



# Most Significant Change The GEF Pacific STAR R2R Project - FSM



## Community Support for Protection of the Tamil Watershed



Ezekiel Kenfathlee

I was involved with the coordination of a climate change mitigation project aimed to protect the Tamil Watershed in Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia. Due to a large portion of the Yap State population relying on the watershed for fresh water resource, it was critical to properly conserve the watershed area to safeguard its sustainability.

Funded by the German Government (BMUB) and supported by other partners including R2R, TNC, MCT, RARE and YapCAP, the project was implemented by the Tamil Resources Conservation Trust (TRCT) in collaboration with the Tamil community.



Tamil Watershed

One of the project's key activities included a water campaign to increase awareness on water conservation, as well as leverage continued commitment from key stakeholders to the project. Assistance was sought from different partners for a water saving competition. At that time, the R2R project was just starting to gain recognition in Yap. The R2R project responded to our request by funding the prize of the water saving competition. Since then, the R2R project has supported the Tamil community by producing a billboard featuring the boundaries and other key information of its watershed. Other support includes sourcing of GIS experts to develop maps for the watershed and generally promoting greater awareness on the watershed project.

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Tamil Watershed Management Area Map

I think the community's behavior towards conservation, climate change, and water conservation to be specific, tops the list for the most significant change. Prior to the introduction of conservation and climate change mitigation projects, there was a huge gap in support from government to CBOs. TRCT was established as a CBO responsible for overseeing and managing Tamil's natural resources. Through partnerships with Government and NGOs, TRCT managed and completed several successful projects. This positively impacted the behaviors of the people of Tamil towards resource conservation.

The community's perception and behavior towards water conservation began to change as a result of many factors, but I believe we can agree that support towards the water saving competition conducted in the Tamil was the most effective method of influencing people's behaviors. The outreach done on the Save Water campaign went beyond expectations. If you ask a primary school kid what is the importance of the watershed and its natural resources, they'll smile and tell you.

In some ways, this behavior change is somewhat special to individuals like myself. We are currently living in a time where people can see the real impacts of climate change. With this mindset, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are what I believe to be the 'golden keys' because I would love to know that future generations will enjoy the same natural resources I enjoy now or even better. Therefore, promoting positive behavior change towards management of critical resources is what it is all about.



Community artwork

