

Voices from the forest



www.ntfp.org

NTFPs are important particularly to forest dwellers in Cambodia. NTFPs not only serve as a safety net in times of food shortage, but also as a valuable source of household materials and income. Women play key roles in NTFP harvesting, production and marketing. They gather fuelwood for their families and they are also involved in processing and marketing of NTFPs such as weaving and handicrafts.

NETWORKING IN CAMBODIA

creating spaces & connections for NTFP development

By FEMY PINTO, NTFP-EP FACILITATOR FOR CAMBODIA

ALSO INSIDE

FIRST STEP TO MOVE FORWARD
A MEETING OF MINDS:
NTFPs IN LATIN AMERICA
EXCHANGE NEWS
LEARNING HONEY MANAGEMENT
IN KEYSTONE, INDIA
MAKING BOTH ENDS MEET
FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT
CRAFTING A NEW COMMUNITY-
BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN





A view from the Keystone campus in Kotagiri, India

Learning honey management in Keystone

By WAHYU WIDHI, Dian Niaga, Indonesia

Keystone Foundation is known as an organisation concerned with honey management and marketing for communities without compromising the sustainability of bee's community itself. The Bee Museum, the Green Shops and the honey hunter's prosperity are some proofs of Keystone achievement.

In order to learn more about honey management and marketing, Dian Niaga Jakarta, a member of the Indonesian Forest Honey Network sent me to learn from the honey expert in Keystone, India.

My training started on Tuesday, 12th December 2006 at the Keystone office in Kotagiri. After a trip around the Keystone office, Mr. Leo told me about Keystone enterprise, how they started working with the community, what obstacles they've faced and how they can survive them.

On the second day, we discussed how to handle honey from community; how to undertake inventory; about storing honey for long periods, bottling and packing in boxes to get ready to sell. Mr. Leo taught me a simple way to remove pollen from honey. After lunch, we discussed the Green Shop concept with Mr. Pratim. The Green Shop has become door that will lead to understanding about their community, a place for information exchange. Keystone has three Green Shops – in Kotagiri, Conoor and Ooty.

On the third day we spent time working with chemicals in laboratory to check honey quality.

Among the displays at the Bee Museum is a ladder made from vines (hanging over the door), used by the Kurumba tribe in their honey hunting

Ms. Shinny shared her knowledge on the honey testing method which is very useful when we are dealing with honey from a new supplier or when we're simply suspicious about honey quality. The method can be applied in the field with simple equipment. In the afternoon, I had the opportunity to visit the Green Shop in Kotagiri. Located at the main junction in Kotagiri, one can find a whole range of products from organic tea to cotton cloth. But the main product is honey; we can find pure honey, spiced honey, and bitter honey in different packages.

Product Development and Marketing became topics on the fourth day. Mr. Samraj explained pricing, simple calculations for preparing stock, branding products and other marketing methods to help increase honey sales. Mr. Samraj's advice about Green Shop is: don't just sell honey, but all green products (organic, fair trade, ecological monitoring). Because if we just sell honey we can't cover our expenses, so we need to sell other green products to help cover monthly expenses.

After spending time studying in the class, it's time to visit the field. On Monday, 18th December 2006 we were guided by Mr Miller. Two members from Telapak, Nanang and Putra, joined us to take a documentary film about Sememarai village and production of the Kurumba community. Unfortunately we can't see the beeswax melting process because the heater machine needed to be prepared at least three hours to get the right temperature. But with the help of a local person, Mr. Miller demonstrated how to melt the beeswax and make candles and balm.

On the last day of training, we discussed Product Development and Marketing in more detail with Mr. Mathew. Mr. Mathew showed me the process for

Keystone honey product, starting with some ordinary labels, adding the green icon to the label, and then putting the "Last Forest" brand. After the discussion, I got a chance to go to Ooty to visit the Green Shop and Bee Museum. The Green Shop in Ooty is bigger and sells more products than in Kotagiri. Products are displayed in an attractive way, with honey being the bestseller in this shop. On the second floor is the Bee Museum. We can find tools and equipment for honey harvesting from other areas, including a smoker from Ueesi, Kendari that Mr. Leo brought to the Forest Honey Meeting last time. Information about honey, honey harvesting and honey quality can be read in the poster that is displayed next to rope that the Kurumba community uses to harvest honey. I hope someday we can develop a bee museum like this in Jakarta too.

It had been more than a week and the training was already finished. The highlight of my learning from Keystone, India is that everything starts from nothing and problems may lay ahead, but if we can endure and solve the obstacles, everything will fine.

• Dian Niaga Jakarta
 Jl Raya Pos Pengumben No 34 Jakarta 11630
 Telephone: +62 21 585 1929
 Fax: +62 21 585 0624
 Email: dianjkt@dnet.net.id
 Website: www.maduhutan.com



Putting theory into practice: the author removing pollen from the honey surface with paper



ALL PHOTOS FOR THIS ARTICLE BY WIDHI