

Project Update: January 2017

Three more community outreach events were held to further raise awareness and build capacity of fisheries biodiversity research and conservation work as well as embracing activities that are not a threat to the aquatic environment within the area. Two radio talk shows were also held on local radio stations (Voice of Kigezi and Hope Radio) to reach out to a wide audience in the area and further sensitise the locals on effective environmental management practices as well as biodiversity conservation. The events continued to directly impact on and involve the local stakeholders in the project activities that ensured project stewardship as well as its sustainability.



Figure 1: Assessing the limnology of Lake Bunyonyi in Uganda.

Two fisheries biodiversity and limnology assessments were carried out on the lake and its surrounding wetlands to further examine the physico-chemical and microbiological aspects of its waters as well as identifying the relations of fish species with their environment.

Three fish breeding sites were mapped and the project updated local fishers as well as fisheries management authorities on the geographic distribution and relative abundance of various fish species. This in addition to the environmental education provided by the project to the local communities, they were further advised on the location and importance of such breeding zones and how to work closely with the fishers on safeguarding them. Furthermore, two meetings were held with the District Fisheries Officer, leaders of local fishers and members of the Local Council Committees to provide a framework in revising/updating their local conservation bylaws to reflect the newly generated information by this project.



Figure 2: Meeting with local community members on the shore of Lake Bunyonyi

In collaboration with a Community Based Organisation (FITS Uganda) that was initiated by this project for regular fisheries biodiversity and nature conservation activities, support and training of local communities on how to venture in environmental friendly alternative livelihood sources was undertaken. For example, community members were supported with rabbits to provide an alternative source of proteins and income and further trained, with assistance from the district extension workers, in effective agricultural practices such as contour ploughing, controlled

fertiliser application as well as controlled use of pesticides on the gardens in vicinity to the lake. Before the end of this project phase in April 2017, the project team is exploring ways of how to empower the formed community based organisation for it to continue holding frequent trainings of the communities for continuous integration of their local knowledge in natural resources management as well as embracing fisheries biodiversity conservation activities to ensure project sustainability.