

## East Usambara Forest Conservation Project

### Participatory Forest Management

#### Summary

Since 1993 TFCG has been promoting forest conservation in the East Usambara Mountains of Muheza District. The project has assisted villagers to plant over one million trees; establish three village forest reserves; engage in income generating activities such as fish farming and vegetable gardens and to have a greater understanding of forest conservation.

#### Introduction

The project aims to conserve the biodiversity and water catchment values of the East Usambara forests and improve the livelihoods of forest close communities. The three main objectives are: 1) To implement sustainable management systems for natural forest on village land; 2) To increase household and primary school incomes and improve livelihood sustainability of forest close communities; and 3) To raise awareness amongst stakeholders on the importance of conserving East Usambara forests.

The project has focused its attention on communities in the vicinity of Kambai, Semdoe, Kwamgumi, Segoma and Manga Forest Reserves located in the centre of the East Usambaras. This area is critical for its role in connecting the southern forests of Amani with the more northerly forests of Mtai and Kwamgumi as well as protecting some of the few remaining patches of lowland forest.

The main threats to the forests in the East Usambara are fire and encroachment of agricultural land. Until the 1980s timber harvesting was also a key threat but this has been much reduced.

#### Biological Importance

The East Usambara Mountains have 40 Eastern Arc endemic and 16 Eastern Arc near-endemic vertebrate species. There are at least 36 animal species and 111 plant species listed as threatened by IUCN in the East Usambaras. This includes two animal species and one plant species considered to be critically endangered.

#### TFCG's Conservation Activities

The project has focused on four villages with a total population of 6719 people. These are Kambai, Kwezitu, Kuze-Kibago and Churwa. Since 2003 the project has also started working with Shembangeda, Mkwajuni and Kizerui. As a result of TFCG's activities, over one million trees have been planted and village forest reserves have been established at Kambai, Kwezitu and Kuze-Kibago. In Shembangeda and Kizerui the process of establishing a village forest reserve has begun. In some villages up to 86% of households have planted tree crops including teak trees with an average of 200 trees per household. In a recent survey, 97% of villagers stated that the forest reserve was beneficial to their lives.

#### References

None cited.

#### Site Details

**Location:** East Usambara Mountains, Muheza District, Tanga Region.

**Area:** Scope of project covers 1955 ha of transitional Eastern Arc/Coastal evergreen forest.

**Biodiversity:** Six Eastern Arc endemic, nine Eastern Arc and coastal forest endemic, and one Coastal Forest endemic vertebrate species; two endangered and four vulnerable vertebrate species according to the IUCN Red Data List; 162 species of trees and shrubs including ten endemic to the Eastern Arc and Coastal Forests.

**Status:** Threatened by agricultural encroachment and fire

● **East Usambara Mountains**  
Since 1993 TFCG has been providing environmental education and support for tree planting in these lowland mountains. Over one million trees have been planted.

