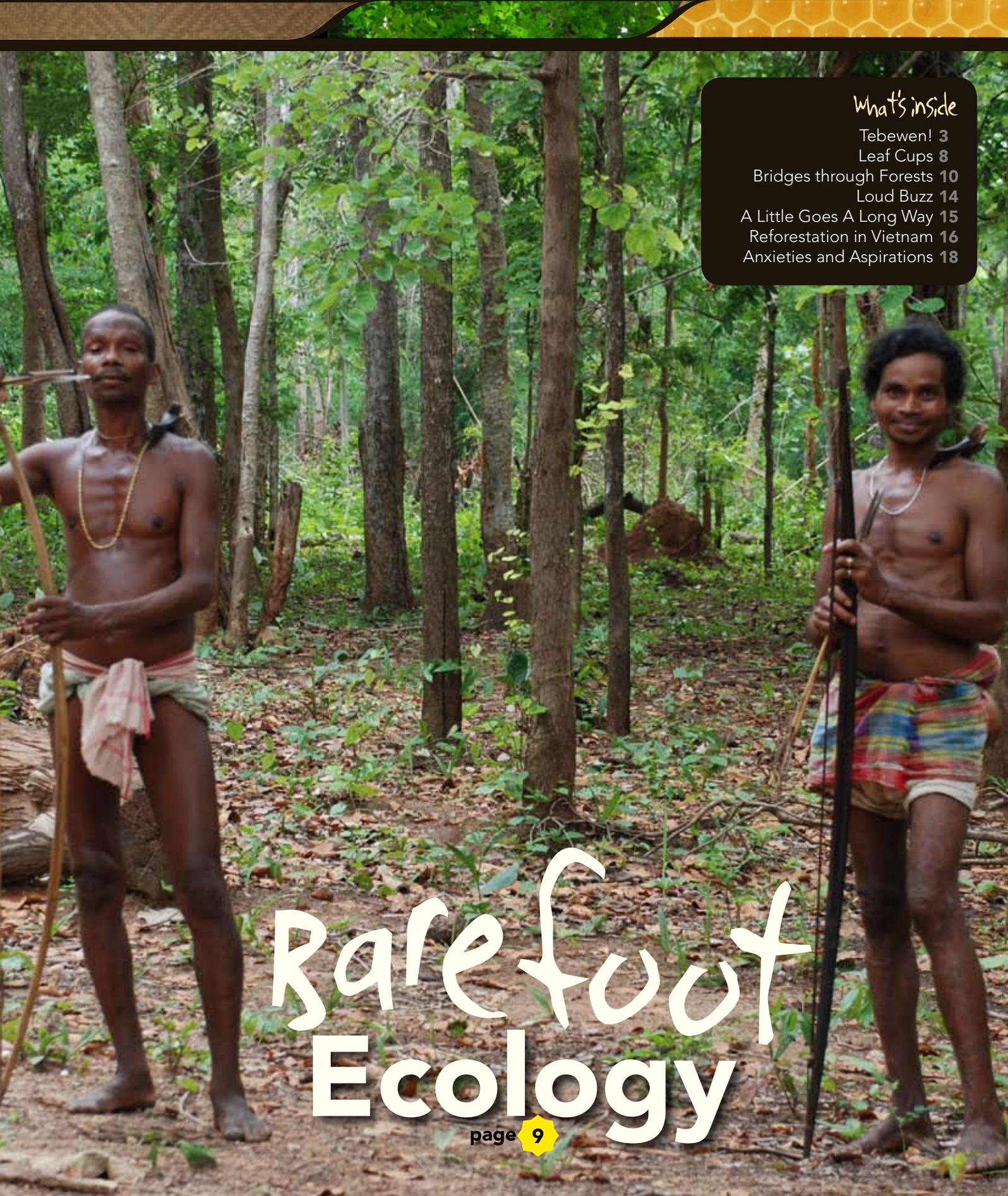


# Voices from the Forest

Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia



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# Rare Foot Ecology

# Voices from the Forest

**Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia (NTFP-EP)** is a collaborative network of over 60 civil society organizations (CSOs) working with forest-based communities to strengthen their capacity in the sustainable management of natural resources in the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia, with initial contacts made in Bangladesh.

**Voices from the Forest** is the official newsletter of NTFP-EP. It is released biannually and contains regional and country forests and people updates from the NTFP-EP network.

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Ecologists teach us about the living world and how humans relate to the environment around us. But **barefoot ecologists** see connections we don't see.

We tribute this issue to **barefoot ecologists**, the unsung heroes of the forest, who are unlearned by academic measurements but survive in, adapt to, understand and manage forests in a way no outsider can (Page 9).

In the Philippines, many barefoot ecologists can be found among the Negrito people. Through photos we relate the colorful cultural revival activity calling due attention to the true keepers of the forest (Page).

Diverse forest ecosystems are being promoted as well by Vietnam partners through native tree reforestation. This has only been possible with the involvement and knowledge of the local people. As a result, birds and other small mammals are back in the forest! (Page 16).

But with the new phenomenon of climate change, it appears that **new** problems need a mix of **old** and **new** solutions. As "Voices From the Forest" editors want to hear the "voices" of different sectors on this issue, thus Cambodian government and civil society organizations share their thoughts (page 10-13) as communities in REDD Plus sites relate their own perspectives (page 18-19).

As for other updates, we share with you crafts enterprise stories in Indonesia and Malaysia; from advanced trainings to sales in the land of the rising sun!

These are exciting times, and NTFP-EP is also excited to administer the Partnership Fund for Community-based NTFP Initiatives in South and Southeast Asia; whether it is about conserving one dwindling resource or fighting for tracks of forests in pristine areas (page 15).

Join us as we journey through the diverse stories of this issue!

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## BORNEO CHIC GOES TO JAPAN FASHION WEEK 2012!

Written by: The Toyota Foundation

Two ladies from Kalimantan, Ms. Alty and Ms. Puput participated in "JFW International Fashion Fair" (July 18-20), held at Tokyo Bigsite, Ariake. They were invited by the government of Indonesia to exhibit their products.

Their brand "Borneo Chic" presents bags and other items using traditional handcraft materials such as rattan, water reed, and naturally dyed Ikat. Their group has been a recipient of Toyota Foundation Asian Neighbors Program (Project representative: Mr. Panthom Sidi Priyandoko). The project finished in 2011, but the group continued to develop their activities. They now run a shop in Jakarta, and the products enjoy popularity among both locals and foreigners.

It was a good news for us to know that the group continues to grow, and utilize their traditional handcraft skills to improve their standard of living. Their group has been a recipient of Toyota Foundation Asian Neighbors Program (Project representative: Mr. Panthom Sidi Priyandoko). The project finished in 2011, but the group continued to develop their activities. They now run a shop in Jakarta, and the products enjoy popularity among both locals and foreigners. It was a good news for us to know that the group continues to grow, and utilize their traditional handcraft skills to improve their standard of living.

From: [/www.toyotafound.or.jp/english/00topics/topics02/2012-0720-1450-4.html](http://www.toyotafound.or.jp/english/00topics/topics02/2012-0720-1450-4.html)



## GOOD CRAFTERNOONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Written by: Merry Tobing

This is my second visit to the Philippines to learn from NTFP-TF and their partners. The first time was in November 2011, together with my colleague from Yayasan Dian Tama and Borneo Chic. We learned about CMCC experience of operations and of their cooperative experience with their partners (Department of Trade and Industry, NGOs community enterprises and subcontract businesses). We also met various partners in Bukidnon in Mindanao, weaver communities (SUNFLOWER), NGO counterparts (FVCTLDC) and marketing counterparts (PAMAHANDI & LINDUNGAWAN). We also did a "Sales Call" to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) where the Sales Personnel of CMCC was able to get an order for thousands of pieces!

This time, with Patrick of JOAS (Network of indigenous peoples in Malaysia), we visited 2 places in the Philippines. First one was Quezon City with CMCC team, and then in Occidental Mindoro. Our training was a 19 day advanced training on community enterprise. We joined the Enterprise Development Officers (EDOs), local indigenous federation (PASAKAMI), marketing arm (YAMAN GUBAT) and community based enterprises (HOKBANG MO, KBKH). We learned about the 4 main elements of community enterprise: 1. Enterprise Organizing, 2. Production, 3. Marketing, 4. Finance. We also joined the marketing strategy training for CBEs. The training provided me with a better understanding about

marketing and on how to create a marketing strategy for community products. I learned how to make a training design/module, and also natural dye techniques for abaca, ulap doyo and rattan.

From this training, now I have a follow up plan and new ideas for inspiration. My follow up plan will be applied for CBEs in East Kalimantan and also for Craft Kalimantan partners. In just a few days I am going to share this experience through a Training of Trainers on Community Enterprise for Craft Kalimantan partners. Wish me luck! It will be my first time as a trainer of this kind. I'm nervous but prepared for the challenge.





# Recognizing Forest Heroes



**Dr. Yaing Saing Koma,**

**Cambodia**

**Putting Science at the Service of the Farmers**

Yang Saing Koma, from Cambodia is being recognized for "his creative fusion of practical science and collective will that has inspired and enabled vast numbers of farmers in Cambodia to become more empowered and productive contributors to their country's economic growth." Dr. Koma is one of our earliest believers and supporters in setting up a wild honey enterprise support programme for farmers and forest collectors in Cambodia... He continues to support our efforts until now. Congrats, Koma!



Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's highest honor and is widely regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine President, and is given every year to individuals or organizations in Asia who manifest the same sense of selfless service that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.

"The Magsaysay awardees of 2012," says RMAF President Carmencita Abella, "are six remarkable individuals, all deeply involved in creating sustainable solutions to poverty and its accompanying disempowerment - whether in the forests or on farmlands, in exploitative industries or in inadequate education. Working selflessly in unpretentious yet powerful ways, they are showing how commitment, competence, and collaborative leadership can truly transform millions of individual lives and galvanize progressive community action."

"Their concerns are clearly quite diverse - agricultural productivity, environmental justice, farmer education, women economic empowerment, good education for the young. But there is one thing these Magsaysay laureates share: a greatness of spirit which infuses their distinct leadership for change. Working with others, they all single-mindedly apply their skills to their passion for improving the lives of others. They all refuse to give up, despite adversity and opposition. They are all deeply rooted in hope."

- Ramon Magsaysay Foundation, 2012



**Ambrosius "Ruwi" Ruwindrijarto**

**Indonesia**

**Saving Indonesian Forests Through Media**

Forests is his passion. Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto or better known as "Ruwi" and his co-founders in Telapak are in the forefront of protecting the forests of Indonesia through media. What started out as dangerous exposes tracking illegal timber trade sparked public interest and influenced the government to tighten regulations on timber trade. Ruwi and his co-founders in Telapak did not only oppose and expose; they also proposed principled but pragmatic solutions. Telapak promoted sustainable, community-based logging and has created community logging cooperatives that legally and sustainably manage forests in more than 200,000 hectares of forest land, using an approach that does not only conserve forest wealth but also benefits the local communities instead of a few well-connected concessionaires and unscrupulous traders." Keep it up, Ruwi!



# Tebewen

## 1st National Negrito Cultural Revival Festival & Development Forum

*Written by: Jenne de Beer, NTFP-TF*

*Photographs by: Beng Camba*

*and Jon Corbett*

A series of local festivals during the previous two years (see *Voices* 21/22 and *NBTA*), last October 14 – 16, culminated in a first ever national Negrito cultural revival festival and development forum.

The three-day event, which took place in General Nakar, Quezon Province, was hosted by SAGIBIN-LN, Tribal Center for Development & the Quezon Provincial Tribal Council. In collaboration with NTFP-TF, Kakai, NCIP, NCCA, Anthrowatch, Team Energy, the Philippine Olympic Committee & Both Ends.

For highlights, here below we let the pictures speak...



photo by: Jon Corbett

TOP:  
Grand parade through the streets of General Nakar town (Day 2)

MIDDLE:  
Archery competition during Tribal Games – facilitated by the Philippine Olympic Committee. (Day 1).

BOTTOM  
Performance of students of the SPA primary school (Day 1).



photo by: Jon Corbett

photo by: Jon Corbett



photo by: Beng Camba



photo by: Beng Camba



photo by: Jon Corbett

MIDDLE: Crocodile Tricks – Tribal Games. (Day 1) [To be added]

TOP RIGHT: Working group on 'culture in education' (Day 2 – in preparation of development forum.)

BOTTOM: Wild Food Tasting during Development Forum (Day 3). From Right to left: Undersecretary Dep-Ed Butch Rufino; Assistant Secretary Dep. of Social Welfare & Development Javier Jimenez; NCCA Commissioner Joycie Dorado Alegre; National Anti Poverty Commission and IP Sector Representative Ponjong Kadlos.

TOP LEFT: Of course: no festival without music! (Day 1)



photo by: Jon Corbett



# Leaf cups

by: Madhu Ramnath, NTFP-EP India

There is a story about the Maharaja of Bastar having remarked that he eats out of a golden plate every day, and that he throws away the plate after each meal. The people of Bastar delight in this tale and glow with pride about their leaf containers in which they serve their food: the Maharaja was referring to the leaf cups.

Just off-hand, a normal home in adivasi Bastar fashions several kinds of leaf cups each day. Dokpa for rice; chokni for the side dish; koondu for the kanji; and chipdi for the mahua. If there are any ceremonies we have also the kadan chokni, in which rice contributions are given, and the addom chokni, made of two sal leaves placed across each other and used to make offerings in a shrine. Each of these containers require a specific number of leaves – which depends in turn on the kind of leaf – and their making demands a certain skill and intimate knowledge about the leaf. Some leaves are stiff (char), some are supple and pliable (sal), some are large and a few suffice to stitch what we need (siyadi). There are about a dozen species of leaves commonly available and used to make containers in central India. Most women have an almost daily relation with the forest through a search for these leaves. Changing seasons make some leaves scarce and one then resorts to different species. Some women take the trouble to make the containers when the leaves are in abundance and dry them for later.

And this is just about leaves and leaf cups. When we talk about baskets the list gets longer. Kunjya, korli, dabna korli, takri, gappa, odigappa, puna, petiamunda, dikki, are all different

kinds of bamboo baskets, of varying shapes and sizes, each specialized and designed to serve a specific purpose. Similarly, one can mention the variety of fish-traps, of mats, of mortars and pestles, of bows and arrows of numerous other artefacts that are produced in-house by most adivasi people. This is the material wealth of a people, all made of gold as the Raja said, and thrown away when the time comes without a second thought. There is no point in hoarding gold.

The amount of things that are made and used in an adivasi home in the forest is formidable. This is understandable, as every need is preceded by designing and making the tools to satisfy it. The desire for meat requires a bow and arrows: which means bamboo for the arrow-shaft and the bow, silk thread from cocoons to tie the arrow-head to the shaft, feathers, fibre for the bow-string, and so on. To put together any tool implies relating to the forest from a specific angle; the forest is known from a mostly utilitarian perspective. Does knowledge for knowledge sake – a completely misplaced ideal of our times – make any sense at all?

Yet, adivasi homes are not cluttered, as most of the things are made to last for only a specific amount of time. Leaf cups are for a meal; a mat or a fence lasts a season or two; a good rain-hat will go for three monsoons with repairs; an arrow will inevitably get lost; and even a house will be rebuilt a few times during a persons life. Each object is marked by the time it is meant to last and the impermanence of matter is obvious and acknowledged.

*A common tendency of civilized society is to equate the material wealth of a people with their intellectual advancement. Accordingly, our society, littered as it is with all sorts of "things made to last apparently forever" considers itself to be a step higher on the intellectual ladder than the adivasi. This much is easy to understand. But we need to remember that for the adivasi there is nothing, really, to inherit from ones parents and aunts except the knowledge and skill to fashion whatever is required. The material wealth for the adivasi is a possibility that may be actualized whenever necessary; for us matter seems to actualize and accumulate all through our lives, crowding us out of our homes!*

# Rarefoot Ecology 101

by: Madhu Ramnath, NTFP-EP India

Ishwar and I were out looking for monitor lizards. We spotted one on a tree and Ishwar commented that it would rain. "Why do you say that?"

"Because it is sitting in the middle of the branch and refuses to go to the tip!" On our way back home with the lizard it poured.

Ecology is the branch of biology dealing with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings. For us to understand what these relations in a forest environment are requires that we spend much time in the forest, making observations and making links; when we are a little adept we may even hypothesize and watch to see whether we were right. Though ecology as a subject is taught formally at university the lessons cannot go beyond providing general rules that may guide the student's ability to observe and make sensible conjectures.

Most forest peoples have, over generations, understood many of the relations between organisms in the forest. The accuracy of their observations and what they infer from them has ensured their survival; taking this a step further, it has also ensured the survival of the organisms that the people depend on. The appearance of mushrooms during the monsoon – in a specific order – or the absence of a particular fish may convey much information to someone who knows. With today's emergence of Climate Change as a theme, and a worry, such micro-level observations are important to understand the larger picture of how the world is changing.

Unfortunately, a lot of traditional forest knowledge is often lost as it is not passed on. Migrations to urban centres are on the increase, keeping the youth away from the elders; forest peoples are being displaced due to dams and mining projects; and our education pays little attention to the unseasonal appearance of a bird. It would be worthwhile to pool in our efforts to understand what traditional knowledge offers, and to realize how it works. Indigenous knowledge may yet show us a way out of the traps we've unknowingly set for ourselves.



## POLICIES, PROCESSES AND PEOPLE

ASFCC Adviser Ms. Doris Capistrano, summed up appropriately the highlights of the learnings of the Cambodian and Filipino participants to the Learning and Exchange Visit on Multistakeholder Engagement in National REDD Plus Strategy Development and Social Forestry Programmes held in Metro Manila and Southern Leyte, Philippines last July 30- August 3, 2012. The participants were very tired when they returned to Manila at the end of the week, but it did not inhibit the group during the closing dinner hosted by NTFP-EP, to share the things that struck them the most especially during the trip to Southern Leyte. The participants highlighted what they appreciated and learned:

- The participation of the local government unit (LGU) and cooperation with them is very important for CBFM to work
- Preparation of the national climate change plan, and the forest land use plans are through a bottom-up participatory approach.
- Having a policy on safeguards such as free and informed prior consent (FPIC) is critical in REDD Plus.
- In the Philippines, there is not only 1 indigenous representative; indigenous groups are organized from local to national level.
- We learned about co-benefits in REDD plus
- If there is good coordination at all levels, when people work together (government, non-government and community and local authorities), things can work more efficiently and successfully.

Ms. Doris Capistrano and NTFP-EP Executive Director, Ms. Crissy Guerrero both encouraged the participants to share their experience to their peers and colleagues when they return to their offices and communities, and to explore what learnings may be relevant in their own work areas and policy programs, and apply these as appropriate.

The study visit was made possible through the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) of which NTFP-EP is one of the implementing partners.

# Bridges through forests

## Cambodia - Philippines Exchanges on Social Forestry & Climate Change

At the heels of the successful back to back 1st ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Civil Society Forum on Social Forestry and Climate Change and the 3rd ASFN Conference on Strengthening Civil Society Engagement on Social Forestry and Climate Change (see Exchange News and Voices From the Forests 22) held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in June 2012, NTFP-EP organized and facilitated an exchange visit of Cambodian government and non-government partners and local project staff to the Philippines from July 30 to August 3, 2012. The main objective of the study visit was to share experiences in bottom-up, multi-stakeholder national REDD Plus (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) strategy development and in the implementation of social forestry programs and initiatives.



*Written by: Femy Pinto, NTFP-EP Cambodia with contributions from Choeng Soviriya, Cristina Oñate, Phan Kamnap, and Olivia Melendrez*

*Photos by: Femy Pinto, Choang Siviriya and Flor Samiano*

The Philippines adopted Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) as its national strategy to ensure and achieve sustainable forestry and social justice in 1995 through an Executive Order (signed by the President of the Philippines). The Executive Order also mandates that the CBFM strategy adheres to the 1987 Philippine Constitution's provisions on the promotion of social justice for all citizens, recognition and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, and the sustainable management of forestlands and natural resources.

The Philippines also has created by law in 2009, a National Climate Change Commission (NCCC) that mandates the implementation and oversight of national strategies on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and REDD Plus. All such na-

tional strategy development processes in the Philippines offered relevant examples of multistakeholder engagements and collaborations amongst community-based or peoples organizations, non-government and government organizations and local authorities and others.

Cambodia's National Forestry Programme and Community Forestry as one of the main strategies for sustainable forest management and poverty reduction was launched and formalized only in 2010. Prior relevant laws such as the Forestry Law, Protected Areas Law and related subdecrees implementing Community Forestry and Community Protected Areas development were adopted successively from 2002 until 2008. Additionally, Cambodia's REDD Readiness Plan Proposal (RPP or the REDD Roadmap)

was approved by funders such as UN-REDD and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank in early 2011. Cambodia is in a critical moment of upscaling its Community Forestry Programme to up to 2 million hectares with demonstrable livelihood benefits and sustainable forestry impacts. Likewise, it is setting up management arrangements for its national REDD Plus programme to include participation of civil society and indigenous peoples.

Between the two country experiences and current status, all participants and resource people had a lot to share and learn about from each other. Learning from the specific national strategies and local level to national level processes in both countries, the study visit was timely, relevant and interesting for all partic-





The participants of the learning visit exchange ideas during their field trip to Leyte.

participants. There were a total of 16 participants from Cambodia and the Philippines. From Cambodia: 3 social forestry officers from the Forestry Administration, 2 from the General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection at the Ministry of Environment, 2 staff from Cambodian civil society organizations, CDA and NGO Forum, and 3 staff of NTFP-EP Cambodia. From the Philippines: 2 community partners from REDD+ demonstration sites – General Nakar, Quezon and Narra, Palawan, 1 civil society representative from NGO, IDEAS, and 3 staff of the NTFP Task Force. The themes and lessons gained from the exchange visit were shared through a combination of formal presentations and dialogue by resource people from the Philip-

pine and from the Filipino and Cambodian participants, office visits, field / site visits, community interactions, and conversations over shared meals, socials and road and air travels.

The first part of the exchange visit was conducted in Metro Manila. There was a two-day round-table discussion, which was lively and rich in content that focused on the lessons learned, processes and current challenges for REDD+ and CBFM strategy and initiatives in the Philippines and Cambodia. Resource persons from Philippine government agencies, nongovernment organizations, peoples organizations and donor agencies involved in REDD+ and CBFM and activities including around community safeguards and indigenous peoples rights, gave presentations on these themes. We

## CoDe-REDD PHILIPPINES GOES CAMBODIA!



Flor Samiano presenting to the participants during the CoDe REDD visit to Cambodia.

As part of NTFP-EP exchange initiatives under the ASFCC, NTFP-EP Cambodia invited CoDe-REDD on a successive exchange opportunities, which we are expecting to also help solidify topical exchanges among our partners and with government officers, about community rights and benefits, sustainable and participatory forest management, and REDD Plus.

On March 30th, NTFP Task Force REDD Plus Network Coordinator, Forester Olive Melendrez presented at the Thematic Session at the ASEAN Peoples Forum (APF) on ASEAN NGO/CSOs Perspectives on the Issues, Impacts and Engagements in Climate Change Mitigation through REDD+. Her presentation on the Multistakeholder Strategy and Perspectives on REDD Plus: The Case of the Philippines, contributed lessons learned on the importance and positive gains from multistakeholder processes and approaches in developing and implementing the Philippines REDD Plus Strategy. Multistakeholders are working together on a number of policy agenda items inside and outside of the forestry sector as part of the national REDD Plus strategy including on FPIC, alternative mining, sustainable forest ecosystems management (SFEM), and national land use. A continuing process of information dissemination is necessary in order to embed fully the engagement of the key stakeholders in the different

relevant sectors in REDD Plus.

In April and July 2012, Forester Marlea Muñoz of Women Initiatives for Society and Environment (WISE) conducted two trainers' training sessions for Cambodian CSO staff and NTFP-EP Cambodia staff on REDD Plus. The first session was on the basics and key concepts in climate change and REDD Plus. The second session was on forest and community issues in REDD Plus including analysis of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, community carbon rights, FPIC, benefit sharing, and gender in REDD Plus.

In September 2012, Forester Flor Samiano of the Forest Products Research and Development Institute (FPRDI), shared further to a Cambodian peer audience, the case of the Philippines and its multistakeholder and multilevel engagements and mechanisms in National REDD Plus Strategy Development. Speaking on the 2nd day of the Workshop on Engagement of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples in the Cambodia REDD Plus Programme, she emphasized that civil society roles and contributions are critical and are embedded in the multistakeholder mechanisms – for decision-making, implementation and information and communication flows in the REDD Plus strategy in the Philippines. Facilitating co-benefits (and not just Carbon revenues) for communities are core features in REDD Plus and must be upheld.

In April 2012, Cebu Pacific launched its direct flights from Manila, Philippines to Siem Reap, Cambodia. This has made NTFP-EP – facilitated exchanges between partners and colleagues from Philippines and Cambodia more feasible and a popular support mechanism for peer to peer capacity building and learning about social forestry and climate change.

especially thank our resource people from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its Bureaus –Forest Management Bureau (FMB) and Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), National Climate Change Commission (NCCC), National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), CoDe-REDD, the CBFM Federation, the UN-REDD - Philippines and others. The Cambodian participants shared the history, status and context of Community Forestry, Community Protected Area Development, REDD Plus development, and CSO initiatives on forestry and REDD- Plus and achievements and challenges to-date.

The second part of the visit took place in the island province of Southern Leyte, to which the participants

traveled by air and land. It was a long and hectic travel to visit and meet more government officers from the DENR and local authorities, and to interact and learn from the experiences and achievements of the Peoples Organizations (POs) of YISEDA, and KICFA. We especially thank the Regional Office (Region VIII) of the DENR and the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) of Southern Leyte, the BMU-GIZ project team on REDD Plus and the community CBFM leaders from Barangay Lunas in Maasin and from Silago. The participants were particularly interested about the processes and methods of forest land use planning and the forestry management and community development activities and initiatives of YISEDA and KICFA such as on

tree and rattan plantations, and NTFP management and agroforestry livelihood. In addition, there was a key observation and positive recognition of the active women's leadership and participation in the people's organizations that were visited and with whom the study visit participants interacted. Furthermore, key women involvement among the local authorities and government line agencies were also observed.

"Asian tropical bees are the bees of the future for New Asia", was the concluding remark of Dr. Cleo Cervancia, President of the APIMONDIA Regional Commission for Asia, in her speech during the 11th Asian Apicultural Association<sup>1</sup> (AAA) Conference held in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia on September 26 - October 2, 2012. The conference brought together more than 200 participants of bee scientists, bee keepers, researchers, professionals and managers from the government, academe, non-government and private sectors.

Themed "Diversity, Choices, and Constrained Resources", the event was successful in sharing diverse experiences. Participants tasted varied honey from all over the world in a honey tasting workshop; met people from different countries who unselfishly shared their expertise and knowledge of bees and its conservation; listened to diverse topics on bee biology, pests, and diseases, pollination, apitherapy, issues around the sustainability of beekeeping and honey hunting.

Choices were presented and discussed on use of exotic or indigenous bee species. Disadvantages of using exotic bee species were discussed which include infecting local bees with pathogens because they have not developed resistance over it, infesting imported bees with local pathogens, high cost of *A. mellifera* beekeeping which is beyond the reach of rural farmers, preference to wild honey by local market, and infesting agricultural crops".<sup>2</sup> Supporting honey hunting or promoting beekeeping -issues on unsustainable honey hunting practices and loss of bee habitats and continued decline of *Apis dorsata* was extensively discussed. Petersen, who has been involved in many studies on Asian bees, enumerated various ways to promote sustainable hunting which include: i) understanding the population dynamics of wild bees through establishment of baseline data to determine fluctuations and trends, harvest records, density, migration patterns and routes, and forage in local areas; ii) educating honey hunters, officials, and public as to the value of honey

# Asian Tropical Bees... the Bees of the Future

Written and photographs by: Amalia Maling, WWF Cambodia



bees to the environment; iii) conservation of bee habitats.

In response to the challenges posed and given our constrained resources delegates from Cambodia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines agreed on two action points in promoting sustainable beekeeping and honey harvesting: 1) develop product standardization for Asian honey which will be endorsed to Apimondia; 2) draft a unified proposal for a research on population dynamics and cause of decline of Asian tropical bees.

Indeed, from this conference we heard the various messages of honeybees. As aptly put by one presenter honey "provide messages of diversity and culture but from honey we also hear message of challenges" – for the Asian tropical bees this message of challenge is about habitat loss. Bees are indicators of healthy forest ecosystem. They

only thrive in an environment free of pesticides and toxic chemicals. They need abundant bee loving plants to forage on. Climate change and deforestation is not only affecting the wild bee population but even the farmed bees. As participants bid adieu with another, we bring with us new learning, acquaintances, experiences, and probably new choices. For me I going back with a fresh outlook at our honey hunting projects in Cambodia, with a resolve to re-evaluate our approaches and assess how our current effort are contributing to the conservation of already constrained population of Asian giant honeybees and developed new strategies if necessary.

I hope that through forums like AAA, Apimondia, and from those who love to savor the sweet wild taste of Asian honeys, this message will be relayed to more people especially the policy makers and in the end would result to genuine interests and actions to save the tropical forests of the world in which the bees live.



1 AAA was created in 1992 as an information actors of bees and honey industry to share experience, challenges and offer opportunities for research and project collaborations.

2 Colony Collapse disorder or CCD is a phenomenon related to abrupt disappearance of European bee colonies. The drastic increase in disappearance, which many suspected to be related to combination of factors such exposure to Varroa mites and virus diseases, increase use of pesticides, introduction of genetically modified (GMs) crops, and weakening in genetic composition due to cross breeding (source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony\\_collapse\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony_collapse_disorder))



## What is the Micro Grant Fund?

The Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) is a network of indigenous organizations and support NGOs. Our shared goal is to empower forest-based communities to make use of and manage forest resources in a sustainable manner. To this end, the NTFP-EP catalyses and supports activities that build up and strengthen the capacity of our partner organisations in their work with forest-dependent communities, particularly indigenous peoples.

With support from the Broederlijk Delen, the Partnership Fund for Community-Based NTFP Initiatives in South and Southeast Asia was established, which basically serves as the 2nd phase for the EP Microgrant Fund (MGF) and is accessible for:

- Promising new initiatives needing start-up funds; and
- Established initiatives in need of immediate support (unexpected opportunities, sudden threats)

The over-all purpose of the MGF is to catalyze and support activities that will build up and strengthen the capacity of local organizations in:

- the protection and sustainable management of ecosystems
- mainstreaming and integrating sustainable forest management in NTFP enterprise development and NTFP subsistence uses or vice-versa.
- communicating their local issues and plans to other stakeholders and parties locally or on a more macro-scale.

# A Little Goes a Long way

## NTFP-EP Micro Grant Fund Success Stories

The NTFP-EP Micro Grant Fund (MGF) started in 2007 with the support of Both-Ends and IUCN Netherlands and has assisted 33 initiatives for about €150,000 in 6 countries. The MGF is awarded to promising new initiatives which need start-up funds and established initiatives in need of immediate support. The second phase in 2011 of the grant awarding was supported by Broederlijk Delen. This phase enabled the grant to be open to all applicants, not just NTFP-EP partners.

### Rattan Jernang Cultivation as Alternative Rescue Action for Sumatra Forest

*Yayasan Gita Buana, Jambi, Indonesia*

Jernang Rattan is one of the many rattan species found in the lowland forests of Indonesia, but with increasing rate of forest loss in Indonesia, particularly due to plantations, mining, and small scale farming, jernang rattan is increasingly hard to find. Jernang Rattan has historically been processed into crafts materials, dyes and antiseptics and has long been used by the local communities. As the demand and market price go up, Jernang hunters go as far as the protected forest areas and further threaten the existing Jernang. A past project was able to plant Jernang in a rubber plantation community, and there has been growing interest for it since. This initiative will establish a cooperation amongst communities and have a seed bank for cultivation activities. There will also be training for processing of products and for proper management of the seed bank.

### The Impact of Mining and Oil Palm Plantations on NTFPs

*Ancestral Land/Domain Watch Network (ALDAW), Palawan, Philippines*

Mining and oil palm expansion in Palawan are being pushed quite aggressively and thus the depletion of NTFPs used by indigenous communities represents a serious and very alarming reality. This initiative will do inventories of NTFPs used by indigenous peoples in Palawan and produce audiovisual and geo-referenced documentation to show overlapping between mining tenements and oil palm plantations with customary IP use. This will enable communities to use and avail of the video to have an influential voice in local decisions, as well as evidence to corroborate their claims about ancestral land/resources being encroached. Community members will be trained on participatory video methodologies and geo-tagging techniques so that they can document the impact of these extractive industries on their lives.

## Looking back at history

In the 1980s, local people cleared the forest for farming cash crops such as seed melon, peanut, green pea, sesame, etc. In 1990, the forest was declared a protected area and the Takou Nature Reserve was established. In spite of this, but farming of cash crops continued. However, such farming gradually became economically ineffective when the institutional capacity and policies were shaped. Several farming areas were abandoned and natural succession occurred. For large sites, succession did occur along their boundary and the inner land remained barren; wild animals would be exposed to threats when they had to cross the area.

The official reforestation programmes have been implemented in the reserve since the 1990s with low success. The first 100 hectares of exotic acacia was planted in 1998 and the total area of acacia plantation reached 800 hectares several years later. This plantation was helpful in preventing strong and sandy winds but the introduced trees, which were planted in local poor sandy soils, died in many sites. However, in other sites, successfully growing acacias produced seedlings in high density that in turn prevented the regeneration of other native forest plants. The recovery of the native forest did not happen.

## The idea

Observing the native forest plants lead to the recognition that some species

can survive in different habitats, such as wild mango (Cóc r ng in Vietnamese - *Spondias pinnata* (Koenig et L.f.) Kurz) and Tummy wood (V ng in Vietnamese - *Careya sphaerica* Roxb.). Twigs of these plants were then cut and treated with plant hormones until they rooted. Best replicates showed up to 60% twigs that did root but their growth was slow.

The wild mango has fleshy fruits containing only one large seed that are hang on high branch. Its fruits ripen in different times and it is hard to collect them as

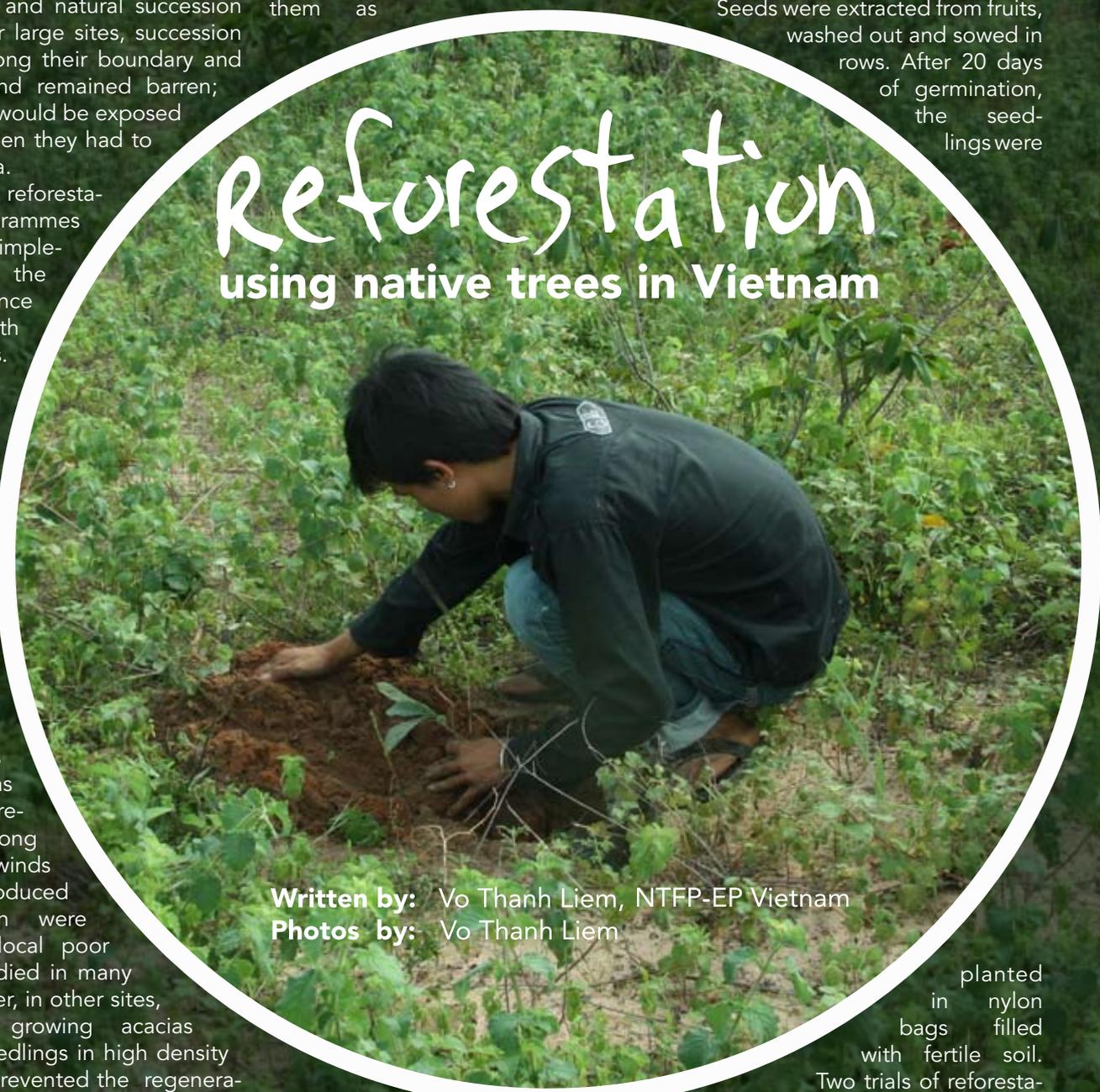
was submitted and then approved by Binh Thuan People's Committee for funding.

Selection of mother trees was made through forest patrol and other activities following the criteria: i. growing in denser populations; ii. massive flowering; iii. even crown; and iv. healthy growth. Those selected were marked for later seed collection.

Its fruits ripen in May, just in time for seed collection and germination. Collected fruits are stored in cool place and watered to keep humid.

Seeds were extracted from fruits, washed out and sowed in rows. After 20 days of germination, the seedlings were

# Reforestation using native trees in Vietnam



**Written by:** Vo Thanh Liem, NTFP-EP Vietnam

**Photos by:** Vo Thanh Liem

seeds for nursery. In contrast, the tummy wood produces many fruits that ripen massively and contain abundant seeds that are easily collected for nursery, and so the species has been chosen for a trial.

A first 200 hectare of tummy wood

planted in nylon bags filled with fertile soil.

Two trials of reforestation were made using seedlings of either one or three months. The one month old trial appeared to perform better.

## Initial results

A total of 181 hectares of different

habitats have been on trial in 2010 and 2011. The planted tummy trees grow well under the dry coastal climate of southern Central Vietnam. Other native plants are now seen in the plantation areas. More wild animals are seen roaming the areas. For example the reserve's patrol team report that many jungle fowls re-appear to feed in these sites. Other small mammals like squirrels and rabbits are often seen too.

The reforestation project is targeted to plant other important native trees, which need shade in their early growth stage such as dipterocarps, in these reforested areas in order to revitalize the forest canopy. Other multi-purpose species are on the list to be re-introduced in their habitats to provide added benefits to local people. The local community shall also be included in all steps of the reforestation.



# Anxieties & Aspirations

## REDD communities speak out

Interviewed by: Dats Sangkula, NTFP-TF

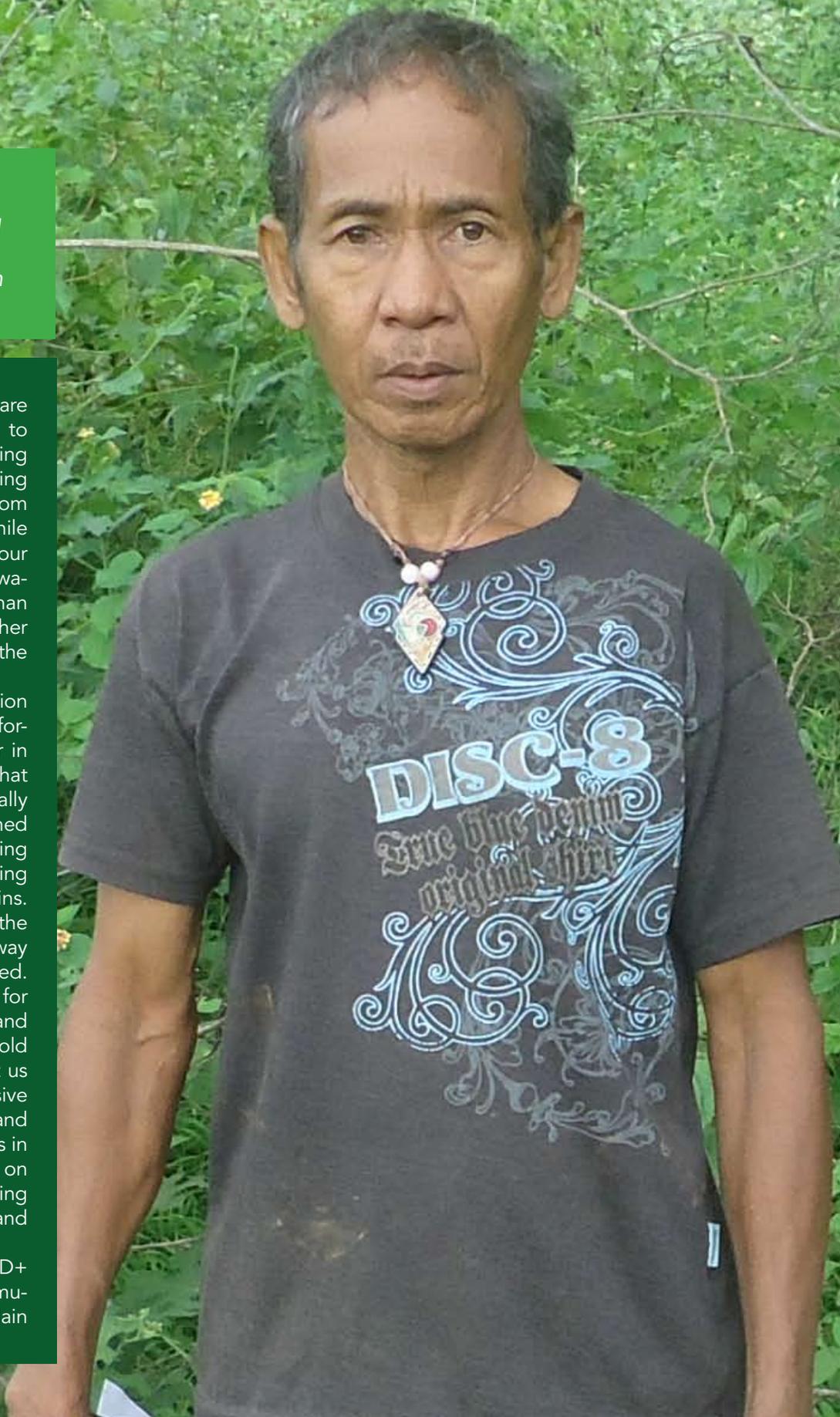
Photographs by: Dats Sangkula

*Julpino Langbo is the President of Samahan ng mga Katutubong Tagbanua sa Katel, Malinau, Narra, Palawan (SKTSK), community partner in the ADVANCE REDD project*

Our livelihood sources in Katel are varied but are mostly connected to forests. Families depend on planting crops and fruit bearing plants, selling charcoal and collecting resins from the almaciga tree in Palawan. While the forest has supplied us with our needs over the years, planting nowadays seems more complicated than before due to the changing weather and climate patterns. This causes the quality of products to deteriorate.

Having heard Reducing Emission from Forest Degradation and Deforestation or REDD+ from a seminar in Sabang in 2010, I was surprised that there was more to it than how I initially recalled it as the color red. I learned that it involves accounting for all living things in the forest such as measuring a tree and the carbon that it contains. For many community members, the misconception of REDD+; taking away the trees from them; has been clarified. They now know that it is the carbon for which we will be compensated for and our forests and land will not be sold in the process. The seminar taught us how humans have generated excessive amounts of carbon over the years and emphasized the importance of trees in forests that absorb it. It was focused on preserving the forests and protecting everything in it, humans, plants and animals included.

Teaching people about REDD+ should involve many. In our community, it is never an easy task to explain





*Julpino and other members of the community read an issue of Voices from the Forest*



*Julpino and his friends during their visit to Kartel*

REDD+ especially in the absence of a good speaker who could explain it to them. Some community members have questioned REDD+ as they don't think it will provide enough money, not like mining. I myself am having difficulty convincing some members to join our efforts. But I know that the REDD+ program is not only about "money" but also about the fresh water, fresh air and all the natural resources we use and manage there. It would be great to conduct other seminars on REDD+ involving more community members and other stakeholders. From this activity, they would know further REDD+'s objectives. I could say that I already have a deeper understanding of REDD+ now as compared to before. But the hurdles are still large as there are those practicing unsustainable agriculture in the area, extensive charcoal making, illegal logging and other practices which may be harmful to the environment. There are outsiders who don't understand the value of the forest and are harming the forest.

In our case in Katel, carbon payment and continuous socio-economic projects are the main things we could benefit from REDD+. The production center of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and handicrafts really helps out in our community's livelihood. Support to our ancestral domain claim is also crucial. Indigenous communities are often considered peripheral but through the efforts of people helping us out through REDD+, communities like us are recognized as important and eventually empowered.

I think there should be further studies or seminars with our partners in this project to promote awareness among other communities and its members. They serve as very helpful guides in leading us into the long but hopeful REDD+ trail. The continuity of REDD+ lies in the cooperation and coordination and so, it is my personal dream that many people be involved in helping out REDD+ and its projects to materialize its objectives – to take care of the forests for everyone that depends on it indigenous and non-indigenous peoples alike.



**Forest Honey,  
Health and Nutrition**

The Forest Honey, Health and Nutrition Symposium is organized by the Forest Honey Network (JMHI), together with Dian Niaga Jakarta and in collaboration with Manila-based NTFP Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia (NTFP-EP).

The symposium aims to share up-to-date information on the nutrition and health benefits of *Apis dorsata* and *Trigona* spp, honey, pollen and propolis. Furthermore, the sharing will take place in the context of wider issues affecting forest honey's position as a specialty niche product.



**Coming Together,  
Sharing and Uniting**

The Negritos represent the first indigenous culture in the Philippines that remain unforged in the past 3000 years. Among these are the Agta, Aeta, Ati, Batak and Mamanwa. This documentary aims to celebrate the distinct Negrito culture – their deep rootedness in the environment and their society of equality and justice. The voices in this video come from Negrito leaders in the Philippines. They will discuss five main focal points that communities currently face: ancestral domain issues, resource management, environment-based livelihoods, preservation of culture through education and health services. In conclusion, the discussions in this documentary will portray how Negrito leaders envision the future of the next generations.

## Oh My goodness!



### Once Upon A Time

How would  
you like to  
have a taste of  
civilization?



NTFP-EP's new Finance and Admin Officer Ana del Rosario who enjoys playing the drums adds more rock-flavored taste to the musically inclined people as when she joined the team last March 2012. As a family person, she never fails to spend quality leisure time with her two kids through playing, cooking and baking. Now we can't wait for us to taste those sumptuous baked goodies from you, Ana!



An addition to NTFP's smiling team is another natural smiler, Tes Matibag who also brings in positivity and possibilities. She made an NTFP comeback this time as the Grants Development Officer. Aside from co-sharing family work with her partner Ed, Tes supports him in expanding a family-based social enterprise of a pesticide-free fruit farm in Laguna that complements their advocacy for sustainable living.



Lia has been involved in social development for the past 17 years working on the areas of agrarian reform, land rights, local governance and the environment. She headed an environment NGO for eight (8) years, before joining NTFP-EP as Deputy Director last July. Her passion for protecting the environment stems from her desire to pass on to her two young daughters – and their children's children -- a living earth.

new staff