

# Women & Water for Change in Communities

Promoting women as leaders, entrepreneurs and sustainability change agents in rural communities



The 2-year project "Women and Water for Change in Communities", funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation, aims to strengthen the role of women as sustainability change agents in rural African communities. Using an Action Research approach, the project will support local women and youth groups in assessing the state of their water and natural resources, and engage in decisions affecting long term sustainability and social wellbeing. The initiative combines training, citizen monitoring and entrepreneurship opportunities for and led by women.

## The Challenge

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, environmental pressures are acute, as the degradation of natural resources threatens livelihoods and future prospects. Community-based stewardship of ecosystems and natural resources is a core aspect of the global effort to set societies on a more sustainable trajectory. But rural communities, while often aware of degradation in their local environment, rarely have the means or institutions to effectively address problems in an integrated way. Resulting gaps in water management and degrading ecosystems affect women and girls disproportionately, through time needed for fetching water, missed opportunities for education, and diminishing returns of economic activities dependent on natural resources. Increasing female leadership in water-related decisions is, therefore, seen as a key tool for promoting equity and sustainable resource use alike.



## The Project

"Women and Water for Change in Communities" aims to promote women leadership in water-related decision-making, supporting them in improving local use of water, sustainable natural resources management and public health. Activities will focus on training for effective participation in decision-making, support for sustainability entrepreneurs, and the development of locally relevant citizen monitoring schemes with the potential to changing power relationships in resource management. The project follows an Action Research philosophy, documenting and reflecting on changes in local attitudes in parallel to all activities, to track how change comes about and how it is perceived.



## The Sites



The project will work with local communities in three action sites, the Mara Bay and Masirori Swamp in Tanzania, the wildlife conservation area of the Silowana complex in Zambia, and the Mabamba Bay wetland system in Uganda. All three communities depend on degrading natural resources, and all have recently developed an integrated management plan in multi-stakeholder consultations that they are now challenged to implement. This provides a diverse but coherent frame to experiment with innovative tools for women empowerment.

## At a Glance

What	Strengthening the role of women in water-related decisions
Why	Inclusive processes improve sustainable resource use & WASH
How	Action Research
When	09/2017-08/2019
Where	Mara Wetland, TZ Mabamba Bay, UG Silowana Complex, ZM
Who	IHE Delft (Project Lead) Birdlife International TZ & Mara Water Users Nature Uganda & Mabamba Bay Site Support Group Agents of Change Foundation Zambia & Village Action Groups Nile Basin Discourse

## Focus Activities

- Skill development for effective participation in decisions on water, public health and sustainable resource use
- Locally owned and relevant resource monitoring schemes
- Seed funding and training for women entrepreneurs improving the sustainability of local value chains

## Contact

Ellen Pfeiffer, IHE Delft  
Mail: [e.pfeiffer@un-ihe.org](mailto:e.pfeiffer@un-ihe.org)  
Web: [www.un-ihe.org](http://www.un-ihe.org)

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