

Project Update: November 2014

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The project activities is divided in three parts.

1. Biodiversity Monitoring. The monitoring is done by local field assistants who send data periodically to the coordinator at the University of Dare es Salaam. This part is largely funded by Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo. The focus is on two vulnerable wetland bird species (Shoebill and Wattled Crane) found in the area.
2. Environmental awareness. This part intends to share experiences from previous researches in the area on the threats of biodiversity, with the local communities in the targeted localities. The project will also discuss some national and international legislations governing the environment and natural resources management. Under this part, there is also study tour to learn from other communities at wetlands where wetlands have been managed successfully by the communities.
3. Beekeeping Pilot Program. This will involve training of potential beekeepers and establishing a beekeeping group at one of the village which will be supported with modern beehives and related gears for beekeeping.

This report is concerned with part 2, the environmental awareness.

The Project Coordinator, Dr. Jasson John, visited the project site **between 26th August and 4th September 2014** to discuss with the village leaders and targeted members of the communities. The aim was to introduce the project and discuss the modalities of implementing the proposed actions. The following were the outcomes



1. In all the three villages (Lumbe-Tabora Region, Changu and Kasisi – Kigoma Region), we agreed that workshops be held in October 2014.
2. Target audiences: Village environmental and natural resources committees, Village Executive Officers (VEO), Village Game Scouts (VGS), Village land committee and representative of the Wildlife Management Areas and Schools
3. Workshops to be held differently for adults and school children in each village.
4. The village leaders agreed to nominate participants for the workshops, beekeeping training and for a study tour. It was agreed to have a good representation of gender.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS WORKSHOPS

Materials for the workshops were prepared by project team, Dr. Jasson John and Emanuel Fidelis. The materials for environmental awareness included posters, laminated pictures, and some stationeries especially for school children. The workshops were facilitated by Mr. Emanuel Fidelis. Workshops were held **between 15th and 23rd October 2014**. The workshops facilitator shared his experiences from previous researches, explained the national wildlife management and environmental related policies

and lastly the participants discussed several issues that impend the biodiversity management in their areas. Workshops at Schools were mainly environmental education on the importance of managing the wetland and implementing wise use of the resources. The facilitator also explained the uniqueness of the Malagarasi Ramsar Site to both school children and the villagers.

2.1 Workshop outputs

1. During the awareness program in the three villages, we reached 48 villagers (see figures below) composed of the village leaders, members of several committees (mentioned above) and VGS. Among the 48 participants, 29% were females.
2. From 3 elementary (primary) schools in the three villages, we reached 137 children, 33.2 % being female. The pupils were from standard 1 to 6. Standard 7 were not include because they had already finished their final examinations in September. Tanzania elementary school system is 7 years.
3. Fifty three (53) secondary school pupils participated in the awareness raising workshop at Lumbe (Ukumbisiganga) Secondary School. Over forty three percent (43.4%) were females. The pupils were mixed from form 1 to Form 4, Tanzania secondary education is 4 years for ordinary and 2 for advanced. Lumbe School is an ordinary Secondary School.
4. School children were give challenges in class, and best participants and performers were given exercise books and pens.

2.2 Workshop Discussions

In villages and schools, facilitator guided the discussions. Topics ranged from challenges and possible solutions for managing resources within the Malagarasi Ramsar Sites, Wise use of resources and possible alternative economic activities for livelihood. They also discussed about establishing school environmental clubs. Specific topic discussion are as follows

1. During the workshop, we discussed several environmental issues starting with types of protected areas found in the country and their importance to the conservation of our natural resources as well as about Ramsar Site Convention, its importance to sustainable utilization of wetland resources and compliance on the ground.
2. Uses, benefits and importance of Malagarasi-Muyovozi Ramsar Site to the daily life of the surrounding communities as well as to the country.
3. We also discussed factors or activities which threaten the wetland resources as well as other natural resources found within it. All village visited seemed to have more or less same factors or activities threatening the wetland resources except excavation of aestivating lung fish, which was found to be an activity done at Lumbe Village only when the swampy dries out. We all discussed that the activity threat the sustainability of fish resources as it disturb the breeding cycle for the fish which are excavated are the one which had to complete the breeding cycle after the rain comes
4. Illegal wildlife trades: Villagers claimed that wildlife trappers come from outside their communities. However, some villagers may be colluding with the illegal wildlife trappers and they insisted to finish this problem using the VGS network with support from the District Game

Officers. The communities are aware of illegal wildlife trade and they all know that it is not allowed without a written permission from the Director of Wildlife.

5. Uncontrolled fire was found to be set by number of people including farmers, livestock keepers, hunters and honey gatherer. Most of these people never consider the timing for the fire set neither be there to setoff when it goes uncontrolled. This increases the risk for the loss of the vegetation and wildlife found in the area as well as their habitat. The village leaders were then advised to establish village laws and rules to control fire setting as well penalties for non-compliance.
6. Establishment of settlements and permanent activity near water sources and/ water bodies (wetland in our case) is prohibited by the National Environment Management Act of 2004. In some of the villages surrounding Malagarasi-Muyovozi Ramsar Site there are some of the people (especially livestock keepers and fishermen) who have violate the act. The local governments alone have no resources to take the people out of the wetland. The village leaders insisted that, if the government and other organizations could support them, they will join hands together and protect the wetland against non-compliance.
7. Wood degradation mainly for agriculture was found to be a serious problem in all visited villages. Tobacco agriculture is the main motive for the cutting of trees found around the wetland. After the discussion with the workshop participants, they all agreed that cutting of trees is graveyard activity and they promised to educate the villagers the importance of forests and its conservation. Together with education, participants asked if there would an alternative income generation to them in place of tobacco farming, they might reduce or even abandon tobacco farming for it because despite having good income, tobacco farming is more tiresome, time and energy consuming.
8. We also discussed with the risk of wetland eutrophication to be caused by usage of fertilizers by farmers who illegal cultivate near the wetland. The fertilizer used can be taken to the wetland by runoff water after rain fall. After the discussion, the participants agreed that, farmers have to comply the laws of environment management by not cultivating near the wetland as the National Environment Act directs.

2.3 General understanding of the communities on environmental issues

The communities have a general understand of the wise use concepts in the wetland especially those that participated in the previous Ramsar projects and research work in the area. Moreover, most people have very little knowledge on the environment, wildlife acts and legislations. Lack of environment education and that of legislations governing utilization of natural resources can be said to be among the factor for the ongoing environment destruction done by most local people of the area visited. For example, villagers were not aware that human activities are prohibited within 60m area from wetlands/source of water and that severe punishment including imprisonment could apply.

2.4 Conclusion

After discussions the following suggestions were reached by workshop participants.

- Village Land Use Plan. The villagers via their village government can design a land use plan which will govern their wetland utilization and ensure its sustainability

- Sustainable tourism by establishing and registering Wildlife Management Area of which according to the new Wildlife Conservation Act of 2009, it gives villagers user right to utilize wildlife resources found in their areas and this will increase their income and prosper their development. The wetland within the village land has some unique resources that could be marketed for tourism, they include spot fishing, canoeing, birdwatching (shoebill and wattled crane being unique here), wildlife tourism (Sitatunga unique here) etc
- Sustainable fishing, to ensure the fish resources found in the wetland benefits the present and future generations. The villagers were advised to ensure fishing activities are done sustainably, and this involves usage of allowed safe fishing methods including standard mesh size net.
- Beekeeping is one of the income generating activities which is has not any negative impact to the environment. The village leaders were advised to take beekeeping as an opportunity for their alternative income generations as well as conserving the forests found in their area. Via this project funded by Rufford Foundation, the villagers will be provided with bee hives and establish beekeeping farm within reserved village lands.
- We also concluded that, conservation of natural resources is the responsibility of each individual and thus, all of them agreed to actively participate in natural resource management at their capacity.
- Poverty among the local people living with natural resources is clear factor for the ongoing destruction of the natural resources found in their areas therefore; provision of alternative income generation to the villagers living around the Ramsar Site can rescue the natural resources to a large extent. Many villagers stated that they involved themselves in environment destruction for the reason that there is no clear and determined source of income, a factor driving them to depend on natural resources to provide money to run their families.
- Teachers and school children were excited about the uniqueness of the wetland in their area, and protected area management systems in Tanzania. They expressed interest to establish environmental clubs at their schools.

2.4.1 Suggestions and recommendations

- Technical and financial support is needed to give the local villagers ability to conserve the resources found in their areas. The villagers seem to have willing for conservation of the natural resources found in their area but they lack resources to make that happen. Government institutions and other organizations should support them in order to protect the resources against destruction. The fact is that, destruction and degradation of the wetland resources has been said to be done by intruders mostly livestock keepers, who bring in large number of livestock to the wetland without taking account of the laws and regulation governing the utilization of the wetland. Local communities need support from government and responsible ministries to deal with such threats.
- Environmental education and awareness to be conducted consistently and periodically so as to reach large number of people.
- Frequent awareness program to primary and secondary students found in the areas of interest for wildlife conservation is very important; this will help to prepare an upcoming generation

which is interested and committed to nature conservation. Establishment of school environmental clubs was seen an immediate action for schools

- Provision of environment friendly economic activities (like beehives, poultry etc) may reduce overdependence to the natural resources.
- Lack of fund and capacity to enforce compliance of the laws and regulation governing the utilization of the wetland and wildlife is another challenge. The responsible ministry for environment and natural resources should work with other stakeholders such as NGOs and media to make sure the acts and legislations are translated into simple languages for local people.
- Government via its ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism should acknowledge the efforts established by the local people in conservation of natural resources and they should also support them in some of their conservation initiatives because without them (local people) the resources may be over utilized.

