

Report September 2013

WACDEP Rwanda-Burundi Communication and Journalism Practitioners Training on

“Role of Communication in Promoting Water Security and Climate Resilience,” 21-22nd August, 2013, Busegera District, Rwanda

Organized by Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWPEA)



Workshop participants inspecting how climate impacts waters of Lake Cyohoha, 22 August 2013

1. Introduction and Background

GWP Eastern Africa organized a Water and Climate Development (WACDEP) Training Workshop on August 21-22, 2013 in Bugesera District, Rwanda. The title of the workshop was **“Role of Communication in Promoting Water Security and Climate Resilience.”** The theme was grounded in the understanding that the success of WACDEP rests on how all stakeholders are informed, actively engaged and owning the processes: consultations, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A total of 30 communications experts and journalists from Burundi and Rwanda attended the training (see the objective & outcomes of the training).

The training is one of the sequenced outputs aimed at implementing AMCOW’s (the African Ministers Council on Water) decision–designating Global Water Partnership (GWP) as its focal partner to address issues of climate change and the response needed through the water sector; and launched a common program–Water, Climate and Development (WACDEP). **The goal** of the programme is to promote water as a key part of sustainable regional and national development and contribute to climate change adaptation for economic growth and human security.

The overall objective WACDEP is to support integration of water security and climate resilience in development planning and decision making processes, through enhanced technical and institutional capacity and predictable financing and investments in water security and climate change adaptation.

Initially, WACDEP will be implemented in eight countries: Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Rwanda and Tunisia; and four river basins: Volta Basin, Lake Chad, Lake Victoria-Kagera, and Limpopo Basin.’

In Eastern Africa, the program is being implemented at different levels, Trans-boundary river basin-Kagera, specifically in Bugesera Region, around Lake Cyohoha—a trans-boundary lake between Rwanda and Burundi.

Historically, Bugesera, a region shared by Rwanda and Burundi face persistent drought brought by climatic changes resulting from unfriendly human practices such as over-cultivation, deforestation and unregulated livestock farming methods.

Lake Cyohoha is a lake between Burundi and Rwanda. Its watershed extends 508 km². Of this, 369 km² is located in Burundi and 139 km² in Rwanda. The lake is 27 km long and .5 to 2 km wide. It branches up to 9 km. It is separated from the river Akanyaru by a series of swamps.

This is an important area for GWPEA to focus a WACDEP project on as it is a transboundary water source that significantly contributes to the livelihoods and wellbeing of several communities on both sides of the lake. Along its banks many people farm and graze their livestock. This area is also home to potential conflict over its dwindling resources.

The lake is being negatively affected by erosion as well as pollution from both human and animal waste. Conflict may arise over the declining state of the lake as Rwanda is bound to very strict environmental laws in order to protect its fresh water resources while Burundi is still at low levels. Limited efforts by Burundi to protect the lake may also inspire Rwandans to take advantage of its resources without care for its future quality.



Lake Cyohoha photographed from Rwandan side. Opposite direction is Burundi



Water from Lake Cyohoha for home use



2. Training Objectives

The main purpose of the workshop was to equip communication and media practitioners from Rwanda and Burundi with requisite skills and knowledge about Integrated Water Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptations around Lake Cyohoha. This objective is based on that fact that climate adaptation and sustainable management of the ecosystems and Lake Cyohoha will depend on how stakeholders (residents, fishing cooperatives, bugesera district technical teams, women associations, youth and decision-makers) are aware and fully take ownership of the process towards solutions for the existing challenges. Media's role in this front cannot be under-estimated.

Specific objectives were to:

- Raise awareness about the issues of water security and climate resilience with particular focus on media as key conveyors of messages
- Equip some reporters from Rwanda and Burundi with key concepts such as climate change, water security, climate adaptation, climate resilience, water and climate uncertainties, among others
- Create interests in partnering between media from the two countries and GWP Eastern Africa for WIN-WIN solutions (media, GWP Eastern and citizens around Lake Cyohoha as ultimate beneficiaries)
- Generate inputs from media practitioners and communication officers on WACDEP Communication Strategy

3. Expected Training Outcomes

The expected training outcomes were that:

- Invited media practitioners and communication officers understood key concepts (water security, climate change, climate adaptation, climate resilience, among others);
- Invited journalism practitioners developed interests in covering water and climate change issues as to be evidenced by progressive media articles and eventual media, water and climate mitigation Network (MWCN);
- Inputs from participants relating to WACDEP Communication Strategy generated;
- Participants clearly understood their unique role in sustainable management of Lake Cyohoha;
- Media Network for Water Security and Climate Change Adaptation created and elected members committed to its cause.

4. Trainers

Mr. Patrick Safari is the Regional Coordinator of GWP Eastern Africa. Mr. Safari led two different sessions. One of his sessions was titled, **“Towards Water Security and Climate Resilience in the World: Highlights of GWP’s Programmes and Activities (Global and in Eastern Africa Region).”** This session was designed to familiarize participants with the work of GWPO as a whole and GWP Eastern Africa in particular, as well as the importance of water security and climate resilience. This session explained the importance of building partnerships for WRM and concluded by describing some of the programs GWP Eastern Africa is supporting at regional, national and community levels. He mainly focused on Water, Climate Development Program(WACDEP), its objectives, expected outcomes and work packages/components and roles stakeholders play in implementing the program in Rwanda and Burundi, specifically around Lake Cyohoha.

The second session led by Mr. Safari was titled, **“Towards Water Security and Climate Resilient Development in Burundi and Rwanda: Introduction to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).”** The objectives of this session were to ensure the participants understood the meaning and principles of IWRM and to introduce the importance of an IWRM approach. This presentation finished by depicting the Lake Cyohoha catchment area to ensure that participants fully grasped the connections between IWRM, Climate Change, mitigation and adaptation strategies and the current issues surrounding this trans-boundary lake Cyohoha.

Both of these presentations established an essential foundation that participants can use to further their knowledge and understanding of IWRM and transboundary water issues throughout their region. With this, they can build a network of communication and information dissemination throughout the region to ensure that people at all levels of society are aware of the issues facing their water resources and the efforts that can be made in order to preserve these resources for future utilization.



GWP Eastern Africa Regional Coordinator making a presentation to Participants on 21st August 2013. Bugesera. Eastern Province. Rwanda

Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, trainer from Nile IWRM-Net and experienced expert in Water Resources Management and Climate Change led an additional session on climate change to improve participant understanding of the concepts, realities, challenges/risks and uncertainties Climate Change and Water Insecurity. He conducted a very important session titled, **“Concepts, Reality and Uncertainty of Climate Change and Water Scarcity.”**

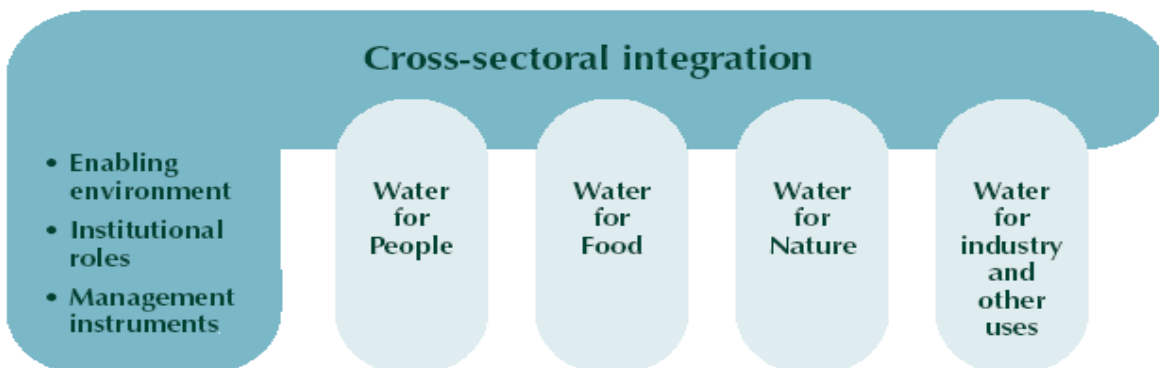
As the title suggests, this presentation shared the main concepts of climate change so that participants were able to fully grasp the difference what climate change is and how it is affecting Eastern Africa Region and provoke further discussions and interests by the Media practitioners from Rwanda and Burundi. With this information the participants were able to understand what Climate Change is, its causes, foreseeable uncertainties and risks and mitigation strategies.

Media practitioners and communication officers realized that addressing climate change concerns is imperative and that climate change is something that affects all facets of life, particularly for those living throughout in rural Africa because of their limited capacities to mitigate it.



Dr Callist Tindimugaya, Expert in IWRM & Climate Change making Presentation, 22nd August 2013, Bugesera District, Eastern Province, Rwanda

Mr. Willy Mugenzi, is the Regional Communications Officer of GWP Eastern Africa. He emphasized that improved communications and information dissemination concerning water issues will better enable local communities and policy-makers to preserve their water resources, especially in the face of climate change. He also led two different sessions, both of which revolved around communication. One of his presentations was titled, **“Why Climate Change and Water Issues are Important for Media?”** The focus on his presentation aimed at responding to the overall thematic question: **what is the Role of Communication in Promoting Water Security and Climate Resilience?.** It was through this presentation that Mr. Mugenzi helped participants understand why water news matters for the media. He demonstrated how water is necessary for people, food, nature and industry, thus it is important for all aspects of human life and well-being.



Extracted from GWP Key documents as used by GWP Eastern Africa Communications (2013)

Therefore, it is an essential topic to be covered by the media. Through this presentation he also reminded the media that they are able to act as an early warning system for their communities by bringing awareness to water and climate issues such as erratic floods, drought, and deadly winds. Due to media's focus on political stories, such issues of public interest and concern rarely cross to the editor's desk thus get scarcely published and broadcast by newspapers, broadcast media in Rwanda and Burundi.

Expounding on why climate change and water issues are newsworthy, the trained outlined the following points:

- Struggle for continuity of humanity vs vulnerability over climate change;
- Climate change as today's critical development challenge—influencing international development discourse;
- Water based-conflicts in water scarce regions for instance the recent Egypt vs Ethiopia verbal exchanges over the waters of River Nile and Renaissance Dam (Ethiopia);
- Media's attention to unusual occurrences: ice caps of mountain caps slowly pilling off, extreme water disasters (floods), reducing waters in water catchments (in drier regions), temperate rises, water-based migrations and conflicts.
- Media's social responsibility—informing & educating societies about happenings
- Most importantly, media's unique role of preventing disasters through early warning investigative signals (reports) about climate change and its impacts.

However, there is more to the above—media need to continually ask the right questions relating to consequences to causes/effects of Climate Change, drivers; presenting hard evidences from science reports in an simple and plain language for ordinary citizens to understand. This cannot be achieved unless journalism practitioners develop specialization and interests in the water world and climate change issues. Right questions will not be asked, right information will hardly be delivered at the right time to the right audience with apparent disinterest and neglect of water issues and effects of climate change by the news media.

The second presentation was titled, **“Draft WACDEP Communication Strategy.”** This presentation outlined the current draft of communication strategy to be used by WACDEP in East Africa: elaboration process, rationale, SWOT Analysis, strategy objectives and outcomes, targeted audiences, tools, and action plan as well as feedback mechanism. Participants recommended considering local and national context and building the existing cultural and linguistic values and similarities while implementing the WACDEP Communication Strategy.

Emphasis was drawn on the importance of effective communication of WACDEP—creation of awareness, stimulating change in attitude, sharing of best and success stories and sustaining them for the posterity of citizens living around lake Cyohoha and beyond. This presentation helped participants familiarize themselves with potential strategies for their own work.



GWP Eastern Africa Communications Officer in discussion with participants 22 August 2013, Bugesera, Eastern Province, Rwanda

5. Participants

There were a total of 30 participants from the communications and media sectors of Burundi and Rwanda. Journalists from radio, web, newspaper, and television sectors of both countries were present to ensure all media avenues were represented. This creates more active and unified media participation concerning WACDEP in Eastern Africa.

It was important to include participants specifically media and communication practitioners from both Burundi and Rwanda as the issues concerning Lake Cyohoha are transboundary in nature and need active involvement of the media for awareness-raising, stimulating change in practices and attitudes that are not friendly to water security and climate resilience.

It is important that the messages shared through this training are disseminated throughout both countries. The sharing of information on both sides of the lake will enable people on either side to know how to better preserve, protect and manage their water resources for a future of sustainability.



*Journalists and Communications after a study fieldtrip around Lake Cyohoha 21st
August 2013, Bugesera, Eastern Province, Rwanda*

6. Methodology

The training was conducted through a variety of methods. A documentary film was shown in order to familiarize participants with climate change and its interactions with water, climate change effects and strategies for mitigation. Each trainer used PowerPoint presentations during their sessions in order to captivate participants with pictures, graphs, and charts.



The PowerPoint presentations also simplified the more complicated messages so that participants could easily follow along with the speakers, making the knowledge more accessible.



The highlight of the workshop was a fieldtrip to the Rwandan side of Lake Cyohoha. This field trip was led by Jean de Dieu Munyengeza Executive Secretary of the Kamabuye Sector, Bugesera District in Rwanda. He took participants to the lake where they were able to see first-hand the differences in terms of best case and worst case scenarios around Lake Cyohoha. Participants were able to interview local community members, including farmers, about their concerns and hopes for the lake. Local interviews also allowed the participants to gain a more complete understanding of the lake as well as some of the more pressing water issues in the region. Mr. Munyengeza shared his experience with the political side of environmental reform for the lake region.

The fieldtrip provided participants with exposure and gave them material for their first

Interviewing resident 22nd Aug, 2013

stories about WACDEP and Lake Cyohoha. Finally, ample time was given for questions and answers. This ensured that all participants fully understood all of the sessions and what each of the trainers shared throughout the presentations. It also provided a platform for dialogue amongst participants and trainers about climate change, regional politics, IWRM and WACDEP in Eastern Africa.



Reporters interviewing a water-user in Kamabuye Sector, Bugesera District, Eastern Province, Rwanda

7. Accomplishments/Outcomes

The most significant accomplishment of this training was an increased awareness and understanding of the WACDED, its objectives expected outcomes, stakeholders and their roles in its successful implementation. Reporters expressed commitment to further cooperate with GWP Eastern Africa in seeking out information and reporting about WACDEP activities.

Media practitioners and communication officers understood key concepts: water security, climate change, climate adaptation, climate resilience Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Approach and it can be applied in climate change mitigation.

Relating to WACDEP Communication Strategy, participants provided insightful inputs to the WACDEP Communication strategy by emphasizing the need for building on the existing linguistic assets between Rwanda and Burundi and use of community radio stations and meetings;

Participants were enthusiastic about what they learned, and expressed how they formerly never shared water and climate related information with the public through their various broadcast and publications.

At the end of the training, each participant broadcast via radio and published stories (print and online) from the training and fieldtrip. This way, the public was informed about what took place and some reporters reported having received citizen feedback through SMS reacting on the broadcast stories through community radio stations.

Importantly, the media and communication practitioners formed a network aimed at sharing information and knowledge. The network will enable exchange of knowledge products, press information packs between GWP Eastern and the news media. Through such network, coordination and monitoring of activities between media and communication practitioners (see photo below) will be faster and effective. The last two points expressly demonstrated the commitment of the news media and communication practitioners towards the sustainable management of Lake Cyohoha



Elected Committee of Media Network led by Jean Bicomumpaka, 22nd Aug 2013

8. Feedback

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. All participants reported that they were grateful they attended the training and that they learned valuable information that they think is important to spread throughout their communities and region.

In the words of Daniel MULISA, representing the Ministry of Infrastructure in Rwanda, “Awareness is created [through this workshop] between the members of the two countries. Everyone learned their shortcomings and will move forward...it [the training] will create a big impact because everyone here is a writer so everyone will write and write and more awareness will be created. And, if we write the articles many lives will be changed as a result of environmental protection.”

Diane UWIMANA of Burundi said the training established a foundation for a “dynamic network.” She also said that it was “important to see the project implemented [Rwanda’s environmental protection policies along the lake],” because it “inspires journalists to go to the field to report.”

Cyprian NZAYISABA said, “this workshop has contributed too much to all [participants]. It is necessary and important knowledge that can help the people to be integrated into this program. It was also an opportunity for journalists to build new friendships among participants, such that I can say that this will be the future of such good things like two countries who can work together to protect the environment. I appreciate the effort of the government and local government in Rwanda. The side of Rwanda proves the potential [the lake has for improvement]. It encourages leaders on the other side to cooperate [for the protection of the lake].”

Jeanne UMUHOZA responded to the training by saying, “It is very interesting. It helped us to compare the countries about environmental protection and water resources management... Burundi participants are dedicated to create change because if there s no change, there will be bad impacts on their side. There can be more effort by government and policy makers.”

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion this training was a great success. It demonstrates the potential for active media and communications involvement in promoting WACDEP in Rwanda and Burundi. It Demonstrated the role of communicators and reporters in promoting water security and climate resilience—if effectively engaged and trained to get requisite knowledge and skills.

The media and communication sectors expressed a great interest in accessing and spreading water and climate change stories throughout the region for the improvement of Lake Cyohoha.

It was recommended use of catchy and practical methods such as documentaries, imagery presentations was commendable way to keep trainees engaged and interested.

Emphasis on use of field visits and enabling journalists get a practical exposure on issues of water security and climate security was complementary and commendable way for understanding of the intricate issues, concepts and practices around Lake Cyohoha.

Thus, participants recommended that future trainings have a similar field trip component and continuously involve media in WACDEP activities.

The created Media network sought for more close collaboration and support from GWP Eastern Africa through active sharing of information, trainings and knowledge products.

**Report compiled by GWP Eastern Africa Communications
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