

# 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)

**September 2012**

## World Habitat Day 2012 in the Lake Victoria basin: *Changing Cities Not Generating Matching Opportunities For All*



Unplanned cities offer few opportunities for the poor.  
Photo: UCSD

The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. This year through the theme; [‘Changing Cities, Building Opportunities’](#), the [World Habitat Day](#) will reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right of all, to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

According to the [State of East Africa Report \(2012\)](#), by 2030 East Africa will have 178 million children and youth out of a total population of 237 million with 31 per cent (73 million) of them living in urban areas, putting pressure on the capacity of East Africa’s major cities to host these new urbanites (SID, 2012). This new and growing population with a high demand for land could lead to more unsustainable land use practices and social challenges

At the moment in many parts of the Lake Victoria basin, Cities like Kampala, Kisumu, Mwanza, Jinja, and are surely ‘changing’ due to natural and human induced factors. But the question as to who benefits due to this change could generate diverse answers depending on the social and interest group; age bracket and the part of the city one has sought such response from.

Furthermore, land degradation in the Lake Victoria basin is a common problem, but particularly acute in the Republics of Burundi, Rwanda, South Western Uganda, Nyando and Rachuonyo Districts in Kenya and Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara regions in Tanzania (EAC, 2007). This increasing human population and the associated activities have accelerated the rate of delivery of nutrients causing eutrophication in Lake Victoria. The effects of increased pollution from urban and industrial discharges and soil erosion are visible in some of the rivers and streams: Nakivubo Channel (Uganda); Kisat, Nzoia, Yala, Nyando (Kenya) Kagera (Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda); Ruvubu (Burundi and Tanzania), Simiyu (Tanzania).

The way forward is to scale up appropriate technological innovations and adoption in rural areas to help offset rural – urban migration that can spur job creation and better social amenities. Similarly, technological solutions are needed to assist urban dwellers to cope with the ‘changing cities’ through efficient and effective use of natural resources like land, water, energy (charcoal, grid power, firewood, solar energy), and waste. This is in addition to key sectors like water supply, sanitation, food preservation, transport and housing. In addition to having *working* governance structures and mechanisms in place, other long-term and viable options could be through public private partnerships involving Cities, Municipalities and other Local authorities with Intergovernmental agencies, Private entities and Not-for-Profit agencies interested in these areas.

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## East African CSOs Equipped with better ICT Skills for Sustainable Development



CSO participants undergoing training in Mwanza. Photo: UCSD

The value of Information and Communication Technology in development has been stressed by Carol Kibe an ICT professional from Kenya. This was during the one week Tailor made training in Information Technology training for 20 participants from the East African Sustainability Watch Network, held at the Open University of Tanzania in Mwanza from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2012.

This training was designed to equip CSOs with skills and knowledge in basic Computer Networking, Internet Solutions, Web development and Design Web development and Design, Publishing and e-Material Management; Social networking and on-line activism; to enable them develop, package and disseminate information on environmental sustainability and to enable them monitor LVEMP II progress and implementation in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. The training was in line with one of the resolutions of the Lake Victoria Basin Forum of June 2012, which called for the Lake Victoria Basin to be developed as a digital society.

Speaking during the training, Ms Kibe reiterated that the East African Community is connected to mobile telephone, which is fast growing and therefore offering an opportunity to link millions of people in the region to information on environmental conservation, proper waste management and ecological sustainability. “CSOs can use the mobile applications to reach many communities; more over the traditional social networks can be integrated in the ICT to be able to reach everybody. There should be more awareness given to the communities for them to be able to use ICT to make them more productive, because ICT is the solution to the word’s information challenges now”, She added. Ms Kibe revealed that in the Rift Valley area in Kenya ICTs powered by solar energy is helping children read using i-pads to solve the problem of lack of text books.

Mr. Charles Njithi, another ICT specialist in the training observed that the challenge of using IT tools remains, although there is a gradual move to using solar and wind energy to power the gadgets. He added that the attitude gap between the rural and urban people in terms of using ICT is wide but the rural people have to learn to take a risk and use computers. “Things are improving every day now and - with Google there are currently options of changing languages that can help people who do not know English to use languages they are familiar with like Kiswahili, Luganda, Ikinyarwanda, he adds.

Participants at the training said they gained a lot of information, which they will utilize to increase interactivity with communities in their work. Nicholas Migot an ICT administrator working with Osienala (Friends of Lake Victoria) in Kisumu notes that “ICT is important because it helps organizations cut costs of operation and management and reduces space since paper work is reduced.

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“Specifically organizations will get savings when they integrate ICT in the operations because there will be less time used through tele-conferencing”, observes Migot. He added that the training was very important in terms of enabling them understand that CSOs just like other organizations can have a platform for passing information to communities by using open source social media, internet and other forms of new technology ideas to enhance operations and effective information delivery.

## LVEMP II to support Rakai Farmers and Pastoralists to conserve Lake Kijanebarola



UCSD members with Kirangira farmers during a field visit to Ms. Kate Kagumire's banana plantation. Photo: UCSD

As part of Community meeting in Rakai, Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) visited Kirangira Farmers' Association - one of the beneficiary Community Groups supported by the ongoing Lake Victoria Environment Management Project (LVEMP II) in Uganda.

Established in 2004, Kirangira Farmers' Association currently has 150 members under 10 active groups in Kirangira Parish, Kagamba sub county, Rakai District and within confines of Lake Kijanebarola (an ecologically fragile shallow lake with an average depth of only 5 metres).

The area is composed of peasant farmers who grow banana, maize and beans in this hilly terrain with low soil fertility, poor structure and steep slopes, as well as a pastoralist community that that heavily relies on this lake.

The high un-employment rate with few employment options in the area have resulted in unsustainable activities such as cultivation in wetlands, bush fires, illegal fishing, and other detrimental activities. Other than Kirangira Farmers' Association, there are no strong local institutions and groups that have come out directly to address environmental degradation in Kagamba Sub-county, Rakai District. Kirangira Farmers Association therefore, is positioning itself to engage in reducing environmental degradation to achieve sustainable development. They plan to achieve this by improving soil productivity through sustainable banana farming methods, given that this is the main source of food and income for the people of this area. The main challenges that the farmers are facing with their banana plantation includes the banana bacterial wilt, lack of materials for mulching to conserve soils, lack of farm implements, price fluctuations of the banana produce and prolonged droughts which greatly affects quality and quantity produced.

Among others, LVEMP II is to support Kirangira farmers to: improve soil productivity by minimizing soil losses associated with erosion and promotion of fruit tree growing to address the issue of nutritional challenges among its populace; improve crop yields through adoption of the appropriate land use management practices; create awareness amongst the population adjacent the wetlands of Lake Kijanebarola about wetland conservation and wise use; and adhere to proper animal husbandry practices which eliminate overgrazing and wetlands encroachment given that the area is a part of the cattle corridor - a relatively dry zone in Uganda that stretches from Karamoja to Nakasongola further down to Mbarara and Rakai.