

Voices from the Forest

Learning from the Tagbanua



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Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) is a collaborative network of over 100 civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) whose mission is to catalyze the empowerment of forest-dependent communities in Asia towards the sustainable management of forested landscapes & ecosystems.

Voices from the Forest is the official newsletter of NTFP-EP. It is released bi-annually and contains regional and country forests and peoples updates from the NTFP-EP network.

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Cover photo by Tanya Conlu, NTFP-EP
Asia: The ancestral waters and lands of the
Tagbanua of Coron, Palawan, Philippines

EDITOR'S NOTES

In 2017, women were in the limelight in the entertainment news for multiple cases of sexual harassment claims and violation of women's rights. Though these situations were and are deplorable, and while we stand firmly behind the victims, these developments did help to bring more awareness and action on the rights of women and girls.

In this issue, we feature empowered women fighting for their rights and playing heroic roles to conserve nature and the environment. In the article entitled "**Indigenous Sumatran Women Protecting the Forest**" on page 9, Uslaini, better known as Chaus, reveals the injustice of farm labor where women are paid half the wages of men. Roziah, a Badjao woman, featured on page 5 doesn't really care if what she is doing is a role of the woman or a man, all she wants to do is save the turtles off the islands of Sabah where only 1 in 1000 turtle eggs ever make it to full adult turtle life. On page 6, Joan, a Higaonon woman from the Southern Philippine mountains, relates her realization that assets of their territories are the assets of all men and **women** and that these assets should be defended for current and future generations.

Women are also featured in the support of the GAGGA grant to a women's enterprise focused on orchid management in Central Sulawesi (page 7). Additional benefits drawn from natural resources are also the highlight of the Community based Eco-tourism project in Kratie, Cambodia where Ms. Phat Hoeurn relates her gains from eco-tourism catering services. **Mainstreaming Community-Forestry enterprises** not only in Indonesia and Cambodia, but **in all of ASEAN** is a goal of NTFP-EP and thus the activities with the ASEAN small and medium enterprise (SME) sector as featured on page 18.

Though the 32nd issue was focused entirely on forest food, we do not depart from this important topic in this issue. Stories of improving efficiency of palm sugar cooking in Indonesia, and **traditional Penan sago delicacy preparation** in Malaysia are found on pages 7 and 15 respectively. The Punan youth in North Kalimantan also share with us in their discreet yet powerful way, about their knowledge of forest management, particularly in hunting and river fishing. (page 12).

But, our cover article on the community management of the ancestral waters of the Tagbanua of Coron reflects our passions and goals for indigenous communities to have not only access to forest resources but also control and benefit from the same. It is in these inspirational visits that our eyes are opened to not only explore and develop products in forests but, to draw from Tanya Conlu's thoughts in her article "**Going back to our roots**" on page 3, to **patiently and respectfully look at the whole ecosystem and the practices of its stewards** to draw meaningful and lasting lessons on the conservation of cultures, of peoples, and of nature.

GOING BACK TO OUR ROOTS

Article by Tanya Conlu, NTFP-EP Asia
Photos by Natasya Muliandari, NTFP-EP Indonesia



As an organization and a network, NTFP-EP has gone far and wide from its earlier days of a few scattered individuals using their houses as offices. It has continually built a strong voice for indigenous communities within Asia and is pushing its advocacies into the international arena. We are known for our NTFP enterprise programme, and our products are loved by many who attend conferences and come to our shops and get to know our work.

But in our growth, we sometimes lose sight of the bees for the honey, the forest for the resin, the indigenous community for the woven bags and baskets.



But in our growth, sometimes we lose sight of the bees for the honey, the forest for the resin, the indigenous community for the woven bags and baskets.

One way to center our efforts back to the bigger picture is to build capacity of staff on the basics of conservation, resource management, and traditional ecological knowledge. Last November we had a Field Course in Community-based Ecological Monitoring in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, with a mix of old and new staff focusing on enterprise and conservation and a few partners. The participants were oriented on natural resource management, taken through the steps of coming up with a resource monitoring plan with partner communities, and guided through examples of monitoring tools. This included a field visit to Namo in Sigi District where NTFP-EP Indonesia has started work with Rotan Lestari, or Sustainable Rattan, using Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). We also have a small project with the women on their orchid enterprise. [see article on page 7]

The six-day training turned out to be more than just learning about monitoring. It was going back

to why NTFPs are at the core of the network's reason for being. It was valuable lessons on how to partner with communities, grounding our work in traditional knowledge. It was truly going back to the roots of how and why our "loose collaboration", as we called ourselves when we started, was founded by visionary Jenne de Beer and a handful of pioneers who started our NTFP movement.

The participants finished the course inspired with the work ahead, full of ideas on how to proceed with their resource management and monitoring despite their different country contexts and the different aspects of NTFP work they were doing.

We are truly grateful to the leaders, the rattan harvesters, the women, the ojek drivers, the youth – the entire community of Namo – for hosting us and sharing their homes, forest, and lives with us. It is precisely for these communities, and their beautiful forests, that we do what we do.



RIPPLES OF CHANGE

Article by Crissy Guerrero, NTFP-EP Asia

Photos by Roziah Binti Jalalid, WAPO and Herminatalia Tabar, WWF-Malaysia



Being someone who has been focusing primarily on forests, the conservation of marine-life is not usually discussed in my immediate circles. I'm glad then to have known Persatuan Wanita Pulau Omadal (WAPO) or the Association of the Women of Omadal Island, a group of 24 women from the sea-faring Badjao people. Their Chairperson Roziah Binti Jalalid shares how WAPO is creating ripples of change in Sabah.

Omadal is one of the 40 smaller islands that make up the Semporna island clusters in Sabah, Malaysia. Semporna is known to be a nesting ground for sea turtles considering its abundant coral reefs and sandy beaches that make it a perfect habitat for turtle life and for egg hatching.

WAPO women are aware of how fragile turtle eggs are. It is estimated that only 1 in 1000 turtle eggs will ever make it to being a full adult sea turtle.

Unfortunately, sea turtles in Semporna are gravely affected by fish bombing, egg poaching and garbage, like plastic bags which find themselves in oceans. These affect sea turtle population as significantly evident in the reduced population in the area.

Given this dilemma, WAPO decided to take action and started patrolling the Omadal beach every day looking for turtle eggs. If they would find any turtle eggs, they would bring them to a safe place and after hatching in 3 months, they would release them out into the ocean. Because of this strong commitment, The Sabah Wildlife Department officially recognized the WAPO women as Honorary Wildlife Wardens to make their protection efforts official and supported.

Roziah shared that many WAPO women, single mothers or sea-nomads of the Badjao people, also make handicrafts out of *pandanus* leaves to help support the income of Badjao families. One of the goals of WAPO is to address the poverty situation on the island. They sell the products locally and to tourists as well. 10% of the sales of the products go to a turtle conservation fund.

Through the EXCEED training, NTFP-EP was able to assist Roziah in analyzing their market situation to expand the customer-base of WAPO products. The training helped in making recommendations to improve the profitability of WAPO products through various means and involve the seemingly uninterested youth on the island in weaving.

Roziah graduated from the training feeling more confident with more tools to make community-based enterprise work both for conservation and income generation for the people of Omadal. We too were motivated and inspired by such a noble cause and such energy from a committed group of women living on the edge of Borneo. Roziah and women of WAPO truly are heroines in their dedicated work for social and ecological purposes. May their efforts continue to gain traction, and may wildlife and human life continue to benefit from it!

STORIES FROM GRASSROOTS GRANTEES



The following articles are contributions from grantees of NTFP-EP's Pastor Rice Small Grants Fund (PRSGF) through the support of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)



My story is our story

Original article written by Joan S. Gairan-Talasan

Edited by LILAK

Photo by Deanna Pelaez

As a Higaonon woman from Malaybalay Bukidnon, it was the first time that I was able to attend the National Indigenous Women's Gathering. Being invited to the gathering gave me mixed feelings of excitement and apprehension. While I was thrilled to meet women from different indigenous groups from all over the country, I was also worried about what may come out of the event. *Will I fit in? Will I be able to share my and my community's story to others?*

The National Indigenous Women's Gathering gave me a glimpse of the lives of other indigenous women like me: their culture, their stories and their struggles. I realized that though we come from different islands and tribes, we have so much in common. As mothers, daughters and sisters, we are expected to be homemakers and the family's caregivers. However, I believe that women should go beyond these limited expectations. As indigenous women who can and will continue to stand in the frontline for our communities to defend our territories, it is also our responsibility to protect our culture and secure the future of our children.

Hearing the struggles of other women breaks my heart knowing that we are being threatened, or worse, killed, because we are asserting our rights. While many of us appear to be shaken, this only

motivates us as to become human rights defenders. Realizing that there are still many issues and rights that women in community need to be made aware of strengthened my will to assert that our rights as indigenous women should be upheld at all times.

The importance of economic empowerment of women towards financial freedom ignited my enthusiasm to start up activities that can help our community to have substantive income. This is deeply rooted in the right of women to have access and control over the resources in our ancestral domains. Indigenous people should not be damned but rather be protected because we oppose extractive industries like mining that destroy our territories. It is not just our obligation as indigenous people to protect our land and its resources, but that of the government as well.

The road ahead is long but I am grateful for the opportunity and the venue for us indigenous women to listen to "our" stories. I am thankful for the chance to pat each other on the back and say we are together in these challenges. Working with and for my community, the strategies and new knowledge imparted in the workshops have been very helpful. The doubts I had in the beginning was replaced with feelings of excitement and inspiration at the end of the 3-day gathering.

Budding success for Namo Village

Article and photos by IMUNITAS



Because of its brightly colored and uniquely shaped petals, orchids are among the most interesting plant species that can be found in the forests. For the women's group of Namo Village however, beyond ornamental, orchids hold the potential to provide them with better economic benefits.

A few years ago, Namo Village started using the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), a locally-focused quality assurance system that certifies producers based on the active participation of stakeholders in networking and knowledge exchange, for their rattan products. The sustainable management of rattan in their village forest has provided them with better economic benefits as compared to other conventional quality systems.

Learning from this experience, the Namo villagers explored the idea of applying the same system to another abundant NTFP in their village forest: orchids. Their village forest is home to several species of orchids. In the same way that rattan has provided additional income for the communities, orchids, if well-managed, could also provide additional income for communities, especially womens groups.

The capacity building programme is done in phases: forming the orchid management unit; conducting technical training on orchid cultivation and tissue culture harvesting, gathering orchids from the forest; and building a greenhouse.

The utilization of orchids as an alternative enterprise is expected to provide income for the community, popularize Namo Village, and add color to gardens of orchid enthusiasts.

Sweet innovation for Labean Village

Article and photos by IMUNITAS



Sugar palm is a common food item for most families in Labean Village of of Donggala District. Through innovation, this unique household ingredient could provide more economic benefits for many locals.

One of the largest production cost components in the process of making palm sugar is fuel. In some places, palm sugar processing uses briquette or gas fuel to reduce production costs. However, the fuel is less likely to be applied in Labean Village. In other places, the production cost efficiency is made by modifying the wood-fired stove, in such a way as to be able to process air nara, the water of sugar palm (*Arenga pinnata*).

The use of an unmodified conventional stove yields little palm sugar for such a long boiling time. The main problem in the production of palm sugar is the limitation of firewood as the main fuel.

Through an innovative fuel-efficient burning stove, the required time to process 20-30 liters of air nira has been reduced from 5-6 hours to 4-5 hours, with an increased yield for lesser use of wood-fuel. This innovation could help the palm sugar makers to increase their production, increasing the palm sugar processing from once to twice a day.

However, their success does not stop there. IMUNITAS is assisting the village in preparing the governance standards for sustainable sugar palm as well as firewood for sustainability. One that will be done by the palm sugar maker is planting kaliandra tree (*Calliandra calothyrsus*) to ensure the availability of firewood.

INDIGENOUS WEST SUMATRAN WOMEN PROTECT FORESTS

Article by Uslaini Chaus, WALHI Sumatra and the Global Forest Coalition originally posted on www.magdalene.co

Chaus was one of the participants in the EXCEED training in Yogyakarta in September 2017.

My name is Uslaini but I am also known as Chaus. I am an activist working for the development of rural communities and conservation of our forests. I am currently the Director of an organization called WALHI Sumatra Barat in Indonesia which works among forest and indigenous communities.



I like taking photographs, and these are pictures of some of our daily work.

As the sixth among seven children, I used to work the fields to earn enough to cover my school fees. Coming from a farming family of the Minangkabau indigenous tribe in West Sumatra, my heart is helping other rural women. I am very passionate about working with rural communities and women so they can have a better life.



Illegal logging is a common occurrence in these communities. Here you can see the damage done to the forest by loggers in Nagari Sungai Kecamatan Baru Sijunjung Regency in West Sumatra province of Indonesia. (Photo by Fadli)

Deforestation has a devastating impact on women and local communities who are dependent on forest resources. It affects the availability of clean water for the community, including for families and for farmers' small-scale agriculture, and the collection of non-timber forest products that forest communities, and especially women, use regularly.



We're helping women in four local communities to set up production units so that they can sell products made from cacao and *pala* fruit. (Photo by Chaus)



The Maninjau Lake at Agam District is being used as a source of water for the Maninjau hydropower plant and for agriculture in the subdistrict of Lubuk Basung. While this hydroelectric power plant helps to meet the demand for electricity in West Sumatra, the design of the dam impedes fish migration thus endangering some species of endemic fish in Lake Maninjau. The nine village communities around the lake have asked the government to provide funds obtained from hydropower water taxes for forest conservation, but no response has been given by the government. (Photo by Chaus)



Many women work as farm laborers to earn a side income, but they earn a wage only half of what men earn for the same number of work hours. In this village, WALHI works with community women to obtain social forestry management permits, to ensure that they can conserve their forests and also benefit from the sustainable use of forest products. (Photo by Chaus)

WALHI works on a range of environmental and social issues including gender justice. We campaign and advocate for community development in rural and forest villages, and we run projects that help to transform people's lives in really practical ways in harmony with the forest. Our non-timber forest products project is a good example of conserving forests with sustainable use.



Women peel the *pala* (nutmeg) fruits which is used to make nutmeg syrup. WALHI supports indigenous women to set up small production units so they can process cacao and *pala* fruit. The skin of the *pala* fruits is used to prepare fruit juice and nut butter. (Photo by Chaus)



The skin of nutmeg is usually wasted, but now under the guidance of Dr. Tuty Angraini from the Department of Agricultural Product Technology Faculty of Agricultural Technology Andalas University, this agricultural waste can be processed into processed products with higher economic value. (Photo by Chaus)

LEARNING FROM THE TAGBANUA

Article by Kate Mana-Galido, NTFP-EP Philippines
Photos by Tanya Conlu, NTFP-EP Asia



Coron Island's Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) is the first CADT to have included ancestral waters. Managed by the Tagbanua of Coron Island Tribes Inc., Coron Island has become the holder of the cleanest lake award and is now a very famous tourist spot. Everyday, the community receives 200-300 guests in Kayangan lake alone, not counting the other tourist destinations on the island.

I felt very excited upon knowing that the Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA) learning event will allow me to visit Coron, the place where my journey as an environment and indigenous peoples' advocate started.

One of my fondest memories was the day I joined the Tagbanua indigenous community of Barangay Tara in spear fishing in their marine protected area. Chairman Kultit, one of the elders, skillfully speared two big fishes in just one breath. There are no words that can describe how beautiful and magnificent their ecosystems are. I saw how the communities respect and love their environment. Their food, livelihood and cultural ways are very dependent on the environment. In return, the community elders and members respect and maintain the health of their ecosystems. That day, I was witness to their intimate relationship with nature.

Being new to the advocacy, one of the first communities I was able to visit was the half of the twin barangays managing Coron Island, the community of Barangay Cabugao in Coron Island. Back then, I remembered them turning down the Community-based Coastal Resource Management (CBCRM) project they were offered because they wanted to establish a name for themselves. Done in good faith, they continued to value and accept our assistance on the legal aspect. Nineteen years after, I am in awe to see how they are able to establish themselves successfully, and maintain and protect their ancestral domain.

WHAT ARE ICCAs?

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Conserved Areas and Territories are places wherein a community has a close association with their territory under their own governance and conservation system. ICCAs are a source of identity, culture, everyday needs and livelihood – the very life force of these peoples.



Leader to leader: Tagbanua leader from the Philippines meets with Karen elder from Myanmar



Freshly caught octopus for breakfast!

The learning event was aimed at promoting and strengthening the governance systems of the indigenous communities that contribute to conservation. NTFP-EP brought different NGO advocates and community leaders and members from Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to Coron Island to learn about the challenges and lessons in territories, and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Presently, the Philippines, led by BUKLURAN or the local ICCA consortium (composed mainly by indigenous groups) through the support of civil society organizations and the Philippine ICCA project of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is working on passing a bill that recognize the ICCAs.

The Tagbanua elders and members of Coron Island showed the learning event participants their ways of life from fishing to singing and dancing. They explained how they are able to maintain their

management of the ancestral domain, including tourism activities. There are many challenges but we saw how strong leadership and united communities kept them successful.

One of the participants asked how the community measures their success in conserving their ancestral domain. Interestingly, the presence of 4 foot fish and sumptuous octopus prepared on the table for us and how they keep the island pristine and clean all by themselves despite the hundreds of tourists was more than enough indicator for me.

In all the indigenous communities I visited, it could be said that the systems are not all perfect. There are always challenges and things that need to be improved, especially for managing big tourism business. But seeing how the Tagbanua communities of Coron Island continue to manage and preserve the magnificence of their ancestral domain, I call for everyone to support the recognition of ICCAs!



We're glad to eat seafood for days!



One of the sites managed by the Tagbanua community

LITTLE THINGS MATTER!

Article by Natasya Muliandari, NTFP-EP Indonesia
Photos by Natasya Muliandari and Anang Setiawan, NTFP-EP Indonesia

A group of elementary students of Long Adiu village, a Punan community, were asked to draw a picture of their forest. At a glance, we can see a tall mountain on a clear blue sky, with lush trees and bushes. There's more to it if we look close enough: a beehive and a wild boar. But is that all there is to it? The caption says: "Ancel menyumpit" (English: Ancel uses a blowpipe), describing a tiny human hiding behind a tree while hunting down a wild boar using a blowpipe. At a glance, the writing and the drawing may be too little to be seen, some of us may even skip the details. But little things matter. They do! This drawing brings me to know more about the boy whose name was written on it, Ancel.

Meet Ancelmus, a Punan Adiu kid who lives in a Punan Adiu village in North Kalimantan, Indonesia. Ancel had lots of stories to tell about hunting and fishing in a river near his village.

When we looked at the other drawings, it turned out he was not the only one who knew these things!

Meet Yosep, or as his friends call him, Abu. Much like Ancel, Abu knows a lot the village life. His expertise: hunting wild boar!

The Punan Adiu are hunter and gatherer communities. No wonder Punan Adiu kids like Ancel and Abu are very knowledgeable about hunting and things related to the forests. However, this knowledge is not taught in schools. They mostly learn these things from their parents. Even though he did not learn these things in school, sharing it in school might help expand how he and his classmates see forests. It could also be a space for these kids to appreciate and feel proud about the skills and knowledge they have.



"Forest" by Intun, Apri, Ancel, Devit, Abu, Cu (students of the government elementary school 005 Malinau Selatan Hilir) – Long Adiu village,



Ancelmus, 13 years old
Hobbies: hunting and catching fish



Abu, 13 years old
Hobby: hunting wild boar



Some food from the forest collected by the parents to be used for the game on the next day.

Bringing a piece of the forest to the school

On October 2017, an activity about kids and forest foods was held at SD Negeri 005 Malinau Selatan Hilir, an elementary school in Long Adiu village. It brought together 36 students from Long Adiu and Punan Adiu villages.

As a start, we asked the kids to bring a piece of forest to the school for the forest foods game.

Since the recipes are known only to a handful of village elders and leaders, they also helped in preparing the recipes.

A food tasting game was held for 1st to 3rd graders (age 5 to 10 years old). While blindfolded, they were asked to guess what forest foods they tasted. About 61% of them guessed by mentioned forest foods, 38% mentioned foods from market/ planted, and 1 % mentioned others (non food).

Older 4th to 6th graders (age 10 to 13 years old) also enjoyed the identification and memorization of food from the forest. About 76% of the answers were correct, while only 24% were incorrect.

After the games, Mr. Lukas of Punan Adiu village and the school teacher Mr. Irang explained about umbut nyibung (shoots) and also all other food from the forest which were used during the games. For some of the students, it was their first time to see and taste the shoots.

Bringing the school kids to the forest

The excitement did not stop there, as the kids asked for more! The following month, the 4th to 6th graders went to the forest for field practice: a “hunting” game. They were asked to observe and memorize everything that can be used from the forest for food. They were divided into two groups, each accompanied by school and field teachers (parents/ elders from the village who are passionately willing to teach the kids about forest foods).



Elders preparing the ingredients they got from the forest



Blindfolded kids guessed what food from the forest they were eating during the identification and memory game



Field practice of 4th to 6th graders

With the enthusiasm everyone had, they found their lists filled in a short span of 15 minutes! The kids wrote it down on paper and put it in a food pyramid that consists of staple food, vegetables, fruits, protein, and oil. Because they also listed down useful plants (used for hunting, utilities, and medicine) other than foods, these products were placed outside the pyramid.

As it was their very first field trip, everyone, including school teachers and field teachers, were very excited during the field practice.

Perhaps most of the time we do not pay enough attention to these little things: the passion of children to know more and contribute to the bigger picture.

An important message can be drawn from the whole experience: these kids see themselves as part of the forest. How we saw the illustrations for the first time may reflect how we see these kids' roles and their interest about forests: too little to be seen but are essential in the bigger scheme of things. The challenge then for us adults is to cultivate their passion to shape them as the future stewards of the forests.



Mr. Lukas (left) one of the field teachers and Mr. Aran (right) one of the school teachers during the field practice.



The pyramid of forest food and medicines that the kids compiled after their insightful forest walk.



THE FIRST HARVEST FESTIVAL

Article by Joanna Sadi Musa, Dominic Langat, and Taro Ringgit, NTFP-EP Malaysia
Photos by Earl Diaz, NTFP-EP Asia

Among the few remaining nomadic cultures the world is the Penan, an indigenous group originating from the Southern part of Sarawak, Malaysia. Practicing what they traditionally refer to as *molong* (which means never taking more than necessary to preserve and sustain forest resources), the Penan are fully dependent on the forests for survival as traditionally hunting-gathering communities.

Over time, aggressions brought about by land encroachment and deforestation forced more and more Penan communities to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and settle into a sedentary life in villages. Among the settlements created was Long Selulung in 2007 which is home to 21 Eastern Penan families in the Apoh-Tutoh area.

While a wide variety of foods were once readily available in their forests, perhaps staple to the Penan diet is sago starch. It is a carbohydrate tediously extracted from the pith of sago palms, a tree which can be found in their native customary lands. This settling however has coerced them to face changes in significant aspects of their lives, including their subsistence on sago.



Participants of the First Harvest Festival in Long Selulung, Sarawak, Malaysia

Through a collaboration that started in 2007, NTFP-EP Malaysia and the members of Long Selulung community created small sago palm plantations around their native customary land and managed to plant 2000 sago palms. Aside from ensuring food security among Penan families, the project has also helped prevent further encroachment of numerous logging companies in their native customary land.

Ten years after settling, the families residing in Long Selulung hosted a two-day festival in 15 to 16 December 2017. To commemorate the success of the sago plantation in the village, the festival theme was "First Harvest." As the Penan are keen on preserving their traditional knowledge and practices, the festival invitations to neighboring villages were well received through the active participation of representatives from Long Ludin, Baa' Taha, Long Siang, Long Meraan, Long Kawa, Long Lesuan, Baa' Marong and Baa' Barei.

Traditional games such as *nyerata'* (simple sign language), *oro'* (advanced sign language), *niho'* (javelin throwing), *ngelangan* (blowpipe), and *mukat osoi* (pole climbing) were held to set the festive mood in the village. To pass onto the younger generations their long tradition of conservation and deep connection with their forests, the festival's main event was the sago processing and cooking demonstrations. The participants, especially the youth, finished the day with a stomach full of food and hands ready to prepare their newly learned sago recipes.

For the Penan, the First Harvest Festival was not only to celebrate their 10 years of dedication in their cause but to rekindle hope and faith for future preservation of the forest and keeping the tradition alive.



Na'o

Na'o is commonly prepared by mixing sago starch with hot water until the mixture turns gelatinous. It is best served while it is hot. Na'o can be enjoyed on its own or dipped in any soupy dishes.



Sat

The core of a young sago shoot is edible. It is white in colour that has a semi-firm texture. The section is diced and eaten raw with sigo apo, tebeh and tageh to enhance the flavour of the dishes. Raw sat can be eaten together with roasted pork as an appetizer. The taste of sat is sweet with a bitter aftertaste.



Sigo Apo

A dish prepared using the sago starch where a lump of the starch is mixed with a little water just to moisten it while still maintaining its texture. Sugar is added according to preference of the individual. As the starch is naturally sweet, adding sugar is optional. The starch is then mixed by hand to crumble before cooking with oil to prevent it from sticking onto the wok. Once cooked, the starch will turn into a gummy and chewy texture. The colour of cooked sigo apo is brown and slightly pinkish. The Penan commonly consume sigo apo with sat to enhance the flavour.



Sigo Jakah

Sigo jakah and sigo apo have similar methods of preparation. The only difference is that a handful of raw sat is added to the mixture for sigo jakah. The mixture is then cooked with some oil (similar to sigo apo). The taste of sigo jakah is sweet with a bitter aftertaste.



Tebeh

The starch is pressed to the edge of the pot leaving the core hollow. First, fresh sago block is mixed with 2 tablespoons of water to ease up the process of pressing the starch to the side of the pot. The pot is then placed on the open fire with its lid on. As it appears, the pot functions as an oven where the heat is trapped and distributed evenly inside it. The texture of tebeh is chewy. Tebeh can be enjoyed together with sat or dipped with pork lard.



Tagah

The starch is fried dry to eliminate the raw taste of the sago until it becomes powdery. The starch must be stirred constantly to distribute the heat and to prevent the starch from getting burnt. Tagah is usually with sat or drizzled with pork lard.



Liyat

Firstly, crumble up a lump of sago starch and mix with lard, sugar and salt to taste. Lard is usually incorporated in the dish but cooking oil can act as a substitute. The mixture is then wrapped in da'un and the parcel is then placed in an open fire until it is cooked. Liyat's texture is slightly rubbery with a dry centre. There will be a lingering smell of charred da'un on the liyat.



Piong Kelipuk

A lump of fresh sago starch is crumbled, with no water added. The starch is then wrapped in the da'un, which is a species of palm leaf (*Licuala valida*). The parcel is then placed in an open fire to be cooked. The palm leaf adds aroma to the dish. The texture of cooked piong kelipuk is chewy on the outside and powdery on the inside.



Dokong

A lump of sago is mixed with water and sugar to form a sago dough. The dough is then shaped into bite size balls and deep fried in hot oil. Dokong preparation may be dangerous since the hot oil may splatter around as the dough slowly expands and eventually bursts once cook. The texture of dokong is crispy on the outside with a chewy centre.



Keluheu

A lump of starch is shaped into bite size pieces. These pieces are then placed into the fire pit and are left until they are slightly charred. Once cooked the texture of keluheu is tough. Keluheu can be enjoyed with sat, dipped in pork lard and meat stew.



Piong Aput

A large lump of sago is placed in the fire pit to cook. The difference between piong aput and keluheu is the size. Piong aput is bigger in size while keluheu is bite size shaped. Piong aput has a slightly tough texture.

POTENTIALS FOR COMMUNITY FOREST BUSINESS IN ASEAN

Article and photo by Dazzle Labapis and Earl Diaz, NTFP-EP Asia



The session on MSMEs was co-organized by NTFP-EP, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Working Group-Social Forestry (AWG-SF) and the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro Small Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME) and supported by the ASEAN Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) during the 7th AWG-SF Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, June 2017

By and large, Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) serve as the backbone of the ASEAN economy with its significantly large potential to contribute to the region's economic integration plans. However, while about 90 percent of business establishments are comprised of MSMEs, they still do not account for a commensurate output share of the region's GDP and exports.

The diverse MSME landscape in Southeast Asia remains relatively unexplored. Given the varying definitions of MSMEs in the region, the limited data on the sector does not come as a surprise. The urban-centric face of MSMEs translates to the lack of support in capacity building and incentives for enterprises in rural settings such as community forestry enterprises (CFEs) by local communities and indigenous peoples living and managing forests. CFEs play an increasingly vital role in the forest product trade coupled with local reinvestment of profits to reduce poverty while providing a strong incentive to maintain ecological balance in the areas that they are managing. In the region, cases across have already proven that CFEs have the potential to be drivers of equitable economic development in rural areas and reduce poverty.

There is much room to integrate support to CFEs and benefit from their contribution within ASEAN's overall plans for the MSME sector. In the attempt to do so, areas for development in capacity building, extending support through financing and policy development to stimulate equitable growth, both for the micro and macro economies, should likewise be highlighted.

With their economic potential, MSMEs could cultivate good leadership and governance most especially among local communities. According to Mr. Ben Abadiano, Director of the Assisi Development Foundation and the founder of 'Advocafe' in the Philippines, many enterprises do not find success in their endeavors due to the eventual disconnect in their values and leadership as they progressed over time. "There needs to be a clear vision, a well-defined business concept so that people would know how to sustain it." In their experience in supporting enterprises, an inclusive approach to entrepreneurship among local communities is a good starting point towards stronger ownership and accountability.

Like many countries in the region, Myanmar is on the verge of political, economic, and social

transformation. The development picture in Myanmar has been unfolding for quite some time now due to its isolated economy, hampered by imbalances and deficiencies at the macro and microeconomic levels.

With Myanmar's re-engagement with the global economy and its aspirations to connect to regional chains in more parts of Asia, Dr. Phyu Phyu Win of ACCMSME Myanmar shares how social forestry in their country could help boost this country goal.

Aside from the benefits currently being reaped in mangrove conservation and rehabilitation, coastal management through social forestry in Myanmar, value addition to products traditionally found in forest areas such as bamboo, *thanaka*, coconut, natural plum, and tea could prove to be an innovative way to connect the country's available resources and its economic aspirations. Dr. Win emphasized that in order for MSMEs to become smarter in playing the game, they need to innovate fresher twists to traditional products.

More and more consumers are becoming more willing to pay premium organic products. With a lot of noise generated around green and organic products, how can products laboriously made by CFEs like local forest honey enterprises for example, stand out among a shelf full of farmed honey? With the nature of sustainably-harvested forest products that could prove to go beyond the 'organic' label, forest enterprises have yet to tap and maximize this steadily growing market.

The increasing availability of technology being made available for consumers and enterprises alike have also shifted the way businesses are run. Such is the case of Coopita, an e-platform that bridges the demand and supply by putting a face to products through stories of local artisans and producers and making their journey available online.

Mr. Mayur Singh, co-founder of Coopita shared the omni marketing strategy. Moving away from the mass, cookie-cutter approach, an omni marketing strategy personalizes a seamless shopping experience that stems from a thorough understanding of both producers and consumers.

While innovation and technology are challenges

posed to MSMEs, financing is a common hurdle among MSMEs especially those which are only starting. In Indonesia for instance, while MSMEs in Indonesia are characterized by rising business incomes and greater financing needs, only a small portion of the total outstanding bank financing can be attributed to MSMEs.

As a locally-driven response, *Koperasi Kredit Keling Kumang*, or commonly known as Credit Union Keling Kumang (CUKK), a credit union operating in the eastern region of West Kalimantan since 1993 has become the second largest credit unit in Indonesia. Mr. Yohannes RJ of CUKK shared its mission of "Borneo without poverty." This, according to Yohannes, is employed through its emphasis on education and financial literacy. Investments in capacity building in human resources is a crucial part of the process to foster trust and a stronger sense of community among MSMEs.

Another major hurdle in the creation of smarter MSMEs in CFEs remains to be in policy. As an example, Dr. Surin On Prom of Kasetsart University stated that the current form of forest governance in Thailand is skewed to the disfavor of many CFEs. While communities are allowed to collect NTFPs, the country's regulatory framework was designed mainly to promote subsistence economy. This situation is oddly very familiar among Thailand's neighboring countries where the limited tenure and resource access continue to constrain communities from maximizing benefits for ecological conservation and security in livelihoods.

Key issues relating to land tenure and meaningful participation have been around for many years already, and the untapped community forestry MSMEs potential could help shift perspectives of governments on the crucial role of local communities in both economic development and sustainable management of forests. While there is a need to install support mechanisms for soft and hard skills of entrepreneurs, there is also a need to ensure stability and sustainability through equitable benefit-sharing. Having deeper discussions both at the regional and national levels may facilitate in developing the strategies and action plans to mainstream and integrate CFEs into the overall macroeconomic picture more effectively.

MORE THAN JUST TOURISM

Article and photos by Nob Vannarith, NTFP-EP Cambodia



Located in one of the biggest islands in Kratie, Koh Pdao Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) in Cambodia has had many years' experience in hosting tourists since its establishment in 2008.

Given the site's potential to be recognized as a key tourist spot in the country, the community still has much room for improvement. With the attention the site has drawn over its brief establishment, there needs to be an upscaling of skills in managing the tours from design, organization, to promotion.

Support to Koh Pdao community under the Partner for Forestry and Fisheries (PaFF) was initiated by analyzing the current situation and strengthening the community's skills on enterprising. The community ecotourism center was renovated along with the installation of solar panels to ensure sustainability. Promotional materials were also

produced to increase the online and offline presence of the CBET. Through the support of NTFP-EP and the Provincial Department of Tourism (PDoT), sessions on book-keeping, coaching, and hospitality and group management were held. As a follow through, linkages to agencies and companies for organizing tours visits to the community were also established.

Much improvement has been seen over the past few years. This is evident in the 17 homestays accommodating about 50 tourists made available throughout the village and a spacious tour center that provides tour information and also serves meals. The number of business tour agencies has increased from one to four. Internally, the CBET management committees are able to install administrative and financial systems to keep books and accounts in check.

With regards to benefit sharing, this CBET is playing an important role in contributing to the community development and local natural resource protection. As much as 10% of net profit has been set aside to contribute to conserving fisheries resources, particularly of the Mekong Irrawaddy Dolphin. Another 15% has been contributed to commune development such as road and bridge reparation.



Mrs. Phat Hoeurn, 46 years old, is living in Koh Pdao village, Kampong Cham commune, Sambor district, Kratie province. She has 4 children (2 daughters and 2 sons). The main livelihoods of her family are rice growing, fishing, and vegetable and livestock raising. She is a member of the cooking group. She said, “The income from doing farming is not enough to support my family’s living. Since being a member of CBET, I have earned more income through providing ecotourism services such as cooking food for tourists.” She added, “My family’s annual income has increased by about 35% from the ecotourism service. This is very important to me and my family, as my two children are finishing their university degrees. I am really happy to be a member of this community, and much thanks to NTFP-EP and other NGOs that initiated this CBET.”



Mr. Chhith Norn is the chief of the Kampong Cham commune. He has been involved with the Koh Pdao CBET since it was established. According to him: “The CBET plays an important role in the improvement not just in the livelihoods of the community members but also in resource conservation. It has also contributed to the repairs of the roads and the bridge in the commune. On behalf of the villagers living in the Kampong Cham commune, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to NGOs, including NTFP-EP Cambodia for their continued support in the CBET.”



Mr. Prum Sarin, Chief of the Koh Pdao CBET said: “We, the management committee and its members are very excited to see the improvement of the community livelihoods and the resources conserved. The Mekong Irrawaddy Dolphins have been conserved through the participation of the community, commune authority, and the Fisheries Administration Cantonment. In the long term, we would like to engage with tour agencies in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. By working closely with other partners like the commune authority, Provincial Department of Tourism, and NTFP-EP and other NGOs, we hope to bridge the gaps. Unfortunately, we’ve been hearing news that there are plans to push through with the Sambo Hydropower Dam. If constructed, there will be a huge negative impact on our community and the biodiversity, including the dolphins in the area.”

The last three years have been quite remarkable for Koh Pdao. With the success steadily gained by the ecotourism project, the Koh Pdao CBET will not only establish its name on the map as a key tourist spot to visit in Cambodia, but also play an integral role in the greater ecological movement in Mekong while contributing to the livelihoods of the local community.

ADVANCING THE PARIS AGREEMENT THROUGH SOCIAL FORESTRY

Article by Dazzle Labapis, Edna Maguigad, and Earl Diaz NTFP-EP Asia

Photos by Earl Paulo Diaz, NTFP-EP Asia and Center for Development Research (ZEF) University of Bonn

The COP23 side session was organized by the NTFP-EP in collaboration with the Civil Society Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN with the German Development Institute (DIE), Center for Development Research (ZEF) University of Bonn, and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), with support from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC).



Indigenous peoples and local communities in Southeast Asia have long managed forests in social forestry (SF) systems— a system that is people-centered, engages indigenous peoples and local communities living within and around forests in sustainable forest use and management.

On the ground, indigenous peoples and local communities are leading several climate change adaptation actions and are actively engaged in activities that reduce emissions and forest landscape restoration initiatives. These communities use indigenous and local knowledge which have been proven to lead into cost-effective, participatory and sustainable adaptation and mitigation strategies. Given the premise of the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), there is a need to move forward with dialogues and engagements with communities, CSOs, academe, as well as ASEAN Member States to include the

contribution of social forestry in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Social forestry in the Southeast Asian region has had its share of significant success and gains. However, based on recent statistics, the increase of social forestry in terms of area covered remains to be slow.

For indigenous peoples, shifting cultivation has a strong link with indigenous culture and world view, and is a common practice among indigenous peoples in different regions across Asia. For instance, Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, Chairperson of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) shared the cases of the Hin Laad Nai Lua and La-Oop communities in Thailand. Having established their own traditional forest and ecosystem management, shifting cultivation has always been an integral livelihood system that promotes food security,

sustainable land use and in the selection and preservation of indigenous seeds.

In mainstreaming social forestry in REDD-plus, Emmy Primadona of the Community Conservation Indonesia (KKI Warsi) shared the case of their project implementation that utilizes social forestry as an approach. Warsi has implemented a social forestry scheme that has integrated livelihood development, participatory mapping, establishment of micro-hydro farms, and utilization of non-timber forest products. She strongly remarked that REDD+ implementation should be anchored on rights-based approach and does not recommend a market approach for its implementation. This is evident as their community REDD+ project has led to the gradual decrease of deforestation rate in their project area in Bungo District in Jambi, Indonesia.

The many faces of women in local communities remain underscored despite their important role in the management of natural resources in forests. “As indigenous women, we supply food for our family where the main sources of these food come from the forest,” remarked by Mai Thin Yu Mon of the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO). Women are holders, purveyors and practitioners of traditional knowledge in the case of crafts, locators and protectors of resources such as food, medicinal plants, and other NTFPs that can be found in the forest. They directly provide impact on local communities and indigenous peoples’ livelihoods, despite numerous challenges that are being faced by their women communities particularly in Myanmar, such as discrimination and power imbalances. This also holds true according to the research conducted by Denise Matias of Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Palawan, Philippines, where the importance of local knowledge in sustainable forest honey harvest has been highlighted. To capacitate women will allow them

to take on stronger leadership roles not just locally but also in the larger political discussions. “Political support such as budget allocation, capacity building and market access are a critical role to maximize the forest protection outcomes.” Ms. Primadona reiterated.

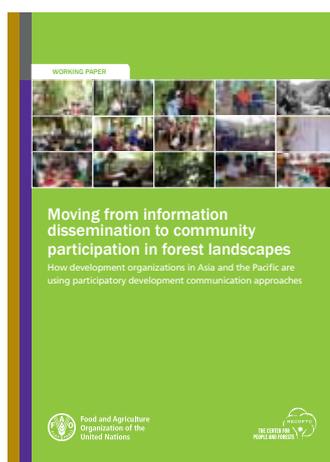
Dazzle Labapis, CSO Forum Facilitator of NTFP-EP Asia then highlighted that there are already existing platforms for indigenous peoples and local communities at the regional and local levels. Examples are the CSO Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN at the regional level, and platforms such as the Sabah Social Forestry Working Group (Malaysia), National and Provincial Community Forestry Programme Coordination Committee (Cambodia), and Community Based Forest Management National Working Group (Philippines) among others at country level. These have provided grounded and sound avenue for distilling lessons and knowledge that feed into regional processes in the case of ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWGSF), and national processes for informed policy and decision making processes on social forestry.

In the case of Myanmar, Hla Doi of Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT) shared their experience in engaging institutions and stakeholders to push for the rights of indigenous peoples in policy development. He added that there is a need to revise and update its outdated policies.

As an effective and equitable approach, social forestry can contribute to community resilience. As we move towards presenting concrete contributions to the Paris Agreement, policies, programmes, and investments made at the country level need to listen to the voices of local communities as partners in achieving their NDCs.



FEATURED PUBLICATIONS AND VIDEOS



CASE STUDY

MOVING FROM INFORMATION DISSEMINATION TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN FOREST LANDSCAPES: THE CASE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Earl Paulo Diaz,
NTFP-EP Asia



JOURNAL

THINKING BEYOND WESTERN COMMERCIAL HONEYBEE HIVES: TOWARDS IMPROVED CONSERVATION OF HONEY BEE DIVERSITY

Denise Margaret S. Matias,
Christian Borgemeister, &
Henrik von Wehrden

Participatory Development Communication (PDC) is a systematic process using participatory techniques and communication media (such as radio, newspapers, TV, social media) to empower communities to participate in the development process, enable them to take the lead on its activities and use the learning generated to improve their livelihoods. The purpose of PDC is to seek sustainable social change by engaging and empowering relevant stakeholders (FAO, 2014). At the heart of PDC and other participatory research and development approaches is people's meaningful participation and empowerment.

This paper offers a brief overview of the basic and practical steps involved in the PDC process to assist sustainable forest practitioners and communication officers to adopt a PDC approach in their work. The paper then reviews the PDC components of six case studies promoting sustainable forest management in Asia and the Pacific, including a case from the Philippines engaging indigenous youth to protect their cultural heritage through cultural revival festivals.

A decline of wild pollinators, along with a decline of bee diversity, has been a cause of concern among academics and governmental organizations. According to IPBES, a lack of wild pollinator data contributes to difficulties in comprehensively analyzing the regional status of wild pollinators in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania. It may have also contributed to the prevailing lack of awareness of the diversity of honey bees, of which the managed *Apis mellifera* is often considered as “the (only) honey bee,” despite the fact that there are eight other honey bee species extant in Asia.

A survey of 100 journal articles published in 2016 shows that 57% of the studies still identified *A. mellifera* as “the honey bee.” In total, 80% of studies were conducted solely on *A. mellifera*. This focus on *A. mellifera* has also caused the honey standard of Codex Alimentarius and the European Union to be based solely on *A. mellifera*, causing improper evaluation of honeys from other species. We recommend adapting current standards to reflect the diversity of honey bees and in the process correct failures in the honey market and pave the way towards improved protection of honey bee species and their habitats.



What are your thoughts about this issue? Do you have interesting stories of people and forests that you'd like us to feature in Voices from the Forest?

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