



Stories of change

Mainstreaming biodiversity and development



UNEP



WCMC



Getting biodiversity concerns into the policies and plans of government ministries and private sector companies is a goal that can take many years to achieve. Huge amounts of energy and determination are needed to bring the right people together. These stories highlight where this has been done and a change is starting to be seen.

The stories come from five of the member countries in the African Leadership Group of the NBSAPs 2.0 Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Development project, facilitated by IIED and UNEP-WCMC, led by Steve Bass. They are based on interviews conducted by Rosalind Goodrich and Emily Benson from IIED.

We would like to thank everyone involved in putting the stories together, particularly staff and consultants from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Namibia; the National Environment Management Authority and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Uganda; Department of Environmental Affairs in Malawi; Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate in Zimbabwe; and the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

Do you have a story of change you would like to share? Do let us know by getting in touch with Dilys Roe (dilys.roe@iied.org) or John Tayleur (john.tayleur@unep-wcmc.org).

For more information and outputs relating to the NBSAPs 2.0 project:

www.iied.org/nbsaps

Contents

Introduction	2
Seeds of change: Lilongwe City Council recognises the value of urban nature	4
Encouraging collaboration: drafting a new law to stop biopiracy in Namibia	8
Mining for common ground: putting biodiversity on the agenda of mining companies in South Africa	12
Getting to know you: stronger relationships contribute to better biodiversity development mainstreaming	16
Biodiversity stories: building understanding in the media leads to richer reporting	20
Photography credits	24



Introduction

From 2012 to 2015 IIED and UNEP-WCMC worked with four African countries – Namibia, Botswana, Seychelles and Uganda – as they revised their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

The reason? To provide technical support and capacity development in biodiversity mainstreaming. We wanted to help them develop resilient and effective NBSAPs that communicated the importance of biodiversity to key development sectors and to poverty reduction. The plans needed to make a compelling argument for conservation, influence development decisions and have the potential to improve outcomes for biodiversity and poverty.





Along the way, other countries became interested in the initiative. South Africa, Malawi and Zimbabwe joined our group of African leaders seeking to include development concerns in biodiversity policy and planning – and vice versa. Representatives from these countries met together at regular project workshops and reported not just on how their NBSAPs were progressing but also on other evidence of how biodiversity was being incorporated into decision making at different levels of society.

Working with journalists, the private sector, and with government, these countries have started to make real strides in ensuring that biodiversity is mainstreamed across government and society – a key objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The stories of this progress – 'stories of change' – are described in this booklet. They aren't revolutionary but they tell us about small, everyday changes with the potential to turn into something big. They are intended to inspire and encourage others to look for their own stories of change that can make a difference to how biodiversity is valued, used and protected.

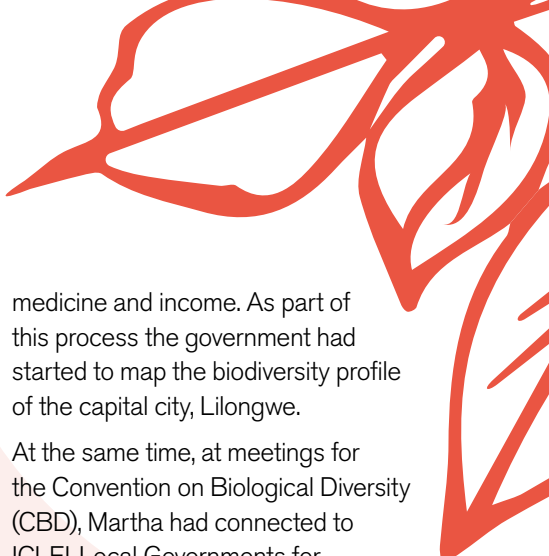


Seeds of change: Lilongwe City Council recognises the value of urban nature

Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi, is known as the Garden City by its residents. Forests, savannah woodlands and botanical gardens break up the urban space and give a home to diverse species. But in recent years these green retreats have been at risk. New developments have been built on river buffer zones, protected parkland has been bought for private developments, and new housing plans have been made with no provision for green or public space.

Now, thanks to the persistence of a small group of champions, and the support of international partners, Lilongwe City Council has been developing an action plan to integrate biodiversity into its planning decisions.





Martha Kalemba, an environmental officer at Malawi's Department of Environmental Affairs, first became interested in biodiversity while studying at university. Inspired by stories of how other capital cities as diverse as Tokyo and Manila were restoring nature, Martha's thesis investigated how lower income countries could integrate biodiversity into the planning process and she used Lilongwe as her case study.

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and Lilongwe is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa. Ever since the first Urban Master Plan (1968), Lilongwe City Council has earmarked space for afforestation and conservation but as the population has expanded, new settlements have started to encroach into protected areas, forests have been depleted as people have sought fuel for cooking and heating, and freshwater sources have been polluted.

A turning point

Martha recalls that the issue of biodiversity hit the national agenda for two reasons. The first was that the government had recently begun to revise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which underscored the economic as well as social benefits of biodiversity to Malawians via food, shelter,

medicine and income. As part of this process the government had started to map the biodiversity profile of the capital city, Lilongwe.

At the same time, at meetings for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Martha had connected to ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability's Cities Biodiversity Centre, which was working with 21 local governments to improve ecosystem management as part of its Local Action for Biodiversity programme. Lilongwe was awarded a place on ICLEI's programme as a pilot project.

Taking action

With ICLEI's support, the city council decided to develop an in-depth biodiversity report for Lilongwe that would assess the status of its ecosystems, including wetlands, parks and planted forests, as well as the institutional arrangements in government for protecting the city's natural assets.

As a signal of its commitment to the process, the government seconded two national staff members to Lilongwe City Council to share their experiences of developing the national strategy.

The first step was to put together a task force of different departments to explore



the role of biodiversity in different aspects of urban life. The task force included departmental staff from fisheries, wildlife and parks, national herbarium, forestry, and local officials from urban planning, information, finance, trade, and from recreation, as well as local NGOs.

Monipher Musasa, also based with the Department of Environmental Affairs, recalls that few local government officials had heard of the term biodiversity or considered it as an issue for their programmes of work. By exploring the different services that ecosystems provided the city, local officials began to see the economic as well as environmental benefits of biodiversity. Staff working with the water and electricity boards described how their budgets were going towards the clearance of invasive species, while representatives at the Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism shared their experiences of how the city's precious parks and nature reserves were under threat from development. *"For the first time officials began to see the relevance of biodiversity to their programmes of work and activity"* comments Monipher.

The city council published its biodiversity report in 2013. It provides a

comprehensive overview of the role and value that biodiversity plays in the city, and as a result the task force has gone on to develop an action plan for the city. Soon to be completed, the plan is a practical roadmap for integrating biodiversity issues into all planning processes. This will restore the city's precious natural reserves as a means of delivering on broader developmental aims.

Seeds of change

For Martha Kalemba the big step forward is the fact that city-level officials are taking ownership of parts of the action plan and have started to collaborate with other government departments. *"The participatory process of developing the action plan created awareness in city officials not working directly in biodiversity management,"* she says. This is a marked change from two years ago when the term 'biodiversity' was still unfamiliar to many of them.

For Tiyamike Malija, a desk officer at the city council, the process has already made an impact: *"All along people have been applying to have these [protected] plots for construction, but recently a decision has been made to turn these areas into parks."* She describes how



the city council has also decided to scale up the afforestation programme which takes place every rainy season.

Looking ahead

With ICLEI's support, the task team has learned some important lessons along the way. For example, representatives from key sectors, such as health and education, were not present at the first meeting and as a result it has proved difficult to engage them. The team has also learnt that rather than host meetings at the city council buildings, which has allowed officials to drop in and out of the meetings, in future they would hope to host them at other departments to ensure that members participate in the whole meeting.

Putting the action plan into motion will require funds and commitment from across the government admits Monipher Musasa, and so the task ahead is still daunting given the number of other challenges that the country is facing. However, the experience so far has begun to convince the city council that biodiversity is not merely a rural and remote issue but one that is central to the urban context.

Interviews

Martha Kalemba, *environmental officer, Department of Environmental Affairs, Malawi*

Monipher Musasa, *environmental officer, Department of Environmental Affairs, Malawi*

André Mader, *biodiversity strategy Coordinator, Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) ICLEI*

Tiyamike Malija, *desk officer, Lilongwe City Council*



Resources

National Biodiversity and Action Plan, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Resources, Malawi Government (2006) <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mw/mw-nbsap-01-en.pdf>

City of Lilongwe Biodiversity Plan (2013) <http://www.cbc.iclei.org/Content/Docs/LLC%20BIODIVERSITY%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf>

Encouraging collaboration: drafting a new law to stop biopiracy in Namibia

Communities and indigenous groups have worked with departments from across the Namibian government to understand the value of their country's biodiversity, shaping a national bill to protect genetic resources and the ecosystems in which they live.





Biopiracy has been a serious problem for Namibia. According to Lazarus Kairabeb, secretary general of the Nama Traditional Leaders Association, the lack of legitimate opportunities for communities has allowed the phenomenon to thrive. Marula oil and the hoodia plant, for example, are lucrative commodities internationally, yet neither Namibia nor its communities have benefited from their sale.

“We have had corporations from the developed world claiming ownership of our genetic resources and traditional knowledge,” Lazarus says, “and it has been made easier by a kind of symbiotic relationship between some sections of the community and the biopirates.”

Tensions, disaffection and illegal use by local people have been seen in communities, he thinks, because of the pressures of poverty and the lack of any kind of regulation requiring private companies to compensate the communities, or even recognise them as stakeholders in the international business.

Talking about benefit sharing

In a bid to tackle this, the Namibian government set up an Interim Bioprospecting Committee in 2007 to discuss benefit sharing and genetic resources with different organisations and local communities. Departments

from across government, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministries of Justice and Education, plus the University of Namibia and representatives from the private sector and nongovernmental organisations were on the committee, chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The first step was to draft an indigenous local community strategy on access to benefit sharing with the aim of local communities having a say on what resources could be shared and how. If for example, an international buyer or their representative wanted to harvest marula oil or Devil’s claw (used to treat osteoarthritis), it was proposed that they should sign a contractual agreement before extracting the resource.

In 2011, Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah, Minister of Environment and Tourism at the time, injected new energy into the government-wide process to base these principles in law. Her revised bill reflected the objectives set out in the 2010 Nagoya Protocol (Namibia had played a key role in its negotiation). Participants ranging from government institutions to the police and home affairs departments and traditional authorities, were brought together to understand the implications of biopiracy at national and local levels and contribute to the bill’s content.



Cooperation between institutions was strong, says Ndapanda Kanime, chief conservation scientist in the Department of Environmental Affairs. She thinks the situation was helped by the existing structure of topical cross-department steering committees – the Interim Bioprospecting Committee being one of them – which had already fostered a spirit of collaboration. Committee members were willing to share information and play a part in discussions and felt responsible for going back to their ministries to update colleagues on progress. As with all steering committees, this one met quarterly, but people were prepared to come together more frequently if needed.

At the same time, the environment ministry team went out into villages and local communities to consult with traditional leaders and chiefs and gather their views on what the bill should contain, encouraging buy-in to the political process. In a complex logistical exercise to make sure that participants from Namibia's 14 regions could attend, five regional meetings as far apart as Caprivi and Karas were held between June and

August 2011, with a national workshop to present the final bill in February 2012.

Recognising biodiversity's role

Decision makers at all levels are beginning to recognise the role and value of biodiversity in the culture and economy of the country. A 2012 UNEP report clarified that legal biotrade contributed around 4.5 per cent to Namibian GDP and was particularly important for the country's poverty reduction efforts in rural areas, providing harvesters and other 'resource stewards' received a greater share of the retail value of the resources being traded.

The proposed law states that any person who wants to conduct research, commercialise or add value to any genetic resource, including a genetic resource associated with traditional knowledge must first gain a permit from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. It also makes clear that external actors must obtain a letter of consent from a local leader to research or export a natural product. Lazarus Kairabeb points out that to insist that international corporations



do this traditional leaders will need the support of strong local institutions – such as well-resourced conservancy committees. He welcomes the fact however, that national government consulted outside its own four walls and believes this is an ongoing learning process.

Since 2012, staff from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism have engaged parliamentarians in both upper and lower houses to explain the significance of the bill. Despite members of parliament changing over that time, many people are now briefed about the potential for biotrade and the negative effects of biopiracy.

In early 2015 the Cabinet Committee on Legislation certified the bill, having checked with the Office of the Attorney General that it was consistent with the Namibian Constitution. The change of government in March 2015 delayed the process a little but the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is hopeful that the bill will obtain presidential approval early in the 2015-16 financial year. Meanwhile the Interim Bioprospecting Committee is providing guidance on

regulations needed to support the bill once it becomes law, including deciding which institutions need to be involved in its enforcement.

Interviews

Ndapanda Kanime, *chief conservation scientist in the Department of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), responsible for biodiversity and sustainable land management.*

Elize Shakalela, *environmental legal officer and acting biodiversity management and climate change project coordinator, MET*

Lazarus Kairabeb, *secretary general of the Nama Traditional Leaders Association*

Jonas Nghishidi, *former project coordinator for biodiversity management and climate change*

Resources

UNEP (2012) Green Economy Sectoral Study: Biotrade – a catalyst for transitioning to a green economy in Namibia. <http://www.iecn-namibia.com/green-economy/>

Mining for common ground: putting biodiversity on the agenda of mining companies in South Africa

In 2011 the Vele Colliery — a large open-cast mine in South Africa — hit the national headlines. Civil society groups accused the mining company of damaging the environment near the Mapungubwe National Park, while the mining company argued that its operations were in line with the law. The mine was closed temporarily for non-compliance with environmental regulations but reopened after lengthy discussions between the main parties.

Controversies such as this had become familiar in South Africa until civil society groups, mining companies and the government took the initiative to find common ground. Together they drafted a set of guidelines to help mining companies understand the status of and risks to biodiversity, and the opportunities for using a biodiverse environment sustainably in their operational context. The process of defining shared principles across different interest groups has laid the foundation for change.





South Africa is the third most biodiverse country in the world. From wetlands and grasslands to coastlines and forestland, the country contains 10 per cent of all plant species on Earth and is home to rare species, big and small.

South Africa is also a mine for the world, producing metals ranging from platinum required for our catalytic converters and chemotherapy drugs, to kyanite for bricks and mortar, rutile used to protect our skin from ultra-violet (UV) light, and coal. The mining industry employs more than 500,000 people, and has been central to the country's economic development.

Laying the ground for change

Stephen Holness, a consultant working with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), helped to facilitate the guidelines. He describes how – surprisingly – it was the mining sector that initiated the idea rather than government environment or mining departments. Mining companies were encountering too many risks to their business operations and company reputations, and while there is a wealth of information about the country's biodiversity, much of it is fragmented or too complex to understand. The sheer volume of data makes it difficult to know what is important without

doing detailed and expensive studies. Industry representatives recognised that they needed some practical guidance on how to use all this information to help them manage the environmental approval process better and reduce their impact on the environment.

The South African Mining and Biodiversity Forum brought together industry, civil society, government and academic representatives to discuss how to generate a set of guidelines. Patti Wickens, environmental principle at DeBeers who chairs the forum, recalls the atmosphere at the early meetings as different interest groups met:

"The mining industry was nervous.

They were worried about meeting NGOs and even the government for fear that it would lead to mines being shut down or operations being slowed."

Crossing the language divide

Unlike past efforts to mainstream environmental issues into private sector practices, the Mining and Biodiversity Forum decided against a legislative or regulatory approach. Rather, it opted for consensus-based and voluntary guidelines, which incorporated all existing legal requirements.



One of the biggest challenges in drafting the guidelines was developing a common understanding of key terms across all interest groups: *“The ecologist’s definition of a wetland and an engineer’s definition of a wetland are two very different things,”* recalls Stephen Holness. The drafting process took over two years. But it was this painstaking approach that proved important in the long run. Patti Wickens notes that for the first time, biodiversity has been framed in terms of the business risks and opportunities, while technical teams working in the mining houses began to understand the ecological needs of the areas they were working in.

Putting guidelines into practice

The final set of Mining and Biodiversity Guidelines provides the mining sector with a practical, user-friendly manual for integrating biodiversity considerations into the planning processes and managing biodiversity during the operational phases of a mine, from exploration through to closure. It gives direction for where mining-related impacts are legally

prohibited, and where biodiversity priority areas may present high risks for mining projects.

For many people the final product is a symbol of the strengthening relationship between industry and civil society as well as within government. In May 2013 the guidelines were launched jointly at the highest political level by the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs and the Minister of Mineral Resources alongside the Chamber of Mines and SANBI — a collaboration that signals a new attitude among policymakers towards the country’s shared natural assets.

Wilma Lutsch, director of biodiversity conservation at the Department of Environmental Affairs comments that the process has prompted some long lasting change: *“Internally, there is a better understanding between government departments on each other’s roles and responsibilities, as well as the consequences of mandatory operations and impacts and interdependencies.”* New coordination mechanisms have been established to help government departments and the provinces identify



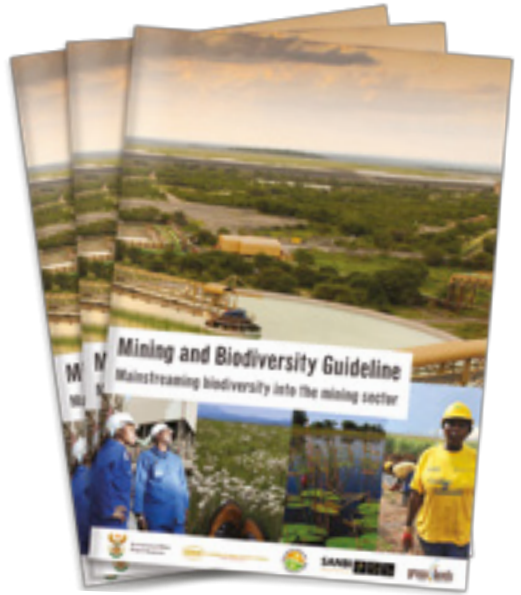
issues of mutual concern. "Through these joint forums, it is expected that industry values will be changed and improvement in industry practice will follow," she adds.

For Stephen Holness and his SANBI colleagues, the most significant achievement has been the shift in language and approach at the strategic level in mining companies. For the first time, the technical departments of big platinum and coal mining houses have started to use spatial, ecosystem level data as they plan their activities. As a signal of the continued practical value of the guidelines, the mining industry supported workshops to train over 500 environmental consultants, industry experts, policymakers and researchers in how to use them.

As the trust between the different interest groups has grown, so other collaborations have emerged including more practical tools for implementing the guidelines and a new approach to biodiversity offsetting in wetlands.

The road ahead

It is still too early to gauge the longer term impact of the Mining and Biodiversity Guidelines. But, by reframing the risks and opportunities of protecting biodiversity in a language that businesses can understand, the foundations for more responsible practices have been laid.



Interviews

Anthea Stephens, *director: Grasslands Programme, SANBI*

Dr Stephen Holness, *consultant, SANBI*

Patti Wickens, *environmental principal, De Beers Group*

Wilma Lutsch, *director: Biodiversity Conservation, Department of Environmental Affairs South African government*



Resources

<http://www.pwc.co.za/en/assets/pdf/sa-mining-2012.pdf>



Getting to know you: stronger relationships contribute to better biodiversity development mainstreaming

Development specialists outside the Ugandan Ministry of Environment have not always considered biodiversity concerns in their policy and planning decisions. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) revision team, including Monique Akullo from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), wanted to change this. They involved a representative from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in the NBSAP revision process and she has passed on her new knowledge to colleagues, encouraging them to undertake training at NEMA.



Angella Rwabutomize is a principal economist working on the Water and Environment Sector desk in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in the Ugandan government. In 2013 she was assigned by the ministry to liaise with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) as it was revising the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

"It started when Monique Akullo from NEMA wrote to the ministry, asking for a technical person to attend an NBSAP meeting," says Angella. "I was interested in natural resource economics, which someone must have known, so I was assigned to go. NEMA pitched a strong business case to me about why it was important to consider biodiversity issues in our development planning in the Ministry of Finance, and they kept in regular contact. I quickly became engaged with what they were doing."



Considering the relevance of biodiversity in development

As liaison person, she attended regular NEMA policy review meetings and NBSAP review and update meetings. In turn, she reported back to colleagues in her department about what NEMA was trying to do and in detail about the critical status of national biodiversity. She met up with most sector representatives in her directorate on a one-to-one basis to discuss how the environment and within that, biodiversity, was relevant to decisions about road building, for example, or tourism, encouraging them to attend the training on offer from NEMA. She made sure that she attended relevant meetings within the ministry to put forward similar messages.

David Okwii, working on the Land, Housing and Urban Development desk in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, took the opportunity to go on a training day at NEMA. *"They took us through environmentally sensitive planning; how we should bear in mind the effect that building a road will have on crops, species and the forest,"* he recalls. *"We were asked to consider mitigating factors to reduce biodiversity loss, even if that meant diverting the route of a road, for instance, away from going straight through a forest."*



At the same time, NEMA linked up its environment experts from other government ministries, agencies, departments and local government with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to provide input and to review any significant reports to check that biodiversity concerns were incorporated. While this was time and labour intensive it was worth it for the awareness it raised around the importance of considering biodiversity.

Building relationships and understanding

Increased mutual understanding about the NBSAP revision process and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development's priorities helped the 2014 National Development Plan II process, including elements of the NBSAP. Accompanying this is a budget for around US\$ 6.2 billion (approximately US\$ 2,500,000) funding for NBSAP activities over the plan's five-year period.

In addition, understanding the importance of biodiversity led to the Ministry of

Finance, Planning and Economic Development increasing NEMA's budget by US\$ 3 billion (US\$ 1,200,000) per year to cater for managing the environmental impacts of oil and gas development in a biodiversity rich area (the Albertine Graben). Oil and gas are key emerging issues in Uganda's NBSAP.

"While we might have got funding from other ministries," says Monique Akullo, "getting funding from the Ministry of Finance links what we are doing to the government budgeting system. This means there's more chance that funding for biodiversity conservation is institutionalised within the system, rather than remaining as one off payments. This makes a big difference since it will improve biodiversity and sectoral policies and better align Uganda's national expenditures with biodiversity and development goals and strategies.

"Aside from the funding, it is easy now to identify environmental and biodiversity activities across sectors and attach a NEMA resource to them – it wasn't like this before because we just didn't know what was going on."



Angella Rwabutomize adds a word of caution: the familiarisation and liaison exercise must be continuous to make sure that the process of using NEMA as a reviewer is followed every time, particularly since staff come and go. Daphne Rutazaana, senior economist working with the Tourism, Trade and Industry desk, adds: *“The training was excellent but one day isn’t enough — I’d like a refresher. And I think more technical people in the sector from the permanent secretary down should be told about the value of mainstreaming biodiversity, so that we can really make progress.”* Angella still has to persuade some colleagues about the benefit of considering biodiversity in development plans.

But overall, she and Monique Akullo are optimistic about the change in attitude among staff in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. They are now willing to consider biodiversity concerns and include them in their planning, and the NEMA staff are beginning to present their case in a way that resonates with both development and biodiversity priorities.

Interviews

Monique Akullo, *National Environment Management Authority, Uganda*

Angella Rwabutomize, *Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Water and Environment)*

Daphne Rutazaana, *Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Tourism)*

David Okwii, *Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Land)*



Resources

<http://www.nemaug.org>

Biodiversity stories: building understanding in the media leads to richer reporting

The number of journalists able to report on biodiversity issues in Zimbabwe has grown significantly thanks to a focused effort by the NBSAP revision committee to build understanding across the media.

Before the beginning of 2013 there were few journalists in Zimbabwe who knew what the term 'biodiversity' really meant. Likewise only a handful knew why policy people should consider the effect on biodiversity of the decisions they made in the name of development. As a result, media reporting on biodiversity issues was infrequent and lacked impact.

In March 2013 things began to change. At a stocktaking workshop in Kadoma organised by Dr Chip Chirara, a member of the NBSAP revision team, participants from across sectors pointed out that communicating biodiversity messages in a concise and understandable way remained a major challenge for the nation's media. The response, three





months later, was a capacity building workshop on biodiversity reporting facilitated by the Biodiversity Office of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate. Journalists from print, radio and TV attended, taking the opportunity to find out about the threats to the country's biodiversity caused by activities such as mining for minerals in national parks and the cutting down of huge swathes of indigenous trees for the tobacco curing process.

Elizabeth Chengeta works for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, reporting on current affairs and local, environmental and social issues for Radio Zimbabwe. She broadcasts in the Shona language *"simplifying issues for the ordinary person across the country."* She attended the workshop. *"Before I was involved my knowledge of biodiversity was zero,"* she says. *"I learnt so much from the event."*

Chipo Masara agrees. A journalist on the independent newspaper *The Standard*, she was one of those who had already reported on how wetlands around Harare were being affected by construction work. *"The workshop cemented what I already knew and made me realise how vital biodiversity was to an area's overall environmental status."*

She noticed that after the workshop in June 2013 the number of environmental stories in print and TV increased. Whereas she had been one of no more than ten people at the most reporting on the environment, now there were around 30. *"I used to think I was really good at what I did"* she says, *"but now I was seeing a better understanding, stories backed up by strong research, journalists attending conferences and showing a real interest."*

Masara herself wrote a column in *The Standard* on environmental and biodiversity topics for three years. The paper appeals to both urban and rural readers, largely from low income groups, and covers a lot of political stories. Masara's column dealt with many contentious issues including the wildlife-based land reform programme and its impact on wildlife conservation and the tourism industry; the shortage of funds for national parks management which has contributed to incidences such as the poisoning of more than 90 elephants by poachers in Hwange National Park; and the switch by many Zimbabweans away from maize growing to tobacco with a resulting increase in deforestation nationwide.



Biodiversity benefits at first-hand

In August 2014 the Chirinda Forest in Chipinge in the Eastern Highlands was the destination for 18 journalists from different media houses, both national and regional, who had suggested the idea for the field trip the year before. Before setting out from Mutare, Steady Kangata from the Environmental Management Agency briefed them on the different components of biodiversity including ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. They then travelled towards Birchenough Bridge, experiencing the vegetation change from evergreen forests to a landscape dominated by acacias and baobab trees.

“They saw at first-hand how local people use the range of natural resources to earn a living,” said Dr Chirara. *“They had debarked the baobab tree for its fibre to make mats for sale by the road. The bark is allowed to grow back and the next time bark is collected it is taken from a different spot to reduce the risk of the tree being harmed. Boiling the fibre with acacia*

pods dyes it black; cream dye is created from the bark of the Forest Natal Mahogany tree.”

Elizabeth Chengeta described how the three-day field trip fired her up to do more on the importance of conserving biodiversity and the environment.

“Chirinda Forest contains the Big Tree (Khaya anthotheca) which is thought to be over 1,000 years old; it has a species of butterfly and the Chirinda toad which are only found in that area. But they are threatened by a growing community cutting down trees to clear spaces for crops,” she said.

When she got back to Harare she was interviewed on current affairs TV. With her newfound understanding she was able to explain what biodiversity was in both Shona and Ndebele and talk about the need to conserve it. Shortly afterwards, she produced her own programme on Radio Zimbabwe called Keep Zimbabwe Clean/Chenesai Zimbabwe/Kayihlanzeke iZimbabwe. Guests on the show, who



included Steady Kangata, Chief Nhema from the Shurugwi community and local people from around Mount Chirinda, touched on everything from litter to pollution, and the need to manage biodiversity and the environment in a sustainable way. Radio Zimbabwe is the most listened to station in the country, having 98 per cent coverage, and Elizabeth Chengeta received plenty of feedback from people asking for more information about how they could live sustainably.

Gaining media momentum

“We wanted journalists to identify with the issues so that they would convert ideas into stories. But biodiversity reporting is not taught at journalism college,” explains Dr Chirara. *“Following the workshop and field trip I think we’re gaining momentum: gone are the days when the media say that reporting on trees and animals is not interesting for readers. They understand why biodiversity is important and how its sustainable use can contribute to people’s*

livelihoods. Now that interest is generated, we can use it as a launching pad for covering other areas, such as water purification and ecosystem services.”

Elizabeth Chengeta has the last word. *“I can foresee Keep Zimbabwe Clean and other coverage changing people’s mind sets. I think we need to go out into communities and stimulate enthusiasm – we’re experienced communicators after all. I want to be part of a society that talks much more about how important biodiversity is to Zimbabwe – if there could be a project to do that I’d support it.”*



Resources

<http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2012/10/21/yet-another-wetland-under-siege/>

<http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2012/09/16/preserve-the-aura-of-mana-pools/>

Photography credits

- Page 2 Aquaculture in Malawi
Flickr/World Fish
- Page 4 Lilongwe — known as
'the Garden City'
Gome Jenda
- Page 6 Butterfly in Lilongwe
Flickr/Robin Cafolla
- Page 7 A Lilongwe market
Flickr/NeilJS
- Page 7 Biodiversity provides economic
and social benefits for many
people *Flickr/LucianF*
- Page 8 Marula oil production
Flickr/CIFOR
- Page 10 Hoodia flower
Flickr/Petr Kosina
- Page 10 Lilac breasted Roller
Flickr/Martin Heigan
- Page 11 The Khwe community in
Kavango East uses traditional
knowledge to heal sickness
with fruits from local trees.
Elize Shakalela
- Page 12 Site discussions to integrate
biodiversity into mine planning
and operations *SANBI*
- Page 14 Randfontein Mine,
Johannesburg
Flickr/Paul Saad
- Page 15 Mining and Biodiversity
Guidelines *SANBI*
- Page 16 Agama lizard
Flickr/Michael Sale
- Page 18 Rainforest replaced
with cultivation
Flickr/Rod Waddington
- Page 18 Giant lobelia
Flickr/James Gaither
- Page 19 Cooking fish heads
Flickr/Rory Mizen
- Page 20 Mana Pools Wildlife
Conservation Area
Flickr/Vince O'Sullivan
- Page 22 Making rope from baobab bark
*Flickr/Bioersity
International/B Vinceti*
- Page 23 Elephants in Hwange
National Park
Flickr/Peter Glenday
- Page 23 Agincourt Mine
Flickr/Kevin Walsh



All the photos in this booklet taken from Flickr have been made available through a creative commons licence: www.creativecommons.org



The production of these stories was supported by the project '*Support to GEF eligible countries for achieving Aichi biodiversity target 17 through a globally guided NBSAPs update process*', funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by UNDP and UNEP.

This booklet was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union.

The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNEP, contributory organisations or editors. The designations employed and the presentations of material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNEP or contributory organisations, editors or publishers concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries or the designation of its name, frontiers or boundaries. The mention of a commercial entity or product in this publication does not imply endorsement by UNEP.

Citation: IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2015)

Stories of change: Mainstreaming biodiversity and development. IIED, London

Published by IIED in July 2015 <http://pubs/iied.org/17305IIED>

ISBN 978-1-78431-230-5

Printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks

Getting biodiversity concerns into the policies and plans of government ministries and private sector companies is a goal that can take many years to achieve. Huge amounts of energy and determination are needed to bring the right people together. These stories highlight where this has been done and a change is starting to be seen.

They cover:

- Working with mining companies
- Working with the media
- Work to draft legislation for tackling biopiracy
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in an urban context
- The importance of building relationships with the right people.

Do you have a story of change you would like to share?

Do let us know by getting in touch with Dilys Roe (dilys.roe@iied.org) or John Tayleur (john.tayleur@unep-wcmc.org).

For more information and outputs relating to the NBSAPs 2.0 project:
www.iied.org/nbsaps

IIED promotes sustainable development, linking local priorities to global challenges. We support some of the world's most vulnerable people to strengthen their voice in decision making.

International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399 Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055 Email: info@iied.org www.iied.org

[@iied](#)

www.facebook.com/theIIED

www.linkedin.com/company/iied/

Download more publications at www.iied.org/pubs



**Knowledge
Products**

Tool

July 2015

Biodiversity

Keywords: Mainstreaming, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

