Jamii, Ustawi na Mikoko (JUMP) Project: Restoring Mangroves and Empowering Communities in Lindi, Tanzania

The Jamii, Ustawi na Mikoko Project is a one-year initiative from 2025 to 2026 led by HUDEFO in partnership with Klima und Natur and funded by the Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung. The project focuses on restoring degraded mangrove forests in Mbanja Ward, Lindi Urban District. Mbanja is part of a broader 23,000-acre mangrove ecosystem along Tanzania's southern coast, with about 130 acres in the ward itself. These mangrove forests, which include species such as Rhizophora mucronata, Avicennia marina, and Ceriops tagal, face severe threats. Expansion of salt pans, illegal wood harvesting for fuel and construction, pollution from nearby settlements, and climate change impacts including sea-level rise and storm surges have caused significant degradation. Local communities are increasingly vulnerable to coastal erosion, loss of fisheries and wood resources, reduced carbon storage, and declining biodiversity.

In response to these challenges, HUDEFO launched the JUMP Project on June 28, 2025, aiming to restore 30 acres of degraded mangroves in Mbanja by planting 10,000 mangrove propagules and establishing a sustainable nursery. The launch event engaged over 175 participants including representatives from Tanzania Forest Service, local government authorities, schools, community organizations, and media. During the event, 1,310 mangrove seedlings were planted in the nursery and 3,473 propagules were planted directly in degraded areas. Participants also took part in an awareness session on the ecological and economic importance of mangroves, including coastal protection, fish breeding habitats, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

To promote community involvement and environmental knowledge, the project commemorated International World Mangrove Day on July 26, 2025. Mbanja Primary School students, teachers, local authorities, and community members participated in hands-on activities such as species identification, nursery preparation, and planting techniques. An additional 1,003 seedlings were prepared and 452 propagules planted, focusing on Rhizophora mucronata due to its availability. These activities contributed to rehabilitating degraded areas and fostered environmental stewardship among young people and community members.

The project also emphasizes long-term community capacity building and sustainable livelihoods to reduce pressure on mangrove forests. Between September 10 and 12, 2025, a three-day training was conducted for the Village Natural Resource Committee. The training covered administrative and financial management as well as regenerative farming practices. Participants learned leadership, budgeting, record-keeping, composting, organic mulching, and bio-spray preparation. Practical sessions on vegetable cultivation, farm preparation, and water management equipped farmers with eco-friendly techniques that rebuild soils, improve biodiversity, and enhance food security. Beekeeping was introduced as an alternative source of income. Community members are now actively practicing regenerative agriculture and beekeeping, which provide sustainable livelihoods and reduce dependence on mangrove resources for fuel, construction, and income.

The impact of these interventions is already visible. A total of 3,925 mangrove propagules have been planted and 2,313 seedlings are growing in the nursery. Ten Village Natural Resource Committee members received training in governance and financial management, and fourteen farmers gained skills in regenerative farming. Over 175 stakeholders including students, teachers, community members, and government officers participated in conservation activities, demonstrating strong local commitment.

Going forward, the project aims to expand nursery production to 10,000 seedlings, continue monthly planting sessions, increase awareness campaigns targeting women, youth, and children, and strengthen the capacity of the Village Natural Resource Committee in sustainable beekeeping and mangrove conservation. By integrating ecological restoration with community empowerment, the JUMP Project seeks to protect Mbanja's mangrove forests, improve coastal resilience, and provide sustainable income opportunities for local communities.