

The LVEMP II Civil Society Watch E-bulletin

A Monthly from the **East African Sustainability Watch Network** comprising: Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Network (SusWatch Kenya)

February 2015

World Water Day 2015: Lake Victoria basin Livelihood study shows that access to water remains a challenge linked to other sectors



From Left to Right: A water harvesting tank in Upper North Kabodho (Kenya) provided through LVEMP II; Women collect water from Mwamkala dam (Mwanza, Tanzania); and a man collects water from a natural reservoir in Rakai (Uganda)

This Year's theme for World Water Day is 'Water and Sustainable Development'. Water is at the core of sustainable development. Water resources, and the range of services they provide, underpin poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental sustainability. According to UNESCO (2015), from food and energy security to human and environmental health, water contributes to improvements in social well-being and inclusive growth, affecting the livelihoods of billions.

In the run up to this year's World Water Day, the East African Sustainability Watch Network has released findings of its September 2014 study, 'Assessing changes in community livelihoods within the selected areas in Rivers Nyando (Kenya), Simiyu (Tanzania) and Katonga (Uganda) with specific focus on: water and sanitation; renewable energy; and aquaculture. This study was carried out between June and August 2014, and sought to analyse changes realised within the communities under these three intervention areas as a result of the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project Phase II (LVEMP II) project interventions. This is the second study after the baselines carried out in 2012 and subsequent first study carried out in August 2013.

In Kenya, the findings indicate that use of water from unprotected water sources remains high in Middle Nyando and Lower Nyando, especially during the dry season. In spite of this, in the Middle Nyando, there has been an increase in the number of households accessing water within less than a kilometre (from 24% in 2013 to 44.2% in 2014), while in Lower Nyando, the number increased from 28.2% to 56.5% in 2014. While majority of households interviewed treat their water before consumption, use of chemicals (water guard) remains the most preferred treatment method above boiling it. This could partly be explained by the growing scarcity of firewood for domestic use due to reduced tree cover.

In Tanzania, respondents in the study areas (Bubinza and Sayaka villages) observed an improvement in availability of water due to the LVEMP II intervention. However, these water sources are seen as being seasonal because they dry up during the hot season. As a consequence, clean and safe water remains elusive during the dry period driving people to depend on contaminated water that is worsened by poor hygiene conditions and low latrine coverage.

In Uganda, respondents in Rakai and Mubende where the study was carried out it was observed that a big part of the population still draws water from unprotected wells (as summed up in *Figure 1* below) which raised health concerns due to risk of water-borne diseases.

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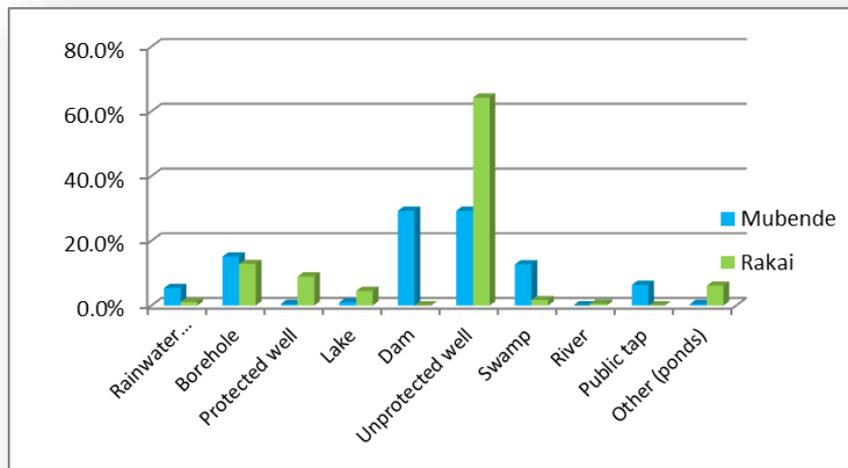


Figure 1: Main source of Water in Mubende and Rakai (Uganda)

‘While some level of improvement has been noted as a result of the LVEMP II interventions, there is need to strengthen local level management of water related initiatives in place, in the long run by way of securing sustained capacities (technology and skills around water harvesting, soil and water conservation; internal governance mechanisms as well as ability to solve issues internally as much as possible; as well as monitoring of water projects for results and accountability)’, emphasized Kimbowa Richard, the Regional Coordinator for the LVEMP II Civil Society Watch Project

He added that at a wider level, since water is affected by many sector including sanitation and hygiene, energy, agriculture, environment, among others, it is now quite urgent to harmonise the related policies regarding use of this resource in the Lake Victoria basin in order to reduce the chances for marginalisation of the poor people, ease conflicts due to competing uses, and to lessen further stress on the Lake.

The East African sustainability Watch Network brings together CSOs from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda that have since 2011 been implementing the LVEMP II Civil Society (CS) Watch Project that seeks to lobby and advocate for realization of results-based performance from LVEMP II and implementation of the East African Community Climate Change Policy. The Annual LVEMP II Livelihood Case Study No.2 is in series (the previous one having been done in 2013). Read more about this September 2014 Case Study from: <http://bit.ly/1w19M2P>

Sustainable Forest Management in the L. Victoria basin - what does it mean in practice?

During the inauguration of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission in Kisumu, June 11th, 2007, the former Kenyan President - Mwai Kibaki noted:

“Regrettably, Lake Victoria is today seriously threatened due to receding water levels, soil and waste pollution, over-fishing, and a growing decline in the health of its ecosystems. As a result, the livelihoods and well-being of over 30 million people who live around its basin are at risk. It is imperative that we act urgently and decisively to halt further decline of the lake and the surrounding environment.”

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN has estimated that deforestation affected an estimated 13 million hectares per year between 2000 and 2010, if not for to afforestation and natural expansion the net forest loss was 5.2 million hectares per year.

The description on the ecological situation in the Lake Victoria basin situation (above) has probably not changed much. Deforestation typically contributes to increased soil erosion, reduced biodiversity and modified river flows. Soil erosion leads to losses of organic matter and nutrients and reduced agricultural productivity. Furthermore it fertilizes downstream water bodies and eventually Lake Victoria thereby contributing to algae blooms and the spread of the water hyacinth. Forests impacts on water retention, water flow and flood protection is complex and situation specific. In a study from the North West of Mount Kenya, conversion of natural forest to small scale agriculture lowered infiltration of the soils causing an increased runoff and flash floods (Sida, 2007).

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) has always been put forward as one option to address the negative trends associated with deforestation. But what is SFM, what practical options does it offer to inspire action on deforestation in East Africa?

FAO has recently launched a Sustainable Forest Management Toolbox, a comprehensive online technical package of tools and examples to facilitate and guide the implementation of sustainable forest management in various contexts. The Toolbox aims to make the wide body of collective knowledge and experience about sustainable forest management more accessible to forest managers and other stakeholders, thereby supporting SFM dissemination and implementation on the ground. **Read more about the SFM Toolbox from: <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/en/>**

Resources and upcoming events

Resource: The LVEMPII Community-Driven Development Subprojects Watch No.2 by the East African Sustainability Watch (September 2014). **More: <http://bit.ly/1FNMgPs>**

World Water Day 2015



World Water Day is held annually on 22 March as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. **In 2015, the theme for World Water Day is 'Water and Sustainable Development'**. It's about how water links to all areas we need to consider creating the future we want. **More: <http://bit.ly/1wGGPz1>**

International day of Forests 2015 (March 21)



The theme of the 2015 International Day of Forests (IDF) is *Forests | Climate | Change*, chosen purposely to highlight the ways in which forests and climate change are linked, and to rally global support for greater action and change. **Read More: <http://bit.ly/1BQU5Tv>**