

Country: Tanzania

Focus of case study: Soil conservation

Summary: The Shinyanga region in the north of Tanzania is occupied mainly by the agropastoral Sukuma people. The Hifadhi Ardhi Shinyanga (HASHI) project, which means “soil conservation” in Kiswahili, is a government initiative under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. It has been instrumental in reviving the Sukuma people's traditional practice of conservation. Using indigenous knowledge, they practice a natural resource management system called ngitili - a Sukuma word meaning enclosure. Traditionally ngitilis were used to provide animal fodder for very young, old or sick animals unable to follow other animals to grazing lands and were managed either individually or communally. Involving the conservation of grazing and fodder lands by encouraging vegetation regeneration and tree planting, ngitili has proven to help protect the environment and improve the livelihoods of communities in the region.

The Shinyanga region used to be extensively forested with dense woodland and bushland species. The traditional practice of ngitili was used by people in response to serious fodder shortages caused by the frequent droughts typical in semi-arid areas. The government relocation scheme, together with drought, over-grazing, cash crop cultivation, destruction of forests to wipe out tsetse fly and increased demand for fuel wood, began to reduce land productivity and increase deforestation and soil erosion. The Shinyanga landscape is now changing, thanks to farmers' enthusiasm for agroforestry. When establishing a ngitili a number of factors are considered, including: site selection for degraded croplands and rangelands and availability; demarcation and issuing of deeds, employment of traditional village guards for protection; and conservation by closing off ngitilis for a period of several years for regeneration.

Class of adaptation practice: communal pooling

External support: leadership

Local rural institutions: collective/ social

External institutions: public

Capacity building: information exchange/ coordination among groups, ability to plan and strategize, ability to maintain livelihood during environmental hazards, ability to maintain operations and improve production

Source: UNFCCC Local Coping Strategies Database: “Ngitili in Shinyanga, Tanzania.”
