

APEDDH Cleanup Activity on Lake Kivu Report in Rusizi District on 12th October 2024

Introduction

The activity was conducted in Birogo Village, Gahinga Cell in Mururu Sector. In Rusizi we found colossal quantities of coastal litter as portrayed by this photo below.



These are plastic materials collected by a person who intends to repurpose them; however, it constitutes a partial solution, as the report will explain it in the observation section. Meanwhile, this represents a proof of plastic waste threat for Kivu Lake. This image only highlights a portion of the plastic waster. Below is the photo of an other part of the piled plastic trash.



Both photos don't however show all the trash gathered from the lake —exactly in the same place where we carried out the cleanup —for only one month, as we were informed.



A wooden boat was employed, to collect the rubbish from the shore.

Activity purpose, goal and specific objectives

The general objective of this activity in Rusizi 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- Aimable Ngabirinda, and 12 volunteers. As usual, the APEDDH employees were 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.





Baby diapers which justify the necessity of gloves as the volunteers claimed them.

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

Approximately 8 00 kilos of non-decomposing waste was removed from the lake's shore. Below is the rubbish in a pile.



Because of the huge quantity, here the volunteer decides to paddle the wooden boat, to collect the rubbish.



Removing the trash like this alone could not suffice.



The volunteers offloading the wooden boat.



The boat is now empty.

VI. Cleanup awareness

The Environment Officer, Aimable Ngabirinda, said *“I especially think the village leader, I informed him of this activity late but he abandoned all his work, to join this activity. This activity has run well and we promise you our support in this struggle to safeguard our resource. I also seize this occasion to underline that through your group you have allocate your entire heart to this maximally important waterbody.*

Allow me to be grateful to this partner, APEDDH, for their creativity which has resulted in such work since they are the first organization to engage in the cleanup of Lake Kivu.”

APEDDH Executive Director, Alexis Kizungu, said *“We first of all thank you very much for this work and we humbly request you and based on how we have seen, we don’t doubt that you will help us to maintain this lake in safe and healthy conditions. We stay determined to accompany you in this struggle to protect our lake.”*

VII. Observation and lessons learnt

1. Gargantuan quantity of plastic rubbish identified in Rusizi

We were astounded by the mammoth quantity in this district as already portrayed by the photos of the huge pile made by an investor that intends to exploit this rubbish. But, the investor doesn’t take all waste, the reason why we retrieved a big quantity in a space of around 16 square meter area for just an hour and half. He only picks what he regards as fit for his business, leaving unfit one littered on the shore.



However, we consider this a great opportunity for us as far as a cleanup project is concerned. We used to ask ourselves how we would act, to turn the waste into a precious resource. In this regard, this investor will inspire the project in this respect.

As for the site where to place coastal rubbish which will regularly be collected, the investor gave a space where the trash will be put. The next step then is to discuss with the district the fate of this trash which can't be recycled, since the investor's solution is not a definitive one. However, this will be feasible after we secure a project to carry this work on.

2. Lack of Kivu Coastal Litter Disposal Mechanism

The district doesn't have a fishing gear disposal mechanism either.

VII. Immediate outcome: Voluntary Saving and Loan Group

The volunteers also created the group.

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