



Lamu Environment Foundation

Impact assessment report

July 2024

Context and objectives

Context

Lamu Environment Foundation has been operating for 3 years and would like to understand the impact of their funded projects so far, the learnings from these projects, and identify suggested areas to focus on going forwards¹

Goals of this report

- 1 Share brief summary of projects reviewed
- 2 Assess the impact of completed projects against their targets as well as the LEF 2024 strategy
- 3 Identify the common challenges and learnings
- 4 Lay out potential ideas to focus on going forwards

Asks of the Board

- Be informed of progress and impact made by programmes over the past 3 years, in order to enable the Board to advocate for LEF externally
- Guide LEF on where to focus going forwards based on the outcomes of this study, incl.:
 - Whether to continue funding broad range of activities and types of impact, or to specialize
 - What impact targets LEF has for the next period

1. This report focuses on 10 projects completed between 2021 and 2024. Assessment is based on reviewing project reports, as well as interviews with project leads for 5 projects. Out of scope are changes to the project application form structure, LEF's fundraising strategy, LEF's communications strategy, and financial reporting of the projects.

Executive summary

The Lamu Environment Foundation has been operating for three years and is conducting a study assessing the impact made during this period, the challenges faced, and lessons learned from a select set of 10 projects across all focus areas: marine conservation, land regeneration, mangrove restoration, and solid waste management.

LEF has achieved positive impact across all key focus areas, including collecting 44 tonnes of plastic waste from beaches, reducing damaging fishing practices by training fishermen and translating fisheries policies into Swahili for the first time, seeing a 30% increase in turtle nestings in one area, and planting a mangrove nursery with 3000 seedlings.

However, longer term environmental or livelihoods impact is not clearly measured or reported on, since the impact may only happen after the end of the project. Therefore, LEF could consider how to both set clearer targets and scope for impact, as well as how to measure it on a longer-term basis (e.g., conduct environmental impact assessments every few years).






The most common activities across all projects include awareness training among communities (e.g., causes and effects of climate change), and **training of local communities** (e.g., how to set up a crab farm), where 7/10 projects do awareness raising, and 7/10 do training. The majority of projects do additional activities as well but less consistently across projects, such as conducting environmental activities such as mangrove planting (6/10), conducting income generating activities (4/10), or enhancing local laws or policies (2/10). Awareness raising and training are harder to translate into direct environmental or livelihoods impact, therefore LEF could consider how to ensure the additional activities are being conducted in parallel.

Challenges faced in projects focus primarily on facilitating alternative income generation (e.g., requiring scaling of local markets for selling recycled goods, guards to protect equipment from theft), **ensuring long-term sustainability of projects** (e.g., providing longer-term mentoring), and **managing budget during inflationary periods**.




LEF has a decision to make about whether to continue focusing on a broad set of activities and impact areas, or whether to identify a small number of specific impact areas to target and to go deeper on those, as well as how to ensure longer-term sustainability of projects.

1. 10 projects were assessed from the past 3 years

List of projects assessed

| Area of interest | Project title | Main objective | Organisation |
|---|--|---|---|
|  Marine conservation | 1 BMU Phase 1 and 2 | Improve sustainable fisheries management through sensitizing the community and improving BMU governance | Faza Youth Action Group |
| | 2 Kuruwitu Knowledge Exchange | Improve fishermen's understanding of conservation | Kuruwitu, Oceans Alive |
|  Land regeneration | 3 Lake Kenyatta | Identify via a research study the root cause of the shrinking of Lake Kenyatta and identify sustainable land management solutions | Lamu Outreach Youth Initiative |
| | 4 Kipungani Practical Permaculture Design Course and Permaculture Home Gardens | Increase skills in permaculture in Kipungani through delivering a 2.5 week workshop | Earth Love |
| | 5 2 Trees 1 Family | Increase skills in permaculture and tree planting through training community members to develop gardens | CSCBO |
|  Mangrove protection | 6 Beekeeping Yr I and 2 | Protect mangroves and enhance the livelihoods of mangrove-dependent forest communities by introducing bee-keeping as an alternative source of income | Save Lamu |
| | 7 Crab Farming | Persuade local communities to stop doing mangrove degrading activities through presenting alternative income generating activities of crab farming | Faza Youth Action Group |
|  Solid waste management | 8 Fanya Safi waste Coalition | Build capacity of local waste management organisations to increase collection of recyclable materials and recycling on Lamu | Takataka Heroes (TTH), Shela Environmental Residents Group (SERG), & Manda Taka Project (MTP) |
| | 9 Kiunga Marine Reserve cleanup and plastic recycling | Build on ongoing project to collect, sort, and recycle plastics into sellable products , including improving livelihoods and health | Kiunga Bahari Moja |
|  Cross-cutting | 10 Hima Pate | Raise local awareness about causes and effects of climate change through theatre | SAFE / LATA |

2. LEF has achieved impact across all focus areas

| Key focus area | Impact achieved 2020-2023 (in 10 selected projects) |
|--|--|
|  Marine conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in marine conservation governance mechanisms – including establishment of a marine conservation network in Lamu, establishment of a mechanism to hold Beach Management Units to account • Reduction of damaging fishing practices – incl. translation of fisheries policies into Swahili for the first time, 3 BMUs advocating for not using illegal fishing gear, and 15 local fishermen educated on conservation practices • Improved biodiversity on beaches - 30% increase in sea turtle nestings in one area from 2022 to 2023 |
|  Land regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in regenerative agricultural practices in Kipungani through the building of 20 permaculture gardens, and 20 people equipped with the skills to use permaculture • Increased understanding of environmental impacts of human activity on Lake Kenyatta via conducting research effort to understand the causes of the shrinking of the lake • Improved community environmental by-laws in Lake Kenyatta • Increased tree and plant coverage in Lake Kenyatta through establishment of tree nursery and increased grass coverage |
|  Mangrove protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mangrove planting and restoration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Mangrove nursery established with 3000 seedlings, and planted 1000 seedlings — 4km of mangroves conserved, and 2.5 acres of mangroves restored — Increased inter-agency coordination at local level (e.g., KFS, KEFRI, NGOs, schools) • Development of alternative sources of income for communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1 crab farm developed in Kikomani — Creation of 11 apiaries and 176kg of honey produced, and KES 113k made from sales |
|  Solid waste management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of 44.1 tonnes of plastic waste from beaches and mangroves in Manda, Shela, Kikomani, and Kiunga marine reserve, and regular beach clean ups and collections with 200 community members, as well as community awareness raising conducted in Kiunga marine reserve • Increase in waste collection through community cleanups on Pate Island with 860 people and construction of dumpsites • Income generated from plastic waste – 6 tonnes of plastic waste sold |
|  Cross-cutting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in community awareness about the cause and effect of environmental destruction through a 7-day theatre tour on Pate Island, reaching 2,678 community members |

Long-term environmental and livelihoods impact is not clearly measured

LEF could consider doing an environmental impact summary every few years

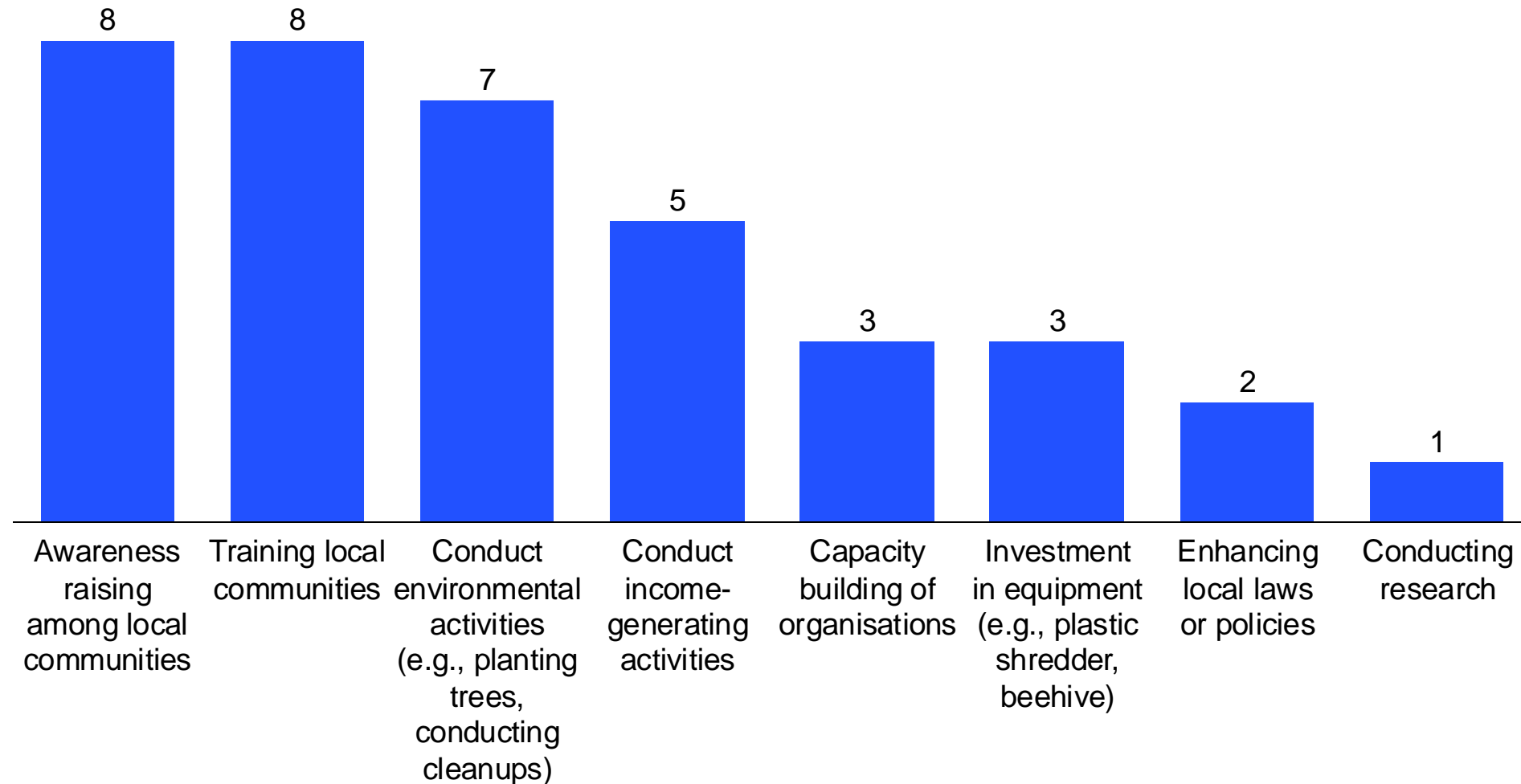
Some impact is relevant to more than one key focus area (e.g., solid waste management impacts marine conservation)

Note: Impact achieved refers only to the 10 projects assessed, and not to any other projects funded by LEF

Source: Project reports and interviews with 5 projects

2. The majority of projects focus on awareness raising, training local communities, and conducting environmental activities

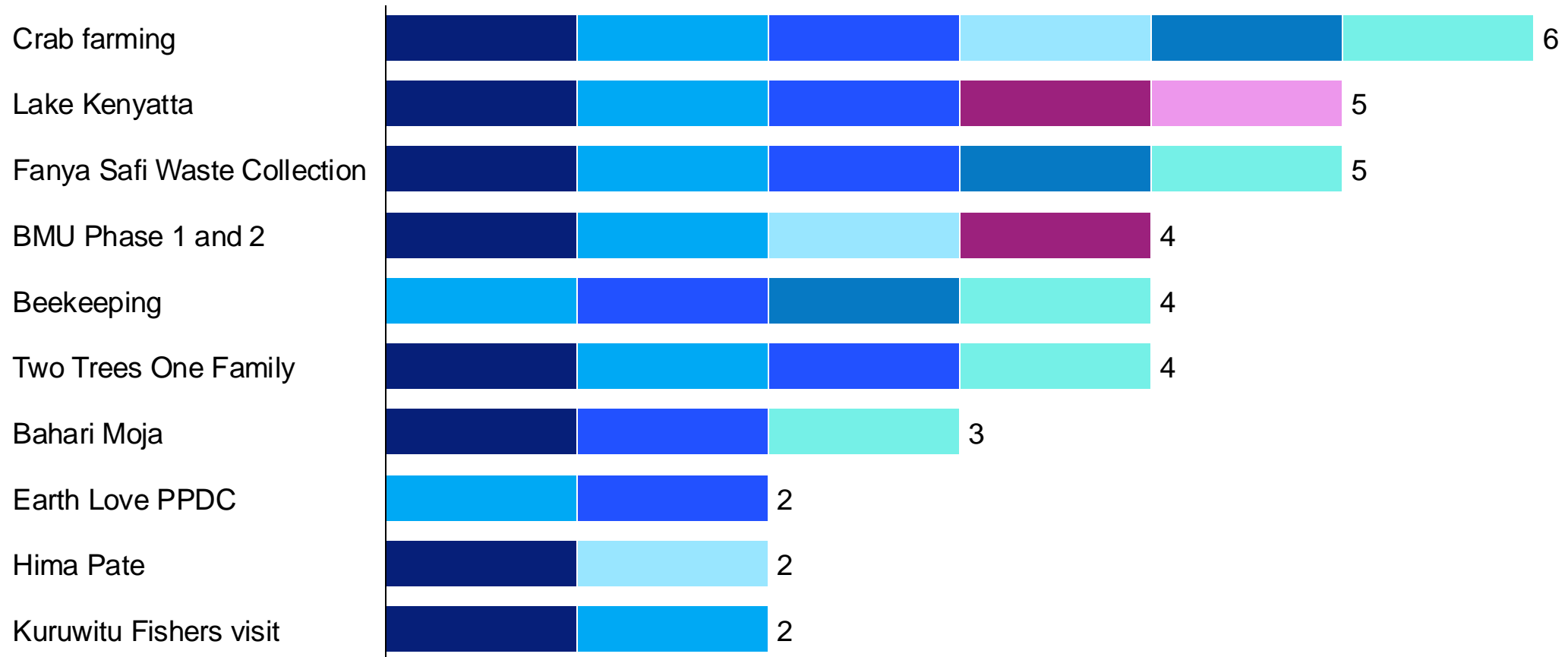
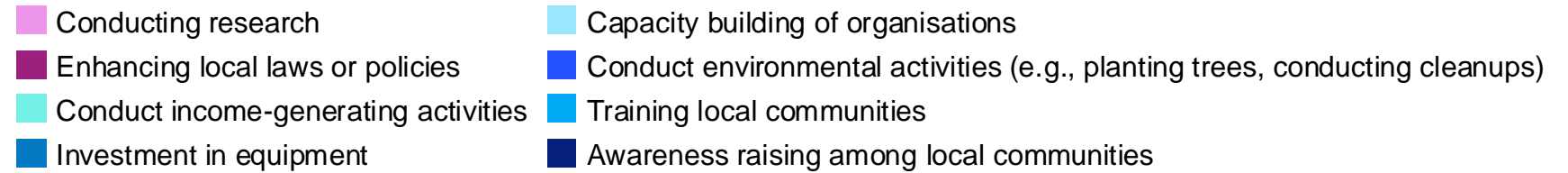
Number of projects that conduct each type of activity (n=10 projects, each project may conduct more than 1 activity)



For discussion:
Should LEF specialize in a particular set of activities or continue to fund a broad range?
Should LEF focus on increasing the number of activities beyond awareness raising and training?

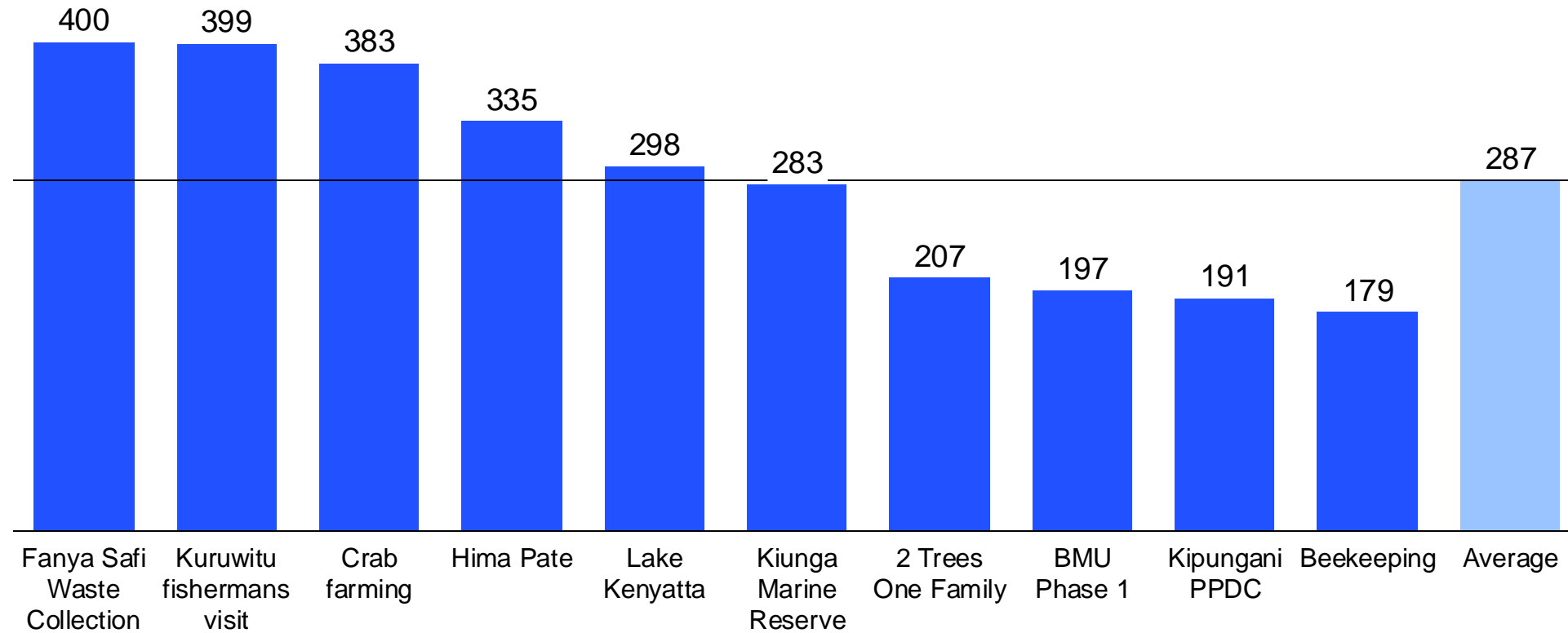
2. Most projects do a combination of activities with awareness raising and training of local communities as a core base

Number and type of activities per project



2. The average cost per project per month is **KES ~300k (USD 1,800)**

Cost per month by project, KES thousands



Fanya Safi Waste Collection and the Crab farming projects included more equipment purchases than other projects (e.g., constructing a water storage area, purchasing crab nets)

Kuruwitu fisherman's visit was a short project of <1 month so fixed costs all occurred at once


Note: Costs do not include LEF staff costs


Source: Project reports



















3. Challenges were faced particularly in facilitating alternative incomes, and in ensuring long-term project sustainability

| Challenge faced | Example | Projects affected | Potential ways to address |
|---|---|--|---|
| Facilitating alternative incomes | Limited market for selling recycled plastic goods due to lack of demand for intermediate products (e.g., shredded plastic), lack of awareness of recycled plastic end products (e.g., eco-bricks), and sometimes higher costs compared to alternative (e.g., eco-bricks) | Bahari Moja, Fanya Safi | Scale market for recycled plastics by raising awareness of potential uses of products, and connecting producers with buyers |
| | Theft of equipment or products that were unguarded reduced production and sales potential for crab farming and beekeeping | FYAG Crab farming, Save Lamu Beekeeping | Factor cost of guard into the project budget to protect equipment and inputs |
| | Alternative income generation not detracting from environmentally damaging practices in selected cases – e.g., Save Lamu beekeeping project was not designed to target those using mangroves for selling wood and therefore has not directly reduced the cutting down of mangroves | Save Lamu Beekeeping | Ensure that alternative income projects are focused towards families that get their income from environmentally unsustainable practices |
| Ensuring long-term project sustainability | Some projects were not able to continue having impact following the project phase e.g., crab farming did not continue following the end of the project, of the permaculture gardens 60-70% were still running 1 year on | FYAG Crab farming, Earth Love permaculture gardens | Factor in more investment upfront into equipment and training so that production can continue post-project (e.g., crab farming, plastics shredder) Provide long-term mentoring over time to project participants (worked well in Save Lamu Beekeeping over 4yr period) Review business models to estimate time to profitability and when donor funding no longer needed |
| | Some projects had less impact than planned due to selecting participants that were not fully committed to the work such as Two Trees One Family project, or Save Lamu beekeeping where one apiary closed due to lack of interest | Earth Love permaculture gardens, Save Lamu Beekeeping | Create competitive selection process for course participants to increase chances of success |
| Managing budget during inflationary periods | Several project budgets were squeezed compared to plan due to inflation resulting in lower impact , e.g., increase in fuel prices for transportation resulted in selling half of planned shredded plastics at Fanya Safi, and increase in mangrove seedling prices for Save Lamu | Fanya Safi Waste collection, Bahari Moja, Save Lamu beekeeping | Keep project budgets in local currency (already implemented) and consider whether there should be room for currency fluctuations in budgeting (or a trigger point to re-review the budget) |
| | Unexpected costs to cover government attendance to key meetings faced in BMU project, where government had insufficient funds to pay their transport costs | FYAG BMU | Plan in advance whether government attendance is required and if budget should be planned for it |

4. There are a few ideas LEF could focus on going forwards to increase impact, according to project grantees

 Ideas from project stakeholders

 Ideas from LEF team

| Key focus area | Ideas to increase impact going forwards |
|---|--|
|  Marine conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Alert systems to international monitoring organisations (funded by the Gallifrye foundation) on IUUUF in Lamu seas  Improve coordination between turtle conservation groups |
|  Land regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Ensure long-term sustainability of permaculture through protecting permaculture gardens from damage caused by chickens with chain link fences  Explore use of biochar (Bio-Logical factory starting in Nbo) in land regeneration; explore how Bio-Logical can help us either start a biochar plant or set up a biochar plant in Lamu county  Improve coordination and streamlining between County and other NGOs working around Lake Kenyatta |
|  Mangrove protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Scale and enhance alternative income generating activities (e.g., placing beekeeping next to agriculture or mangroves to scale output) |
|  Solid waste management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Create a waste dumpsite in every village (which also reduces marine pollution)  Invest in sorting at source  Bring together different waste management partners to increase efficiency  Support the creation of a Lamu County waste management policy  Support scaling of market for recycled goods via raising awareness of potential uses of products, and connecting producers with buyers |
|  Cross-cutting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Consider supporting projects to raise funding via carbon or biodiversity credits (although projects may be too small)  Fund data collection to assess environmental status across all focus areas |

For discussion:
Should LEF consider identifying a small number of game changing initiatives to focus on, or continue to fund a wider range of activities?

Source: Interviews conducted with four organisations who received funding from LEF in June 2024

4. Questions for discussion

1. Should LEF specialize in **funding a small set of specific activities** (e.g., awareness raising, alternative incomes) or **continue to fund a wide range** of activities?
2. Should LEF consider **identifying a small number of game changing initiatives** for each area of focus, or **continue to fund a wider range** of activities?
3. Are there **specific impact metrics** LEF would like to target over the next period, and what are they?

Feedback on LEF

“” **LEF was helpful to us, they were more positive** than working with other organisations - they helped us improve our organisation, they were **very flexible** and open to discuss with the team. Not every donor takes time to discuss with the community

“” **I would love to work with them in future.** Hannah was **very approachable** and she really encouraged community-led initiatives, she is ready to help every time

“” **It has been a great experience with LEF,** Hannah has a **deep understanding of the context**, and they were **very flexible and in close contact** (e.g., flexible to divert from the original application if justified)

“” **LEF has made a massive difference in all of our lives** - Hannah is so helpful in going through our reports and planning, she **intimately gets to know the projects and cares about them**, and does what she can do to help them to grow.. whereas some other donors are more hands off.

“” **LEF has provided capacity building so that we can do better reporting** (we use the LEF the report in other projects now)

“” When I first filled in the application form it was very simple and easy for the local community to complete it, they have become **more complicated with their forms incl going online - makes it more challenging for local community to fill in, they need support now to do it**