

RWANDA



LVEMP II

Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (Phase II)

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION TOWARDS WEALTH CREATION

The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project, Phase II (LVEMP II) works to improve the environmental management of selected degraded sub-catchments for the benefits of communities who depend on the natural resources of the Lake Victoria Basin.

ON THE COVER The rehabilitation of Rweru Wetland in Bugesera District

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EDITORIAL

DEAR READERS,

It is my pleasure to bring to you the third edition of the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project, Phase II (LVEMP II)-Rwanda quarterly newsletter.

In this issue we are mostly bringing you testimonies from our beneficiaries as well as their views and opinions on the project's realisations.

Since LVEMP II started its interventions, we have been focusing on protecting environment and rehabilitating degraded zones in the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) with the aim of bringing a positive change within the livelihood of the local communities.

Our interventions have used a community-centred and participatory approach whereby we have actively involved residents living in targeted areas to ensure ownership and sustainability of our activities.

Apart from ensuring that the population gets involved in our efforts to safeguard the LVB environment, this approach has also created thousands of jobs, opening a door for a flow of money into communities and offering residents an alternative source of income to sustain their lives.

In this issue, you will read about the LVEMP II efforts to rehabilitate the Rweru wetland in Bugesera District and what has been the impact so far.

We also bring you reports about other interventions in our targeted areas, including the protection of Mwogo River in Huye District.

Also, you will read how LVEMP II is supporting efforts geared at



driving the socio-economic transformation of lives of local communities.

Through the Community Driven Development Sub-projects (CDDs), LVEMP II supports residents to create cooperatives and assist them to start income generating activities in order to boost their income. This sub-component is already underway in some of our targeted areas and we are set to implement it in more other areas in the coming months.

It is important to note that our beneficiaries are already experiencing a positive transformation within their lives due to this programme.

I thank all stakeholders who continue to support LVEMP II Rwanda in its efforts to protect the LVB environment.

I wish you a good read.

MUHAYIMANA Annette Sylvie
National Coordinator/ LVEMP II Rwanda

THE BIG STORY

Rweru rehabilitation saves the Wetland and offers residents a chance of better lives



On January 31, 2015 residents joined local leaders, Army and Police to weed the tree plantation along Rweru Buffer Zone ©LVEMP II Rwanda

Since 2013, the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) started a programme to rehabilitate Rweru Wetland, a major reservoir of water for the entire ecosystem of lakes and rivers in the area.

The project aims at rehabilitating and protecting Rweru wetland in Bugesera District and reducing the amount of sediments carried by erosion and sustainably protect the ecosystem and its supports.

As part of the project, local authorities and residents were trained and educated on policy and environmental law in order to raise public awareness and increase ownership. Efforts were also made to encourage their active participation in the implementation and monitoring of the works for sustainability.

Currently, LVEMP II has completed 37 kilometres of demarcation lines separating the Wetland's buffer zone from local residents' farms. 264,197 trees, that include grevillia, calliandra and jacaranda, were also planted around Rweru wetland along the 20 metres that makes its buffer area.

In Ngoma District, 35 kilometres of demarcation lines have been completed and 622, 888 trees planted along the Rweru wetland buffer zone.

Apart from protecting the wetland, the trees will also be a source of fresh air for local communities and boost the rainfalls in an area which has experienced repeated rain shortfalls in the past years.

Virginie Mukagakwaya, a resident of Rweru Sector, Bugesera District received news of the

project with a lot of optimism and today she still holds the same beliefs.

"The project was timely. Apart from being a wonderful way of protecting the environment, rehabilitating and protecting Rweru Wetland and planting trees around it will ensure regular and enough rainfalls in the coming years and that means increased agriculture produce for us," Mukagakwaya, a farmer, says.

Etienne Kidaraza, 45, another resident also says environmental protection is essential in the quest for better living conditions.

The rehabilitation and conservation of an important ecosystems will have as an impact the increase of land productivity which will directly impact our income.

CONTINUE TO P3

THE BIG STORY

Rweru rehabilitation saves the Wetland and offers residents a chance of better lives

FROM P2

"We are well aware that without a sustainably managed environment, life would continue to be very difficult," Kidaraza observes.

JOB CREATION

But while environmental protection remains a key element of the project, LVEMP II is also working to improve the living conditions of residents in areas where it is operating.

One way of insuring a positive socio-economic transformation of lives is through the creation of employment in the benefit of local communities.

Over 800 individuals have been employed in tree planting and establishment of demarcation lines around Rweru Wetland Buffer zone.

Each of them earns a daily wage of Rwf1000, which are paid to them via individual accounts opened in a local Savings and Credit Cooperatives (Umurenge SACCO). This has had as a result the encouragement of beneficiaries to work with financial institutions and embrace the saving culture.

From their earnings, beneficiaries were encouraged to save part of it which they later invested in income generating activities. Many of them chose to invest in livestock or improved agriculture related activities.

Evariste Sebanani, one of those employed in planting trees around Rweru Wetland, has already bought a goat in only one month he has worked with the project.

"This project gave me a unique opportunity to transform my life and

I look forward to more improvement and more achievements," Sebani says.

As well, those who have been working with the project since it started are reporting even bigger achievements.

Emmanuel Mvukiyehe was employed on the tree planting exercise since 2013. He says the money he has earned has significantly transformed his life.

"I have been able to buy four goats and a cow. I have also been able to renovate my house," Mvukiyehe says.

"I have no doubt that my life will continue to improve," he adds.

And apart from the financial gains, beneficiaries also say that by working on an environmental protection scheme they have as well earned skills that will guide their future actions and activities.

"We are now well aware that our role in safeguarding our environment remains very crucial and that by being very active we will be setting ground for a prosperous and healthy future life for both of us and the next generation," Mvukiyehe notes.



264,197 trees have so far been planted along the 20 metres that constitutes Rweru wetland buffer zone in Bugesera District ©LVEMP II Rwanda

WHAT THE LAW SAYS ABOUT WETLAND PROTECTION

The Organic Law N° 04/2005 of 08/04/2005 determining the modalities of protection, conservation and promotion of environment in Rwanda states that swamps with permanent water shall be given special protection and prohibits the construction of houses and other buildings as well as dumping wastes in wetlands and other hazardous product. The law also prohibits pastoral and agricultural activities in protected/reserved wetlands and sets a protective zone of at least twenty metres (20 m) away from the bank of the swamp.

Protecting Mwogo River for a safe environment



Workers clearing the banks of Mwogo River in Huye District. LVEMP II has planted reeds and bamboos in the river's buffer zone to protect it ©LVEMPII Rwanda

Mwogo, a tributary of Nyabarongo River, flows mainly through Huye and Nyamagabe Districts where its waters are mainly exploited for agriculture purpose.

But due to poor exploitation practices, including poor agricultural practices and illegal sand mining, the river's watershed was degraded by erosion. Sometimes the river over-flooded, washing away arable soils and destroying crops.

However, since 2014 the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) undertook a programme to rehabilitate the river banks and surrounding hills with the aim of protecting it against the devastating effects resulting from topographic nature of the area and human activities through improvement of natural resources management within Mwogo river watershed. The interventions, at the same time,

are also driven towards improving the livelihood of the riparian population.

The major activities being carried out as part of the sub-project include training and sensitizing local residents and local leaders on policy and environmental law, planting bamboos and reeds along Mwogo River and making progressive terracing on an up-hill region around the river.

Currently, the project has planted reeds and bamboos on over 20 hectares around the river in Huye District, made progressive terraces on an area stretching to 100 hectares, planted over 12,000 agro-forestry trees around the Mwogo Wetland and distributed about 6,300 fruit trees to local residents for planting in their households fields in order to boost their nutrition and income.

The impact of the interven-

tions is already being felt among the project beneficiaries.

Residents and local leaders say they are observing a positive improvement on the Mwogo River water flow, the quality of water has improved, sediments in the river reduced and there is an improvement on adjacent agricultural lands.

Gervais Nzanywayimana, one of the beneficiaries, says he is observing a positive impact in terms of a significant drop in damages related to the river's over-flooding which was as well associated with poor practices, mainly related to agricultural activities, around the river.

"We used to lose several hectares of crops due to the river's over-flooding. But we are observing an improvement ever since the protection of the river banks started," Nzanywayimana says.

"I believe the already perceived results will continue to increase and look forward to even far more better results in the long run."

The project is also contributing to the improvement of livelihoods of communities living around the river.

One of the direct benefits to the communities remains the creation of hundreds of jobs for the residents, which contributed to uplifting their living conditions.

The LVEMP II interventions around Mwogo River in Huye District employed 540 individuals who were recruited mainly among the most vulnerable, of whom 310 were females.

The beneficiaries are experiencing a positive change within their lives.

The following page is dedicated to their testimonies.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS ABOUT RIVER PROTECTION

The Organic Law N° 04/2005 of 08/04/2005 determining the modalities of protection, conservation and promotion of environment in Rwanda prohibits the dumping or disposal of any solid, liquid waste or hazardous gaseous substances in a stream and river as well as damaging the quality of air and of the surface or underground water. It sets a protective buffer zone of ten (10) metres for any activity around a river or stream

Word from beneficiaries

“

When LVEMP II started its project to rehabilitate the Mwogo sub-catchment in early 2014 I was given job. This was a wonderful opportunity for me as it offered me a unique chance to earn money. When I started working, I planned on money use and saved part of it because I wanted to build something sustainable. I have now invested what I saved in animal husbandry. Today, I own two pigs, three chicken and a turkey. I have also bought a small plot of land which I am exploiting for food production.

Indeed, I can proudly say that this project has changed my life once and for all.”

TUMUKUNDE Rosine, 21 years old, Simbi Sector, Huye District



“

LVEMP II as a project has contributed to the diversification of sources of income for our population through job creation and that had as a result the significant improvement of their livelihoods. Also, by working on an environmental protection programme, residents acquired valuable skills and it is with no doubt that they will replicate the techniques they have learnt in their communities.

MUTWARASIBO Cyprien, Vice Mayor for Economic Affairs, Huye District



NZANYWAYIMANA Gervais, Farmer, Huye District

“

For us, it is a matter of double benefit: first we have benefited in terms of employment and then because the riverbanks were protected, we are already experiencing a positive impact on agriculture because it has reduced flooding which in the past affected the soil productivity, destroyed our crops and had hampered our efforts to increase production.

Besides, after being employed, we decided to invest the money we earned into income generating activities. We have since bought over 218 pigs that we distributed amongst us and the exercise is ongoing. Personally, I keep one pig and have given out seven more to my neighbours. It is quite a big achievement in such a small period and am very thankful to this project.

”



Community Driven Development Sub-projects-CDDs

-Driving Socio-economic transformation: Hope in Bugesera

Apart from environmental protection interventions, the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project, Phase II (LVEMP II) is working to improve the living conditions of residents in its areas of operations. Under this sub component, LVEMP II extends support to income-generating activities that benefit the poor and promote environmental sustainable practices-with the aim of building improved community awareness and engagement resulting in better environmental management, and improved livelihoods for communities in the targeted areas.

One of the areas where LVEMP II is conducting such community-focused developmental interventions is in the Eastern District of Bugesera.

The Nkanga Cassava Cooperative in Rweru, Bugesera, is already planting selected quality cassava cuttings on a plot of land that stretches to three hectares.

LVEMP II has availed funds to support the initiative which is benefiting mainly individuals whose lands or part of their farmland fell into the 20 metre strip that was demarcated as the Rweru Wetland buffer zone.

LVEMP II supported the cooperative, which has about 40 members, in capacity development and acquiring improved cassava cuttings to plant on their land and continues to support them in land preparation.



Members of Nkanga Cassava Cooperative work on the 3 hectares plot of land where they plan to grow cassava. LVEMP II is financially supporting their efforts

©LVEMP II Rwanda

Each member is getting a daily take-home pay of Rwf1000 for works in the field to help them sustain their lives as they wait for the first production.

This, for the farmers, means double-benefits as they are earning both in terms of wages and of course the production they will harvest.

Stanislas Rwigamba, the cooperative representative, says the support they are receiving and the prospects for their area of investment give them assurance for better yields and a positive and significant improvement of their lives.

"With this project, we have a chance to diversify the sources of our income to meet the needs of our families and sustain our lives," Rwigamba says.

"For instance, many of us had struggled to raise money to subscribe to the community health insurance but now it will clearly become easy, as we will be generating enough money to meet our needs" he notes.

Rwigamba estimates that if all goes as planned, his cooperative will make a net profit of at least Rwf4million (4,000,000Rwf), out of their Rwf8million (8,000,000Rwf) investment.

But the interventions are also carrying other benefits for members of the cooperatives.

Anastasia Mukarukaka, a member of the cooperative, says she is acquiring best farming and environmental protection practices which she hopes to also apply in her other plots of land.

"The skills are an important asset that we are earning and we will utilise them to further improve the environment, our productivity and our lives," she says.



Members of Nkanga Cassava Cooperative have already started planting cassava. LVEMP II is supporting their efforts ©LVEMP II Rwanda

Community Driven Development sub-projects-CDDs

Apart from the Nkanga Cassava Cooperative, LVEMP II also supports several other Community Driven Development (CDDs) subprojects to improve the socio-economic lives of residents in targeted areas.

DISTRICT	COOPERATIVE
BUGESERA	Vegetable production by RVCO Cooperative
	Goat Livestock Production by BGI CO cooperative
	vegetable production by KIVLCO Cooperative
NGOMA	Goat Livestock Production by MGUK Cooperative
	Goat Livestock Production by KGLC Cooperative
	vegetable production by JWECCO Cooperative
	Fish production in floating cages by IAFCCO Cooperative

More CDDs are set to be rolled out

DISTRICT	Area of intervention for the new CDDs
BUGESERA	Small scale Irrigation
NGOMA	Beekeeping
RULINDO	Beekeeping & Pork livestock production
GAKINKE	Improved Pineapple production, Improved Pork livestock production, Maize processing, Bee keeping, Improved chicken livestock, Goat Livestock Production
KAMONYI	Beekeeping
HUYE	Fruit production, Vegetable production, Improved Pork Livestock production, Mushroom production
NYAMAGABU	Beekeeping, Improved cows livestock production
KARONGI	Beekeeping, Goat livestock production

Word from a beneficiary

“This project of raising goats gives me assurance that we are headed to a bright destination because it fits well this area and clearly will be a success. I am very optimistic that our lives will keep improving. We are in total 45 members and we look forward to earn more and uplift our lives. We are altogether expecting positive change in our lives, our families and our entire community. We thank LVEMP II for their support.

We have started planting grass to feed the goats in the coming months as we

prepare to receive them soon. We have in total two hectares of land where the pasture grasses have been grown. Our animals will be kept in a common shed on the property and that will help us in a proper follow up and ensure that the goats receive enough attention for proper growth.

This is a good incentive for us to build improved lives as we champion and get actively involved in building a healthy and sustainable environment.”

NDAYISHIMIYE Augustin, Member and secretary, Batima Goat Livestock Cooperative

