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AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP



Photo Credit: CI

Global Health Linkages to Biodiversity Conservation: Fresh Water Conservation - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Building African capacity to conserve freshwater biodiversity resources while improving human well-being through an integrated conservation and development approach.

CONTEXT

Sub-Saharan Africa is under increasing pressure from population growth, urbanization, and consumption, as well as poorly-planned infrastructure development. These factors negatively impact freshwater biodiversity, and the quality and availability of freshwater resources. Climate change further contributes to water stress across Africa.

Effective biodiversity conservation requires empowering local communities and authorities to address the root causes of human-induced pressures including limited community access to water resources and poor resource governance.

OVERVIEW

By linking freshwater conservation and WASH, the **Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG)** through its thematic working group, **Global Health Linkages to Biodiversity Conservation**, aims to reduce watershed degradation and pollution, thereby improving the health of freshwater ecosystems. In support of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Biodiversity Policy, this task will ensure proactive engagement of diverse, local community actors in development activities in order to mitigate impacts and provide compensation for biodiversity loss to deliver positive conservation outcomes.

Building on successful examples from ABCG's previous programmatic phase, Conservation International (CI) and

The **Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group** is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to advance understanding of critical conservation challenges and their solutions in sub Saharan Africa.

The Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) are conducting pilot projects in South Africa and Uganda to examine the effectiveness of implementing integrated development and conservation projects from a freshwater ecosystems perspective, and provide tangible examples of proactive engagements. This learning will be shared through the creation of a Nairobi-based community of practice to build capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa, led by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and supported by CI, for advancing integrated freshwater conservation and WASH projects.

South Africa

Conservation South Africa, a local affiliate of CI, with technical assistance from CI, is piloting Freshwater-WASH integration tools in the Alfred Nzo District of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. This area forms the headwaters of the Mzimvubu River, South Africa's last free-flowing river, which supplies water to over one million people. In this region, community volunteers trained in water quality monitoring promote awareness of how to protect water sources and improve sanitation practices. Local community members have also been engaged to protect and restore freshwater springs and understand how livestock grazing practices are impacting their sources of water for household use. Preserving freshwater ecosystems not only maintains water quality, but also works to improve human and ecosystem health.



Pupils at Karongo Primary School in Uganda washing their hands at the newly installed water tank in their school. Photo Credit: JGI



Teachers demonstrating the use of a tip tap after the ABCG – WASH training. Photo Credit: JGI

Uganda

JGI is piloting WASH activities in local villages in the Albertine rift region of Hoima and Masindi Districts, also known as the Budongo-Bugoma Corridor- a region with chimpanzee habitat. JGI works with the Hoima and Masindi district councils, local institutions, and schools to reach young people with awareness raising and education campaigns on water conservation and improved sanitation, in addition to renovating protected streams and constructing community rain water harvest points in schools. Access to potable water and increased hygiene awareness reduces illness and death from disease, leading to improved health, poverty reduction and socio-economic development. Getting the entire community and the government directly involved in these projects ensures that communities and the ecosystems in which they live in continue to be vibrant and healthy.

Community of Practice

The focus of this in-person and virtual community supported by an online platform is to share practical, front line, on-the-job experiences and the applicability of implementation and M&E tools. By developing a collective 'know-how' among practitioners in the field, knowledge sharing will improve and will better inform integrated approaches to freshwater conservation and WASH.

For more information about ABCG, please visit www.abcg.org

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