

PARTICIPATORY VIDEO ON SACRED FOREST GROVES JAMBIANI AND PAJE ZANZIBAR SUMMARY REPORT ON PV TRAINING MAY 2012



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Supported by Terralingua, Sacred Natural Sites Initiative and ZASOZO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary report documents the participatory video (PV) training and provides the context of the project. The aim of the project is to support the conservation of the biocultural values of the sacred forests of Zanzibar through collecting oral histories in several villages and making 2 participatory films; one that will document key issues important to custodian communities and the other a record of oral histories and traditions as told by custodians. This project is one part of a longer-term engagement of custodians of sacred sites on Zanzibar and needs to be viewed in context. The trainers are Zanzibaris or long-term Zanzibar residents with an understanding of cultural mores of the villages.

The training involved 13 village members from Jambiani and Paje, on the East Coast of Zanzibar. In addition 2 members of ZASOZO joined the training. It was carried out over 12 days and resulted in two short videos, one focusing on the oral history of the sacred sites involved and the other on the ongoing management issues. The videos were planned and filmed by the participants themselves. Village elders and custodians were interviewed and opinions and recommendations sought. The exercise included visits to a number of sacred sites and culminated in burning the films to DVD and an evening village showing. The films have subsequently been subtitled in English and uploaded to the web.

Custodians reported the existence of 32 sacred sites within Paje and Jambiani and a further 36 located in the adjacent marine area. The exercise revealed the precarious situation and numerous challenges faced by remaining sacred sites in the two villages. It also demonstrated that much of the oral history resides with elders of the village and there is an apparent reluctance by young people to respect the existing traditions and sites. Much forest has been cut for firewood and other uses and tourism investment in the area has resulted in destruction of several sites.

Recommendations have been given by villagers for actions needed to conserve remaining areas, including formal demarcation by government and official inclusion in existing 'community managed forest areas'.

BACKGROUND (extract from the project proposal)

The numerous Sacred Groves of Zanzibar are patches of mature biodiversity rich forests in an otherwise degraded forest landscape. Cared for by custodian communities, they provide cultural services and promote social well-being. They protect natural springs and provide dry season water for people and livestock, as well as being a source of medicinal plants. Rapid urbanisation has meant that forests are under severe pressure for fuel wood and building material, and the area is one of Zanzibar's key tourism locations for small scale and larger beach-based tourism. Intergenerational social changes, new immigrant populations and exposure to tourist values has led to declining social respect for the groves, several have been damaged and many are at risk. In a context of increasing interest in forest restoration to meet carbon sequestration, sacred forests provide nodes of biological and cultural resilience with adaptation and restoration potential.

INTRODUCTION

Jambiani and Paje are two adjacent coastal villages located on the south-east coast of Unguja, the main island of Zanzibar, Tanzania. The villages have a total of 68 sacred sites, 32 of them on land and 36 in the sea. Many of the land based sites have forest associated with them and in many cases these are the only areas where forest remains and represent sanctuaries for both plant and animal species. They also represent some of the only remaining potential sources of firewood and timber for building for local villagers.

Custodians from these two villages have participated in a sacred grove project being conducted by ZASOZO – the Zanzibar Zoological Association who have been working for over 5 years with

communities on natural resources conservation including on sacred forests. As part of a follow up to this project, SNSI (the IUCN associated Sacred Natural Sites Initiative) approached Terralingua for joint funding of a Participatory Video initiative focusing on oral histories and ongoing management issues. Zasozi recommended these villages for the video project as a suitable and practical location for collecting oral histories regarding the sacred groves.

SNSI approached Mwambao Coastal Community Network (Mwambao) to carry out a Participatory Video training in the villages over the month of April 2012. Mwambao Staff met with villagers and custodians to plan the PV training and 13 participants were selected. 2 Zasozi members were also invited to take part.

‘Mwambao Coastal Community Network’ is an initiative of Sand County Foundation Tanzania. Participatory Video is being used to help build the network with the aim of facilitating exchange between communities on sustainable natural resource management and thereby building community resilience to the environmental challenges being faced. This PV exercise and the resulting videos will help to build the network and add to the body of knowledge available to the coastal community.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF COMMUNITY FILMS.

Community Films: As a technique, participatory video (PV) is distinct from other types of film making in several ways:

- Trainees many of whom have never handled film-making equipment are trained in the basic techniques;
- Trainees decide the content of the film and work together to design the storyboard.
- Generally the trainers do not accompany the trainees when filming but review and discuss material on return;
- Editing is time-restricted (2-3 days) and carried out with trainees/community members. Having left the village subsequent editing is not carried out (apart from subtitling) so the film remains as reviewed by trainees/village communities. The aim is not to produce perfect cinematography but to produce a community product and communicate community issues to wider stakeholders;
- The copyright is held by the trainees/village communities;
- Copies of the DVDs are left with trainees/village communities for their use at the end of the training;

- Produce one film documenting history and traditions of sacred sites in the community
- Produce a second film discussing challenges and successes in conserving these areas and including detailed recommendations for action
- Evaluate the pilot approach of using PV to address the overall objective

Progress on these objectives is reported in the results section below.

IMPLEMENTATION

The participatory video process took place in Jambiani village from 16-27th April 2012. Negotiations for the exercise took place (prior to PV training) with the village Sheha (official representative), the Conservation Committee Chairman and three sacred site custodians, along with a woman representative from Jambiani.

13 village members were selected to participate (3 women and 10 men) and included the Village Sheha. Two members of ZASOZO also participated. A full list of participants is shown in Appendix 1.

A brief outline of the process and activities on a daily basis is given below. A local house was used for most of the training and a television and DVD player were hired locally for daily use.

DAY 1

– Introductions, establishing norms, handling the cameras and microphones, name game exercises, filming each other's stories and feedback



Learning to handle the video camcorder



Introductions

DAY 2

– Review day 1, handling tripods, horizons and levels, disappearing game, style of shots, close ups, plan and shoot short film about an item (introduce storyboard), introduce interview techniques (open, closed, leading etc).



Learning to use the tripod



Exploring style of 'shot' (close up, far away, very close etc.)

DAY3

– Carried out 3 interviews, discuss importance of light on subject, sound, background, location; introduced oral history techniques; repeat interviews; 2-team debate around two statements which were:

1. Tree cutting should be permitted in Sacred Groves for different uses such as firewood, building poles, charcoal etc.
2. Tourists should be allowed to visit our Sacred Sites.

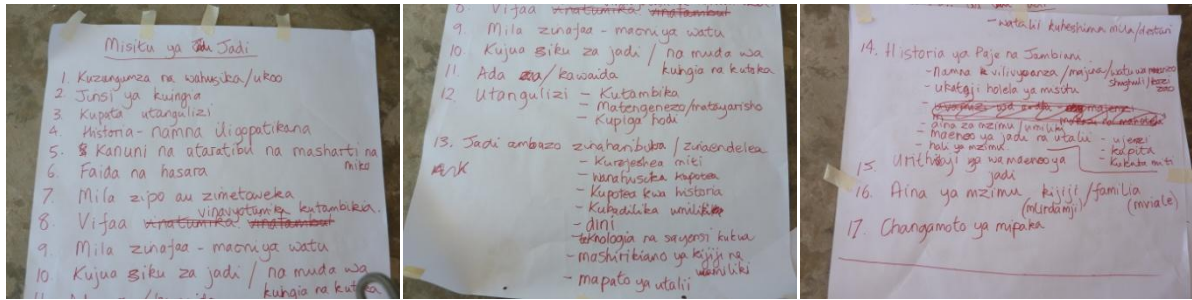
This was followed by group discussion about the issues that should be included in the videos regarding history, traditions and challenges.



Trial interview with Custodian



Two groups debating the statements



List of issues to be included in the films

DAY 4

– Review interviews; introduce ‘cutaways’; explore what makes an attractive film; telling a story; comic strip exercise (using the same pictures to tell different stories). Introduced storyboard. Participants divided into two groups focusing on history and management issues. Started to plan storyboard (max 8 frames) identifying topics, interviewees, locations, cutaways, beginning and end. On this day participants were asked individually for filmed consent to go ahead with film and it was given by all.



Comic strip exercise



Drawing the storyboard Group 1 (Management challenges)

DAY 5

– Detailed planning of storyboard in the two groups. Decided who to interview and where. Responsibilities of group members delegated. Groups chose facilitator. Each group showed storyboard to the others.



Storyboard Group 1



Explaining storyboard to Group 2

DAY 6

- Provided cameras, microphones and tripods. Arranged travel to local groves. Started filming following storyboard. Feedback identified problems with sound, panning, framing picture.



Reviewing storyboard



Groups travel to some of the Sacred Grove sites in taxi

DAY 7

- Reviewed storyboard both teams; defined outstanding clips. Revisited interview techniques (what questions to ask, position of interviewer, lighting etc); carried out sample interview following oral history guidelines; identified interviews to be repeated. Continued filming.

DAY 8

- Reviewed film clips. Started paper edit of film and ordering of clips.

DAY 9

- Continued paper edit. Facilitation team ordered clips on editing programme.



Conducting 'paper edit' by reviewing clips, selecting those wanted and ordering them in sequence for the final film

DAY 10

- Showed back order of clips on computer. Facilitation team continued to edit.



Reviewing film clips and editing using laptop computers



A much needed 'exercise' break!

DAY 11

– Show back of near-finished films; identified needed changes. Continued edit.

DAY 12

– Films shown back to group and burned to DVD. Certificates presented. Group photo. Filmed individual consent regards uploading of films on internet and other usage. Arranged community showing for evening in open village area in Jambiani.



Presenting certificate to Mwanahida



PV group



Community showing of films with an audience of c. 200 villagers.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Progress against each individual planned objective is given below.

- **Document local history and tradition with regard to sacred sites**

A number of custodians and village elders were interviewed as part of the PV training. All individual interviews were filmed and have been saved to DVD in full and transcribed and translated into English. Excerpts from the interviews were selected for the Guardianship video (see below).

- **Discuss challenges with regard to conservation of these areas in particular with regard to management**

A group brainstorming session produced a list of challenges to be explored during the videomaking (see photographs above). These challenges helped to decide who to interview as part of the filming. A film about the challenges of management and continued guardianship of the sites was produced (see below).

- **Train a minimum of 12 villagers in Jambiani and Paje in participatory video techniques**

13 villagers were trained and 2 members of ZASOZO; making two film crews, one of 7 and one of 8.

- **Produce one film documenting history and traditions of sacred sites in the community**

Film produced (20 minutes length) titled 'Guardianship of Sacred Sites Jambiani and Paje'

- **Produce a second film discussing, challenges and successes in conserving these areas and including detailed recommendations for action**

Film produced (16 minutes in length) titled 'Sacred Groves and Their Challenges, Paje and Jambiani, Zanzibar'.

- **Evaluate the pilot approach of using PV to address the overall objective**

The overall objective of this proposal is to use participatory video training to facilitate villager voice in the conservation of sacred sites in Zanzibar using the villages of Paje and Jambiani as a pilot.

Participatory video proved a very useful tool in exploring the sacred sites in the villages of Jambiani and Paje. It adequately documented some of the challenges faced in the continuing conservation of these sites and recommendations were forthcoming as how some of these challenges could be addressed and by whom.

As a means of recording oral history of the sites, it provided an opportunity to document the many stories and traditions of the sacred sites and about the villages themselves. During the filming the team became aware of just how much of this information is being held by the older generation, many of whom are now very old. There were limitations in villagers themselves carrying out the research in that not as much information was collected from individuals as could have been on each occasion. This may have been due to familiarity with the person and lack of importance given to detail. On the other hand, free access was given to sites and custodians spoke freely.

Some of the advantages of the PV process were that it examined the problem in a very appropriate visual and practical way with minimum written input, it imparted training both in video production and problem analysis, and finally it produced a tangible product that can be used both by the villagers themselves but also by NGOs in awareness raising and for advocacy.

Some limitations of the approach include the editing; computer proficiency is required which means that in practice the final edit is carried out by the facilitators. This does remove some of the 'voice' from the participants but a thorough paper edit with the participants minimizes this problem. Participants are shown the edited film regularly throughout the process and therefore have the opportunity to suggest changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Recommendations coming directly from the filming process are as follows:

1. Participants would like the film used to educate both the village and the whole of Zanzibar so that they can research and conserve their sacred sites.
2. Custodians need help with protection of sites (eg wall) so that custodians and others can benefit from (controlled) tourism for example.
3. People need education so that the cutting of trees and the desecration of these sites is not allowed i.e. they remain intact
4. Villagers would like their sacred sites formally demarcated by government.
5. Villagers would like their sacred sites officially incorporated into community managed (forest) areas.
6. The community needs assistance to conserve their sacred areas.

The films have been copied to ZASOZO and to the local office of CARE International who are responsible for the implementation of REDD in the Jambiani area. Further consultation with stakeholders and supporting NGOs could usefully take the process through to the next stage, which would involve putting together a future plan of action for the conservation of sacred groves and might involve formation of a local custodians group.

USE OF THE FILMS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The films produced were the result of the 12-day participatory video process taking place in the village. The film clips were planned, executed and sequenced by the villagers themselves according to their own storyboard. The editing was a joint process whereby participants undertook the 'paper edit' and the facilitators used this as guidance for the computer editing but with constant feedback at all stages. The participants have the copyright to the films as they have been produced. They are powerful statements from the villages of Paje and Jambiani in their own words and as such should not be manipulated in any way or re-edited without full informed consent of the community.

The films have been subtitled in English and prefaced with some introductory and end frames. The films can easily be used for training and awareness raising purposes. Wherever possible, the villagers **themselves** should be invited to present their films and to be available for any questions that might arise from the target audience. This would result in the most meaningful exchange.



Report prepared by Lorna Slade with input from Ali Thani and Hajj M. Hajj
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APPENDIX 1

List of Participants:

Asha Ali Shauri
Hakiba Hassan Omar
Mwanahija Abdulla Ussi
Kesi Ali Pandu
Abdulla Msellem Issa
Ali Haji Amer
Abdallah Sisi (custodian)
Ali Vuai Haji
Fadhili Haji Hassan (custodian)
Suleiman Ali Hassan (Village Sheha)
Msellem Issa Msellem (Conservation Committee Chairman)
Hassan Ali Haji (custodian)
Ame Haji Simai (custodian)

ZASOZO:

Mahmoud Mtumwa Mnyimbi
Amina Kashoro

Facilitators:

Hajj M. Hajj (Country Coordinator Mwambao Coastal Community Network)
Ali Thani (Assistant Country Coordinator MCCN)
Lorna Slade (Executive Director Sand County Foundation Tanzania)