

# 3 Human Resource Development Initiatives

Current forestry education and training provided at institutions, such as the Institute of Forestry at Yezin, the Myanmar Forest School at Pyin-Oo-Lwin, and the Central Forestry Development Training Centre at Hmawbi, are largely oriented towards the basic bio-physical sciences and technical forestry. These institutions only cater to the training needs of Forest Department staff. Nevertheless, the Central Forestry Development Training Centre has introduced some new initiatives in recent years. The institute now organizes courses on community forestry for communities. Such courses include farmers' attitudes towards the adoption of new techniques, forestry extension, government schemes, technology transfer, incentives, and income-generating activities, and they inculcate a spirit of self-reliance. In community forestry, users are seen as the ultimate managers and decision-makers regarding forest and tree resources. Therefore, capacity building training activities, such as seminars for community leaders and networking workshops for user groups, are conducted for the members of local communities. Seedling nursery development training and environmental awareness raising activities for local schools are also offered.

In order to promote sustainable forest development, a strong forestry extension service is needed that can support effective implementation of forest policy and promotion of rural development. The forest policy, and some elements of the forest law, make it clear that the extension approach must be one that not only emphasises sustainable land use but also promotes an attitude of self-help in problem solving, builds up local institutions and capacity, and aims for the improvement of rural well-being. It is important to realise that participatory forest management is mainly limited to tree planting on degraded or waste land, but it includes management by local people of natural forests and trees and their participation in decisions affecting these activities.

The diversity of bio-physical and socioeconomic situations strongly favours a decentralized approach to forestry extension. The forest policy states clearly that an extension organization, strategy, and structure should be developed in direct collaboration with the ultimate end users - the rural communities - to ensure effective local participation. Forestry problems cannot be resolved by foresters alone - it is necessary to develop an approach that involves other partners not only at the national but also at the local level.