



RUBONDO ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

SCHOOL COMPETITION REPORT



**Funded by Columbus Zoo
Partner: African Otter Outreach Project**

**Prepared by: Hobokela Mwamjengwa
OUTREACH WARDEN**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since 1996 outreach program has been implemented in Rubondo Island National Park (RINP). The program includes (SCIP) Support for community Initiated projects program and conservation education program. Conservation education is being provided to the community living in villages neighboring the park; however students in secondary and primary schools are among the target groups in provision of conservation education. Conservation education program in schools includes environmental conservation studies to students and facilitate environmental conservation activities such as tree planting, establishment of tree nurseries, waste materials management, etc. Due to various challenges none of the mentioned activities succeeded, though park was providing them with education and other necessary supports such as tree nurseries equipment for tree nursery initiation in schools. One of the park solutions to this was to make teachers and students in schools engaged in environmental conservation through school competition on environmental conservation activities.

The first competition was conducted 14.05.2012 to 17.05.2012. This was carried out by the Competition Committee composed of environmental teachers from 5 schools (Ikuza primary school, Ihumilo primary school, Izumacheli primary school, Butwa primary school and Zakhia secondary school and the RINP Outreach Warden. The committee was selected by environmental teachers participating in the ZACC/Woodland Park Zoo RINP Teachers Workshop conducted in May 2011 with the assistance of the African Otter Outreach Project (AoTOP). One community member from Katemwa village was invited by the committee to provide his experience in tree nursery farming. The competition itself involved 8 schools (Ikuza primary school, Nyabugera primary school, Katemwa primary school, Butwa primary school, Izumacheli primary school, Ihumilo primary school, Nkome secondary school and Zakhia secondary school).

To make the exercise easier all Committee members were taken to the park on 13.05.2012 where they were provided with food and accommodation by TANAPA RINP. So every day the committee was going out from the park to visit schools and returning.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE COMPETITION

The purpose of the competition was to stimulate environmental conservation activities in schools through inspecting schools' compound to see how students put in action everything they were being taught about environmental conservation.

3.0 COMPETITION CRITERIA

The following criteria were set by the committee to guide them in measuring and grading the standard of the school in environmental conservation:

1. **Compound cleanliness** – committee was looking on the cleanliness of the school compound, if there are uncontrolled trash, bushes near classrooms and other buildings etc.
2. **Tree planting** – we looked if the school has tree planting program?
3. **Grass planting** – we looked on vegetation cover in school compound.

4. **Flower garden** – committee was looking if the school have flower gardens and flower planted beside the buildings and if they are well maintained.
5. **Toilet room's cleanliness** – committee was looking on toilet room cleanliness, if water storage containers are in place.
6. **Waste control** – committee was looking if the school had dust bins and waste pits for perishable and non-perishable materials
7. **Students' general understanding about environment** – committee wanted to see to what extent students understood environmental issues.
8. **Students' general understanding about Tanzania National Park** – unfortunately many Tanzanians do not understand National parks and different status of protected areas, due to that the committee needed to know to what extent these students understand this.
9. **Tree nursery** – committee was looking if the school has a tree nursery and if it was well maintained.
10. **Existence of conservation club** – The committee was looking if the school has an active conservation club.

Each criterion carried 10 marks/scores.



School Competition committee setting criteria for competition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rubondo Park Management would like to acknowledge Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, for the grant that made this important activity possible. The Park Management would also like to extend appreciation to Mrs. Jan Reed-Smith for her support and advice during implementation of this project. You are real part of success of Rubondo Outreach program.



Mrs Jan Reed Smith talking with teachers during teachers' workshop conducted in May 2011

Many people contributed to the accomplishment of this activity. The park conveys special thanks to the Competition Committee for their tireless efforts in making sure that the exercise was done successfully, efficiently and effectively. Sometimes these people were coming back from the field in late evening and sometimes rain and big storms of the lake came over them. No one complained, instead were happy to have this opportunity. In order to reach villages outside the park one needs to cross Lake Victoria by boat to because it is an island. Villages we are working with are located on surrounding islands and others on the mainland.

Competition Committee members in the boat ready to go to villages to visit schools.



Members of school competition committee coming back to the park late evening



Many thanks to Head teachers in schools where we conducted this exercise, for their cooperation and warm welcoming of the committee, some of schools found the means to offer the committee soft drinks and some of schools offered food. This made feel honored, appreciated, and accepted.

Well prepared venue for Committee to have a talk with teachers and conservation club at Nyabugera primary school.



Competition Committee members share drinks with teachers and conservation club members at Nyabugera Primary school



GENERAL OBSERVATION OF THE COMPETITION

1. **School compound cleanliness** - At least each school tried to keep school environment clean, we found slashed grasses; bushes along trails and buildings were cut. Some of them did cleanliness just for the sake of the competition but were few of those. There was one school found to be very dirty.
2. In **tree planting** criteria; we witnessed all schools planted trees which are in different age of growth that assured the committee that there is continuation of the activity. Zakhia Secondary school and Ihumilo primary school did very good on this. We appreciate the creativity of Ihumilo primary school conservation club, by overcoming the problem of daily watering of trees by practicing drip irrigation using used mineral water bottles. The bottle is cut at the bottom and hung upside-down directly above the planted tree seedling. They put cotton in the cap of the bottle and made small holes in it which the water pass out slowly. They said this innovation is time and water saving because they put water in bottles two times a week, each student in school has his/her own tree to take care.



Competition Committee observing drip watering innovation at Ihumilo primary school. Trees with watering drip planted in about one acre of the school area.



Drip watering technology at Ihumilo Primary school



Well maintained trees at Zakhia secondary school



Planted and well maintained trees at Zakhia Secondary school

3. **Grass planting** - it was observed that many schools had large areas in the school compound without vegetation cover, we advised the schools to plant grass or trees in uncovered areas.
4. **Flower planting** - as it was in grass it is the same in flowers. Many schools didn't plant flowers along the trails and beside buildings, however flower gardens in schools is the problem.



Flour garden at Nyabugera primary school

5. **Toilet rooms' cleanliness** - There is a big challenge in schools regarding toilet service in Tanzania; there are inadequate toilet rooms in most schools, as a result many toilet rooms in schools are always dirty because they are over used and have no water supply service. The committee encouraged the schools to use their initiative to ensure that toilets are supplied with water and kept clean. This is possible because we found two schools during this exercise that had water storage containers in toilet rooms.
6. **Waste management** – Committee found that at least each school has a trash control program, but they do not have dust bins. Most of them had pits for trash disposal; normally they have two types of pits one for hard trash and the other one for perishable trash. They burn hard trash because there is no recycling program in nearby townships.
7. **Students' general understanding about environment** – It was discovered that most of the students don't have clear understanding of the environment and its importance to the livelihood of human beings. Committee took some time to educate students and give advice to environmental teachers that they set aside time for environmental conservation studies in schools.

8. **Students' general understandings about Tanzania National parks** – Committee also discovered that most of the students and teachers do not have enough knowledge about National parks, and differences between National parks and other protected areas in Tanzania.
9. **Tree nursery** – All visited schools had a tree nursery except one. However, most of the tree nurseries had few tree seedlings and many of these had been kept in the nursery too long and needed to be planted. A wonderful thing here is the creativity of many schools to use small plastic bag-like containers (used for packaging alcohol) as polythene tubes in tree nurseries. Students are being told by teachers to collect them from street and other areas to reduce uncontrolled trash in streets and bring them to school for another use. This sounds environmentally good because it is the one way of decreasing uncontrolled trash in streets and recycling but also saves money for buying polythene tubes. (See picture below).



Collected used plastic sacks at Ikuza primary school



Tree seedling growing in used sacks for alcohol packing at Ikuza Primary school



A community member advising the school on the good ways of taking care tree nursery

10. **Existence of conservation club** – Most of the schools had conservation clubs that are active, but they have small number of members. We advised teachers to encourage students to join the clubs.



Conservation club of Ikuza primary school



Conservation club at Nyabugera primary school



Zakhia secondary school Conservation club

6.0 COMPETITION RESULTS

The results of the competition have been presented according to the criteria showing how school performed in each criterion.

1. ZAKHIA SECONDARY SCHOOL

S/N	Criterion	Marks	Remarks
1	School compound cleanliness	9.5	
2	Tree planting	9.7	
3	Grass planting	9.5	
4	Flour planting	9.5	
5	Toilet rooms cleanliness	9.3	
6	Waste control	9.6	
7	General knowledge about environment	9.2	
8	General knowledge about National parks in Tanzania	9.5	
9	Tree nursery	9.6	
10	Existing of conservation club	9.8	
Total		95.2/100	

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROJECT WORK PLAN

WORK PLAN (Lavender = work target date; blue = monitoring and evaluation)

ACTIVITY	4 TH QUARTER			1 ST QUARTER			2 ND QUARTER			3 RD QUARTER			REMARKS
	APRIL	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	
To facilitate 2 groups of pupils study tour to Sanane Island National Park													
To facilitate 6 groups of pupils to visit RINP park													
To conduct seminar to environment teachers in schools on environment conservation													Completed in May 2011
To facilitate schools competition and debate													
To enhance the functioning of conservation clubs in schools													
Facilitate waste management in schools													