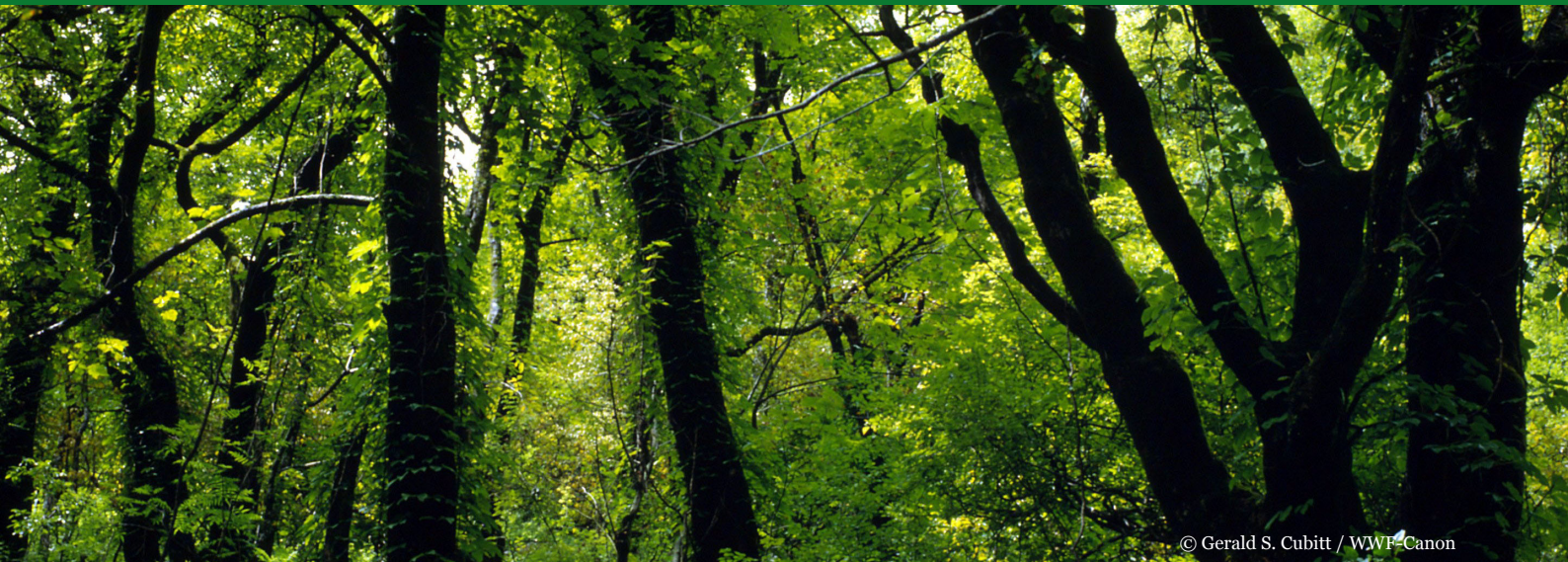


THE HARIYO BAN PROGRAM

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Message from the Chief of Party, Judy Oglethorpe



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Greetings!

Welcome to the first issue of the Hariyo Ban Program electronic newsletter. The newsletter will help us reach out to our partners and stakeholders about our activities, and is designed for anybody who is interested in the major issues that the Hariyo Ban Program is working on in Nepal.

The Hariyo Ban Program is a five-year initiative funded by USAID with the goal of reducing vulnerability to climate change and threats to biodiversity in Nepal. At its heart lie three interwoven components — biodiversity conservation, payments for ecosystem services including REDD+, and climate change adaptation. The program has a major focus on empowering communities to manage forests sustainably and adapt to climate change, and so has strong cross-cutting themes of livelihoods, governance, and gender and social inclusion. Hariyo Ban Program works in two landscapes — Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), and the Chitwan Annapurna Landscape (CHAL) which comprises the

whole of the Gandaki river basin in Nepal. It is being implemented by a consortium of four partners: WWF Nepal, CARE Nepal, Federation of Community Forest Users - Nepal (FECOFUN) and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

During its first year the Hariyo Ban Program core partners built up the team, offices and governance structure for the program, and began implementation. In TAL we identified parts of the Government of Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape Strategy Plan (2004-2014) where we could best contribute, including in four corridors in the landscape as well as working on focal wildlife species in protected areas. In CHAL, while waiting for results of a rapid assessment of the landscape, its biodiversity and drivers of deforestation/forest degradation, we identified a small number of key areas to start work on the ground in the Seti and Marsyangdi sub-basins. Early field activities in both landscapes have included work to improve governance in local groups, assessment of local vulnerability to climate, and work to improve livelihoods

and reduce threats on forests. We have supported training of community groups to fight forest fires, establishment of Community Learning and Action Centers, training in gender and social inclusion, a survey of snow leopard, and a review of community based tourism. At central level we have supported the REDD Cell of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation to produce a REDD+ strategy framework.

The Hariyo Ban Program values the interests, and shares the concerns, of individuals and organizations that play an important role in assisting and/or benefitting from its activities. We recognize you as our key stakeholders and as such have included you in our mailing list for the first edition of this newsletter. Any feedback from you is most welcome. If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter please let us know.

Judy Oglethorpe

Chief of Party, Hariyo Ban Program

SPOTLIGHT : Youths Active in Conservation

Youths help to curb wildlife crimes

Wildlife poaching is one of the major threats in conservation. While national parks are protected, animals like rhinoceros and tiger roam beyond protected areas into adjacent buffer zones and community forest areas, which are easily accessible to poachers. This is why, when poaching increased in these areas, concerned youths living close to forests started Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPUs) to support park authorities by providing information for anti-poaching operations. CBAPUs are now sub-committees of Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) that are under Buffer Zone Management Councils (BZMCs).

The major activity of CBAPUs is generating awareness among local groups, eco-clubs and others to save wild animals from poaching and curb illegal wildlife trade. The awareness programs include street dramas, house to house visits, distribution of pamphlets and posters, rallies, hoarding boards, games, folk songs, patrolling and radio programs.

Parallel to the work of CBAPUs, emphasis is also given to promoting local livelihoods through alternative income generating initiatives. This helps youths to support themselves and encourages volunteering to curb wildlife as well.

Skill based trainings such as mobile phone, bike and electrical appliance repair; driving as well as fish farming are a few of the initiatives to help promote livelihoods.



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On 20-21 August, 2012 with the support of the Hariyo Ban Program, the Terai Arc Landscape—Protected Areas and Buffer Zone Project (TAL PABZ) organized a CBAPU workshop on the "Role of youths in conservation and anti-poaching operations". The chief objective of the workshop was to decide on a uniform structure for CBAPUs. The workshop also focused on their working modality and an information sharing mechanism with the authorities of the five Protected Areas.

Twenty-seven participants including five women participated from the buffer zones of Parsa Wildlife Reserve, Chitwan National Park, Banke National Park, Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve. The program was facilitated by WWF Nepal and Chitwan National Park.

Youths protect Barandabhar Corridor against fire

Barandabhar is an important biological corridor that connects Churiya with the Mahabharat range where endangered species such as tiger, rhinoceros and gaur are found. It also forms part of a link to Panchase Protection Forest and the Annapurna Conservation Area through the Seti river corridor, and to Manaslu Conservation Area through the Trishuli, Daraudi and Budhi Gandaki river corridors. Barandabhar corridor may also function as a critical climate refugia and has important wetlands including Beeshazari Lake, a Ramsar site. Yet this biologically rich corridor faces tremendous pressure from people, domestic animals, and infrastructure developments such as roads and transmission lines, with increased encroachment and habitat fragmentation. Another serious threat to Barandabhar is frequent and deliberate forest fire.

Although fire is used as a traditional tool for clearing and managing forest and agricultural land, lately the incidence of deliberate fires has imposed a serious threat to biodiversity and ecosystems. Annually for the three hot months of the summer season the corridor faces devastating loss from forest fire.

Realizing the importance of this corridor, in April 2012 the Hariyo Ban Program provided a seven-day intensive training as well as firefighting tools and equipment to twenty-five local youths to contain and control forest fire.

After the training, the youths were able to control fire in sixty different places in Barandabhar this summer. While in

the past most locals did not report fires, this year they have become alert through awareness campaigns initiated around Tikauli Buffer Zone Community Forest (BZCF). They now report fire occurrences to this trained firefighting group by cell-phone. Furthermore, in order to make this initiative functional Tikauli BZCF has established an endowment fund of fifty thousand Nepali rupees. This is used as needed for transportation, communication and patrolling by the firefighting group.

The District Forest Office and the National Park have appreciated the work of the firefighting group and have stressed the importance of replicating this in other vulnerable areas.



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EXPERT INTERVIEW:

Hariyo Ban Program through the lens of Gender and Social Inclusion



"When I used to say that we need to protect the forest, no one agreed. But the Community Learning Action Center (CLAC) has provided a platform for women to meet, share issues and address them together. Now, I have found other like-minded women who are there to raise voices together," says 51 year-old Sira Devi Sanjyal from Kailali.

Hariyo Ban Program has helped established 126 CLACs.



"As a local resource person, I facilitate my community people to meet in our CLAC and discuss a wide range of current issues relating to marginalized communities, and our roles and responsibilities. I now understand that we should not simply sit idle saying we are vulnerable – instead we should be proactive. The training provided by Hariyo Ban Program has given me added knowledge and has enhanced my capacity as a leader, facilitator and moderator. I am confident that I will be helping address issues of many voiceless women and poor," says Sarita Gurung, a Local Resource Person (LRP) from Dahakhani Village Development Committee (VDC), Khetbari Tole in Chitwan.

The program has trained 85 Local Resource Persons.

For the Hariyo Ban Program gender and social inclusion is a key cross-cutting programmatic approach, to help empower both women and men to challenge and change deeply rooted inequalities and improve the policy environment.

We talked to Shikha Shrestha who works as the Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Coordinator for the Hariyo Ban Program and provides technical

guidance on gender and social inclusion perspectives.

Shikha has always been keen on gender and social inclusion issues. She says, "Witnessing transformation in the lives of women, dalits and marginalized janajatis from being powerless to becoming change agents inspired me to work in this field." Shikha works with the consortium partners to design GESI capacity building packages and networks

with women's organizations, ethnic networks and government agencies to act as a bridge between government and citizens in raising genuine concerns through effective policy mechanisms. She adds, "I like to spend time in the field talking to women and marginalized groups, to gain a better understanding of the issues they face."

Here are few things that she shared with us.

Why work in gender and social inclusion?

To transform power relationships, by empowering women, poor and marginalized communities to realize their innate potential and rights. They are empowered to claim their rights and support policy makers to become more accountable towards them.

How would you tell a layperson what gender and social inclusion are?

Largely, there is a misconception that gender corresponds to women but it is not so. It refers to identities or roles assigned to both men and women by society that affect relationships, rights, responsibilities and resources. Social inclusion on the other hand is about achieving power balance through diversified representation based on class, caste and ethnicity.

How has the Hariyo Ban Program best incorporated gender and social inclusion?

Gender equality and social inclusion are not treated as an isolated theme in the Hariyo Ban Program. It is important to mainstream this theme into the core components – biodiversity conservation, REDD+ and climate change adaptation, and other cross-cutting themes such as governance and livelihoods. This is done through GESI sensitive capacity enhancement, research and policy advocacy. The Hariyo Ban Program is promoting strong engagement of marginalized communities and building leadership to change power dimensions, with equitable benefit sharing.

What would successful gender and social inclusion for Hariyo Ban Program look like?

I want Hariyo Ban Program to promote better socio-economic and leadership status of women, poor and



Shikha Shrestha

Gender and Social Inclusion Co-ordinator

marginalized communities. It will act as a catalyst to develop their self-esteem and confidence and also build their resilience to climate change. It should also contribute in creating a GESI sensitive policy environment, as a result of which more women and socially excluded groups emerge as change agents. Ultimately, Hariyo Ban Program should be recognized as a successful GESI sensitive initiative that can be replicated by various development actors.



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Rehabilitating land degraded by shifting cultivation

Shifting cultivation is widely practiced in Asia including Nepal. It is an agricultural land use system where land is cleared of forest and cultivated until its fertility diminishes, after which it is abandoned and the farmer moves on to clear a new area. This kind of land use system promotes deforestation and forest degradation, thus contributing to carbon emission and biodiversity loss.

Shifting cultivation has been practiced for a long time by several indigenous groups including Chepeng, Magar, Sherpa, Rai, Limbu, Tamang and Gurung in over 20 districts of Nepal (Regmi et al., 2005). In Tanahun district alone there are twelve VDCs where it occurs including Devghat and Chhimkeshwari VDCs.

The Hariyo Ban Program with the support of the District Forest Office Tanahu and seventeen leasehold Forest Users Groups (LFUGs) started a rehabilitation program by cultivating Amriso, popularly known as broom grass. The LFUGs contributed by voluntarily planting around 375,350 Amriso plants in approximately 37.5 ha

of steep slopes in Amdanda, Gaighat and Sinchangghdi of Devghat VDC and in the Baralung area of Chhimkeshwari VDC. This area serves as a forest corridor to enhance the ecological connectivity of the Chitwan Annapurna Landscape (CHAL), so this restoration is very critical.

Amriso is a popular non-timber forest product (NTFP) in Nepal. The flowers can be used to make sweeping brooms, the leaves provide good fodder and the stems provide fuel. It has mat-like roots that bind the soil firmly, preventing soil erosion. When planted with tree species, Amriso stabilizes slopes preventing landslides. It also helps to reduce the growth of invasive plant species like *Lantana camara*.

Once planted, Amriso can be used in the first year of growth and lasts for many years. Planting Amriso is an efficient method of rehabilitating degraded land and an effective way of enhancing the livelihoods of poor and marginalized communities dependent on forest and shifting agriculture.

Brain Teaser: What iconic animal is printed on the hundred rupee Nepali note?

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