

**Project Update: March 2012**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Lake Victoria Tour Guides Association(LVTOGA) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> support from the Rufford Small Grants in implementing a twelve months project entitled; ***Community Empowerment for the Restoration and Conservation of Kusa and Koguta wetlands in Kenya.*** The project entails capacity building training of farmers on sustainable papyrus harvesting techniques and organic farming, establishment of Village Agroforestry Centre for multipurpose tree seedlings production for wetland habitat restoration and establishment of two units of ecosan toilets as demonstration sites for human manure generation for organic farming.

This report therefore focuses on a period of five months starting from October 2011 to February 2012.

### **Project Activities**

- a) Community Capacity Building trainings
- b) Establishment of Village Agroforestry Centre (VAC)
- c) Wetland Habitat Restoration
- d) Establishment of two units Ecosan toilets for Organic farming.

### **Community Consultative meetings**

Various consultative meetings were carried out with Site Conservation Group members of Kusa and Koguta villages with the main aim of discussing and agreeing on the project's intended activities in terms of appropriate space for the Village Agroforestry Centre, Ecosan toilets and the training period and venues.



**Photo 1: LVTOGA coordinator with members of Kusa Site Conservation Group during consultative visits.**

### **Capacity Building Trainings**

Training on sustainable papyrus harvesting techniques was carried out for Kusa and Koguta wetland villages for two days. Thirty people including both men and women who engage in papyrus harvesting and local crafts production were trained. The facilitator was Caroline Agwanda from

Onsite trainings of wetland farmers were also undertaken both in Kusa and Koguta demonstrating sustainable farming techniques, composting with reference to ecosan manure, and also crops diversification for nutrition and income generation. This training was facilitated by VI-Agroforestry Centre.



**Left: Training of papyrus user groups at Kusa wetland village. Right: Training of wetland farmers on sustainable farming techniques using compost manure.**

#### **Establishment of Village Agroforestry centre (VAC)**

The Village Agroforestry Centre construction has been kick started. The seed beds have been established with a variety of about fifteen different indigenous tree species planted. A further construction of the potting shed, tree seedlings section and information section is still ongoing.

The Nyadina primary school nature club have been actively involved in the activities at the centre including, planting seeds, potting, and daily watering of the tree seedlings. They also have plans to develop information materials regarding the available trees on site.



**Photo 2: A Tree seedlings section of the Village Agroforestry Centre.**

### **Wetland Habitat Restoration**

This was carried out in the month of February at a local event organized at Koguta beach to mark the World Wetlands Day. Restoration was conducted in form of trees planting within the Kusa and Koguta villages and in the schools compound. Indigenous trees species were sourced from partners including VI Agroforestry, and other individual tree nurseries dealers.



**Photo 3: Pupils holding tree seedlings for planting.**



**Photo 4: The project Coordinator with pupils planting trees during a local event at Koguta to mark the World Wetlands Day.**

### **Establishment of two units of ecosan toilets for organic farming**

The project intends to construct two ecosan toilets at Koguta and Kusa villages to act as demonstration sites for human waste management and organic farming hence discouraging unsustainable wetland farming and reducing human-hippo conflicts. The construction is underway and the community will be

expected to commence using and composting for a period of six months to one year in order to generate the required manure for farming.



**Photo 5: A double vault ecosan toilet under construction.**

#### **Lessons Learnt**

- The community agreed that the demonstration projects be split between the two villages according to the feasibility of the areas. Thus the Village Agroforestry centre would be established in Koguta while Ecosan toilets for organic at Kusa village.
- The wetland farmers and papyrus harvesters had little or no knowledge on the sustainable farming and papyrus harvesting techniques.
- The farmers and the papyrus craft makers lacked access to profitable markets for their products.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

1. The already established Site Conservation Groups (SCGs) of Kusa and Koguta villages collaboratively participated in the planning and implementation stages of the project.
2. The two communities provided space for the establishment of the demonstrative projects.
3. The remaining activities mainly completion of the Village Agroforestry Centre will be undertaken in the remaining months.
4. Onsite training and demonstration on the use of ecosan toilet products will also be carried out in the two communities.
5. The organization continuously aims at networking with various conservation organizations and like minded institutions for future prospecting.