

COMMUNITY EVOLVED MODEL FOR RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF A DYING WATER SOURCE

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Introduction

River Bukoola found in the semi-arid Rakai District in the south-western part of Uganda is approximately 70 kilometres long - joining two water bodies: Lakes Kijanebalora and Victoria. All along its course, R. Bukoola has for decades served a significant role to the local population as:

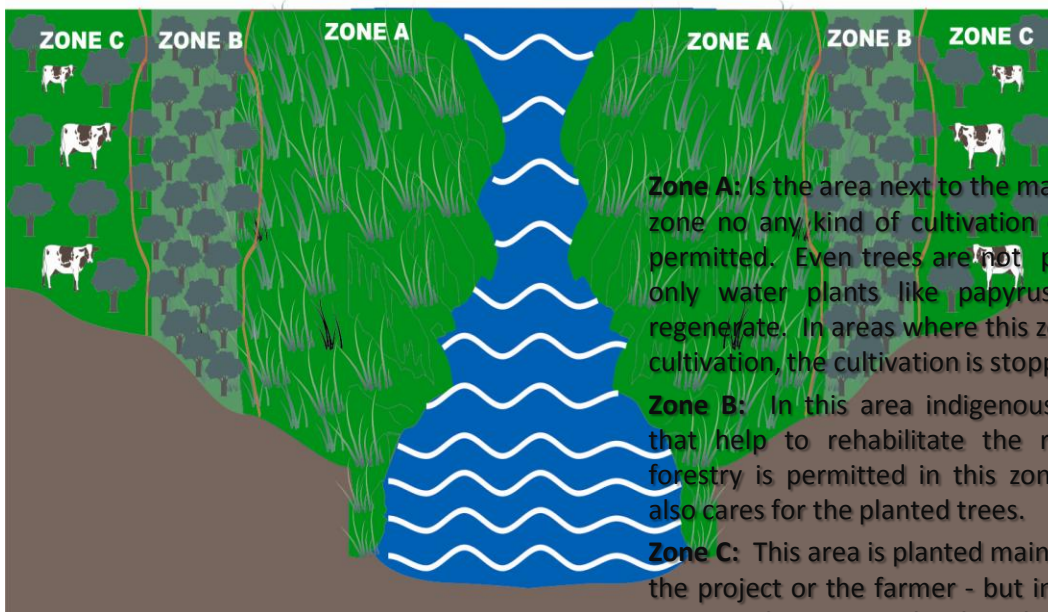
- Source of Water for animals
- Sources of Water for Off-season agriculture
- Source of Water for Human Consumption

•Stands as key feature in aiding local population adaptation to Climate Change:

However, over last five years the water levels of the river drastically dwindled due to effects of climate change coupled with indiscriminate destruction of its banks through tree cutting, uncontrolled grazing and river bank gardening, exposing the population and their animals to extreme vulnerability and threatened livelihoods.

Community Response

Facilitated by Nature Palace Foundation, the community has developed an integrated water conservation and management model that involves river-bank restoration, water governance through water management committees and a wider watershed management plan. The community-evolved ecosystem rehabilitation model that divides the river ecosystem on either side of the river into 3 zones and stipulates interventions in each of the zones, aimed at restoring the river ecosystem and its water catchments while addressing other key community needs i.e. access to water and food while promoting resilience to climate change.



Zone A: Is the area next to the main river flow: In this zone no any kind of cultivation or animal rearing is permitted. Even trees are not planted in this zone; only water plants like papyrus will be aided to regenerate. In areas where this zone is already under cultivation, the cultivation is stopped.

Zone B: In this area indigenous trees are planted, that help to rehabilitate the river banks. Agroforestry is permitted in this zone while the farmer also cares for the planted trees.

Zone C: This area is planted mainly with fruit trees by the project or the farmer - but in each case the fruit trees are for the benefit of the farmer's household, to increase the economic gains while contributing to food security.

Results /Conclusion:

The short term gains have been increased water levels . Socio-economic activities like fishing *clarius* in shallow swamps have also resumed. The longer-term outcomes, however, are expected to be a total restoration and sustainable management of the Water-shade and river eco-system while addressing key community needs i.e. access to water and Food while promoting resilience to Climate Change.