

COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS IN BABATI DISTRICT FOSTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Tanzania is ranked the 26th most vulnerable country to climate risk. The increased rate of unpredictable rainfall presents risks to farmers in drought prone regions such as Arusha, Manyara, Shinyanga, Simiyu, and Dodoma, most of whom no longer know when or what to plant. According to the UNDP report on Climate Change Adaptation, water sources in Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Jipe in Kilimanjaro are experiencing a significant reduction of water levels, and even the loss of some species.

Climate change increases the chances of worsening floods and droughts and in some parts of Tanzania, citizens are already feeling the pinch.

“I have never seen floods of this magnitude.” said Gabriel Gache, a farmer in Sangara village, in Manyara region. “When the floods hit my village in 2013, the water wiped away all the crops in my 5-acre farm.” Gabriel, a father, and the breadwinner for his family of 14 children said it took him about four years to restore his land and get back to farming. Aside from losing the crops, going for years without farming, he also had to spend over TZS 1.6 million (US \$690) to construct a burnt brick fence to protect his farm in case the floods hit again. “The loss was extreme.” He said.

Gone unchecked, In Babati District, in Manyara region there is evidence of having excessive aeration of water source in the natural springs



Climate change champions in Sangara planting trees during world environment day in 2021

and great water loss in Lake Babati which has resulted into great water shocks and stress in most communities, like Sangara village and nearby villages. Since 2018, WaterAid has been working with the government through the Ministry of Water’s Rural Water and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) and local communities in Sangara village, located in Babati District to strengthen their water resource management skills. Initiatives have included supporting communities to legally register their Community Water Supply Based Organization (CBWSO) and have conducted awareness raising campaigns to villagers on effective management of climatic change and building climate-resilience in their communities.

Furthermore, WaterAid is utilizing Low carbon emitting technology advancements, to mitigate the risks and shocks of climate change, and as such WaterAid has constructed a water supply scheme at Sangara village with solar powered pumps in efforts to mitigate air pollutions.

WaterAid with support from People’s Postcode Lottery (PPL) have identified and built capacities of 10 community champions on climate change adaptation and appropriate mitigation measures to overcome climate related risks and shocks.

Hashim Hamisi is a climate change champion from Sangara village. Hashim said, “I am proud to be working with other climate change

champions to raise awareness on environmental conservation in our village. This is a rewarding job.”

Through the campaigns, climate change champions are beginning to realize some immediate impacts including the decrease of environment harming. “The cutting of trees has reduced significantly; citizens are now switching to using fuel efficient stoves, a welcome addition in efforts to safeguard and manage our natural resources.” Hashim added.

According to the United Nations (UN), every three seconds, the world loses enough forest to cover a football pitch and over the last century we have destroyed half of our wetland. The UN has declared 5 June as World Environment Day to encourage awareness and action to protect our environment around the world. In 2021, climate change champions from Sangara village met at a nearby village Riroda to commemorate the day and mobilized community members to plant 600 trees on various water sources and further committed to planting 6,000 trees between November 2021 and April 2022.

“Climate change mitigation requires sustained efforts from varied sectors. We are proud to be working closely with the government in Babati district and other key stakeholders including citizens to mitigate the risks brought by climate change.” Said Ms. Anna Mzinga from WaterAid.