



Tagabe River Clean Up Campaign Mini Programmatic Report



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Acknowledgement

The Tanvasoko Youth Council with International Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) Project would like to acknowledge the Pacific Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) Vanuatu for generous funding assistance towards the implementation of the cleaning up along Tagabe River. As the implementing partners towards this event and thus extending this overwhelming acknowledgement to the Tagabe River Communities, especially the youths of each community, men, women and children as well as the Chiefs beginning from Unelco pump station right down to the last communities in Blacksand's Area for their proactive participation in this event. Further words of gratitude to the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and the Department of Water Resources (DoWR) as the national implementing partners of the Ridge to Reef Project. We would also like to personally acknowledge Nelson Pakokoto as representative of the Tanvasoko Youth Council for the time, commitment and coordination of such massive cleaning up. WAN SMOLBAG youth with very much appreciation for their kind participation to be acknowledged in this important activity. Lastly, words of gratitude to Jack Manual's, Shefa youth officer representing the Department of Youth and Sport for his participation.

As a result of all your contributions the Tagabe River Clean-up campaign was successfully coordinated and implemented achieving productive outcomes. As part of the coordinating team we very much look forward for the ongoing and strengthening of our generous collaboration in any related activities concerning Tagabe River as such in the near future.

Purpose

The current status of the Tagabe River in terms of waste management and pollution such as disposal and littering within 30m buffer of the river banks has been always a major concern for residing communities and natural resources authorities from both government and NGOs. With the absence of strategic planning, response and integrative management, the issue of dealing with waste disposal and littering will continue. Thus posing an immediate threat to communities who themselves are actors of the scenario but also beneficiaries of the river in sustaining day-day livelihood. But with expanding concerns to the biodiversity of the river





system, the flora, fauna and micro-organisms that are inclusion towards the overall functioning of the entire ecosystem stretching inland to coastal areas and adjacent reefs of Blacksand. Keeping this concept in mind we decide to conduct this cleaning campaign for such purpose:

1. ***Minimize the accumulation of inorganic products found in and along Tagabe River.***

Even though the absent of strategic management in placed, we look towards reducing the accumulation of rubbish in the river and avoid its further accumulation as well its point source pollutant.

2. ***Enhancing the mindset of river communities.***

As a starting base and moving forward for at least a better management of the river. It is important to engage the participation of communities as they are daily resource users. Community engagement such as this will therefore recall and retain mindset of their ownership, and thus reinstating their responsibilities by adopting protective measures as key managers for Tagabe Rivers.

3. Therefore from per purpose 1 and 2, but also to commemorate the ***World Cleaning up Day 15th September 2018.***

Being part of this global event with confident priorities to engage Tagabe River island communities in celebrating this global event by collecting litter rubbishes within community respective areas.

Background Information

The Tagabe River situates as part of the lower catchment comprising the entire Tagabe Watershed Catchment Area. In the past and currently has been always beneficially used for daily by residing island communities for different purpose to sustain their livelihoods. The lack of awareness/advocacy considering knowledge on waste management and **unaffordable** cabbage collection as a consequence clouds communities' actions in placing rubbish dumping site along the river. Carelessly throwing litter products or for instance disregarding powder soap bag in the river after washing does have collaborating inputs towards the contamination





of the river. Apart from community consciousness of the environment, thus seen unfit to sustain the residing communities.

In respond to the context these situations as in the past, there has been clean up campaigns previously conducted along Tagabe River. However the significance of this cleaning campaigns should focus towards the enhancement and the chancing of communities' mindset. This should promise the sustainability of a clean Tagabe River. Therefore communities engaging in river cleaning up must be aware of its purpose to ensure consistent understanding of such activities for which are advantages as to them as daily resource users. But also with greater regards to Tagabe Catchment.

Engaging communities' participations in this event is of great significance. The need of more awareness to communities in terms of waste management is also highly prioritise and should be at now be address. Only then we can see changes along Tagabe River.

Therefore, this cleaning up campaign seeks to acquire a different approach. Engaging communities and setting the correct purpose of why we conduct the entire Tagabe River clean up. Therefore as a steady base in convincing communities to take interactive responsibilities towards the cleanliness of Tagabe River. Awareness talk will in every communities be conducted by Tanvasoko Youth Council before actual clean up, setting the scope of the activities. Cabbage bags and gloves are provided to each communities to specifically remove rubbish such as plastic bags and bottle, tins, metals and littering products in and beside the river. Evenly Distribution of cabbage bags gloves as according to the community size and amount of waste present in the river.

Current Status

There are more than currently nine communities situated along the Tagabe River. Majority of the communities have settlement that is directly within 30m buffer areas while only minority from observation have household settings indirectly within the buffer areas. Rubbish dumping sites for most of the communities' members are placed within from a distance of 10-15m from river consisting of mixture of organic and inorganic products that at some





points can be at causes of naturally events be washed or blown down into the river by wind or during heavy rains and banks flooding.

In the river itself composition of plastic bags, plastic bottles, tins and canes other products distributed by shops like foam bags, metals and even refrigerators. All these can be found accumulated on the bottom of the river or floating on top. Much of it stays afloat on the surface of the river and are kept together in groups especially where parches of water lilies stretch across the river. As results they can be found in large heaps floating on top of the river.

However since it is a river system naturally flowing inland downstream to coastal areas. Much of the littering light in mass have capability to float, wherefore, descending up stream which can be found collated in parches or individually downstream. Communities residing downstream often complain about such matter and the littering rubbishes that was not theirs but rather up stream communities. It's a great concerns to ensure for the benefits of the entire river as part of the catchment and also communities to collaborate now and at all times to ensure the effective cleaning up is taken in accordance to reef to reef approach given the close interconnectedness land, water and coastal. Water is vector that connects all this components.

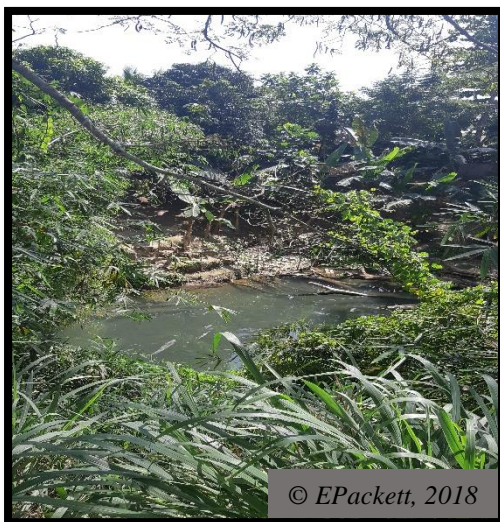


Figure 1 Tagabe River view after cleaning up campaign, day 3. Huarere Studios





Tagabe River Clean Up Campaign

Coordination

Cabbage bags and hand gloves were provided to each communities. Distribution was made in accordance to the size of the community and the amount of rubbish observed within their proximity. Cleaning Campaign starts at 11th Sept which resumes for the next three (3) days from the 11th -14th September.

Upstream communities such as those residing above Tagabe main bridge to Unelco Pump stations were the priority communities to be engaged in the first day of river clean up. It was purposely coordinated in such manner for communities upstream to remove their rubbish prior to downstream communities ensuring any rubbish floating down stream which is not collected will still be picked by communities downstream. It's a sequential coordination for this cleaning up campaign. Communities between Blacksand and Tagabe Main Bridges and towards coastal areas resume cleaning up later in days 2, 3 and 4.





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Figure 3 Tanna Community engage in cleaning up campaign, day 2



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Figure 4 Blacksand mix-community engaging in cleaning up campaign, day 1. Women and children's show their dedication towards the cleanliness of Tagabe River



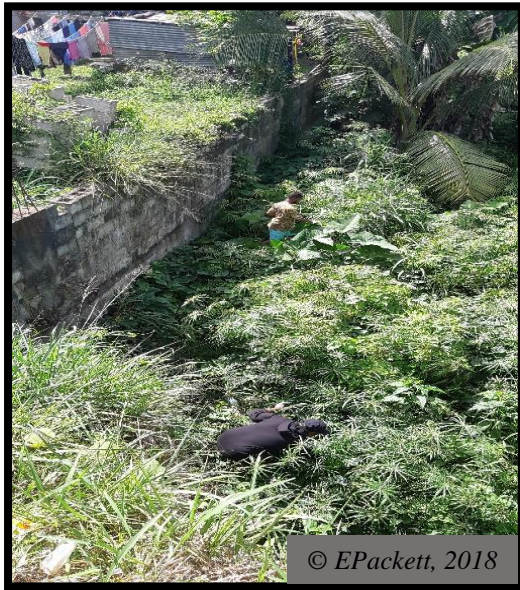


Figure 5 WAN SMOLBAG youth cleaning from Tagabe Main Bridge

The turning out of activities results in at least six (6) trips made by private waste collector for disposal at Etas. Most of the communities respond to have more cabbage bags and hand gloves. Again stressing communities' commitment towards related issues addressing waste management. The cleaning campaign proceeds on for at least four days engaging predominantly communities.





Figure 6 Cabbage Bags collected at each individual community check points





As part of the coordination team for this cleaning campaign together with Tanvasoko Youth Council, we took this opportunities to provide light refreshment for all community members' participants in this cleaning up campaigns. Inclusion of refreshment such as breads, juice and tin tuna was provided to the communities. Such was not promised to the communities, however a generosity giving to show our gratitude for their willingness and concern for their river. Gladly received by the communities which in return showing their commitment and boastful effort requesting more cabbage bags and hand gloves were distributed as requested.



Figure 7 Distributing Plastic Bags and Hand Gloves to Communities





Figure 8 Light Refreshment provided to the communities along Tagabe River

Highlights

1. Entire Tagabe River from furthest communities upstream to the last community downstream in Blacksand engage in littering rubbish collection and other inorganic products.
2. Communities take responsibilities and dedication towards cleaning up their respective riparian areas of Tagabe River
3. Six (6) trips of cabbage collection to Etas (Municipal Rubbish Dumping site). A total of 600 cabbage bags collected.
4. Gender inclusive/equality in community member's participation in this massive river clean up.
5. Chiefly system took governance towards coordinating their communities in this activities, again displaying their commitment and concern for their river but also paving a way towards any future engagement of communities being major part of integrative management of Tagabe River.
6. As part of awareness, communication and knowledge management at least 1 press release on Daily Post Vanuatu, broadcasted in radio news in FM107 6:00PM news 14 September, 2 broadcast in Radio Vanuatu news at 13th September 12:00PM and





6:00PM. Additionally 1 Television Broadcast from TBV news at 7:00PM and 11:00PM at 13th September.

7. Pre mini awareness with the communities. Its purpose to provide justification to communities in safeguarding their river for to health benefits through improved waste management practices and neighbouring communities. Capturing and changing communities' mindset to be proper managers of their river.



Figure 9 Pre awareness to communities by PEBACC and Shefa Youth Council

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Vanuatu Environmental Science Society (VESS) littering data sheets were distributed to communities to tally the rubbish collected. To ensure the quality of data avoiding bias considering the methodology needs to be robust. Only two data sheets were given to each communities. Each communities is to divide themselves into two groups along the river on both sides and data can be collected separately within these areas. Purposely to avoid overlaps. Yet the data presented below are from two major community's settlement where littering accumulation is intense. Such communities need to be pre-informed and trained to be able to collect quality littering data within the waters of Tagabe River.



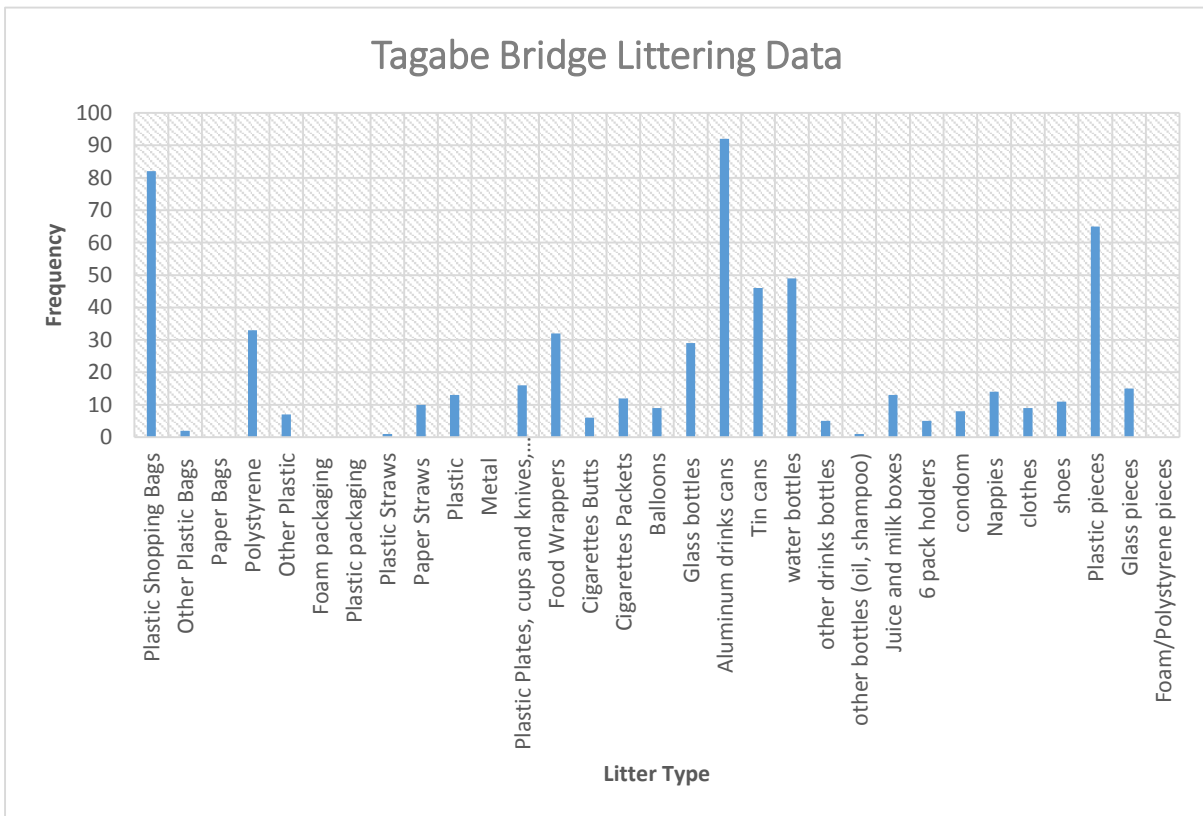
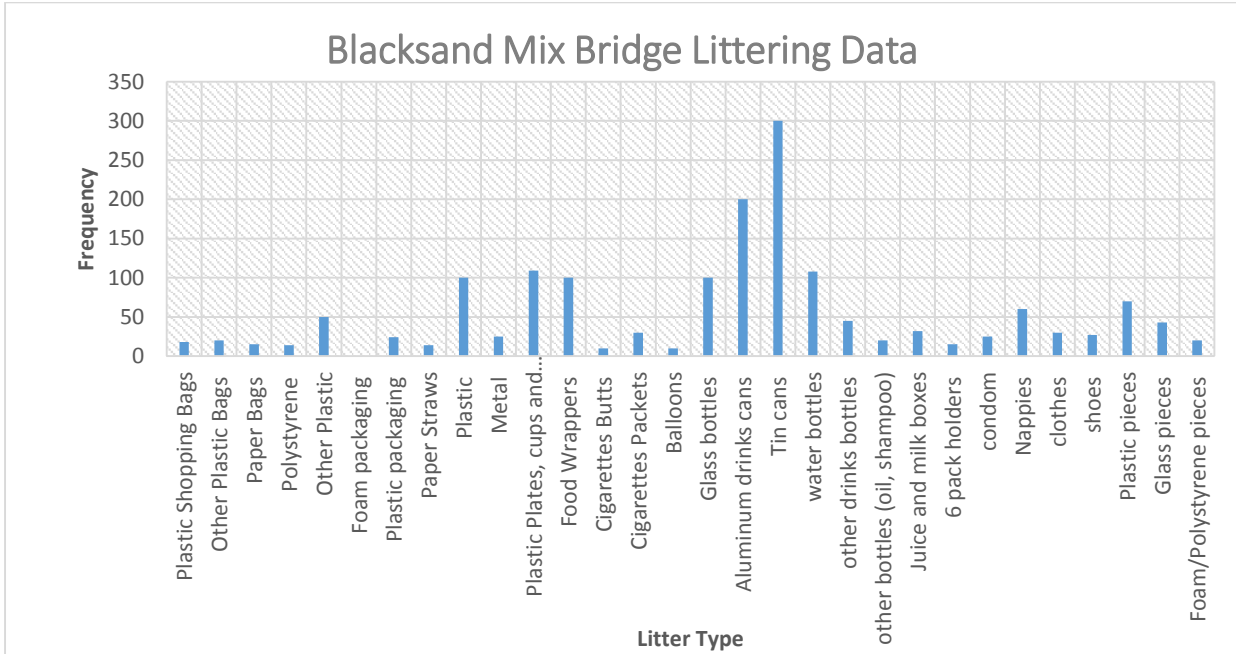


Figure 10 Litter Data for the collected rubbish during Tagabe Clean-up Campaign



The data sheet collected from two communities illustrate differentiations in trends. Despite the distance and location of both communities as indicated (fig 1), specific litter type such as; glass bottle, Aluminium Drinks Cans, Tin Cans, and Water bottles are predominantly found in the river. Other littering are also found disposed into the river however at different numbers across different communities. Each communities due to its nature and context of location would be in differentiation in litter type and its frequency.

Furthermore, according to the data collected at Tagabe Bridge. Since it is located on the main highway, heavy trafficking of vehicle and direct routes for people daily. Thus illustrating, Plastic Shopping Bags, Polystyrene, Plastic plates, plastic knives, plastic cups as well as food wrappers and plastic pieces and cup pieces have higher frequency found within this area alone. A main contributing factors towards this littering issue which may be the root cause of Tagabe Bridge be one of the intense littering site where rubbish accumulation is of greater issue than other parts of the river is the establishment of commercial houses and multiple shop even at present and in the past as well as public access.

According to data collected by the Blacksand Bridge Mix communities, another context of situations is encountered. Absent of main commercial shops who are also distributors of much of the littering products. Routes with light traffic at daily basis. Thus the present of the rubbish trends depends much on the locality of communities but also communication of members with the main distributors in the urban areas. However the trends of these following litter type, Plastic Shopping Bags, Polystyrene, Plastic plates, plastic knives, plastic cups as well as food wrappers and plastic pieces and cup pieces resembles those at Tagabe Bridge. Which we can conclude that this litter products are commonly disposed and found in the river.





Observations

While on ground coordination and implementation there were several observation and issue/concerns raised by communities along Tagabe River. Some of which are of great importance to be addressed if strategic management is taken.

1. Communities along Tagabe River do show their concerns towards the rubbish that are found in the river. Simply for the reason of which they are the daily users of the river for various purpose. Even before this current massive clean-up, communities who really have this overall idea have been recently cleaning their part of the river. Thus it was greatly portrayed by the commitment and time. For communities not serious about their river do still remain faithful during this clean-up campaign participating equally as to those communities having clear concern of their environment. It may be the result of pre awareness to either communities or chief towards the consent of their environment and for the own benefits and the entire Tagabe water catchment.
2. Communities concerns raised were of related issue of the *invasive species* (IA) *Water Lily* and *Water Hyacinth* in the river. Such fresh water flora has the tendency to reduce flow rate of the water. They can be found along the river in large parches. Ecological significance and function as surface water filter. However at large rate due fast replication it high acts has a barrier for rubbish floating down the river. Therefore capturing them in huge bulk floating in the surface and beneath of the river. Thus over ally slow down the flowing rate of the river.
3. Secondly the communities who have overwhelming concern of their river in practice do complain about what is distributed up stream. Communities downstream continuously affect and at some point discriminate their willingness to consistently clean their part of the river. If such is ongoing we will be expecting Tagabe River to be heavily contaminated by accumulation of rubbish.
4. In terms of the marine ecosystem. If such rubbish or littering flows to the coastal areas and even to the adjacent reef areas. Such will not only impact marine creatures but the entire reef ecosystem. Thus relates to Ifira Community Conservation





(ICCA) that specifically falls under the Ifira Marine Management (IMM) to conserve and protect our marine resources. Such practices and measures to reduce disposal of litter waste into the reef will have direct consequences that will either be positive or negative to our community and coastal conservation that has been in place. Therefore promoting and enforcing the traditional conservation of our marine resources of which are being highly threatened by human induced action inland.

Recommendation

Regarding the observation/issues and concerns from this massive cleaning up campaigns there should be a more strategic respond and integrative management of surface water, land and riparian areas (land) engaging communities and to cabinet level to collaborate and effectively with greater assistance from government and non-government organisation. Therefore recommendations are as follows;

1. Setting up WASH committee for every communities along Tagabe River. Or alternatively strengthen the existing provincial government structure to have focal points, i.e. groups within the communities to implement natural resources management and preserving ecosystem goods and services towards sustaining all of Tagabe River Communities. But also allows knowledge sharing and issues addressing Tagabe River can be taken accountable by all relevant key players.
2. The need of more advocacy, awareness and knowledge sharing to the communities on best land and surface water practices. To capture the mindset of communities and enhance they management practices towards a more sustainable river.
3. It is highly recommended that strategic plans and integrative management of Tagabe River considered soon as possible. Issues apart from waste, sanitation is also becoming increase concerns for the communities and wherefore all responsible organisations. The need of lower catchment be better coordinated by TRMC to develop and implement management plan.
4. Establishing recycle cage, as seen from the data collected. Plastic bottles trends will likely to be increase. However with the latest band of plastic bags will largely





enhance its trench. Plastic bottles will increase since we have more distributors. However with World Vision and other commercial organisation taking the lead in the recycling. This should be a profound way to remove and reduce those numbers in the river.

- To ensure such effective awareness and knowledge sharing for the cleanliness of Tagabe River to the Chief of Ifira and to the chief's council. As such, an opportunity to tapped into our existing traditional frameworks, representation of native land owners in for their indigenous integration of community mindset as environmental managers of Tagabe river prolonging its services to the island communities but also to maintain this historical site to the people of Ifira.

Finance

Item	Expenditure	Funders
Food	32,490 vatu	PEBACC (SPREP)
Transport	14,710 Vatu	PEBACC (SPREP)
Transport	4,000 Vatu	Vanuatu IW R2R
Communication (credit card)	2,800 Vatu	PEBACC (SPREP)
Cabbage Bag and Hand Gloves	39,905 Vatu	Vanuatu IW R2R
Cabbage Collection by Private Waste Collector	18,000Vatu	Vanuatu IW R2R
Total	111,905	

Conclusion

To conclude, the overall Tagabe Clean-up campaign is a kick-start off to get communities up and running. Engaging Tagabe communities to take responsible as manager of the river from which their benefits from but also for the entire population of Port Vila being part of the Tagabe Catchment. This should pave the way forward towards achieving a more strategic and integrated management to land, water and forest given the close interconnectedness to maintain and enhance ecosystem services in sustaining livelihoods of Tagabe Island communities.

