

## **Project Update: August 2010**

The activities and their progress are mentioned below:

### **Community mobiliser appointment**

An experienced community mobiliser (Mr.Parshu Bhattarai) has been appointed for the communities' mobilization. He has been working in the field.

### **Household survey**

To identify the economic status, understanding level for nature conservation, natural resources, etc., a household survey was conducted among two residential areas (Ranku and Aahale) of Chiuridanda VDC. From the survey, it shows that most of the people are living below the poverty line. They depend on forest for their two time meal. They do not have awareness and skill to protect and promote the forests.

### **Forest users groups converted into briquette production groups.**

The two forest users groups (Ranku Community Forest Users Group and Aahale Community Forest Users Group) were converted into Ranku Forest Conservation & Community Briquette Production Group and Aahale Forest Conservation & Community Briquette Production Group respectively. Each group consists of 25 members of poor farmers selected on the basis of household survey. The farmers are more aware in the importance of community forestry. They feel that they can earn more income through the community forestry. It is conducted community forestry management training that empowers the people and develops skill to manage the community forestry. After the training they identify the species found in the forest.

### **Saving and credit for the production groups and revolving fund establishment**

A 2-day training course on the saving and credit system was conducted for each group. All 25 members of the group participated in the training. A revolving fund of NPR 20,000 for each group has also been established. The groups have also decided to collect NRs.50 from all members individually per month as their saving amount. The saving amount has been collected regularly at the date of monthly meeting. The community mobiliser has been facilitating the meeting as well as the saving and credit effectively. The fund will be use for the operation of agricultural cooperatives later.

### **Materials support for saving and credit**

Registers, files, white-boards, different stationery machines, copies, pens, calculator, etc were supported as saving and credit materials in each groups. It helps to operate the groups in systematic way.

### **Regular briquette production groups' meeting**

A regular meeting of each group has been conducted on a fixed date each month. For the first group, the date is 25th of the month and for the second, the 28th. At the same time, they have collected the saving amount.

### **Forest conservation awareness campaign**

A forest conservation awareness campaign was conducted in June 2010. Under the programme, 7 classes were conducted in different wards of the Chiuridanda VDC. Local people as well as school students were participated in the campaign. Local school teachers were used as resource persons for the programme. Tree plantation was done as a part of the programme. The aim of the programme was to educate the participants and students on the concept of environment, the need and importance of forest conservation. At the same time, World Environment Day was celebrated on 5th June. A rally of community members and school students of Bidhyodaya Higher Secondary School, Chiuridanda took place. Local leaders, teachers, student representatives, representatives from project team and the community mobiliser of the project highlighted on the importance of environmental as well as forest conservation and sustainable livelihoods and development.

### **Orientation training for forest conservation to briquette production groups**

A 3-days orientation training course on forest conservation was conducted with each briquette production group. The orientation was conducted by Kumar Luitel (Team Leader) and Anjesh Shrestha (Team Member). From the training, the participant farmers were educated about the importance of bio-briquettes in local areas. They knew that increasing demand for fuel wood in rural areas of Nepal like Chiuridanda VDC poses a serious threat to nature. The loss of biodiversity, soil fertility and degradation of watersheds are some of the visible impacts of the deforestation. In order to tackle these problems, identification and promotion of alternative low cost and sustainable energy sources is the basic need of the community, especially in rural areas. The bio-briquette is one of such alternative energies. It does not only prevent deforestation but also provides an ample income generation opportunity for the rural communities. A refresher training course on biodiversity as well as forest conservation and income generation was conducted on 2nd September 2010.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The programme was monitored and evaluated twice. Monitoring will be done among the groups on a regular basis with the involvement of the local stakeholders. A joint monitoring and evaluation mechanism was also applied to the project. A representative of District Forest Office, VDC Chairman, local leaders and project team members were involved in the joint monitoring.

### **Workshop with local level stakeholders for forest conservation**

A 2-day workshop on forest conservation and livelihood was held. About 65 participants attended. Target farmers, political leaders, teachers, local conservationists and members of forest users group were involved in the workshop. Participants understood the detail action plan of the programme of RSG during the project period. It was very effective to encourage the local people to be involved for the biodiversity as well as forest conservation efforts.

