



Flower Industry Sustains Communities

Lake Naivasha Region in Kenya



HARTMUT JUNGIUS / WWF-CANON

Farmer woman, Lake Naivasha watershed, Kenya.

Lake Naivasha is in the Great Rift Valley, a WWF priority region. It is under threat from pollution, and agricultural and industrial activities.

The lake is the only inland freshwater lake of economic importance in Kenya. Apart from being a vital source of water in a seemingly semi-arid environment, the lake supports a flourishing business in horticulture and floriculture. These activities earn the country a substantial amount of foreign exchange in the form of exports. The lake is also famous for sport fishing, tourism and recreation.

The WWF partner in this project is Oserian, a company growing cut flowers. The company employs 5'500 workers. Oserian is a well-organised, professional company, even for Swiss standards.

Oserian provides a housing estate for its employees and their families, hosting a population of approximately 15'000 people. Oserian is located on a road that serves as a major trade way for illegal charcoal from the Mau-Escarpment, supplying all of Naivasha and even further with charcoal. The Mau Escarpment is quickly losing its forest cover. The deforestation of the water towers has been identified as an issue of national security in Kenya, but action so far has been limited.

The Masai are the only native community around Lake Naivasha. All other tribes historically migrated to the area. They have been deprived of their land title during colonization and been granted ownership of some areas only relatively recently. Still, they are economically disadvantaged, mostly depending on subsistence farming. Some own rather large corn plantations and large herds of livestock. The Masai already benefit from Oserian through access to a school and a hospital and participate in a project, supplying hand-made bracelets for flower bouquets.



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Roses grown in green houses are transported for packing, Lake Naivasha, Kenya

Basic facts:

- Around 35'000 people live in the project area
- Most of them are life stock keepers
- Most have no access to electricity
- 94% of the people living in the region rely solely on firewood with no existing use of efficient woodstoves.
- Women walk on average of 4.8 kilometres to fetch firewood.
- Globally, indoor air pollution is responsible for a higher death toll than AIDS or Malaria, according to WHO.

This project supplies efficient woodstoves at a subsidized price to the villages. The stoves reduce firewood use by around 50%. This reduction in firewood use slows down the deforestation rate and contributes to healthy and thriving forests in Kenya.

- CO₂ reduction potential: 10,000-20,000 tons per year.
- Timeline and current status: The project started in January 2012.
- Additional benefits, potential risks: Scale-up potential and also potential to engage in other carbon mitigation activities such as geothermal energy, water disinfection, eco-charcoal from flower waste, biogas, efficient charcoal stoves exists.

Partner: Oserian

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