

APEDDH Cleanup Activity on Lake Kivu Report in Nyamasheke District on 11th October 2024

Introduction

The activity was conducted in Mujabagiro Village, Ninzi Cell and Kagano Sector.



These people above are some of the participants in this work.

Activity purpose, goal and specific objectives

Like the cleanup work in other previous districts, the general objective of this activity in Nyamasheke was to promote environmental conservation and protect human health by reducing pollution in and around Lake Kivu through community-driven waste removal and awareness-raising activities.

The specific objectives were to

- 1) Mitigate Kivu water pollution by removing debris and other pollutants from the lake's shores in efforts to prevent further contamination of water resources and protect aquatic ecosystems, while enhancing biodiversity;
- 2) Raise awareness and foster community engagement, while supporting global conservation efforts by creating awareness on water pollution's environmental and health impacts, promoting responsible waste management and community engagement, and supporting global conservation efforts.

Course of the activity

I. Activity participants:

The activity saw the participation of three APEDDH staff members, the District Environment Officer- Albert Sengambi, the Cell Executive Secretary- Egide Ndagijimana, and 16 volunteer residents of the mentioned village. The APEDDH employees specifically included the Executive Director— Alexis Kizungu, the Program Manager— Crispain Ndatabaya Bikotwa and the Projects Manager— Jean Baptiste Ndabananiye.

II. Self-introduction of APEDDH staff and the Environment Officer to the volunteers and justification of the work

As usual, we presented ourselves to the volunteers to know us and comprehend the reason for the work.

III. Cleanup activity

This work began at 10h00 am and finished at 13h30.



As indicated by the middle image with Kizungu seeming to point his hand at some rubbish, the latter one is fishing gear that the work removed from the lake's shore. The gear is a fishing net. The photo showing the pile is the place where we piled the waste.

IV. Estimation of the quantity of rubbish eliminated from the lake

Approximately 200 kilos of non-decomposing waste was removed from the lake's shore.



As highlighted by these above photos, unlike other previous districts, in Nyamasheke we found some fishing equipment. This pile consists of non-biodegradable rubbish.

V. Cleanup awareness among the volunteers



Awareness session time.

Like in the other districts, various people who spoke appreciated the cleanup work, exhorting the volunteers to attach extremely great importance to it. Sengambi said *“This is a good initiative because this lake is crucial for both Rwanda and other 5 countries of them being preserving this borders. bordering Tanganyika Lake, some Burundi, Tanzania, and Malawi. So, lake’s ecosystem is vital beyond our borders.”*



Albert Sengambi on the right addressing the participants.

That is why we encourage you to become a great group which will fulfill a significant role in safeguarding this resource, recognizing that water is decreasing in the world and that this work, if regularly conducted, will permit to keep this lake safe for generations and generations.”



Alexis Kizungu, the 3rd from the left among these people standing next to the lake’s waters. He directs his arm at the lake, underscoring its gigantic importance and the great importance of its cleanup.

APEDDH Executive Director, Alexis Kizungu, seized an opportunity to sincerely thank these volunteers. *“We thank you so much for this activity and grab this occasion to remind you that you are the first people to protect this lake as people who benefit directly from it. We wish you to ensure that living organisms in this lake remain safe and healthy.”*

VI. Observation and lessons learnt

1. Interview with the Cell Executive Secretary- Ndagijimana on fishing gear

“I first thank you (APEDDH) for this work, because our lake is marred with rubbish- such as plastic bottles and fishing nets- most of which sinks to the bottom of the lake. We request you to help us retrieve the waste from the bottom and I assert that the lake’s bottom contains a lot of trash.



Fishers use wooden boats and when wind blows; they throw most of their fishing gear, while struggling to save their lives. Furthermore, they discard too old fishing nets into the lake. For example, I personally know a case of fishers in around November and December 2022 when some fishers' boat was broken by a wind; which caused them to dump their fishing nets into the lake, so as to rescue their lives from the peril."

One of the wooden boats is this one in the middle below which we then photographed.



Wind was blowing as shown by the above photo on the right, so that it could have been dangerous, if it had been in the middle of the lake, with the likelihood to cause an accident. Here it had just reached the shore.

2. Lack of Kivu Coastal Litter Disposal Mechanism

Like the other districts, this district also lacks the proper system to dispose of fishing gear. As it is visible in the place where we placed the rubbish, there are ashes. These ashes have come from the incineration of rubbish; which is not a proper way to handle trash. We told them that this practice is inappropriate, adding that in our next work we will discuss with them how to dispose of waste properly. This place is the site designated for litter which will be regularly eliminated from the lake.

VII. Immediate outcome: Voluntary Saving and Loan Group

Like in Rubavu, on the recommendation by the Projects Manager- Jean Baptiste Ndabananiye, the Nyamasheke volunteers also created the group.



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Approved by Alexis Kizungu, APEDD Executive Director.