



A woman from Gazi village participating in forest monitoring

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING TO ADDRESS UNSUSTAINABLE HARVESTING METHODS WHERE THIS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DEGRADATION

**WHERE:** GAZI BAY, KENYA

**AREA OF RESTORATION SITE:** 117 HECTARES

**HABITAT TYPES:** MANGROVE

**PROJECT LEAD:** [MIKOKO PAMOJA](#)

### USE OF WILD SPECIES

The mangrove forest at Gazi bay is one of the largest and most intact mangrove forests in East Africa. It is found in the southern coastal region of Kenya, near the town of Gazi in Kwale County and represents an ecologically significant ecosystem with high marine and coastal biodiversity and a rapidly growing human population. The forest is of great

cultural significance to the local Digo people, who have traditionally depended on its marine and coastal resources for fishing, timber, and other resources. Products sold from artisanal fisheries include breams *Lethrinidae*, snappers *Lutjanidae* and barracuda *Sph yraenidae*, crustaceans, and molluscs.

### HOW IS THE USE OF WILD SPECIES SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF THIS RESTORATION PROJECT?

In this project, the goal is to improve the sustainability of use of species, as currently use is a driver of degradation.

As a natural forest, the mangroves of Gazi Bay have been present for millennia. However,

they have been subjected to extensive deforestation, degradation and in some areas total destruction for many years. Large areas that have been clear-cut in the 1970s to supply firewood have not shown natural regeneration, affecting the ecosystem services

that the forest provides, including coastal protection, nursery habitat for fish and water purification. The main current uses of the large natural forest area are for fishing, extraction of fuel wood, and tree harvesting for building. Therefore, the loss and degradation of mangrove cover leads to declining fish stocks and shortage of harvestable wood products, creating significant socioeconomic impacts and loss of community livelihoods.

Gazi and Makongeni villages are predominantly inhabited by fishing communities that depend on the mangrove forest ecosystem, and the

fisheries in particular, for their livelihoods. Population increases and other environmental factors put increasing pressure on marine and coastal resources, resulting in a substantial decline in the number and diversity of fish and other marine life due to overexploitation and use of destructive fishing gear in the area. Mikoko Pamoja is community-led initiative with the goals of protecting and restoring the mangrove ecosystems, which includes activities to enhance fish habitats and breeding zones and encourage sustainable exploitation of natural resources.



A woman from Gazi village is planting mangrove seedlings in a nursery.

### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

This project has helped to conserve and restore the forests by planting new mangrove seedlings and providing ongoing monitoring and maintenance to ensure their survival. Alongside restoration of this habitat, Mikoko Pamoja also educates local communities about the importance of mangroves and provides them with the skills and resources needed to carry out sustainable resource management practices. To reduce pressure on resources from the mangrove forests, the project also promotes alternative livelihood opportunities in the form of beekeeping, fish farming and ecotourism.

Restored areas are managed under a participatory forest management plan

developed by the local community. The plan outlines the rules and regulations for the use of the restored areas, including rules for harvesting non timber forest products such as poles, fuelwood and medicinal plants. The community also has the use rights to the restored areas for fishing and ecotourism activities. The plan includes restrictions on unsustainable practices, such as large-scale cutting of mangroves or the use of destructive fishing methods. The project is also working with local government authorities to secure legal recognition of the community's management rights to the restored mangrove areas.