

Voices from the Forest

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



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Designing livelihoods
for the future

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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.

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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This was a particularly difficult issue to close considering Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines and rendered many homeless and suffering over loved ones lost just before printing. We feel that it is then fitting that our banner story is about disaster risk response and climate change adaption of communities whose livelihoods are affected by intensifying drought, forest fires and floods. We dedicate this issue to the thousands who lost their lives in the madness that is still unfolding as we go to press.

We have heard it before; the current development paradigm built on greenhouse gas releasing industries will result in warmer climates leading to stronger typhoons and greater loss to life and limb.

We at NTFP-EP join many other civil society organizations in working to build an alternative paradigm for a healthier, cleaner environment: where rights to land and liberty are upheld (page 8-9), sustainable livelihoods and industries promoted (page 10-11), ecosystems equitably conserved (page 12-13), where food is healthy, fresh, and yummy (page 18-19), where everyone has their fair share (page 16-17), and where voices of one and all can be heard (page 14-15). Call it utopia or call it a possibility. Call it nonsense or call it a step in the right direction. Here are the stories where we continue the struggle for this better world. Because we still believe, "We can fix this. We can stop this madness!" Opening session address November 11, 2013, Climate Change Commissioner Yeb Saño, Head of the Delegation of the Philippines to CoP19, Warsaw, Poland. **Bangon Visayas! Bangon Pilipinas!**

Cover photo by Earl Diaz
Penan woman weaving a traditional basket

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designing livelihoods for the future

Article by: Joanna de Rozario, NTFP-EP Malaysia
Photos by: Hui Yein Koong



In rural Sarawak where life is difficult on a good day, Penan women gather, many for the first time to share and learn about 'pitah pengurip', in Penan meaning the way to keep living. The event co-organised with Sarawak Crafts Council saw representatives from ten villages participate in a 4 day workshop on sustainable livelihoods with special focus on crafts development.

Penan women are not just caregivers but look after household expenses and income generation to meet shortfalls. Food and income shortages are most acute during the most taxing time of the year, the planting season. One participant responded, "We have to try our best to find ways to earn some money". Their main income generation activities are sales of crafts and also vegetables. However, communities with intact forest do not suffer from the same shortages particularly from food and have lesser need for cash income for their staple food. Forest degradation is seen as caused by logging companies and together with oil palm and tree plantations pose a major threat to their sustainable livelihood.

Yet, the women also observed that they had an abundance of assets at their disposal including their skills and personal qualities, rivers and forest, basic amenities, relationships with each other and external government and non governmental agencies and community generated funds and saving schemes. Nonetheless, a sustainable livelihood meant that



Penan women illustrating their plans during the livelihoods workshop

their assets were resilient to shocks and stresses and independent from external support. They also needed to be mindful of the impact of their livelihood activities on the environment and other members in the community.

A taste in enterprise development during the workshop and the women wanted more. Two groups of women were provided a limited amount of funds to purchase material and meet an order of 20 envelopes with detailed specifications. Both groups had problems. “If we were given a second chance, we will study the design and plan our work,” defended the leader of group one. Group two met the specifications but not the order within the time limit. However, they worked as a team. In the past, the

Penan women work and sell their crafts individually. At the workshop, they decided to form two community-based enterprises called Apoh and Tutoh after the rivers where the villages are located.

In developing their respective enterprises, poor health and the need to improve skills, declining resources, trust issues among the women, poor market access and rudimentary weaving tools needed to be addressed. In an exercise, the women identified these blocks along their road to a successful enterprise and drew imaginary bridges to overcome these obstacles including replanting resources, raising funds and holding meetings among the women and youth. They also mapped their available





resources and the respective crafts fashioned from them. The crafts' quality, markets and production time were also assessed.

The main aim of the workshop was to build the capacity and skills of the women on sustainable livelihoods. More importantly, the women felt that they were not alone and that other women in other villages shared the same concerns and issues. They were also enthusiastic about the future, saying "The workshop is not just about crafts but also in relation to improving our livelihood. We cannot give surety that we can reach the dream we have today but we hope we can contribute to meet this dream."



EXCEED

The NTFP Academy

Expanding Community Enterprise and Economic Development, or **EXCEED** is the Training and Advisory Program of the NTFP-EP targeted to support the work of NGOs, government agencies and community-based organizations in the South and Southeast Asian Region on expanding and strengthening livelihoods and community-based enterprise developments in rural, forest and protected areas.

EXCEED offers an array of training courses and advisory services to provide comprehensive support to community enterprise development, from the start of the initiative including conducting assessments, program design and development, product and market scanning; during the project, including product development, business planning, systems enhancement, market linking and mentoring; and until the end of the project, such as impact evaluation. Special courses are also developed to cover vital and urgent topics that have impacts on communities and their enterprises such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, among others.

The program draws from over 12 years of direct, grassroots work with local organizations and rural and forest-based communities on enterprise development in 5 countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and the Philippines. Its approach and tools are derived from an integration of knowledge and experience of organizations and a pool of international experts from a range of backgrounds including community enterprise development, resource management, forest products research, marketing, and design, among others.

EXCEED's pilot course "Beyond Business: Ensuring Viability, Sustainability and Resilience" will be conducted on September 21 - 26, 2014, in the Philippines.

For more information on EXCEED, visit our website: www.ntfp.org/exceed and get the latest news and updates.



Healthy Forests Healthy People

Traditional health and medicine in the forests

Article by: Katherine Mana-Galido

Artwork by: Robbie Bautista

For indigenous communities in the Philippines, the value of forests goes beyond ecological and economic reasons. The health of the forests is a reflection of the health of their communities.

The country is home to different indigenous communities with rich Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices or IKSPs. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), there is an estimated 14-17 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups.

The IKSPs involve different aspects of the IP communities' life, one of which is health. Health IKSPs are based on communities' strong attachment to their natural resources. IP communities regard their forests as 'pharmacy and hospital'. They get their medicine from the different parts of the different species of plants and wildlife found in the forest.

The country's rich biological diversity and indigenous health systems and practices are interconnected. And with the decline of the country's environmental condition, health IKSPs are threatened too.

A major threat to health IKSPs is the loss and degradation of the forest base. An indigenous healer in Palawan said that if the mountains will be mined out, the different medicinal plants he gathers will be lost too.

Until now, many indigenous communities live in remote areas with little or no access to health programs and facilities. In these areas, health IKSPs are still evident and locally supported.

In urban areas, there are also medical practitioners, non-government organizations (NGOs), individuals and community groups who advocate for indigenous ways of healing.

What are health indigenous knowledge, systems and practices?

“Traditional medicine is an ancient and culture-bound medical practice which existed in human societies before the application of modern science to health. It refers to health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being.”

“Traditional medicine is the sum total of knowledge, skills and practices of holistic healthcare, which is recognized and accepted by the community for its role in the maintenance of health and the treatment of diseases.”

- WHO, 1999

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report in 2001, the traditional medicine practitioners in the country are about 250,000. There are no privately owned hospitals providing formal traditional or complementary/alternative medical services. Natural medicines are marketed over the counter in dozens of health food stores and in a limited number of pharmacies.

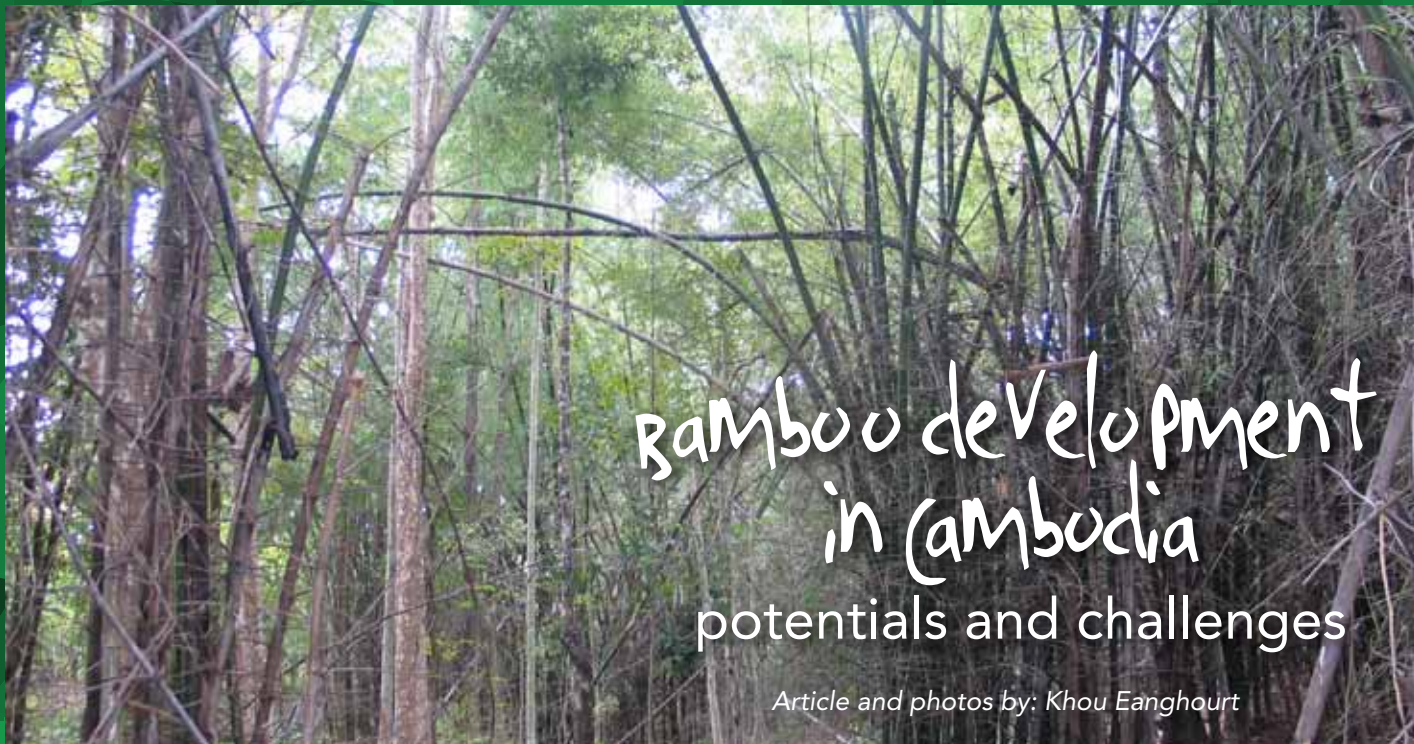
The Philippines' interest in medicinal plants started during the World War II period (1941-1945) when Executive Order No. 14 was promulgated creating a committee on medicinal plants.

In 1997, the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act was passed. The law states that it is the policy of the Government to improve the quality and delivery of health care services to the Filipino people through the development of traditional and complementary/alternative medicine and its integration into the national health care delivery system.

In 2010, the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines and the Traditional and Alternative Health Care called on government to review the outdated policy on herbal medicines and to conduct new researches.

The need for more studies and documentation of medicinal plants and indigenous knowledge systems and practices is important and should be done soon. But the conduct of researches on these herbal medicines should not be for the benefit of the big pharmaceutical companies alone.

The diversity of forest types, wildlife, disease vectors, human populations and cultures, and interactions among these factors, all affect human health. Different sectors and expertise need to work together to make the country's rich natural resources and IKSPs contribute to the improvement of health and resilience especially of the poorest communities.



Bamboo development in Cambodia

potentials and challenges

Article and photos by: Khou Eanghourt

Bamboo is part of the grass family Poaceae or Graminae, and is one of the fastest growing plants on earth. Bamboo lives up to 10 years if not cut.

Ecologically, bamboos die after producing flowers and fruits. According to Wong KM, there are 1,200-1,500 bamboo species worldwide.

Thickness of bamboo culms is extremely variable from very thick to very thin, which can be made into different products. Cambodian bamboos are sympodial rhizome species with short rhizomes and close culms, and thus form compact clumps and distinct from one to another.

Bamboo taxonomy in Cambodia is poorly studied and thus only vernacular names are used as a basis for communicating in trade. However, local names cannot be reliable as one species is named differently by people living in different areas, and vice versa; many different bamboo species are called the same name. Limited background knowledge of bamboo taxonomy hinders the research of bamboo development and commercial trade in terms of uses and product development as well as horticulture.

Beside its intangible benefit to the environment, hundreds of products can be made from bamboos, ranging from raw material, charcoal, housing, pulp (paper and cloth), panels, stick, flooring, weaving products and crafts, fuel, furniture, souvenir, carving and food.

At present, they can also be used to replace steel and wood for certain construction. Just one known wild species of bamboo, locally called Russey Roleak with medium thick culm can be developed into numerous products.



Bamboo strip used as a concrete foundation to replace steel

Traditional flat basket
made of bamboos in
Mondulkiri province



A resource assessment of bamboos in the two northeastern provinces, Kratie and Ratanakiri recorded seven potential bamboo species in vernacular names for household utilization and commercial trade. These species are composed of very thick, medium thick and thin culms. At present, even though some forest areas are converted into agriculture and other development purposes, the species richness and their populations remain high and can be commercialized in large scale.

Cambodia also has very limited technology for bamboo product development, thus only raw materials are sold and traditional products are made by hand, which adds small amount of value to it and cannot compete with imported products in terms of quantity, quality and price.

Hence, it is fundamentally crucial to have taxonomical background knowledge of bamboo species, their ecology and existing uses through botanical study. The output of these researches will serve as basis for bamboo development and contribute to national green economy growth in Cambodia through large scale or community-based bamboo cottage industry.

donor roll

MacArthur Foundation

MacArthur Foundation's conservation and sustainable development programme aims to preserve ecosystems and species and to promote development that respects the environment. Between 2012-2020, MacArthur Foundation is prioritizing grantmaking in 3 geographic regions including the Greater Mekong and its headwaters, whose population and ecosystems faces a high level of threat from hydropower dam development and unsustainable extraction of natural resources, deforestation and rapid land use change.

MacArthur Foundation will support via NTFP-EP, the Highlanders Association, Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association, Organization for Promotion of Kuy Culture and Indigenous People for Agriculture in Cambodia to secure and strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples to their natural resources.

These 4 local indigenous peoples organizations are initial participants of the Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Alliance who will undertake grassroots action and coordinate provincial up to national level activities around four integrated themes: indigenous peoples rights, natural resources and biodiversity, culture and indigenous knowledge systems, and food and income security.

The Cambodian Indigenous Peoples Alliance is a solidarity action platform of IP organizations (community-based or NGOs) in Cambodia, who through a voluntary and participatory learning and exchange process have committed to a long-term goal of indigenous peoples self-determination. The 3-year project aims to strengthen the indigenous alliance initial members' capacity and support their grassroots action, particularly in the registration and capacity building of IP legal entities and the initiation of communal land titling applications, implementation of community based resource management and livelihood actions in the target sites, including community based mapping, resources assessment and planning, building the solidarity lines of indigenous communities, and strengthening the social and political support mechanism through indigenous peoples outreach, mobilization, advocacy and campaign coordination activities.

For more information on MacArthur Foundation and its Conservation and Sustainable Development programme, visit <http://www.macfound.org/programs/conservation/>.

Protecting Lives, Securing Livelihoods and Forests

Article and photos by: Genela Buhia

Manalog is a quaint, quiet community perched in the highlands of Malaybalay City in Bukidnon province, southern Philippines. The village is settled amidst the breathtaking views of rolling hills, abundant creeks, mountain ranges, upland farms and a vast swath of greenery punctuated with lush forest vegetation. The travel to Manalog takes an uphill winding climb of 26 kilometers from the town center of Malaybalay City. The barangay is home to 139 Higaonon indigenous families whose main economic activities are farming and abaca weaving. A distinct attribute of the Higaonon men and women in this village is their skill in abaca weaving, a long-held strength of their indigenous cultural identity and traditional values.

Beyond such features however, Manalog is vulnerable to a host of natural hazards. Owing partly to its topographic characteristics, Manalog community experienced recurrent episodes of landslides, floods, typhoons as well as long periods of drought and torrential rains in the last 30 years. Typhoons in recent years have wreaked havoc on the people in Manalog. Strong winds and rains from the last strong typhoon triggered landslides, uprooted crops, damaged houses and destroyed livelihood assets including the abaca dye processing center in the village.

Extreme weather events bring food shortage, disease and loss of income to the families in Manalog. Families are wary about prolonged rains because they are unable to farm, harvest, collect wood and cross inundated roads. Waters become unsafe for drinking and ailments especially among children arise during this time. High temperature during dry season causes abaca stems to become stiff and brittle. In periods of prolonged rainfall, abaca fibers turned into darker color. Both extreme weather conditions spoil the quality of some abaca fibers resulting in lower income.

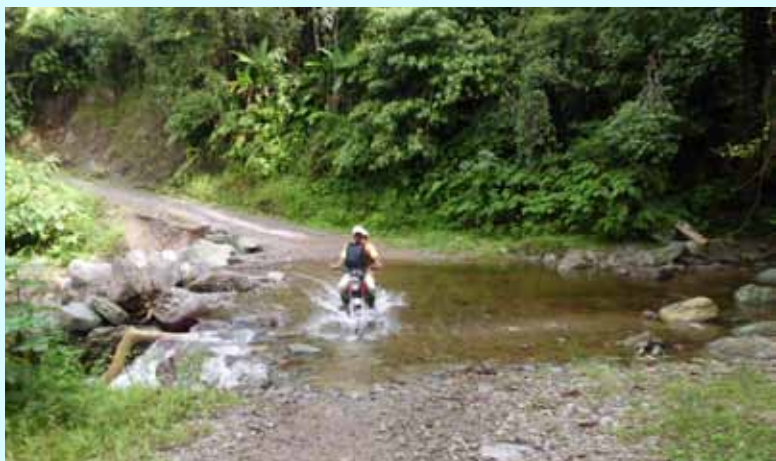


Abaca fiber being transported by the men of Manalog





The rolling hills of Bukidnon



The men and women in Manalog came to better reflect on these hazards when they took part in the participatory risk assessment initiated by NTFP-EP Philippines. Manalog was one barangay among three in Bukidnon chosen for assessments sponsored by the ASEAN Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) through the support of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN). In the on-site activities, men and women from these communities identified the significant hazards and the underlying causes of their vulnerability to these hazards. With inputs from PAGASA, men and women gained awareness that climate change can further exacerbate the impact of disasters and erode their limited coping capacities. Communities then came up with a Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction/Climate Change Adaptation Plan where the communities prioritized building capacities for disaster preparedness, improving early warning and access to weather and climate information to lessen future uncertainty. More robust coordination with relevant government agencies was also proposed. For abaca production, agroforestry management and conservation agriculture practices were considered because of its potential to diversify income streams, manage landslides, protect soil and moisture for abaca, and buffer against disaster risks and climate variability.

The people in Manalog believe they can act on their vulnerabilities building on their capacities, indigenous resources and socio-cultural system. They recognize the need to work with relevant stakeholders and building link of communities with livelihood experts, policy and science on adapting to climate change. They hope that this initiative will guide them in the long run towards achieving their vision – a community that is able to protect and secure lives, livelihoods and their forest.



Article and photo by: Madhu Ramnath, NTFP-EP India

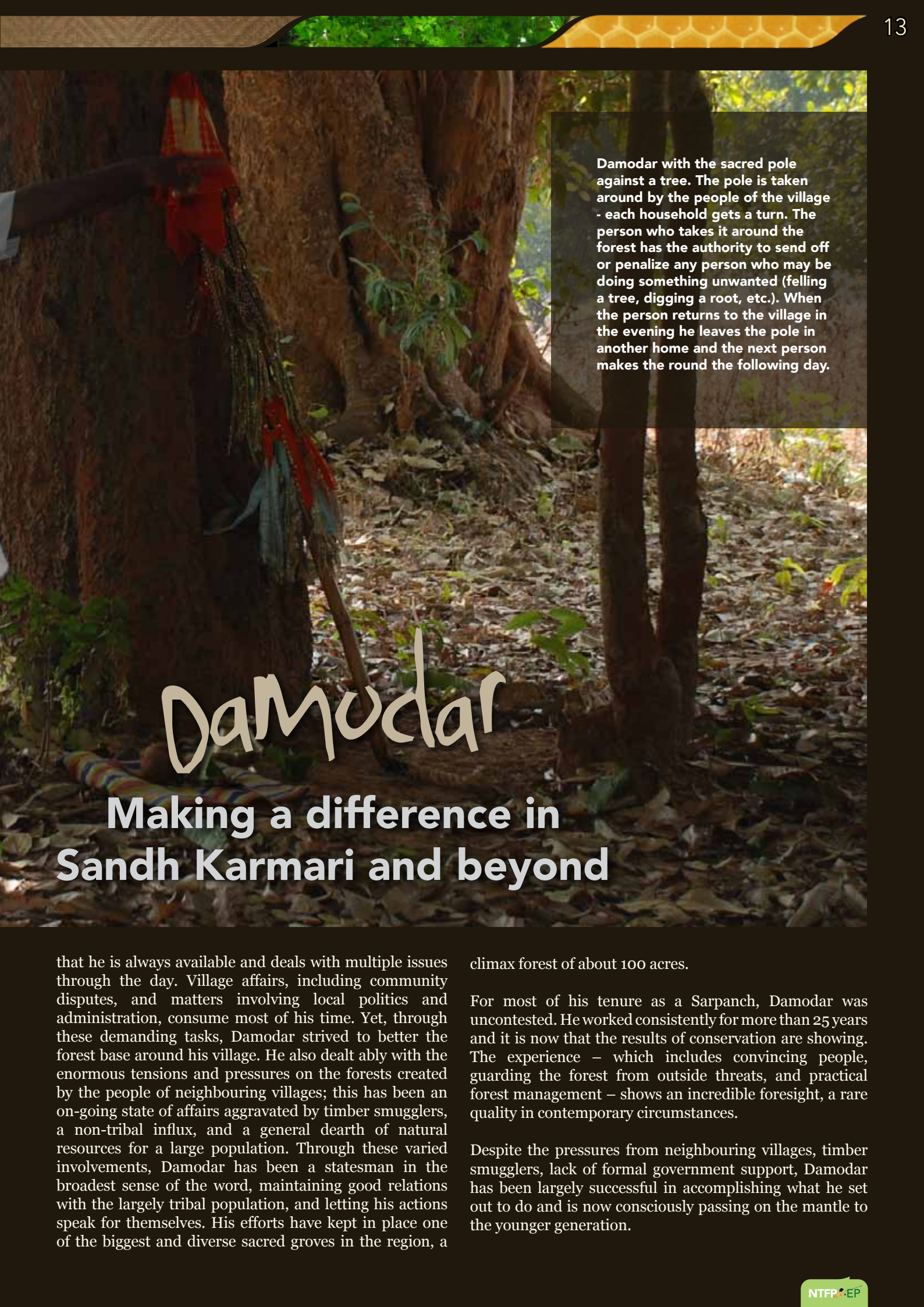
Damodar Kashyap is 67 years old and belongs to the Bhatra community of Sandh Karmari, a village in the eastern border of Orissa. For 35 years he has been the Sarpanch of the Panchayat or the village head and focused on conservation of the forests in the region. The village boasts of several large stands of sal forests and sacred groves, most of which have been nurtured by the village community that was motivated by Damodar to do so.

Today, 5 years after quitting the post of Sarpanch, Damodar continues to motivate the younger generation to carry on with conservation. The community has come together and revived an old tradition – thengapalli – that distributes the responsibility of forest protection among all members of the village. Each family voluntarily takes turns ‘patrolling’ the village forests. This has brought

about a sense of solidarity within the village.

Of late, the message from Sandh Karmari has spread to neighbouring villages that have lost their forests and depend on the forests of Karmari. Damodar initiated meetings with villages around Karmari, proposing that these villages too restore their degraded forests and protect what remains. The first of such meetings was held in March 2013 and the first plantings have taken place with plants provided from the large nursery that Legal and Environmental Action Foundation (LEAF) maintains. Before the onset of monsoon in 2014 more meetings and planting is expected to occur. It is hoped that along with the restoration of forests, inter-village relations will improve.

Damodar is a farmer and a village leader, which entails



Damodar with the sacred pole against a tree. The pole is taken around by the people of the village - each household gets a turn. The person who takes it around the forest has the authority to send off or penalize any person who may be doing something unwanted (felling a tree, digging a root, etc.). When the person returns to the village in the evening he leaves the pole in another home and the next person makes the round the following day.

Damodar

Making a difference in Sandh Karmari and beyond

that he is always available and deals with multiple issues through the day. Village affairs, including community disputes, and matters involving local politics and administration, consume most of his time. Yet, through these demanding tasks, Damodar strived to better the forest base around his village. He also dealt ably with the enormous tensions and pressures on the forests created by the people of neighbouring villages; this has been an on-going state of affairs aggravated by timber smugglers, a non-tribal influx, and a general dearth of natural resources for a large population. Through these varied involvements, Damodar has been a statesman in the broadest sense of the word, maintaining good relations with the largely tribal population, and letting his actions speak for themselves. His efforts have kept in place one of the biggest and diverse sacred groves in the region, a

climax forest of about 100 acres.

For most of his tenure as a Sarpanch, Damodar was uncontested. He worked consistently for more than 25 years and it is now that the results of conservation are showing. The experience – which includes convincing people, guarding the forest from outside threats, and practical forest management – shows an incredible foresight, a rare quality in contemporary circumstances.

Despite the pressures from neighbouring villages, timber smugglers, lack of formal government support, Damodar has been largely successful in accomplishing what he set out to do and is now consciously passing on the mantle to the younger generation.



The Southern Sierra Madre mountains in General Nakar, Quezon - one of the largest ancestral domain in the Philippines and a major watershed that provides water to 17 cities in Metro Manila and Palawan, the Philippines' last ecological frontier were the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD-plus) demonstration sites and venue for the Community Carbon Pools Programme learning exchange visit for 2013.

Readiness through EXchanges

Article by: Florence Baula
Photos by: Leonard Reyes



Nearly 40 community partners from Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia and project implementers from the Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme and Fauna and Flora International (FFI) came together to share lessons and experiences about the readiness phase of the REDD-plus programme.



The REDD-plus Readiness Programme is one of the global solutions for climate change aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries plus conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

17 community partners who were non-English speakers were aided with translators throughout the discussions and exchanges during the 5-day activity and in the end realized they had more in common with their counterparts in other countries despite the language barrier.



Students of the Sentrong Paaralan para sa mga Agta (SPA), a school for indigenous children in Nakar, welcomed the participants through a showcase of traditional dances which demonstrates how their tribe celebrates the gift of nature while others only abuse and consume forest resources.

Participants visited the forest for a demonstration on forest carbon inventory and biodiversity assessments. These two activities are critical in the readiness phase of the REDD-plus programme.



In Palawan, the REDD-plus project was instrumental in helping secure the area's boundary delineation, helping the village local government to successfully pass a joint resolution in 2009 declaring POLESTAR (the villages of Poblacion, Elbita, Estrella, and Taritien) as protected area covering 1,800 hectares. The Tagbanua tribe emphasized that the ADVANCE REDD project provided skills and knowledge on boundary delineation and forest protection.

Participants also made a quick stop at the village of Urduja, Narra, at one of the stores selling handicrafts, which is part of the sustainable livelihood component of the "Sustaining the Advancement of Victoria-Anipahan Communities and Ecosystems through REDD-plus (ADVANCE REDD) project.

NTEP-EP Deputy Director Lia Jasmin Esquillo emphasized the importance of the communities' voices being heard especially in the decision making process since they play a critical role in forest protection.

Rob Harris, FFI's Regional Programme Manager reiterated the importance of bringing the lessons up from the field to the regional level, summing up the concept of the learning exchange.



NTFPs and Green Consumption

Article by: Nola Andaya

Photo by: Roos Nijpels



Early this year, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) invited some representatives of the NTFP-EP and Rich Forests to an informal roundtable to discuss NTFPs, the North-South trade relationship, consumer behavior and their role in advancing green consumerism. Maria Rydlund, Policy Officer for Tropical Forests and Sara Nilsson, Program Officer for Sustainable Consumption organized the event while Eva Eiderström, SSNC board member and head of the Green Consumption Department moderated the discussion.

While it was 3°C and white with snow outside, the discussion in the round table was warm and colorful with many ideas and experiences being shared.

Some of the important points I brought home from the discussion are summarized below:

Consumer Groups, a potential key partner. One of the key strategies of the SSNC in advocating for sustainable practices and products in the market is the mobilization of consumers to demand these from the companies. They have developed and promoted an eco-label that is widely recognized and trusted in Sweden. In promoting NTFP products, for more sustainable consumption, local organizations may explore partnerships not just with private companies, government agencies, but also explore engaging consumer groups to demand for NTFP-based products.

NTFPs, a base for greener products. Green consumption can be advanced through more sustainable product choices. Products should be designed and developed from more sustainable materials. NTFPs offer that resource. It is important therefore for more companies and product designers to know about these materials and to have more knowledge about them, their uses and the technology that can allow for their applications.

Green consumption in the North can support its development in the south. Through the demand of “northern” countries for green products, “southern” suppliers are compelled to develop green products, production systems in the south. In this way, the base for green consumption is developed in the south, allowing its organic development and spread among “southern” consumers. The trends that are usually passed on from “north to south” can also contribute to the green consumption movement in the south.

Finally, it was an interesting learning that the work of the **NTFP-EP** also offers a good example for an economically and technologically advanced country as Sweden, where forests’ value is mainly accounted to the timber found in them. The importance of non-timber forest products and environmental systems allow for the full recognition of the potential that forests can provide.



Article by: Anang Setiawan

Last February 13 – 21 February, 2014 The Ecosystem Alliance organized a training on the Green Climate Fund for its Indonesian partners in Bali, Indonesia. This was held before the GCF board meeting. NTFP-EP was one of the attendees. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a system of climate financing which is part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was established in 2010 with the goal of addressing the impact of climate change in developing countries. GCF is intended to provide financial support for projects, programs, policies and other climate change activities.

What I learned is that funds from developed countries will be managed by a 24 member board from developed and developing countries using existing international banks in each developing country. Through various mechanisms, developing countries can access both mitigation and adaptation funds. The allocation of resources should be done so that there is a balance between mitigation and adaptation initiatives supported by the fund. Civil society came together to consolidate advocacies on GCF to make sure developing countries benefit from these funds. Civil society participants believe that funds for mitigation should be in accordance with the country - driven approach, and should include specific financing for technology needs of developing countries. Adaptation financing should be on a grant basis. Distribution of these funds can be in the form of grants and loans.

The allocation and use of these funds should be transparent. Countries should be fair and open when proposing for and

allocating funds. There should be no unilateral actions in implementation. In addition, greater private sector involvement is foreseen in the GCF. Private sector is encouraged to address the issue of climate change. This is because the private sector can generate additional funds from their profits. That being said, GCF is a fund for the people. There must be real engagement by civil society, especially those most greatly affected by climate change. The projects should respond directly to the needs of the most vulnerable to climate crises.

Unfortunately the process seems quite stalled. So far, the countries which are members of the GCF are still working to formulate a good mechanism in the climate finance system. No grants or loans have been granted so far. There is danger in the current discussions where if funds received are more in the form of loans than grants, the developing countries will be increasingly saddled with increasing debt. If the country borrows more and more, then the country debt will increase as the use of these funds increase. Within a specified time developing countries have to repay borrowed monies. Civil society members are advocating for no more debt for developing countries. Furthermore, profiting through loans created to address the climate change dilemma should be avoided.

Lets hope that this Green Climate fund can be a “friend” for local people and not a climate farce for developing countries.



The A-Listers!

Kotagiri social activist bags Jamnalal Bajaj Award

Lifted from The Hindu, India, November 19, 2013

Be it conservation or development, non-governmental organisations can play a key role particularly in ecologically sensitive places such as The Nilgiris with a mixed population including a significant number of people belonging to the indigenous communities.



Award

Expressing this view, Sneha Lata Nath, director of the Kotagiri-based Keystone Foundation, who recently received the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation Award for effective application of Science and Technology for Rural Development from President Pranab Mukherjee in Mumbai, said that NGOs of The Nilgiris had helped in influencing decisions which had benefited the district. It was their voice which led to the proposed neutrino project being shifted out of the district, she added.

Stating that “the award means a lot to our organisation”, Ms. Nath added, “we will set higher standards”. She said that it also reflected the importance being accorded to The Nilgiris by corporates and expressed the hope that the recognition would make others replicate their work.

At the 36th Jamnalal Bajaj Awards function, it was pointed out that for the last 20 years, Ms. Nath had been working in the field of eco-development, livelihood and sustainability, to bring progression in the tribes of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

Livelihood support

She aimed at providing a sustainable livelihood support to the community while preserving their traditional way of life and conserving the environment. She initiated work across eight centres in the forested tri-junction of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

The idea was to initiate activities related to eco-development which enhanced the well-being of the community and promote biodiversity.

Training

Over the years, Ms. Nath provided extensive training to villagers, NGOs and government departments on topics ranging from sustainable honey harvesting practices to bee-keeping to value addition of Non Timber Forest Products.

All the activities were focused on local manpower development and capacity building. She also worked through NGO networks in Chattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh wherein similar work was initiated.

Her work was concentrated only on Adivasi / tribal communities. The award consisted of a citation, a trophy and a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh.

Sadhu Nag - Profile of a young artist

By: Madhu Ramnath



Sadhu Nag is a longhaired young man from Kakalura. His house is where the youth from the village tend to hang out, chatting, working on bamboo, and listening to music. What struck a visitor was the amount of craft inside Sadhu's home: the bed whose legs were carved specially, the arms of a clock fitted into an octagonal bamboo tray, the decorated knife and axe handles... but what impressed me most was the bamboo door of the fence that closed automatically due to a contraption made of rubber tubing that pulled it back. A swing door!

About 3 years ago the Fibre Desk of the NTFP-Exchange Programme India held a workshop in Sirsi, Karnataka. Sadhu was one of the participants and became an earnest student of the two teachers who conducted the workshop. One of the fibres used to fashion baskets and other artifacts was from the stem of the *Ichnocarpus frutescens*, a twine found commonly all over India; the other fibre whose use was taught in that workshop was that of banana. Within a few days Sadhu mastered the basic elements in using the new fibre and, when he went home, not only practised the craft but

also taught a few of his friends in Kakalura. Returning to the second part of the workshop the following year he surprised his teachers: he brought along several exquisite baskets, trays and other decorative pieces for his teachers. His teachers declared that they had nothing more to teach Sadhu.



It is now Sadhu's intention to continue his work with bamboo as well as with other materials to produce and teach, not only articles of utility that are required in a tribal village, but also to explore other products. He would also be travelling to newer areas to meet and exchange ideas with other artisans. The scholarship provided by the Joke Waller-Hunter Initiative will allow him to do just this!

Sadhu is a member of the Legal and Environmental Action Foundation (LEAF) in Bastar, Chhattisgarh, in India and takes an overall interest in conservation.



**Indigenous People's
Voice in Philippine
REDD-Plus**

For hundreds of years since the arrival of colonial powers in the Philippines, the survival of indigenous peoples has been threatened. The vision of the Philippine National REDD Plus Strategy is to empower the people to sustain and manage forestlands and ancestral domains with enhanced carbon stock and reduced greenhouse gases emission.

The support of the traditional leadership of the indigenous people is an important factor in the process of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). This video documentary features opportunities and challenges encountered in the two demonstration sites in the Philippines, in relation to the FPIC process.



**Women, Weaving
and Sustaining
Culture**

Women, Weaving and Sustaining Culture is a book that tells the story of the passion of the Dayak Iban women in weaving the beautiful bemban (water reed) mats. For them, weaving bemban mats is both artistic work and spiritual journey. A woman receives great respect if she is able to complete a woven mat with the antu gerasi masir motif on it.

Through this book we can find out the uniqueness of Dayak Iban culture in connection with woven mats and sustaining forests. We also learn about the legend of bemban and the legend of the revered antu gerasi masir motif mat. The way of life and customs of the Dayak Iban are much aligned to forest conservation. They may well be known as "culture and conservation warriors".



**Raising Awareness
on the Biodiversity
of Kien Giang Karst**
(photo by
Hong Truong Luu)

A 15-minute documentary film is made as a means to call for conserving the Vietnamese Mekong Delta's unique Kien Giang Karst, a hotspot of biodiversity with many hundreds of species unknown to science and several] threatened by quarrying companies and other human activities in the Mekong Delta. This is a special result from support by NTFP-EP, Cordaid and BothEnds through the Catalyst Partnership Fund for Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE). The Vietnamese film with English subtitle is made based on a four-volume series film project jointly produced by SIE and the Vietnam Television Channel 2 (VTV2), one volume of which is on the world's biggest sarus crane (*Grus antigone*) that is granted the Silver Award on Science and Education in the 33th Vietnam National Television Film Festival in December 2013 at Ha Long Bay.

Oh My goodness!

What e-Shame this had to happen!

A new interactive web-database was launched to provide access to land use in Sarawak. The site features maps and information on land use changes in the Sarawak, Malaysia.



A few days after its launch, the geoportal was suspectedly attacked by online hackers which caused it to be temporarily unavailable for use.

Good thing they were able to remedy the situation, the website is currently up and running! Hooray!



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about this issue of Voices from the Forest.
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