



Mangroves for the Future (MFF) E-Newsletter

Issue No: 8

February-March, 2009

Welcome to the eight issue of the MFF e-Newsletter!

This e-Newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs), partner organisations and other stakeholder groups up to date on MFF activities and other marine and coastal news. We warmly welcome your contribution! This issue focuses on project activities in Thailand.

News/Announcements



The MFF e-Newsletter reaches 1000!

The first MFF e-newsletter was sent to 61 people comprising of the immediate MFF family, the Regional Steering Committee members in January, 2008. Ever since, the bi-monthly e-newsletter has grown exponentially and this issue has reached more than 1000 subscribers, ranging from MFF partners and grantees to academics and community organisers.

MFF Opens a Secretariat office in Jakarta, Indonesia

An MFF Office was opened in Jakarta in February 2009 to provide secretariat support to NCB Indonesia and its partners to ensure the smooth running of the implementation of MFF activities in Indonesia.

Newcomers!

MFF is pleased to announce that Sri Lanka has appointed **Ms. Padmini Batuwitage**, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources as the new NCB Chair for Sri Lanka. She can be reached at: padmini@menr.lk. Thailand appointed **Mr Samran Rakchart**, Director General of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) as the MFF Thailand NCB chair. He can be reached at: samran@dmcr.go.th. All other contacts are available at: <http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/contact.html>.



Au revoir to Tom and Annika!

Tom Christiansen and Annika Pohl Harrisson both joined MFF in September, 2008 as MFF interns. They are both post-graduate students at Aarhus University, in Denmark. Annika's anthropological research was an invaluable contribution to the MFF "BMZ project" currently being implemented in Sri Lanka and Thailand. Annika, focused on the **Bang Lam Poo village and The Stateless Thais** working from the IUCN field office in Kuraburi, Thailand. Tom was based in Bangkok looking at organizational communications and working with the MFF Communications team introducing new multi-media approaches for effectively communicating the MFF objectives. We are extremely grateful for their contributions to MFF and we wish them the best in their future careers.



Recent Events

Coastal Conservation Study Tour in Thailand, 22-30 March 2009



13 delegates from diverse disciplines, from the eastern part of Sri Lanka participated in a cross-country study tour in Thailand initiated during the Ranong *Scientific and Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management* in November, 2008.

The idea was to expose the Sri Lankan delegates, who are all leaders in their respective areas, to successful coastal management, as well as lessons learned from badly designed interventions, environmental stewardships, true entrepreneurs, eco-tourism and other sustainable income generating activities for successful replication in the region of Sri Lanka which has been plagued with 15 years of war.



MFF, IUCN Sri Lanka and UNDP organized a 10 day study tour in Thailand to visit Learning centres, participatory mangrove management, and to see first hand the many challenges of tsunami post-reconstruction, as well as to discuss CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) with the Evason group, and look at sustainable tourism activities from award winning communities. The Kampuan Learning Centre in Ranong Province's innovative and comfortable environment set the scene for experimental learning; the centre is available to community members, entrepreneurs, local authorities, educational groups, NGOs and visitors.

Right: Sri Lankan participants admiring the natural re-generation of mangrove trees around the Lee led Village because of improved ecosystem and waste management in the area.



Seagrass monitoring, 26-27 March

Another activity under the "BMZ" project in Thailand was seagrass monitoring carried out with Phuket Marine Biological Centre (PMBC) and a CBO. 35 Community members were trained in seagrass monitoring in the largest seagrass area in the North Andaman sea coast. The aim of was to integrate local/traditional and scientific knowledge and to set up a long-term-monitoring plan with a local CBO to monitor their natural resources.

GPS mapping in Wat Suang Wang

Petchrung Sukpong (Aye) is working with the local communities and youth groups from the IUCN Thailand field office in Kuraburi. 20 people from the youth group and community members are engaged in GPS mapping (right).



Linking Communities from Reef to Ridge and from South to North for action learning, 15-21 March, 2009 Thailand



As part of the MFF "BMZ project's" capacity building component, 54 Community members, field officers, local authorities, DMCR representative, and marine police representative from southern Thailand, joined a study tour to Northern Thailand. The coastal study group looked at watershed management and integrated agriculture practices in the North; experience of establishing community group foundations and how to manage community funds, soil and water conservation and eco-tourism. Participants spend a day discussing what they had learned and what could be applied in their respective communities.



“Strengthening Marine and Coastal Resource Network for Island Sustainable Tourism in the Central Gulf of Thailand” workshop, 19-20 February, 2009

The workshop, organised by the Department of Coastal and Marine Resources (DMCR), IUCN, Green Fins Association, SEASTART and Chumporn Cabana resort brought together over 1000 participants from Government agencies, private sector, educational institutions and local community groups mainly from Koh Pha-Ngan, Koh Samui, and Koh Tao. The workshop focused on the impacts of tourism on the watershed and coral reefs, as well as climate change adaptation. The workshop looked at best practices for integrated coastal management, community strengthening, and corporate environmental and social responsibility (CESR) in order to develop a low-impact development plan.



Whale Shark, Koh Tao Island © Mike, Plunge Koh Tao

Koh Tao Island, Ready to be a green model!

Marine experts at the workshop said Koh Tao has the biggest potential to become a “Green Model” for neighbouring islands in the Gulf of Thailand due to its environmentally aware communities and strong sustainability advocates within the communities.

Workshop on Incorporating Environmental Safeguards into Disaster Risk Management 16-19, March 2009, Sri Lanka



The IUCN Ecosystem & Livelihood Group based in Sri Lanka organised a training workshop that brought 21 participants from four MFF focal countries, namely Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and one MFF dialogue country, Pakistan. Participants learned how to assess community vulnerability using integrated tools for disaster management planning and pro-poor environmental linkages, and applied the concepts discussed at the workshop for a real life situation by preparing a pre and post disaster risk management plan for an identified village.

PROJECTS

More MFF Projects approved!

The first round of MFF SGF (Small Grant Facility) approved 59 small projects; 37 in Sri Lanka, 10 in India, 8 in Thailand, and 4 in the Seychelles. The first MFF large project has also been contracted has been signed. The Thailand Wetlands International Office will begin implementing the large project; **Reversing Environmental Damage through Community Focused Sustainable Livelihoods in Ban Don Bay, Surat Thani province, Thailand.**



20 years ago shrimp farming boomed in Surat Thani Province in Thailand, but often without sufficient waste water management. The 34km² mangrove area was reduced to 19km², and fish were reduced from 32 to 12 species. Destructive fishing methods such as the use of chemicals, dynamite and electric fishing further degraded the area. 4 000 people live in the area and 20% of the population engage in traditional fishing as a main source of income. Khun **Prasert Chanjukron**, from the Lee led Village and recipient of many distinguished awards brought 40 people together to discuss how they could improve the natural environment.

MFF Sri Lankan Study tour participants listens to the Chief of District, Prasert Chanjukro, March, 2009.



Seven years later, Mr. Chanjukron, the Chief of the District has built a network of eight villages working together for sustainable resource and tourism management. The hard work to restore and protect the natural environment, and improve the water quality, has paid off; the area now has 2 700 Rai (450Ha) of naturally generated mangrove forest through improved ecosystem management.

The area of naturally regenerated mangroves would have cost 11 million Thai baht to plant. A 13 km area is

patrolled by a voluntary group. The area has 30 species of birds of which 90% are water birds (*Nok nam*). It is forbidden for fishers to fish within 1.5 km from land, and the patrolling team patrol at night and has the authority to arrest violators. Fishers from other communities are allowed access, as long as they follow the local rules.

Along side conservation activities, the communities engage in ecotourism activities, such as home stays and mangrove study tours. The community won the Home Stay Standards Award from the Office of Tourism Development and Ministry of Tourism and Sports. It also provides guide training. Ecotourism activities has increased annual household income by THB 100 000.



Community representatives said that *"the water is still not 100% clean, because rubbish is still coming from neighbouring villages"*. A recently approved MFF SGF project will be used to raise awareness and for mangrove rehabilitation. The small project will be implemented in Baan Don Bay, with a protection zone for fish and to promote natural mangrove regeneration.



NCB Maldives makes rapid progress

An interim NCB meeting was held in Male 9 February, chaired by Mr Mohamed Zuhair, Director General Ministry of Housing, Transport and Environment. Several other ministries and departments of the new Government of Maldives also participated (Fisheries, Tourism, Planning), together with NGO, UNDP and project representatives.

Implications of the Change of Government in Maldives

Following the change of Government in Maldives in November 2008, the draft National Strategy and Action Plan (NSAP) was also revised and developed during February-March to reflect recent national policy shifts. For example, the new government is reviewing options regarding the Safe Islands policy, and its policies regarding agricultural expansion and the leasing of islands for tourism development. Government decentralization and the need to prioritise certain islands for multi-sectoral development are also key issues. IUCN Sri Lanka, together with two consultants from Sri Lanka (Dr Samarakoon) and Maldives (Ms Lubna Moosa), have been assisting the NCB to revise the NSAP.

Thailand puts out a second call for large project proposals!

The deadline for submission is 30 April 2009 in order to give enough time for NCB to appraise the proposal before submitting them to MFF Secretariat for final approval.

The 6th Thai NCB meeting, 19 February, 2009

This was the first official meeting for the Thai NCB members with the new NCB chair, Mr Samran Rakchart, DMCR. The NCB approved 8 small grant proposals for funding. The NCB gave mandate to UNDP Thailand office to manage the SGF project portfolio.

MFF Large Project Proposal Workshop. 4-5 March 2009, Thailand

The Workshop was organized by NCB's secretariat and facilitated by Tim Greenhow, MFF consultant. The aim of the workshop was to gather potential project proponents and to inform them about MFF Large Project Proposal guidelines and criteria, as well as to build capacity on how to write a successful proposal. The workshop was well received by the participants. The next workshop will be 27 April 2009.



Large Project Proposal Refinement Workshop, New Delhi, India, 19-20, March, 2009

MFF India Initiative has made significant progress on the MFF Large Project Grants. NCB India has already shortlisted four large project proposals covering 3 of the 4 priority states. To further fine-tune these, the large project proposal refinement workshop was organised with the aid of MFF Secretariat at the IUCN India Country Office for the project proponents and NCB members. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Don Macintosh, MFF Coordinator and Mr. Tim Greenhow, MFF Consultant from Sweden. The aim of the workshop was to enlightening the NCB India members on the project appraisal process, and related procedures for project, as well as to guide the project proponents on project design. A session on project cycle management by Mr. Greenhow was followed by his individual guidance to each proponent; this assistance was much appreciated by all participants.

Stories from the field

The fight for a healthy coastal environment and community- the case of the Stateless Thais



A woman from Bang Poo Village, © Annika Pohl Harrison

Bang Lam Poo Village is the poorest village within the BMZ project area due to a large Stateless Thai population. They have migrated from the present southernmost part of Myanmar, home to a large Thai diaspora community. During the past 40 years, Thais have migrated back to Thailand but have not been granted citizenship easily because they are not considered truly *Thai*. The lack of access to a Thai Citizenship has numerous implications for the social, physical and economic conditions, as well as the natural resource use and dependence. The Stateless children make up 90% of the students in the local primary school but only 7% of the students are continuing to high school. This is especially significant for the prospective of the next generation. They are not allowed any ownership and they do not qualify for the national health services. These restrictions automatically separate the Bang Lam Poo Stateless villagers from the rest. The Stateless Thais and the Thai Citizens in Bang Lam Poo seem to live together in harmony, but with an evident social divide.

Nypa harvesters

Because of the low educational level, the Stateless Thais mainly work on the extensive rubber and palm oil plantations. The practice of roof thatching from the mangrove palm *Nypa Fruticans* is the most common Income Generating Activity amongst the women. There are two types of nypa producers. One group (the larger, mostly younger or middle-aged couples) rent mangrove land and subsequently are responsible for the maintenance and harvesting of the crop in that area. If they do not have access to a boat, they will visit the area in the low tide. The other group of nypa workers (which mainly consists of elderly women or single/divorced women with children bound to the house) gets the readily harvested and bundled nypa leaves delivered. Men take part in the nypa harvesting. Amongst the nypa thatchers 43% state that they pay rent for a patch of mangrove forest although there is no actual landownership in the adjoining mangrove forest. Local people who have traditionally made use of the forest for generations claim an informal user-right.



© Annika Pohl Harrison



© Annika Pohl Harrison

Natural Resource Use and Dependence and the Environment

To compensate for a low income and supplement diet or other household needs, the vast majority of villagers rely on natural resources collected in their surroundings. Crabs, shrimp and shellfish are collected in the mangrove area to the east of the village. The collection of these, small fish and birds are often done by the children. They go in groups and consider this a fun activity. Forest vegetables for consumption are collected by 83% of the households. A third of the villagers collect materials for housing such as rattan, bamboo or timber and some gather firewood since they do not have a regular kitchen but prepare food on a small open fireplace. Another natural resource the Stateless Thais depend upon is medicinal herbs to treat for example headaches, stomach pains or skin rashes. Although the Stateless Thais in Bang Lam Poo are comparatively poor and face numerous problems due to their lack of citizenship and ownership rights, they feel a responsibility towards their natural environment and understand the concept and necessity of conservation. A process of conservation or responsible natural resource management cannot be at the cost of the already fragile living conditions. On the contrary, enabling this community through income generating activities, providing funds and activities for the schoolchildren and environmental education on a village level might create allies in the fight for a healthy coastal environment and community.

Baan Tap Yang Land Tenure Battle with developers



Baan Tap yang villagers have been fighting for the land they live on for 28 years. The attention given to the area by outsiders after the 2004 tsunami provided the villagers with an opportunity to build a network to strengthen their voices. The Baan Tap Yang community was forced to give up the land they had settled on. The land was then rented for a high price by developers and investors, mainly for tin mining. The fight was led by the community group president (*left*) who spearheaded the group's mobilisation from writing letters to the Prime Minister to getting lawyers, GIS experts, and facilitators onboard. Each community member had to pay 30 baht/month to the community fund to help pay for their fight. Today, they have gained back 170 out of 250 rai of land, but the dispute is still not fully settled.

Maldivian Atolls suffers from Erosion and inadequate waste management

MFF Programme Officer Adam Shareef showed Don and Sergio several atolls and islands to look at some of the environmental issues at first hand during their visit. Coastal erosion, garbage and limited solid waste management facilities, plus poor sanitation and shortages, are common challenges faced by many of the islands.



Right: Coastal erosion and *left* waste water and garbage pollution, Mudavari Island, Raa Atoll, Maldives



Upcoming Events

The next ICRI General Meeting - 20– 24 April 2009, Phuket, Thailand. The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is a partnership among governments, international organizations, and non-government organizations seeking to reverse the degradation of the world's coral reefs and related ecosystems. To find out more, visit: <http://www.icriforum.org/thailandgm.html>

Tsunami +5, New York, 24 April, 2009



2009 marks the fifth anniversary after the Indian Ocean Tsunami. The sheer magnitude of both the devastation and the influx of aid made the post-tsunami recovery one of the most complex coordination and logistical challenges the UN's disaster response system has ever had to face. Innovative solutions were identified to these challenges which deserve to be highlighted and shared and the same is true for the mistakes. The Governments of India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand under the leadership of the government of Indonesia launched an initiative to consolidate the important lessons learned during the past five years. The published report will be launched in New York, followed by country presentations and speeches by Indonesia Permanent Representative, the UN Secretary General, and former US President Bill Clinton who planted the first mangrove tree to launch the MFF initiative on Phuket Island in aspiration that both the tree and MFF would grow into something long-standing.

Regional Workshop on 'Sharing experiences and Lessons Learned in Disaster Risk Management' 27–29 April 2009, Sri Lanka

This workshop will focus on exploring how environmental safeguards can be incorporated into Disaster Risk Reduction frameworks. IUCN's Ecosystem and Livelihoods Group based in Colombo, Sri Lanka has continued to play an important role in the post-tsunami scenario with current efforts concentrating on disaster risk reduction and ecosystem management.

International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC 2009), 20-24 May, Washington D.C.

The Marine Section of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is hosting the first International Marine Conservation Congress aimed at advancing marine conservation by facilitating discussion among scientists, managers and policy-makers.

Sixth WIOMSA Scientific Symposium, St. Denis, La Réunion, 24-29 August 2009.

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), are offering travel grants for paper contributors, please visit <http://www.wiomsa.org> for more information.

The World Ocean Conference, 11-15 May, 2009 in Manado, Sulawesi, Indonesia



Launch of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), at WOC2009

Coral Triangle Initiative Summit will take place 15 May, 2009 when the six Heads of State of the Coral Triangle countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste), and representatives of two partner countries, the USA and Australia, and the NGO consortium will meet. The initiative has five main goals and objectives which will be implemented through the following actions:

- Assessment, monitoring and information management
- Sustainable financing
- Capacity building
- Public / private partnerships
- Enabling laws and policies

Can Climate Change Adaptation be mainstreamed?

A one-day workshop on **Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and Actions**, May 11, 2009 at 09.00-16.30, Manado Convention Centre, Indonesia

A one-day workshop on **Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and Actions**, co-sponsored by MFF has been designed to help address the policy and practical challenges in adaptation to the impacts of ocean and coastal climate change. The workshop provides an opportunity for sharing experiences and utilising participant cases in discussions and exercises. A group exercise will explore in more depth the different starting points for understanding strategies to mainstream adaptation measures into projects, laws and national policy.

The workshop is limited to a maximum of 50 people. Participation is through registration only. **Deadline** for registration is Friday **17 April**, 2009. To register please visit: www.mangrovesforthefuture.org and <http://www.woc2009.org/home.php> for more information about the WOC2009

The East Asian Seas Congress 2009 – Partnerships at Work!

Local Implementation and good practices , 23 -27 November, 2009, Manila, Philippines



Prof. Raphael P.M. Lotilla, Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) visited the MFF Secretariat 10 March, 2009 to discuss the upcoming EAS Congress in November and potential future collaboration between MFF and PEMSEA. Various common interest and ways for PEMSEA and MFF to cooperate were discussed, particularly MFF's involvement in the EAS2009 Congress later this year.

The EAS Congress 2009 will be a venue for reviewing and sharing on-the-ground experiences in integrated management of coastal and marine resources. The EAS Congress 2009 will highlight initiatives and good practices covering key aspects of coastal and marine resource management and how interregional, interagency and multisectoral partnerships are contributing toward the attainment of regional and international environmental targets.

The EAS Congress 2009 will be hosted by the Government of the Philippines through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). It is being organized by PEMSEA and DENR and supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Office for Project Services and Coastal Management Center.

Various partner organizations are being invited to co-convene Congress workshops, seminars and events.

To find out more, please visit: <http://www.pemsea.org/eascongress/eas-congress-2009>

The deadline for call for abstracts has been extended until 30 April, 2009.

Media



[MFF Talks to Survivors in the Irrawady Delta through BBC World Services Radio](#)

Don Macintosh, MFF Coordinator was interviewed about coastal ecosystem restoration on a BBC radio programme aimed at the survivors of the cyclone in Myanmar last year and people trying to help (NGO workers, government, monks, health workers, teachers etc). The programme is aired in Myanmar and goes out on the BBC World Service in Burmese.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/myanmar/features/story/2009/03/090318_health_trust_16.shtml

[MFF Commissions TVE to produce an Earth Report Programme for BBC World!](#)

MFF signed a contract with TVE in February, 2009 to produce an Earth Report Programme for BBC World on Mangroves and Climate Change, focusing on Indonesia and Viet Nam, and how communities in both countries are willing to adapt to climate change, as well as find sustainable solutions to local development and environment issues.



Put your news in the next issue of the MFF E-Newsletter!

Do you have any news or stories that you would like to feature in the next issue of the bi-monthly MFF Newsletter? We invite you to send in your latest news and updates on projects and other activities to:

e-news@mangrovesforthe future.org.

About MFF

Mangroves for the Future (MFF), is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem which builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 tsunami, as well as extensive consultations with over 200 individuals and 160 institutions involved in coastal zone management. It focuses on the countries worst-affected by the tsunami; India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as dialogue countries in the region that face similar issues. MFF uses mangroves as a flagship ecosystem but is inclusive of all coastal ecosystems.

MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries who are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues, to work towards a common goal. Through generating knowledge, empowering institutions and individuals to promote good governance in coastal ecosystem management MFF seeks to achieve demonstrable results in influencing regional cooperation, national programme support, private sector engagement and community action.

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