

COMDEKS

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



Empowered lives.
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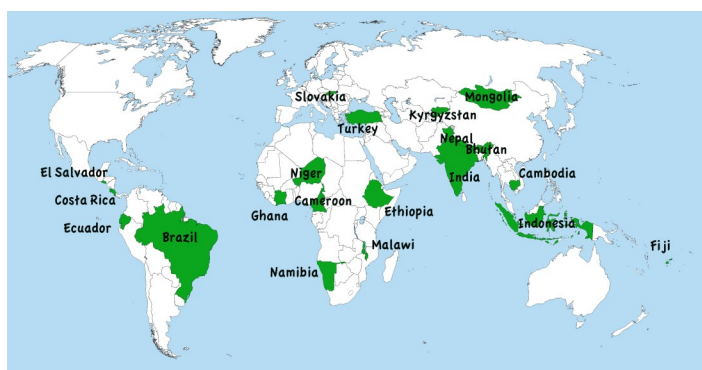
This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators, project impacts and results, and noteworthy announcements.

Welcome to the fourteenth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) COMDEKS grantee in Mongolia among finalists for Equator Prize 2015
- 2) Women's Organization contributes to the resilient landscapes in the Yaku Samai Biocorridor, Ecuador
- 3) Conservation of biodiversity and drilling in the Bogo landscape, Cameroon
- 4) Climate-smart agriculture and apiary development for sustainable livelihoods in the Weto Range, Ghana
- 5) Portfolio Updates: Videos from Ecuador and photo story from Indonesia

COMDEKS Country Programmes: December 2015



COMDEKS grantee in Mongolia among finalists for Equator Prize 2015

We are pleased to announce that the Haraagiin Khishig community group in Mongolia, both a COMDEKS and SGP grantee, received a Certificate of Recognition for the 2015 Equator Prize one of the 118 finalists, selected from a pool of 1,461 nominations from 126 countries. Given the quality and significance of nominations this year, this is a major accomplishment. The Equator Initiative is a UNDP-led partnership dedicated to supporting and advancing local sustainable development solutions aimed at enhancing economic and ecological resilience. By conferring the Equator

Prize it honors outstanding local efforts that are advancing innovative solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. The grantee, Haraagiin Khishig, successfully implemented the project "Riparian area development and grazing management near Baruunharaa village", employing a multi-community approach to achieve a widespread increase in environmental consciousness, shifting preferences for income generating activities from mainly pastoralism to cultivation of vegetables and tree seedlings, beekeeping, and



Beekeeping training with the head of Haraagiin Khishig

Photo: Mongolia

fruit orchards. Project activities have effectively reduced land degradation from overgrazing and unsustainable land use practices, encouraged reforestation and ecological restoration, as well as increased incomes of local communities through these alternative sources of livelihoods. Moreover, through trainings and knowledge exchange, skill and education levels continue to improve as local enterprises develop.

Contributed by Mr. Ganbaatar Bandi, Mongolia National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Women's Organization contributes to resilient landscapes in the Yaku Samai Biocorridor, Ecuador

Santa Rita is a proactive Kichwa community that promotes tropical rainforest conservation through diverse environmental initiatives in Archidona, Napo Province. During the last three years, with the support of COMDEKS funding, San



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ta Rita's partner, the women's organization "Tukuy Warmikuna Jatarishun Sumak Kawsaymi", reforested six hectares with native plants and fruit trees in micro river basins from the Puní to Rumi Shicama rivers. Conservation



Community consultation workshop

Photo: Ecuador

activities were reinforced by an agreement that established a common commitment to not perform activities that endanger local water sources. Reforestation is highly valued by the community, as it contributes to wildlife recovery, promotes environmental awareness, and promises a source of income along with an organizational focus. Consequently, Kichwa women are planning to further increase their reforestation activities.



Santa Rita community members

Photo: Ecuador

The Santa Rita project aimed to increase harvest of products that were once or have been part of the community's daily diet based on its production landscape approach. Santa Rita promoted the cultivation of several agricultural products through the chakras system, or family farms in the Kichwa language. The women of Santa Rita now get together in the Marquesina, a place built on a wooden floor and covered by a sliding roof, to facilitate processing, drying and fermenting of cocoa. Women also gather to work on handicrafts in a communal room. Fish farming of native

species such as cachama (*Piaractus brachypomus*) contributes to sustainable self-consumption as well as sales. The women's organization Tukuy Warmikuna Jatarishun Sumak Kawsaymi also plays an active role in the Yaku Samai Biocorredor, which aims to conserve the Rumi Shicama Puni micro-basin of the Calmitoyacu River by strengthening the management of these traditional chakras. COMDEKS supports the Santa Rita project to promote a sound socio-ecological production landscape with the technical assistance of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Ecuador through EQUIPATE Sacha Causai, its Amazon Regional Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Team.

Contributed by Ana Maria Varea, Ecuador National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Conservation of biodiversity and drilling of solar powered boreholes in Cameroon



Solar-powered pump in the Bogo Landscape

Photo: Cameroon

The target landscape selected as the focus of COMDEKS activities in Cameroon is the Sahelian Zone in Bogo, the Northern region that is home to Sedek, Djidel, and Messere communities. The constant scarcity of potable water leads to continual outbreaks of waterborne diseases including cholera, dysentery, bilharzias, and diarrhea. Women and children are responsible for obtaining water in rural areas, and boreholes and deep wells are equipped with manual pumps whose use becomes a stressful and time consuming task. With the support from the MBOSCUA Women's Social and Welfare Committee, 339 members of the target community were trained in management and conservation of water systems to improve access to water. Manual pumps were replaced with solar energy pumps. As an outcome of these solar-powered pumps, communities are now free of water-borne diseases, pastoral activities are better managed through the provision of drinking water points for animals, and economic activities have been diversified, improving the economic well-being of the communities.

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Climate change is already threatening food security since this region's crops are not adapting readily to increasing temperatures and changes in rainfall. With support from COMDEKS, the MBODUSCA Women's Social and Welfare Committee introduced organic agriculture to these communities. High quality onion seeds resistant to climatic change were provided to local farmers, enabling them to improve their food security. With community training, agrobiodiversity was promoted through the production of local landraces and varieties of maize, sorghum, black-eyed peas (niebe), hibiscus (folere), okra, and a type of legume (gouboudo).



Site visit by local women and youth

Photo: Cameroon

Additionally, the Women's Sustainable Development Fund was established to create additional income generating activities for these communities. The fund supports mobilization of women and youths for adult literacy programs and supports group dynamics by institutionalizing these newly created groups.

Management of this socio-ecological production landscape is a pioneer initiative in Cameroon. Because of its positive impact, the government intends to replicate and upgrade this approach to various areas.

Contributed by Hajara Haman, Programme Coordinator MBOSCUA Women's Social and Welfare Committee in Cameroon and Mr. Aimé Kamga, Cameroon Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP

Climate-smart agriculture and apiary development for sustainable livelihoods in Ghana

Through intense and persistent wildfires occurring between Bame and Kwanta every year, local communities named this portion of the Weto Mountain Range "fire mountain". Through a COMDEKS supported project, Traditional Leaders Associations were established in three communities to educate more than 4,000 people on agroforestry practices

and to promote beekeeping as a factor in fire prevention and income generation.

The highly wildfire-prone stretches of "fire mountain" measuring 100 ha have been placed under targeted sustainable management and partly converted into apiaries. So far, ten main apiaries with 60 beehives each have been established and are managed by local communities, led by the traditional leaders. As a direct result, the 9.6 km stretch of the mountain has not experienced any wildfires for the past three years, and illegal hunting and timber logging has been drastically reduced.



Fruit trees planted on "Fire Mountain"

Photo: Ghana

Additionally, 350 farmers and their farmer associations have put over 500 ha of land under sustainable agricultural practices. About 100 organic cocoa, mango, citrus and oil palm farms have been established under agroforestry systems intercropped with plantain, banana, and cassava crops. Traditional crops like rice, leafy vegetables, and non-timber forest products have also been reintroduced.

Within the last three years, community skills in biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, and alternative livelihoods were considerably strengthened. Three community-managed tree nurseries were established, which have been producing 280,000 tree seedlings annually. Indigenous species raised include *Khaya senegalensis* (Mahogany), *Terminalia superba* (Ofram), *Cederela odorata* (Cedar) and other species such as *Gmelina*, *Cassia*, teak and economic trees such as cocoa, avocado, oil palm, citrus, mango, and banana. These nursery groups generate annual returns of USD 65,500 and have already rehabilitated over 1,250 ha of degraded lands in the Weto range. In addition, 400 ha of community conserved areas were created high in the mountains, creating a rich wildlife sanctuary and increasing eco-tourism opportunities for local communities.

Contributed by Mr. George Ortsin, Ghana National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Portfolio Updates:

Ecuador



Please click on the image above to view the videos.

The Napo River Watershed in the Ecuadorian Amazon Region was selected as the target landscape in Ecuador. The Amazon region plays a critical role in regulating the climate as it retains large amounts of organic carbon and contributes to the regulation of the Amazon basin, one of the most important freshwater systems on the planet. The selected area is a zone rich in biodiversity, environmental services, traditional methods for suitable resource management and ancestral knowledge of biodiversity. However, it is also an area that has lost nearly 20% of its natural vegetative cover in the past 50 years.

COMDEKS projects in the Ecuadorian Amazon target landscape empower communities to conserve important ecosystems through communitarian agreements, reforestation activities, forest species rehabilitation and protection of micro watersheds. Recognizing the achievements of improving livelihoods of local communities as well as environmental health, the SGP Ecuador Country Programme has recently produced five videos describing the activities and results of COMDEKS supported local projects on socio-ecological production landscapes in two Biocorridors of Living Well, Yaku Samai ("the power of water") and Akllak Sacha ("the chosen forest"), in the Ecuadorian Amazon Region. The main video gives an overview of COMDEKS funded projects in the target landscape. The remaining four videos provide more detailed information on four select projects, including on activities and achievements in diversifying agricultural products and increasing crop yield productivity by promoting the ancient chakras system of family farming, reforesting timber and fruit trees, rehabilitating local fish species, improving access to clean water as well as supporting income generating activities such as production of handicrafts using non-timber forest products.

Contributed by Ana Maria Varea, Ecuador National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Indonesia

Semau Island was selected as the target landscape for COMDEKS activities in Indonesia. Currently under pressure from a combination of limited supply of freshwater and unsustainable agricultural practices exacerbated by climate change and extreme weather events, this ecologically diverse area is home to rich terrestrial, marine and coastal biodiversity.

Activities carried out under the COMDEKS landscape strategy for Semau Island have improved community awareness and supported implementation of improved practices of sustainable resource management, generating improved ecosystem services, greater market access and environmental conservation of landscapes and seascapes. Local communities are now directly involved in the restoration and management of the ecosystems their livelihoods depend on. In addition, a number of new partnerships and groups such as the Springs Management Agency, the Institute of Village Community Empowerment (LPMD), and the Village Water Management Institute, among others, were established at the village level with the participation of community leaders, community groups and government authorities.



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Please click on the image above to access a photo story from Indonesia.

This photo story illustrates COMDEKS activities from the baseline assessment of the target landscape, through development of the Landscape Strategy to project implementation in Semau Island, Indonesia.

Contributed by Catharina Dwiastarini, Indonesia National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Please click [here](#) for previous Issues of COMDEKS Newsletter.