

Project Update: February 2010

In working towards improving collaboration with various stakeholders to jointly map out ways of promoting pro-poor community tourism, three dialogue meetings involving tour operators and local leaders (Kasanje sub-county and representatives of Wakiso District) were held. One of the outcomes was an agreement that Mabamba Ecotourism Information Centre initiated by the project and manned by a Community association, Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA) will be the official tourism reception area. The sub-county (Kasanje Local Government) consequently erected a signpost instructing all tourists to first report to this office. This is viewed as one way of built confidence with the community association which the project has facilitated to build its capacity and also as an important step in developing collaboration with various stakeholders – especially local governments and tour operators. There is however still a challenge of a few individuals working as tourist guides who still haven't cooperated well yet. The association is working hard to ensure that they are also brought on board.

Miss Alexandra Singpiel has joined the project as a volunteer educator. She comes from Germany and will work with the project for 12 months. Alexandra will focus on inter-cultural training, an area which she has gained experience with Solivol/weltwärts volunteers programme. Her input is expected to help guides meet the visitors' expectations, and add value to the service they offer to visitors, the majority of whom come from Europe.

