

Report for the CSO Quarterly Community Meetings held in Masaka - Social Centre on January 29, 2013



**Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development
February 6, 2013**

1.0 Introduction

Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development as part of The East African SusWatch Network has since November 2011 been implementing the LVEMP II Civil Society Watch Project with support from Government of Sweden. The project has been developed in order to consolidate Phase I achievements to-date and address emerging issues that influence/affect sustainable development in LVB. Specifically, the project seeks to monitor regional and national level interventions of Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP II) under Component 3 (national level): Watershed management (focusing on Natural resources conservation and livelihoods improvement) respectively and monitoring the implementation of the East African Community Climate Change Policy (EACCCP)

East African Suswatch intends to advocate at the regional level (LVBC) for fair and timely implementation of LVEMP II activities and the EACCCP through carrying out regular independent assessments. This will be supported by heightened CSO awareness and media attention about implementation of the EACCCP commitments and overall LVEMP II intervention; supporting genuine subproject identification and preparation by communities (for eventual benefit when implemented). EA SusWatch Network also plans to lobby for increased capacity to fund adaptation activities, availability of adequate information, and increased communities' ability to adapt to extreme weather events among others, so as to reduce the vulnerability and increase resilience of natural (including water and fisheries systems) and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects.

UCSD last year initiated series of community meetings that were held in Masaka, Mubende, Rakai and Mityana and various issues came up as explained below that the meeting advanced in these years' community meetings.

LVEMP II in simple terms it is a project grant that is aimed at changing the community from those livelihood activities that are degrading the natural resources in the LVB. In order to achieve this, the project proponents saw need to engage the CBO's as conduits of the grant to the targeted victims of the environmental degradation. They also developed a set of guidelines that are supposed to guide the stakeholders in developing the community driven development projects (CDD) with clear roles, expectations, timeframe and expected stakeholders or target beneficiaries.

Unfortunately since its inception, the project seems to be only known by the few people mostly at the National level as opposed to the community where interventions are supposed to be implemented, the project has celebrated revisions of various editions of guidelines that have become an agent of confusion to the beneficiaries, The CBO's in the selected districts along the River Katonga catchment areas whose proposal were approved for funding signed their financing agreements in accordance with the guidelines with the districts. The financial agreement has restrictions that work has to start upon signing them.

But since it was done there is nothing on the ground and everyone is wondering where did the money go? This dramatically contravenes the guidelines and puts the technical team at a doubt of competence, as was evidenced in one of the community meetings where some community members admitted that they thought the district technical officers have “eaten” their money, yet the delay is from the national project implementation team. Lack of effective communication among the project proponents, the districts, communities and other interested actors has resulted to mistrust and suspicion.

Therefore, UCSD held a follow up Community meeting to review above issues and come up with a way forward on how the project’s implementation by the relevant stakeholders can be speeded up. The community meeting provided an important avenue for understanding and discussing the issues, objectives, expected results and Partner obligations for LVEMP II under the EAC association as a way of consolidating efforts towards monitoring of LVEMP II interventions.

The meeting brought together 27 participants including the communities who have signed the financial agreement with the districts as approved beneficiaries of LVEMP II’s CDD projects, the district Natural Resources officers – who serves as LVEMP II focal points, the and the media, so as to share their experiences and concerns of what is going on in Uganda in relation to the project’s implementation. Translation to Luganda was provided while participants were free to use either English or Luganda to communicate.

2.0 Rationale for the Meeting

There are so many CSOs that were selected as beneficiaries of LVEMP II grants to implement the CDD projects for livelihood improvement and avoid environmental degradation. Due to various issues that were raised among which are highlighted above the project has not yet started operations at community level. The rationale for this meeting will be to highlight the operational and management issues that are affecting the community and voice out the view of the community beneficiaries ‘on the best way forward. The community meeting therefore forms an ideal platform for the CSOs to understand and discuss the issues, challenges and opportunities in relation to LVEMP II Project implementation.

EA Suswatch advocates for LVEMP II implementation team to address these issues and challenges experienced by the communities as well as scaling up best practices.

3.0 Objectives

The overall objective of the community meeting was to review progress made in implementation of LVEMP II in the region since the last meeting.

Specifically, the Community meeting aimed at:

- To review issues raised since the last meeting regarding implementation of LVEMP II CDD subprojects since the last meeting held 2012

- To generate beneficiaries' viewpoints, recommendations and experiences on the progress in implementation of the CDD subprojects of LVEMPII
- To share the key highlights from the 2 baseline studies carried out in 2012

4.0 Expected Outputs

- a. Level of action taken on the issues raised in the last meeting and progress regarding implementation of LVEMPII subprojects discussed
- b. Beneficiaries' viewpoints, recommendations and experiences with regard to LVEMPII CDD subprojects implementation documented for sharing with project implementation teams at the local, national and regional levels.
- c. Synergies between UCSD / EA SusWatch Network, and CSOs and amongst the CSOs in the Katonga River Catchment basin strengthened through networking based on future meetings, electronic platforms and the East African SusWatchdog Newsletter so as to consolidate collective monitoring of LVEMPII in Uganda. Share information from EA SusWatch Network including key highlights from the 2 baselines studies carried out in 2012
- d. Mapping out a way forward in implementation of LVEMP II CS Watch Project

5.0 Summary of the key issues of discussion

Highlights from the Baseline Survey for LVEMP II on Environment and Sustainable Land Management In Rakai and Mubende Districts; Katonga River Catchment

Community Driven Development approach has been adopted for LVEMPII, which puts communities at the centre of problem identification, project planning, implementation and management.

Although LVEMP I was implemented in Rakai district, a lot more needs to be done to consolidate its achievements, which task will be reflected in the LVEMP II project.

In order to systematically and successfully implement the LVEMP II project, there is need to monitor and document its progress based on some baseline data on the state of environment around LVB, The findings can be used to inform proper community based project planning, implementation and effective monitoring of progress. Hence, UCSD's initiative to monitor LVEMPII progress will be based on the baseline survey on Environment and Sustainable Land Management carried out in Mubende and Rakai districts from 8th to 17th August 2012.

This methodological section therefore gives the details of the survey process. The survey was

The purpose of the baseline survey is to establish the current state of environment and the Land Management practices around the LVB – River Katonga Catchment area in Mubende and Rakai districts. The findings of the baseline survey will not only provide benchmarks for measuring changes in environment and land management practices around the LVB, but also will be used by UCSD in setting up indicators for effective monitoring of LVEMP II project progress and the intended and unintended changes.

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A brief summary of findings arranged thematically. The summary is both qualitative and quantitative in nature depending on the nature of analysis. The summaries are drawn from a sample of four hundred (400) respondents in both Rakai and Mubende, of which three hundred ninety four (394) were valid responses. See the details below; Knowledge and perception about environment issues, Key Environment Degradation issues, Forests Depletion, Climate Change Manifestations, Wetlands Depletion, and Land use and Management. More details will be in the infosheets that UCSD is preparing this year.

A baseline Report for LVEMP II Baseline Survey on Livelihoods in Rakai and Mubende Districts: Katonga River Catchment.

The baseline survey was premised on the role of East African Sustainable Watch Network (SusWatch) to monitor, assess, lobby and document community beneficiary experiences, capacity, knowledge and level of adoption of Sustainable environment and livelihood practices under LVEMP II in selected areas in River and River Katonga (Uganda). One of the core outputs of the survey was to provide benchmarks (baseline information) and formulate indicators for UCSD to facilitate their monitoring of the CBOs implementing the LVEMP II CDD sub projects in Mubende and Rakai districts.

The overall objective of the survey was to establish baseline data and define benchmarks on the state of Livelihoods in the Lake Victoria Basin with specific emphasis on River Katonga in the two (2) districts of Rakai and Mubende. This was aimed at informing development of indicators for UCSD to assess implementation of LVEMP II.

The two baselines baseline surveys were conducted in the 2 selected districts within the Katonga River catchment area; Rakai and Mubende districts in Uganda covered by LVEMP II. It involved male and female respondents among other stakeholders from the sub counties in the respective district. In Rakai, the survey covered 4 LVEMP II sub counties; Kifamba, Kagamba, Kabira, and Kyebe, while in Mubende district, the survey covered 5 LVEMP II sub counties; Kitenga, Bageza, Myanzi, Kigando, and Manyogaseka in Uganda where LVEMP II CDD sub projects will be implemented.

6.0 Updates from the Rakai District Forestry Officer (Mr Mukasa Tebesigwa)

The project implementation in Rakai was based on proximity to the Lake Victoria and Katonga catchment. LVEMP I project was implemented in Kabira and kifamba sub-counties. The district community development office helped the groups to develop constitutions for their respective beneficiary groups

Projects were submitted and selected and financial agreements were signed. Meetings were also held in Kifamba with the communities to see how to implement the projects. On the implementation the projects nothing has been done (funds not yet released from the National Project secretariat). But with the opening of the banks accounts the groups should continue operating even if the money has not been sent from the project because there is need for co-financing with the communities. He also advised CDD beneficiaries to open bank accounts with Microfinance institutions that do not charge high rates. He also advised groups to hold on to the common interests that should keep them together and not disintegrate because of delay of funds from LVEMP II project

Rakai District has two components- district strategic intervention and community demand driven development sub projects- with three projects in fisheries, forestry and wetlands management. While the community CBOs has six CDD projects that were approved in line with soil management in the literal zones and wetlands.

7.0 Updates from Masaka district Natural Resources Officer (Ms Rose Nakyejjwe)

Progress since July the completed and submitted 12 proposals out of which 5 CDD proposal and 5 district strategic proposals were approved. Major focus is forestry, wetlands, lake eco-tourism and waste management. After approval they got feedback and how to do requisition.

They are still waiting for the implementation because of the delayed fund disbursement by the LVEMP II secretariat.

In August 2012 Auditors from the Government came in to assess if the selection process of the projects was followed up to the required standards. In November 2012 they came back to monitor the progress in terms of implementation yet the project funds have not been disbursed.

Information flow from LVEMP II to local government is hard because unless you call the coordinator that is when you can hear from them on what is happening.

In spite of the delay, community groups are progressing with environmental projects of the CBO's is turning nature into money through apirary. While another group is working waste management through recycling of plastics has receive funding from Coca cola to construct the store for the recycled materials and land from Masaka Municipal Council. With this progress, the group is waiting for the LVEMP II money in order for them to purchase the recycling equipment.

A Youth group is engaged in fish farming in order to reduce on the pressure exerted on the lake by fisher folk. This has not yielded much because they are still waiting for the delayed funds from LVEMP II.

People are willing to change their lifestyles but there are obstacles to the change due to the delays.

She also thanked UCSD / EA Suswatch network and the World Bank for the respective interventions.

Under strategic interventions by the district Masaka district plans to control pollution, conserve trees through energy saving technologies through planting more trees. Briquetting waste into money, and wetland restoration with alternative income generating activities and soil management.

8.0 Feedback from the Ministry of Water and Environment on LVEMP II based on a meeting held before the community meeting. - Emily Arayo

The Lake Victoria Environment Management Project in Uganda will fund 65 community demand driven projects in 9 districts with in the Lake Victoria Basin in Uganda. This was revealed by the National Project Coordinator of LVEMP II in Uganda, Mr. Sewagudde Sowed, at a meeting with East African Sustainability Watch Network (EASUSWATCH) staff working on LVEMP II Civil Society watch project in Uganda at the Ministry of Water and Environment in Kampala. Mr. Sewagudde said that LVEMP II has advanced 138 proposals from communities in the 9 districts and so far 65 projects have been screened and submitted to the World Bank for final approval.

Upon vetting from the World Bank, the funds for implementing the CDD projects will be sent to the district local governments who will then send them to the communities' respectively. He regretted that the process has been slow but is optimistic that the agreed disbursement of approved community demand driven sub- project funds will be effected. At the same meeting, the Under Secretary of the Ministry Mr. Charles Okuraja appreciated the

Complimentary efforts of the Civil Society Organizations in the environment subsector. He noted that both government and the CSO s can do a lot together for the benefit of the communities around the Lake Victoria Basin.

He commended the advocacy role and information generated by the EA SusWatch in highlighting issues of climate change in the region, creating awareness of the East African Climate Change Policy and involving communities to conserve Lake Victoria through

monitoring, information sharing dialogue.

The districts to benefit from the first funding include Masaka, Gomba, Rakai, Kalungu and Mubende, Namayingo, Kalangala, etc. which are in the upper and lower catchment of River Katonga. EASUSWATCH has a mandate to monitor and advocate for the effective implementation of national and regional obligations to international agreements and other arrangements for sustainable development in Eastern Africa. Besides River Katonga, the projects focus in around River Nyando in Kenya and River Simiyu in Tanzania.

9.0 Questions and concerns

1. Communities members wanted to know when UCSD / EA Suswatch will meet with the World Bank to take their views to this level.
2. When will the people responsible (Ministry of Water and Environment) visit the community?
3. The delay to release funds that is supposed to complement the co-funding from the communities is worrying as it is likely to lead to substandard work due to late implementation within the time available.
4. How will the communities use the baseline surveys that were carried out in Rakai and Mubende?
5. Some community based organizations had planned among the activities, to raise awareness on apiculture and within it they had an element of refreshments which is not available. There is currently fatigue from members to attend meetings without any refreshments and hence they accuse the leaders of the CBOs for having received the money and using it for self benefit.
6. One CBOs reported that they sold three cows, 2 goats and 3 pigs as part of the co-financing their group. They also used that money by opening the bank account and since the delay in money disbursement they have now received threats from bank that it might close their account unless they keep it active by depositing money on it.
7. Budgeting at the district last year included LVEMP II funds which were not received. The district councils have been blaming the technical officers for including LVEMPPI, when they are not sure of the fund releases. Furthermore, since is it budget time, questions are being raised as to whether LVEMPPII should feature or not.
8. The sustainability of the CBOs work even after LVEMP II should be put into consideration so as to sustain the achievements made in the long run.
9. The community is asking why the fund release process is so long.
- 10 The community members were also concerned that during the budgeting of the CDD projects they used the rate of 1\$ to 2400. But due to the inflation the dollar rate they will be affected especially where some projects will involve procurement or contract with service providers.

11. Community members were concerned if the groups invited to attend the quarterly meeting were those with sub-project proposals vetted already and awaiting funds?

10.0 Way forward

- A suggestion to use of the community SACCOs as opposed to the bank was put forward as they do not have strict conditions in account management.
- There is need to develop and operationalise community procurement guidelines as in case of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS).
- Need to improve communication between the LVEMP II National Secretariat, the Local governments and communities. Climate change in the Katonga catchment area is a big issue among the community where during the changes in seasons has heavily affected farmers' plans.

11.0 Closing remarks

Ms Rose Nakyejjwe: Thanked EA Suswatch as a mouth piece for the communities for its role in voicing out issues affecting the communities in the Lake Victoria Basin. She noted NGOs have a big influence and advocacy. They can easily deliver the message to high level profile officers in the country.

While Mr. Njuba Charles Nsimbe Councillor Kyebe Sub-county was able to appreciate the role played by UCSD/ EA suswatch to bring the communities together and update them on what is happening..

Appendix 1: Programme

| TIME | SESSION | FACILITATOR |
|------------------|---|--|
| 8:30 - 9:00 am | Arrival and Registration | UCSD |
| 9:00 - 9:20 am | Welcoming remarks from the Masaka District Environmental Officer | Ms Rose Nakyejjwe |
| 9:20 - 9:40 am | Introduction of participants | Ms Rose Nakyejjwe |
| 9:40 - 9:55 am | Objectives of the meeting and Expected Outcomes | Mwayafu M. David |
| 9:55 - 10: 25 am | <p>a. Brief review of the LVEMP II / sustainable development issues from the last meeting held (10 minutes) and from the baseline studies</p> <p>b. Progress since the last meeting and latest update on project implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masaka (10 minutes) - Rakai (10 minutes) | <p>Mwayafu David</p> <p>Rose Jamil</p> |

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|--------------------|---|---|
| 10:25 - 10:55 am | Plenary discussion | |
| 10:55 - 11:20 am | TEA BREAK | All |
| 11:20 – 12:1:00 pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the challenges faced in relation to project implementation? - What do we recommend to address these challenges? <p>Are there other issues not discussed that have an effect on the implementation of the CDD subprojects of LVEMPII?</p> | <p>Focus Group Discussion</p> <p>(All)</p> |
| 1:00 – 2:00 pm | LUNCH | All |
| 2:00 - 5:00 pm | Visit to one of the Community Based Organization in Masaka (Bakasimbi Development Projects at Jangalo – Gulama) | Staff and Media |

Appendix II: List of participants

| No | Name | Gender | Title | Organisation | Contact address: Email and Telephone |
|----|-----------------------|--------|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Kimbowa Richard | M | Regional coordinator | UCSD | ugandacoalition@infocom.co.ug |
| 2 | Kiwanuka Deo | M | charperson | Bakasimbi HIV Aids Awareness | bakasimbikiwanuka@yahoo.com 0794605401 |
| 3 | Bukenya R | M | charperson | Namirembe Lake shore | 0754 135030 |
| 4 | Lusembo John M | M | charperson | MIKESAETACA | 0756024699 |
| 5 | Kalema stanley | M | Coordinator | Nyange Kentale Kukuuma Butonde Group | 0700367144 |
| 6 | Mwayafu M David | M | NC | UCSD | dmwayafu@ugandacoalition.or.ug |
| 7 | Ssendagi John | M | Coordinator | Kirangira Farmers Association | 0779688332 |
| 8 | Kanwangi Saul | M | Secretary | Kigayaza Farmers Group | 0773253202 |
| 9 | Tibesigwa Mukasa | M | DFO | Rakai District Local Government | tibesigmu@yahoo.com |
| 10 | Ssemwogerere David | M | Treasurer UCSD | Suubi Centre | david.ssemwogerere@gmail.com |
| 11 | Njuba Charles Nsimbe | M | Patron | BACECOP | 0782945418/0758431038 |
| 12 | Mambule Ali | M | Reporter | New vision | 0772441587 |
| 13 | Francis Kagolo | M | Reporter | New vision | 0784907955 |
| 14 | Apollo Musabe | M | Producer | UBC | 0783205498 |
| 15 | Mukasa Tom Bukenya | M | District Fisheries Officer | Masaka | 0772/0702476148 |
| 16 | Flavia Lanyero | F | Reporter | Daily Monitor | flanyero@ug.nationmedia.com |
| 17 | Kawunde Evalisto | M | charperson | Kabonera Ssebawali Fish Farmers Youth Group | 0712109809/0752109809 |
| 18 | Emily Arayo | F | RICO | UCSD | earayo@easuswatch.org |
| 19 | Kasule Edward | M | charperson | Sango Bay farmers Group | 0775849598 |
| 20 | Miiro Michael | M | Member | MADIPU | miiro_m@yahoo.co.uk |
| 21 | Rose Nakyejjwe | F | DNRO | Masaka District Local Government | raynakyrsemp@yahoo.ca |
| 22 | Joyce Nanjobe Kawooya | F | Director Finance | ECOPA | joycenanjobekawooya@gmail.com |
| 23 | Musafu Peter | M | Accounts Assistant | KATMIL Projects | Katmilprojects@gmail.com |
| 24 | Gertrude Wamala | F | Secretary | Akwata Empola Nabulayo | 0784118833 |