It was a sunny day despite being the start of the rainy season, a good sign for the Penan community and their guests that had gathered. The rhythmic drumming on both ends of an elevated tree trunk signalled the start of the celebration. In the past, Metit atui was practised to welcome the catch of a clouded leopard. When word came to a village that a clouded leopard is caught, the whole village hurriedly prepares the tree trunk and drums along in anticipation of its arrival. It is seen as a way to appease the spirit of the cat that was defeated by the hunter.

Blowpipes are synonymous to the Penan and...
when the forest was good, pigs were plenty and easy to hunt and fish were abundant in clear, clear rivers. It was a time they played music and danced and lived a happy life that they are missing now. The Penan women were not to be upset by the men, playing the keningat or nose flute and the sapa lute. Both musical instruments were played beautifully by Pak Keboing and Limin Seng, as they described it, “to the tune that is lead by their hearts.”

The afternoon ended with the long dance or sayau kebit that shows the influence of other ethnic tribes on Penan culture. A procession of dancers and musicians arrived from a distance to the Penan dwelling where they were greeted by a row of headmen, leaders and the community, continuing to sing and dance until everyone settled down.

After dinner, the night was filled with more song and dance. An exceptional game was also played. Mukat layuk or “climbing the tree,” two men locked hands and formed a bridge while a third man climbed over and then under them, then through their feet - all without touching the ground - and back to where he began. This brought much laughter and cheers from the crowd. The game was once played by the Penan men for entertainment after a hunt but it is rarely practised in these times where the hunt has become longer than it used to. The laughter continued as the women danced a traditional dance called sayau ngitiu accompanied by the pagang, a traditional bamboo strong instrument. It is a fast moving dance that the younger generation love to watch and when exaggerated with more vigorous hip movements, brings much laughter to the crowd. At times, the dancer pulled others to join in and the crowd of dancing and laughing women grew.

The pace slowed down as the participants were entranced by the and spontaneous poetic words of Paya Seng singing the nggejjan. She sang of how happy she was to see Penans from near and far present and how singing brought her back to when she was a young girl roaming a beautiful forest, happy and contented. She also sang of her concern of forest loss in recent times and raised a plea to those who may help the Penans protect their land and forest from further destruction. Nggejjan is sung as a lullaby to comfort and put children to sleep, to tell epic stories such as when a clouded leopard is caught and to bid a safe journey. It was upstaged by the men, playing the sayau kebit that shows the Penans protect their land and forest and raised a plea to those who may help.

The next morning a discussion on the asad or culture and the need to be guardians of your own land and forest. A DAY TO CELEBRATE PENAN The Importance of Adat, or culture, and the need to be guardians of your own land and forest. naturally a blowpipe competition was up next. The beauty of this was both young and old participated and showed the skills of the Penan amidst cheers and jeers. It was far from a daunting challenge for the Penans as they are more used to shooting small moving objects with their blowpipe. However, in the end, there was a winner.

It was then a short walk to their forest and herbal gardens to hear the sharing of a few key plants...
The modest longhouse in Long Iman is usually a side visit on the tourist map, as tourists from across the world make their eco-adventure trip to the Mulu Caves in Mulu National Park in Sarawak. Today, however, it is Pesta Penan (Penan festival) and the longhouse comes alive as it is the sole destination for Penans coming from villagers near and far, travelling for hours by boat and car.

I and eight others were the only outsiders to Pesta Penan. It was also my first time in “Penan country,” and I was there with mixed feelings of awe and sadness.

As a city dweller, much of what I know of the Penan people is from the news. Since the 1990s, there have been many heroic stories of these traditional hunter-gatherers’ attempt to resist logging in their traditional land through the setting up of makeshift blockades on logging roads. Alongside those stories are photographs of men and women dressed in their traditional clothes and holding a spear or blowpipe symbolically, guarding the blockades.

More recently is the media coverage on the Penan girls being raped by workers in the logging camps; these girls are dependent on hitchhiking a ride on logging trucks to get to and from school. Coupled with news of poverty in the resettlement camps, it seems like bad news is the only news coming from the Penan people. A group of Penan set up a Committee to change that by organizing the Pesta Penan, backed by the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP).

During the festival which fell on 3-5 December 2009, the Penans organized many activities. The first was the blowpipe competitions, followed by demonstrations of “jungle sign language” where branches and leaves were used to communicate. The other activities included honeygathering in the compound of Long Iman. The elders and leaders explained to the group the many traditional medicinal uses of plants found in the jungle.

Between activities, the veranda of the longhouse was filled with crafts to display and sell. Craft collectors would have a tough time deciding how many rattan mats and bags they can haul out without sinking the boat, while visitors would be able to buy little trinkets such as bamboo bangles and keychains.

As night fell, everyone gathered to share musical performances and dances. Sketches were performed and well-received, especially one which required some acrobatic skills to depict how the Penan collect honey.

The activities brought out some nostalgia amongst the elders, but they were new to the younger Penans who were raised in settlements. “This event is really good. We are very happy to be a part of this, and happy that this knowledge can be passed down to the younger generation,” said Efeng Liyan, an elderly woman from Btu Bunyan.

The material culture of the Penan seemed modest compared to their fellow neighbours such as the Kayan and Kelabit groups – whose traditional costumes boast many striking colors and their hats proudly wearing feathers of rare birds. Instead, it was a subtle affair with Penans dressed in loin cloth or other costumes influenced by different groups in Sarawak.

The Atui, a giant musical instrument made from a carved log and adorned with a beautiful piece of clouded leopard skin, took center stage.

“We (Penan) believe that the clouded leopard is very powerful. We greatly respect it because it is the epitome of perfection” Isaral Weng explained to me. “The clouded leopard strives for perfection in everything. For example, if it got a wound or broke a tooth, it would want to die because it is not perfect anymore. An ‘imperfect’ leopard would follow a human hoping to get caught and killed. This is why it is a very special and good creature.”

As a show of respect, the Penans would beat on the Atui whenever a clouded leopard is caught and brought back to camp. The same treatment would also be given to leaders of high ranks if they visited; and only those leaders are given the honor of wearing the skin of the clouded leopard.

Clearly, the Pesta Penan clarified the ways in which misconceptions people have about the Penan people not having “culture,” just because they are traditionally hunter-gatherers. On the contrary, the Penan people share many similarities in music, dance, traditional knowledge, oral history and pride for their culture as other indigenous groups in Borneo.

It may take many years to work through the complexities of finding an arrangement where the state development plans can happen while respecting the indigenous peoples as rightful forest stewards. For now, let’s hope that we will read more stories such as on the Pesta Penan, which celebrates its culture and people, instead of being high-lighted as victims of development.

Puah Sze Ning, Elevyn, Malaysia

Photographs by Puah Sze Ning

The group struggled to prepare a document that would meet the objective of reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation at the same time tried to stay true to principles of community empowerment, social justice, and biodiversity conservation using a participatory, multi-stakeholder approach.

The group discussed such difficult issues as carbon ownership, the cost and accuracy of satellite imagery, and field measurements needed to monitor forest change, capacity building for communities to monitor forest carbon, research needs for forest degradation, policies to address drivers of deforestation, effective institutional and forest governance mechanisms to halt deforestation, coordinated restoration of forests using indigenous species and sustainable financing among other concerns.

The group was also reminded by colleagues about the holistic view of the indigenous communities of forests as sources of water, food, spiritual strength and the importance to recognize such values in the national REDD+ strategy.

Through the process the group identified certain thrusts that differentiate it from other National REDD+ strategy processes developing around the world.

• In terms of scale, as full national REDD+ plus will take technical upgrading and capacity development, the proposal is to undertake REDD+ plus at a sub-national level in the early phase and upscalerational level once capacities have been strengthened and data generated.

• In terms of REDD+ action areas, the NRPS will focus its attention on tenured areas (such as ancestral domain areas, community-based forest management areas) as well as areas of key biodiversity.

• In terms of governance and implementation, the NRPS promotes a decentralized approach where much of assessment, planning, and implementation actions are approved at the local level. This is in line with the approach of the Philippines National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC).

• In terms of actors, the NRPS would like to empower and increase the involvement of community-based organizations, especially indigenous groups in monitoring, carbon accounting, REDD+-related institutions and possibly community fund management.

• The NRPS also focuses on strong inter-sectoral communication and coordination so as to address drivers of deforestation outside the forestry sector.

With the guidance of the satellites and spirits, lots of hard work and team effort, the process is moving with great promise. The stakeholders of the NRPS are expected to present a draft of the said strategy to the Climate Change Commission for adoption and subsequent implementation by the middle of April 2010.

Finally, all involved would like to thank the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and IUCN-NL Nature and Poverty.net for their financial support to this process.

Maria Cristina S. Guerrero, NTFP-EP

The practice of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is one arena of actions that indigenous peoples, particularly the elders, have been asserting for within their communities. This is because many indigenous peoples, especially the youth, have succumbed to the pressures of mainstream culture which regards TEK as an inferior set of knowledge relative to Western knowledge. Yet indigenous peoples can boast of their biologically-diverse territories as living proof of the success of their TEK practices.

At the Pamulaan Center for Indigenous Peoples’ Education in Davao City, the Philippines, a bold attempt to give prominence to TEK and contribute to its revival among the youth is being undertaken—piloting of TEK as a college course. The course studies the environment or ecology from the perspectives of indigenous peoples’ rights and TEK. TEK is “a cumulative body of knowledge, practices and beliefs about the relationship between people and the environment evolving by adaptive process and passed on between generations through cultural mechanisms” (Fikret Berkes, 1999).

There are 92 indigenous scholars of TEK, representing 31 indigenous groups/sub-groups around the country. They are taking up undergraduate courses in applied anthropology, indigenous education, applied agriculture and peace education at the University of Southeastern Philippines, La Union. The sessions cover key topics aimed at preparing students to become future community workers and leaders who will help protect and nurture their ancestral domains and promote TEK. Invited resource speakers complement their lectures with culturally-sensitive and experience-based methods, as well as home assignments.

Entitled “Enhancing Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Indigenous Youth Towards the Sustainable Forest Management of Ancestral Domains: Developing and Testing a College Course for Pamulaan Students of the University of Southeastern Philippines,” the 20-month project is being implemented in partnership with the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature-Netherlands.

The project would not have taken shape and implemented without the passionate work, inspiration, and contribution of many international and local TEK/KSP advocates, practitioners, professors and scholars, and indigenous support organizations. They have been instrumental in the development of the syllabus, collection of references, handling of the TEK sessions and writing of lecture notes. It would not have been as substantive and relevant without the wisdom and blessings of some Philippine indigenous elders who were consulted during project commencement and curriculum development, and invited as a resource speaker.

With the project ending in May 2010, Pamulaan students are challenged to share and research TEK in their respective communities, as well as to learn from other tribes. It is their hope that the course will be continued and succeeding batches of Pamulaan scholars will carry on the practice of TEK as an essential weapon for the very survival of their tribes. The USEP and its faculty are enjoined to meet the challenge of promoting pluralism in knowledge, particularly in valuing TEK and indigenous knowledge systems, and practices in co-existence with mainstream knowledge in an academic setting.

Jenne de Beer

Of Snails and Crocodiles
Workshop on Food from the Forest by the Pamulaan Students

Last September, I was invited to facilitate two workshops at the Pamulaan Center in Mindanao. It was a thrill to work with the enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of students I found there.

One workshop was held as theme ‘Food from the Forest’. After examples were given of IFIT recipes from elsewhere (see Voices 17), the students were challenged to write down their own recipes with background information on the ingredients used. The groups went off with gusto and in no time some wonderful stuff was produced. Judge for yourself!

Gintaan Gabi with Snail

Tribes: T’boli

This dish is commonly cooked for meals, and at times even sold. Make sure to wash the gabi before peeling off the skin!

Ingredients

- Gabi leaves
- Ginger
- Gabi stem
- Garlic
- Gabi roots
- Onion
- Coconut milk
- Galayot
- Lemon grass
- Snail
- Yellow ginger
- Salt

Instructions

1. Prepare and wash all ingredients.
2. Remove the skin of the gabi roots, gabi stem, yellow ginger, garlic, onion, coconut milk and lemon grass.
3. Boil the gabi roots in water.
4. Put coconut milk and snail in the pan and let boil.
5. Put the spices (onions, garlic, ginger, lemon grass, yellow ginger) into the pan.
6. After 3-5 minutes, add salt to taste.
7. Add the gabi leaves and stems.
8. Lastly, add the “sakoyit” a minute before it will be served.

Ginataang Gabi with Snail

Tribes: Teduray and Badjao

This dish is commonly cooked for meals, and at thanksgiving. It is commonly served during the cold season. It is believed to be taboo for pregnant women or anyone ill to eat this dish.

Ingredients

- Mushroom: netum diwil (Lentinus stipitosus) or refs (Volvariola esculenta)
- Grated coconut
- Wild red ginger (Possibly Vanoverbergia exilus) or refs (Volvaria esculenta)
- Onion leaf (wild)
- Native tomato
- Salt

Instructions

1. Wash the mushrooms
2. Slice the spices, and combine with the mushrooms
3. Wrap the mixture in a banana leaf
4. Put the banana leaf in the fire
5. Cook for 15 minutes. Serve.

Bulaknala

Tribes: Talungandig and Kalantangan

Commonly prepared and eaten at home, Balaiha Hinabulakala is a versatile dish for any meal of the day.

1. Ingredients
- Rattan shoots

2. How to Prepare
- Cut into 7-inch lengths so that the rattan shoots will fit inside the kettle
- Put it in the kettle and boil until soft
- Chop up and get the soft part of the rattan shoots
- Prepare the sarsawan or sauce or just salt well
- Do for the sauce, mix together onion rings, soy sauce and chilli

During a 2nd workshop, students were invited to map the relation between water, forest and people in their ancestral domain.

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Ginataang Gabi with Snail

Tribes: Teduray and Badjao

This is a versatile dish for many occasions including birthday, gathering, rituals and thanksgiving. It is commonly served during the cold season. It is believed to be taboo for pregnant women or anyone ill to eat this dish.

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The regional 'forest honey and bee conservation movement' of Madhu Dunia, is recently getting real good traction with, for example, spectacular results in Bangladesh of BARC’s collaboration with Mawali honey collectors in the vast mangrove forests of the Sunderbans (see ‘Partner profile’ on page 11). Furthermore, in both Cambodia and the Philippines, newly established forest honey networks are getting off the ground — taking a page or two from the Indonesian JMHI example.

In the Philippines, the dynamics, right now, are especially energetic among the Agta-Dumagat hunter gatherers of General Nakar and within less than a year from start, over 30 settlements are ready in the Sierra Madre mountains. With their PO SAGIBIN in the lead and we plan to report extensively on this in Voices 19.

In India, Keystone Foundation concluded the Darwin Initiative project on Bees, Biodiversity and Livelihoods. This has generated primary data on bee populations, pollination and peoples livelihoods with honey and wax. The proceedings of the concluding workshop are available on request from Keystone.

Meanwhile, a group of EP partners participated in the Apimonia 2009, held in France. It was quite an experience. But we hope to be able to once, again, to organize a more focused (on forest bees of course!) Madhu Dunia conference soon.

While MD-J, to great acclaim place inultra- Interestingly, two years ago, the next one (2011) most likely will be held in Ujung Kulon, Indonesia.

**Pioneer Awards Go Indonesia**

Last year, two JMHI ‘heavy weights’ both received prestigious awards for their outstanding work with forest honey collecting communities in the Indonesian archipelago. Heri Valentinus of Pratim Roy of Keystone (India), Amy Maling has helped to lay the basis for where we are today.

...for our indigenous communities, only got marginal attention in the past. And unique is an Apis laboriosa conservation initiative in the far north of Vietnam. The activities are implemented by ethnic Hmong communities with support from EP partner BRDC. The initiative is reaching maturity as we write and we plan to report extensively on this in Voices 19.

In Cambodia, the support of IUCN Netherlands and in particular its EGP arm, plan forward. The plan would cover about 150,000 ha of ancestral domain, for which full title is expected to be awarded soon.

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BARCIK Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge

*In Solidarity with Sundarban Honey Wisdom*

The Sundarbans is the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world. Local people call this forest baduban. It spans 10,000 km², about 6,000 km² of which are in Bangladesh. The Sundarbans were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997 and were declared as the first Ramsar site of Bangladesh in 21 May 1992. In fact, the Sundarbans consist of two ecoregions: freshwater swamp forests and mangrove forests. Very rich in floral diversity with about 334 plant species, it is also known for faunal diversity (375 animals, of which 35 reptiles, 41 mammals, 210 fish, 14 crab and 43 molluska species). The Bengal tiger (Panthera tigris) and the Sundari tree (Heritiera fomes) are among the significant species here.

According to the Bangladesh National Forest Resources Inventory (BNFRI) of 2005, there are 90 species of economic importance. The Sundarbans are a significant source of natural resources, providing livelihoods to the local communities.

**Ecological steps**

The Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK) started to work in the area in 2001. From its inception, BARCIK has strived to understand the biodiversity situation, local knowledge and practices, as well as how local people cope with natural calamities or developmental destruction by their own methods and resources. One key area here is livelihood rights.

BARCIK has taken an important step through a new project “Advocacy on sustainable resource management and livelihood improvement of Mawalis in Sundarbans”. The project started in September 2008. Funded by IUCN-NL, it considers the local context and the project aims at a comprehensive community-led programme, focusing on:

1. Ecology and biodiversity conservation,
2. NTFP-dependent livelihoods, and
3. Ecological markets in the Sundarbans region.

**Nine mawali groups in the same boat**

Traditionally a Mawali group, composed of 7 to 9 persons, is formed during the honey collection season. The group leader, called sojani, coordinates and operates the whole process. After the harvest, they no longer work together in the same group or in any activities requiring teamwork. However, through BARCIK, NTFP collectors formed 9 groups from 81 families. Mawali named their groups with the nine significant mangrove trees, namely: Sundari, Pashur, Khalisha, Goran, Golgach, Bain, Kakra, Kewra and Dhulchaka.

**Bonded soil, bonded honey**

In the early 1980s, the rich and influential started commercial, large-scale shrimp culture, affecting the agrarian rhythm of livelihoods in the Sundarbans. The shrimp farms uprooted biological resources, displaced rural people from their cultivable land, and impacted negatively on the heritage of the area. Moreover, national and international development and financial institutions supported the shrimp culture in Southwestern Bangladesh. The agrarian rural population, hoping to gain a livelihood, migrated to towns and cities to become a day labourers or, worse, ended up as jobless outsiders. Simultaneously, a large number of the displaced people started to move into the forest legally or illegally in order to survive. The situation created incredible conflict between traditional forest resource users, new settlers and the Forest Department with regards NTFP collection.

The people of the Sundarbans, traditionally involved in forest resource collection with legal permits from the Forest Department, are suffering in various ways. Not only has their once easy access to forest resources been hampered, but their very lives and livelihoods are now under threat.

Mawali honey collectors are the main victims. While tourists and buyers visit the Sundarbans and have a unique affection for Sundarban honey, they are unaware of the unjust honey collection system and the inhuman struggle of the mawali in this livelihood. They lost their forest rights due to unjust forest rules, while most of the poor and resource-marginal mawali used to take out loans from mahajan (traditional money lenders) and micro-credit based NGOs and would give most of their collection without question. Mawali also were not able to sell their honey in the market at anything near to fair prices. And this has been the practice for the past 150 years or so. Mawali are able to sell their honey in the market at anything near to fair prices. And this has been the practice for the past 150 years or so. Mawali are able to sell their honey in the market at anything near to fair prices.

**Nine mawali groups break the silence**

The nine mawali groups have collected about 5,600 kg of honey and 280 kg of wax in an ecologically friendly process. Women are involved in forest honey processing in a hygienic manner. Both women and men forest dwellers assess the honey market from local to national levels and sell their own collection at a fair price that they had decided for themselves for the first time.

A decade ago, no one would believe that mawali would have their own bank account and savings. Forest people used to depend on loans from the mahajan (traditional money lenders) and micro-credit based NGOs. Today, the group members have their own bank account and have saved a total of more than one lac taka (US$1,500). Though as yet at a small scale, it is proof that the previously marginalized mawalis have been able to break the unjust social power structure for their independent survival.

**Suppressed women’s voices, now united**

In the Sundarbans, women collect various forest resources for their family’s daily needs. Women also face many threats every day: wild animals like the tiger, crocodile, and snake; robbers; unjust forest rules; and the male-dominant system. Until today, women’s forest resource rights in the Sundarban areas remain largely unrecongnised. Through BARCIK, the women have organized themselves and formed a group named Sundarban Mohila Samiti. Women are now trying to develop NTFP-based cottage industries including pickled Kewra fruit, golpata handicrafts, as well as soap and candles made of wax.

**Bees and mawali kids - now friends**

BARCIK has started an ecological education program in different colourful and interesting ways among school students and grassroots youths. Students, both boys and girls, have formed a strong volunteer team known as the Sundarban biodiversity savers group. They organise various ecological activities in their schools and villages, sharing and disseminating ecological knowledge. They have started a campaign: ‘do not kill the bee kids during the collection of honey from the forest’. And they have motivated the locals to save all wildlife in the forest and to stop illegal poaching. Finally the students have organised school debates, essay competitions, and street drama.

**Make honey garlands with different flowers**

The long process has brought together many people: forest dwellers, the Forest Department, local government, school teachers, youth, journalists, the Forest committee members, small entrepreneurs, ecologists, local NGOs, and policy makers. Together, they have been promoting ecological development approaches in this sensitive region. BARCIK also publishes a bulletin on Sundarbans’ cultural rights, is compiling a Sundarban’s resource profile, and undertakes research at the grassroots.

BARCIK has become active in various networks. It is already associated with Keystone; an NGO based in Tamil Nadu, India which looks at NTFP rights and is co-organiser of Madhu Dunia. Mr. Leo and Mr. Chandran from Keystone have visited the Sundarbans, and have conducted honey workshops, helping the mawali to harvest pure honey in a hygienic manner. Mr. Jenne de Beer of NTFP-EP has also visited the area and attended several meetings and workshops with various stakeholders. Sundarbans’ people expect to undertake an activity similar to Madhu Dunia which could help them fight for forest resource rights and gain access to fair trade of NTFPs. The greater involvement of people is slowly improving the life and livelihood of the mawali (and other NTFP-dependent peoples.) This is truly a step towards saving biodiversity and ensuring the ecological harmony of the Sundarbans.

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Photo credit: Pavel Partha

*Madhu Duniya*

*Newly established women’s group helping does forest development*

*Animistbanga@gmail.com*

Madhu Duniya

*How we got out of fear of forest thieves*

*Exploding sustainable honey harvesting to forest dwellers’ relief during oil scarcity morning*

*Make honey garlands with different flowers*

Traditionally smoked, an essential tool

*Finally the students have organised school debates, essay competitions, and street drama.*

*Animistbanga@gmail.com*

Photo credit: Pavel Partha
A Malaysian's First Time Visit to the Philippines

After spending three weeks zipping around all over the Philippines, we've collected some fond memories and wild stories to boast of to our friends back home. From Lake Sebu near the troubled area of Mindanao, to the beautiful "last frontier" of Palawan, through the bustling streets of Quezon City in Manila, and up the dizzy, winding roads to the Cordillera range, the Philippines is anything but ordinary.

So what warnings, from the locals no less, may have put off many a tourist visiting in the Philippines? Thankfully for us, our concerns were minimal as our working trip was well organized and carefully watched over by the team of NTFP-EP, our network partner.

Late last year, Elevyn and NTFP-EP decided to start working closely by getting CustomMade Crafts Center (CMCC) to set up their shop on www.elevyn.com. Elevyn is a social enterprise that works with marginalized and indigenous communities to provide market access for their handmade crafts through the Internet.

Our trip to the Philippines was initially scheduled for October 2009 but it was postponed due to the passing of three typhoons and massive floodings in Manila. Coming from Malaysia, where typhoons and volcano threats were something we only read in the papers and watched on TV, it made us think twice if we were really welcome there.

When we arrived, the answer was clear. Everyone spoke Filipino to us, thinking we were locals, and the horrors of the most recent flood were way down there before.

Lake Sebu and Palawan

In the first week of our trip, CMCC's Nancy Javier accompanied us to Lake Sebu, Mindanao to meet the T'boli indigenous artisans, where we had a chance to find out more about the KENHULUNG Federation and the Lake Sebu Indigenous Women Weavers Association (LASIWWAI).

Nadeth Ofong, the President of KENHULUNG brought us to Sitio Lamdadlay. Access is possible only via dirt tracks. It took awhile before our bones and ethereal vital organs got used to the bumpy grind of the roads, but we enjoyed the little adventure. The brassware-makers in the village left a lasting impression as it was the first time we've seen how brass is recycled to be re-molded.

The process is a lot longer and harsher than we've ever imagined, from spending hours keeping the fire alive to heat up the brass, to pounding each mold with wax and later, casting it with a black mixture. When put in fire, the wax will melt leaving the black mold to hold the liquid brass. The black coat would later be easily broken once it is cooled – leaving a shiny new molded figure.

Next, we met up with LASIWWAI in Barangay Klubi, led by its charismatic founder Jenita Eko. She showed us how they produce the smooth Tkalak, a traditional cloth made from abaca fiber. We were really impressed with the organization and quality of work that the LASIWWAI artisans are producing - testament to the hard work and co-operation of the entire team.

Our journey then brought us down south to Palawan. Right off the plane, we were picked up by Norlita Colili and whisked off to an introductory meeting with NATRIPAL, where we learnt about its work on wild honey and indigenous crafts. Although we stayed in Palawan for only one night, the trip was extremely productive as we managed to get Natripal's online store set up on elevyn.com.

The Cordilleras

Next, we returned to Luzon and, while wearing a tan that Holly wood starlets would die for, headed to Ifugao land in Banaue, famed for its rice terraces. The place was a lot cooler, and we were really glad for Manang Lily's cozy Banaue View Inn.

Manang Lily's group of weavers are in the early stages of setting up their group and we got the pleasure of visiting their workshop in town. Manang Lily's group later gave us a ride to the scenic town of Sagada, where they were going to purchase aloom. We then made our way back to Manila, before flying home to KL.

If you asked us before our trip, what we thought of Filipino crafts, our answer would've been 'cheap' and 'mass produced' as that was typically what we would find in the markets at home. But after meeting the artisan groups of CMCC, we realized that there is plenty of high quality and unique crafts coming from the Philippines which have never trickled into Malaysia.

At Elevyn, we strongly identify with NTFP's philosophy in reviving indigenous crafts and introducing sustainability through community empowerment. We hope the partnership will go a long way towards our goal of bringing South East Asian crafts to the world.

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Dancing Along in a Healthy Forest (Hutan Lestari, Rakjat Menari). The film documents an exchange visit of Penan leaders from Sarawak to Malnau (East Kalimantan). The leaders visit the Punun village of Adu to study the forest reha-

Wild Product Governance: Finding policies that work for non-timber forest products By Sarah A. Laid, Rebecca J. McLain, Rachel P. Wynberg (Eds.) NTFPs have a multitude of purposes, contribute substantially to rural livelihoods, generate revenue for companies and governments, and have a range of important cultural, social, and environmental values.

Monon: The Teduray Weaving Tradition What an interesting and well-illustrated booklet this is! We have a vivid portrait of the people behind this art, and we can begin to appreciate how important this weaving skill is as tradi-

Community Forest Management Manual In the context of Orissa, community based manage-

Delaying Justice. Indigenous communities in Malaysia, which are experiencing land grab for logging and plantations are increasingly turning to the courts for justice. There are certainly successes, but the road is also often bumpy and stony with bitter disappointments and anxieties. A Ketapang Pictures production. In English, Malay, Iban.

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Delaying Justice. Indigenous communities in Malaysia, which are experiencing land grab for logging and plantations are increasingly turning to the courts for justice. There are certainly successes, but the road is also often bumpy and stony with bitter disappointments and anxies.
Jaringan Madu Hutan Indonesia. A compilation on the Indonesian forest honey network and its members. Produced by Gekko Studio, JNHH and NTFP EP. In Bahasa Indonesia and English (29 min.). This is available online at: http://www.gekkovoices.com. For further info, contact: info@gekkovoices.com

Mondulkiri Wild: Protecting People and Biodiversity. Mondulkiri in Northeast Cambodia is rich in forest and natural resources. It is also home to Bunong indigenous communities. NTFPs are viewed as key means to improve the livelihood of the Bunong but also to ensure their direct participation in the conservation of the province's remaining forests of about 1.2M hectares. However, the Bunong currently face challenges to their way of life and their efforts at protecting their forest, culture and livelihood. WWF Cambodia and NTFP EP are working together with Bunong communities with the aim of sustaining community benefits from the forest. Produced by NTFP EP, WWF & Gekko Studio. PAL (27 min.) English and Khmer. Info: phan_channa@yahoo.com

Non-Timber Forest Produce - Protocols for Harvest: Resource Pack for Practitioners. Sustainability of harvest of NTFPs has been a long discussed topic and this Resource Pack, produced by the Keystone Foundation (India), aims to cover aspects concerning harvests of specific plant parts and seeks to address institutions, NGOs and researchers working with harvester communities. The pack will be especially useful to ensure an ecological view of resources and suggests methods for community-based ecological monitoring. Thumb rules related to harvesting are presented as separate cards so that they can be replicated and translated in different languages, specifically for harvesters from different communities. Finally, the resource pack is an outcome of several years of work in the field of NTFPs and has benefited from contributions from various institutions and networks. Contact: kf@keystone-foundation.org

The Wild Meat Trail. A film on the impacts of hunting wild animals in the northeast of India. This latest Dusty Foot production – a jewel of a film! – received generous support from IUCN-NL/EGP. It looks at hunting that exists as traditional practice and now for a growing commercial market. It explores whether it is possible to save one of the last good and biodiverse wildlife populations from diminishing. Are there new paths of conservation that can be adopted there?

To substantiate the vision of the film, it was felt that a well-planned conservation education programme would be a significant start. An outcome of this has been Under the Canopy, a manual for training of trainers in wildlife and conservation education. The first set of workshops for trainers was held in December in Nagaland and Assam. The idea is that the trainers will take it further with children in schools.

For more info on the film or manual, contact Dusty Foot Productions (New Delhi). Phone +91-11-26121673; Email: dustyfootindia@yahoo.com. Catch the film and many others online at http://dustyfootindia.com

Pure from the Forest: Mondulkiri Wild Honey. This film focuses on the honey hunting tradition of the Bunong of Mondulkiri. Efforts to protect the forest through livelihood incentives around sustainable collection and marketing of wild honey are very promising. Produced by: NTFP EP, WWF & Gekko Studio. In Khmer with English subtitles, PAL (10 min). For more info: phan_channa@yahoo.com

Our focus is on the bounty and richness of the Penan people of Malaysia – their forests and their culture – in our cover story of the recent Pesta Penan. Experience the celebration yourself through the colourful accounts and photos of Joanna de Rosario and Szeuling.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, students from indigenous groups around the country are rediscovering and celebrating their roots in the unique academic setting of Mindanao’s Pamulaan school. Revisiting their elder’s wisdom on traditional ecological knowledge is the only way to ensure the survival of age-old traditions and the protection of their forests, as pointed out by Che Dominguez, a Mawali community member.

The buzz has been getting louder as bee and honey-related activities are fast gaining ground across the region. Find out why a hubbub was raised when honey from Asian honeybees isn’t considered real from Loreta Alsa’s participation in the Apimondia in France. On a more positive note, Agta hunter gatherers of the Sierra Madre are ecstatic as their own bee program takes flight, promising much better returns for honey and bee wax.

In our partner profile, we learn about a stunning success story of the Mawali people in the Sundarbans – the largest mangrove forest in the world – through the work of EP’s Bangladesh partner BARKIK. Yes, honey figures (again) Big in that story!

Vietnam played host to this year’s EP regional meeting. EP newcomer Tanya Conlu (and partners) came across little known NTFP-related facts and encountered new faces during the many opportunities for sharing and learning.

India, on the other hand, entered a dialogue with the federal government – through the revived Save Western Ghats Movement. Pandurang Hegde shares how hundreds of supporters from all walks of life have come together to protect this fragile mountain range.

Again, this issue of Voices is a full one. Some snippets of other articles include: Avatar’s surprising parallelisms with certain things going on in our region, and a host of wonderful books and videos produced by, or together with, our partners.

Finally, EXTRA a four-page insert on the Kalimantan Craft Network (Indonesia). Those four pages are to celebrate the launch – April 2010 – of the network’s Borneo Chic Brand.

It is in Bahasa Indonesia, but if your reading skills are rusty in the language, don’t worry. The pictures of those gorgeous bags and the artisans involved in making the materials speak for themselves.

We hope you enjoy these Voices!