

## **Project Update: June 2009**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The project "***Promotion of Networks to enhance Advocacy for Dunga Swamp Conservation***" had main objective of bringing together various stakeholders in Dunga wetland so as to support conservation efforts through awareness creation and advocacy. The stakeholders were to be drawn from the community, NGOs, CBOs, corporate sector and government. It is aimed that at the end of the project there will be sufficient links between various players to enhance the conservation efforts on Dunga swamp. This report explores the progress of the project so far and looks into the activities that have been carried out for the past months since the inception of the project. It will be therefore be an important tool in judging the performance of the project at this particular time.

### **2.0 Activities**

#### **2.1 Training of wetland scouts**

To help in the surveillance and monitoring of activities within Dunga swamp a group of persons drawn from various sections of the community were trained as wetland scouts and wardens. They will act as custodians of the wetland by being vigilante and keen enough to observe and report on the activities occurring within the wetland. Two training workshops were held and benefited 25 people (11 female and 24 male) who were trained on:

- Environment Management and Coordination Act (EMCA 1999)
- Human-wildlife conflict
- Importance of biodiversity/wetland conservation
- The role of the City Council in management of Trust lands/Dunga wetland

The training was backed up by a follow-up meeting which had the prime objective of assessing the effectiveness of the training in terms of what the wardens had accomplished so far, the challenges and way forward. This would prove to be important in future engagements with the wardens and the wider community.

#### **2.2 Establishment and update of LVSB website**

Marketing of Dunga swamp as an ecotourism destination is one of the main objectives of LVSB since ecotourism is a justification for the conservation measures and community involvement. Based on this the group website was redesigned, updated and uploaded. The new website [www.lakevictoriasunsetbirders.org](http://www.lakevictoriasunsetbirders.org) is a well presented website with up to date and accurate information about the activities of LVSB and their partners at Dunga wetland. Lake Victoria Sunset Birders believe that this will help in informing the whole world about the importance of Dunga wetland and promote its conservation.

### 2.3 Community programmes

Members of Dunga community went for a 4-day exchange visit to Kiambu District, Central Province. The team comprised of 5 females and 8 males drawn from schools, provincial administration and local CBOs. During the visit the team learnt a lot concerning sustainable utilization of natural resources in the following ways:

- Ecotourism
- Beekeeping
- Eco-agriculture
- Environmental education
- Green funds

Since this visit, there has been active involvement by the local administration in Dunga swamp conservation activities. The weekly chief barazas are currently addressing environmental issues affecting Dunga swamp through awareness and advocacy. The community members involved in the exchange program is spearheading awareness programs through these barazas. The awareness has been done in **ten** sessions so far.

### 2.4 Establishment of a schools' environment magazine

Important strides were made towards the establishment of an environment magazine for the Lake Victoria region where Dunga swamp falls. First, a School nature club patrons meeting was convened with 10 teachers from Kisumu District attending and this was followed by series of meetings to chat the way forward in coming up with a schools' environmental magazine for the region. Four workshops were held to this effect. The outcomes of the meetings were as follows:

- The name of the magazine – **Ecochat**.
- A 5 member editorial board comprising 2 teachers, 1 LVSB member, an environment expert and a journalist.
- Strategy for obtaining articles and accompanied images (photos, pictures) including important dates.
- Role assignment for each participant.

So far the articles have been obtained, edited and the design of the magazine done. The articles touch on various environmental issues and include poems, features, narratives, puzzles, photos and paintings. Fifty copies of the magazine have been printed and to be launched through a teachers' workshop by end of June 2009. A copy of the magazine will be uploaded on LVSB website by end of June 2009.

### 2.5 Initial contact with corporates

Various corporate companies were contacted to support the advocacy programme with particular emphasis on the Schools' environment magazine. LVSB had strategized to have the corporates support the magazine through advertisement. However, positive response was received from **Kenya Airways** and **Davis & Shirliff** only. This prompted LVSB to change tack and roll out the environment magazine and distribute to various offices, this we believe will elicit interest among various cooperates who may eventually see the sense to support the initiative to sustainability.

### 2.6 Summary of Implemented Activities

Activity	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Joint workshops for partners		X	X	X	X
Training of wetland scouts		X			
Planning for and production of environmental magazine	X	X			
LVSB website update	X				

Web marketing for Dunga	X	X	X	X	X
Project monitoring		X			X
Quarterly reports			X		

### **Conclusion and Future Plans**

The schools environmental magazine is to be launched by end of June 2009. We intend to market this to the corporate companies to ensure their involvement in production of subsequent copies to ensure sustainability.

Partnerships between schools, NGOs, government departments, trained wetland wardens and scouts is gradually being enhanced follow up meetings by LVSB. The project programmes have also drawn the interest of international partnership between LVSB and a volunteer programme in Germany called Solivol which has uploaded information on LVSB on their website. Solivol is also planning to send two volunteers to LVSB in September 2009 to support LVSB activities.