SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

on the logging road

A child draws a map of the territory of his people, the nomadic Penan living along the tutoh river. The site is bordering the Gunung Mulu National Park, one of Malaysia’s top-notch conservation areas. However, logging company Samling has recently announced its plan to invade the last remaining patches of good forest in the national park’s bufferzone.

This is of grave concern to the Penan, as they depend on these patches for sago, their staple food.

(Story is included in our film, just released, *Voices From the Forest*, see Free Books and Videos, page 12)

**ALSO INSIDE:**

IMPRESSIONS OF MARKETING ON-THE-JOB
EUROPEAN TOUR (A LA MODI)
SHARING OF EXPERIENCE & LEARNING FROM INDONESIA
EXCHANGE NEWS
EFFORTS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE NTFP MANAGEMENT IN INDIA
A TIME FOR LEARNING
I went to Manila to attend an on-the-job marketing training for ten days. The objective of the training was to fulfill our learning needs in relation fair trade system, implementation of marketing mix in practices, and ways to increase marketing management. At this training, we saw marketing processes and practices of a marketing foundation.

The training is related very much to my own work. At the first meeting of the Forest Honey Network of Indonesia held in Danau Sentarum, there were activity compilers among the participants. There were five earlier analyses: to take inventory honey potentiality each sites, organising at honey farmer stage, relationship between beekeeping and sustainable nature management, post harvesting process and marketing process. At this time, honey from Danau Sentarum passed four of these five stages. The urgent need is marketing. Riak Bumi fills the marketing function at Pontianak city and had just sold only about 1.5 tonnes honey from a potential of 20-25 tonnes almost every harvesting time.

The place for training is the Upland Marketing Foundation Incorporation (UMFI), a non-government organisation concerned with marketing upland food products; lately they sold canned fish too. To them, NGOs cannot remain dependent on grants and therefore NGOs must have resources to raise funds so that people do not leave the community. UMFI works directly with and sells the products of farmer organisations and small enterprise groups. They implement transparent accounts with producers and support a fair trade system.

I saw the marketing line process of UMFI. We visited the supermarkets as UMFI’s main target are customers of city supermarkets. UMFI care very much about quality, taste, but labelling and packaging are important things also. UMFI has many competitors with similar products and similar packaging, but they promote their product as organic. Many in the urban population are searching for “healthy” products even if they are more expensive, UMFI put a logo on the caps of their bottles. This butterfly logo shows that the product is organic.

We also visited organic rice farming in Pecuaria, Bicol province and a women’s group, a small enterprise that produces peanut jam in Naga province.

Modern Indigenous or Modi is part of the NTFP Task Force in the Philippines. They handle management and marketing of handicraft products woven from natural fibres. They built a modern concept around indigenous products. Interestingly, MODI chose high class segmentation. Helped by volunteer designers they can help local community produce nice, artistic, unique but high value products. They can produce limited items without pressuring the local communities.

Their success was recognised when they won the Super Award 2005 as best modern indigenous product from a well-known national newspaper. (It was also my first time to drink western wine!)

I learned how important it is to educate customers about our products, besides ensuring the buyer or consignee that we have proper products to sell. Segmentation is also important because to whom we sell the product influences how we package, promote and take the price to the customer. Moreover, as a marketing officer, it is important to stay focused on the marketing activity – we need consistently to do it. Marketing is a process. Personally, Riak Bumi has its homework to do.

Fair trade should not only give a profit to the seller but community as producer also. Lastly, build a good relationship with your producers; an agreement among the producers to market their products through fair trade not only adds trust but also helps them to see challenges of their product so that it is easier to make changes if needed.

Sesilia Ernawati
Riak Bumi, Jl. Putri Dara Hitam Gang Tani I No. 26
Pontianak 78116, West Kalimantan, Indonesia
Tel/Fax: +62 561 737132
Email: riakbumi@pontianak.waspanta.net.id

When I embarked on my first trip abroad to Manila, Philippines I was eager to know how things work in another country and how I can understand their place and context. To my surprise, I felt very much at home with the NTFP -EP team and my companion from Indonesia, Sesilia Ernawati aka Nina.

Our first visit to the UMFI office put things in their perspective and helped me understand their operations. Though I was a little surprised to see few numbers of NTFP-based products, I could understand the need for such a distribution network which facilitates the marketing of NTFP-based products. Holding an identity in such a crowded shelf space is a task in itself. “Healthy Rice” and muscovado sugar, which comprise more than one-third of UMFI’s turnover, have a strong presence.
across the malls and super stores. Innovative products based on NTFPs from the rural areas can easily find space in the urban markets through this distribution channel.

The small team – managing a turnover of more than Pesos 10 million – shows the level of efficiency and commitment. The ability to stay at the top end of a competitive rice market infuses a lot of confidence for the team to launch new product lines and gain attention. Having a presence in such a big urban market is the strongest factor for growth for UMFI. This visit has given me the confidence to work in an urban market and look into a strategy for faster growth and networking.

An assured supply base for rice and sugar in Pecuaria has given UMFI the leverage needed for growth. But reservations like competition from certified organic rice and the ability of the Pecuaria cooperative to fulfill the demand created by growing market share of Healthy Rice still remain. The launch of mineral water may add to this rate of growth and open other sectors of the market in Manila.

The marketing of Modi was an entirely new experience after the UMFI experience. Modi’s complete indigenous identity and exclusive NTFP-based products impressed me very much. The ability to join hands with top-of-the-line designers to create completely up-market product lines shows the depth of understanding of the market and the means of achieving the goals of sustainable use of NTFPs.

With the wealth of experience the NTFP-EP has in sustainable use of NTFPs, the goals of balanced growth and equitable distribution of benefits can without doubt be achieved in the near future.

I am grateful to the NTFP-EP and UMFI team for their hospitality and assistance which translated this visit into a memorable and valuable experience.

T. Samraj
Keystone Foundation, Groves Hill Road, Kotagiri 643217, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India
Tel: +91 4266 272277
Tel/Fax: (91) 4266 272977
Email: kf@keystone-foundation.org
URL: www.keystone-foundation.org

While the NTFP-EP’s work always aimed to be holistic and integrative, this issue of Voices brings to the fore efforts in marketing. It is an area which needs much attention given the cut-throat competition and the wide array of products seeking markets. By knowing the rules of the game, NTFPs have made headway in both the fair trade and mainstream markets.

One activity aimed at sharing experiences in marketing was an exchange amongst partners in Indonesia, India and the Philippines. On-the-job, T. Samraj (Keystone, India) and Nina Ernawati (Riak Bumi, Indonesia) saw firsthand how the Upland Marketing Foundation goes about marketing various NTFP products in supermarkets in the big city. They also discovered how the CustomMade Crafts Center has been actively promoting its handicrafts through its brandnames CustomMade and Modi. Already, Sam and Nina see areas for integration of their learnings in their own work.

With the Philippine crafts center going full blast, it is now exploring how to break into the European market. Nola Andaya shares these opportunities for Philippines crafts based on her insights from her recent trip to France and the Netherlands.

Nabaghan Ojha, from our partner, the Regional Center for Development Cooperation in India, sums up over a decades’ long experience work on NTFPs.

Robert Leo from Keystone, an expert in honey, shares his impressions from his visit to Indonesian partner Riak Bumi, also involved in honey work.

Our team-up with Telapak from Bogor, Indonesia has been fruitful and we have two new films showcasing NTFP-related work. “Voices from the Forest” and “Profiting from Honey” tell the stories behind the products. You can expect more exciting films in the near future.

Finally, this year’s regional NTFP meeting, was shared by the newest member of the NTFP-EP fold, Joanna de Rozario. She will be working with friends in Malaysia and Indonesia as the regional coordinator. Our warmest welcome to Joanna! - Aloisa Zamora-Santos

The NTFP-EP Secretariat
Jenne de Beer, Executive Director/Field Coordinator Maria Cristina S. Guerrero,
Deputy Director Joanna de Rozario, Regional Facilitator for Malaysia and Indonesia Maria Teresa
Padilla-Matibag, Resource Mobilisation & Programme Development Officer Aloisa Zamora-Santos, Information Management Officer

our readers ...

Yes, he was on our cover last issue. Family members gather around and excitedly peruse the pages of Voices.