

Coral Reef Case Study: Part II

Community-Based Management: Saving the Coral Reefs of Tanzania

This led the Tanzanian government to launch an innovative community-based coastal management program which emphasizes the collaboration between local communities and local and national authorities. The program is innovative because, rather than impose solutions from outside the communities of the Tanga coast, it has been designed to explore conservation measures with full participation by all stakeholder groups—villagers, government officials, commercial users, and non-governmental organizations. These measures will then be implemented by the local people themselves, thereby taking much of the enforcement burden off of the government.

Government extension workers began by conducting a series of participatory appraisals. This yielded important information on how the resources were used by the villagers, in addition to their perspectives on the problems facing these resources, and possible solutions to these problems. With the support of local officials, three pilot villages created committees to deal with destructive fishing, the increasing demand for fish, and the increasing numbers of fishers in the area. After two community-wide workshops, the committees have developed action plans that control types of fishing and close off parts of reefs to harvesting. Village elders inspect fishing gear and the fish for sale in local markets. There are also patrols against fishermen using dynamite.

Government officers have collaborated with the villagers to help enforce the management measures which were devised by the local communities. Efforts in the three pilot villages have proved so effective that fish landings have increased and more villages have come forward wanting to enter the program. The demand for community based management programs has exceeded the government's ability to respond, and demonstrated to the government the advantages of involving coastal communities in coral reef management. The sounds of blast fishing are now becoming a thing of the past along the Tanga coast.

Source: Reprinted with permission from NOAA's Reporter's Coral Reef Tip Sheet, June 23, 1997.
<<http://www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/iyorwk25.html>>, accessed May 3, 2005.