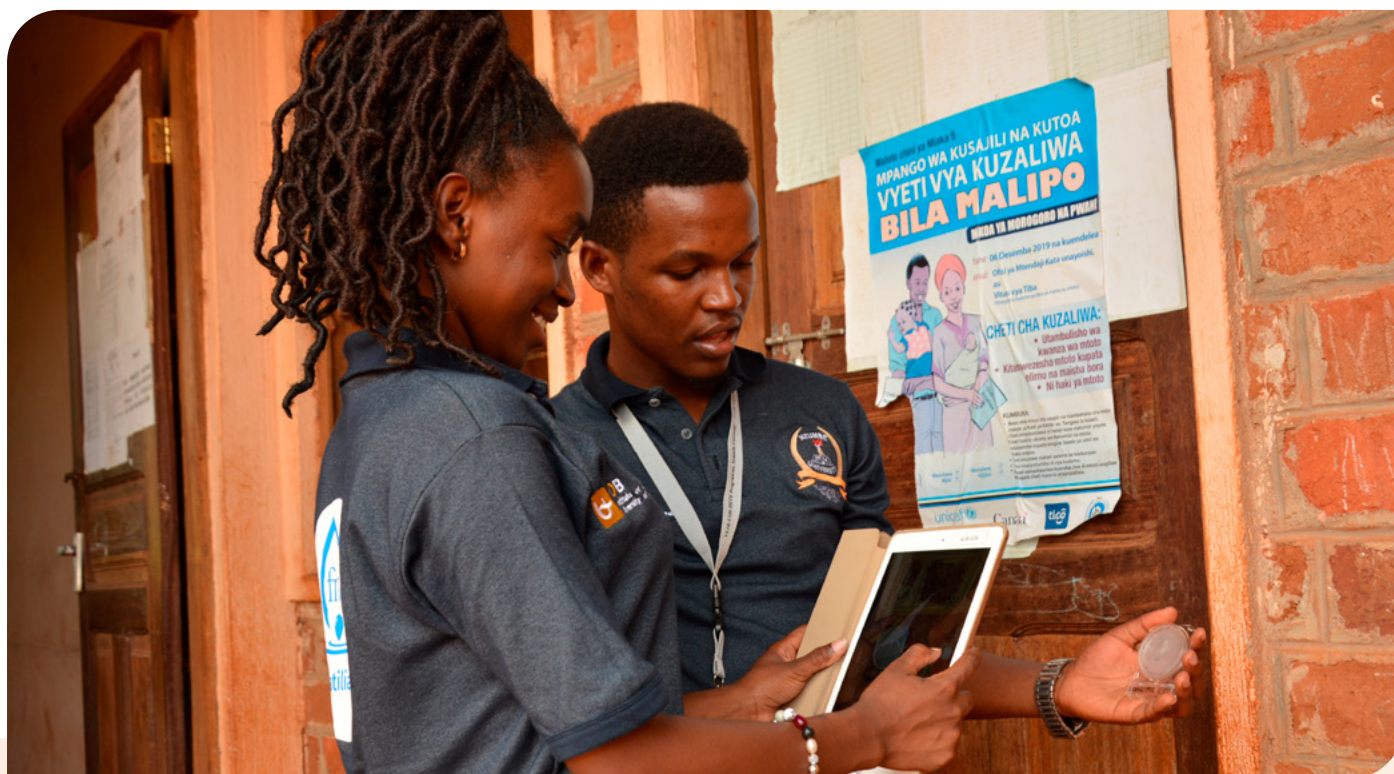


## Added Value of Community Based Monitoring (CBM): Lessons from the Fuatilia Maji Project



### Key messages important lessons & recommendations

- **Key message:** The Fuatilia Maji project has registered significant contributions to the stakeholders involved. These benefits range from skills acquisition and knowledge improvement, to empowerment of the student and community monitors, and to palpable changes in local community life, especially in relation to the use, treatment and management of water resources in the Morogoro region of Tanzania.
- **Lesson 1:** The **monitors improved** upon their data collection, water quality testing and water source monitoring **technical skills**. They also highlighted considerable improvement in their **personal skills** namely; **leadership, presentation and advocacy skills**. A comparison of the two groups of monitors revealed that the student monitors seemed to have registered greater gains in these skills than the community monitors.
- **Lesson 2:** A similar observation can be reached with regard to **deepening the knowledge acquired on water, water treatment and water source management**. The student monitors seemed to have experienced much more expanding of their knowledge on these water aspects in comparison to the community monitors.
- **Lesson 3:** With regards to overall attitudinal changes, monitors felt greatly **empowered** through their role on the project, deeply **respected** by fellow citizens and motivated to engage in **community work**.
- **Lesson 4:** The community monitors reported **increased water knowledge among the citizens** and significant improvement in the utilization and management of water sources by village level duty bearers.
- **Lesson 5:** Apart from internet connectivity and absence of water sample tests, both groups barely encountered **challenges** while executing their duties as monitors.
- **Recommendation 1:** There is **need for recurrent trainings** not only among the monitors but the entire citizenry in order to foster sustainable behavioral change in the use, treatment and management of water sources.
- **Recommendation 2:** Collaboration between the monitors and technical personnel is fundamental. Moreover, **trainer of trainers initiatives** should be explored, with **community monitors at the forefront**.

## About Fuatilia Maji

The [Fuatilia Maji](#) Project (FM) is co-financed by VLIR-UOS and jointly managed by the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp and Mzumbe University in Tanzania. It supports synergies between students and staff of IOB and Mzumbe University, local rural communities and duty bearers in Morogoro region, Tanzania (IOB, 2019)<sup>1</sup>. **FM aims to empower rural communities to actively participate in the sustainable provision of clean water for domestic consumption through mobile technology use in community based tracking of access to, functionality, and quality of public water sources** (IOB, 2019).

Through a monitoring system with warning flags that is is; red, implying water unsafe for both drinking and bathing; orange, water unsafe for drinking but can be used for bathing and green, water safe for both drinking and bathing; the monitors are able to collect data on the quality of the water sources (Daily news reporter in Morogoro, 2021)<sup>2</sup>.

Citizens are then informed about the quality of their water sources through village meetings. Moreover, the duty bearers are notified by mobile text message with the link to the online [mwater portal](#), showing all data on water sources' access, functionality and water quality collected from the field monitoring activities.

## About the study

Information on the added value and challenges for the monitors involved on the Fuatilia Maji project and corresponding recommendations were captured using semi-structured questionnaire surveys (Nov-Dec 2021). A total of 17 community monitors were interviewed from the villages of Lugono, Matale, Vikenge, Mgudeni and Vitonga in Morogoro region in Tanzania. Additionally, 28 student monitors involved in FM were interviewed. The findings presented in this research brief therefore highlight the contribution of the project in terms of skills, knowledge and attitudes to those involved in monitoring water sources in the communities. The findings are also intended to document the perceived local changes since the start of the Fuatilia Maji project and give insights on the potential of ICT enhanced resource monitoring to offer new information or faster ways to share information from the water source itself to the duty bearers and citizens.

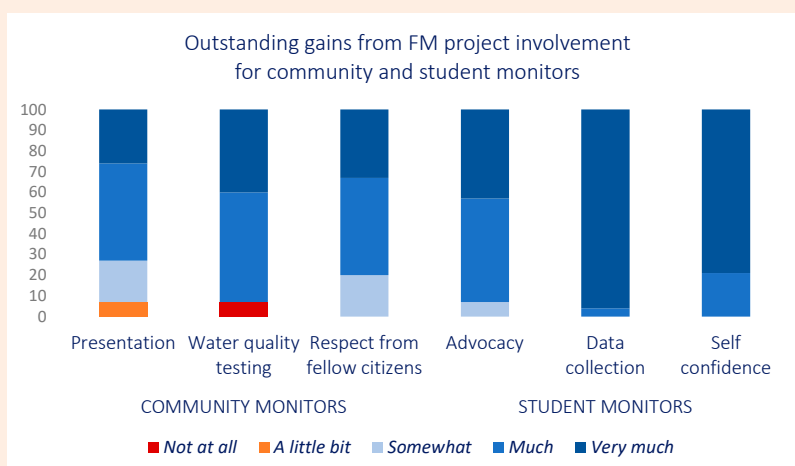


## Study results

The added value of the Fuatilia Maji project for the monitors with regards to the skills gained and attitudinal change as well as perceived local changes and challenges encountered by monitors are highlighted below.

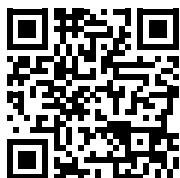
### Result 1: Overall improvement in skills and attitudes observed among student monitors

A large majority of graduates indicated that they learned a lot from the study experience, reporting gains in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes & ideas, and networks. Around 95% of alumni respondents indicated that the IOB programmes increased their knowledge on development, while over 85% have gained transferable skills such as critical thinking, analytical and research skills. More unexpectedly 93% of graduates highlighted that the study experience impacted their attitudes, ideas and perspectives, most prominently their (self-) confidence, global perspectives and interest, openness to new ideas, and commitment to development.



## More information

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### Result 2: Community monitors gain self-confidence and deep respect in their communities

Many of the community monitors cited harnessing new ideas (80%), learning better water quality testing techniques (93%) and improved presentation skills (73%). Moreover with regards to attitudinal transformation, nearly more than half of community monitors highlighted developing a deeper self-confidence (67%) while performing their duties on FM. The findings also confirmed that being a water monitor in the community invoked respect not only from fellow duty bearers as revealed by close to 70% of the community monitors but also fellow citizens (80%). Consequently, there was a renewed and heightened interest in community work (80%).

### Result 3: Tangible local changes observed by the community monitors

The most significant changes in the use, treatment and management of water sources, as perceived by the community monitors, were registered among the village level duty bearers. Community monitors reported improvement in the way these Village Duty Bearers (VDB) treated water (73%) and also a heightened advocacy for water services among duty bearers (DB) (53%). Almost half (53%) of the community monitors also indicated an increase in knowledge about water quality and functionality among citizens yet they also observed that this did not yield much behavioral change in the way the citizens collected and treated water.



### Result 4: Generally few challenges were encountered by both the student and community monitors

Internet connectivity and absence of water sample tests were the challenges common to both groups. About 40% of the community monitors expressed difficulties in understanding instructions/responding to questions in the English language while collecting data. Also, 19% of the student monitors cited minimal participation/ collaboration of citizens during water testing.

*"Project added value to me because now I can educate other people in issue concerning water" - Male community monitor*

*"I have learnt about collecting data using mobile app, water testing, I have improved my confidence and ability to interact with people, met new friends and family" - Female student monitor*

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are those of the author/s and should not be attributed to the IOB and/ or its funders

<sup>1</sup> IOB, (2019). Water monitoring in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania. Annual Report, 2019. Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp.

<sup>2</sup> Daily news reporter in Morogoro (2021). Tanzania: Mzumbe, Antwerp Launch Social Platform for Projects Monitoring. Tanzania Daily news (Dar es saalam). <https://allafrica.com/stories/202112140136.html>