

Project Update: May 2006

The project team organised and conducted awareness campaigns on the problems associated with over-utilisation and sustainable harvesting of medicinal and economic plant species of the Nyika national park. The awareness campaigns were conducted to the society living around the national park. The awareness campaigns were achieved by organising traditional dances, songs and drama; and informal education to take environmental messages to the society which derive its livelihood from the park. In total, 42 villages were visited and sensitised on the dangers of over-utilisation and unsustainable harvesting of socio-economic plants. The community was informed that over-utilisation of plant biodiversity causes the loss of plant species which are of socio-economic importance to people and to the country. The community was further informed that unsustainable harvest of plant species result in massive deaths of socio-economic plants. All these detrimental activities result in widespread poverty and food insecurity in the country. During the informal education, the society was educated on the benefits of plant propagation and sustainable plant harvest. These activities would help to make the useful plants readily available to them and 45 villages surrounding the park benefited from the environmental education and awareness campaigns that were organised.