

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME SUCCESS STORIES

### PLANTING TREES FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY



*Environmental sustainability through tree planting activities is one of the projects supported by Danida. Photo: Danida*

Danida has been working with the Kenyan government and its partners to ensure that the leaders of tomorrow are aware of environmental issues and understand how their actions will affect both the country and the world. Key to this has been getting the environment onto the curriculum of Kenyan schools and universities and Danida's 167 million Danish Kroner for environmental programme support is helping to do this.

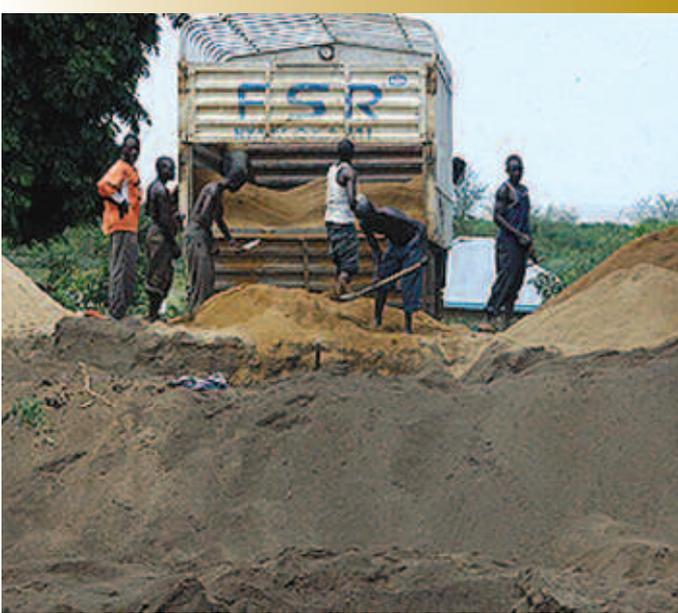
David Ong'are, Deputy Director of Kenya's National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has spearheaded work on this and NEMA now sits on the national curriculum board and is also working in other areas of education. As part of a Danida-funded Environmental Education Awareness Initiative, NEMA worked with the Kenyan Ministry of the Environment and Mineral Resources to increase environmental awareness in 114 primary schools. The schools were encouraged to start eco-clubs and tree nurseries as a way of getting the environmental message across.

NEMA has also worked closely with the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) to include environmental issues in all its courses. After failing with individual lecturers, NEMA approached the Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Mabel Imbuga.

"It was important to engage with the top decision maker," says Ong'are. He invited Professor George Ndegwa and a small team appointed by the JKUAT Vice Chancellor to visit NEMA, so that they could develop their policies together.

Following a series of seminars, they came up with a step-by-step programme that resulted in environmental education being fully integrated into JKUAT's curriculum, making it the only institution of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa to incorporate education for sustainable development into its activities.

# ADVOCACY FOR SUSTAINABLE SAND HARVESTING



*Sand harvesting is a cross cutting issue affecting water, the environment and security. Photo: medianproperty*

Monica Musyoki woke up one day to find that someone had come in the night and stolen her farm – not the title deeds, the buildings or the equipment, but the very soil itself. Hundreds of cubic metres of fertile earth had been carved out of the riverbank bordering her farm and trucked away to fuel the building boom in nearby Nairobi. She is not alone; it has happened to hundreds of her neighbours in this desperately poor area where one of the few assets – sand – is non-renewable, its extraction fundamentally irreversible.

The poor and marginal area around Machakos in Ukambani is well known for the excellence of its sand – a key ingredient of Kenya’s booming construction industry. Unscrupulous developers in Nairobi, allied with corrupt officials, have been removing sand from the area without paying the going rate – or in Monica’s case, without paying at all. It has caused great individual hardship and communal suffering because of the destruction of tree cover, the erosion of riverbanks and the loss of topsoil.

In partnership with Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the Kenyan government, Danida has brought new hope to Monica and the people of Kenya’s Ukambani area by encouraging residents to know their rights and to fight for them.

From the funds that Danida and Sida donated to Kenya through its environmental programme support, 56.5 million Danish Kroner (DKK) went to the Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF), a funding mechanism administered to exacting standards with support from the European Union. The CDTF asked community groups to submit proposals, with

the condition that local communities provide a proportion of the funding and are fully involved in project implementation. After stringent vetting, one successful application came from the Poverty Eradication Network, (PEN) an advocacy organisation that has been working in Ukambani’s Machakos area since 2003.

“Sand in Machakos is a security issue, it is a water issue, it is an issue that is cutting across all other sectors” says Mary Mutuku, one of PEN’s project officers.

PEN put together a proposal that hoped to address these issues, combining education and action. It required much thought as people in the area are desperately poor and harvest sand themselves for survival purposes, not just for profit. There were five parts to PEN’s proposal:

- education on sustainable harvesting methods
- training on environmental legislation
- assistance to set up tree nurseries and other environmental measures
- interactive communications strategies to help build awareness
- negotiation with the local administration to police the harvesting.

A truck load of sand worth 20 US dollars in Ukumbani can be sold for twenty times that in Nairobi, just a couple of hours drive away. But with just a small amount of funding from Danida ( DKK 338,200) real inroads have been made into addressing the problem.

PEN ensured that there was proven community investment, rigorous monitoring and evaluation and clear identification of target groups. It exploited the multiplier effect by using local FM radio for publicity and partnering with women’s groups to produce seedlings to restock degraded areas. Word was also spread with PEN literature and T-shirts.

PEN also persuaded a local headmaster to start a tree-planting project at his school and to teach children about the perils of unregulated sand harvesting. The immediate benefit of the project is already visible only two years after it started: people can now shelter from the sun under trees planted with PEN encouragement.

For Monica, Danida’s funding has allowed her to advocate for change and provide alternatives so that her children no longer have to “drop out of school to come and work here loading sand into lorries”. Well-planned, well-monitored interventions on behalf of the people of Denmark can make a big difference to residents of areas like Ukambani. For people like Monica, they already have.