

Linking science and community development: the community driven development approach

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The Kenya coastal region is rich with natural and cultural resources that underpin the livelihood of the majority of its inhabitants. Availability of knowledge, skills and institutions for sustainable utilisation of these resources is therefore critical for the livelihood of the coastal communities. Various Government agencies within the region have mandates to conduct research and transfer knowledge and skills to the coastal communities for improved management of these resources. While a lot of work has been done in this undertaking, gaps still exist between research findings and their ultimate adoption for improved management of natural resources and community development.

The Kenya Coastal Development Project (KCDP) has embraced the Community Driven Development (CDD) model in trying to effectively link science to community development. Through this method, a comprehensive approach to building capacity of the coastal communities in management of natural resources and community development is adopted. The approach comprises building the capacity of Community Based Organisations through training, technical backstopping and provision of small grants for implementation of priority projects within their locality. KCDP has developed a CDD programme – *Hazina Ya Maendeleo Ya Pwani (HMP)* which has been implemented within the coastal region of Kenya since 2013.

Lessons learned so far are that, the CDD approach has stimulated the interest of coastal communities in participating in the HMP programme. The community trainings, technical backstopping and small grants provided to communities has given them the confidence of wanting to be part of stakeholders that are critical in the management of natural resources and community development.

The paper provides the conceptual framework of HMP in the context of the Kenyan coast and highlights progress achieved to date. A description of some of the experiences gathered, challenges and difficulties encountered so far, is also provided.