



LTBP Participation in the Nyanza Project

by *Mukungilwa Kamalebo*

Nine African students and twelve American students participated in the first session of The Nyanza Project in Kigoma, Tanzania, from 1 June – 10 July 1998. The Nyanza Project is a scientific research and training course initiated by Dr. Andrew Cohen of the University of Arizona (USA). It is a part of the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) programs, the main objective of which is to interest and to actively involve participants in different types of scientific research. The Nyanza Project specialized in the following research subjects: geology, biology, and limnology of The African Great Lakes, and of Lake Tanganyika in particular.



Nyanza students work with freshly collected samples

The American National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsors the five-year project. While NSF/REU supported the American participants, The Lake Tanganyika Biodiversity Project (LTBP) sponsored the African participants and provided material contributions for the organization of the courses.

Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI) hosted the courses. The project students and instructors also received scientific and technical collaboration from TAFIRI staff members.

The African students travelled many different paths to reach Kigoma. The Congolese delegation left Uvira, via Bujumbura, on the 28 May 1998 and arrived in Kigoma by small plane the same day. The Burundian delegation arrived the following day by small charter plane. The Tanzanian and Zambian delegates arrived by train on the 31 May 1998 along with the American students and the instructors. All the students were accommodated in « Railway Hotel ».

The training activities were two-fold i.e. theory and practical courses with exercises in the field and laboratory and individual research projects.

Theory and practical courses took place during the first three weeks of the session. One week of intensive classroom lecture and field and laboratory practical courses were devoted to each of the major theme topics: geology of East African lakes, tropical limnology and biology, biodiversity and the evolution of Lake Tanganyika.

Each student, under the supervision of a trainer and sometimes in collaboration with other students, completed an independent research project in a subject of his/her choice related to one of the branches of theory, (i.e. geology, limnology or biology of Lake Tanganyika). Research topics among the African students included diverse subjects such as: a comparison of fish populations at two different habitats, the effects of coastal upwelling in high relief and low relief zones, variations in the thermocline and its effect on nutrient levels in Kigoma basin, algal benthos of the littoral zone, diatom assemblages from surface sediments, the relationship between water parameters and fishing results, the effect of small streams on the hydrogeochemistry of the lake and studies of the settling rates of fish eggs. At the end of his/her work, each student presented, in plenary session, his achieved preliminary results.

In addition to their scientific activities, participants got the opportunity to visit Livingstone Museum in Ujiji and the road of slaves. They also had an excursion to Gombe Stream National Park.

Three Burundians participated in the course: Célestin Bigirimana, Arthur Nahayo, Térance Nahimana; along with three Congolese: Safari Borauzima (ISP Bukavu), Mukungilwa Kamalebo (CRH/UVIRA), Mavula Mbemba (CRH/UVIRA); two Tanzanians: Shariffa Bungala, Chobaliko Rubabwa and one Zambian: Phallen Milambo. Twelve American students also participated: Pete Macintyre, Karine Simon, Kirsten Bannister, Kristin France, Christie Hauptert, Beverly Green, Giana Gelsey, Ginger Edattukarran, Brandon League, Joel Hoffman, Sarah Pittiglio, Mark Woodworth.

The following trainers did their best to ensure the success of the Nyanza Project:

Andrew Cohen, University of Arizona, USA, Director of Nyanza Project; Chris Scholtz, geologist, University of Miami, Florida, USA; Ellinor Michel, biologist University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Pierre –Denis Plisnier, limnologist, Tervuren Museum, Belgium, Gaspard Ntakimazi, biologist, University of Burundi, Nick Matthieu, R.E.U. Administrator and guest lecturers: Kelly West, biologist, scientific coordinator, LTBP; Simone Alin, biologist, USA.

The Nyanza Project training session, Kigoma 1998, ended as planned on the 10th of July 1998 and the African students followed different paths to their respective homes.

The Congolese team would like to take this opportunity to express its thanks to the Nyanza Project organisers, the trainers, LTBP and to all those who contributed to the success of Nyanza Project, Kigoma 1998.

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