

FIRST WOMEN DIVE LAB FOR RESTORING REEFS IMPLEMENTED IN TANZANIA

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[The Climate Champions.net website](#) published an article stating that in Tanzania the [Action for Ocean Initiative](#) is developing the first all-women dive lab for restoring reefs.

Nearly half of the coral reefs and mangroves along Tanzania's coastline have been degraded or lost, threatening food security, coastal protection, biodiversity, and local livelihoods. For decades, access to marine skills, certification, and leadership in ocean conservation has been limited, particularly for women. [Through its Ocean Access Programme, Action For Ocean \(AFO\) is changing that narrative.](#)



The project, developed in collaboration with the [Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance \(ORRAA\)](#) is focused on the conservation and restoration of ocean and coastal ecosystems through training activities linked to support local livelihoods and practices. Its target by 2030 is: 20 km² of marine habitats restored and 150 new divers trained.

In 2025, the project established a PADI-certified educational dive facility in the Kilwa Seascape, the first of its kind operated by a local nonprofit in East Africa. The eco-dive centre makes internationally recognised dive training accessible within Tanzania, delivered by local instructors and largely in Swahili.. A pioneering cohort of six women is currently training toward Open Water SCUBA certification. From there, they will lead in:

- Coral restoration & community-led conservation enterprises
- Marine research
- Eco-tourism

Action For Ocean's model blends science with community power. Along Tanzania's coast, the organisation leads large-scale marine restoration, bringing corals, mangroves, and seagrass meadows back to life.

Young women are now able to dive, conduct underwater research, and actively participate in conservation projects. Since its inception:

- 21 women have been certified as scuba divers, with one advancing to Dive Instructor level and currently leading coral restoration efforts at Kilwa seascape to restore over 20,000 coral fragments in degraded sites.
- Over 30 women and girls have received one-on-one mentorship, providing them with career guidance and professional development in marine sciences through inter-schools' participatory career fairs.



8,234 young girls have been reached through school outreach programs, introducing them to STEM opportunities and inspiring them to consider ocean sciences as a viable career through our Aquatic Resources Education Program.

Looking ahead, Tanzania Dive Lab has bold ambitions:

- Certifying 100 dive masters by 2030, with at least 60% being women.
- Expanding fully funded dive training to make ocean science more accessible.
- Strengthening and expanding scientific research programs, particularly in coral and seagrass restoration/monitoring.
- Reaching an additional 5,000 young girls through STEM outreach to inspire the next wave of female ocean leaders within the next year.

The vision is clear: a future where Tanzanian women do not just participate in ocean conservation, they *lead it*.

Tanzania's Blue Economy and Fisheries strategies emphasize youth inclusion, marine governance, and sustainable livelihoods. AFO's PADI facility operationalizes those policies at the community level. Globally, it aligns with the [UN Ocean Decade \(2021–2030\)](#) and [Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Life Below Water](#), bridging local action with global priorities. The facility positions Tanzania as a regional hub for ocean literacy and capacity-building.

In the coming five years AFO will stand at the forefront of a new era of ocean leadership, where restoration, governance, and livelihoods flow together and most critically locally led.

Through its PADI Educational Facility located in the Southern coast, Kilwa Masoko, a generation of Tanzanian divers will lead the recovery of more than 20 km² of coral reefs, transforming coastal waters into living classrooms and engines of resilience. These certified professionals will serve as the nation's "eyes underwater," strengthening governance, protecting marine managed areas, and advancing Tanzania's Blue Economy. At the same time, the [Tanzania DiveLab](#) will create over 150 professional divers and 100 dive masters, turning conservation into careers and passion into purpose.

To know more

[Article in Climatechampions.net](#)

[Article in Action For Ocean website \(AFO\)](#)

[Article in Action For Ocean website](#)

[Action For Ocean \(AFO\) Tanzania](#)

[AFO Impact Report 2025](#)

[Race to Resilience campaign](#)

[Climate Champions net website](#)

