So as to clearly demonstrate effective link between the positive results of the actions and the expected impacts towards biodiversity sustainability, scaling up of activities needs to be implemented and therefore, fundraising for new project funding be successful.

Financement

The project is funded by the USAID Global Population Fund of Washington.



WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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