

Project Update: February 2020

Summary of activities:

Mobilisation of the community, project introduction to the community and formation of Community Environmental Committee (CEC in Ggolo Parish).

In January 2021, there were fewer activities done due to the elections from the Presidential to local council III level. The team avoided collision from the political divide at the time which could affect our activities such as formation of the Community Environmental Committee.

On 10th February 2021, the team visited the local leadership in Ggolo Parish and introduced the project to the area and an appropriate engagement day was selected.

The community engagement was conducted on 20th February 2021 where the community was trained on the importance of catchment protection and co-management of the Katonga catchment. This was followed by the formation of the community environmental committee for Ggolo. In attendance were the community whose activities have overlapped within the Katonga catchment.

During training the communities raised fundamental questions to the team such as:

- a) Where will the committee get powers to help the communities?
- b) If we conserve and others destroy where do, we report?
- c) Where do the committee report during operation?
- d) How will the livelihoods of those who are willing to offer part of their land for species conservation be supported?
- e) Are there specialists who are willing to assist in the best conservation practices?



The location of Ggolo Community Environmental Committee

Responses from the project team:

- a) The main objective of this project is to link communities along the habitats of R. Katonga with the relevant government stakeholders and government ministries and departments to find lasting solutions for the conservation of these habitats. The project team will link the committees with the said stakeholders for quick response and necessary help. Reporting will be structured to begin at the lower levels of government upwards.
- b) Committees' main work will be sensitisation and finding alternatives for livelihoods. People destroy these habitats to find livelihoods and quick money. Project team is committed to training in viable sources of income other than looking at those that affect nature. Opportunities will be derived from modern practices in conservation, modern farming and sustainable use of the natural resources without necessarily harming habitats. The involvement of ministries departments, and agencies MDAs to decide on the working components and approach for the co-management to be strengthened will be the next activity and the opportunity is that government has programs like Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) which shall be tapped into during the engagements to supplement people's livelihoods in the overlapping habitats along R. Katonga.
- c) The committees will work with the project team while in the field and also through social media platforms where both negative and positive responses from the community are received and monitored. The team is already working on the community monitoring tool that will be used by the committees after training to simplify monitoring and reporting. The MDAs shall also be on the platforms to quickly take responsibility since they are mandated by the law. However, the project team also intend to have these committees learn to operate independently in case the project ends, there should be posterity.
- d) Voluntary land offer for conservation by individuals is a good deed of sacrifice for the good of nature and sustainability. However, this does not mean that these will have lost their lands completely. These people can still use their lands for other activities because the conserved species can co-exist with other flora and fauna as shall be trained in subsequent activities.
- e) The project team has experience with experts in all the fields for the project of this nature. The team has experience from African Union of Conservationists. The community shall benefit from the training such as discouraging illegal sand mining, wetland clearance and rampant burning, and forest degradation in order to manage species interaction of conservation concern in overlapping areas



Community engagement



Photo of the community members after formation of the committee

The Ggolo –Bukunja Environmental committee include:

1. Chairperson; Kayiwa Joseph.
2. Vice Chairperson: Kawere Abbas.
3. Mobilizer: Muwonge Peter.
4. Secretary: Kagame John.
5. Treasurer: Ms. Kaddu Agnes.
6. Head of conservation and monitoring: Bwanika Mathias.