

APEDDH Cleanup Activity on Lake Kivu Report in Karongi District on 05th October 2024

Introduction

The activity took place in Rurembo Village, Kibuye Cell in Bwishyura Sector which constitutes a key urban center of the district. Like in other cleanup activities, this activity also engaged volunteers besides two officials unlike other cleanup activities which saw the participation of one official. We conducted the work in a place that engages actively in tourism services, as demonstrated by the below images of small boats which perform rides for tourists.



However, this place suffers cleanup issues as also substantiated by these images.



Photo, we took, of sacks used to block soil on the beach where the tourism boats are secured. These sacks are harmful to the lake.



Image of a huge and long tree trunk that we found in Kivu but failed to remove it because we weren't ready to take it from the waters. It needed some appropriate garments, in order not to be drenched by waters.

Activity purpose, goal and specific objectives

Like the cleanup work in the preceding districts of Rubavu and Rutsiro, the general objective of this activity in Karongi 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.



Another photo representing the place where conducted the cleanup activity.

Unfolding of the activity

I. Activity participants:

The activity was attended by three APEDDH staff members, Karongi District Environment Officer, and the Hygiene and Sanitation Officer in Bwishyura Sector, and cleanup volunteers.

II. Self-introduction of APEDDH staff

As usual, we conducted self-introduction for the volunteers to know us and understand the rationale of the work. It was unnecessary for the officials to present themselves to the volunteers, since the volunteers already knew them.

III. Cleanup activity

This work began at 9h30 am and finished at 11h00.





As highlighted by these photos, the cleanup work was conducted on this concreted beach – around 20 meters wide and 40 long and the other place, depicted by the other image above on the right, which covers the area of approximately 4 square meters. This above work has attained the following outcomes that are represented by the below pictures.





Significance of this work

Masengesho responsible for hygiene and sanitation in the sector said that when waste is accumulated on the shore, winds blow it into the lake. It signifies this trash comprising the leaves of the palm tree, among others, risked being carried away by winds into the lake.



Before the work, the concreted place was inundated with rubbish as depicted by these two joined photos on the left.



As shown by the photos above in the middle, this concreted beach lies above waters, with pillars planted or anchored beneath waters, to support this beach. We left the entire place clean as indicated by the photos on the right.

Estimation of the quantity of rubbish eliminated from the lake and site

We estimate that the non-biodegradable rubbish in the two sacks weighs around 30 kilograms while the biodegradable one weighs approximately 70 kilograms. In fact, this work substantiated to us that Karongi shoreline contains huge quantities of coastal rubbish, because as already said, the shoreline we covered is a touristic area which ought to be rubbish-free.

This means that the situations certainly stands worse in other places, as one of the volunteers- Zéphanie Matoroshi affirmed it in these words *“We face very quantities of coastal litter, especially on islands where with like 2 boats you can bring 80 sacs of 100 kilograms each.”*

IV. Cleanup awareness among the volunteers



Jean Baptiste Ndabananiye, 3rd from the right, is addressing the participants.

As done in the other previous districts, the participants were also sensitized upon the importance of Kivu Lake cleanup. Alexis Kizungu, APEDDH Executive Director/ 2nd from the right in the photo, said *“This is preliminary work we are conducting, we will come back and it’s you whom we select to work with in Karongi and encourage you to continue cleaning the lake shore even while we are not there. If you do so, take photos and send them to us. Kivu cleanup is vital for the*

protection of Lakivu which stands crucial for you especially as people directly benefitting from and even us from faraway as well as other nations. We have to assure that we jealously safeguard this substantial resource. We thank you considerably for your agreeing to participate in this struggle.”

Jean Baptiste Ndabananiye said *“I won’t come back to the undeniable importance of this public resource, since I believe that you better know it than I do. I am instead going to exhort you to create a voluntary saving and loan group. With it you will be able to improve your living conditions and be motivated to regularly conduct cleanup activities on Kivu shores.”*

Masengesho said *“We also sincerely thank these volunteers and encourage them to play a significant role in the cleanup of this lake since cleanup is paramount. We, both the district and the sector, are with them since this resource needs to be protected at all cost. We particularly thank APEDDH for this work, you are the first organization in Rwanda to conduct this intervention. Please, continue accompanying us since we actually need your role and we seize this occasion to request for your intervention for*

us to establish a proper fishing gear disposal mechanism. We already have a site where will put this waste already collected whereby tomorrow a vehicle from Karongi District Office will transport them to the site, but we are lacking the fishing gear disposal site.”

I. Observation and lessons learnt

1. Cage fish farming

Though we didn't manage to photograph cages in Karongi, they do exist there since we saw them in some distant places. These cages are among issues that rationalize the creation of a proper fishing gear disposal site.

2. Lesson learnt

We observed that the district and sector officials didn't conveniently prepare the field. While in the other districts, the officials and volunteers knew where we had to carry out cleanup, it wasn't the same case for Karongi. We improvised the cleanup location on the shore. As a lesson, we are insisting that the officials in charge in the remaining districts should predetermine cleanup locations as it went in Rutsiro and Rubavu Districts.

VII. Immediate outcome: Voluntary Saving and Loan Group

Like in the other districts, the volunteers established a voluntary saving and loan group with its committee.

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