



Newsletter – October 2018

Dugong Conservation in Mozambique



In the region of Bazaruto Archipelago in Mozambique lives a group of approximately 250 a 300 dugongs, which is the last sustainable population of dugongs on Africa's Eastern coast. The Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project works to protect the dugongs in Mozambique and increase the knowledge among the Mozambican population of this species and the risks for its continued existence. In this newsletter the reader can learn about key activities and results from July, August and September 2018.

Participation in the Biodiversity Fair and Exposition in Inhambane

From the 3rd to the 12th of August, the project team participated in the Biodiversity Fair and Exposition (Exposição e Feira sobre a Conservação da Biodiversidade) in the city of Inhambane. The event was organized by BIOFUND.

The purpose of the event was to increase the awareness about biodiversity conservation in Mozambique, and more than 5.000 people visited the fair and exposition. Participants Included children, adults and young students.



The Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project participated with a variety of activities with the aim of informing and raising awareness among the students and school children about the conservation situation and challenges of the dugongs in Mozambique as well as the importance of seagrass.

The activities included the presentation and dissemination of posters and brochures, educational games about the threats towards the dugongos and seagrass beds, a drawing competition, seminars and the presentation of a documentary about dugong conservation.



Drawing competition to promote dugong awareness

In July 2018, the Mozambican project partner, the Dugong Conservation Association (Associação para a Conservação e Protecção dos Dugongos e Espécies de Mamíferos Marinhos), launched a drawing competition about dugong conservation. The competition was open for secondary school children and university students in Maputo.

The objective of the competition was to create educational posters to inform about the characteristics, the potential threats and the possible actions to protect the dugongs. Many contributions were received, and the 32 best posters were pre-selected by a jury based on their creativity, originality, graphic quality as well as the relevance of the message about dugongs.

The pre-selected posters were published on the Facebook page of the Mozambican project, where they were subject to public voting by the Facebook users for a period of 10 days. The three designs with most votes in both categories won the competition, and the winners were awarded with an amount of money for the purchase of school materials. All participants also received t-shirts with project logos. The prizes as well as participation certificates were presented to the contestants at an award ceremony held on the 22nd of September in Maputo.

The winners are:

Secondary schools:

- 1st: Issufo Omar, Estrela Vermelha Secondary School
- 2nd: Seyxa Cuaiane, Colégio Adventista
- 3rd: Joaquim Maposse, Eduardo Mondlane Secondary School

University students:

- 1^o: Cipriano Salema, Faculty of Science, Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM)
- 2^o: Nercia Nhanice, Faculty of Science, UEM
- 3^o: Alberto Fernando, Faculty of Science, UEM



Congratulations! The designs can be found on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mozdugong/>

Stronger coordination between conservation stakeholders and African Parks

The Dugong Conservation Association participated in a meeting to enhance research and monitoring of marine species, organized by African Parks and held on the 26th and 27th of September 2018 in Vilanculos. Various national and international organizations participated, as well as the National Administration of Conservation Areas ANAC, the focal point for the dugong MOU in Mozambique and representatives of the Inhambane Directorate for Land, Environment and Rural Development. Also the director of the District Service for Economic Activities of Inhassoro, the District Administration of Vilanculos, the coastal sanctuary of Vilanculos and tourism operators participated.

The research and monitoring approach of African Parks is based on the need to ensure the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Bazaruto Archipelago National Park. Research priorities will include several focal areas: ecological issues, such as habitats, protected species, hydric resources, vegetation and their main threats; community issues such as resource extraction, agriculture and fishery; and financial issues such as tourism and its benefits for the park and the communities. Another important issue is the enforcement effort, which influences the park both socially, economically and ecologically.

The Dugong Conservation Association called attention to the fact that most of the protected species, including the dugongs, live outside the limits of the National Park. The main pressure on their habitat comes from the need for survival of the neighbouring communities such as Vilanculos, Inhassoro and Govuro as well as the tourism activities conducted here. Also the existing and foreseen developments in these districts may further endanger the ecological balance through pollution, erosion and other effects.

A closer cooperation between African Parks and diverse partners and stakeholders is foreseen for the future, and the meeting led to a definition of platforms for them to increase communication and exchange of experiences. The objective is that all the involved organizations will assist African Parks in reaching their conservation objectives and aim at environmental, social and economic sustainability of the National Park. Possible support areas of the Dugong Conservation Association will be monitoring of the dugong population and seagrass beds, sharing experiences of community education in environmental issues as well as investigation in alternative livelihood strategies.

Conclusion of community training program

The program for education in environmental issues and marine species conservation concluded its activities of training and capacity building of primary school teachers in the district of Inhassoro. Among the topics taught during the program were knowledge of protected species, marine species conservation, the dugongs and their threats as well as the importance of seagrass. The project has trained 59 teachers from 10 primary schools during a period of 18 months. On the 26th – 28th of September 2018, the project team presented the participants with training certificates in Inhassoro, Fiquete, Chibo, Mahoche, Mangarelane, Petane e Mananisse.



The teachers also received t-shirts with project images and logos as well as the message “ I am a friend of the dugong”. After the conclusion of the educational program, the teachers will continue to apply their knowledge in order to educate and inform their students and fellow community members about the dugongs, their habitats and the threats that they face.



On the 26th of September, the team also visited the secondary school of Inhassoro, holding competitions with the students about dugong and seagrass conservation. The winners received t-shirts with logos and slogans from the project.

On the 29th of September, a training session was held with fishers in Vila de Nhamabué about protected species and dugong and seagrass conservation.

The Dugong Conservation Association is committed to continue its efforts to raise awareness and inform about the dugongs, seagrass and the threats to their existence. Therefore, the Association has entered into a partnership with the community radio in Vilanculos in order to broadcast four daily radio spots in Portuguese and the local language Xitsua.

The radio spots will deliver messages on dugong and seagrass conservation and sustainable fishing practices. The sports will be broadcasted during a four-month period starting from October 2018.

