

S.A.F.E. Resilience and Environmental Conservation Programme

Creation of Methodology and Theory of Change

S.A.F.E.'s environmental resilience programme was designed in partnership with academics from the University of Exeter. The project *Gangavasi* ran for five years focusing on five fishing villages in Kwale County (Vanga, Gasi, Jimbo, Kiwegu and Majoreni). S.A.F.E. piloted their methodology of using theatre to inspire action and build resilience to climate change. During this time, the programme's theory of change was perfected, and it is now being used to create resilience to climate change in seven drought-stricken villages in Kenya, and is soon to be implemented in Lamu in partnership with the Lamu Environment Fund and Lamu Theatre and Arts Alliance.

Theory of Change

Goal: To create community lead, sustainable and long-term environmental resilience in target communities.

IF communities are given information, in an easy to understand format, about how their current activities contribute to the effects of climate change they are experiencing, and are given the platform to come together as a community to create and implement these solutions, solutions that take into account the needs and ideas of ALL community members THEN communities will be able to use their own resources, structures, and indigenous knowledge to adapt their activities THEREBY contributing to the implementation of environmentally friendly activities (sustainable fishing, farming, and tree planting) CONTRIBUTING TO increased environmental protection and mitigation of the effects of extreme weather events.

S.A.F.E.'s Environment Project so far – Key Successes

- **Gangavasi target community able to link the current extreme weather with unsustainable activities:** SAFE Pwani conducted a survey to ascertain the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the community at the end of the project. Community members were able to link cutting down trees, lack of education, illegal fishing, farming activities, and an unclean environment to the current challenges that they faced as a community – such as unemployment, depletion of fish stocks, and drought.
- **Gangavasi community members were empowered to take both individual and collective action to improve their resilience:** 100% of the survey participants said that they were empowered by SAFE Pwani, and gave reasons such as they helped us come together as

a community, they gave us awareness and they made us see that there are solutions to our problems.

- **Gangavasi Community Involvement in Environment matters:** The team found that 82% of the target community were involved in *Gangavasi* and that 61% of these participants were involved in the community action days that brought people together for tree planting activities, community plastic waste clean-ups, and girl's mentorship days.

Gangavasi Ongoing action and Impact

The community-led nature of the project ensured that the change that was created during the project implementation continued after the end of the project. When S.A.F.E. carried out a follow-up in 2021, two years after our exit, we found that many of the initiatives have continued under the guardianship of the youth and community groups who had been part and parcel of the delivery of the programme:

- **Gasi Youth Group** took the initiative to build on the community action days, and start their own household garbage collection services, they have started to generate income from these activities. They also mobilise the community to carry out clean-ups in the village and on the beach.

The community has also made further strides towards sanitation by increasing the number of latrines in the village and reducing waste and pollution in their water supplies.

- **VAJIK (Vanga, Jimbo, and Kiwegu community group)** took the initiative of maintaining the cleanness of Vanga, Jimbo, and Kiwegu. At the beginning of the intervention, the beach and the general area in the community were dirty and polluted with plastic and human waste. There are now designated dumping sites, a safe distance away from the community, and there is a safe space for recreational activities. In Jimbo in particular, the shoreline has been cleared of plastic, and the community regularly comes together to clean up the beach.

The mangrove forest in Vanga that was regenerated as part of the SAFE Pwani community action days has continued to thrive. VAJIK is caring for all of the trees and has increased the size of the forest. The group recently qualified for carbon credits and is using this income to sustain their activities.

In addition to these specific actions inspired by the project. The target communities have used the information, structures, and community cohesion created by the project to advocate for themselves

- The Beach Management Units in Gasi, Jimbo, and Vanga have secured modern fishing equipment (such as legal nets). In addition, in partnership with the government, have increased surveillance to eliminate deforestation in the mangrove forests and hazardous and illegal fishing practices.
- The community around Base Titanium has also advocated for inclusion in land reclamation, and actively monitors the environmental changes seen as a result of the company's activities. In Addition, Base Titanium has put more investment into the community – providing training in tree care and other sustainable activities.

During this time, S.A.F.E. also made a [documentary](#), documenting the methodology and the impact that the project had on the target communities.

Why it works

Accessible: The information is given to the community through high quality, mobile street theatre; an unrivaled way of making complex and taboo issues easy to understand and engage with.

Community led: The community are involved and informed at every stage of the implementation of the project. The play is created using stories and experiences from community members. During the performance, they are invited on stage to give their solutions to the challenges presented, and these ideas and solutions, become the core actions of the project.

Powered by community knowledge, structures and resources: S.A.F.E. provides information, safe spaces and platforms for community members to come together to create and implement solutions. The project builds on knowledge in the community, asking participants to think about how their ancestors would sustain forests, fish stocks and pass information from one generation to another.

The project strengthens structures and groups already working in the community. It gives ownership of actions to those who are most invested in it. Through this, the project insures that actions are continued after S.A.F.E.'s exit.

The project reduces the risk of reliance on external funding and actors by empowering the community to use their own resources to build resilience. This also ensures sustainability.

