

INTEGRATED CONSERVATION AND HEALTH INITIATIVES



INTRODUCTION

Makira Natural Park in the northeast of Madagascar harbors the largest remaining contiguous tract of low and mid-altitude rainforest in Madagascar. The importance of this site, which covers 372,470 hectares, lies in its astounding biodiversity and its level of species endemism, which is amongst the highest in the country. However, anthropogenic pressures from the 90,000 people living around Makira Natural Park threaten the integrity of the forest, and this in turn affects their livelihoods that depend on the natural resource base provided by the protected area.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) manages Makira Natural Park in collaboration with 73 community associations (or COBAs) that are responsible for 350,000 hectares of community-managed forests that form a “green belt” around the park. Communities living within the green belt have very limited access to health care. Only 21 government-run basic health centers serve 12,000 households of more than 90,000 populations around the park. Drinking water and sanitation facilities are undeveloped and the population suffers from food shortages for 3 to 6 months a year. Population growth is very high, partly as a result of poor access to family planning services. Early pregnancies are common and large family sizes reduce the ability to households to ensure adequate education and nutrition for all their children. As a result, and despite community commitments to protect the biodiversity of the protected area, populations are often forced to illegally exploit resources in the protected area to cover basic needs. To achieve its conservation outcomes while contributing to the the well-being of its community partners, WCS implements a holistic and multi-faceted approach to integrated conservation and health initiatives.

BENEFICIARIES

50,000 target people, 56 schools, and 73 community associations

MAIN DONORS & PARTNERS

The Peter and Kristan Norvig Family Fund, Australian Aid (Australian Agency for International Development), the Tany Meva Foundation, Marie Stopes International (MSI), USAID - Mahefa Miraka, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education



GOAL

The integrated health and conservation program aims to empower local populations to implement community health services, to build awareness, knowledge and skills on preventive care and family planning, in order to sustain a healthy environment and to improve human wellbeing.

OUR APPROACH

- Develop COBAs' institutional capacity for community health through the establishment of a permanent health advisory structure within COBAs and construction of basic community health and pharmacy infrastructure
- Train community health agents to provide permanent proximate basic health services and reinforce biodiversity conservation awareness
- Carry out preventive health education sessions through media, community meetings, and health festivals
- Organize mobile health clinic services in remote areas and in collaboration with local nurses and doctors
- Provide reproductive health education and family planning service for youth and adults
- Improve school children health, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition through school canteens, water/sanitation/hygiene education, and demonstration of healthy food production such as vegetable gardening and fish farming



QUICK FACTS

- 90,000 local people living in its proximity depend on the park's ecological services.
- 115 peer educators, 27 women associations, and 127 community health agents have been trained by WCS and partners and work around the park to provide preventive health sessions and basic health care.
- 4,000 households benefit from mobile clinic visits.
- 4,000 children from 56 primary schools, around Makira Natural Park receive equilibrated food and wash and hygiene kits.
- 56 primary schools produce vegetable for school canteen and seven schools implement fish farming as sustainable source of food.
- The project expects to cover unmet basic health needs of 75 percent of community associations until 2020.



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