

Navigation:

[NTFP.org](#)

[Main Voices](#)

[Voices No. 1](#)

[Voices No. 2](#)

[Voices No. 3](#)

[Voices No. 4](#)

[Voices No. 5](#)

[Voices No. 6](#)

[Voices No. 7](#)

[Voices No. 8](#)

You are  
now reading:

***Voices from  
the Forest***

Edition No. 7  
April 2004

Bulletin of the  
NTFP exchange  
programme  
Southeast Asia

No. 7  
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## CONTENTS

1. [Editorial](#)
2. [Exchange News](#)
3. [Inauguration of Keystone Campus](#)
4. [Bastar to Philippines](#)
5. [Local Regulations in Meratus Area](#)
6. [The Highs and Lows of Crafts Marketing](#)
7. [EU Market for Ornamental Products](#)
8. [Publications](#)
9. [Colofon](#)

April 2004

***Voices from the Forest***

## EDITORIAL

This 7<sup>th</sup> issue of the bulletin 'Voices from the Forest' contains, next to the exchange news, agenda and the announcement of new publication, six articles compiled by various people who are, in one way or the other, involved in the NTFPs.

The titles of the articles included in this issue are as follow

- Inauguration of Keystone Campu
- Bastar to Philippines
- Local Regulations in Meratus Area
- The Highs and Lows of Crafts Marketing
- EU Market for Ornamental Products

The agenda already makes an announcement of an upcoming event, which was planned to take place in Puncak, Indonesia from April 20-22. In the meantime, this Regional Workshop on Value Addition in Community-Based NTFP Enterprise and Trade Strategies has already taken place and here we will give a short review on this meeting. A more elaborate article will follow in the next issue of Voices.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, most of the participants gathered together in Cikipo, a day before the meeting would start. About 25 representatives from Vietnam, the Philippines, India, Indonesia and The Netherlands actively participated in the workshop on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of April, while on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the whole group left for a field trip to a botanical garden and plant of Martina Berto. This field trip was organised by Ibu Nuning S. Barwa from the Martha Tilaar Group. More in-depth information follows!





**Written by:**  
**Editorial staff of 'Voices from the Forest'**

**Navigation:**  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

***Voices from the Forest***

## EXCHANGE NEWS

### Activities and Developments September 2003 – March 2004

#### 1. Regional meeting in Bayabong, the Philippines

Regional Meeting in Bayabong, the Philippines, October 2003.

Main issue: *Community NTFP Assessment and Monitoring strategies*. The issue (which is quite a mouthful) was chosen, because many of the communities in the EP network do feel a need to better (or more systematically) assess and monitor the NTFP resources in their territories.

As became clear during the meeting, the trigger for this interest varies. Communities may:

- Worry about dwindling resources. (e.g. Bastar, India);
- Need to prove sustainability in order to attain premium price for their products. (e.g. Rattan farmers East Kalimantan);
- Need proper inventories in order to address government requirements (Philippines).

On the sideline of and after the meeting other issues were discussed, such as the future establishment of mahua banks in tribal areas in Central Eastern India, the threat from oil palm plantations in the Philippines, new land allocation legislation in Vietnam and rattan marketing in Kalimantan.

Mary Stockdale of LAPIS, together with Miks of AnthroWatch, facilitated the meeting. Mary is currently preparing a manual based on the discussions in Bayabong. The manual will be released in October 2004.

#### 2. Annual EP Steering Committee meeting

Annual EP Steering Committee meeting, October 2003. The committee has been transformed into EP Board and is now officially registered in the Philippines.

#### 3. Exchange Visits

- Immediately after the Regional meeting, the India team (Sneh, Nadji and Madhu) traveled to the island of Palawan, where they were hosted by NATRIPAL. The visit had two objectives: NATRIPAL was seeking advice from the Indian partners for the improvement of their honey processing unit, while 'India' wanted to learn more about ancestral domain management as practised on the island.
- Riak Bumi and Dian Tama, both from West Kalimantan and NATRIPAL/Task Force from the Philippines went to Nilgiris in November. At Keystone they got on-the-job training in honey processing. Soon after the training Riak Bumi (through EP and funded by the Indonesian Focal Point) received basic, but high-quality processing equipment (refractometer, filters) for use in Danau Sentarum. Equipment and lessons learned have already been tested with good results. (See NBTA for related article.)
- LPMA of South Kalimantan and a Dayak Meratus representative in November went on an ancestral domain learning visit to Bakun in the Philippines. (See article.)







*Exchange visit to Keystone*



*Keystone filtering honey*

### **AGENDA March – December, 2004**

1. Regional technical Workshop Value Addition in Community-Based NTFP Enterprise and Trade Strategies: Puncak, April 20 - 22
2. National Crafts Workshop Philippines: July

3. Exchange visit Philippines/Indonesia to Brazil: September
4. Annual EP Regional Meeting: mid October in Vietnam. The meeting will be hosted by TEW.
5. Resin Tapping Workshop Nilgiris: November.
6. National Forest Honey Worskhop in Danau Sentarum (West Kalimantan): Mid- December



**Written by:**  
*Editors 'Voices from the Forest'*

**Navigation:**  
[Back to Editorial](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

***Voices from the Forest***

## INAUGURATION OF KEYSTONE CAMPUS AT KOTAGIRI

*The Nilgiris, Western Ghats, India*

February 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> were the final dates and it seemed that, at last, all that was dreamt over for the past 10 years of Keystone's existence was coming to culmination.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> we invited some members from the adivasi community for a discussion on the future of Keystone's work - what was the road for us in the years to come, how will the partnerships be, what were their aspirations and how could we be a part of all this? The discussion led to some interesting ideas and was followed by a traditional dance called, *Duddu Attam*. There was a lot of music, drumming and dance late into the evening.



The next day was the inauguration of the Campus with traditional lamp lighting by the Founders and Trustees and the 'cutting of marigold ribbons' by leaders from adivasi villages. This was the formal event. For once, all of us wore shining new clothes, quite unlike the usual rough wear, trekking shoes and knapsacks! The morning was full of small felicitations by different people from the district and beyond and we were proud of the nice things said about us. Everybody enjoyed their time; meeting old friends, dancing in the hot sun, catching up with other relatives they had not met for years, some newcomers finding out what is done in the different unit buildings of the campus. This evening with the formal function over, was a time for the staff, their families and some close friends to celebrate and joke, dance and crash out, happily tired of all the fun.

For those of you who do not know, Keystone works in the Nilgiris on conservation and livelihood issues with adivasi communities. Its main work relates to honey and other NTFPs, land development/traditional agriculture and enterprise development with food and forest produce.

***Written by:***  
***Snehlata Nath***

**Navigation:**  
[Previous Article](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

***Voices from the Forest***



## **BASTAR TO PHILIPPINES**

### ***A pre-tour experience in Positive Thinking & Action***

This is a true story. Arjun Singh Nag is a Bastari tribal from Chattisgarh in Central India. He is instrumental in running a forest cooperative ? thereby providing livelihood opportunities to his people through collection of Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and conserving the natural resource base by community monitoring such as only matured trees to be harvested, marked and village institutions to be built up for sustainable management and use of natural resources.

Keystone Foundation, an NGO to whom I belong, works with tribal communities in the Nilgiris and is now in the process of networking with other similar initiatives in India. Last year, we had a successful Bastar meeting with a number of community organizations, the Forest Department and Arjun Singh Nag became a friend of Keystone.

This year, our NTFP partners organised (it takes place every year) an NTFP exchange program to invite people from South East Asia in Philippines for a workshop ? exchanging experiences, learning lessons.

Arjun Singh has never travelled beyond his village in Bastar. We took this up as a challenge that here is a person who should participate in this workshop and bring back to India and his village valuable knowledge and practice on forests and communities.

He first had to travel to Bhopal from Jagdalpur (Bastar District's HQ) which is an 18-hour journey to get a Tatkal (Urgent) passport (a passport given under special circumstances). Letters were written, phone calls made to the Collector Bastar and he got the passport from Bhopal.

The passport was sent to Delhi through our travel agent and submitted to the Embassy for visa. In the meanwhile, Nagji gets an official letter from the Regional Passport Office, Bhopal stating that his passport is 'defective' ? is not valid for travel, so he must come in person to Bhopal to get a fresh passport issued.

Clouds began to gather around this sunny event. Prayers, contacts and phone calls around the country were made. Friends in high places in the Government managed that the Regional Passport Officer in Chennai talks to his counter-part (most probably IAS batch mate) in Bhopal to expedite this matter. But still he needed the old passport as the old one (due to printing and software error). In these situations all sorts of errors crop in and mostly it happens to the weak, vulnerable people in society ? empirical data shows this pattern.

His visa application gets rejected by the Philippine embassy and we ask the travel agent to courier the defective passport to Bhopal ? to a non-descript hotel where Nagji has been holed in. The courier leaves on Thursday from Delhi to reach him the next morning, but no, the story does not end like this ? the courier is delayed (Blue Dart) and it reaches on Saturday ? passport offices are closed, we again try to find some way, but the RPO tells us that it can be done only on Monday. Two others, who were to accompany him for the workshop, leave for the Philippines on Sunday ? leaving Nagji extremely nervous. A man who has been in the village, how can he go abroad, board a plane all by himself ? without knowing any good English? I speak to him for an hour giving him the confidence; my other colleagues give up, saying it is now difficult, the travel agent says it is impossible.

The new plan emerges that he has to get the new passport on Monday and get in a train to Delhi to submit the visa application before 10 AM (visa applications are not taken after that). He gets the new passport (without giving any money!) and misses his train which should bring him early to Delhi. He comes in the next train ? the people waiting for him at the Railway station have gone, phone calls, sms, e-mails fly between Kotagiri and Delhi and a second pick-up party is scrambled to pick up the forest-man. It is too late for the visa. We lose Tuesday. The workshop in Philippines has begun on Sunday itself. Time is running out. From Tuesday we make another plan ? try and contact someone high up in Manila through our NTFP network and let the person talk to the Embassy officials or the boss himself (Ambassador).

Faxes, phone calls go back and forth from Wednesday morning as Nagji will appear in the counter for his application. The Travel agent warns us that the embassy officials requires 4 working days ? Wednesday to Monday to process a visa so his ticket to Manila has to be on Tuesday! What will he do going to the workshop when it was already finished? Positive thinking, storage tanks or rather warehouses are tapped and I say to myself: either he gets it today or he goes back to his village. Anyway I will accept the verdict; I have finished all my cards.

The sweet talk from Manila works, the faxes and letters (redrafts...) weave their way through and he gets the Visa!! In one day. As I write this, today is Wednesday ? the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2003 he gets the visa, the travel agent organizes his ticket... and I have to explain to him what to do in the International Airport in Delhi ? baggage check, ticketing, immigration, etc. He will take a flight to KL and then to Manila, from there our friends will take care of him. The story has not ended ? just as we thought all our hurdles, one after the other we had crossed ? like coming back into the game and winning after a huge initial set-back? As he is a tribal, he does not have a degree (education) so his immigration will not be cleared; we are again working on it?

This is the story, the old saying of ?where there is a will there is a way? and to add if you have Grace (needs to be tied all the time as part of you) with you it is a win-win situation all the time, come what may?

PS: His passport has a ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) he will not be allowed to leave the country unless he has a ECNR (Emigration Clearance Not Required) ? Nagji tells us that he is a lawyer which means that he has BL (Bachelor of Law) degree, it is five past, the offices are closed to get the proper stamp for ECNR (that is if he is carrying his law degree?). Tomorrow there are no flights to Manila from Delhi. Today another miracle has to happen ? very fast, I hope the Grace Officials from above have not closed their office for today.

**Written by:**  
Pratim Roy

Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri, Nilgiris (Batch of  
[www.keystone-foundation.org](http://www.keystone-foundation.org)

85)

**Navigation:**  
[Previous Article](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

***Voices from the Forest***

## *Voices from the Forest*

### DEVELOPING LOCAL REGULATIONS IN THE MERATUS AREA

It was an interesting eight day journey to bakun, last November 23 to December 1, 2003, providing a good opportunity to visit the Kankanaey-Bago indigenous communities. These communities have been managing their customary land, or ancestral domain, through the rights recognized by the 1997 Indigenous Rights Act of the Philippines.

The experience has inspired Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Adat (LPMA) to do the same thing by encouraging the formulation of a local regulation among 3 villages in the Meratus are of South Kalimantan, Indonesia. To prepare for this, LPMA initiated a regional regulation study focusing on villages in Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency. The results of the study will be used as a starting point to formulate a local regulation (PERDES) in the villages of Juhu, Hinas and Hinas Kanan.

Simultaneously, work is being done with village institutions, to build capacity in planning and in the formulation of regulations that are within the constitutional framework and are responsive to community needs.

Capacity building is important because at present the village institutions are still weak in terms of formulating local regulations properly. Usually, higher-up authorities formulate local regulations, and often this process does not involve participation by the communities. There is now a new policy (Regulation No. 5/1997 to No. 22/1999) that recognizes the village as an autonomous institution and grants them the authority to manage their own administrative affairs. However, because this is still a new policy, the village representatives have not yet developed their full capacity, particularly in coming up with legislation. Hence there is still a need to improve their capacity.

Aside from the existing policy study, LPMA is also recording the customary law and covenants that are still practiced in the three villages. The expected outcome of these activities is the formulation of good local regulations, mutually developed by both the village administrators and the Dayak Meratus communities in the 3 villages. The regulations formulated will focus on the protection of the Gunung Meratus ecosystem, particularly the customary land, from the threat of over-exploitation and unsustainable resource use.

Why have a local village regulation? The village (Desa) is the smallest autonomous unit in the regional structure. It is therefore authorized to have its own rural administration plan. Consequently, the community has the right to formulate regulations that would maintain the sustainability of the villager's livelihood and protect the territory as the community's ? in this case the Dayak Meratus ? life support system (forest, land, water). Another reason is that local regulations may encourage communities to participate in sustaining the environment.

N.B This article has also been published in Spark newsletter No. 16.

***Written by:***  
***Betty Ro Minar***

**Navigation:**  
[Previous Article](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

## *Voices from the Forest*

### THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF CRAFT MARKETING

At the NTFP-TF Crafts Center, we are going through the highs and lows of crafts marketing .. and we are very excited!

#### **The high end of things**

We are now implementing the HIGH VALUE, LOW VOLUME Crafts Marketing strategy — Yes, we mean coming up with products of high value but produced at low volume. Taking into consideration factors that are not usually present in marketing mainstream crafts, such as limited volume capacity, cultural value of crafts, environmental sustainability and community integrity, we decided that high value-low volume is the way to go. By concentrating on high end products, income requirements of crafts producers can be met without adding pressure to their traditional way of life nor to their environmental resources.

In general, production capacity of IP communities is moderate due to a way of life tied to traditions and a regulated access to raw materials. Due to the limited volume as well as other factors such as distance from the market, higher labour costs, etc. which results in high production costs, it is best to position the products in the higher end market, which is capable of absorbing this cost and will give a higher profit margin to the artisan.



*Miss Nola Andaya showing some handicraft products*

It's also a reality that indigenous handicrafts are faced with becoming commonplace, due to indiscriminate copycat practices of companies that use modern, mass production techniques. This has caused a decrease in crafts' perceived value, undermining the intricate and tedious process that the artisans go through to create the masterpiece. The HV-LV strategy aims to add value to crafts by matching traditional skills and raw materials with top-contemporary designs and functions that highlight or bring out the innate value of the cultural craft. In this way, the strategy is expected to better compensate the labour and historical/cultural value that goes into the products.



## FATE and FAME

It was at F.A.M.E. that the fate of the strategy was sealed. Through the invitation and support Mangyan Heritage Center, The NTFP-TF and partner, Mangyan Mission had the chance to present the Mangyan Crafts to an international audience and a sophisticated and modern lot of designers at last year's FAME, the largest international trade fair on Philippine furniture and crafts organized by CITEM.

It was at this fair that we met designer, Tracie Anglo-Dizon. This young and pro-active designer shares our passion to elevate IP traditional crafts to the level it should be in – a level that will value the hand in handicrafts. Inspired by a brand called LOSA (London – South Africa<sup>[1]</sup>) that she came across with on one of her trips to the UK, Tracie, together with other three designers, readily teamed up with NTFP-TF to create a line that will be guided by the high value and low volume mantra; a line that shall promote the craftsmanship of IP crafts.

## Hopping on the Brand Wagon

This line, which will open up new niches for IP crafts, thus increasing the demand for it, will range from fashion articles to house wear and lifestyle products. The line will be a blend of craftsmanship, perfected through generations and generations of practicing artisans, and sophistication and functionality of contemporary design.

The line will be launched under a brand that is currently being designed and developed with the help of 4 volunteer-designers. This brand will project a way of life that reconciles urban taste for sophistication and quality with an awareness of environmental and social issues -- a lifestyle that a very demanding and intelligent consumer would want to adhere today.

The new line will be presented to the broader public by the third quarter of this year, during a Crafts Conference.

While ending this article, I remember a song that I grew up with... a song from the Disney animation Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs – it goes: hi – ho, hi – ho, off to work we go... well, with a little revision, it can be a formula for the IP crafts marketing --- High-low, high-low, off to market we go... (whistling sound).

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[1] An initiative of top auction house Sotheby's and South African artisans to create a wider market for South African craft workers by applying modern designs to the traditional South African crafts: beadwork, woven coiled grass basket-work, telephone wire work, wood carving and embroidery.

**Written by:**  
*Nola P. Andaya*

*NTFP-TF*

**Navigation:**  
[Previous Article](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

***Voices from the Forest***

---

---

***Voices from the Forest***

---

**EU MARKET FOR ORNAMENTAL NATURAL PRODUCTS*****Inquiry for assortment***

Believe it or not, but it is estimated that European consumers spend a staggering 15 billion euro on cut flowers and flower arrangements per year. This market does not only consist of cut flowers, but includes a wide range of product groups like foliage, dried branches and even dried fruits and vegetables. Colourful dried corn stalks (maize), for instance, have been a big hit as a component in bouquets and flower arrangements.

It is a well-developed and highly competitive market which approaches saturation in some countries. As a result, traders are continuously seeking new, special and different products to distinguish themselves. Consumers want to be surprised: see something new and unexpected in the shops. It is obvious that this huge market offers varying opportunities for companies in developing countries as potential suppliers of natural products with ornamental features.

In view of this opportunity, ProVerde is looking for ways to match demand and potential suppliers. ProVerde is an internationally oriented company providing trade facilitation and trade mediation services to primarily companies in developing countries. We are based in The Netherlands, the centre of international floricultural trade, and specialised in marketing cut flowers & plants, florist items, and biodiversity products.

A number of our contacts, who are active as wholesalers in the European floricultural and related sectors, have expressed interest in new suppliers from Asia, Latin America and Africa. Because of my background as a market specialist in these sectors, I am able to identify interesting products for them.

The products that we are particularly interested in are natural products that can be used for ornamental purposes (foliage, rattan, dried fruits, bamboo, ornamental seeds, etc.). These products will be used for flower arrangements, bouquets or as stand-alone items. Please observe that these do not include arts and handicrafts.

Currently, ProVerde and the Indonesian company Dian Niaga are in the process of marketing ornamental charcoal products (fruits, bamboo). This product had already been exported successfully to Japan in the form of arrangements in mixed baskets and for the purpose of extracting bad odours. For the European market, however, this product is a complete novelty. After some research in the preferences of the market parties, it was decided to introduce the selected fruits in single-variety wholesale packaging. Before long, we hope to close the first deal with a Dutch wholesale company that supplies florist items to retailers.



*Ornamental charcoal products*

Do you also think you have interesting products with potential in the floricultural market? Or do you know organisations or companies that have?

Then, I would like to invite you to send us an overview of the assortment, preferably with a catalogue, brochure or (digital) photos of the products.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

***Written by:***  
***Milco Rikken***

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**Navigation:**  
**[Previous Article](#)**  
**[Back to Contents](#)**  
**[Next Article](#)**

---

***Voices from the Forest***

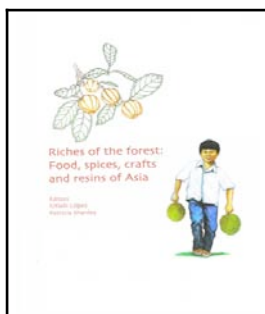
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## Voices from the Forest

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### PUBLICATIONS

#### Free Book & Video Services:



#### **Riches of the Forest:**

#### **Food, spices, crafts and resins of Asia.**

*Editors: Citlalli Lopez & Patricia Shanley. CIFOR 2004.*

This beautifully illustrated book aims to serve as a first introduction to the subject of NTFPs and, as such, is particularly useful for critical consumers in Asia and beyond. In twenty cases from all over the region, the following issues are covered:

- The key role which NTFPs play in forest dependent communities.
- The organisation of the trade and benefit sharing through the trade chain.
- The sustainable management of resources and the link with forest conservation.

An edition in Bahasa Indonesia is being prepared.

Free copies are available for EP partners.

#### **Two Videos/CDs produced by Bogor-based Telapak**

1) 'The Story of Java Bamboo': successful bamboo furniture development in two villages in the Bogor regency, Java. (Ten minutes.)

2) 'Konawehea, Forest on the Edge': harvesting of *Apis dorsata* honey in Kendari, South Sulawesi as an alternative to illegal logging. (Ten minutes.)

A limited number of copies are available for EP partners free of charge. Others can order the video or CD with Telapak: [rrsigit@telapak.org](mailto:rrsigit@telapak.org)

**Written by:**  
*Jenne de Beer*

**Navigation::**  
[Previous Article](#)  
[Back to Contents](#)  
[Next Article](#)

---

## Voices from the Forest

---



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## *Voices from the Forest*

### **COLOFON**

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#### **Navigation:**

[Previous Article](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

---

## *Voices from the Forest*