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Dear Friends of Tarayana,

We are excited to share with you the diverse range of activities that took place at our sites during the month of March. From bamboo craft training to bamboo exposure training in India, we had an eventful month full of enriching experiences.

We facilitated a Bamboo Craft Training programme to empower artisans with bamboo weaving, carving, and furniture-making skills. Our bamboo master artisans trained participants in creating beautiful and functional bamboo crafts. Additionally, we organized a Bamboo Exposure Training trip to India, where artisans gained exposure to different styles of bamboo craftsmanship, sustainable operation of community facility centers (CFC), and interacted with experienced Indian artisans. The trip included visits to bamboo craft villages, bamboo nurseries, bamboo CFCs, interactions with local artisans, and learning the trends in the bamboo industry. Artisans expressed excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to learn and be inspired. The organization is committed to promoting bamboo artistry and empowering artisans through skill-building initiatives.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of our monthly newsletter.

## News in Brief

- **Consultation meetings for the project “Promoting Agroforestry as Climate Change Adaptation” were undertaken in the target communities in Dagana district.**
- **Exposure visit for seven bamboo artisans from Mongar and Zhemgang & Experience and Knowledge sharing for four CFC personnel to Latur and Dumka, India, under the SDF-funded project “Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprises Development among SAARC Countries.” Foundation for MSME Clusters, India, facilitated the visit.**
- **The installation of electric fencing at Yagyur and Khengzor village under Khar block in Pema Gatshel through the SGP-funded project “Developing Climate Resilient Communities through Appropriate Adaptation and Mitigation” was completed within two weeks in March.**
- **The Foundation’s Field Officer Passang Tobgay, and two master artisans, Mr. Minjur and Mr. Sangay from Zhemgang facilitated a 14-day training organized by Langthel Block Administration in Trongsa.**
- **A team from the Head Office led by the Director of Programme conducted a monitoring visit to Mongar and Zhemgang for the SDF project “Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprise Development among SAARC Countries.**



## **Monitoring Visit to Mongar and Zhemgang for the SDF project “Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprise Development among SAARC Countries”**

**27th March - 3rd April, 2023**

The monitoring team during the visit verified that the construction of a four-bedroom hostel in Kalapang CFC, located in Saling block, Mongar, has been completed. However, some final touches, such as interior wall painting, plumbing, and electrification, are pending. Additionally, efforts are needed for debris clearance and beautification of the premises, including the construction of footpaths, plantation of flowers, creation of parking areas, and bamboo plantation to stabilize slopes near the parking area. The team also procured the kitchen and other necessary items for the CFC.

Dasho Dzongrab of Mongar district visited the CFC and acknowledged the positive initiative taken by the Foundation in establishing the CFC, which would greatly benefit the local economy through capacity building, employment creation, and income generation. He emphasized the importance of promoting bamboo and utilizing locally available bamboo and cane resources. Dasho also highlighted bamboo's potential and future scope in the country and the need for capacity building among the younger generation. He committed to coordinating and collaborating with the Foundation for any bamboo and cane-related activities in the district.

the CFC facilities and interviewed Field Officers and Machine Operators on the services, facilities, and training programmes provided by the CFC.

The team also visited Bjoka CFC in Zhemgang, where they installed a 3-phase transformer and a meter box for machine operation, checked the conditions and operational status of the machines, and discussed with the Forest Ranger about bamboo nursery development.

During a visit to Kagtong and Mewangang, the team interacted with the bamboo artisans to discuss the benefits of the project activities, the gaps and challenges that needs further addressing, and the way forward.



### **The installation of electric fencing at Yagyur and Khengzor village under Khar block in Pema Gatshel**

Human-wildlife conflicts have been a persistent challenge faced by farmers across the country, and the Yagyur and Khengzor villages in Pema Gatshel are no exception. These villages, located in dense forest areas, have been grappling with crop losses due to wild animals, despite using traditional methods like making noises and patrolling their fields day and night. However,

The Foundation installed electric fencing in Yagyur (18hhs) and Khengzor (56hhs) villages to address this issue, covering four and six kilometers, respectively. The farmers were also provided with training on the operation and maintenance of the fence.

The electric fence has proven to be a boon for the villagers as they no longer need to spend sleepless nights guarding their crops and can now enjoy the benefits of increased yields. One significant improvement in the electric fencing initiative was using concrete poles instead of wooden poles prone to deteriorate within a few years. The concrete poles were sourced from Lhuntse and were manufactured by a youth group formed with support from the Foundation.

The successful implementation of the electric fencing initiative in Yagyur and Khengzor villages is a testament to the effectiveness of modern technologies in mitigating human-wildlife conflicts and supporting farmers in safeguarding their crops. This initiative has not only helped reduce crop losses but has also improved the villagers' livelihoods, providing them with a more sustainable and secure farming environment. This initiative is a part of the GEF Small Grant Programme, UNDP.



### **Enhancing Traditional Tsharzo Techniques for Handicrafts, Lifestyle Products, and Furniture Making: Lessons from the Training Program**

Tarayana facilitated the fourteen days training program held in Jangbi village organized by the Langthel Block Administration in Trongsa. The Foundation's

Mongar for Furniture making, were the trainers. The training focused on enhancing Tsharzo techniques in handicrafts, lifestyle products, and furniture making.

During the training, participants were taught various aspects of bamboo, including nursery raising, management, post-harvesting practices, post-harvest management, sorting, grading, and the different parts of bamboo and their uses and treatment techniques. In addition, to product diversification and innovation, the participants were also provided with financial literacy training, the importance of saving, investment, and record-keeping of income and expenditures, which are essential for managing finances effectively.

Mr. Chenchu, 36, a carpenter by profession who is originally from Rukha in Wangdue and is now settled in Jangbi, was one of the participants in the training. He shares, “As someone previously exclusively involved in woodworking, delving into bamboo craft has expanded my horizons and enriched my craft in ways I never imagined. Learning to work with bamboo has been an eye-opening experience, pushing me to learn new techniques, experiment with different designs, and broaden my creativity. It has been a humbling and rewarding journey, and I am grateful for the opportunities that bamboo craft training has brought into my life”. He further added that the trainer, Passang Tobgay is an effective resource person, and he anticipates receiving such training in the future.

The training provided an excellent opportunity for all participants to learn and engage in these valuable skills and knowledge related to bamboo handicrafts, lifestyle products, and furniture making.



The Field Officer from the Foundation conducted a Consultation Meeting for the project "Promoting Agroforestry for Climate Change Adaptation" with community members from Akochen, Gibsa, Thomgang, Paksay, and Poktog villages under Khebisa block, as well as Mangmethang and Nimtola under Dorona block, in Dagana district.

The consultation meeting involved community stakeholders, including youths, men, women, local government leaders, and extension officers, and was conducted from March 13th to 17th, 2023. Prior to the community consultation, the Field Officer had discussions with Dasho Dzungda, Dzungkhag Sector heads, and relevant officials to gather their insights and wisdom for project planning and implementation.

During the consultation, various issues, such as land management, innovative agriculture technologies, climate change adaptation, seed banking, and food processing needs in the community were brought up for discussion. Resource mapping, seasonal calendar, and field assessments were also carried out. The challenges faced by the community included rugged terrain for cultivation, the need for land management intervention, the introduction of feasible agriculture technologies, human-wildlife conflict, transportation, market facilitation for products, and scarcity of irrigation water.

Based on the challenges identified and needs prioritized, the community members requested support to mitigate the impacts of climate change. 277 households from Khebisa block and 129 households from Dorona block are expected to benefit from the project initiatives directly.

The consultation meeting was crucial to promoting agroforestry as a climate change adaptation strategy in the selected sites. It provided a platform for community members to voice their opinions, share their knowledge, and actively participate in decision-making processes, reinforcing the Foundation's goal of fostering resilience and sustainable livelihoods through community engagement and agroforestry practices.

The project is funded by Stiftung Drittes Millennium aka the Third Millennium Foundation, and is implemented in partnership with Eco-Himal Austria and Eco-Himal Nepal.

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### **Exposure, Experience, and Knowledge Sharing Visit for Bamboo Artisans from Mongar and Zhemgang**

An exposure visit for seven bamboo artisans (2f,5m) from Mongar and Zhemgang and four Community Facility Centre personnel was completed as part of the SDF (South Asian Development Fund) funded project "Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprises Development among SAARC Countries." The visit, facilitated by Foundation for MSME Clusters, took place in Latur and Dumka, India, from 1st to 7th March 2023.

The main objective of the visit was to build the capacity of the bamboo artisans and CFC staff by exposing them to the latest advancements and technologies in the bamboo sector, as well as to understand the sustainable operation and management of bamboo CFCs.

During the visit, the group had the opportunity to learn about new product designs, product development and diversification, value addition, bamboo handicrafts and furniture, bamboo machinery and process technology, bamboo cluster and nurseries, tissue culture, and other aspects related to the bamboo sector.

One of the highlights of the visit was the exposure to new marketable bamboo furniture designs and product development, especially basketry items, during the visit to Lodga. Mr. Sanjeev Karpe, the head of the center, presented how [Konkan Bamboo and Cane Development Centre](#) was started and its advancements since then.

At Dumka CFC, the artisans interacted with women artisans who come to the



Income Market Systems) functions and the training they provide to interested individuals. The visit also offered insights into research activities related to bamboo, bamboo processing, composites, and preservation. The CFC Manager, Mr. Umesh, took the team around the CFC premises and demonstrated the usage of different machines, allowing the artisans to use them with the help of machine operators.

The team also visited the institute's newly set bamboo nursery, where they were taught stem-cutting propagation. Additionally, the artisans participated in a short training on bamboo mat weaving with patterns, where master artisans gave practical demonstrations of their weaving culture.

Overall, the exposure visit and knowledge sharing provided the bamboo artisans and CFC personnel with valuable insights into the latest advancements and technologies in the bamboo sector, as well as successful business models and value chain development in bamboo enterprises. It also provided learning and skill development opportunities in bamboo furniture, basketry, and machine operations and allowed for cultural exchange and sharing of experiences with other artisans.



Dorji Wangchuk, a 22-year-old who dropped out of class 10, was among the seven participants who went on an exposure and a knowledge-sharing visit to India. Hailing from Kheng Nagor in Mongar district, Dorji shared his experience of the trip, saying, "It was my first time to visit India and to travel in flight," with a smile. "Learning about how bamboo is used by the people there was an eye-opening, as it exposed me to new possibilities. I am grateful to the Tarayana Foundation for giving me this opportunity," he added.

During the trip, Dorji was impressed by how bamboo was utilised efficiently, ensuring the use of every part with zero wastage. He was surprised to see bamboo being carved into office decorations and teapot sets, which he had not known was possible before. He said, "Previously, I used to work with wood carpentry, but it had many challenges. Trees take years to grow, and there is a lot of competition in the wood carpentry market. However, with bamboo, there is less competition currently, and bamboo only takes two to three years to grow, so I decided to shift my focus to bamboo carpentry."

Until now, Dorji has been making furniture from bamboo, but after the knowledge and experiences gained from the trip, he plans to expand his product range to include home decor items and kitchen utensils such as spoons, cups, and water bottles made from bamboo. He learned carpentry from his mother while he was in the 8th grade, and his entrepreneurial training further fueled his aspirations.

Dorji is determined to share the knowledge and skills he acquired from the trip with his friends in the community so that they can all grow together. He said, "I am not going to keep the knowledge to myself. Instead, I will share it with my friends back in the community and let them know what I learned from the trip. Together, we can all benefit and prosper."



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