

## Coastal green belt planting and livelihood improvement



family earnings, thereby empowering them economically.

### Target beneficiaries

Residents of Panama, in particular selected women beneficiaries.

### Outputs

- ▶ Creation of a 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> coastal green belt plantation.
- ▶ Construction of a well for watering the plantation.
- ▶ Delivery of two awareness programmes on coastal conservation.
- ▶ Establishment of a coastal conservation society.
- ▶ Preparation of a coastal conservation activity plan with community participation.
- ▶ Provision of support to twelve women to start self-employment in seaweed farming.



### Objectives

This project had three objectives:

- ❶ to reforest the shoreline with the help of local communities;
- ❷ to protect the reforested shore with community participation; and
- ❸ to increase the incomes of women in the community.

### Accomplishments and challenges

The rehabilitation of the coastal green belt prevented erosion by sea and wind, thus helping to reduce environmental degradation. The community increased its awareness of environmental issues, and twelve women empowered economically through job creation started earning a supplementary income to improve the living standards of their families.

### Challenges

The project was hindered by a lack of support from government agencies, and by an initial

#### LOCATION

Panama, Sri Lanka

#### PRIORITY POWS

- Sustainable Livelihoods
- Community Resilience

#### DURATION

One year

#### MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$4,254

### Background

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami destroyed the coastal green belt of Panama, a village in the south-eastern coastal district of Ampara. It also damaged the local fishing economy – for families which traditionally depend on men to bring in an income from fishing this caused severe hardship and deprivation. This project sought to tackle both problems by introducing a programme of participatory coastal planting, and by giving women a means to earn extra income to supplement

lack of awareness of environmental issues in the community that was eventually overcome by awareness programmes.

## Contributions to cross-cutting themes

### Gender equality

In a major change to their economic and social status, twelve women are now successfully self-employed.

### Lessons learned

The project worked best when responsibility for implementation was handed over to

the community. Also, instead of using concrete posts and barbed wire to fence off the planted areas (costly and prone to rusting), the project built fences with wooden poles and *Gliricidia* sticks. These are more cost-effective both to set up and to maintain.

Assigning two women to look after each block of plantation proved a successful method of ensuring plants were tended because of the healthy competition it generated.

Lastly seaweed farming has proved to have strong potential as an alternative source of family income.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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