Posters from the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum 'Climate Action and Mountain Issues'

8–12 August 2011

Participants at the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum presented posters related to sustainability, green economy, and green jobs. The participants included 43 youths from ICIMOD's eight regional member countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan) and nine other countries from the Asia-Pacific region.

The tree of opportunity

Tith Chandara, Cambodia

As you may know the nature of the tree is that its growth is governed by its roots and the soil. Have a look at the roots of the tree. These roots signify the activities and commitments of stakeholders working on environmental issues and climate change. These activities help the tree grow.

If you are interested in this poster, please take the time to read the cloud of words inside the tree. There are thousands of opportunities you can receive when the tree grows. What if there are more trees like this in your community, your country, and throughout the world? How would you feel? In contrast, how would you feel without this kind of tree?

The green effect behind the caption 'One tree, thousands of opportunities' represents a mountain range. It looks like this when we commence as individuals to plant a tree, or trees. At least, plant one tree in your life. If you have done so already, plant more because it is worthwhile. Take the lead in your community.

Tith Chandara works as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Media and Communication in Cambodia where he was pursuing his Bachelor's degree under a scholarship programme. He works in collaboration with media and is responsible for public relations and outreach. This young Cambodian media practitioner has been working as a freelance reporter for a local English newspaper, the Phnom Penh Post. In 2010, he got a grant to intern in the press office of Care Germany. Since then, he has produced an environmental film about the impacts of plastic bags which was selected for the Southeast Asian Student Documentary Award in Thailand. He has produced several films on different topics, mostly on environment and education. He is now organising a webzine for his department. He can be reached at tithchandara@gmail.com.

Realise the changes: act now!

Aastha Shrestha, Nepal

Although there are several natural causes influencing the temperature on our planet, many climate scientists attribute the global warming phenomenon observed recently to anthropogenic activities. Over recent decades, deforestation and the burning of fossil fuel have become serious causes of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and, therefore, leading contributors to global warming.

Climate change is among the most critical global environmental challenges of our time. Recent events have demonstrated emphatically mankind's growing vulnerability to climate change. Increasing concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere, particularly carbon dioxide, is the primary cause of global warming. Rapid increases in the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide since the onset of the industrial revolution have caused the Earth to warm more than previously, leading to a rise in sea levels (as a result of thermal expansion and melting polar ice caps and glaciers) and causing various impacts on the global climate.

Retreat of glaciers and ice sheets has two major impacts. First, the high rate of meltdown causes increased runoff leading to floods and landslides. Secondly, areas relying on the runoff from melting glaciers are likely to experience severe water shortages as glaciers disappear. A decrease in runoff will lead to a reduction in water to irrigate crops as freshwater dams and reservoirs become dry. As the volume of runoff decreases, then energy, urban, and agricultural infrastructure will be placed under stress.

In order to cope with these changes, adaptation strategies – such as expansion of rainwater harvesting; water storage and conservation techniques; recycling and reuse of water resources; desalination; and efficient use of water and irrigation facilities – can be adopted. These strategies should be accompanied by inputs such as afforestation, reforestation, management of forest harvesting, improvements in tree species to increase biomass production and carbon sequestration, and land-use changes as these could mitigate the impacts of change.

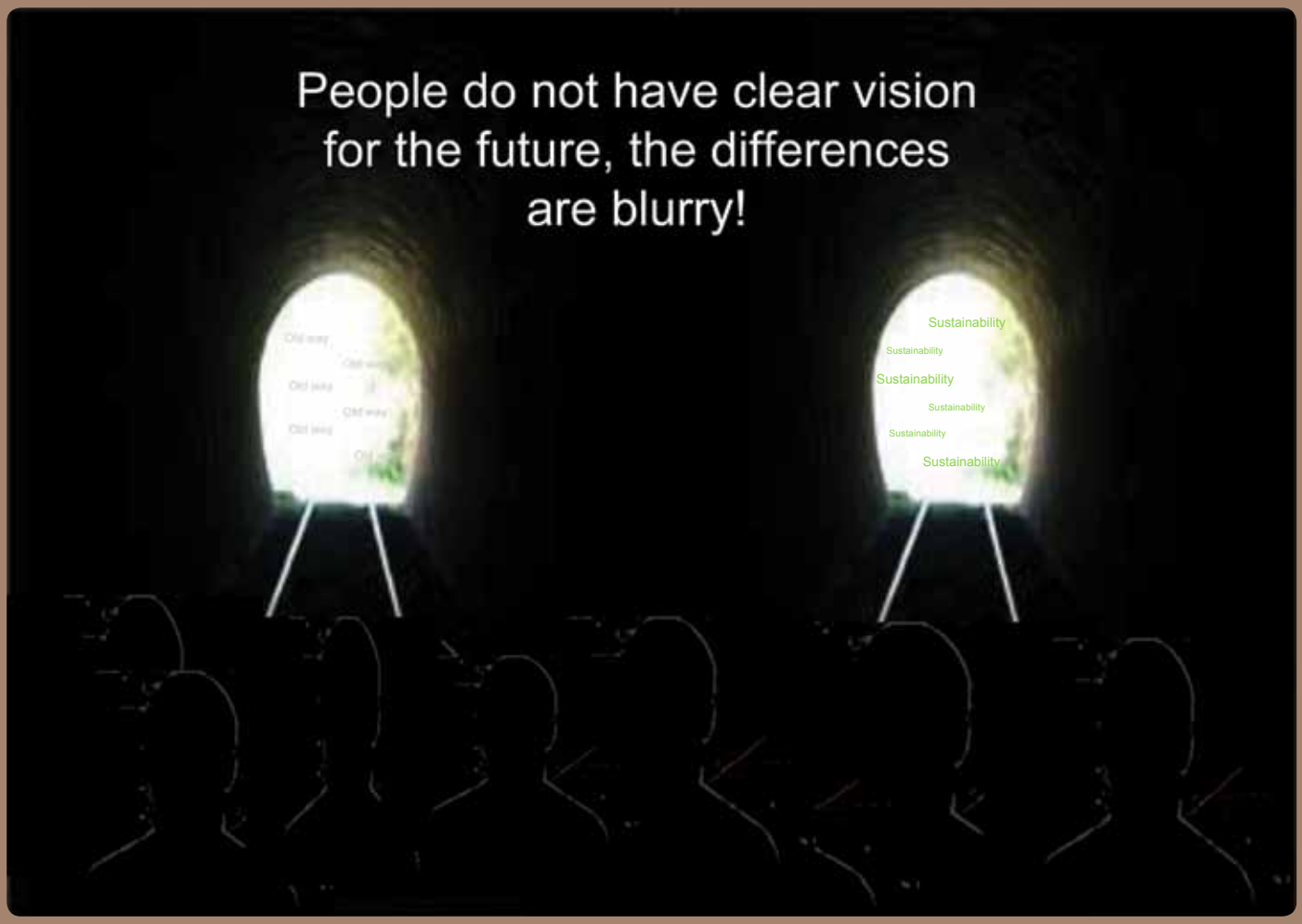
We must realise what is happening and act now!

Aastha Shrestha, a Nepalese citizen, is currently an undergraduate student in Environmental Science at the College of Applied Sciences, affiliated to Tribhuvan University, Nepal. She has been leading various extracurricular activities at her college to raise awareness about climate change and publishes 'Flourish', a college magazine focusing on youth and environmental issues. Ms Shrestha serves as the editor of this magazine which focuses on environmental awareness and sustainable consumption. She plans to pursue a career in the environmental sector. She seeks to share her ideas on different environmental issues in a global forum and can be reached at aastha_debonaire@yahoo.com.

Clear vision for a clear future

Serik Dossayev

My poster shows that the community (the shadows of people on the poster) faces a choice (two tunnels) of whether to continue in their old ways or to choose sustainable development. As they are surrounded by darkness (two ways only are shown and people are confused, they are in a fog (black background), and they are frustrated. Inside the tunnel are two labels, they indicate which direction people can decide to follow. The tunnels are identical, only differing in the colour of the labels. I want to show through this poster that people do not sense differences but that, depending upon the choices they make, the end results differ in every aspect. People lack the motivation and knowledge to choose one path over another and tend to choose one that is easy and familiar.



Serik Dossayev, a Kazakh national, joined Executive Consulting in 2008 as a Consultant for Strategic and Service Management. In 2010 Serik became a Deputy Director and he is responsible now for development of the company's new business direction which includes establishment of partnerships with local universities for collaborative research in strategic management, service management, organisational change, and sustainable development as well as creation of a national internet platform for implementing online market research. Serik completed his Master's degree in Economics and Social Studies as a scholar of 'Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst' or German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) at Trier University, Germany. Serik received his first diploma in agro-industrial economy at T. Ryskulow Kazakh Economic University, Kazakhstan. While studying for a Bachelor's degree, Serik spent a year as an exchange student at the University of Applied Science at Osnabrueck in Germany where he studied intensive marketing. Serik is a member of Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) Alumni Association, an organisation that aims to connect the new generation of leaders to establish sustainable development. He can be reached at seka_dos2004@yahoo.de.

Green e-cow-nomy

Kamran Hussain, Pakistan

Production of biogas (a mixture of approximately 60% methane and 40% carbon dioxide) is becoming more favourable as the prices of oil and fertiliser rise. Furthermore, biogas production units provide a decentralised fuel supply and waste management system, both of which are sought out increasingly, particularly in rural areas of developing countries. The majority of work carried out on biogas has used animal waste as raw material.

Gas derived from cows is 55–65% methane and 30–35% carbon dioxide with some hydrogen, nitrogen, and other traces. Its heating value is around 600 British thermal units (Btu) per cubic foot. Natural gas consists of around 80% methane, yielding a Btu value of about 1,000. Biogas can be improved by filtering it through lime water to remove carbon dioxide; iron filings to absorb corrosive hydrogen sulphide; and calcium chloride to extract water vapour after completing the two other processes. Cow dung slurry is composed of 1.8–2.4% nitrogen (N_2), 1.0–1.2% phosphorus (P_2O_5), 0.6–0.8% potassium (K_2O), and 50–75% organic humus. About one cubic foot of gas can be generated from one pound of cow manure at around 28°C. This is enough gas to cook a day's meals for a family of four to six people in India. About 1.7 cubic metres of biogas is equivalent to one litre of gasoline. The manure produced by one cow in one year can be converted to methane and is equivalent to over 200 litres of gasoline. Gas engines require about 0.5 m^3 of methane per unit of horsepower per hour.

Kamran Hussain is a graduate in forestry from the Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI). He studied forestry under a scholarship programme from IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature)-Pakistan in 2005. From 2006 he served for two years at the State Forestry Department as a forest officer and was subsequently nominated by the Forestry Department for post-graduate studies in Mountain Conservation and Watershed Management at the University of Punjab, Lahore. He graduated in 2009. Mr Hussain received a gold medal from the university in 2011 for securing first position in mountain research. He worked as a lecturer at the Centre for Integrated Mountain Research (CIMR), University of Punjab, Lahore, on deputation for a six-month period following graduation. His main areas of interest are capacity building and training of youth, communities, and government officials on issues related to the environment, specifically natural resource management (NRM), reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation(REDD/REDD+), wetlands' management, and watershed management. In three bureaucratic training courses held by him, Kamram trained over 250 government/NGO officials, youth, and community representatives on environmental issues. He has represented his country at international forums: for example Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) – Switzerland; International Youth Forum on Benefiting Youth from Earth Observation Information for Climate Action in Nepal in 2010, and an International Post-graduate School for Mountains' (IPROMO) course on Natural Hazards on Disaster Risk Management in Mountains in Ormea, Italy, in July 2011. Recently he received a scholarship from Pakistan Wetlands' Programme to study for an MS in Environmental Management in Malaysia. This commenced in September 2011. He can be reached at kam_asif@yahoo.com.

Sustainability circle

Watkana Thongrueng, Thailand

To live a sustainable lifestyle we need a social structure that supports behaviour conducive to sustainability. Unfortunately, this type of society doesn't establish itself: it must be created and built by everyone! We, as the younger generation full of dreams, energy, knowledge, and skills in the use of new technologies and a profound willingness to lead change for a better future, have the right and opportunity to make our own choices to establish sustainable communities and societies.

In my poster, the sun, with the compass symbol in the middle, represents the hope illuminating the way towards a future sustainable community. The compass acts as a guide to provide direction and perspective by considering all aspects of life. These aspects include the natural systems on which all life depends; economic systems that provide humanity with goods, services, and meaningful work; social and cultural systems that provide cohesion, identity, security, and freedom; cultural traditions; legal frameworks; and, most importantly, the wellbeing of individuals taking into consideration their happiness and overall quality of life.

The most important characteristic for a sustainable community is the full participation of all people. Thus, the poster is designed to provide space and encouragement for people to reflect on this idea and participate in constructing the poster by adding those aspects they believe are missing and which should be included in the sustainability community; i.e., elements from your own vision. Thus, we can create a shared vision of our sustainable world.

Watkana Thongrueng is a Thai citizen who graduated in Marine Science from the Faculty of Fisheries at Kasetsart University in Thailand. She previously worked for a period of two years as a coastal resources' researcher for Ranong Coastal Resources' Research Station in areas affected by tsunami. She is currently working on sustainability for a multidisciplinary consulting firm in Bangkok. She has worked there for five years now. Her primary responsibilities are teaching and training in curriculum and materials' development for education programmes. She is interested in sustainable living styles. She has attended various courses related to this topic such as eco-village design, education, and sustainable living and farming. She can be reached at nonglala@gmail.com.