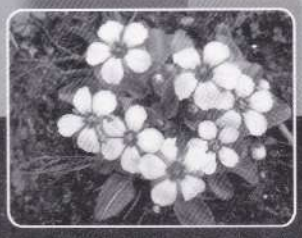
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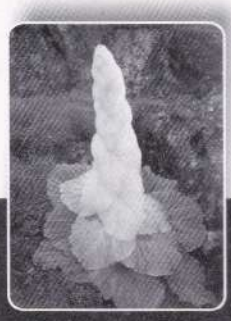
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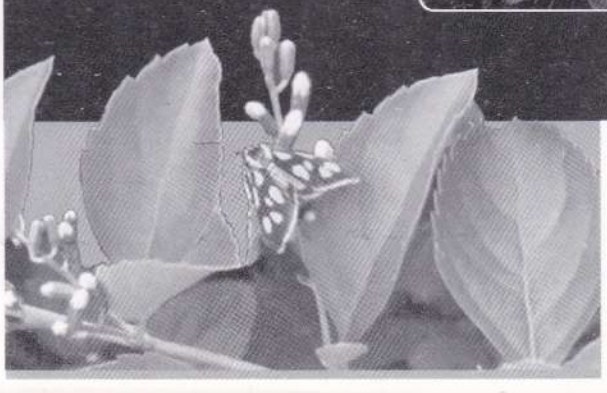
ECOTOURISM & CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SIKKIM

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Phone: +91 3592- 228211, Fax: +91 3592 229183
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Website: www.ecossikkim.org









Conservation precedes ecotourism

Our Mandate



- To develop and promote Sikkim as an Ecotourism destination and to see that it finds its rightful place in the National and International Ecotourism map.



- To ensure that Ecotourism development has positive and sustainable linkages and that it addresses the developmental needs of marginalised mountain communities.



- To build awareness and capacity of the people of Sikkim and to keep them well informed about their natural capital and wealth which is in the form of increasingly depleting biodiversity reserves. To be able to deliver best practices from all around the world so that local people are able to do more to save these scarce resources.



- To promote research in the areas of conservation, environmental impact of developmental projects, Ecotourism and sustainable development. Research would be undertaken with a view to help in the formulation of ecotourism practice policies for implementation at the State and National Levels.



- To work toward finding National and International partners who would work with us to achieve our goals.

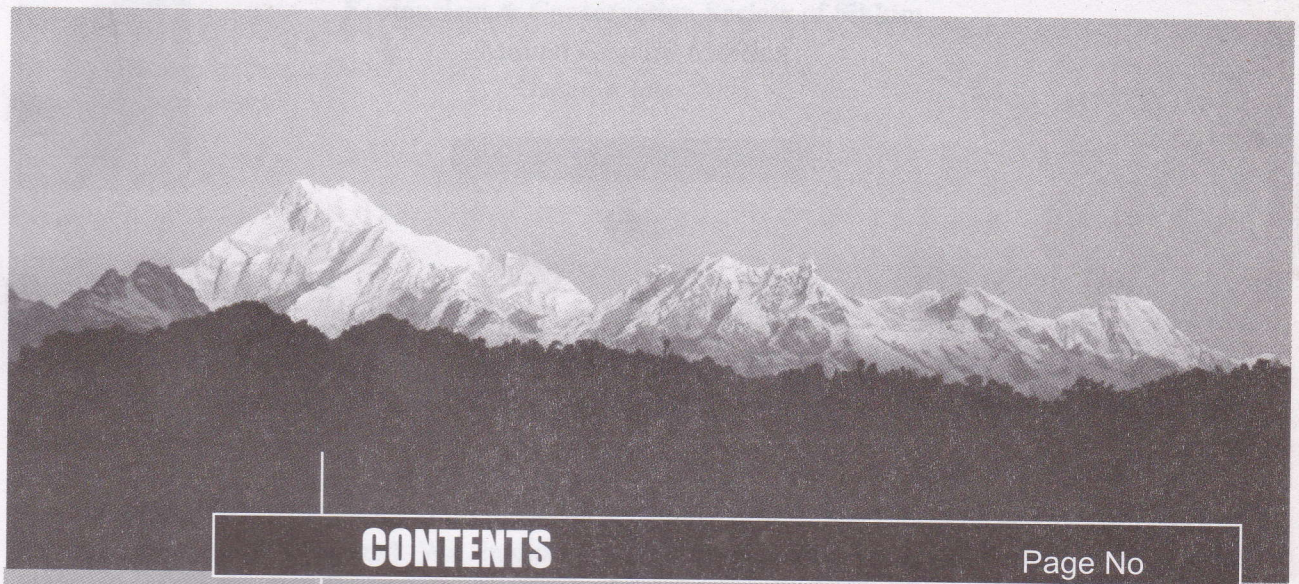


- To work outside Sikkim, mainly in the immediate areas of Darjeeling District, North East of India, Bhutan and Nepal and to share experiences so that the whole region can focus on Ecotourism as a way forward in enhancing the quality of lives of the local people.

OUR MANDATE



For People, For Nature, For Future



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Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim
Annual General Meeting
Gangtok, June 2006

Chairman's Message

Dear Members,

Let me first welcome you all to our sixth Annual General Meeting. The past year, characteristically for ECOSS, has been another busy year putting a closure to some projects and undertaking new ones. All in all it has been a satisfying year.

The Community Small Grants Scheme initiated in September of 2004 that kept us preoccupied for much of last year was finally completed. We should all feel proud that this was acknowledged as one of the highlights of the two year Gangtok Water Supply and Sanitation Project funded by AusAID. Through the CSGS marginalized communities living in the Greater Gangtok Area were able to access environmental sanitation services and thereby improve their living conditions. The project clearly demonstrated that communities are willing to contribute substantially if they are genuinely engaged and empowered in meeting their local needs. The success of this project can also be attributed to the energy and drive displayed by some 25 young boys and girls that ECOSS engaged to work with the communities. With the right mentoring, training and guidance they performed beyond our expectations. I am glad to say that at the close of the project they have acquired skills and confidence that I am sure will stand them in good stead in future. Most of them have been placed in various organizations.

ECOSS also undertook the USAEP and AusAID funded EcoWatch Project working closely with selected schools and the Education Department in introducing environmental education / activities in schools. It was encouraging to see that there are committed young teachers in these schools who are genuinely concerned about the welfare of students and the environment. The need to provide a meaningful platform where these young teachers can stay connected and motivated would be an invaluable contribution. We have also yet to formalize the junior membership plan for students who participated in the EcoWatch Program.

An interesting project that ECOSS undertook was a survey in Sikkim. This was done at the request of C-NES (Center for North East Studies and Policy Research) who was mandated by the North East Council to undertake a survey of the entire North East Region so that the peoples' voices and development aspirations could be factored in the forthcoming NER Vision 2020 Document. Key findings were presented in a seminar.

ECOSS through funding support from various sources continues to engage communities in the far flung reaches of Sikkim in the areas of ecotourism and conservation building capacities, facilitating workshops and providing marketing and promotional support for many of the home stay centers.

These are but some of the activities that ECOSS is engaged in. When we look at where we started from and where we are today six years down the road we have every reason to be satisfied. ECOSS has successfully maintained financial self reliance all these years. As an organization it has achieved credibility and

recognition in Sikkim and in very many places outside of Sikkim. Its services are being sought by national and international agencies. I believe this has been a result of a clear vision on what ECOSS should do, the guiding principles and values which have dictated the way we conduct our business, the support from members and partner organizations that share our vision and see the value in our work and an inspired and dedicated team.

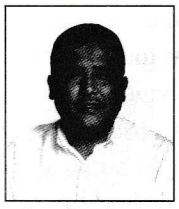
Much, though, still needs to be done. The challenges ahead in terms of bringing about a correct understanding of ecotourism, building local level capacities to successfully undertake ecotourism oriented projects, marketing and promoting these projects and influencing policy decisions at the higher levels are indeed daunting. ECOSS must continue the institutionalizing process to strengthen the organization and continue the engagement process with members, communities, organizations and government that lead towards desired development outcomes.

With these words I commend the audit statement for the financial year 2005-06 and the accompanying report for discussion and adoption.



Loday Chungyalpa
Chairman

Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim
Annual General Meeting
Gangtok, June 2006



Executive Secretary's Report

Dear Members,

It gives me great pleasure to bring before you the 6th Annual Report of our organization for the year 2005-2006. This year was filled with engagements in multiple projects and programs and the ECOSS team grew to meet the challenges of project planning and field implementation. It was a busy and fulfilling year.

The year 2005-2006 represents a major milestone for our organization. ECOSS undertook experimental projects in urban settlements of Gangtok with a focus on urban environmental sanitation issues. As part of this program, we engaged young adults from Sikkim and honed their skills in community mobilization, participatory planning, project implementation, and monitoring. Because the effective functioning of any organization depends on team members who work smartly and conscientiously, ECOSS leadership made a commitment to mentoring and guiding these young adults in their professional development. The benefits of this approach have been astonishing.

Our Executive Board members and Project Advisors demonstrated leadership by steering the programs and developing the capacities of staff members and project communities.

In the year-long urban environmental sanitation program, more than 25 boys and girls were engaged in various capacities and were trained thoroughly in urban sanitation management. In addition to this work, ECOSS also provided opportunities for national and international volunteers to work in our innovative programs. The value of the contributions made by these volunteers is matched only by the rich and rewarding experiences they had in Sikkim.

In the field of ecotourism development, ECOSS has expanded its programs and made significant steps to develop linkages with communities and service providers. The Himalayan Homestay program was strengthened by the inclusion of the villages of Kewzing and Pastanga. ECOSS reaffirmed its commitment to stakeholders at the project sites by developing the capacities of ecotourism providers and creating opportunities for better livelihoods. In addition to the project sites, many communities from pristine remote areas were provided institutional support to organize tourism awareness workshops, seminars, and skill development training programs.

In the year 2005-2006, ECOSS significantly strengthened its ties with field-based NGOs from all districts of Sikkim and worked in partnership to realize the goals of the Vision 2020 document. The survey of more than 98 villages and the participatory exercises have been a great learning experience. These activities have given us a clearer understanding of the existing realities and priorities of development in Sikkim.

It is a noteworthy fact that ECOSS has managed its growth and the intensification of its programs by attracting substantial financial support from a multitude of stakeholders in the region. Significantly, ECOSS has made a humble attempt to begin ensuring financial security for the organization. We will build on these efforts so that changing environments do not hamper the work that we have initiated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the various agencies that have believed in us and have shared our values by supporting our activities. Mention must be made of AusAID, the agency that gave us the opportunity to work in urban communities and understand the approaches and community dynamics that lead to successful project implementation. Support from US-AEP gave us the opportunity to develop closer association with six major schools from Gangtok to address education and environmental issues under the innovative ECOWATCH program. Support from the Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES) enabled us to work in partnership with civil society groups to prepare a vision document for Sikkim. We cannot forget UNESCO Paris, which has continued to support our work with communities interested in developing homestays as an alternative livelihood. Special thanks goes to all the volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to support the activities of ECOSS. By contributing to ECOSS projects, they have helped extend the reach of our organization and they have cultivated lasting memories of Sikkim.

Lastly, we are thankful to the Government of Sikkim, our Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pawan Kumar Chamling without whose patronage and vision it would be possible for organizations like ECOSS to work effectively for the development and welfare of Sikkimese society.

The milestone events described in the subsequent pages of this report clearly demonstrate why 2005-2006 has been such an important year for ECOSS. To enable us to achieve the goals and objectives set before us, we welcome comments and suggestions from members. We are still developing strategies to effectively engage our resourceful ECOSS members in meaningful ways so that our combined initiatives make a lasting imprint on Sikkim's future. I sincerely hope that in the days to come we will be able to build synergies to deliver what we have been talking about for so long.

Before I conclude, I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all our ECOSS members, colleagues and well-wishers...



Renzino Lepcha
Executive Secretary

ECOSS Executive Member Profile



Mr. Loday Chungyalpa (Chairman)

MBA

Background in Management and Planning. Work experience in development of village tourism, rural based micro enterprises and experience in management of educational institutions.



Dr. J. P. Tamang (Vice Chairman)

(Phd.)

Reader at the Department of Botany, Sikkim Government College. Master's and doctorate degree from North Bengal University. Post-doctoral research at the National Food Research Institute, Tsukuba, Japan. Recipient of National Bio-science Award for Career Development 2004 - 2005.



Mr. P.D. Rai (Executive Member)

B. Tech (IIT Kanpur)

PGDM (IIMA) Eisenhower Fellow.

On the CII – as member of the Tourism Committee for North East.

Background in Information & Communications Technology and Management. Has worked extensively in the formulation of Policy Initiatives and implementation of the same.



Mr. R. P. Gurung (Treasurer)

B.Com (Hons) CA Inter.

Background in Accounts/ Management with interest in Food Processing and community centered innovative programs. Presently managing a Sikkim based computer sales and promotion company.



Ms. Sarikah Atreya (Executive Member)

B.A.(Hons)

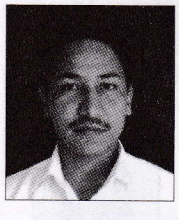
Writer, Journalist and activist on himalayan issues.



Mr. K.N. Bhutia (Executive Member)

B. Tech Mining Engineering(BHU)

Post Graduate Diploma Mining Engineering (Mc Gill University, Montreal Canada) Specialization in Renewal Energy Sources. Recepient of State Award 1990. Instrumental in preparation of Sikkim Tourism Mater Plan.



Mr. S.K. Pradhan (Executive Member)

B.Com

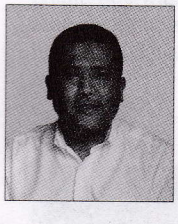
Has experience in travel trade for more then 10 years and is the Managing Director of Siniolchu International (P) Ltd. Founder member of TAAS and Legship Tourism Development Cooperation Society in Legship, West Sikkim.



Mr. Bejoy Gurung (Executive Member)

M. Sc. Forestry

Background in forestry and specialization in medicinal plants and other non-timber forest resources of the Sikkim Himalaya. Keen interests and focus on the Acers (Maples) and Zingibers of Sikkim. Authored a book on medicinal plants of Sikkim.



Mr. Renzino Lepcha (Executive Secretary)

M. Sc. Mphil

Background in environmental sciences and tourism with specialization in training on Community Based Tourism Planning and training.. Presently managing the activities and programs of ECOSS.

ECOSS Secretariat Staff



Mr. Renzino Lepcha *(Executive Secretary)*

A Post Graduate and M.Phil in Environmental Sciences with a wide experience of tourism operations and management in the early nineties. Worked in an international conservation and community development organization and gained wide experience in the field of ecotourism implementation, management and development for 6 years. Resource person and trainer for international and national ecotourism planning training programs in India, Nepal, Central and South East Asian countries.

Presently managing ECOSS programs and activities.



Ms. Bidhya Pradhan (Office *Secretary)*

Worked in an international development organization for 6 years in the capacity of Project Assistant. Experience in office management, maintaining the book of accounts, general office administrative support, coordinating and networking locally among the members and stakeholders of ecotourism in Sikkim.



Mr. Peter Lepcha *(Program Assistant)*

Experience in the tourism industry for 4 years in general office management and field based operations. Presently involved in projects and field based programs of ECOSS. Presently looking after the publication and publicity affairs of ECOSS and providing support for field based activities and programs. Currently coordinating the Ecowatch Project.



Mr. Adrian Pakhrin (*Project Manager)*

Experience of tourism in the private sector and actively involved in sustainable tourism network for the past four years. Managed the Himalayan Homestay program funded under UNESCO and also a facilitator and trainer for ecotourism service providers.



Mr. Mani Kr. Subba *(Office Assistant)*

A responsible and dedicated staff responsible for maintaining office premises, taking care of office equipments and assets, providing all round support for ECOSS programs and activities.

Community Small Grants Scheme Project Staff

Mrs. Smriti Bejoy Gurung, Miss Srijana Chettri and **Mr. Kuldeep Rai** were Project Supervisors engaged for various periods. Their role was to work in close collaboration with the Social Managers in implementing and managing the water and sanitation projects. Reporting and strategizing the activities was an important role the supervisors played with assistance from the Project Coordinator and Advisors.





Miss Christina Rai was engaged in the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) program for thirteen months. Following are her accomplishments.



SWM Project	1
Sanitation Projects	6
Community Drain Project	1
Water Supply Projects	2

Mrs. Dawa Samdup Lepcha completed her full tenure in the SGS program. The following projects are credited to her name.



SWM Project	1
Sanitation Projects	1
Community Drain Project	3
Water Supply Projects	1

Ms. Poonam Gazmer completed her full term of thirteen months with the SGS program. Following are the projects she successfully managed.



SWM Project	1
Sanitation Projects	4
Community Drain Project	1
Water Supply Projects	3

Ms Ranjeeta Tamang was engaged for a period of eight months with the Small Grants Scheme program. She successfully managed and completed the following five projects.



SWM Project	1
Sanitation Project	3
Community Drain	1

Mrs. Pema Lhamu Bhutia had a total of seven projects to her credit. She was also engaged with the project for a full term of thirteen months during which she successfully completed her projects and learnt the basics of community development. .



Sanitation Project	4
Community Drain Project	2
Water Supply Project	2

Ms. Suman Lata Pradhan joined the SGS team at a later stage. She worked for 9 months under the SGS Program. Apart from her routine field engagement, she assisted in the project documentation and supported the NEC survey project. To her credit the following projects are ascribed.



SWM Project	1
Sanitation Project	1
Community Drain Project	3

Mr. Milan Rai joined as a volunteer and later appointed fulltime under the SGS program. In his six months of engagement, he completed the following projects



Sanitation Project	1
Community Drain Project	1
Water Supply Project	2



Mr. Harka Gurung worked under the SGS program and was greatly involved in the community mobilization stage. Projects undertaken by him were handed over to other colleagues and team members as he quit his assignment before the completion of his term.

Mr. Ravi Kiran Pradhan joined ECOSS as a volunteer. He initially volunteered for 6 weeks and then was absorbed into the SGS program. In his five months engagement, he successfully completed the following projects



Sanitation Project	2
Community Drain Project	1
Water Supply Project	1

Mr. Deependra Rai another keen volunteer was later absorbed into the SGS program and completed his five months tenure. The following project were completed by him.



Water Supply Project	1
Drain Project	1

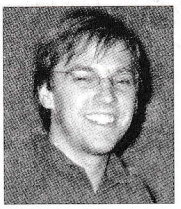


Mr. Simon Paul Rai was actively involved for a short period in the Small Grants Scheme Program during which he successfully completed the Sichey School Water Supply Project.



Mr. Nitya Rai was involved in the Small Grants Scheme Program for a period of three months. He was instrumental in the community mobilization process. He has the Syari Water Supply Project to his credit

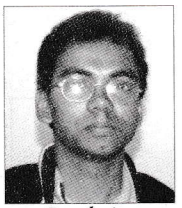
ECOSS Volunteers



Jim Ratcliffe

Jim Ratcliffe, from the United States, volunteered with ECOSS in the ECOWATCH project sponsored by US-AEP and AusAID. With a background in educational publishing and environmental education, Jim was passionately involved with the ECOWATCH project and worked closely with Ms Wendy Pulger.

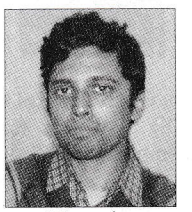
Jim and Wendy worked with ECOSS staff to publish a 300-page teacher-training manual in environmental education called EXPLORE YOUR WORLD. This work has been well received by HRDD and is a welcome resource for teachers in Sikkim. In addition to his work, Jim Ratcliffe is an adventurous person who rode his mountain bike on weekends and explored rural Sikkim practicing his Nepali language skills. As a Ph.D. student in education, he is looking forward to collaborating with the ECOSS team again.



Parthojoy

Parthojoy Bhattacharya and Nirmalya Choudhury

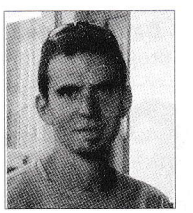
Parthojoy and Nirmalya were placed with ECOSS for an organizational training program. Both were IIFM Bhopal postgraduate final year students who had keen interests to be associated with an ecotourism initiative in North East India.



Nirmalya

During their month long engagement in the project activities of ECOSS, they were exposed to many field and project activities. They specifically took up an assignment related with marketing of the Sikkim Homestay program. Both volunteers conducted visitor surveys and analyzed data for presentation and discussion in the Market Linkage Workshop. A report of their study and outputs is available at ECOSS.

Guido Fioravanti



A statistician by profession, Guido came in contact with ECOSS through the internet. He was interested with the work of ECOSS and wanted to contribute in some meaningful way during his four weeks stay in Sikkim.

Guido worked very consistently in the waste management program of ECOSS and was helpful in analyzing the survey outputs of the Sichey waste management program. He worked with the ECOSS team and built capacity of our young energetic staff in taking up similar assignments in future. Before returning to his hometown in Rome, Guido went for trek in the Khangchendzonga National Park and thoroughly enjoyed the trip. His short two weeks intensive volunteer work with ECOSS was well appreciated.



Robert Enghee

A young Assamese final year student of the Assam Institute of Management, Robert Enghee was associated with ECOSS for a period of two months. Robert was assigned to the UNESCO supported Strengthening Himalayan Homestay Project.

Robert was a hardworking young lad, keen to learn, disciplined and dedicated to his work. The opportunity and exposure that was provided to him has been very helpful for him to think of emulating similar concepts and strategies for ecotourism initiatives in his region of Karbi Anglong. During his association with ECOSS, he assisted in the production of training manuals and promotional materials, conducted training and enjoyed thoroughly his field work. His rich experience has helped him to widen his horizons in ecotourism.

Aparijita Rai



An energetic young girl from Gangtok pursuing her Juridical Science studies from Kolkata requested for a one month attachment on a volunteer program with ECOSS. Aparijita was associated in an environmental program that ECOSS had undertaken in collaboration with the Gangtok Water Supply and Sanitation Project.

She worked with the ECOSS team in surveying the Pani House area and establishing a solid waste management system at the site. Her dedicated hard work and enthusiasm has paid off. Pani House area presently has a model waste management system adopted and managed by the localcommunity. This system has greatly benefitted the locals living in the Pani House area of Gangtok.

Project Activities 2005 - 2006



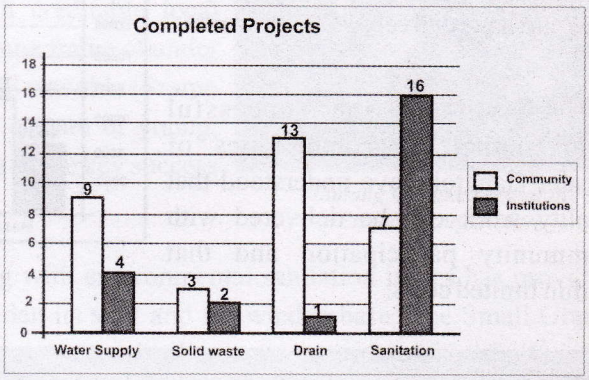
COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS SCHEME PROGRAM

Gangtok
Water Supply and Sanitation Project

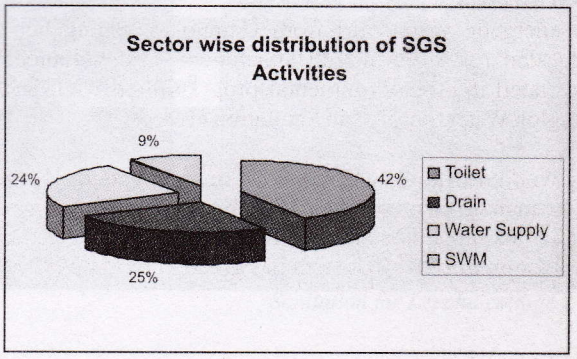
The Gangtok Water and Sanitation Project (GWSSP) funded under the Australian Government's International Development Assistance program to India was a partnership program with the Government of Sikkim. ECOSS was identified as one of the implementing agencies for the Small Grants Scheme program.

The project was basically aimed at bringing improvements in water supply, sanitation and solid waste management services in greater Gangtok. Unlike in Shillong, the Gangtok model was to demonstrate the NGO partnership model.

This scheme provided a rapid funding mechanism and an opportunity for community stakeholder groups to undertake activities to bring about improvement in their environmental sanitation conditions. The entire community engagement process provided an opportunity for the community based organizations to make their own plans, manage their funds, monitor the progress and realize themselves how effective the interventions can come about through their participation and dedication. The entire process generated community ownership and a commitment ensuring the operation and maintenance of the created assets. This innovative project had a cost sharing of 30% from the community while 70% funds was given as grant. For implementation of works the community contracting procedure was adopted so that the communities have the liability and they take a greater interest and onus in the management of the project.



The impact of the Small Grants Scheme by any standards has been remarkable. By the end of the project period a total of 132 Expressions Of Interest (EOI) were received out of which 55 projects were approved by the SGS Committee for implementation, 7 projects were linked with key service providing departments and the remaining 70 application were rendered non viable for various technical reasons. The total cost of the projects including the 30% contribution from communities amounted to Rs 7,733,243 where Rs 2,343,582/- was the contribution collected from

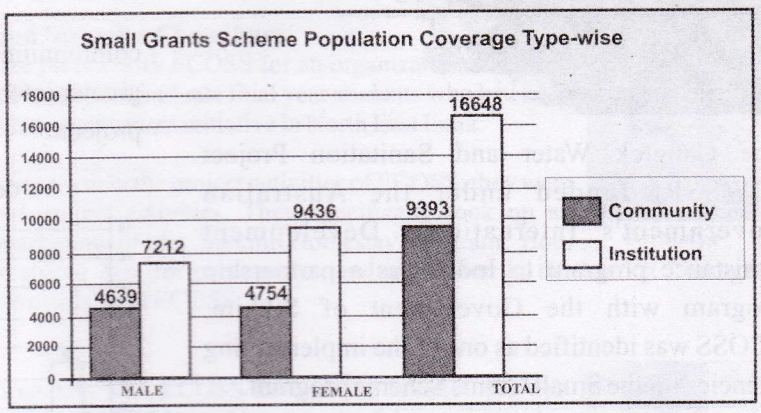


communities. The 55 Small Grants Scheme activities benefitted 26,041 people out of which 54% were females. Almost 60% of the activities were undertaken by communities while the remaining 40% of the activities were undertaken by educational and religious institutions. A good geographic distribution within the Greater Gangtok Area was also achieved.



Project completion signboards

Almost 646 members of the community based organizations involved in the Small Grants Scheme activities have participated actively in various forms and they have been strengthened through exposure, exchanges and training programs to function better. Noteworthy to also mention is that almost 25% of the community contractors were women who were chosen in contentious project sites and have delivered quality works.



As a result of the successful interventions the communities of greater Gangtok have understood that quality work can be delivered with community participation and that within limited costs.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

Community Submits Expression of Interest (EOIs)

↓

Rapid Appraisal of Site

↓

Project Concept placed to Small Grant Committee

↓

Project Concept Approved
Community consultation and planning
Feasibility Studies and Cost estimation: Community and GWSSP engineer estimates
Proposal Development and NOCs

↓

Proposal submitted to GWSSP for final approval

↓

Community Contributions → Contract & Implementation → Contracts between Contractor and Community, Contractor and NGO NGO and Community



Community consultation and planning

The Small Grants Scheme has demonstrated very clearly that communities, even poor ones, are willing to pay for services provided they have a stake in it, their needs are addressed and there are mechanisms in place to ensure transparent and accountable utilization of resources. The capacity of communities to mobilize, with the right facilitation, and take charge of initiatives that impinge on their daily lives in a responsible way was amply demonstrated. The ability to respond quickly to community initiatives with technical support and financial resources was also one of the critical reasons for success.

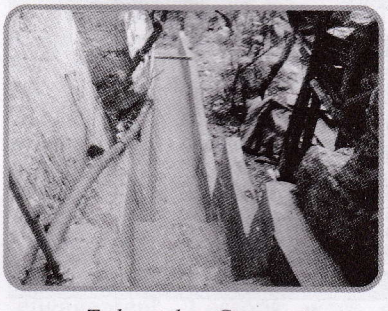
The efficacy of the NGO partnership model was also amply demonstrated. ECOSS's skills in community mobilization using participatory tools as well as being able to liaise effectively between donors, communities and government service providers proved invaluable to the project. The NGO partnership model also demonstrated the wisdom of partnering with creditable local organization with local knowledge. Given the short time frame of under a year from inception of project to completion, ECOSS was able to ramp up the project very quickly and to train and build a team of young, energized and motivated people. This was clearly one of the key success factors.



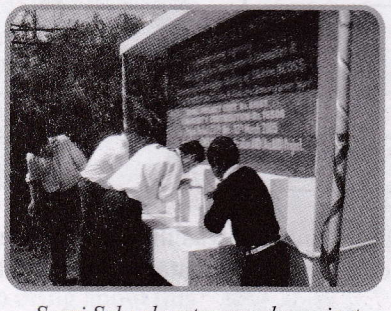
Tamang Gumpa Sanitation Project inauguration

The opportunity to work in an urban setting dealing with environmental sanitation issues has provided ECOSS with great learning opportunities and to widen its skill and knowledge base. The Small Grants Scheme has generated enormous interest in the rural and peri urban communities within the Greater Gangtok Area. Communities and affected citizens finally began to recognise and in fact experience the answers to their water supply and sanitation needs.

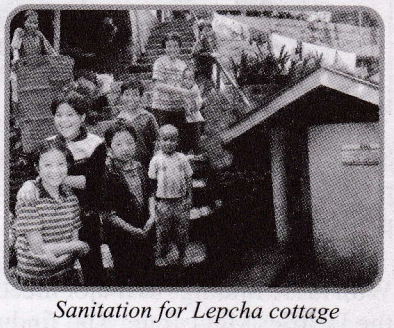
It is hoped that opportunities will be explored to continue the program as the response from communities has been overwhelming. It is felt that the momentum gained should be leveraged for the good of the communities within Greater Gangtok. It will also then be possible to tie up effectively with Government agencies on which the onus of carrying on this task lies.



Tathangchen Community drain project



Syari School water supply project



Sanitation for Lepcha cottage

Sichey Solid Waste Management Project



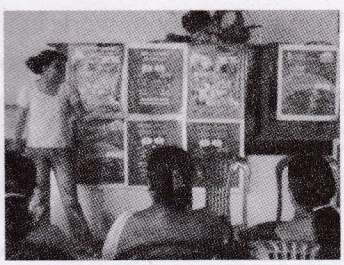
The successful solid waste management models that were undertaken under the community small grants scheme was given approval by GWSSP to be extended in greater Sichey area. ECOSS was selected as the nodal agency to carry out the community mobilization process and prepare the community of Sichey. The area being large and a mix or urban and rural settlements, it was a big challenge to take up this daunting task.

The problem of garbage was pronounced in dense settlements where accessibility of UD & HD vehicle was absent. Communities living beside jhoras were happily dumping waste and this was having detrimental impacts on communities living downstream.

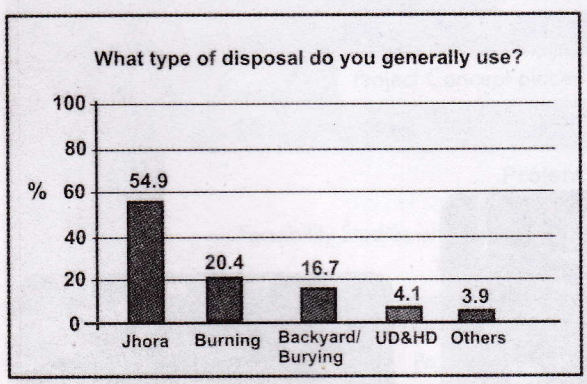
To undertake this task, greater Sichey area was mapped and five zones were identified. Each zone was targeted specifically taking the help of Panchayats and key individuals. Twelve community mobilizers were appointed full time to daily meet the local people, hold community consultations and make them aware about the waste management system that would be introduced in the area. In the process community sanitation committees were also formed and empowered for mobilizing the household people to participate in the event. The UD & HD departmental resources and technical inputs were also received to strengthen the program.

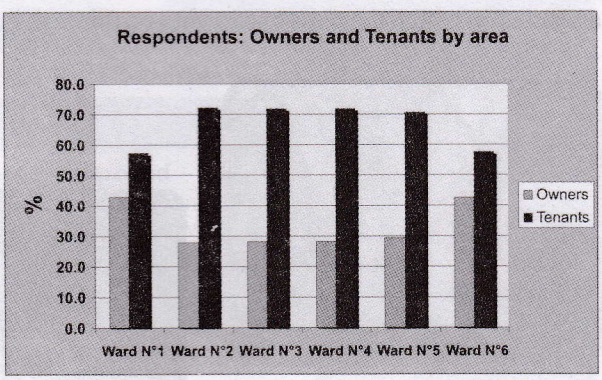
After having extensively met with the stakeholder groups and discussed issues regarding waste management, a detailed survey was carried out to determine the types and amount of waste that was being generated in Sichey and what practices were being followed to dispose the waste. Willing to pay and the amount was also inquired in order to fix the user charge fees. The total people surveyed in the process were as follows

- Number of Respondents: 1306
- Numbers of Males (1037) and Females (254)
- Owners (406) and Tenants (849)
- Household Income: Low (337), Medium (698), High (49)



IEC Program in Sichey





Survey results clearly showed that jhora dumping was highly practiced due to convenience sake. Tenant population was very high in Sichey due to which greater mobilization was required to make the people participate.

With these findings as major meeting with the representatives of these committees was held in the office of the District Magistrate. The findings were shared with the stakeholders and user charges for solid waste service for households, shops and hotels were fixed in the presence of the District Magistrate, area

Panchayats and community representatives.
Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were developed and Sichey area was extensively covered with these information materials printed in English and Nepali languages.

Sichey Waste Management Community Awareness and Mobilization Meetings



Community social mobilization consultation and meetings

Two months of aggressive community engagement and awareness campaign led to the acceptance of the solid waste management system by the community. Golden Circle, the selected local service provider for waste collection was also involved in the community consultation meetings. In close partnership with the UD&HD department the system was explained and services started from the month of November 2005. Garbage collection points and routes were participatorily mapped out with the community and backpackers were employed for waste collection.



Waste collection system in Sichey

The collection system took a month to stabilize, while the user charge fees collection gradually showed an increasing trend over the months. The community had to be educated on the type of garbage that should be disposed on a daily basis and the importance of segregation of waste.

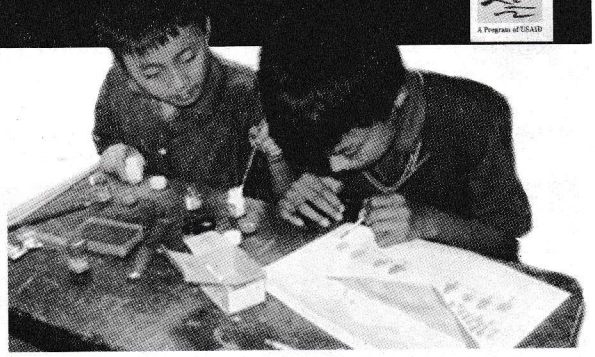
The support received from key institutions and individuals was very encouraging and this made the Sichey Solid Waste Management a big success. The local Panchayats of Sichey were very cooperative in this regard and they also extended their fullest support for the success of this activity. The school children of Sichey were used to spread the information and IEC materials widely while the existing active organizations and religious institutions were involved to mobilize the masses.

The waste management system was well established within a period of three months engagement. Lessons were drawn from the Arithang WATSAN committee success and it would be worthy of mentioning the hard work that was put in by individuals and institutions to bring about this system in Sikkim.



Community participation is important for waste management

Ecowatch Project

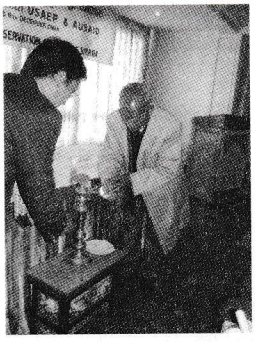


Community based ECOWATCH, an environmental project of United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP) Program and of AusAID was implemented by Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim.

The main objective of the project was to support a community based environmental initiative named "ECO WATCH" in Gangtok. The project had two distinctive components which included the urban and educational component. The urban component was to address environmental issues like air and water pollution, solid waste management and energy conservation, while educational component was taken up to build capacity of teachers and students for environmental education in schools and colleges and to integrate environmental education into their daily lives.

Management Structure:

The management structure for both the Urban and Educational components of the Ecowatch Program was similar. The Education and Urban Components had a Steering Committee at the Apex. The Project Advisor had overall responsibility of managing and coordinating the project supported by a Project Coordinator for the Urban and Education Component respectively.



The ECOWATCH program was launched in Gangtok on 5th December 2004 where the political advisor to the and Government of Sikkim graced the occasion. The program was successfully concluded in the month of November 2005. Many deliverables of the program were released on this day where Mr. S.W. Tenzing, Advisor Government of Sikkim was the chief guest.

Some of the activities undertaken in the the program include the following:

Ecowatch - Education

Six schools from Gangtok were selected for the Ecowatch program which included the following:

Rongnek Junior High School, Modern Secondary School, Paljor Namgyal Girls Sr. Sec. School, Tadong Sr. Sec. School, Lower Syari School and Ranipool Sr. Sec. School.

The school teachers were trained and were introduced to the environmental manual that had been developed under the program.

Students were provided exposure and training on composting, inter school competitions were held and a winter camp organized for forty five students. The best performing schools were rewarded for their performance and participation.

Ecowatch - Urban

Under this urban component the issue of solid waste management was taken up as it had been identified as a priority issue by the stakeholders Series of community consultations were held to sensitize local urban communities and solicit their participation in the program.

Visitor awareness and audio visual materials were produced and also clean up campaigns and were organized in different localities. Two issues of newsletter was also produced which captured the major events and activities of the program.

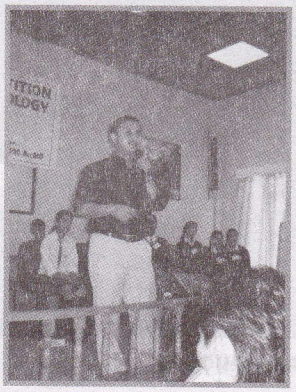
Activities - Education



Teachers Training Program on Environmental education



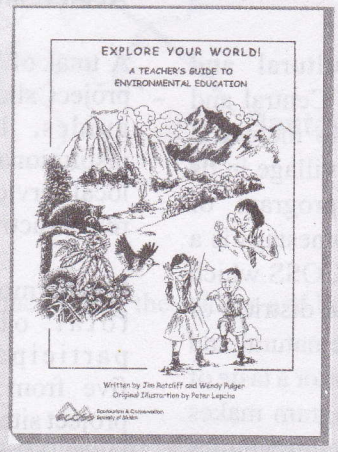
Ecowatch Winter Camps



Inter - School quiz competition



Introduction of Environmental games in schools.



Explore Your World! A Teacher's Guide to Environment Education



Skit play

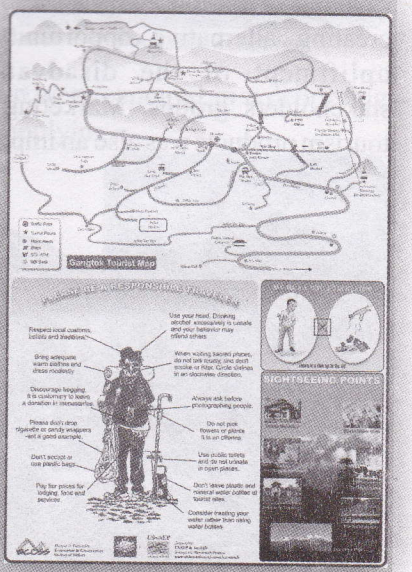
Activities - Urban



Community meeting on Solid Waste Management



Community participation in cleanliness drive



Tourist awareness Poster



Composting training



ECOWATCH concluding program



Strengthening of Sikkim Himalayan Homestays

Introduction

Under the UNESCO funded Cultural and Ecotourism in Mountain Regions of Central and South Asia, ECOSS has been able to include 2 more sites of Pastanga and Kewzing village in its second year of operation. The program of Strengthening Sikkim Himalayan Homestays is a unique and innovative initiative of ECOSS which has taken four villages in the different districts of Sikkim. Each site has its own unique natural and cultural attraction and provides the visitor a taste of rural Sikkimese hospitality. This program makes an attempt to build capacity of local communities and use ecotourism as a means to generate additional incomes and more importantly conserve the rich heritage of the communities.

The homestay program made an attempt to build capacity of ecotourism service providers thereby creating alternative opportunity for economic upliftment of the disadvantaged tourism stakeholders groups. Marketing of the existing tourism products was also an important activity.



Kewzing Homestay

Achievements:

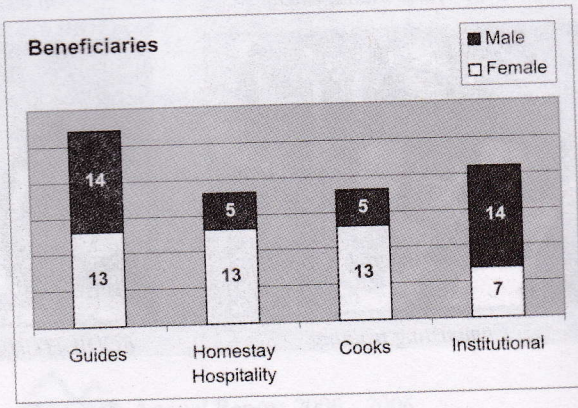
A total of 8 training were conducted at the two project sites of sites Kewzing and Pastanga for guides, homestay operators, cooks and institutional members to build capacities of the local service providers and equip them in tourism related activities.

Furthermore a total of 20 participants, five from each project site were taken across to the different project sites for exposure visits and awareness programs.

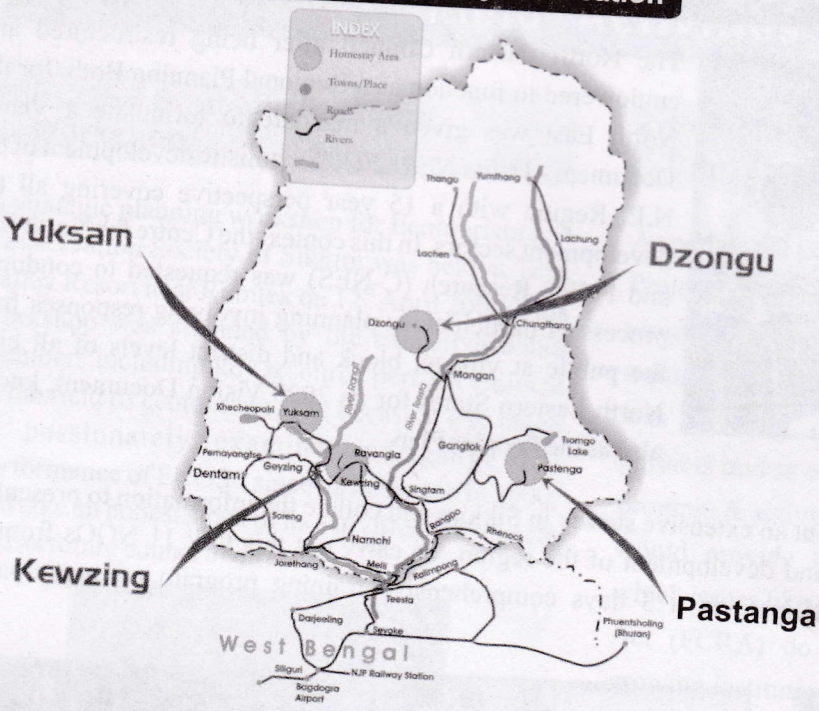


Community planning meet

A total of 84 participants went through various trainings conducted at the 2 project sites, Kewzing and Pastanga. The total no of Male and female beneficiaries trained were: Male 46 and Female 38, i.e. 27 Guides; 18 Homestay Operators; 18 Cooks and 21 Institutional Members.



Sikkim Himalayan Homestay Project Location



Marketing & Promotion

An information brochure containing information of all the project sites was developed and printed for promotion and marketing of the project sites. Furthermore information of the additional sites were developed and uploaded to the Himalayan Homestays website for online information. Maps of the project sites were developed and the Code of Conduct formulated and adopted by village committees. Many of the village services were discussed and efforts were carried out to standardize for visitor's satisfaction. Village committees took active participation in facilitating these ideas and helped local people improve upon their services.

Community Exchange Visits:

A total of 20 participants, 5 from each project site were taken for an exposure visit to the different project sites within Sikkim. Some of these exchange tours were coincided with participants from Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Spiti. These tours provided an opportunity to share their best practices and learn from community experiences.



Community exchange

The visiting delegates to the project site made observations on tourism enterprises, conservation initiatives and the institutional mechanisms that was responsible in bringing the changes within the communities. Lesson were captured in a debriefing session and personal commitments were taken from participants for applying lesson learnt in their own project sites.



Menu planning and cooking



Pastanga homestay



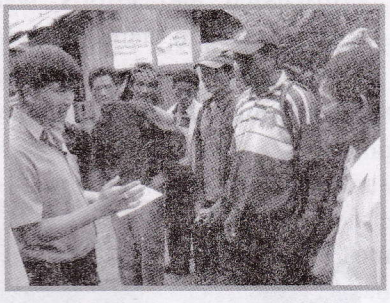
Naturalist guides, Pastanga

NEC Vision 2020: Sikkim



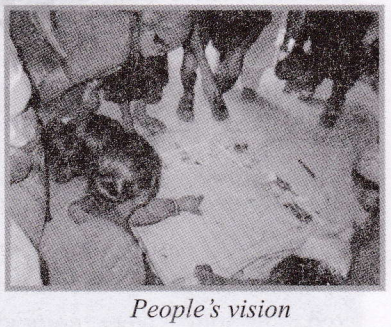
The North Eastern Council after being restructured and empowered to function as a Regional Planning Body for the North East was given a mandate to formulate a Vision Document - *Vision NER: 2020* for holistic development of the N.E. Region with a 15 year perspective covering all the development sectors. In this context the Centre for North East and Policy Research (C-NES) was requested to conduct a process of participatory planning involving responses from the public at village, block and district levels of all eight North Eastern States for its 2020 Vision Document, known also as the Peoples Plan.

ECOSS was selected to carry out an extensive survey in Sikkim and collate the information to present the voice of the people for all round development of the region. To carry out this task 11 NGOs from the districts were invited to participate in a 3 days comprehensive training program on participatory approaches.



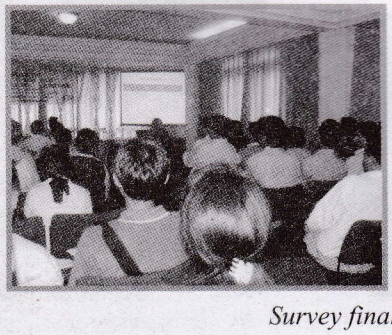


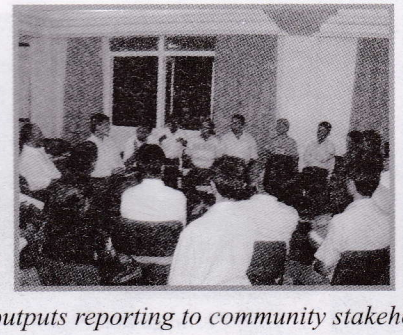
Semi structured intview and data collection



People's vision

The survey was completed in about 40 days including collection, collation, validation and analysis of data. 93 villages were covered including all the urban centers .In the process 6493 individual responses were collected and analyzed. The sample size was adequate and gave a good reflection of the ground realities. Different sectors including education, health, communication, agriculture, governance and development priorities were assessed. A seminar was held to present the key findings to civil society and a report was generated capturing the vision of the people. The entire exercise was enlightening and helpful to understand the realities of the State.





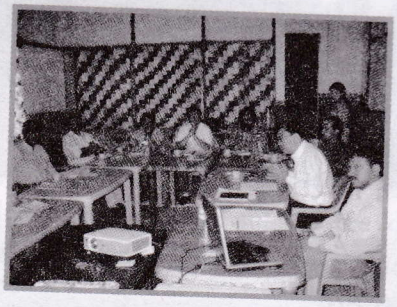


Survey final outputs reporting to community stakeholder groups

Field Activities

1. ECOSS Strategic Planning Workshop

A strategic planning workshop for Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim was held at Teen Talley Resort near Rumtek on 12th April 2005. This workshop was attended by the executive board members including key resource persons eminent in the field of ecotourism. The occasion was taken to passionately examine and gauge the performance of ECOSS since its inception in 2000, and take an honest stock of its activities, its impacts and its future course of direction.



Outcome of the workshop were a set of guidelines and issues that ECOSS needed to focus in the days to come. A SWOT analysis was helpful to identify areas which needed to be strengthened to give a future course of direction to the organization to make its activities and interventions more effective in areas where ECOSS has been working.

Invitation of guest members gave the entire workshop a multidimensional approach to look at issues discussed holistically. 'Absolutely engaging' was the phrase in which majority of the members summed up their experiences of the workshop. It was a an important milestone for ECOSS and each member present had contributed significantly to the whole process.



2. Seminar on FCRA - Foreign Contribution Regulation Act- 1976

As part of the Gangtok Water Supply & Sanitation Project (GWSSP) NGO partner strengthening program, a tour to Delhi for a two day FCRA seminar was organized. The objective of the visit was to build capacity of participating NGO partners and to equip and enable them for future program & activities. Such exposures and training would provide key linkages and networks by which issues like Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) do not become impediments for growing institutions and organizations. ECOSS) and Volunteer Health Association of Sikkim (VHAS) with a GWSSP representatives formed the team to participate in this seminar held on 24th and 25th June 2005 held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

This National level seminar was targeted to demystify FCRA concepts as still many NGOs and Chartered Accountants found FCRA to be a mystery and created many mistakes which was becoming a national threat. The two days seminar had a panel of experts who deliberated and shared their experiences with FCRA and was attended by more that 600 delegates. The seminar mostly analyzed the FCRA Act and its applicability to NGOs and individuals and discussion on specific cases relating to violation of FCRA Act. Issues concerning role of Chartered Accountants, Bankers and Enforcement Agencies in implementation if FCRA Act and board overview of Money Laundering Act and FEMA was also discussed. This training was well thought and timed for institutions like ECOSS to attend and greatly benefit from this exposure.

3. Ladakh and Arunachal Consultative Visit



A study tour for a group from Ladakh and Spiti and another group from Arunachal Pradesh was organized by ECOSS in the month of December 2005. The objective of the study tour was to look at the working ecotourism models in Sikkim and understand the community dynamics in the ecotourism operation.

For the purpose of the study tour participants were made to focus on different issues that would provide better insight into the ecotourism operations that existed in the sites visited. Three key areas of focus included the role of the institutions in ecotourism development, the conservation aspect and lastly the enterprise. Participants made observations during their trip and debriefing was conducted to summarize the lessons learnt.





Apart from this the interesting spots and sites were visited in the destinations and ample opportunity was provided to interact with the local people and institution members. The ecotourism operations at the community level were observed and reflections were conducted each evening. At the end of the study tour all observations were shared among participants and what lessons the participants could apply back in their villages was documented.

The visiting team from Ladakh, Spiti and Arunachal also provided important feedback to the homestay operators of Sikkim and to the CBO members for improving upon the services and work which was being carried out. Cultural exchanges were also part of the program where articipants immersed themselves in the local hospitality and shared the highlights of their own areas. Before departing the participants of the study tour made personnel commitments that were realistic and that would be fulfilled once they returned to their place of work.



4. Ecotourism Awareness Camp-Tinkitam

An ecotourism awareness camp was held Rockland, Sanganath, Tinkitam South Sikkim in collaboration with Kewzing Youth Club on 9th December 2005. The objective of the awareness camp was to highlight the role of ecotourism potential in the area and outline the role of community members for the participation in ecotourism activities.

The meeting was attended by the area Panchayat members, teachers of Rockland ICDS, farmers, students, local entrepreneurs and youth of neighboring villages of Ongchu, Wak and Tinkitam. Almost 90 villagers have gathered for the occasion where Kewzing Youth Club along with the local Panchayat had made the arrangements for the participants attending the awareness camp. This was the first ever tourism mass awareness camp held for the villagers of Tinkitam.

Power point presentation was made to highlight some of the ongoing activities of ECOSS in some of the pilot project sites in Sikkim and also audio visual presentations was made for the villagers. The presentation highlighted the role of village institutions and stakeholders for the development of ecotourism and the importance of building capacity and self reliance for sustainability of the actions. A special question and answer session was facilitated by Kewzing Youth Club wherein the village partners had many queries regarding tourism operations. A short session also identified some of the potential sites and activities around the village and how these could be developed and promoted for benefitting the local people through tourism operations.

The participation of the local people including Panchayats was very impressive. In fact this program has been specially conducted with support from Panchayat funds. Very impressive arrangements had been made for the participants attending the program. The event was successfully concluded with a vote of thanks by the local area Panchayat.

5. UNESCO VII Regional Workshop, New Delhi

The 7th Regional UNESCO Workshop was conducted in New Delhi from 12th to 16th December 2005 at the India International Centre for the participating eight countries from Central and South Asia. A total of eight countries participated representing field staff and managers. The workshop was focused on looking at issues of sustainability in the different ongoing projects and what measures could be taken by different projects to address this issue.

6. National Ecotourism Workshop

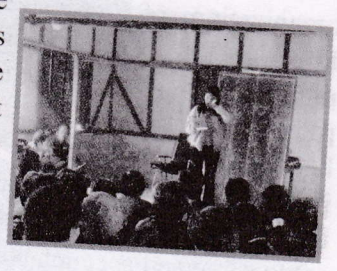
During the last week of January 27th 2006, two ecotourism consultation workshops were organized by ATREE in Gangtok and Kalimpong. The purpose of the workshop was to bring the ecotourism stakeholders from various parts of Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong area and provide a platform to share their rich experiences and lessons learnt. From the proceedings of the workshop, a white paper would be developed for drafting a policy guideline paper for submission to the Ministry of Tourism Government of India. Both these consultations were attended and sessions were moderated by ECOSS members in Gangtok and Kalimpong. It was an appropriate occasion to meet the many different practitioners from the Sikkim and Darjeeling areas and understand the successes and challenges they have had during the implementation of ecotourism in their areas of operation.



7. Ecotourism Awareness Program at Melli Khecheopalri (West Sikkim)

A one day ecotourism awareness program was held on 31st January 2006 at Melli Aching (Khecheopalri), West Sikkim in collaboration with 'Himalayan Environment Tourism, Development Organization (HETDO). The objective of the program was to sensitize the villagers about ecotourism and what measures and steps the community could take to make ecotourism work in their area.

HETDO the community based organization which has a strong community presence has been engaging the community in dialogue and discussion and this event was one of their efforts in collaboration with ECOSS to make the local people learn from the different examples from across the homestay project sites. Basic facts about ecotourism, how local people need



to participate, conservation and equity issues and improving the socio economic status through responsible tourism activities were explained and highlighted through power point presentation. A half an hour video show on tourism and conservation was also screened for the public who had gathered in large numbers for the occasion.

Members from the Panchayat, Joint Forest management Committee, and almost 90 participants representing the villages of, Melli aching, Khecheopalri Chojo, Topung, Lethang and Tathang were present in the occasion.

8. Dzongu Ecotourism Committee Meeting



A meeting of the ecotourism stakeholders group was organized at Namprikdang in the month of February 2006. This meeting was to review the working aspects of the Dzongu Ecotourism Committee and also to take stock of the activities and commitments of the Mutanchi Lom AL Shezum.

Participants at the meeting were updated about the ecotourism activities in Dzongu and what had been accomplished as of date and what still needed to done. How it was important for the other key stakeholders to be informed and be involved in the process. MLAS the local community based organization of Dzongu also made a presentation highlighting the importance of ensuring that ecotourism heads in the right direction in Dzongu and that there are responsible and accountable institutions that lead the development process.



Other important issues raised and discussed in the meeting included the following:

- The ecotourism committee members to become more active
- Trained human capital of Dzongu not available for ecotourism activities.
- Awareness programs to continue to mobilize the local people
- Promotion and publicity of Dzongu as a destination to be make done more consistently.

9. Ecotourism Awareness Workshop at Omchu, South Sikkim



A tourism awareness campaign was organized at Omchu, South Sikkim on 10th February 2006 in collaboration with Jharna Club and Kewzling Youth Club. More than 140 participants representing self help groups, farmers clubs, and women's group had assembled for the program.

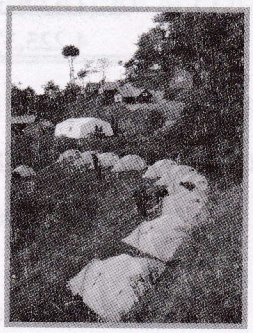
The program aimed at creating mass awareness among the villagers about tourism opportunities and how stakeholders need to be more proactive to start some initiatives in their site. The various service avenues in tourism were identified and greater emphasis on proper education and



developing the right skills, getting exposure and training were highlighted. A slide show of potential tourism enterprises and activities were screened to highlight how local people could be involved and benefit shared among the stakeholders.

Mr. Prem Rai of Jharna Club Omchu had taken the lead in organizing the program with support from Mr. Topzor Bhutia of Kewzing Youth Club (KYC) . Sikkim branch of Nheru Yuwa Kendra had sponsored the program. ECOSS was invited to participate for a full day's program to specially focus on ecotourism and interact with the local villagers.

10. SASEC Ecotourism Guides Training, Kathmandu, Nepal

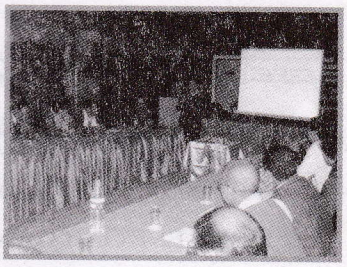


The ADB funded South Asia Sub Economic Countries (SASEC) project had planned an ecotourism guides training program for participants from 4 national tourism organizations (NTOs) from Nepal, India, Bhutan and Bangladesh. This eco-tourism training of trainers for naturalists and guides was one of the many training projects of ADB.

This training program saw 20 participants from the SASEC representing countries. The training was a mix of workshop and field-work for a period of 6 days starting from 15th December and concluding on 21st December 2005.

ECOSS in collaboration with The Mountain Institute designed the course curriculum and delivered the training in collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board. Renzino Lepcha from ECOSS was the lead trainer with logistical support from TMI. Participants for this training program included protected area managers, tourism professionals, practitioners and academicians. Four days were set aside to look at participatory methods of training while two days was assigned for practical field work and exposure.

11. Rethinking Paradigms of Development for the North East of India



A national seminar on Rethinking Paradigms of Development for the North-East India was organized by ECOSS in collaboration with C- NES and Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla was held from 24 to 25 March 2006 at Gangtok, Sikkim. The seminar was inaugurated by the Governor of Sikkim His Excellency V. Rama Rao and concluding session chaired by the Chief secretary to the Government of Sikkim Shri N.D. Chingappa.

The seminar was an opportunity for the intellectual capital of Sikkim to congregate and discuss issues related with the development of North-East India. It was a platform to ask questions and delve into discussion and find out what forms of development do the people of the region seek? Does the region require the kind of development that has been attained by the successful developing economies of the world? It was an occasion to critically examine a suitable paradigm and policy plan that benefits the people of the North East India.

The seminar witnessed many thinkers and academics who presented a host of papers for discussion and debate. The Sikkim Government College fraternity participated in full strength led by Dr. J. P. Tamang while other eminent personalities and NGO representatives from Sikkim presented papers and case studies in the seminar.



Organization : **Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim**

Address : Gangtok (East Sikkim)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2006

	PARTICULARS	CURRENT YEAR AMOUNT Rs. P	PREVIOUS YEAR AMOUNT Rs. P
A	**EXPENDITURE**		
	ESTABLISHMENT EXPENDITURE	691,750.40	548,259.70
	INTEREST ON LOANS	0.00	2,841.62
	PROJECT AND PROGRAM EXPENSES	3,235,741.00	2,165,340.50
	OTHERS	102,279.00	11,997.00
	DEPRECIATIONS	51,201.59	45,043.93
	RECEIVABLES WRITTEN OFF	144,399.50	104,400.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES (A)	**4,225,371.49**	**2,877,882.75**
B	**INCOME**		
	MEMBERSHIP FEES	20,990.00	13,155.00
	INTEREST ON SAVING BANK ACCOUNT	38,903.00	11,090.00
	DONATION	0.00	0.00
	PROGRAME & PROJECT INCOMES	3,204,503.00	2,045,699.22
	OTHER RECEIPTS	1,548,474.10	1,087,145.00
	TOTAL INCOME (B)	**4,812,870.10**	**3,157,089.22**
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) (B-A)	**587,498.61**	**279,206.47**
	BALANCE B/D	**539,580.01**	**260,373.54**
		1,127,078.62	539,580.01
	LESS: TRANSFERRED TO OTHER FUND	0.00	0.00
	CARRIED OVER TO STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS	**1,127,078.62**	**539,580.01**

In terms of our report of even date
For B.C. PERIWAL & ASSOCIATES
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

(B.C. PERIWAL)
PROPRIETOR
Place: Gangtok
Date: 17.05.2006

CHAIRMAN
ECOSS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ECOSS

Organization : **Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim**

Address : Gangtok (East Sikkim)

BALANCE SHEET

Statement of Affairs as at 31st March 2006

	PARTICULARS	AS AT 31.03.2006 Rs. P	AS AT 31.03.2005 Rs. P
1.	**FUND AND LIABILITIES**		
	GENERAL FUND	0.00	0.00
	FIXED ASSETS GRANT FUND	275,130.00	247,050.00
	LOAN FUND	0.00	0.00
	INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	1,127,078.62	539,580.01
	DEPOSIT	19,441.00	470,568.00
	CURRENT LIABILITIES & PROVISIONS	61,930.00	144,467.70
	TOTAL FUND AND LIABILITIES (1)	**1,483,579.62**	**1,401,665.71**
2	**ASSETS**		
	FIXED ASSETS	419,938.94	344,260.53
	INVESTMENT AND DEPOSITS	2,880.00	2,880.00
	ADVANCES	3,000.00	0.00
	RECEIVABLES	191,285.50	402,703.00
	OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	866,475.18	651,822.18
	TOTAL ASSETS (B)	**1,483,579.62**	**1,401,665.71**
	NOTES ON ACCOUNT	**0.00**	**0.00**

In terms of our report of even date

For B.C. PERIWAL & ASSOCIATES

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

(B.C. PERIWAL)

PROPRIETOR

Place: Gangtok

Date: 17.05.2006

CHAIRMAN

ECOSS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ECOSS

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About ECOSS

The Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) is a registered body (2001), recognized by the Government of Sikkim, as an independent, non-political, not-for-profit Non Governmental Organization.

ECOSS is dedicated to promoting ecotourism and conservation for the benefit of people at all levels of Sikkimese society. It seeks to combine the strengths of rural communities with the experiences and expertise of national and international groups who are leaders in the field of ecotourism.

ECOSS lays great emphasis to foster transparency and inclusion in all its dealings and transactions. It believes that non governmental organizations today need to be more responsible than ever before to ensure that they are accountable to the people and society they serve. ECOSS believes that community self determination and targeted intervention can lead to sustainable development. ECOSS further believes that ecotourism and conservation go hand in hand. This is our shared vision. In order to achieve our mission ECOSS has given itself a wide mandate. ECOSS goes about its work by engaging local institutions and Government agencies in its work whilst working closely with the communities. This way, dovetailing of the intervention with projects of Government is ensured.

ECOSS has been successful in making a lasting impact on the way tourism is now viewed especially in rural areas. With more and more people coming forward to engage ECOSS in their developmental initiatives it is a very good indicator that ECOSS has made valuable contribution in this sector.

With varied expertise among its core committee members and supported by a dedicated operations team, indeed driven by passion, ECOSS continues to lay tremendous emphasis on public awareness, training, capacity building and education on ecotourism and conservation issues. ECOSS is poised for future growth and substantive progress in the years to come. It is well positioned for this even as globalization has truly hit Sikkim with the impending and historical Nathula Pass being opened for trans-border trader.

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