



CASE STUDY

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Case Study:

Locally Managed Marine Area:
Kuruwitu co-management area

Contributors:

Kuruwitu Conservation and Welfare
Community Based Organization (KCW
CBO) and CORDIO East Africa.

KEY MESSAGES

- Establishment of a community-managed area to enhance fishery and tourism incomes shared across a local community results in improved coral reef health and in the long term, greater and diversified benefits and incomes.
- Community empowerment and management strengthens and/or rebuilds natural, economic and social assets, thus improving food security and resilience to external threats, including climate change.
- Building trust and social capital over the long term, supported in early stages by seed funds, turns users from stakeholders to shareholders in the socio-ecological system and generates secondary outcomes across a wide range of domains.

Principle links to the post-2020 GBF goals:

- A. Conserving and rebuilding coral reef natural assets (corals, fish);
- B. Sustainable and diversified use of coral reef services (fishing, tourism)
- C. Equitable sharing of the benefits through a community institution (comanagement)
- D. Seed funding and income generation through sustainable resource use.

Background

The Kuruwitu co-management area is a locally managed protected area on a fringing coral reef, 30 km north of Mombasa, in Kenya. The reef flat is exposed at low tides providing easy access by walking and swimming through waist-deep water. With many decades of intense fishing pressure, population growth in adjacent villages and the nearby towns and development threaten most Kenyan coral reefs by over-exploitation from artisanal/small-scale fisheries, and declining habitat quality. This case study features a locally led collaboration between the local fishing community and residents to protect a reef area and thereby improve local fisherfolks' fish catch and stimulate tourism and diversified revenue into the local economy.



The Kuruwitu no-take zone (NTZ), established in 2006 by the Kuruwitu Conservation and Welfare Community Based Organization (KCW CBO) is found within Kuruwitu co-management area. The KCW CBO is a community group established in 2003 within the local Beach Management Unit (BMU). The co-management area covers six fish landing sites with a total area of approximately 100 sq. km, while the NTZ covers 29 ha of the backreef/reef lagoon within it. As part of the co-management area, stakeholders voluntarily agreed to close part of their fishing grounds for conservation and to monitor the use of illegal gears such as beach seines, fine mesh nets (including mosquito nets) and monofilament nets.

In Kenya, BMUs are established by the government with local communities to ensure management is locally owned and benefits are shared. BMUs prepare co-management plans and bylaws that regulate fishing in their co-management area. Gender-balance in BMU committees is required by law.

Key stake/shareholders:

Kuruwitu BMU, KCW CBO, Oceans Alive Trust, Kenya Fisheries Service, local government.

Primary beneficiaries:

- The Beach Management Unit and its members consisting of the wider fishing community including fish traders.
- Tourism entities, tourist guides, local restaurants, beach vendors (including those who sell crafts, local produce such as fruit, coconuts, etc.) and visitors.
- Education and research institutions, school children educated through the marine-based education programme.

Natural asset



Direct benefits/actions



Indirect benefits



Key outcomes or impact:

This first community fishery NTZ in Kenya has shown a range of positive outcomes, centered on benefits accrued for the stakeholders, more appropriately now dubbed 'shareholders' of the initiative:

Reduced drivers:

- Reduced or eliminated poor, unsustainable and illegal fishing practices.
- Stoppage of trampling and breakage of corals and crevices.
- Stoppage of aquarium fishing, coral extraction and shell collection.

Improved outputs, largely contributed by improved sustainable use activities:

- Spillover of fish from the no-take zone into the fished areas, improving fish stocks overall and consequently improving livelihoods .
- Recovery (at least partial) of the coral reef fishery .
- Assets for hire (i.e. generators, fishing boats).
- Restoration of biodiversity through protection including turtles and nests.
- A marine based education package offered to educational institutions.

Improved outcomes:

- Reduced dependence on subsistence fishing relieving pressure on the fishing grounds.
- The no-take zone has become a learning and demonstration site of community-based marine resource management for other coastal areas.
- Attracted other collaborators and partners such as civil society, government institutions to learn about the marine initiative.
- Establishment of waste collection and recycling center on the beach.
- Welfare and community support projects, improving community access to clean water, education and health facilities.
- Increased revenue through alternative income generating enterprises and training, taking the pressure off the marine resource (e.g. fish selling/ marketing, a farm, wood-work, tourism, locally made products and outlets).
- Initiation of related projects like aquaculture and coral restoration
- Initiation of a Sacco loan scheme in conjunction with a dividend scheme from a percentage of profits from enterprise.
- A working, income generating Womens group
- A change in gender attitudes in the community, as sitting together on a gender-balanced board is reported as having a broader significant impact.

Key challenges faced:

Primary threats driving degradation of the coral reef:

- Overfishing of key species.
- Unregulated and unsustainable fish and coral collection for the aquarium trade.
- Use of destructive and illegal gears and breakage of corals and shelter by trampling, and spearing for octopus.
- Coral mortality from bleaching due to high temperatures, first experienced in the 1997/98 El Nino.
- Degraded marine habitats relating to on shore developments like construction, sand harvesting, desalination and pollution

Primary trade-offs for establishing the community managed area:

- Designating fishing grounds as a no-take zone is challenging for many fishers whose effort are displaced by the protection zone.
- Benefits from potential increased fish catch in the future don't address immediate income needs, and final success and improved catch/revenue are unpredictable.
- Revenue from tourism in the managed area is unpredictable and may go to people other than the fishers affected by the closure.
- Conflict between different stakeholder and shareholder perspectives.

Primary social and economic challenges

- Because conservation benefits require a long period of time until their benefits are realized, this is a long-term strategic intervention, not a short-term solution and thus more difficult to be accepted.
- Fragmented community interests and ownership of the idea.
- Loss of fishing income for fishers displaced from the no-take zone until improvements in fish catch are experienced once fish stocks improve.
- Establishment of processes and governance to equitably share benefits across the whole community.
- Poor legal scope for co-management at early stages of development, and to support implementation and enforcement once plans are laid out.
- Costs, including time and resources and conflicts requiring mitigation to establish effective co-management.
- Fishers rights not supported.
- New challenges like Covid 19 affecting social interaction and traditional supply chains
- Improvement in fishing techniques threatening small scale fishermen

Lessons learnt:

- Local ownership: The initiative is community driven and managed in collaboration with all major stakeholders – including communities, other residents and local government.
- Sustainable revenue generation that can turn 'stakeholders' into 'shareholders': The initiative was centered around its primary natural assets, the generation of revenue from these in sustainable ways, and establishing mechanisms for sharing benefits among community members.
- Initial capital investment: The initiative has been supported financially through varied sources primarily donor funding, essential during the challenging scoping and establishment phases, and at levels adequate to maintain key functions such as patrolling and monitoring. However, this does not necessarily allow long term financial sustainability and viability.
- Enablers of success: The model includes many opportunities with direct application to different contexts and that allow for upscaling:
 - Direct support of the rights of fisherfolk and the communities.
 - Formation of a democratic system for marine governance that empowers communities to govern the use of their marine and coastal resources independently.
 - Opportunities for improving value chains in market centers (e.g. nearby town Mombasa, Nairobi) who pay higher prices for fish caught sustainably.
 - Gender and marginalized groups strengthened through governance structures.
 - Formation of a 29 ha NTZ and an inspiration to other BMUs who have subsequently established NTZs following this example.
 - Solid foundation following an ecosystem-based approach using our 4 pillars (ecological, economic, social, governance) has led to the creation of the Co-managed area.





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