



CPAR's vision compels us to support communities in their efforts to create and maintain health in a manner that will prevent future generations from sharing the same challenges.

CPAR understands the intrinsic link between the physical and social environment and always utilizes strategies that not only address the needs of those coping with immediate challenges, but also to mitigate any potential harm to the physical environment or, if the potential exists, to rehabilitate environments that have suffered from excessive or short-sighted use.

Poverty can have a profoundly negative effect on the environment. As people are pushed to act upon immediate needs, vulnerabilities are exacerbated in ways that often lead to unsustainable utilization of natural resources – cultivating poor, erosion-prone land for food production; taking fuel wood from living trees in forests that are traditionally protected; overgrazing livestock in fragile grasslands; and a host of other harmful practices.

This translates into some program activities that directly target environmental deficiencies such as the promotion of re-forestation or the use of energy saving technologies that reduce the demand on natural resources. CPAR also incorporates environmental analysis into all of its work to make certain that any potential impact due to our programs is identified and adequately addressed before we begin. This may include elements such as the promotion of bee-keeping (apiculture) among farmers to generate income through the sale of honey. These farmers are thus able to stop harmful agricultural practices such as the tilling of slopes (which are important protection against erosion) to provide for themselves and their families. Furthermore, as with all CPAR programs, activities are community-driven. By doing this we are able to ensure that the communities living in a certain area understand and are equipped to plan for the long-term viability of the solutions that are employed.

Here are some examples of activities in current projects which are supporting environmental sustainability:

- **Identifying sources for sustainable irrigation systems in rural Ethiopia –**
Through the implementation of these systems and training of farmers on how to incorporate this into farming practices, less strain is placed on soil, allowing for better and more robust food production.
- **Training households to build energy saving stoves in Uganda –**
These stoves are constructed using locally available materials and can be used for all regular household cooking while requiring far less wood to be collected from surrounding forests (this also saves a great deal of labour).

- **Employing alternative safe water initiatives in Tanzania –**
To best adapt to the geography of the areas where CPAR works, our program has been utilizing rainwater harvesting through the construction of large tanks that store rainwater collected from school rooftops. After serious investigation, this technique was shown to be the optimal solution for this particular environment (our careful studies of the environment before activities begin often shapes decision-making).
- **Training agricultural actors about soil and water conservation in Malawi –**
Through program activities that expand upon farmers' knowledge about techniques to conserve soil and water these communities are best able to maximize the food they can grow immediately as well as for many seasons to come.

CPAR holds the preservation of the physical environment as one of the most important aspects of good program design and implementation. All of our programs take the necessary steps to make certain that future generations will have the natural resources required to live healthy lives and to take action to improve their situations as they work towards positive change.