



MWAMBAO COASTAL
COMMUNITY NETWORK
TANZANIA

MWAMBAO

IMPACT REPORT

2025

Ocean Health is Community Wealth

95

COMMUNITIES

Tanga, Pemba and
Unguja

28,838

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
IN 2025

144,190

TOTAL REACH

40% of total population

1,115 km

61.83% OF COASTLINE

of 1,804 km total
across 3 seascapes

450k ha

ECOSYSTEM MANAGED

Marine & Coastal

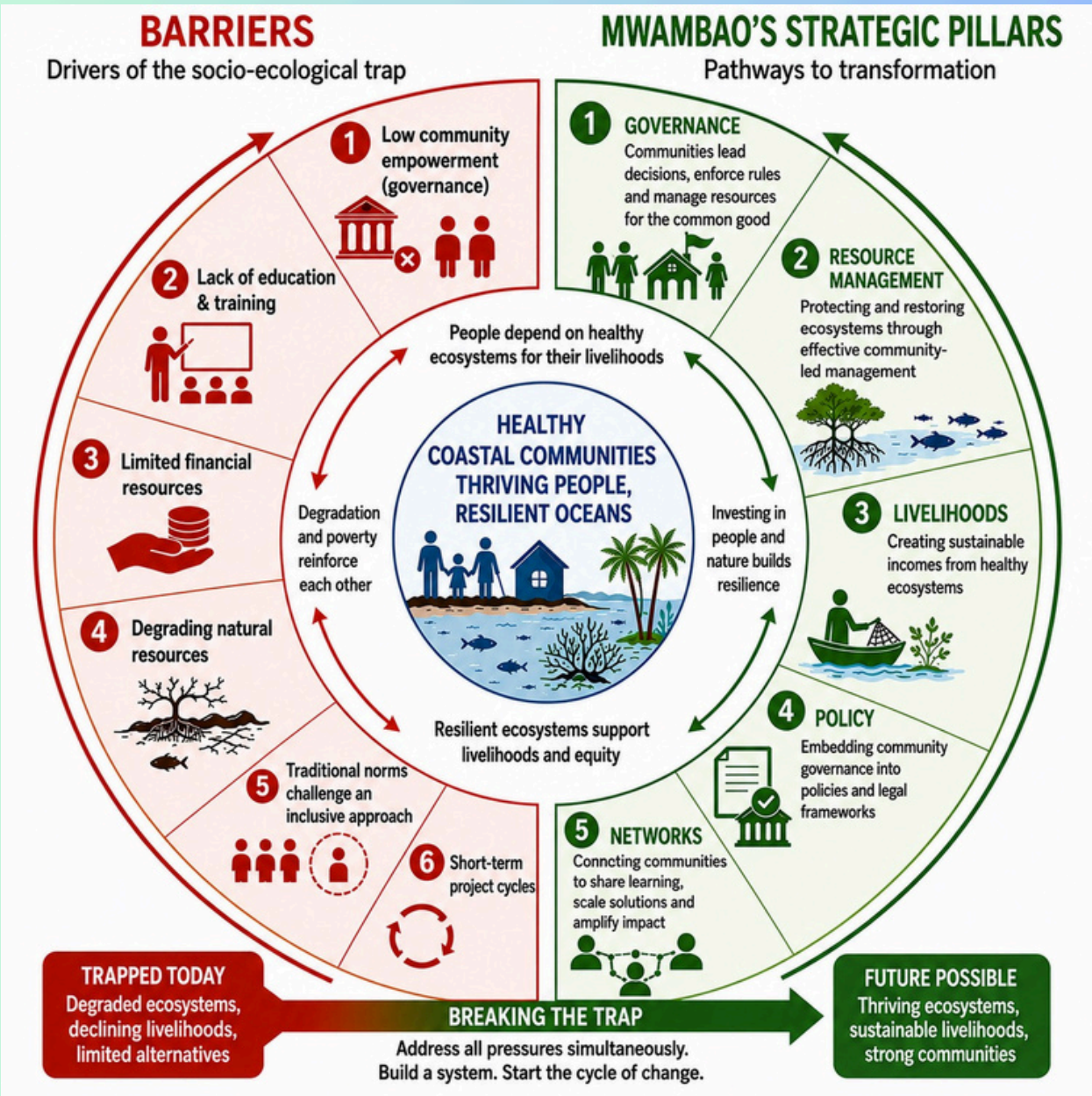


From vulnerability to resilience

There is a socio-ecological trap facing Tanzania's coastal communities, where declining ecosystems, weak governance, and economic vulnerability reinforce each other in a self-sustaining cycle.

Over the last 15 years, **Mwambao** has partnered with and learnt from communities, and developed an approach involving **5 strategic pillars**. These pillars holistically address community needs and ensure the resources, knowledge, and policy support to create resilient coastal communities and thriving oceans.

Across each pillar we present metrics demonstrating Mwambao's impacts in 2025.

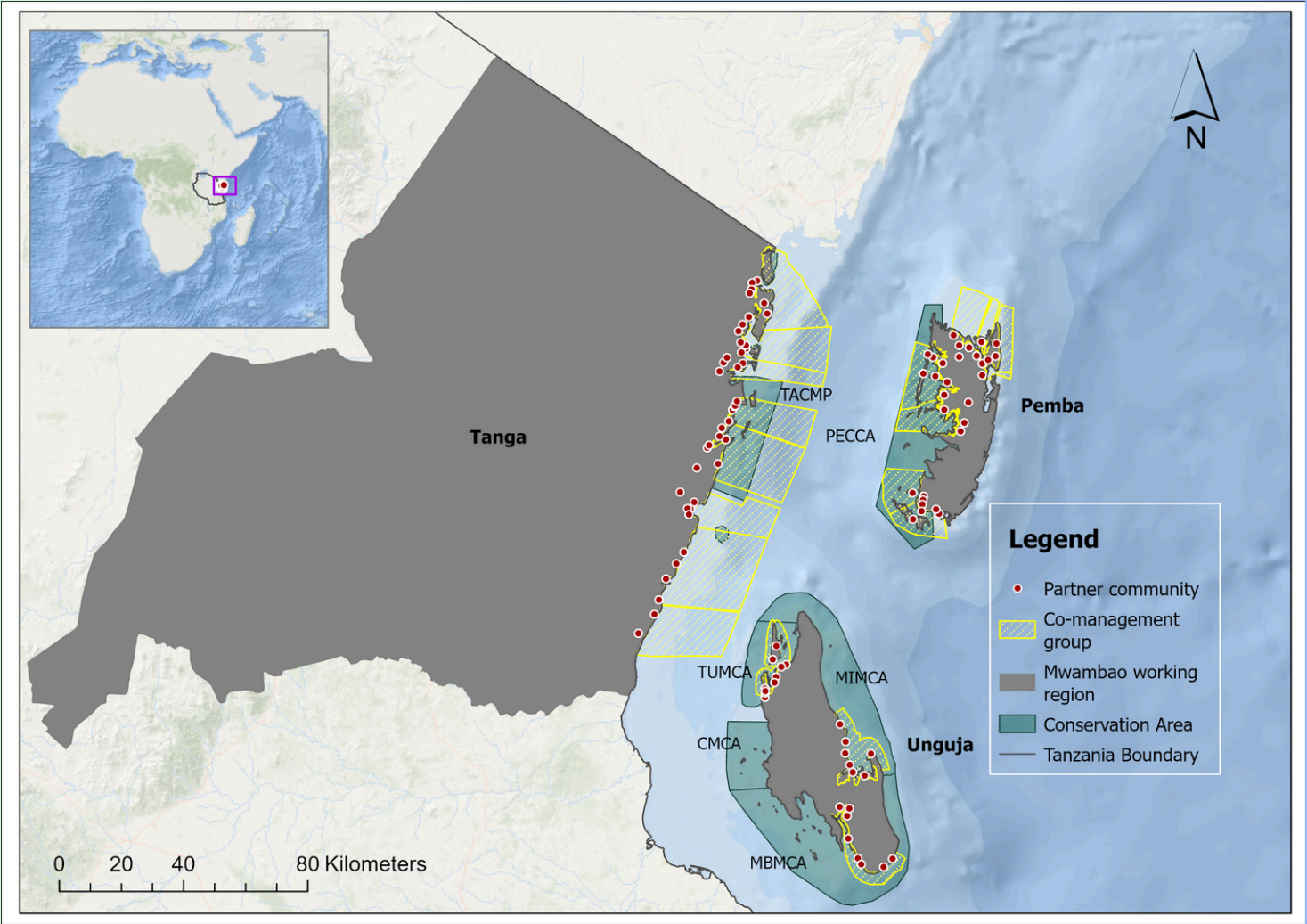


Coordinated conservation at scale

95 Communities. 19 Management Units. One Connected System.

Mwambao works with 95 coastal communities across northern Tanzania (Tanga region) and Zanzibar archipelago (Unguja and Pemba). These communities are organised into co-management groups that share and jointly manage fishing grounds. The **95 communities** we work with represent **19 co-management groups**.

These communities cover 1,115 km of coastline (62% of the total coastline in these three seascapes) and are responsible for managing approximately 450,000 hectares of marine and coastal habitats. The 19 fisheries co-management groups are areas where communities can collectively set rules, conduct patrols, manage voluntarily community fisheries closures, and share data.



Location of Mwambao partner communities, co-management groups, and conservation areas in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar (Unguja and Pemba): Menai Bay, Changu Bawe, Tumbatu, and Mnemba Island Marine Conservation Areas (Zanzibar), and Pemba Channel Conservation Area (Zanzibar); and the Tanga Coelancath Marine Park (mainland).



Improved marine and coastal resource governance at the local level



81% of communities have marine co-management plans

Doubled the number of community patrols

Community Governance scores showed an **71%** improvement

When governance is strong, representative, transparent, inclusive, and accountable, fishers, communities, and government agencies can coordinate effectively, build trust, and agree on rules that are followed. This improves compliance, reduces conflict, and helps ensure marine resources are used sustainably.

Mwambao has developed a training curriculum that builds community capacity for good governance and has carried out training in all 95 communities. In 2025, **31 communities developed marine resource management plans**, bringing the total number of management plans in Mwambao-supported communities to 77 (81%).

In communities trained and then monitored over the last 6 years, revenue collected has increased significantly. This is important because revenue allows communities to carry out their management plans. As an example, in 5 communities in Tanga, **community revenue** to support marine management increased from \$9,253 in 2023 to \$14,753 in 2025 (**59% increase**) through more effective fee collection and other BMU initiatives.

Community patrols ensure that rules agreed upon are respected. In 2025, 12 community patrol teams conducted 402 patrols, double the patrols recorded in 2024. Joint patrols (carried out by communities with government fisheries officers) allow prosecution for any violations. **Joint patrols increased from 55 in 2024 to 271 in 2025**, driven by stronger government partnerships and growing community confidence.

Mwambao measures governance across eight dimensions: leadership, participation, financial accountability, transparency, conflict resolution, law enforcement, co-management progress, and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance through participatory self-assessments (using the Social Assessment of Governance and Ecosystems, SAGE). Mwambao completed governance assessments in 35 communities in 2025, and average governance scores improved from 35% (2024) to 60%. This represents a **71% improvement in governance**.

Improved coastal and marine resource management by local institutions



Based on management measures defined in marine resource management plans, communities are supported in taking action to protect and improve marine resources.

Key management measures in coral reef habitat include the establishment of voluntary fisheries closures to allow habitats to recover and create spillover, and seasonal octopus closures to generate rapid income generation and allowing individual octopus to reach breeding size (due to their rapid life cycle).

In 2025, **6 new long-term voluntary fisheries closures** were established (reaching a cumulative 20 voluntary operational closures, ranging from 1.2-79 hectares in size). Community members have been trained in coral reef monitoring to track change over time, and share the data in participatory feedback meetings. Within the longer-term closures, Mwambao supports communities in improving habitats through restoration. Communities are supported in constructing and installing artificial habitat (reef balls) to enhance structural complexity in highly degraded coral reefs. In 2025, 729 reef balls were deployed (reaching 1,961 reef balls deployed since Mwambao was established).

In 2025, Mwambao established its **first coral nursery**, where coral fragments are grown for later transplantation into degraded reef areas. **Two community members were trained in SCUBA diving and restoration**; these *coral gardeners* clean and ensure survival of the corals in the nursery. Seven thousand corals have been stocked in the nursery thus far, with outplanting planned for 2026.

In 2025, **6 new seasonal octopus closures** were established, covering 754 hectares. This brings the number of seasonal closures in communities supported by Mwambao to 17.



25 Mwambao-supported communities are home to mangrove forests; these communities developed mangrove restoration plans to restore 200 hectares of degraded mangrove forest.

The plans include threat reduction and active outplanting. The communities established 23 nurseries to cultivate mangrove propagules and outplanted seedlings to 156 hectares (20% of the degraded mangrove area across participating communities).

The work was guided by the Mwambao Community Mangrove Restoration Manual and WIO Mangrove Restoration Handbook.

20 long-term
voluntary
fisheries
closures

17 seasonal
octopus
closures

2 community
members
trained in
SCUBA diving &
restoration

1 coral
nursery and
23 mangrove
nurseries

156 ha of
mangrove
habitat
under
restoration



Promote improved local livelihoods through sustainable enterprises

To ensure community wellbeing and reduce pressure on marine resources, Mwambao has supported community livelihoods and created an eco-fund credit system to ensure business training and access to capital.

Livelihood Support

Livelihoods supported included are seaweed farming, fisheries value addition, mangrove honey productions. In 2025, **357 people were trained (61% women)** in financial and business management skills. Mangrove honey was introduced by Mwambao in 2025 in mangrove restoration areas to encourage mangrove protection.

Nine new products were developed in Pemba in 2025 with women including fish candy, fish biscuits, octopus flour, and baked octopus. These products are being marketed by the Zanzibar Chamber of Commerce and the Presidents Office.



357 people were trained

9 new fish products developed

Mangrove beekeeping introduced

MKUBA: Community Eco-Credit

To provide an incentive for marine stewardship and ensure that communities can access credit for business, Mwambao has established a community eco-credit programme: Mfuko wa Kutunza Bahari (MKUBA), meaning "Fund to Care for the Sea". To be eligible, community groups need to use legal gear, follow by-laws, attend institution meetings, report violations, and operate environmentally non-harmful businesses. In addition, MKUBA groups conduct at least one conservation action (patrols, mangrove planting, beach clean-up, or nursery management) every six months.

In 2025, **84 new MKUBA groups with 2,520 members** were formed in 16 communities (creating an overall total of 229 groups with **69% female** membership). Since 2022, there has been 1,683% growth in membership. In 2025, \$67,384 in seed funds were disbursed to the new groups. Since MKUBA inception, \$165,400 has been disbursed, and community savings have reached \$106,784 (voluntary savings and membership fees), with an annual growth rate of 16% and a low loan repayment default rate (<2%). Communities are building financial assets beyond the investment.

1,683% growth in MKUBA membership

\$165,400 disbursed to communities

\$106,784 created through community savings



Supportive Legislation and Policy



Mwambao advocates with government institutions to ensure strong community governance is supported in government policies. In 2025, the Government of Zanzibar invited Mwambao onto the national Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Technical Task Force. In 2025, that Task Force established the MSP Communication Strategy, Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, Local MSP Guidelines, and took part in Blue Tenure Transition Workshops.

In November 2024, Mwambao, in collaboration with Zanzibar's Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, facilitated an inaugural Fisher Certification Training programme. This milestone event aimed to promote sustainable fishing practices including training on: regulations, environmental impact reduction, safety at sea, and resource management. The certification was piloted in 2024 with 53 fishers. In 2025, the certification was rolled out to 608 fishers by 33 community-based peer trainers.

Mwambao worked with the national Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park to bring together 7 villages into a co-management group to ensure inclusive decision-making with the marine park. This represents the first time communities within a Tanzanian national marine park have formed a formal, co-management group to engage in park management.

Scholarship programme for women

Between 2023-2024, Mwambao supported 24 young women from fishing families to acquire vocational skills to build independent livelihoods. Follow up in 2025, revealed that 83% of these scholarship recipients were actively self-employed.



Community networks established that promote knowledge sharing, advocacy, and inclusion of diverse stakeholder groups



A Women's Fisher Network (established with Mwambao support in 2023) held 2 network meetings in 2025, involving 102 women from 71 communities. Follow-up with participants from the 2023/2024 network cohort showed that women carry knowledge back to their communities. As an example, 3 women's groups formed directly based on network learning, are now (as of 2025) running small businesses in tailoring, food production and fish processing.

Two exchange visits were conducted in 2025. One brought community members from Tanga to Kilwa (in southern Tanzania), and another brought 10 communities from Micheweni area of Pemba to one of Mwambao's earliest partner communities (Kukuu). Both of these destinations are model communities which demonstrate effective community marine resource co-management. Exchanges combined peer to peer learning, expert presentations, and hands-on practical sessions on leadership, business management, mangrove conservation, blue economy opportunities, seaweed and anchovy value addition, and explored the challenges of gender-based violence.

CASE STUDY: When Knowledge Travels, Leadership Spreads

Subira, Women's Fisheries Network Member



"Before the exchange visits, I did not think women could take leadership roles in fisheries management," Subira says. "Seeing other women leading gave me confidence to participate and contribute in my own community."

Subira, Women's Fisheries Network Member

For Subira, participation in a women's exchange visit became a turning point. Through learning visits with other coastal women leaders, she observed women actively participating in fisheries committees, conservation activities, and local enterprise development. Inspired by these experiences.

Subira became more actively involved in her own community's governance structures and later served as Secretary within her Shehia Fisheries Committee. At the same time, she expanded her livelihood activities by developing seaweed-based products for local sale.

Community success stories

CASE STUDY: From Small Business Growth to Marine Conservation

Bi Hasna Rashid Mtangi — Kazamoyo, Tanga MKUBA member — shop owner and seaweed farmer



"The training completely changed my mindset," she says. "I understood that conservation is not only about protecting nature, it is also about improving our livelihoods in sustainable ways."

Bi Hasna Rashid Mtangi

Before MKUBA, Bi Hasna ran a small shop in Kazamoyo and borrowed money the only way available to her, through high-interest loans she struggled to repay. "It was very hard," she says. "But since MKUBA came, everything changed. Now I can access interest-free loans that help me improve my business and my life."

With her first MKUBA loan, she expanded her stock. Then she opened two additional business centres. Today, she holds a \$503 loan, actively financing all three. The bigger shift came through MKUBA's seaweed farming training.

She used her next loan to buy seaweed farming equipment. She now plants, harvests, and sells seaweed alongside running her shops' two income streams, one rooted in business, one rooted in the ocean. She has become an active conservation advocate in Kazamoyo, encouraging other women to follow the same path.

CASE STUDY: From Extraction to Stewardship

Akida Sharifu Omari — Chongoleani, Tanga



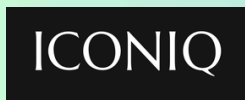
"People did not fully understand the importance of mangroves before. Now the community understands why they matter."

— Akida Sharifu Omari

For many years, mangroves in Chongoleani were heavily degraded as communities depended on them for firewood, building materials, and fishing bait. Unsustainable harvesting weakened fish nursery habitats, increased coastal erosion, and reduced ecosystem resilience. Today, the same community is actively restoring and protecting the mangrove forests it once depleted.

Akida Sharifu Omari, secretary of the Village Natural Resource Committee, has played a leading role in this transformation. Through conservation training, restoration support, and ongoing technical follow-up provided by Mwambao, Akida and her group established a mangrove nursery containing 2,307 seedlings, with 1,421 already planted in degraded coastal areas.

Women now hold leadership positions within the restoration group and actively participate in nursery management, planting activities, and mangrove patrols.



Mwambao's work is made possible through the generous support of our partners and donors.

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