

Conserving and regenerating mangroves at Mithapur

Women and youth working at Arambda nursery, Gujarat, India © TCSRSD



1980s. The project was designed to embrace all of TCSRSD's objectives, including conservation, empowering women, income generation, community involvement and education.

Target beneficiaries

Local communities, especially women and young people.

Outputs

- ▶ A mangrove nursery established, planting sites identified, and 52,400 mangrove trees planted.
- ▶ The creation of ECO clubs in village schools to encourage young people to become conservation champions and contribute to the project's long-term sustainability.
- ▶ The ECO clubs constructively engaged 2,500 young people in 25 rural schools, familiarizing them with the issues and opportunities of mangrove conservation through awareness and exposure visits.
- ▶ The establishment of self-help groups in local villages to empower women and generate income.



LOCATION

Mithapur, Gujarat, India

PRIORITY POWS

- Knowledge for Management
- Civil Society Engagement
- Coastal Governance

DURATION

12 December 2008 to 31 October 2009, extended to 31 December 2009

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$8,000 (MFF)
US\$17,500 (Tata Chemicals Limited)

Objectives

This Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development (TCSRSD) project aimed to convert just over 20 hectares of barren mudflats to mangrove forest, thus increasing awareness and knowledge of community-based mangrove management, and developing a model for larger mangrove planting programmes in the same area. The project's goals were also to provide alternative livelihood opportunities for local people, in particular disadvantaged women and youth (for example working in tree nurseries), and to set up ECO clubs in village schools.

Background

The Indian chemicals company, Tata Chemicals Limited, through its social arm, TCSRSD, is involved in resource management, environmental conservation, and income generation and health programmes to improve the quality of life at Mithapur, near the Arabian Sea coast where it operates. Tata asked MFF India to help build its capacity in mangrove restoration, with a view to rehabilitating a former mangrove habitat devastated by prolonged drought and overgrazing in the

Accomplishments and challenges

Besides meeting every project goal, MFF India successfully engaged the support of a large corporate partner by building its capacity for conservation and by developing an integrated management approach to coastal conservation. This achievement has kindled interest in cooperating with MFF and IUCN among other companies (for example Hazira port in Gujarat).

The ECO club awareness campaign reached 2,500 students in 25 rural schools. Management of mangrove nurseries created 266 days of employment for disadvantaged women in the project's self-help groups.

TCSRDR plans to scale up project activities by planting a further 162 hectares of mangroves, thus creating extra income for local communities, and is exploring the potential for mangrove ecotourism businesses.

Challenges

The project was delayed by setbacks in acquiring land rights. A study conducted by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) found that mangrove planting and establishment of a 50-m buffer zone at the original target site, Charakla salt works, would negatively impact ongoing salt work operations. As a result a new site had to be found and the mangrove restoration site moved there.

At the mangrove nursery site, extra effort had to be devoted to minimize the impacts of algae and seaweed growth, which suffocated mangrove seedlings. Some herders also used the mangroves at the new site for grazing camels, which damaged seedlings at the Arambda nursery. These issues were addressed before the planting began.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Communications

The project produced several leaflets and

posters to explain and promote its activities, and presented a report on its findings to the State-Level Steering Committee for the Conservation of Mangroves and Coral in May 2009.

Gender equality

Through the project, TCSRDR became aware of the problems facing local women and responded by proactively establishing self-help groups to empower women and generate income. Training and the mangrove nursery and planting activities generated 466 days of employment for 25 women and disadvantaged young people.

Lessons Learned

The project showed that the corporate sector can play a leading role in demonstrating how development and conservation needs can be balanced.

Another lesson learned was about the need, especially in land restoration work, to ensure that land ownership rights are secured before releasing any funding.

Partners and their contribution

The community work component was implemented by TCSRDR.



ECO Club session, Gujarat, India © TCSRDR

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