



Minutes of the Living Lakes Assembly – 14th International Living Lakes Conference 2014, Nanchang, China, 23RD NOVEMBER 2014

Moderator:

Dr. Alain Maasri, Head of Unit Water and Living Lakes, Global Nature Fund

You can find the presentations (of the 14th Living Lakes Conference as well as the Living Lakes General Meeting) on the following GNF-website:

<http://www.globalnature.org/14llc-Downloads>

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LIVING LAKES ASSEMBLY – 23RD NOVEMBER 2014

Opening of the Living Lakes Assembly, Marion Hammerl, President of GNF

Overview of Current Living Lakes Activities & Projects, Udo Gattenlöhner, GNF

Communication & Networking Tools, Dr Alain Maasri, GNF

Report from the Living Lakes Sub-networks; Dr Thomas Schaefer, GNF

- **Webinars** should be organised between the coordinators of the sub-networks for better exchange.
- During the past Living Lakes Conferences a **declaration** has been developed. Such declarations were very useful for the local partner organisation to address challenges they are facing. Marion encourages the Living Lakes partners to sign and support the declaration of the 14th LL Conference and to publish it in their home countries.
- The applying new partner in Tanzania asked for support of the international network community to sign a declaration for a specific mining problem. For future requests for support, partners are asked to circulate their declarations and information prior to the conference.

New Living Lakes Members; Bettina Schmidt, GNF

- The result of the evaluation process of the Living Lakes Network will be distributed to the partners.
- It has been pointed out again, that the Living Lakes partner organisations should be NGOs. Otherwise a co-partner NGO should be involved.

Living Lakes Goals 2020, Marion Hammerl, Global Nature Fund

- A new Living Lakes Goals brochure will be published in a few years. The LL Goals brochure is a very good documentation of the achievements of the Living Lakes partners. The brochure has also been used to structure the topics of the world café planned in the afternoon session.

Presentations from Living Lakes Delegates:

- Hans Jerrentrup, Greece; Mosquito Control
 - Climate change effects the distribution of mosquitoes. This can lead to problems like the expansion of Malaria or other mosquito related diseases.
 - Regulation activities concentrate on the larvae with a selective bacterium. This method can not be used as prevention, rather it is used as an intervention to reduce populations. A good mapping of the occurrence is necessary for a more effective treatment. The method can be applied in other areas.
- Margit Säre, Estonia;
 - At Lake Peipsi illegal fishing and water eutrophication are the two major identified problems.
 - Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (CTC) works on a transboundary level for sustainable development of the lake.
 - Peipsi region film: <http://youtu.be/xtG6je177SA>



- Haikai Tane, New Zealand (Aotearoa);
 - The Living Water Foundation strives for the conservation of lakes in New Zealand (Aotearoa). Water is a living organism and has a memory. Only living water will keep humans healthy and alive.
- Alberto Rivero Lescano, Peru;
 - The main problems in the region are the water pollution due to sewage water, mining, agriculture and fish farming. It is predicted that climate change will have a high influence on Lake Titicaca.
 - Possible solutions are e.g. the installation of sewage treatment plants and constructed wetlands around the lake, the surrounding watersheds have to be restored, the population needs to be informed through environmental education activities.
- Salvador Peniche Camps, Mexico;
 - *Letter read aloud can be found in the Annex*
- Yadambaatar Tserenkhand, Mongolia
 - Mongolia has many water resources. Mining (Copper and Gold) activities are one of the biggest problems in the area, causing pollution of the aquatic resources. Many grass route organisations have been founded in Mongolia to fight against the mining. UMMRL (United Movement of Mongolian Rivers and Lakes) is an umbrella institution for these organisations.
 - The “Law on Prohibiting Mineral Exploration and Extraction Near Water Sources, Protected Areas and Forests” to prohibit mineral exploration and mining activities at the headwaters of rivers, protected zones of water reservoirs and forested areas was adopted in 2009. Due to that, many special mining licenses will have to be cancelled.
- Nina Dagbaeva and Tatyana Fedorova, Russia;
 - The results of an environmental education project have been presented. The “Baikal Box” contains games, general and specific information, maps, poster of famous species of Lake Baikal.

Open space and World Cafés:

Thematic groups and opportunities for collaboration and elaboration of new projects:

- Topic 1: Restoration
- Topic 2: Water management
- Topic 3: Nature Conservation
- Topic 4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Topic 5: Environmental education

23rd November 2014, Bettina Schmidt



ANNEX

Letter read aloud by Salvador Peniche Camps

Chapala Lake – Same policies for a new crisis



Salvador Peniche Camps,
University of Guadalajara
Manuel Villagomez Rodríguez,
The Lerma river basin and Chapala Lake
Foundation

Introduction

Chapala Lake did not recover this year despite the reasonable good rainy season. As we speak, she holds less than 50% of its total capacity. Non-fulfillment of the water distribution agreements, industrial, agricultural and urban pollution, illegal extractions, unregulated tourism and fisheries remain her basic problems. Chapala is in a deep coma again...just like in 2002, when Mr. Manuel Villagomez, Dr. Manuel Guzmán Arroyo and myself presented Chapala Lake for the Living Lakes network in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A new face of and old crisis

So, is there anything new? Yes there is. In politics, they say, form is substance. For the first time, the government has openly declared its will to privatize water. In recent weeks, at the 2014 World Water Conference held in London, David Korenfeld, the president of the Mexican National Water Commission, announced the main goal of the current administration: To pass a new law to allow the participation of private capital in the water management agencies across the country. The official press release states that Korenfeld

“Detailed a new scheme to create a new financial system for water, which includes the private participation in private public associations in the construction, operation and maintenance of water infrastructure, as well as the possibility to create metropolitan water administration facilities, and the incorporation of regulation organisms for water supply and sanitation”.

In passed years, citizen’s organizations denounced the attempt to privatize water in Mexico. They identified the hidden agenda behind the regulations and programs of previous administrations and the logic behind the corruption and impunity in the water sector management in last decades. They were right.



Now, in 2014, the privatization of water is consistent with the overall economic policy of the Peña Nieto administration. Similar reforms have been implemented in the education, health, labor and energy sectors. Now, the time has come for water. Together with its public schools, hospitals, and petrol reserves, Mexican public water has begun to disappear as a public good.

The privatization of water is at the basis of Chapala lake crisis. This is not difficult to understand. With the increasing scarcity of water, the liquid finds a better economic allocation in high value export commodities. If we look closely, we can see that most of socio-environmental conflicts in the Lerma Chapala Santiago basin are linked to this logic of hemispheric integration. Water, as a cheap productive resource, has become a source for the competitive advantage for Mexican exports in agriculture and the industry. The lake has been sacrificed for the sake of economic growth and for the North American integration process.

Corruption & market...bad combination

I had the wonderful opportunity to talk with Professor Gerhard Thielcke in one of the Living Lakes Conferences. He told me that the optimal water volume of a lake was one of those impossible questions of modern science. The important question, however is, to define "the proper use for the lake." The answer to that question, I learned then, is the most important step for the survival of Chapala. It should be a product of a high quality democratic exercise and an act of real environmental community governance. The use of a lake shouldn't be decided as a result of a market mechanism ONLY, as market will always choose the maximal economic efficiency over life itself.

Nevertheless, this is not the case of Chapala. Market *is not* the cause of the lake's deterioration. Of course, Chapala water allocation depends mostly on its economic value in the market. The lake has to compete with other users, with the thirst of Guadalajara's 5 million inhabitants, with the production needs of an export-oriented economy, with the growing need of energy generation. Old and new threats such as traditional leather industry of Guanajuato and the fracking initiative are present in the lake's current situation. But no, the main risk for Chapala is not global market, it is plain corruption: Chapala enemy, as for Mexican society as a whole, is the immorality of a government that has been infiltrated by criminals, by the business of the kidnaping industry and arms smuggling, by prostitution networks and the industry of death.

Under these circumstances, you cannot expect anything from governmental environmental policies. On the contrary, Environmental destruction has become a business for the Mexican mafia. In my country you will find all possible environmental crimes: From timber and animal illegal trade to irregular mining licensing and direct occupation of community natural resources. The list goes on, and on. On the other hand, international reports show that Mexico has the worst record of the world in assassinations of environmental activists. They are part of the war carried out by the government, a war that has caused more that 100 thousand deaths since the year 2000. More casualties of the war in Afghanistan and Irak put together.

For these reasons, I want to congratulate our friends and colleagues who have been defending Chapala Lake over the last decades. It is a risky job to defend Chapala.



Small steps for a lake, huge steps for environmentalism

The environmentalist organizations that have been defending Chapala Lake achieved a great success by submitting the case to the Environmental Cooperation Commission of the Free Trade Agreement. As a result, the Mexican government had to accept its responsibility in the mismanagement of the Lerma basin, and in the water crisis of the Chapala Lake. A new distribution agreement has been issued as a federal mandate.

This year, the new water distribution agreement obliged the federal and state water authorities to provide Chapala with what is written in the law: 240 million cubic meters of the liquid, regardless of the capacity of the situation of the dams based upstream.

Unfortunately, the latest news is not so optimistic. As the actual director of the federal basin commission, Elias Chedid stated recently, the new authorities up stream failed to accomplish the law. Despite the fact that the dams built upstream are over their limits, water to Chapala does not flow. The agreement is not working, again.

The evaluation of the environmental groups of Jalisco is straightforward. The Chapala crisis is a deliberate and criminal policy created by the water authorities. The objective is to justify the construction of a new multimillionaire dam at the community of El Zapotillo. The water is needed for the export industry in the neighbor state of Guanajuato. An empty Chapala lake, facilitates political support for a new dam as the government justifies it also as a source of fresh water for the city of Guadalajara.

The worst plan is no plan at all

Environmental groups and the Lerma Chapala Foundation will continue to confront the aggression of the governmental water authorities against our lake, even in the worst conditions. As always, they will find the ways to do what they do.

But, ¿what is the role of our international networks and in particular of Living lakes network? We have great support in favor of Chapala. Now, we learned in the 2014 Living Lakes Nanchang Conference, we might be entering a new stage, a stage of intervention projects, world community involvement and activism. We are ready for the new approach.



Reporting from World Café “Restoration” – Udo Gattenlöhner

General Aspects:

- A proper definition of restoration is essential. Here it was discussed from an ecosystem rehabilitation approach. Ecosystems are very complex and interconnected => a holistic approach is crucial. Topics are interrelated (water, biodiversity, climate change).
- Social challenges must not be underestimated.
- Why restoration: the main reasons and objectives for restoration must be defined.

Challenges expressed by the attendees are:

- Time is lacking, money is scarce.
- Climate Change contributes negatively to the challenges.
- Will and awareness on community level often insufficient
- How to evaluate the benefit of restoration. And how share the benefit.
- Lack of consensus - in particular with agencies - due to their limited agenda.
- Political framework (short terms).
- Conflict of interests -> social challenges
- Limitations of restoration to bring back nature!?
- Lack of understanding how ecosystems function? => Science. When get started?
- Concept of restoration: What are we restoring to?
- No universal standards -> limits of transferability

Solutions expressed during the Session:

- A “cause oriented” approach is required.
- “Natural succession” is often useful. Evolution.
- Use existing tools, i.e. methodological procedures and standards from Europarc, Conservation Action Planning (CAP), PES, Agenda 21, etc.
- Restoration of partially affected sites better than totally damaged.
- Develop a cultural intelligence = with nature vs. against nature
- More exchange between lake regions.
- Links basic needs with restoration, in particular in poorer countries, and a transparent and participatory approach.
- Better law enforcement.
- Holistic and interdisciplinary approach (Integrated Water Resources Management)

Living Lakes Actions:

- Start with small and inexpensive interventions with quick results (i.e. Green Filters, mangroves) and define clear and achievable goals and socio-economic benefits.
- Use community level as the custodians for responsibility and stewardship instead of relying too much on administration. LL success factor is the local level approach (NGO, CBO, community) without too much bureaucracy and administration.
- Strong links between eco-tourism and restoration.



- Involvement of young generation is key.
- Nature conservation vs. restoration. Pursue an open and honest discussion that restoration might not look good (sexy) in the beginning
- Communication and education are important. New channels and social media.

Reporting from World Café “Water management” – Dr. Alain Maasri

Among the main **challenges** expressed by the attendees are:

- Problems and/or lack of governance
- The difficulty to achieve a common vision among water users on how this resource should be managed. Examples were expressed when it concerns navigation, agriculture, drinking water, among others. This lack of vision in addition to being due to the divergence of interests might be the result of a missing space of dialogue between stakeholders in the watershed.
- The lack or limited exchange of good practices
- Another difficulty is the lack of centralized effort to tackle challenges in water management
- Watersheds on the other hand a rarely examined from a holistic approach, a watershed view or a community approach. The deep and extensive knowledge of fauna and flora communities are essential for the proper management of watersheds.
- In countries or regions where a clear and efficient legal framework exist (e.g., WFD), the lack or correct and sufficient implementation of reforms is a major challenge.
- The multijurisdictional responsibilities when it comes to water management is a major challenge to elaborate a common agenda, or a common strategy for water management.
- Transboundary issues are also a difficulty to overcome or to adapt to. This transboundary doesn't have to be between countries, but sometimes inside the same country.
- The lack of sustainable resources is another challenge faces when it comes to correct water management
- The lobbying of important decision makers to advance our cause is missing, more resources should be engaged towards better lobbying
- Our vision of management is very often a hard ware approach with engineering approach and reshaping of the environment. We need to develop more soft management approaches and ecosystem based techniques
- The last two challenges expressed where the lack of political will and the lack of collaboration

Solutions expressed during the world café addressed mainly the challenges listed above

- An approach based on a win-win solution should be the corner stone of each and every water management strategy or plan



- The genuine involvement of people is also very necessary
- The understanding of the rules of nature is very necessary to elaborate adapted monitoring and assessment parameters
- A participatory management of watershed is necessary
- Community education is also very necessary, this should be done by developing appropriate tools of education targeting the different target groups
- The integration and rationalization of directives and water-related legal frameworks should be enhanced.
- Integrated management at the watershed scale is the optimal way to manage aquatic resources and this should be generalized over the different continents
- Open governance and the use of different real time solutions for monitoring the aquatic ecosystem should be developed. This includes for example the citizen/scientist approach. This open governance can benefit from the new available technological advancements, including apps and websites
- Developing ownership of the water resources by riparian communities is a step forward to engage citizens
- Individuals are water managers on their scale and we need to increase awareness in households and to push for a behavioural change

The **agenda** for near future projects should include projects dealing with:

- Developing and establishing monetary value on aquatic resources is a promising way to enhance the conservation and management of aquatic resources. The monetary value can be used communication tool towards decision makers and water users.
- Monetary values should be developed also for the ecosystem services provides by aquatic ecosystems
- Building trust between communities and decision makes is also important and should be on the list of programs and projects to develop
- Engage in more transparent and participatory projects

Reporting from World Café “Nature Conservation” – Dr. Thomas Schaefer, Katharina Trump

Among the main **challenges** expressed by the attendees are:

- Invasive species which cause threat on native/endemic
- Including local communities
- Co-existence for people and Biodiversity is a problem in growing communities → Human-Wildlife-Conflict
- LL-members do much species work but not with GNF
- Governmental opposition to work
- Conflicts of objectives
- Use of habitats by humans



- Water pollution
- Deforestation

Solutions expressed during the world café addressed mainly the challenges listed above

- Use species as ambassadors for catchment management
- Safe the ecosystem by protection of the species which rely on it
- Capacity building
- Use international connections for international founding
- Improve communication between LL partners
- Improve habitat connectivity and
- Enable reproduction of rare species
- Regulate human activity

The **agenda** for near future projects should include projects dealing with:

- Protect Endemic species
- Marco corridors landscape scale programmes
- Small species with important function in the ecosystem
- LL-rare/endemic/threatened species database to create common frame

Reporting from World Café “Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation” – Marion Hammerl

Challenges

- Growing economy and corresponding growing emissions
- Rapidly growing population
- Increasing conflicts between the interests of population /economic interests /nature protection
- Extreme weather events (storms, droughts, floods ...)
- Increasing water scarcity
- New pests in agriculture
- Rising sea level

...the environmental challenges provoked by climate change are well known.

Challenges for organizations promoting climate mitigation in lake regions

- Lack of sound information / different scenarios
- Lack of resources to realize own studies
- Lack of evidence based research
- Management-conflicts: Should we work towards the protection of the ecosystem what it should be or what it will be because of climate change (e.g. salination of coastal fresh water lakes)



- Difficulties to convince stakeholders that impacts of climate change will be negative (e.g. tourism sector at Lake Constance is happy because of the longer tourism season)
- Ongoing discussion: Are the negative impacts because of climate change or is it just a natural evolution
- Lack of financing of short term practical measures

Solutions

- Soft engineering solutions instead of hard engineering (e.g. intact mangrove forest for flood protection)
- Implementation of traditional technologies = low costs = can be implemented in poor countries
- Short term measures, e.g. soil conservation, reforestation
- Include social and economic aspects into modelling /scenarios
- Improve disaster control and management
- All development activities should include low carbon solutions
- Promote multifunctional (waste)water storage systems
- Argue with the climate change impacts on small lakes, because they are very visible
- Collect evidence based arguments related to our daily life
- Support /participate in evidence based research
- Realize monitoring of the lake and the ecosystem functions to proof if political decision were right or not appropriate
- Apply the ecological handprint methodology (Salvador Peniche will provide information)

Next steps within the Living Lakes Network

What	Who	When
Exchange modules regarding education on risks /mitigation /adaptation	CLEAR, Philippines	
Documentation of successful adaptation measures		
Simple assessment of all Living Lakes regarding risks because of climate change	GNF with information from all LL partners	
Living Lakes Position Paper with practical recommendations – based on the results of the assessment	GNF with input from various LL partners (who would be part of the working group)	
Establish pilot adaptation sites (joint project supported by GEF?)		
Share risk and adaptation strategies for municipalities – elaborated by LL partners	Coordination GNF	
Strengthen the contacts to Living Lakes Municipalities, e.g. create LL Municipalities section		
Webinars on Climate Change adaptation for LL partners /managers of lakes in similar situations (e.g. coastal lakes in Europe)	Broads	



Position paper regarding the need of evidence based research for the next COP 21	Wildland Trust, South Africa	
Exchange information on useful equipments and methodologies of monitoring		
Promote the principles of sustainable urban drainage systems for new urbanisations	John Pinder will provide more information	
Compensate our own flights		

Reporting from World Café “Environmental Education” – Bettina Schmidt

Challenges:

- Due to a lack of financial and personnel resources it is not realistic to plan the development of a Living Lakes environmental education tool box as a template, which can be adapted and amended by the Living Lakes partners.
- Target Group: It is important to define the target group for environmental education activities. This can be school and preschool children, youth (here the use of social media is important), families, communities, farmers, and decision makers.

Solutions:

- The E-Learning tool on the GNF website can be used.
<http://www.globalnature.org/E-Learning-Tool>
- The Living Lakes Network could use the World Wetland Day on 2nd February as a platform for raising awareness about lakes.

Next steps:

- Already existing environmental education material will be collected and provided for download on the GNF Knowledge Pool. The material should preferably be in English or with a brief English explanation. Moreover, pictures, songs and games will be collected.
- Further steps: The partners decided to create a Living Lakes Environmental Education Network. Cathy Salki from Lake Winnipeg Foundation, Canada, volunteered to help with the establishment. Webinars shall be offered for the interested partners to get the new network started. Possible funding for a transnational environmental education project might be available through an EU programme.