

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP CAMPAIGN & COMMUNITY AWARENESS MINI PROGRAMMATIC REPORT



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The International Waters Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) Project would like to acknowledge these following stakeholders whom have a close collaborative effort overseeing the successes of the community clean-up campaigns and awareness campaign. With sincere gratitude I present this acknowledgement to, SPREP Tagabe River Riparian Corridor Regeneration Project, Department of Water Resources (DoWR), Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), Department of Forestry (DoF), Shefa Provincial Government, Port Vila Municipal Council (PVMC), Ifira Marine Management (IMM), and the Tagabe River Management Committee (TRMC). IW R2R Project Vanuatu extends its acknowledgement to the resident communities of Tagabe River and the Blacksand communities, in specific the youths, men, women and children as well as the Chiefs and the elderly.

The outcome of this activity is an excellent result of all your and commitments and contributions in this events, and thus it was well coordinated and implemented. As part of the coordinating team we very much look forward for the ongoing collaboration towards protecting and sustaining Tagabe River.



BASIC DATA

Activity Name	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blacksand Coastal Community Awareness Campaign. 2. Blacksand Coastal Community Clean-Up Campaign. 3. Blacksand Coastal Tree Planting. 		
Project Site/Location	Tagabe River Catchment Area, Port, Vanuatu		
Contributing to/Achieving Project Objectives	Component 1	Strengthening coordination in support of the development and implementation of the Tagabe River Management Committee (TRMC)	
	Outcome	<p>1.1. Strengthening coordination in support of the development and implementation of the Tagabe Catchment R2R Management Plan.</p> <p>1.2. Riparian vegetation restored to sustain Tagabe River and Water Source, and thus water quality of Tagabe River is improved.</p>	
	Targets End of Project	<p>1.1. Tagabe catchment surface and ground water quality complies with national standards.</p> <p>1.2. Buffer and Protected use areas established and adhere to.</p>	
	Component 3	Establishing partnerships for sustainable coastal area development.	
	Outcome 3.2	Public-private partnerships for coastal area use preserving ecosystem services and community resilience.	
	Targets End of Project	Best practice for community local government partnership for sustainable land and surface water use reported and replicated through National STAR Projects	
Financial Expenditures	Tagabe River Clean-Up Campaign	VUV 43,740	USD 392
	Blacksand Coastal Community Clean-Up Campaign and Tree Planting	VUV 46,000	USD 412
	Total	VUV 89,740	USD 804

PURPOSE

The current status of the Tagabe River in terms of waste management and water pollution within the river banks and in the river has been always a major concerns for residing communities, local authorities from government institutions and NGOs as well as CBOs. At the moment Shefa Provincial Government has in draft a Water Management Strategy for rural areas like Tagabe and Blacksand. In order, to protect and restore Tagabe River. This posts an immediate threat to communities who themselves are actors of the scenario but also day to day beneficiaries. With this contextual scenario close in-mind, the IW R2R Vanuatu and the implementing agencies decide conduct this mass community clean-up and awareness for such purpose:

1. ***Minimize the accumulation of waste items 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 from many of the collaborative awareness programs with government institutions, NGOs, CBOs and the PEBBAC Tagabe River Riparian Regeneration Project to foster strategic management of the river. It is important to engage the participation of communities as they are residents and daily users of the river. Community engagement such as this will therefore recall as well as retain in their mindset the sense of ownership to reinstate their responsibilities as key managers for Tagabe Rivers.

3. Therefore from per purpose 1 and 2, it is the projects commitment in commemoration of the ***World Cleaning up Day 15th September 2019.***

Being part of this global event with integral priorities to engage resident communities of Tagabe River in celebrating this annual event with global community by cleaning Tagabe River.

CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN

1. TAGABE CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGNS

Cabbage bags and hand gloves were distributed to each of the 21 resident communities. Distribution was made in accordance to community size and the quantity and area coverage of rubbish observed within their respective areas. The campaign resumes from 13th- 15th September involving both upstream communities and downstream communities outstretch the entire length of Tagabe River.

It was purposely coordinated in such manner for communities upstream to remove their rubbish prior to downstream communities ensuring any rubbish floating down stream can be collected by communities downstream. It's a sequential coordination for this mass river cleaning up campaign.

In general the rubbish found in the river can be categorised as; littering products, most of which are plastic related items, iron/metals as well as organic substances and matter.

These are the following residing communities engaged during this clean-up campaign.



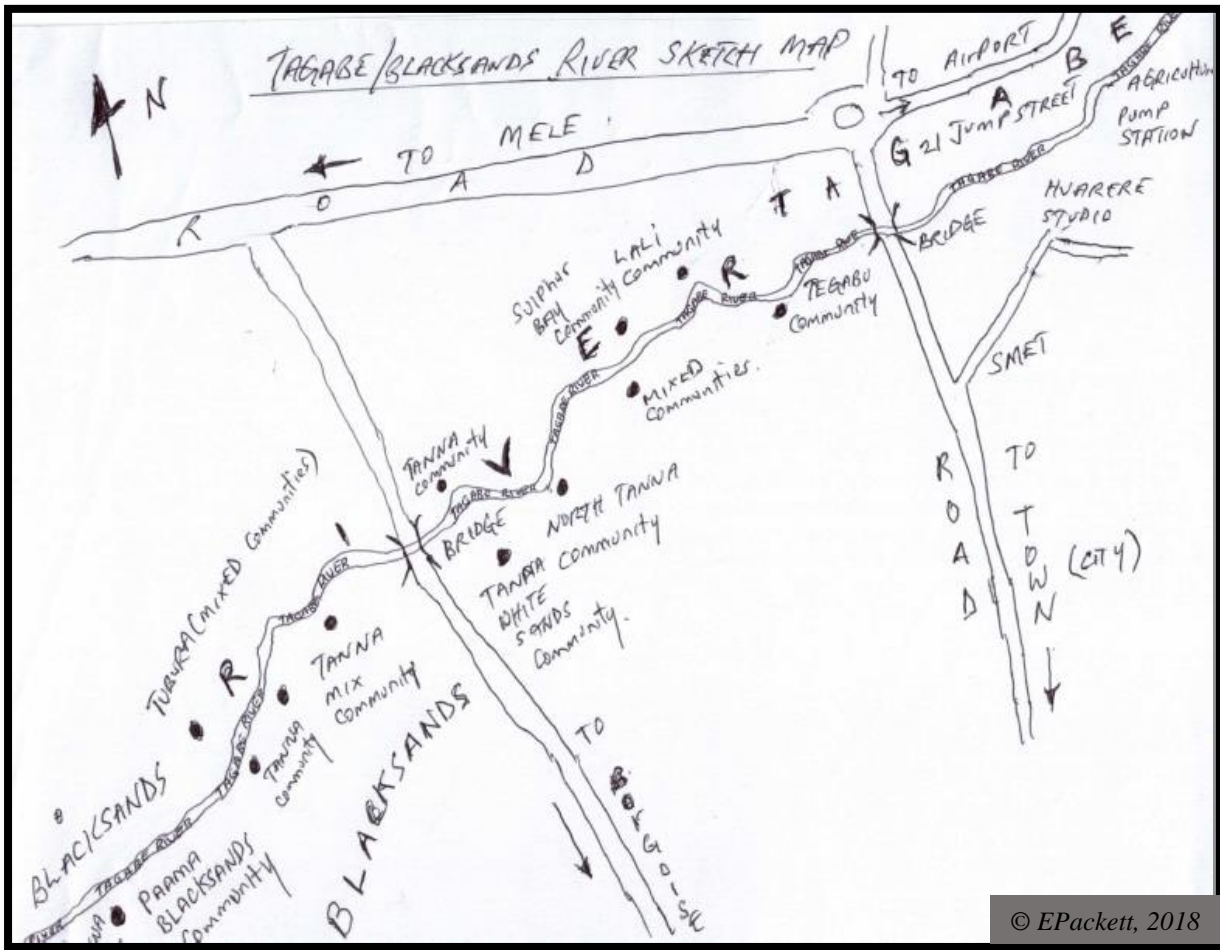


Figure 1 Tagabe River and the residing island communities whom were engaged in this clean-up campaign.

1. Tanna Community 1
2. Paama Blacksand Communities
3. Tanna Community 2
4. Tanna Mix Community
5. Turura Mixed Communities
6. Tanna White Sands Community
7. Sulphur Bay Community (Big)
8. Sulphur Bay Community (Small)
9. Lali Community
10. North Tanna Community
11. Mixed Community
12. Olwi SDA School

13. Tagabe Bridge Community
14. 21 Jump Street Bridge
15. Destination Mix Community
16. Huarere Studio
17. Pump Station Community

It was clear enough that community members are concerned about their river and this shown by the effective participation. Majority of which are women, young girls, children, men and elderly people. Each islander chiefs/leaders were responsible to coordinate his/her community to participate in this mass clean up. During the preparation of this cleaning campaign, chiefs were notified and in advance with notices posted in every community notice boards. Therefore the communities were well aware of this activity. The community's turn out for the river clean-up reflects their concern and ownership roles to protect Tagabe River for the purpose sustainable livelihood and sustainable river that is free from liquid and solid waste pollution.



Figure 2 Shefa Youth engaged with the Tagabe Community in River Clean-Up Campaign



Figure 3 Tagabe main bridge children participate in river clean-up campaign

The Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation as one of the main government institutions dealing with waste management were also part of the engagement. It was a good initiative for the communities to have DEPC team there, on-ground showing their commitment from what their have been advocating in related to waste management. IMM has representation of one the active NGOs around Tagabe and Blacksand area are part of this campaign, mobilizing communities and ensure the overall implementation of this activities.



Figure 4 Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation Staffs engaged in clean-up campaign along Tagabe River

It has also come to attention that the communities take pride in their participation in this campaign. Thus showing their concern for the river from which they are the direct users and beneficiaries. If the river system is not healthy through solid and liquid waste contamination which, then it becomes polluted. With daily access to the river, this should be seen as a potential health risk to communities as well as freshwater biodiversity. These was communicated clearly to all resident communities along Tagabe River during the mass awareness campaign that was schedule through this year. As such this had played a major impact and influence back to the communities to take very serious consideration on how they manage the river. Again this clean-up campaign, especially the engagement of communities

are the result of community enhanced mindset to be better and proactive managers of the Tagabe River.

2. BLACKSAND COASTAL TREE PLANTING & COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN

Another major clean-up campaign was conducted in the areas of Blacksand coasts on the 17th October on a Thursday. It was a whole day activity which started out with an awareness program targeting the surrounding coastal communities and the Victory Hope Primary School. The awareness took place within the school compound involving different project stakeholders. Main message presented in this significant event centres around protecting and keeping the environment through the effective management of waste and littering in Tagabe River which may have potential impact to the marine ecosystem.



Figure 5 Awareness presentation at Blacksand with Victory Hope Primary School and Surrounding Communities.

This one day event involves the engagement of the entire Victory Hope Primary School as minor community members from the surrounding communities. It is therefore seen as an educative session for the students from which action of change can be channelled through them.

Coastal clean-up campaign follows the awareness with the school and then tree planting with both the School and the communities. Department of Forestry through the IW R2R Project collected 636 coastal trees which were then planted along the Blacksand Beach with an aim to restore coastal vegetation and improve resilient to coastal erosion. A total of 600 trees were planted with much enthusiasm from both communities and the school.



Figure 6 Victory Hope Primary School Engaged in Coastal Clean-Up Campaign along Blacksand Shoreline



Figure 7 Victory Hope Primary School also involved in tree planting along Blacksand coastal areas to restore coastal forests



Figure 8 Victory Hope student enthusiastically plant each tree in marking their effort and concern to restore coastal forest of Blacksand shoreline.

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 along Tagabe River.
3. Seven (7) trips of cabbage collection to Etas (Municipal Rubbish Dumping site) for both clean-up campaign.
4. Traditionally chiefly system/governance were utilise for the coordination of their communities in this activities, displaying their commitment and concern for their river but also paving a way towards any future engagement.
5. Proactive participation of both students and communities which might indicate community's understanding and mindset change in respond to the community awareness campaign conducted with close collaboration with SPREP and other relevant stakeholders.

OBSERVATIONS

While on ground coordination and implementation there were several observation on the 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. Thus it was greatly portrayed by the commitment and time. However, 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.
2. Communities concerns raised were of related issue to the *invasive species (IA) Water Lily* and *Water Hyacinth* in the river. These fresh water flora has the tendency to reduce the flow rate of the water. They can be found along the river in large parches. Its ecological function as water filter. However its outbreak in the river acts as natural barrier that blocks rubbish floating along the river and into the ocean. Therefore

- capturing them in huge bulk floating in the surface and beneath of the river that accumulates over time, wherefore contributing to the overall flow rate of the river.
3. Secondly the communities who have overwhelming concern of their river in practice do not complain about what is distributed up stream. Thus, communities downstream are continuously affected. At some point, it also affects their willingness to consistently clean their part of the river.
 4. In terms of the marine ecosystem. If rubbishes such as littering items and organic effluent flows to the coastal areas and even to the adjacent referral areas. Such will not only have negative impacts on the entire reef ecosystem. The Ifira Community Conservation Association (ICCA) through its decentralise structure, Ifira Marine Management (IMM) to conserve and protect the marine lives and resource having in places sustainable practices and measures to boost the conservation effort. Promoting and enforcing the traditional conservation of marine resources that are indirectly threatened by human induced action inland.
 5. Communities also raised concern and complains against the Tusker factory and MCI whom deliberately allow their effluent into the river. Thus affecting surface water quality of river and its daily users but also the aquatic life forms existing in the river.

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. The need of ongoing advocacy, educative 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.
2. It is highly recommended that strategic plans be develop specifically to address waste management crises in Tagabe River. 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.

3. Establishing recycle cage to ensure plastic bottles especially be recycled as identified in its likable trends. However with World Vision and other commercial organisation taking the lead in the recycling. This should be a profound way to reduce their littering item in the river.
4. Establishing Tagabe River buffer areas zoning through interagency partnership with Government Agencies, NGO's, CSO'S and Traditional governing systems.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the overall Clean-up campaign is considered as an ongoing activity that is has become a tradition for the project to conduct at quarterly basis. Engaging Tagabe communities to take responsible as manager of the river from which their benefits from but also as caring citizens 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.