

Project Update: January 2023

During this period (October 2022-January 2023), we continued with the routine wetland monitoring as a follow up to phases one and two of the project, worked with some local community members neighbouring wetlands to roll out sustainable projects and conducted a wetland conservation community dialogue.

Wetland monitoring: During the awareness campaigns (In phases one two of the project), most of the wetland neighbours pledged to comply and conserve the main Magombe wetland and the small wetlands that feed into it by not encroaching on the boundaries using while using the wetland for the agreed upon sustainable activities. To reinforce this, we set up wetland management committees in 14 villages. Each committee comprised of four members who are wetland neighbours and coming from the respective village. The committees report to the project coordinator on any degradation that may happen in their villages, who then follows up with the District Environmental Officer, the police and other stakeholders.

In most of the villages, there was compliance but in three, degradation was going on. One of the committee members from Nkingo village, reported that a local community member was harvesting palm trees from Kanyancu wetland, which connects Magombe wetland and Kibale National Park. The project coordinator alerted the District Environment Officer, local leaders and the police. The place was visited and a group of youths who were found fled upon seeing the police and authorities. The activity was halted, tools were confiscated, and a police case was opened for follow up. We also got reports and halted degradation of small wetlands in Kiyoyima and Nyabubale villages while working with the police and the District Environment Officer.





Top: Peter (in the Middle) one of the project team members together with the District Environment Officer(Left) and Police extinguishing the charcoal burning kiln in Nkingo Village. **Bottom:** Part of the main Magombe wetland that is regenerating due to interventions.

On a positive note, it was great to observe that some of the areas which were encroached on before had started regenerating after our phase one and phase two of the projects

Sustainable projects

We took advantage of the prolonged rains (October to December) to embark on tree planting related projects. We planted over 1000 indigenous trees and some of these were planted as wood lots while others were distributed to many farmers to plant as part of the household agroforestry projects. During the tree planting programme, we worked with local council chairpersons, who registered wetland neighbours, the number and species of indigenous trees they were interested in. We went ahead and worked with the local leaders in distribution of seedlings and in some areas we supported some of the local community members to plant the trees.

Apart from the trees, we distributed 20 Kenya top bar modern beehives to three household heads. These were supplied by a trained beekeeper from the community. We engaged him to continue supporting the beekeepers as a resource person to ensure good practices.

Wetland conservation community dialogue

We held a wetland dialogue meeting in Bigodi Town Council where Magombe Wetland is located. The dialogue meeting also aired live on one of the local radio stations (Voice of Kamwenge). The meeting was attended by over 100 local community members. Keynote speakers included the Resident District Commission, who represents the president in the district. Other members who attended include the District Environment Officer, local leaders and wetland neighbours. From the radio survey, the programme reached over 1500 people. Call in was not possible but feedback was sought by use of

SMS, and we got 45 comments and questions from four different districts during the two hours which were aired live on radio. Part of the dialogue was also covered by a regional television (TV West). The community appreciated sharing their thoughts with key stakeholders and pledged to work hand in hand with them to conserve Magombe and other small wetlands in the area.



Left: A tree nursery established to support the project. **Right:** Local council one leader Mahango village after receiving trees on behalf of his community members.



Left: Voice of Kamwenge technical team setting up before commencement of the dialogue. **Right:** From left to Right: The Resident District Commissioner (with a microphone), The Mayor-Bigodi Town Council, District Environment Officer, Education Officer and the Project Coordinator during the dialogue meeting.