

Voices from the forest



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Community members in Danau Sentarum, with Johnny Utama of Eco Traders, come together to prepare *tikung*, or artificial branches for the upcoming honey season. Installed on trees in the most conducive areas, this attracts the wild honeybee *Apis dorsata* to set up their hives. This traditional technique is sustainable, factoring into organic certification.

FOREST HONEY NETWORK, INDONESIA

organic certification of wild honey

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WHEN IS ENOUGH, REALLY ENOUGH?

PALM OIL IN MALINAU, INDONESIA:
NEW EARTH, NEW SKY, A NEW KALIMANTAN

Certifiably organic honey in the making! {COVER STORY}

Certification undeniably opens up new markets for NTFPs. For Riak Bumi, a West Kalimantan-based NGO and also the national secretariat of the Forest Honey Network Indonesia, getting the organic seal on their honey is becoming closer to a reality.

The network now covers eight sites in Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Sumatra. Network partners are looking at about 200 tonnes of honey from the wild honeybee species *Apis dorsata*.

It was wonderful news when Bogor-based BIOCert, an organic certifying body in Indonesia, announced that it had selected the network to be its pilot for organic certification. BIOCert met with Riak Bumi and NTFP-EP last January 17 to discuss developing Local Standards and an Internal Control System (ICS) for the Honey Producer Groups of the Wild Honey Harvesters in West Kalimantan.

Also present was Dr. Mary Stockdale, who provided input based on principles and process



In Meratus mountain, a harvester climbs up a tree with a torch to drive away the bees from the ready-to-harvest honeycomb.

for community-based NTFP management, as outlined in the manual she authored called *Steps to Sustainable Community-Based NTFP Management*.

Biocert and organic certification
BIOCert is an accredited certifier under the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

Its objectives include
► providing a guarantee on organic and sustainable processes and products,
► promoting equality, democracy,

transparency, accountability for small farmers and,

- promoting an appreciation for indigenous knowledge, and
- stimulating the integration of organic farming and fair trade.

During the meeting, BIOCert presented the Organic Certification Standards specifically for wild harvested products and public lands, and non-timber forest Products. BIOCert also discussed how the ICS is developed and implemented.

Sustainability of the wild honey production system in West Kalimantan

Various aspects of the management system need to be scrutinised to determine whether the honey produced by the network qualifies for organic certification. Here are some areas looked into:

1. Sustainable harvest technique The production of wild honey in West Kalimantan already has very high potential for sustainability. The harvesting technique involves harvesting only the "head" or honey part of the hive rather than destructively harvesting the entire hive, including the part where the bee larvae are found. Motivating the farmers to use this method has been quite easy because its use results in better quality and quantity of harvestable honey. Farmers can actually harvest more honey per hive in a year because they can return to harvest the hive every 20 days until the season is over.

2. Tenure system in place While the forest is public land (a conservation area), the *tikung* or artificial branches are owned and marked by individual harvesters. The honey bees return to the *tikung* seasonally to make their hives. The branches used to come from the *medang* (*Lauraceae sp.*) tree species. As this is now a protected species, farmers now use *tembesu* (*Fagraea fragans*).

Also called the rafter method, *tikung* are length-wise split poles which are placed in the crowns of trees at an angle to facilitate runoff. The poles are attached at both ends in a shady place.

3. Local institutions are in place, encouraging and monitoring sustainable harvest methods The honey harvesters are organised into groups called *priau*, which have existed for about 100 years. The *priau* plan where to

put the *tikung*, who puts them up, how they are to be harvested, etc. The presence of *priau* is positive as these are already in place to manage the ICS.

4. Culturally appropriate sanctions are in place to ensure compliance to regulations Riak Bumi representatives mentioned the importance of applying sanctions that are culturally appropriate, and that maintain harmony in the *priau*.

5. Bulk of the honey is harvested from *tikung* or "managed forests" About 80 percent of honey is harvested from *tikung* and the remainder from *lalau* (or wild) tall forest trees. Unmanaged honey is of a lower quality as harvesters are apt to harvest the entire hive because of the difficulty of harvesting from a tall tree. However, the tenure and management systems for the *lalau* honey is another issue that should be addressed as well.

6. Processing and quality control has been established at the household level This is done by each honey harvester at the household level. Communities want to retain this system so each harvester has control over quality, particularly purity (no other substances are added to the honey, especially post-harvest).

Concerns about certification

Dr. Stockdale expressed other concerns vis-a-vis certification:

- The forest ecosystem needs to be protected, because certain tree species provide the flowers for the honey bees. This situation is positive for organic certification in that the harvesters are motivated in favor of forest protection. As the forest is part of a conservation area, government policy is thus in agreement with the objectives of the honey harvesters. The main problem would be illegal logging, which is done by outsiders, not community members.

- Certification cost should be affordable so communities do not become dependent on external financing.

- There is a need to prepare a market campaign for organic honey though there is already an increasing market (e.g., Malaysia cities and restaurants, supermarkets in Jakarta).

Pushing towards certification

Although it seems that getting certified is a tedious business,



LPMA

An abundance of dripping honey combs harvested from the tikung.

institutions, processes and methods.

Dr. Stockdale stressed paying attention to the principles of sustainable, community-based NTFP management namely: community participation, adaptive management, respecting local knowledge, and considering the entire management system. In support of the setting the ICS, she also recommended the use of the NTFP manual, especially:

- integrating community goals with that of organic standards,
- documenting the existing honey production system (ecological, social and economic),
- possibly using mapping tools or other tools to determine if any changes are necessary,
- establishing a community-based monitoring plan (ICS).

The network seems well on its way to setting up its ICS and eventually getting certified. With a number of factors already working in its favor – sustainable management system and strong, established institutions in place who can manage the certification process – it may not be too far in the future that we see the Forest Honey Network Indonesia's *madu* (honey) bearing the organic seal and breaking into worldwide markets.

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Read more about BIOCert and their work in their *Bulletin Organis* (in Bahasa Indonesia) or visit their website www.biocert.or.id

Editorial

This issue of *Voices* brings to us a number of exciting news, both in new and in continuing work, of our partners across the region.

Our cover story highlights how the fast-growing Forest Honey Network Indonesia and BioCert, an Indonesian certifying agency, are looking into the process towards getting organic certification of the network partners' wild honey. This is timely in light of the IFOAM recognising NTFPs as among those organic wild products being traded worldwide.

In India, awareness raising on gums and resins continues under the Regional Centre for Development Cooperation's encouragement. A recent conference brought together NTFP partners, old and new, to gain inspiration and a cross-cultural understanding of technology and policy on this group of NTFPs.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, more are supporting protests against rampant conversion of forestlands into palm oil plantations. Through multi-sectoral efforts (the Catholic church a major supporter), the indigenous Dayak tribe is speaking up against this threat to their livelihood and culture.

The NTFP manual *Steps to Sustainable and Community-Based NTFP Management* is making its rounds amongst partners. It is interesting to revisit the initial meeting with Philippine partner BIND that spurred on its publication. This experience comes full circle during a policy discussion with the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources.



On the secretariat front, we welcome Mr. Vince Michael Docta, who now handles all donor-related activities. Vince hits the ground running, joining the team at a very busy and exciting time in our work.

And speaking of new faces, our website www.ntfp.org wears a new look! We invite you to visit the new site, contribute, interact, and maximise it as a venue to show more people what we are doing in the fields of NTFPs and livelihoods. - Aloisa Zamora-Santos

The NTFP-EP Secretariat ► Jenne de Beer, Executive Director/Field Coordinator Maria Cristina S. Guerrero, Deputy Director Joanna de Rozario, Regional Facilitator for Malaysia and Indonesia Aloisa Zamora-Santos, Information Management Officer Vince Michael Docta, Resource Mobilisation & Programme Development Officer

A copy of *Voices* finds its way in the bag of Fr. Mar Chia, who braves the rough roads to Mintapod, Bukidnon, the Philippines. Fr. Mar, of Philippine partner Father Vincent Cullen Tulugan Development Center (FVCTDLC) works with Higaonon tribes in Mintapod.



our Readers :

IFOAM meeting in Teslic, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Wild product certification

The meeting was a first of its kind held in a beautiful country. Very little was known to me about this place, other than war. However, war and ethnic conflict seems to be slowly giving way to local enterprise and a sincere effort to "build the nation." Bosnia and Herzegovina produces many herbs, berries and mushrooms, collected from the temperate wild. Amongst the Balkan countries Romania leads in the trade of these products – used mainly for food, condiments and herbal teas.

The meeting was in the idyllic surroundings of Teslic, a three-hour drive from Sarajevo – where people from about 40 countries came together for discussions. I could however, see very little participation from South and South East Asia, except for a few Indians, one Chinese and one Thai participant. The discussions revolved around the importance of wild collection for communities, its growing market share and trade. The opening plenary session highlighted the report *The Overview of Production and Marketing of Organic Wild Products* commissioned by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and set the stage for a constructive conference.

Another aspect discussed in a lot of detail was "sustainability" of wild collection. This was also the session in which Mathew, my colleague presented the case of Keystone. There was a felt need to put into place ecologically sound principles for sustainable harvest of these wild products. It was felt that local solutions, using indigenous knowledge and a monitoring protocol in place were important aspects. Discussions centered on the role that standards play in guaranteeing sustainable use, a guarantee both for collectors and consumers.

There was interesting display of local products from Bosnia – mainly made of herbs and a host of information on initiatives from all over the world. {SNEHLATA NATH, Keystone}

J. DE BEER

eXchange news

Around the region from January-May 2006



On the road to organic certification of NTFPs

In Bogor, Indonesia last January 17, NTFP-EP, Riak Bumi and BioCert came together in a workshop to develop community internal monitoring system for organic certification of NTFPs, in particular for forest honey. {See cover article}

LPMA



JOANNA DE ROZARIO
The District Regent of Malinau graced the well-attended forum in Malinau. The forum initiated a series of smaller workshops and forums in the area, generating much needed interest in an issue affecting thousands.

No to oil palm plantations

Indonesian government is looking at wide-scale conversion to oil palm plantations. About 3 million hectares of forest land along the border of Malaysia is at stake. Affected indigenous group, the Dayak, religious leaders and NGOs in the north eastern districts of Kalimantan strongly opposed this conversion, as agreed in a conference held last 17 January in Malinau, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

With representatives of Manalong sub-district strong feelings about the issue, an echo seminar was held from 11-13 April in the sub-district. The workshops were organised by LP3M, with support from BothEnds, Programme on Natural Livelihood Resources and Poverty Alleviation (Millieu Defensie, IUCN and WWF Netherlands) and NTFP-EP.



ARLAN M. SANTOS

Dr. Mary Stockdale launches NTFP manual in Manila

On January 23, Dr. Mary Stockdale, author of *Steps to Sustainable and Community-Based NTFP Management: A manual written with special reference to South and Southeast Asia*

formally launched the manual in the presence of some 50 representatives from the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), NGOs and academe. The event was co-hosted by the Forest Management Bureau of the DENR.

The accompanying forum was a venue for sharing of experience in resource assessment and monitoring within the larger issue of ancestral domain management. An area of extensive discussion was the steep costs involved in conducting inventories, which are standard procedure for compliance to getting a resource use permit. This was documented during Mary's workshop with Philippine partner NGO BIND (see Benedicto Sanchez's article on page 10) in 2003. The discussions amplified the need for alternative and cost-effective methods that would veer away from inventories and its inherent timber bias.

As a follow-through, a field workshop will be held in Palawan, Philippines in May 2006. It aims to develop recommendations for the more sustainable management of rattan, honey and almaciga resin.

Even in its seminal stages of writing, there had been great interest in the manual. With its release within the NTFP-EP network, interest has further grown in the past year. To make it more relevant to the work of organisations across the region, there are plans to translate it into Spanish, and possibly Bahasa Indonesia and local Indian languages.

Limited copies of the manual are still available upon request at info@ntfp.org.

NTFPs figure in Nature and Poverty in Amsterdam

On February 15, NTFP-EP along with partners from WWF-Indonesia and Walhi-FOE-Indonesia, presented on the Forests and Plantations, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Sub-programme at the Symposium on Nature and Poverty at the World Convention Centre at The Hague, Netherlands. The conference was attended by over 200 people from government, non-government and corporate sectors.

NTFP-EP was invited by the Nature and Poverty Programme, a collaborative program implemented in three continents addressing marine and forest ecosystems on conservation and poverty alleviation jointly implemented by IUCN-NL, WWF-NL, and FOE-NL.

Crissy Guerrero (NTFP-EP) focused on sustainable livelihood activities in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, especially support to partners in Papua New Guinea on developing a business plan for their organic coffee enterprise. She also highlighted further expansion of



Crissy Guerrero (in red), with other participants gathered around for discussions.

the wild honey network in Indonesia and the growing indigenous crafts marketing program in the Philippines.

Fitrian Ardiansyah (WWF-Indonesia) discussed the accomplishments of the Forests and Plantations Sub-programme to maximize resources and strengths of the members of the program to influence corporations to agree to principles and criteria on sustainable palm oil.

Rully Syumanda (Walhi-FOE-Indonesia) discussed land rights and field level advocacy activities to support national and international strategies.

What is it?

amla, *Emblica officinalis*, also called Aonla, Aola, Amalaki, Dharty and Indian Gooseberry.

The dried fruit is used in Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine for ailments like fever, liver disorder, indigestion, anemia, heart complaints and urinary problems. Amalaki is referred to in ancient text as the best medicine to prevent aging, probably because it is a rich natural source of antioxidant Vitamin C. Raw amla fruit is also used for pickles and preserves (morabbas). It is also used in making quality inks, ordinary dyes, hair dyes and shampoos and in the tanning industry.

(Source: <http://www.haryana-online.com>, <http://www.herbal-provider.com>)



RCDC

More on gums and resins

Through the Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC), work on gums and resins has been going full blast. Last 11-13 April, a workshop held in Araku, Andhra Pradesh brought together partners from ECONET (India), the SIERES Group (Vietnam) and NATRIPAL (The Philippines). {See Krishna Srinivasan's article on page 6.}

MANOJ PATANAIK/RCDC



A better practice of harvesting gum, shared by the Kovel Foundation, prescribes using forceps to pick off the gum, then carefully placing them on plastic sheets.

NOLA ANDAYA



The women of Bago, Negros Occidental weaving brightly dyed buri palm leaves for Modi products.

EP Partners Visit Indian Partners

From 14-25 April, immediately after the gums and resins workshop in Araku, the two regional participants split up. While SIERES Group/CBD member Lai Tung Quan proceeded to the Keystone campus in Kotagiri for an intensive on-the-job training program {see article on page 7}, Nerto Colili of NATRIPAL (Palawan) joined an RCDC team on visits to women-led NTFP cooperatives in the Southern districts of Orissa.

Keystone at IFOAM Conference on Organic Wild Production

Last 3-4 May, Keystone's Snehlata Nath and Mathew John participated in the 1st IFOAM Conference on Organic Wild Production in Bosnia and Herzegovina. IFOAM, through its programs and conferences is laying the groundwork for the further development of organic agriculture and its markets worldwide. It also provides a market guarantee for integrity of organic claims and facilitates trade in organic products. The conference acknowledged the need to understand the various initiatives for NTFPs, non-wood forest products and wild collection. {Read Snehlata Nath's impressions, page 3.}

EU-Modi Crafts project wraps up

The Modern Indigenous (MODI) project supported by the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines through its Small Projects Facility ended last March 31. Through

the project, an Exposition Mission to Europe was conducted and linkages with potential buyers were established. At the same time, the capacities of the producer groups in the communities of Oriental Mindoro, Negros, Palawan, Bukidnon, and Palawan were strengthened in the areas of production, product design and development, trading and marketing. This has resulted in increased incomes and improved social conditions for the indigenous peoples and rural artisans. The project also helped in boosting the sales of NTFP-EP's marketing arm, the CustomMade Crafts Center as well as in clarifying its direction and its own fair trade principles and practices. {RUTH CANLAS, NTFP-EP}

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A screenshot of the homepage of the website www.ntfp.org. The page features a green header with the title 'NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS' and a sub-header 'A platform for indigenous peoples and local communities'. Below the header, there are several sections: 'About NTFP-EP', 'Partners', 'Gathering News', 'Information Resources', 'Programmes & Activities', 'Links', and 'Contact us'. There are also sections for 'Voices from the Forest' and 'Publications & Resources'. On the right side, there are images of people working with bamboo and a section titled 'On the logging road' with a photo of a person working in a forest.

www.ntfp.org gets a new look

Our website, www.ntfp.org has gotten a facelift! It now shares a similar look to this bulletin *Voices from the Forest*. We thank our Dutch partner ProFound for generously hosting and managing the website since its inception in the early 1990s. With the turnover of its management to the Manila-based secretariat, we have a lot to live up to indeed!

Visit the site now and find our publications, more news, and photos. We encourage you to interact in our bulletin board and share your own contributions, your choice newsbits, articles and photos that you feel may be of interest to others in the NTFP field. Sign up to be part of the mailing list by sending an email to info@ntfp.org

First bee museum

Dedicated to indigenous Asian bees and the collecting of honey and wax is scheduled to open in the Nilgiris (India) at the end of July of this year. The museum is an initiative of EP partner Keystone and it will share the same premises with Keystone's 3rd Green Shop in the hill resort of Ooty. You are invited to contribute ideas or bee-related items to the museum.



J. DE BEER

WORKSHOP ON GUMS & RESINS, 11-13 APRIL 2006

Learning from the gum pickers of Andhra Pradesh

By KRISHNA SRINIVASAN, ECONET, Pune, India

A cordial invitation from Manoj Patanaik (Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, Orissa) and a hop and jump journey from Pune to Bombay to Hyderabad to Vishakapatnam brought me to the YMCA in Vishakapatnam right across the beautiful sea. A big warm welcome from Snehlata Nath of Keystone, some quick introductions with people whom I was meeting for the first time, the joy of meeting old friends like Siddappa Setty and Narsimha Hegde from Karnataka and some extra sweet tea paved way for another journey to the venue of the workshop. The two-hour journey by road was filled with chatter and enjoying the sight of mango-laden trees along the road. The venue was a resort named Jungle bells, owned and managed by Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Department, located in a beautiful forest still regaining its natural state.

Policies and legal instruments set the tone

The first session focused on policies governing the trade and management of gums and resins. This session was chaired by Mr. A.K. Singh, the Managing Director of Minor Forest Produce Federation in Chattisgarh. In their state, certain gums are nationalised forest produce – trade is regulated, prices are fixed by the government and a purchaser is appointed by the government. There are certain gums which are non-nationalised and are traded in the open market. Representatives from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra shared policies governing the trade and management of gums and resins in their respective states.

The similarities and spaces for rationalization of policies to support the trade and management of gums and resins were hotly debated. The sound of the lunch gong persuaded us to bring a logical conclusion to our enthusiastic debates!

Harvest it but sustainably

Our post-lunch session highlighted a bouquet of sustainable harvesting practices and technologies available for tapping gums and resins.

Dr. M.V. Rao, a scientist from Vijaywada, initiated the dialogue by sharing his work with the Girijan Cooperative Corporation of Andhra Pradesh, an institution mandated by the State Government to procure and sell gum karaya (gum from *Sterculia urens*). The highlight was the turnaround effected by the joint efforts of the gum pickers, Dr. Rao, the GCC team and Kovel Foundation, an NGO based in Vishakapatnam. It rose from a stage of accumulated dead stock of gum karaya to one of the most profitably managed gum karaya procurement and sale mechanisms in the country. This was in response to the situation of dead stock of gum karaya lying in the

warehouses of GCC during the 1990s. One gets the feeling of the right people, coming together at the right time with the right perspective from this experience.

Kovel is involved in training gum pickers which has had a dual impact of strengthening the livelihood of gum pickers and a better quality gum karaya being available for exports.

The representatives of Kovel shared a better practice of gum harvesting that they had developed. The girth of the tree is measured by lovingly hugging the tree – if it is not easy to hug then the girth is of the right size. The blaze on the tree should not be more than 15cms and it should be at a height of 3 feet from the ground; subsequent blazes should be made one above the other. In plucking the gum, it is best to use of forceps instead of your hands. Then put the gum in a plastic sheet which has small holes for the air to pass through, and finally use a clean basket for

transporting the gum. The entire ritual is like a nurse handling a baby! In the normal course of harvesting, none of these parameters are taken into consideration, resulting in the early death of the tree.

Presentations by Dr. A.K. Pandey from Tropical Forest Research Institute (TFRI) and Dr. Rakhi Yadav of State Forestry Research Institute (SFRI), Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh took us deeper into the dialogue on sustainable harvesting of gums and resins. The harvesting practices of gums and resins from different tree species like *Sterculia urens* and *Boswellia serrata* were shared by both. The use of Ethepron (chloroethyl phosphonic acid), a growth regulator for increasing the productivity of gum was put forth by Dr. Pandey. The presentation of Mr. Soham Pandya from Maharashtra also focused on the use of Ethepron for gum harvesting. A lot of heated debates was triggered off over Ethepron, raising the question whether the use a chemical/ production enhancer could be termed as eco-friendly. We still do not know what and how the tree are affected due to use of this chemical. Dr. Rao posited that the quality of gum from trees which had been treated with Ethepron was not up to the prescribed standards.

The first day's session was crawling towards an end but we decided that the pending presentations could be made first thing the next morning. Informal discussions and meetings in dyads and triads continued throughout the remaining part of the day.

The next day...

We began the day with a trek for bird watching in the forest around the resort. It was quite a rejuvenating experience albeit we missed the birds as we were late and they had their own priorities!

The workshop began with pending presentations. Mr. Venugopal from Laya, Vishakapatnam and Mr. Narsimha Hegde from Prakruti, Karnataka continued discussions on sustainable harvesting of gums and resins. We indulged in some warm debates during the presentations.

The market throws some more light...

The next session, chaired by Mr. A.K. Pandey, focused on national and international market trends of gums and resins. Jenne de Beer (NTFP-EP) started with the international scenario. Mr. Lai Tung Quan from the Institute of Tropical Biology, Vietnam mainly delved on the legalities involved in the gums and resins scenario in Vietnam. He shared that gums and resins can be exploited legally everywhere out of strictly-protective, ecological rehabilitation sub-zones and except for endangered, precious and rare species. Forest owners make self-

TOP: A better gum harvesting technique demonstrated by gum pickers, as developed by Kovel Foundation. Looking on is Nerto Colili of NATRIPAL, Palawan, Philippines. RIGHT: Dr. Rao demonstrates how pure gum karaya reacts in water.

decisions of the extent of exploitation (see his article on his India visit in sidebar, next page).

Likewise our friend Mr. Nerto Colili representing NATRIPAL presented the scene vis-à-vis management and trade of resins and gum in Philippines. He shared the harvesting practices adopted by the community and the aspects of conservation which the community had adopted are interesting to note and learn from. Challenges the community face are that of migrant concessionaires having control over the resources and additional management guidelines dictated by the government agencies.

The Indian canvas of market trends for gums and resins was painted by the Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, Orissa. Mr. Avinash from the RCDC team along with inputs from Mr. Manoj Patanaik did the honours. The discussions that followed the presentation filled in the gaps and completed the picture.

The export scenario of gum was shared by a young exporter from Hyderabad representing D.K.Enterprises. He shared with the group the concerns they as an export house have vis-à-vis gum supply and quality. He happened to be my roommate and his business sense is as sharp as his sense of humour!

The session continued post-lunch on strategies for market intervention and enterprise development as cornerstones for developing the market of gums and resins were debated. The floor was thrown open for discussion and everyone participated vociferously. The tradition of informal talks over refreshments and dinner was adhered to by all of us after the workshop sessions were concluded.

Action in the field

The third day was marked for learning from and understanding the gum pickers. The better practice of harvesting gum karaya developed by Kovel Foundation was demonstrated. Of the two groups, my group had to climb a steep hill to reach our gum tree. Once there, the gum picker showed the steps to choose the tree, prepare for making the blaze, actually make the blaze, prepare for collection and finally pick the gum from the wound in the tree. The entire experience was like watching a film. In the entire display of the harvesting practice it was interesting to watch the way the way in which the tree was treated (hugging the tree for finding the girth size, dusting the tree with a cloth!). The experience throws before all of us the challenge of minimizing the impact of our footprint on the belly of Mother Nature.

Inching towards a conclusion

Back on firmer ground, we deliberated on the ways and means to take ahead the discussions and ideas born in the workshop. The workshop concluded with a warm vote of thanks.

Meeting old friends and taking our discussions on NTFPs further, learning about the different dimensions of gums and resins, and interacting with a variety of stakeholders in this field was a very refreshing experience for me. It reinforces the need for a collective, ecologically sensitive and economically sound response for efficient management and development of trade in NTFPs. This could in turn feed into the designing of community-oriented policies and other frameworks. Fingers crossed!

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SNEHLATA NATH

A trip to Keystone

By LAI TUNG QUAN, SIERES Group, Vietnam

It was my first time in India. After a three-day workshop on gums and resins at the Araku Valley, I went to Kotagiri, where Keystone Foundation is based.

Kotagiri is a small town located in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve. It is quite a long way, but it is a satisfying journey, especially if one is working in the field of community development. My experience with Keystone impressed me so much that I recommend a visit if you want to work directly with communities, share in their experiences and feel difficulties that they are facing. It is the reason why Keystone Foundation locates its head office here.

Our group, the SIERES Group, is setting up an organization called the Center for Biodiversity and Development (CBD) whose foci is to work for indigenous communities. Many things are new to us. Meetings among the NTFP-EP and our group members led to my being assigned to visit Keystone – to learn their experiences, especially how they work to become a strong and effective organisation. More importantly, it was intended that I get acquainted with marketing activities for NTFPs, a very new field for our group, too.

At the first day at Keystone, I was surprised with their turnover in 2004-2005 of approximately Rs 2 million (about USD 45,455) from three Green Shops selling NTFPs made by tribal peoples in the Nilgiris. Keystone highly appreciates these products and encourages the tribals to harvest in a sustainable manner. Keystone pays 10 percent higher than local traders for NTFPs that are harvested sustainably.

Keystone Foundation has built a total six field centers for six NTFP-exploited areas in the Nilgiris. These centers function as training grounds for tribal people in sustainable techniques of harvesting, processing, cleaning and packing NTFPs. The products are sold in by Keystone through its Green Shops.

Nowadays, *Last Forest* is the trademark carried by NTFPs supplied by Keystone. *Last Forest* has become well known in Tamil Nadu and is recognised both as a product of local tribal people as well as a project of Keystone. This has helped to keep tribal people within their traditional land, and retain their own customs of using NTFPs from the forest.

Forest honey is a product harvested by the tribal people in the Nilgiris and one of the most important NTFPs that Keystone has been dealing with. The tribal groups, the Kurumbas and Irulas have harvested rock-bee honey for hundreds of years. Their products used to be unappreciated due to unsuitable harvesting techniques which did not exclude impurities from honey. Through Keystone, they learned more about sustainable, clean and hygienic techniques of harvesting and management. Only honey harvested in this way is accepted and marketed by Keystone.

Through the conservation and development project "Canarium conservation," it was learned that tribal people used to unsustainably exploit this resin despite bans issued by the state government. Based on its research, Keystone has warned the tribals of the danger of their unsustainable activities to *Canarium* trees in the forest and have convinced them to plant *Canarium* in their gardens. The resin produced from trees planted from the gardens are presently marketed by Keystone.

The lessons I have learnt from the Nilgiris would be very useful in the establishment of CBD and will surely be an exciting topic for the group's coming meeting in Vietnam.

Finally, I wish Keystone to be always healthy and become much stronger in their activities. I am wishing this not only for our motivated friends at Keystone but also for a better future of the tribal people in the Nilgiris who always trust Keystone and want to live in their green forests and traditional land.

I thank the NTFP-EP and Keystone for financial support and many other valuable assistance for this trip. Hope to see you all soon in Vietnam.

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P3M is a fairly new organisation, hardly five months old and undertaking their very first major conference on a highly sensitive issue in the province of Kalimantan, if not the whole of Indonesia. The government has earmarked 3 million hectares of forest

and fields on the border of Kalimantan and Malaysia for palm oil plantations which has sparked major debates and opposition across Indonesia. Appropriately, the seminar was on "The impact of large scale palm oil plantation on NTFP production and swidden cultivation in the district of Malinau, East Kalimantan."

LP3M pulled off a remarkable feat in organising the seminar with only three core staff with assistance from two part-time staff. LP3M also has a partner in "crime" which is a little unorthodox, namely the Catholic church. Six priests from the local diocese assisted LP3M in chairing and ensuring the smooth flow of the seminar. About 200 local community members, leaders and cultural leaders from Malinau and Nunukan districts in East Kalimantan attended the seminar in January 2006.

The unofficial start of the seminar was the night before where mass was held followed by personal introductions of the participants and organizers. There was also dance and song and this helped everyone get to know each other before the heavy discussions began the next day.

The opening of the seminar was officiated by the District Regent, a rare event in view that the District Regent is supporting companies to start clearing forest for large-scale palm oil plantations in Malinau.

PALM OIL in MALINAU, EAST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

new sky, new earth, a new kalimantan

by JOANNA DE ROZARIO, NTFP-EP

The seminar was introduced to him a few weeks earlier, where he learned that Malinau district was part of the NTFP-EP's video on eaglewood harvesting and cultivation.

When he reached the seminar he was greeted by the village heads and organizing committee and

accompanied by traditional dances from the Dayak and Flores ethnic groups.

However, the District Regent spurred on his support for the federal government's decision on palm oil with the main argument that it was good for local economy. Later the Head of Forestry in Malinau provided statistics that indicated much of Malinau district was covered in forest and there were no palm oil plantations yet in Malinau. Since Malinau district has claimed to be a Conservation District, this should be a good indication of its success. Instead, the Head of Forestry stressed the lack of palm oil plantations as a sign that Malinau district was economically behind. Specific questions on palm oil plantations by the local communities were not answered or rather side stepped for the main general claim of local economic good and there was an abundance of forest left to be exploited.

After the state's view was put forward, a representative from the Catholic church spoke on the church's position on the issue. It was inspiring to hear that the church sees us as stewards of all God's creations and has actively put forward a programme to return Kalimantan to its heyday of natural wonders. It has taken on the action to both green and preserve

Participants from villages came 200-strong to discuss palm oil's threat to their livelihood



JOHANIS JOHN VIRUS



JOANNA DE ROZARIO

Kalimantan's natural resources through its "Plant a Thousand Trees" movement.

The next day, representatives from Padma, an Indonesian NGO, and Pacos, a Malaysian NGO shared the experiences of local communities facing land evictions due to palm oil conversion and those whose land had been converted to palm oil. Padma shared cases in West Kalimantan where palm oil conversion has been rapid and almost complete and the many economic, social and environmental problems faced by the local communities and transmigrants who have been relocated to the area due to the palm oil plantations. This was later supported by a local community member from that area, one of the few villagers still holding on to his land and fighting off palm oil conversion. He describes his land as an island in the sea of palm oil trees and shared the struggles he faced due to this change. When Pacos shared its local experience, the participants felt that Malaysian courts could be used to resolve land rights conflicts as it was much less corrupt and there were more explicit laws in place as compared to Indonesia. However, the palm oil plantations were owned by individuals from West Malaysia and very little economic benefit returned to the local states and districts in East Malaysia which can be seen in the relatively poorer infrastructure and economic development in those respective states.

The seminar continued with valuable information on the development and potential of rattan and eaglewood as economic alternatives to palm oil. The cultivation and resource management of both rattan and eaglewood in Malinau was shared in detail in the hopes it could be replicated in other places.

Finally, the seminar ended with a joint recommendation by its participants addressed to relevant federal and district government officials. The recommendation stated that the undersigned local communities oppose the development of large-scale palm oil plantations and seek the support of the state to develop both product and markets of presently practiced swidden cultivation and NTFP production.

The seminar was long with a heavy topic but the people left armed not only with their certificates of attendance but with new knowledge. Although they were delighted in receiving these certificates for most of them it was their first time ever attending a seminar. But the smiles were also due to the new solidarity found among the different villages that attended the seminar and finally a means of addressing their problem.

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JOANNA DE ROZARIO

A welcome of traditional song and dance from the Dayak ethnic group (top). The District Regent is welcomed to the event (inset).

A Follow Up in Patal Village

by JOHANIS JOHN VIRIUS, Secretary, LP3M

In Nunukan district, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, along the Sembakung River from Mansalong sub-district to the upper reaches of the river, we will find a group of villages named Patal Village (Kelompok Desa Patal).

From 11-13 April, LP3M collaborated with the Mansalong local parish, Sawit Watch and NTFP-EP to organize a seminar on the impacts of large-scale palm oil plantation in Mansalong sub-district. This was a follow-up from the seminar organized in Malinau district in January 2006 as representatives from the Mansalong sub district strongly felt that the experience and information from the earlier seminar would greatly benefit the people in Mansalong sub-district. The seminar was organised to challenge the government's policy on the expansion of large-scale palm oil plantation in Kalimantan and to simultaneously socialize the results of the grand synod of the Indonesian Catholic church (2005) to conserve and restore the forest of Kalimantan.

The majority of people in the six villages in Patal are from the Dayak Agabag sub-ethnic group. They were formerly called Orang Tenggalan (Tenggalan People). Their daily activities include gathering *gaharu* (eaglewood) and rattan from the forest and cultivation of non-irrigated fields. The women, apart from gathering firewood along the edge of the river, make handicrafts like mats and baskets from rattan. The Agabag people's staple diet is *llui*, made from cassava. Rice is only eaten when they are in the forest in search of *gaharu*.

The opening of the seminar was attended by around 500 people from the villages in the sub-district. The seminar was organized just before the Holy Week as many of the Agabag people were Catholics. However not only Catholics but other Christian denominations and Muslims attended the seminar. It was organized just before Holy Week as the villages that were located far away from one another, gather together in Patal for Holy Week. However the seminar proper in the following two days was joined by over 100 village leaders, elders, key community members and cultural leaders.

The seminar was similar to the one held in January whereby views and experience were shared on the negative impact of large-scale palm oil plantations in other parts of Indonesia. Another similarity was the enthusiasm of the local people to participate, understand and resolve the problems they are now facing in Patal with the palm oil companies converting their communal forest into palm oil plantations.

A secondary student who actively participated in the seminar, Henricus Leven strongly felt a need to be present at the seminar, knowing that the environmental problems plaguing Kalimantan must be solved not only for his benefit, but for his people and his land.



When is enough, really enough?

By BENEDICTO Q. SÁNCHEZ, Broad Initiatives for Negros Development (BIND), The Philippines

When is enough, really enough? This question confounds natural resource managers when exploiting forest resources, timber or non-timber.

This is precisely the question that *Bagong Silang-Marcelo Katilingban sang Sustenidong Mangunguma* (BSMKSM) faced when in 2002 it listed the non-timber resources to be extracted from surrounding forests for its community-based enterprises under an NC-IUCN-assisted project. This people's organisation holds the first Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) in Western Visayas.

The PO forged in 1996 a CBFMA with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It has the support of their respective barangay and municipal councils, and was assisted by various NGOs and organised by BIND. The area covers 1,000.60 hectares and encompasses two barangays, Bagong Silang and Marcelo.

In 2002, BIND held a participatory rural assessment. Using the FAO's market analysis and development framework, the participants selected, identified and ranked 32 non-timber species, which included grasses, bamboos, tree leaves, barks, ferns, orchids and rattan.

The process identified tree ferns, orchids, wild bamboo and rattan for utilisation and inventory. DENR clarified, however, that as an endangered and critical resource, the agency has banned tree fern harvesting. Then the market-savvy DENR representative pointed out that wild orchid species cannot compete with their domesticated and cultured cousins. After a heated discussion, the people's organisation members agreed

that domesticated bamboos can replace the wild running bamboos for handicrafts.

Eventually, the selection whittled the choice to rattan. Official policy requires that before utilisation, DENR has to grant a resource use permit based on a systematic sampling inventory using 5% sampling intensity.

Measuring sustainable harvesting thresholds

The first step for the inventory was to define in a community map the rattan harvest areas. The survey revealed poorly-delineated markers, which compelled the crew (composed of representatives from BIND, the PO and DENR) to use boulders, standing trees or rivers as natural witness monuments to determine the boundary lines. The rattan inventory area covered 240 hectares of secondary growth forests, with elevation varying from 800 masl to 1,100 masl.

Several international and national experts helped with the inventory designs. Dr. Mary Stockdale held an orientation and field workshop on participatory inventory. Her exercises guided the community in identifying resource species to be included in the inventory (including information on abundance, population structure and total available yield of the resource species), crafting the sampling design, organising the inventory teams, supplies and equipment and overall, training them on-the-job and on-site.

Dr. Aida Lapis of the Environmental Research and Development Bureau pushed for the strip cruise procedure to determine the extent, distribution and quantity of rattan resources in the area. At 240 hectares, the final design resulted in 12 sample points of 10x1,000 meters, each representing 1 hectare each, based on the required sampling intensity of 5%.

Measured were 15 species of the identified 17 clumped and single-stem rattans, divided into *linghods* (juveniles) and *gulang* (mature), as delineated by community-based rattan users. The *linghods* were defined as stems not more than 4 meters. Visual estimates of the single-stems and the clumps' total length were used.

The inventory crews consisted of 32 persons, divided into 19 men and 8 women. Each team composed of 7 crewmembers: the team leader, compassperson, brusher, two chainpersons and two mensurators.

The activity divided the tasks between men and women. While the compass and brushing were done by men and women, a crew had a woman for the rear chain. Save for one male, the mensurators were men and women, the recorders and crew leaders female and male BIND staff. The over-all head of the inventory was BIND's forester, María Theresa Brunia. A DENR forest ranger helped with the various tasks.

The crews averaged three strips daily, depending on the ruggedness of the terrain and the density of mature rattans. The 15 rattan specimens collected during the inventory were sent to ERDB for identification.

The inventory output came up with a stand-stock-table which served as the DENR's basis for determining BSMKSM's annual allowable cut.

More requirements and paperwork

Yet since rattan utilisation fell under the category of a major non-timber forest resource, the Environmental Management Bureau Region 6 asserted that BSMKSM should first get an Environmental Compliance Certificate under the rules of the Initial Environmental Examination for Community-Based Forest Resources Utilization of the Philippine Environmental Impact

Statement System before utilisation.

None of the previous consultation workshops and technical working group raised concerns on impact assessments. The project was wrapping up its remaining activities, however, when the EMB pressed its concerns.

BSMKSM fulfilled the DENR inventory and ECC requirements. After more than a year of delay, BSMKSM in the presence of DENR and BIND began harvesting 87 poles of rattan on September 20 and 21, 2005 and started processing them into finished products like baskets and trays, to be exhibited at Gateway Cubao in November. In partnership with the NTFP Task Force, it could possibly be exported to Europe in 2006.

However, Salvador Benedicto Mayor, Cynthia de la Cruz ordered the confiscation. She was one of the main accused persons in authority on the illegal logging hotspot in Negros Occidental. Bypassing her office during the harvests was the official reason for the confiscation. She also denied that her office received the necessary documents from DENR Region VI. Most likely under instruction from the town hall, BSMKSM member and Bagong Silang Barangay Captain Clemente Bacordo himself confiscated the rattan poles. A surprise move, since he attended the meeting discussing the harvest plan.

It wasn't just Bacordo who flip-flopped, however. Reversing himself, then-DENR Sec. Michael Defensor stopped the rattan cutting upon the request of de la Cruz. OIC CENRO Joan Gerangaya forthwith informed BIND Executive Director Eva de la Merced to relay to BSMKSM to halt the harvests.

It is nearly two years since DENR granted BSMKSM the resource use permits. Yet, the harvested rattan still languishes somewhere in the Salvador Benedicto town hall, unused commercially and most likely, rotting.

The experience proves the observation that while nature provides the grist, it is the mill of social organisations, individual decision makers, and markets – not nature – that determines that ecological requirements of species and ecosystems are met. At the end of the day, sustainability greatly depends not so much on biology but on political, socioeconomic, and institutional factors.

Simplified resource assessments

Apart from policy, the recognition that many NTFP resource bases are in decline and that increasing pressures commercial demand for NTFPs indicate that traditional management practices are insufficient to sustain the resource base.

There is thus a demand for formal monitoring process to guide the allocation and management of their shrinking biological resources, seeking ways to accommodate the new market-based market needs of traditional forest users while "maintaining the integrity of the ecosystems that the protected areas were created to safeguard."

This can be done by PO members if the monitoring process uses qualitative methods required by regulatory bodies like the DENR are not too demanding of their time and money, and that are based primarily on local knowledge.

We should note that tropical forests are characterized by a large number of tree species per unit area, occurring at densities at one or two trees per hectare. BIND's 1996 forest resource inventory for the

community forestry program in the NNFR bear this out. The activity counted 12 dipterocarp and 138 non-dipterocarp species spread over 85 sample plots of 534.55 hectares at a bewildering density of 625 trees per hectare with DBH of 20 cm and above.

The immense diversity, however, implies that resources would be difficult for harvesters to locate, require long trekking, produce a low yield per unit, area, and are extremely prone to overharvesting.

Yet existing policies recognize only "scientific, expert-driven" knowledge, as reflected in the demand for biometric rigor of quantitative inventories of DAO 29, Series of 1989 over vast areas and comply with the Initial Environmental Examination Checklist for Community-Based Forest Resources Utilization Projects.

To come up with the DENR required comprehensive forest management plans like the Community Resource Management Framework are anchored on such quantitative, scientific—and costly activities.

Take the BSMKSM rattan inventory. Of the 240 ha that was sampled at 5% sampling intensity (S.I.), the cost approximately amounted to PhP160,000. The inventory team members from the community required roughly 200 person-days.

If 1,000 hectares were to be sampled at 5% S.I., this could cost, at the same rate per hectare, PhP670,000 and 830 person days. Clearly, the DENR requirement for 5% S.I. is particularly onerous, especially for larger CBFMA areas, and doesn't make any economic sense. And ecologically, too, for that matter.

These stringent requirements provide a negative incentive for CBFMA holders to implement these requirements at all. Subsistence communities cannot afford to

bankroll any of these activities, much less understand the process.

It comes not as a surprise that many CBFMA holders, not being trained in such methods and furthermore, not being able to underwrite the costs, are non-performers. If anything, this results in the rattan users in the province feeling that their only feasible option is to forego any of these requirements and harvest the resource, preferably in unsustainably higher volumes.

So, when asked, how much is enough, it's not just how much should be harvested, it's also how intense the sampling intensity, how much paperwork needs to be done, how much should be spent.

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PHOTO PREVIOUS PAGE: A trek up the mountains of Negros. Dr. Mary Stockdale in foreground. **THIS PAGE:** The group looks on as Mary marks a tree for the inventory.



my goodness! HONEY THAT ISN'T

The European Commission, a few years ago, redefined what honey is. From now on, only the produce of European hybrid *Apis mellifera* bees is considered 'honey'. Therefore, the stuff, even of the best quality, produced by such bee species as *Apis dorsata*, *A. cerana* and *Trigona spp.* is not recognized as genuine honey anymore and cannot be traded as such within the EU. [Source: FAO Non-Wood News]

free book and Video Service



Eaglewood. *Gaharu* or Eaglewood is a well-known source of high-quality incense. The Chinese describe it as a "nice, profound yet balanced" fragrance. It is formed when damaged Aquilaria trees produce a fragrant protective resin that gradually hardens and turns into black lumps.

Due to its high price in the market (at least US\$2000/kg), the substance is sought out by many. Systematic hunting for the species starts from Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua New Guinea. The high market pressure has led to uncontrolled, destructive and unsustainable exploitation of the species, threatening its existence.

The film describes a unique sustainable harvesting system as practised by the Punan of Malinau, East Kalimantan. It also looks into how *gaharu* is used in reforestation.

Produced by Telapak and the NTFP-EP (2006). Copies (DVD or VCD) can be obtained by July through Ridzki Sigit, Telapak, Jl. Palem Putri III No. 1-3, Komp. Taman Yasmin Sektor V, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. Tel: +62 0251 7159902. Email: rrsigit@telapak.org. URL: www.telapak.org



Mangangabol Ta Mintapod (The Hinabol Weavers of Mintapod). 2005.

Tracing its roots to when their early ancestors made the first piece of *hinabol*, the Higaonon tribe of Mintapod recounts

how abaca fibers are transformed into this special textile. Like all things in their lives, its transformation is steeped in Higaonon custom and tradition.

With the blessings of the tribal leadership and their ancestors (see *Not By Timber Alone*, May 2006) what otherwise would have remained in oral tradition has made its way into the pages of this booklet.

The booklet is a loving tribute to Higaonon youth, the future cultural bearers of their tribe. It was written in behalf of the Higaonon Tribe of Mintapod by Benny Cumatang and Arlan M. Santos/NTFP Task Force. Its publication was supported by the Siemenpuu Foundation and the Netherlands Committee-IUCN.

Limited copies are available from the NTFP Task-Force. Contact Arlan Santos, NTFP-TF. Email: yengsantos@yahoo.com



Voices from the Forest, Khmer Translation.

Working with new partners in Cambodia

has opened new doors on NTFP

information sharing. Through the CFAC under Community Forestry International, a Khmer translation of the film is underway. The original film was jointly produced by Telapak and the NTFP-EP late last year.

Publications and videos are distributed free of charge to our partners and contacts as far as stocks allow.

on our calendar

MAY

10: Informal networking meeting of NGOs in Cambodia. Co-hosted by the Community Forestry International.

23-28: Workshop on documenting and evaluating traditional methods of NTFP harvesting and management in Palawan, the Philippines. Dr. Mary Stockdale serves as resource person.

JUNE

2: Forum on Multi-media for Community Advocacy in Natural Resource Management in Manila. Dr. Jon Corbett (University of Victoria, Canada) will share his experiences on participatory multi-media approaches. Mr. Ridzki Sigit of Telapak will discuss how they use film as a critical tool in investigating and monitoring of issues on natural resource management.

4-6: Virtual Academy to meet in Manila

12-15: NTFP-EP Board set to meet in Manila, The Philippines

JULY

1-8: Visit of artisans group P3R (Kedang Pahu, East Kalimantan) to Bali, Yogyakarta and Jakarta to study the market in those centres of the crafts trade.

10: Crafts Marketing & Design Workshop at Dian Niaga Ecotraders, Jakarta with P3R, and resource persons, including Nola Andaya of CustomMade Crafts Center, Manila.

AUGUST

25-29: Manila-based CustomMade Crafts Center will once again participate in Tendence Lifestyle in Frankfurt, Germany. The Modi Collection 2006 will be exhibited.



Lulu Delgado of the CMCC manning the booth during one of their trade fairs in the Philippines

SEPTEMBER

Late Sep: Workshop on establishing a certifying council for tinalak, the traditional textile of the T'boli tribe. Sponsored by the Philippines' NTFP Task Force and LASIWWAI. Present will be T'boli weavers and representatives of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts and the local government of Lake Sebu.

OCTOBER

Annual Crafts Conference sponsored by the CMCC, Manila.

Late Oct: First National NTFP Conference, Cambodia, Phnom Penh. Organized by Community Forestry International and the NTFP-EP.

NOVEMBER

Training of Keystone staff at BRDC, Hanoi. (Tentative)

colofon

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The NTFP-EP is a collaborative network of about 40 non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations in South and Southeast Asia. We work with forest-based communities to strengthen their capacity in sustainable management of natural resources.