

BUILDING COOPERATION IN KHANGCHENDZONGA

Ilam, Panchthar and Taplejung Districts (Nepal)

Western Sikkim (India)

INTRODUCTION

The Himalaya presents a formidable physical and political boundary between neighboring countries. For centuries, the deep gorges, high pass and open skies have provided corridors through which rivers flow, people trade, cultures mingle and wildlife migrate. Until recently, with the emerging concept of regional based conservation, some of these international borders have served as a significant barrier to the kind of cooperative actions which would allow these inter-dependant ecosystems to be managed in coordination with each other.



KEY THREATS

The primary threats to the area's unique biodiversity and at the project sites are land conversion and degradation and landscape fragmentation.

Direct threats are grazing (local and Transboundary activities across the border between Indian and Nepal), poaching, and unsustainable harvesting of medicinal plants, associated with fuel wood removal and unmanaged tourism.

THE PROJECT

The Mountain Institute has been implementing this project since 2002 to promote improved communication and better management of the contiguous areas better management of the contiguous areas in Nepal and India around Khangchendzonga and the Singalilla range.

The project has three major components namely, promoting regular information exchange at a government - to- government level, specific technical professionals and finally, complimentary community-based conservation programs at the grass root levels on each side of the shared boundaries

Objectives:

- 1) Conserving key habitat especially alpine and pasture areas through improved livestock management, and reduced livestock herds,
- 2) Conserving wild stocks of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) through on farm cultivation,



GOAL

To conserve the biodiversity of the Kanchenjunga landscape and improve local livelihoods in the Kanchenjunga Region.



- 3) Reducing negative impacts and promoting improved eco-tourism management in biodiversity rich areas
- 4) Improving capacities of local organizations to conduct conservation programs, and habitat of the Kanchenjunga area
5. Building on and sustaining cultural heritage and local traditional land management systems
6. Strengthen trans-boundary cooperation for conservation of threatened species



Working Area

The focuses of our efforts are in specific areas of the Landscape in the Eastern Himalaya, administered by 17 village Development Communities (VDCs) outside the

Khangchendzonga Conservation Area in Nepal. In Sikkim, the project is focused on the remote buffer villages of the KBR.

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS



1. 467 participants were trained on different capacity related training like nursery management, cultivation and harvesting techniques, legal provision, veterinary, allo processing etc. These trained participants have gone on to train more people in their areas resulting in 1000 individuals currently engaged in Medicinal plants cultivation.

- 2 Pasture User Groups (PUGs) were formed to reduce herd size and its pressure on pasture. The groups were trained on veterinary skills and were given 13 improved bulls, 2 improved sheep and 1 improved buffalo. In return, they planted trees in 100.52 ha. bare land with a total of 160, 825 seedlings and TMI supported fencing of the land.



3. The 21 community medicinal and aromatic plant nurseries and 2 timber and fodder nurseries established by the project continue to produce and disseminate seeds and seedlings to the local communities as well as to neighboring districts.

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS CONT

4. Since the initiation of the project, MAP's cultivation on private land expanded to 450 ha. with 13 different species. Former participants, those who were trained at the initial stage of the project have been able to generate Rs. 150,540 so far.



5. From the improved bulls support introduced in the early 2004, the community has been able to yield 420 young calf's and practice stall feeding.



6. The Chief District Officer, district Forest Officer provided appreciation award of the year 2005 to TMI and its NGO partners Deep Jyoti & Shree High Altitude Herbal Grower group for excellent work.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM FIELDS

7. ID card and certificates distribution to Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) farmers: During this visit, altogether 52 MAPs ID card and certificates (3 in Panchthar and 49 in Ilam) have been distributed as per Non-timber Forest Product Development Policy, 2061. In Ilam, ID card distribution was done on 3rd June, 09 at Deurali, Sulubung by organizing the inauguration program inviting all district level stakeholders, farmers and journalists. In Panchthar, the similar program was held on 5th June, 09.



8. KANCHENJUNGA CONSERVATION FORMATION REGISTRATION

GROUP AND AND



Trans-boundary Group Formation Workshop

A VDC- level trans-boundary workshop was conducted in Ilam & Panchthar from 24th August to 26th August 2009. In the VDC-level workshops, trans-border conservation issues were prioritized and their solutions were investigated and collected at the local level. The locals from Ilam, Panchthar & Taplejung have gathered to formulate a common agenda on trans-border conservation issues to be raised at the national level through district and regional level workshops to be conducted in the near future. As a result, a working committee was selected for the legal registration of the Trans-boundary Working Group.

TMI's Assistance to partner in MAPs Cultivation

UPDATE ON MAPs WORKING IN DHADING AND RASUWA DISTRICTS

As part of TMI's MAPs conservation and livelihood programs in the eastern Nepal, TMI also helped local farmers from Dhading and Rasuwa to introduce MAPs cultivation into private and community forest areas. Starting in 2007, TMI trained a few model farmers from Dhading District, bringing them for on the job training to some of our Rasuwa project sites. Following training, the Dhading farmers have established several nurseries that are flourishing, and the original six farmers are beginning to get yields from their fields. More farmers are requesting training as trust is established.

10. TMI POSSIBLE PARTNER WITH DZI FOUNDATION

The Mountain Institute has been providing technical support to the DZI Foundation, which is conducting feasibility studies of a MAPs cultivation program in Khotang district, east of Solukhubhu. DZI Foundation members have just completed their first feasibility study in Ilam and Panchthar where they observed and interviewed as many user groups and individual farmers as possible. They are interested in implementing MAPs cultivation program in Khotang district, given interest from the local people.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM FIELDS

DAWA TEMBA SHERPA

Mr. Dawa Temba Sherpa of Mabhu of Ilam is the founder of Namgyal Cholling Gumpa. I have started to raise money to build this gumpa to support the youngster to learn of Buddhist and provide place to meditate for senior scholars. With individual support from Brian Peniston the director of TMI to build the gumpa in collaboration with other donors both nationally and internationally. I have received all this input from the Director of TMI who has been a good friend of Mabhu when he entered this area longtime back.



Dawa Temba Sherpa



Pemba Tsering Bhutia

PEMBA TSERING BHUTIA

The Mountain Institute's efforts have seen some progress in the new approach to improve pasture conditions thereby, reducing number of animals. However, due to Sikkim government's new prohibitory law on grazing inside Shingalila National Park, there has been a tremendous pressure from Sikkim, India on to Nepal borders.

People from Sikkim side are selling off their livestock and the buyers tend to be local people from Nepal side. This new trend of moving animals out of the park has brought challenges of managing livestock in the Nepalese area.

2009-2011 Priority Activities and Funding Needs

LOOKING A HEAD

Through this project, TMI attempts to mitigate negative conservation impacts and help create and train sustainable local organizations that can address these issues over time. However a lot of work still needs to be addressed to promote string-of-conservation practices, while helping communities gain economic benefits and improve their livelihood. We still need to explore, expand and reach more communities through out the trans-boundary region for a greater impact.



FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. Conserving alpine and pasture regions of the Khangchendzonga area by promoting sustainable livestock management practices and increasing local livelihood for herders.
1. Conserving wild stocks of over harvested medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) by promoting sustainable cultivation and marketing as alternative source of income.
2. Mitigating negative tourism impact through improved tourism
3. Strengthening management capacity of local intervention and
4. Scaling up and expanding the program to more areas in both Sikkim and Nepal.

HOW YOU CAN HELP??

To make your visit more meaningful, please join us in our effort to conserve the area's rich biodiversity and improve the lives of mountain people through:

- Donation
- Funding
- Telling your friends about the area and project

TMI'S PARTNERS:

Deep Jyoti Youth Club (Panchthar)

Shree High Altitude Herbal Growers Group (Ilam)

District Development Committee (DDC)

District Forest Officer (DFO)

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TEXT AND CONCEPT

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