

Project Update: November 2010

In the last months we have organised several awareness programmes amongst the people living in the vicinity of our study area, Lawachara National Park. Our focus was mainly on the ethnic *Garo* community since from our study it revealed that they hold the richest ethno-botanical knowledge and highest dependency on the nearby forest. We involved local traditional healer Mr. Sreenath Sangma, representatives from local educational institutes and non-governmental organisations in our awareness programmes to raise awareness of the usefulness of medicinal plants, their status and necessity of conservation both *in situ* and *ex situ*. Schoolchildren from local ethnic communities were integrated in the programme aiming to enrich their ethno-medicinal and conservation knowledge.

Each programme also consist a 3-hour workshop headed by Mr. Sangma to train school going students uses of medicinal plants to cure some primary ailments. Additionally, seedlings of locally available and useful medicinal plants were distributed amongst the students, and local educational institutes. Mr. Sangma was also supported to raise a medicinal plant garden in his yard to conserve and secure a source of decreasing medicinal plant species outside their natural habitat.

We are now working on compiling all the primary information we have collected, with taxonomical identification, and working for a guideline for sustainable use and conservation of medicinal plants based on inputs gathered from the community meetings, during awareness programmes, discussion with local healers, and representative from responsible organisations.

