



Environment Program Highlights

October 2014

Volume 2



August 2014: Steve Collins, RESILIM Biodiversity Activities Manager, and the Botswana Department of Water Affairs successfully test the production of charcoal briquettes from dried water hyacinth

In this Issue:

- Managing Aquatic Alien Invasive Species 1
- RESILIM: Empowering Women, Conserving Nature 2
- SAREP Transforming Lives in Angola With Devil's Claw 2
- Stepping Up to Sustainability: Joining the Worldwide People's March on Climate Change 3
- Featuring AWARD: Building Resilience in the Oliphants Catchment Area 3

MANAGING AQUATIC ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

Water hyacinth is an invasive aquatic plant that has been identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as one of the top 10 most destructive invasive plants in the world. Water hyacinth is common in rivers, wetlands and lakes in the Limpopo River Basin along the borders of South Africa and Botswana. This poses significant threat to biodiversity, fisheries, hydropower generation and recreation in the basin. In Botswana, communities have resorted to removing the water hyacinth manually in order to gain access to the water for their livelihoods and household use.

In August 2014, the Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin Program (RESILIM), in partnership with the Botswana Department of Water Affairs, successfully tested the concept of using this highly invasive alien species as a source of biomass for charcoal production. This could result in deforestation reduction by providing an alternative to wood charcoal, improved flow in the basin, community control of the highly invasive species, and diversification of livelihoods. The next phase will focus on social economic feasibility studies. This concept is attracting much interest across the sub-region.



Environment Program Highlights

SAREP Continues Transforming Lives in Angola with Devil's Claw



A Devil's Claw harvester with her produce at Cuando-Cubango in Angola

In its quest to promote rural conservation based livelihoods and transform lives, the Southern Africa Regional Environment Program (SAREP) has continued supporting communities in the Cuando-Cubango province of Angola with sustainable harvesting of Devil's Claw. SAREP has partnered with communities to identify plants, teaching how to harvest, cutting/slicing, drying and storing. SAREP and Angolan-partner Association of Environment, Conservation and Rural Development (ACADIR) supports these communities for the ultimate goals of sustainable livelihood and a healthy environment to live in.

In the last quarter, one hundred and thirty six Devil's Claw harvesters were able to sell 5,162 kilograms of processed Devil's Claw earning them in excess of USD 12,000. This is a significant achievement, particularly with the challenges faced in transporting devil's claw to nearby markets.

RESILIM: Empowering Women, Conserving Nature

The Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin (RESILIM) project in partnership with the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS) of Botswana has continued its efforts to build the resilience of communities in Botswana to the adverse impacts of climate change. With the aim to diversify livelihoods, RESILIM is working to build the capacity of the Kgesti Ya Tsie (KYT) community Trust to increase the quality and quantity of marula oil production to international standards.

RESILIM has provided various forms of support including exchange visits to a successful community-based marula program in Swaziland, applied learning in safety and hygienic oil processing and purchase of an oil purifying centrifuge machine. The centrifuge provides the KYT group an opportunity to produce high quality oil and is a significant improvement from the traditionally used methods of oil production.

The handover ceremony for the centrifuge, which took place on the 10th of July 2014, was attended by Botswana's Minister of Trade and Industry, Honorable Dorcas Makgato-Malesu who commended the initiative not only as a good opportunity for trade in the region, but also a means for the community to derive benefit from their natural resources.

RESILIM is expected to meet with the KYT group, the Kalahari Conservation Society, the Botswana Department of Forestry and Range Resources (DFRR) and other partners during the month of October 2014 to address challenges and upscale lessons learned.

This initiative is not only addressing the issue of sustainable natural resource management, but also contributing towards the resilience of communities through diversification of livelihoods.



KYT Women demonstrating Oil Purification Process



Honorable Minister Dorcas Makgato-Malesu with USAID Charge D'Affairs, Michael Murphy

More Environment News: Transforming Lives

Introducing Solar to Africa's Lesotho Highlands. See links below:

<http://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories/introducing-solar-technology-rural-communities-lesotho-highlands>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/robz0g8f7nmwmo8/USAID%20Capturing%20the%20Stories.mp4?dl=0>

Stepping Up to Sustainability: Joining the Worldwide People's Climate March

The 21st of September 2014 saw one of the largest mobilizations the World has ever seen on Climate Change. The march, organized by AVAAZ (meaning voice), a global web movement, aimed at showing solidarity for the urgent attention required to help safeguard the planet from the adverse effects of climate change and global warming, and to demand greater action from world leaders.

In Howick, South Africa, the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) made a significant contribution with the "Stepping Up to Sustainability" project prominently on display. The project made its mark by displaying an array of climate change awareness material and showcasing sustainability technology in addition to its Sustain –ED training courses.

The "Stepping Up to Sustainability" project in South Africa is a nationwide, climate change adaptation project that WESSA is undertaking in partnership with USAID to offer participants the chance to explore and try out "change choice practices" for sustainable lifestyle choices. Supported by social media technologies, these choices give impetus to a programme of sustainability practices, innovation and the sharing of sustainability stories.



A group standing at the WESSA Stand during the Worldwide People's Climate March in Howick, South Africa

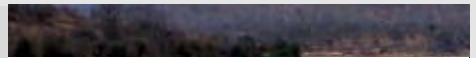
The march in Howick added its voice for a clean future to global marches in Istanbul, Manila, Cape Town, Majuro and Papua New Guinea, concerts in Johannesburg and rallies in Lisbon and New Delhi.

Featuring AWARD: Building Resilience in the Oliphants Catchment Area

The Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), in partnership with USAID, is working to improve water scarcity and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the Oliphants catchment area. AWARD has taken on an innovative "systems thinking" approach to understanding relationships within the catchment with an aim to apply "social learning" in order to collectively transform current unsustainable practices.

AWARD's focus this last quarter has been on understanding the socio-ecological challenges of the Oliphants Catchment, and gathering evidence through research and widely asking three questions: "What is happening here?", "How has this come to be and why?" and "What can we do to change?" To unpack these issues, AWARD has highlighted the "Selati spill" story to show how focusing on significant stories can help understand the complexities of operating in the Oliphants Catchment.

On 31st December 2013, Bosveld Phosphate (BP) private industry spilled significant amounts of contaminated water into the Selati River, near the Kruger National Park of South Africa. AWARD intends to use this and other such occurrences to understand the principles of resilience and consciously address the need to build communication systems, management feedback loops and monitoring networks.



Contaminated water in the Selati River, near Kruger National Park in South Africa



The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. In Southern Africa, the United States seeks to increase trade and strengthen economic ties within the region, address the HIV/AIDS crisis, mitigate recurrent food insecurity, and strengthen democracy to reduce the risk of conflict in the region. USAID/Southern Africa, located in Pretoria, South Africa, complements and enhances USAID's bilateral programs in the region, supporting unique and innovative regional activities and providing a range of services to assist USAID missions in the region.

USAID/SA, P.O. Box 43, Pretoria, 0027. Tel: 27 (012) 452 2000, Fax: 27 (012) 460 3177

For more information about USAID/Southern Africa Environmental projects, please go to: <http://www.usaid.gov/southern-africa-regional>