Women lead community actions to restore endangered coastal ecosystems on the pacific island Palau

**Description of the project:** On small islands like Palau ecosystems are connected from ridge to reef, and inland degradation can become a significant threat to freshwater and coastal waters, diminishing the ability of mangroves and coral reefs to protect coasts. The project targets the states of Ngaremlengui and Ngirai in the Babeldaob watershed. Afforestation activities contribute since 2014 to climate change adaptation. This is restoring bare land, ensuring water and food security, and guaranteeing mitigation measures for new housing through enhanced services from forest and mangrove ecosystems. This community led project has involved local women’s groups, youth groups, schools and households - over 550 people - for planting 1,117 native trees, 1,084 vegetative strips (e.g. lemongrass strip) and ethnobotany trainings.

**Climate impact:** Ebiil Society’s project creates multiple benefits, increasing ecosystems’ and communities’ resilience to climate change impacts. These benefits include regulation of soil erosion and fertility loss, carbon sequestration, improved local climate, provision of freshwater resources, and restored habitat for various species. Over 2,600 trees and lemongrass were planted to resist floods and sediment runoff. Plants are grown in Ebiil’s plant nursery and distributed to households or bare soil areas at no cost to the community.

**Gender impact:** 12 women from the community were identified to lead the implementation of watershed restoration plans, promoting the decision making role of women on land and the matrilineal tradition of Palauan society. Access to trainings was guaranteed to women, men, boys and girls, while elderly women were encouraged to participate as carriers and trainers of traditional knowledge. The women’s groups benefited from capacity development programs in ethnobotany, plant collection and propagation, endangered species, sustainable home gardening, soil treatment and tree planting, and erosion control.

**Scalability / replicability:** Tree growth monitoring conducted in collaboration with Oregon State University informs best practices for planting, depending on species, soil and other environmental variables at restoration sites. This helps in scaling up efforts across the watershed. Methods have been refined over time to ensure resilience in poor soil conditions, bird propagation, social and economic value, as well as minimum maintenance. Afforestation and restoration of degraded land can be replicated in other States, as best practices and collected data can inform housing and construction management policies.

**Miticash – Citizen science**

**Description of the project:** Miticash is a participatory science project which helps women smallholder farmers become citizen agronomists and contribute to climate resilience in drought prone Kenya, using conservation agriculture techniques. 630 women farmers from the arid lands of northeastern Kenya and Boni forest were trained on selecting and growing drought resistant crops, ensuring food security throughout the year for their communities. The project involves men, women, persons with disabilities and children equally in policy planning and implementation. Women assume leadership roles thanks to a train of trainers model, and take part in decision making processes to address the hunger challenges they face due to climate change. Miticash has provided green scholarship to 23 young girls.

**Climate impact:** With climate adapted crops and sustainable farming, vegetables and fruits grown in their gardens, women farmers reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Farmers also have stopped unsustainable practices like bush clearance or charcoal burning, which contributes to deforestation and environmental degradation. Over 300,000 trees seedlings have been planted in social institutions to encourage children to be nature enthusiasts. 40,000 tree species in the project’s seed bed will be planted to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems.

**Gender impact:** This initiative has empowered women smallholders, living in patriarchal communities, to be part of climate negotiations at the local or national level. The women are able to stand their rights. Miticash supports the goal of equal access to education by financing tuition fees to 23 vulnerable girls with a green scholarship.

**Scalability / replicability:** Women in the project area take part in 90% of the agricultural production activity but they practice unsustainable agriculture such as shifting cultivation and bush burning, which contributes to deforestation. Using an approach called train the trainer, women smallholders are divided into groups and choose their group leaders. The group leaders undergo training and after that go back to their own group to train their members. This approach has ensured wider coverage and the same approach could be used to scale up and replicate this project.