ANNUAL REPORT

2006-2007



ECOTOURISM AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SIKKIM

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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 marginalized 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 practice policies for implementation at the State and National Levels.

- To work towards 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.





CONTENT



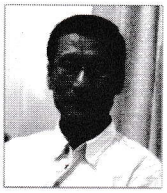




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A word from the Chairman

Let me first welcome you all to our 7th Annual General Meeting. The past year in comparison to previous years has indeed been lean, that is in terms of the number and size of projects undertaken. Many of the large projects we pursued, unfortunately, did not materialize.

However, ECOSS did successfully undertake a number of smaller projects: Environmental Sanitation Program funded by the Government of Sikkim, Strengthening of Sikkim Himalayan Homestays funded by UNESCO, Telecommunication Center Project funded by NABARD and Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism funded by STDC. Together with a number of consultancy projects ECOSS managed to generate a modest operating surplus. This past year has brought into sharp focus our reliance, and therefore our vulnerability, on projects for our financial wellbeing.

Since its inception in 2001, ECOSS has progressively built on knowledge capital in the field of ecotourism and along with it, credibility as an organization. Today, more than ever, this pool of knowledge, ECOSS holds assumes significance in the face of growing environmental and global warming concerns. Ecotourism that is holistically synergized with conservation addresses many of these concerns, and importantly livelihood issues in developing nations. It is so relevant for a place like Sikkim.

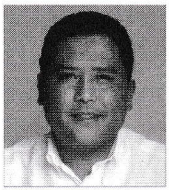
To effectively and meaningfully continue striving towards fulfilling our Mission Statement, I believe, we now need to exert greater impact on policies that determine the future direction of tourism at the same time creating a groundswell of support for the ecotourism movement. We need to capitalize on our knowledge bank, build on our research capabilities, create a continuous stream of human resource and scale our activities several times over through collaboration and networking. We need to operate at a scale where we can start bridging the yawning gap between the rhetoric of "Sikkim, the Ultimate Ecotourism Destination" and the reality of what is actually being played out at ground level. This, I believe, is the challenge now facing us, and where we need to apply our minds to evolving a model that will take ECOSS from strength to strength.

I have now completed my three-year term as Chairman and will be stepping down. It has indeed been a pleasure and a privilege to have served in this capacity. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Executive Committee Members, ECOSS members, Executive Secretary, the ECOSS team and the various Donor Agencies for their unstinting support to the organization.

With these words, I commend the Audit Statement for the financial year 2006-07 and the accompanying report for discussion and adoption.

Thank you.

Loday Chungyalpa
Chairman



From the desk of the Executive Secretary

It gives me immense pleasure in bringing to you the Annual Report, 2007 of our Society. The report brings out the successes and achievements made by ECOSS, in the field of conservation and development. It also shows the growth of ECOSS as an organization; expanding itself with various activities and growing stronger with its presence in the region & nation.

In the year 2006, we fine tuned the operations and management of the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay project at the four model pilot sites. These sites have become a model and excellent learning tool for others to follow. Our collaborations with the local communities, has augmented our understanding of community based tourism at grass root levels. ECOSS can now, proudly boast of the model sites, and work towards leveraging it in the days to come.

This year has been significant with respect to our partnerships with the Government of Sikkim and other significant agencies for various activities. After the success with the Water, Sanitation and Waste Management project funded by AusAID, ECOSS received additional support from the Government of Sikkim. The NEC Cell, under the Planning Department, sanctioned projects to address water and sanitation issues in Sikkim. Similarly, ECOSS also acquired the opportunity to work in partnership with the Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, on a feasibility study for Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism. In an unprecedented move, ECOSS collaborated with NABARD to successfully implement the Village Telecommunication Project, at the four pilot ecotourism sites. With the increase in the potentials of such collaborative efforts, ECOSS is optimistic in expanding its linkages and affiliations.

Several consultancy projects on training and capacity building for Ecotourism have greatly strengthened the network of ECOSS. It has also brought in useful funds to sustain the activities. Such consultancy services on Ecotourism Planning and Management were extended to G. B. Pant Institute for Himalayan Environment and Development head quarters (Uttarakhand), Project Tiger, Forest Department (Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh), International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD, Nepal) and to IFS officers to train them on the significance of Ecotourism ventures; held at Corbett National Park (Uttarakhand) and Thekkady (Kerala). The work of ECOSS continues to diversify to other states in the country. Over the past year, ECOSS has managed to build a vast knowledge capital, and we look forward for opportunities to leverage this asset.

We can proudly proclaim that we have come this far with many achievements to our credit, yet, we have many aspirations to be fulfilled. ECOSS has made a name wherein, communities can seek advice and guidance to start respective developmental activities. Constant efforts are made by us to disseminate information widely and keep stakeholders updated. Holding the principles and ethos of sustainability, we have made considerable progress in achieving our mandate.

With new challenges in the year ahead, we hope to intervene and bring in innovative solutions with the focused leadership of our Executive Board Members and the dedicated Team at ECOSS. I, also take this opportunity to appreciate and express gratitude to my colleagues and volunteers at the ECOSS Secretariat and also thank our valued donors and members who have stood by us and provided support to move forward.

Thank you.

Renzino Lepcha

ECOSS EXECUTIVE MEMBERS



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. 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. 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.



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



Ms. Sarikah Atreya (Executive Member)

B.A.(Hons)

Writer, Journalist and activist on himalayan issues.



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.

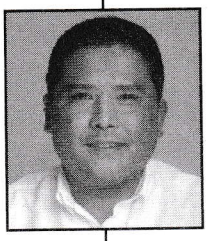


Mr. Renzino Lepcha (Executive Secretary)

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



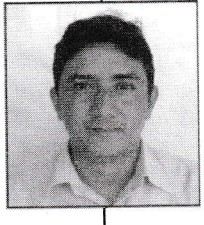
Mr. Renzino Lepcha *(Executive Secretary)*

A Post Graduate and M.Phil in Environmental Sciences with a wide experience of tourism operations and management. Worked in an international conservation and community development organization for 7 years, and gained wide experience in the field of ecotourism implementation, management and development. Resource person and trainer for national and international 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, networking locally and regionally among the members and stakeholders of ecotourism in Sikkim and in the region.



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, and managing the publication and publicity affairs of ECOSS. Currently also coordinating the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay Project.



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.

Project Staff



Ranjeeta Tamang

Ms. Ranjeeta Tamang was engaged for a period of six months under the Small Grants Scheme program as Community Social Manager, a program funded by Department of Planning Economic Reforms and N. E. C. Affairs, Government of Sikkim. She was successful in mobilizing communities to undertake water and sanitation projects in their localities. She efficiently managed and executed four projects in and around Gangtok.



Christina Rai

Ms. Christina Rai was engaged for six months in the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) program as Community Social Manager, a program funded by Department of Planning Economic Reforms and N. E. C. Affairs, Government of Sikkim. With her exemplary mobilization skills, she carried out the program successfully and managed it efficaciously .

Project Consultants



Akai Mao

Ms. Akai Mao from Manipur, completed her PG Diploma in Forestry from the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM). She worked for ECOSS for a period of five months. Her profile involved documentation of the various activities as well as writing project proposals and the feasibility report for the Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism (PPST) development in Sikkim.



Lokesh Kumar

Mr. Lokesh Kumar, also a holder of the PG Diploma in Forestry from IIFM, was hired by ECOSS as an consultant in the PPST project. He was engaged for a period of two months and assisted in the preparation of the feasibility report. He was also engaged as resource person for CBT projects in Bhimtal Catchment area in Uttarakhand and the Himalayan Homestay projects in Sikkim.

ECOSS Volunteers



Melanie Fontaine

Ms. Melanie Fontaine, a student of the Second Year at ISTOM Ecole d'ingenieur Agro- Development International/ College of international Agro-Development, France. She came as a volunteer for ECOSS and her work involved in research in Agro-farming practices in Sikkim. She traveled to remote villages of Sikkim and spent most of her time there learning about the best practices of agro-based farming in Sikkim.



Erell Collin

Ms. Erell Collin, a volunteer from France spent three months with ECOSS and was actively supporting conservation and awareness programs in Sikkim. She was one of the resource person during the celebration of world Environment Day at Hee- Gyathang, Dzongu, North Sikkim. During her stay she traveled to many remote parts of Sikkim villages and provided valuable inputs to the field work of ECOSS.

ECOSS ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2006-2007

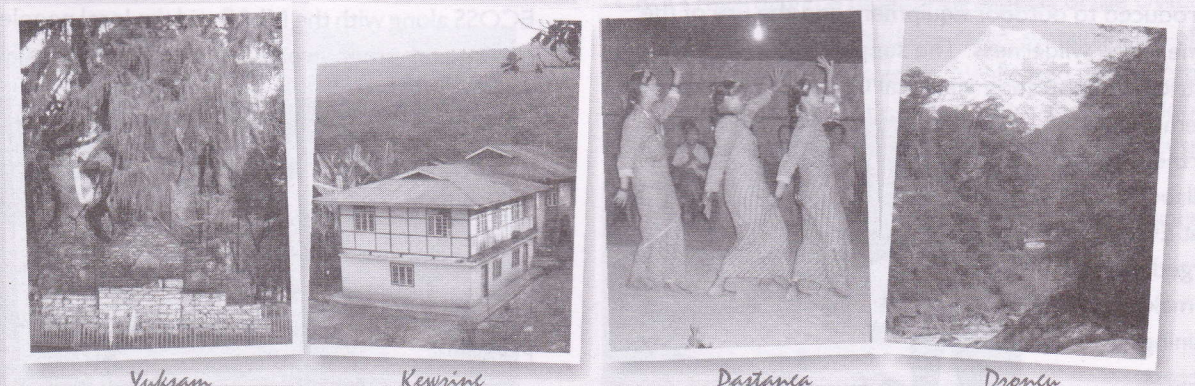


SIKKIM HIMALAYAN HOMESTAY PROJECT

The "Development of Cultural Ecotourism in the Mountain Regions of Central Asia and the Himalayas" is a UNESCO initiated and supported project with an overall objective to promote community-based cultural and ecotourism in the mountain areas, with specific focus on poverty eradication, reduction of rural-urban migration and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage of those areas.

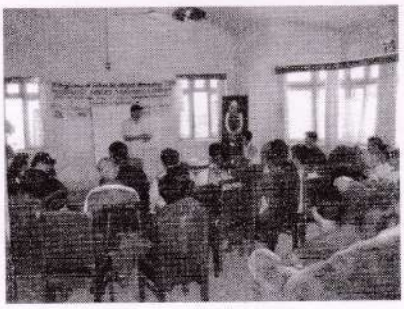
Sikkim is blessed with natural and cultural endowments due to which, this small Himalayan kingdom is a big tourist attraction for domestic and international visitors. Tourism has been developing at a fast pace, due to which many rural areas are gradually getting urbanized and many negative impacts of tourism are being felt at these pristine areas. Many of the tourism issues, which are common in the Mountain Regions of Central Asia and the Himalayas, are being addressed through small scale modest projects.

In Sikkim, ECOSS received support from UNESCO to undertake Sikkim Himalayan Homestay project- to work with local people and strengthen their capacities to manage tourism in a way that is responsible and benefit the local people to a greater extent. Our project partners include Dzongu Ecotourism Committee- Dzongu, North Sikkim, Khedi Ecotourism and Ecodevelopment Promotion- Pastanga, East Sikkim, Kewzing Tourism Development Committee- Kewzing, South Sikkim and Khangcehndzonga Conservation Committee- Yuksam, West Sikkim.



Yuksam Kewzing Pastanga Dzongu

Naturalist Guides Refresher Training Course Dzongu, North Sikkim



Naturalist Guides training program was conducted at Namprikdang, Forest Guest House from 28th to 30th April 2006. This training was organized focusing on the participants of Dzongu from North Sikkim and Pastanga from East Sikkim.

There were a total of 32 participants (5 Female and 27 male) registered, 6 participants from Pastanga and 26 participants from Dzongu.



Local resource persons for bird watching and guiding were from Yuksam, who could easily relate and explain difficult issues in the local context. Both the class room sessions and practical exercises were conducted. Some of the topics covered were the following:

- Role of a guide
- Pre-departure briefing and interpretation
- Campsite management.
- Bird watching techniques and identification
- First Aid, safety and security
- Knowledge on Sikkim's history, natural and cultural resources.
- Passports and permits.

Outdoor activities for bird watching, campsite management and for identification and interpretation of important mountain peaks the participants were taken to Lighthem village for trekking. They were also introduced to outdoor equipment and the use of the same in the wilderness. The support received from the district administration and local CBO's of Dzongu was exemplary, this partnership and collaboration that ECOSS had forged, helped to make the training a success.



"Celebration of World Environment Day 2006"



On the occasion of the World Environment Day an awareness program was held on 5th June 2006 at Hee-Gyathang, Dzongu, North Sikkim, organized by ECOSS in collaboration with Mutanchi Lhom Aal Sezum (MLAS), the local community based organization from Dzongu. The were more than 100 villagers from Hee-Gyathang and surrounding areas, consisting of village Panchayats, School Headmasters, teachers, students, members of MLAS and ECOSS team, who attended the above program.

The awareness program opened with inaugural address by Mr. Ugen P. Lepcha, General Secretary of MLAS. Ms. Akai Mao from ECOSS shared the origin and importance of World Environment Day. Volunteer with ECOSS Ms. Erell Collin shared the significance of tree plantation. Underlining the importance of planting trees and explaining some simple techniques of planting tree and she explained the importance of post plantation efforts. Mr. Renzino Lepcha, Executive Secretary ECOSS highlighted the opportunities of Ecotourism in Dzongu and explained how the local people could be involved and benefitted in a sustained manner.

Mr. Namgyal Lepcha, President of MLAS emphasized the participation of local people in conservation and development issues for the Dzongu. This was followed by distribution of resource materials, handouts and Explore your world- A Teacher's Guide to Environmental Education to the key community leaders.

Towards the end of the event, all the participants were invited for a tree planting drive, wherein members of ECOSS along with the MLAS and the local people planted cherry and other broad leaves tree saplings along the avenues. The event was greatly appreciated by all and turn out to be a successful program.



Homestay Hospitality Training Dzongu, North Sikkim



Three days refresher training course on Homestay was conducted at Namprikdang, Dzongu, North Sikkim held from 24th to 26th April 2006 as a part of capacity building program under the UNESCO project.



There were a total of 25 participants (16 Female and 9 male) registered, 6 participants were from Pastanga, representing Khedi Ecotourism and Ecodevelopment Promotion and 19 participants from Dzongu, representing three organizations, namely Mutanchi Lom Al Shezum, Dzongu Ecotourism Committee and the Tholung Ecotourism Cooperative Society. Interactive brainstorming, sessions were complemented with practical exercises and role plays. Classroom sessions were taken by local resource persons, who were expert in their field, and practical exercises were conducted in groups.

Some of the topics covered were the following:

- Homestay hospitality and facilities
- Rooms standards and bed making
- Serving food and arranging the dining table
- Sanitation and hygiene
- Handling guest and complaints
- First Aid, safety and security
- Pre-departure briefing and permits
- Billing and record keeping



Local NGO's and Government officials were invited at the valedictory function. Mr. P. W. Lepcha, Sub Divisional Magistrate from North District distributed the certificates to the participants. At the end of the training program, evaluation and feedback was conducted to assess the learning and knowledge of the trainees. There was a large number of female participants, who showed greater interest. The sharing and cultural exchange among the trainee reinforced how ecotourism could play a big role in their area. The involvement of the local CBO's would also enhanced their capacity and understanding.

Monitoring and Evaluation Training Program For Community Based Organization- Dzongu



The Monitoring and Evaluation Training Program was conducted on 27the April 2006 at Namprikdang with the local CBO's from Dzongu and Pastanga. There were 12 participants, representatives from the local community Based organization of Pastanga and Dzongu.

The main objective of the training was to equip the local CBO's regarding the monitoring aspects of the UNESCO project and ensure the long term sustainability of the intervention. The first session, highlighted the importance of monitoring, why it is done and how it should be done for the project activities. Different examples were discussed.

Second session was on evaluation, importance of evaluation and types of indicators.

Yuksam Naturalist Guides and Homestay Hospitality Training Program



A four day Naturalist Guides Training and Homestay Hospitality Training was conducted from 17th to 20th May 2006, at the Visitor Information Center of KCC (Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee) at Yuksam, West Sikkim. The objective of the training was to increase awareness about Ecotourism and conservation



so that they would acquire additional knowledge and skills for Ecotourism and share their personal experiences to draw out lessons from the experiential learning cycle.

A total of 38 trainees (25 males and 13 females) participated in the training from West and South Districts of Sikkim, including four participants from KTDC (Kewzing Tourism Development Committee), 24 participants from KCC, West Sikkim and other 10 participants from Himalayan Environment Development Organization (HETDO) of Khecheopalri, West Sikkim.

The training was conducted in consensus with the local NGO, KCC based in Yuksam, West Sikkim, targeting different stakeholder groups.



Seminar cum Workshop on Ecotourism Initiatives in the Sikkim Himalayas.



As part of the UNESCO supported project, a two-day interactive seminar cum workshop on Ecotourism Initiatives in the Sikkim Himalaya was organized by ECOSS. The seminar cum workshop was held at Gangtok on 14th and 15th of July 2006.



The seminar brought together under one roof, prominent dignitaries from the Government Departments and Non-Government Organizations. The Government was represented by the Department of Tourism, the Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) and the Department of Forest Environment and Wildlife Management. Officials from the Central government organizations such as NEDFi and NABARD, National Horticultural Board were also invited as resource persons for the seminar.

The seminar was also attended by representatives from local CBO's and project partners from Yuksam, Kewzing, Pastanga and Dzongu. As this workshop cum seminar was to disseminate information and share experiences among different tourism stakeholder groups, as many as twelve community based organizations from the four districts of Sikkim attended the program.



The two days seminar cum workshop gave opportunities to participate to briefly highlight their activities and share with

peers. The government departments prospective plans were also made clear, including the commitment of financial institutions for the promotion of Ecotourism in Sikkim. The second day workshop was exclusively for CBO's to discuss on pertinent issues that concerned the successful development of Ecotourism in their areas.

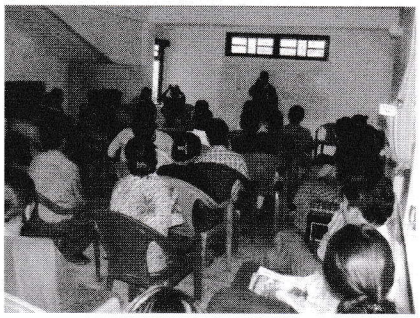


In the group discussions, commonly identified topics were facilitated and the major outcomes and recommendations were drawn to be submitted to various concerned agencies.

The key recommendations included the following:

- Need for standardization of facilities such as toilet, bed facilities etc. in the Homestays.
- Government departments (Forest, Tourism, STDC) should include Ecotourism initiatives in their promotion brochures.
- District wise skill development training for the service providers and Panchayat funds could be allocated for such training.
- The village trails should be kept natural and improve signages.
- Create and empower an agency that would certify Ecotourism products and activities according to well-defined standards.
- Develop partnerships between CBO's and NGO's with the government departments such as Tourism, Forest, Agricultural, PWD, UDHD etc.
- A federation of local level Ecotourism institutions should be formed under the umbrella of ECOSS to jointly assist in product development, marketing and business planning and monitoring.
- Ecotourism ventures should not be operated by the outsiders even on a lease basis.
- The government should involve ECOSS as an umbrella organization, to formulate and amend the policies and guidelines as and when needed. The group felt that ECOSS along with other CBO's/NGO's should play a lead role.

Solid Waste Management Meeting- Yuksam



Yuksam is a well known trekking destination and a trekking off point to Dzongri and Gochela. Annually, it attracts almost 10,000 tourist both domestic and international. Therefore, due to the inflow of tourist and despite of the existence of good tourist amenities, garbage and trash is increasingly becoming a problem for the local residents of Yuksam.

To address this issue, ECOSS in collaboration with the local community based organization Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC), conducted a community awareness on 16th September and a total of 56 participants attended the meeting. Participants included school children, Zilla Panchayat, shopkeepers, hotel, lodge, restaurant and Homestay operators, representatives of KCC, members of Ecotourism Service Provider Association of Yuksam (ESPAY) and ECOSS team.



A presentation was made on waste management issues and different strategies and case studies from Gangtok were shared with the local people. An open discussion was initiated, where participants tabled their opinions. All suggestions and recommendations were noted and some of the major outcome of the meeting included are as follows:

- To form a Solid Waste Management Committee.
- Develop signages not to litter, have simple sticker with messages, posters to sensitize the local people.
- Organize SWM awareness program in the school.
- Organize awareness meetings with the Ecotourism Service Provider of Yuksam, local CBO's and NGO's.
- Quarterly transfer of garbage from the disposal site.
- Monitor the functioning, disposal of garbage and collection of monthly fees.
- Distribute standard garbage bins in all shops, hotels, lodges etc.



The participants were highly motivated by the end of meeting and it was unanimously decided to clear the garbage from the existing disposal site and transfer it out of Yuksam. Members contributed Rs. 2700/- for the garbage collection activity.

Monitoring Visit -Yuksam Solid Waste Management

A monitoring visit was made by ECOSS team to Yuksam from 21st to 24th September 2006. A meeting with the Yuksam Solid Waste Management Committee (YSWMC) was called to review the garbage management issue in Yuksam. In the meeting, Terms of Reference of the YSWMC members was developed and adopted by the



members present.

As per the decision taken the following activities were undertaken in the next couple of days.

- A baseline survey was conducted on Solid Waste Management in Yuksam Bazaar.
- The community consultation meeting was held.
- Collection of Solid Waste Management fees was decided by the committee.
- The garbage collector Mr. Sanglep Bhutia was appointed for the job.
- A work plan was developed and the responsibility was assigned to members.
- An awareness meeting was held at the Yuksam Senior Secondary School to bring awareness on Solid Waste Management among the school children and teachers. Around 300 students attended the meeting.





Institutional Strengthening Training, Kewzing

A two days training on Strengthening of Institution training, was conducted by ECOSS at Kewzing village, South Sikkim, from 27th to 28th September 2006.



Kewzing Tourism Development Committee (KTDC) had changed the office bearers and it was important to give the new office bearers a proper orientation and training on, how to mange their organizational activities and be accountable to the stakeholders, whom they were representing.

The training program included overall management skill for the smooth functioning of the office and the Homestay activities in the village. Record and accounts keeping, reporting writing and recording minutes of a meeting were some of the technical issues that were covered. A computer basic course was also imparted to the trainees and some technical aspects were explained to the participants.

There were total of 8 participants, 5 of them were the core members of KTDC, who were responsible for the



overall management of KTDC office. The participants were now well equipped and had gained tremendous confidence out for the workshop.

Upkeep of Village Herbal Garden

Village herbal gardens are promoted in many village sites across the state and the government has given great impetus for the development of the same. In our two project sites these herbal gardens are an attraction for the



visitors. The local village CBO's have taken interest in developing these gardens and showcasing them to the visitors. It was decided with stakeholders that these herbal gardens needed to be further developed and local peoples participation ehnaced. In this context visits to the field sites at Yuksam and Pastanga were made from 6th to 9th November, 2006, by Mr. Peter Lepcha.

During the visit meetings were conducted with the local people to develop some interpretation material for the Herbal Gardens and also commitments were taken from the participants for maintaining the sites. The site visit also revealed that the Herbal Garden required weeding, additional repair and maintenance of the site. Outputs of the meeting included the following:

- Members agreed to maintain the garden starting with the renovation and cleaning of the trails.
- Developing the interpretation material for the medicinal plants o f the villages

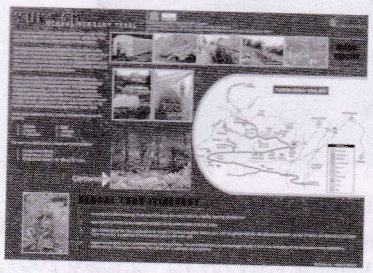
The meeting was helpful for the CBO's managing the herbal gardens

Tourism Product Development for Kewzing and Yuksam.

Under the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay project, two more tourism products were developed, one each at Kewzing and Yuksam.

- Kewzing, which has thick forest cover, makes the area suitable for a variety of birds species. With the help of the local members and some bird watching specialists, a bird watching trail has been demarcated and the following activities were undertaken:
- Listing of some of the important bird species of the area.
- Documenting the history of Doling monastery, Bon monastery and Mangbrue monastery.
- Bird watching trail and itinerary developed for the village.
- Other promotional posters was developed for Kewzing.



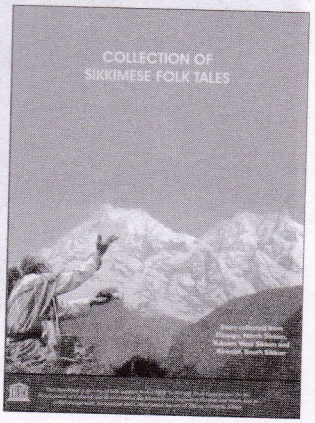


Similarly in Yuksam, a herbal nursery trail was developed in collaboration with the local CBO Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee.
Under the program following activities were undertaken:

- Detailed itinerary for the herbal trail was developed.
- Interpretation of herbal plants and development of medicinal plant posters completed for display and interpretation.
- Development of resource map for distribution to the visitors.
- Other promotional posters were developed for Yuksam.

Collection of Folk Tales/Stories from Project Sites.

One of the achievements of the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay activities has been the collection of folk tales/stories from the project sites. These stories from the villages are well appreciated by visitors as they give information about the history and the legends of the villages.



These collections of stories were developed into a booklet called *"Folk tales of Sikkim Himalayan Homestay,"* which are be distributed to all the home stays in project sites.

Sikkim Himalayan Homestay Exhibition in Gangtok Winter Festival



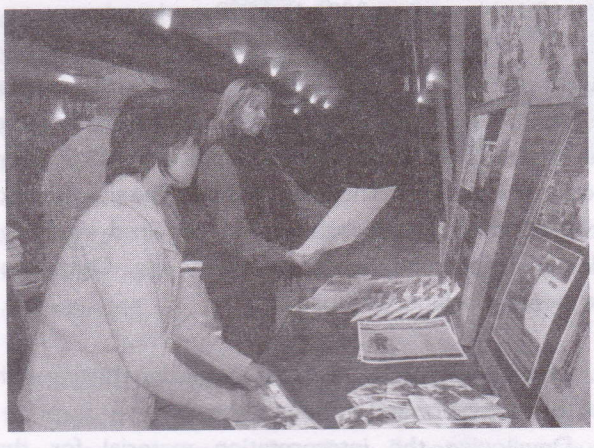
An exhibition stall was put up for the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay at Gangtok Winter Fest on 10th January 2007, organized by Sikkim Tourism, Government of Sikkim. The stall displayed all the information and village products of the Homestay sites.

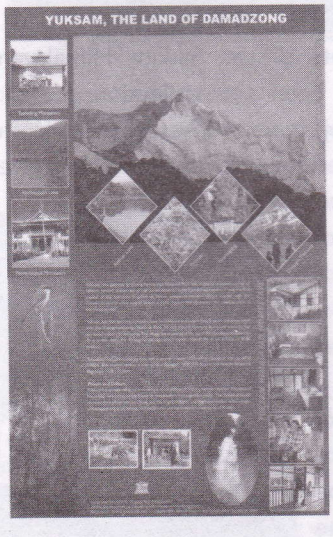
The four project partners took part in the program and as an additional attraction, they were dressed in the traditional costumes. Brochures were distributed to the visitors at the stall. Posters were developed to display the tourism products. Handicrafts and cardamom products were also displayed for sale. The locals were delighted to know about the existence of such products and seem eager to visit the project sites.



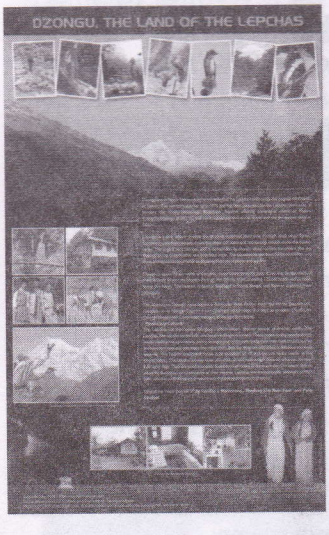


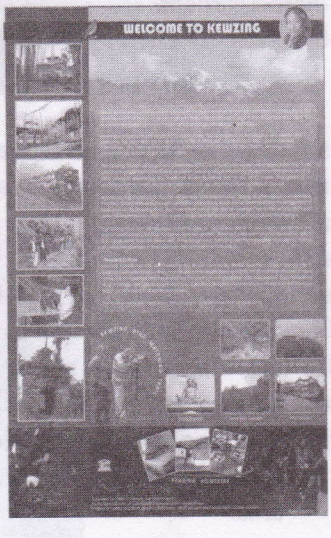
During the two day fest, Sikkim Homestay stall attracted more than 500 guests, which inluded about 120 international visitors, while others were domestic and local visitors. This was also an unprecedented opportunity for the homestay representatives to interact with the visitors directly. Officials from various governmental departments also visited the stall. The Tourism Secretary deeply appreciated the efforts put up by the participants, making the winter fest a successful event and hoped that in future similar cooperation would be received.











COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS SCHEME



Funded by Department of Planning
Economic Reforms
and N. E. C. Affairs, Government of Sikkim

Introduction

After the overwhelming success of the Community Small Grants Scheme under the AusAID, to continue the erstwhile project, a proposal was submitted to the Department of Planning, Economic Reforms and North Eastern Council Affairs, Government of Sikkim. A sum of Rupees Five Lakhs granted by the agencies was made available to address the water, sanitation and solid waste management issues of the community in Gangtok and periphery of Gangtok.



This rapid funding mechanism adopted to support community groups proved to be a unique arrangement, where 30% of the project cost is born by the resident community, while the remaining 70% of the project cost is given as a grant. The process in the long term builds the capacity of the community groups to plan, manage funds and monitor the work. .

The goal of the Small Grants Scheme was to bring overall improvement in water supply, sanitation and solid waste services for the community within the project period.



Community meeting



Screening of Project

Community Small Grants Scheme Project Sites

1. Middle Syari Water Supply Project
2. Mangar Colony Drain Project
3. Lingdok School Sanitation Project
4. Upper Dara Gaon Solid Waste Management Project
5. Sama Junior High School Sanitation Project
6. Panchayat Colony Water Supply Project
7. Upper Karek Cannan Church



PROJECT OUTPUTS

- 7 water supply and sanitation projects successfully completed
- 2900 people beneffited with the project, out of which 1478 were male and 1440 were female.
- An amount of Rs. 4,38, 240 was spent for the implementation of the project under the scheme.

Sr. No.	Project Name	Project Cost	Community Contribution	Implementation Started	Completion Date
1	Panchayat Colony Water Supply Project	Rs.62, 857/-	Rs.25, 143/-	27th June, 06	4th Aug, 06
2	Mangar Colony Drain Project	Rs.18, 012/-	Rs.5, 405/-	27th June, 06	4th Aug, 06
3	Middle Syari Water Supply Project	Rs.38, 298/-	Rs.11, 489/-	26th June, 06	6th Aug, 06
4	Karek Sanitation Project	Rs.56, 184/-	Rs.28, 092/-	17th June, 06	8th Aug, 06
5	Dara Gaon SWM Project	Rs.30, 000/-	Rs. 8,500	21st June, 06	25th Aug, 06
6	Sama School Sanitation Project	Rs.68, 306/-	Rs.20, 492/-	17th June, 06	19th July, 06
7	Lingdok School Sanitation Project	Rs.49, 982/-	Rs.14, 995/-	17th June, 06	20th July, 06



Sama School Sanitation project



Panchayat Colony Water Supply



Karek Village Sanitation Project

PRO-POOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (PPST) FEASIBILITY STUDY

Pro-poor tourism is defined as tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. Benefits may be economic or it may be social, environmental or cultural. The definition says nothing about the relative distribution of the benefits of tourism. Therefore, as long as poor people reap net benefits, tourism can be classified as 'Pro-Poor.'

Sikkim Tourism and SNV/ICIMOD aimed to explore the chances of socio-economic development through the medium of tourism in various rural areas of Sikkim, thereafter develop a feasibility document on possibilities to start a 'poverty reduction program' in those areas, through a sustainable tourism development project. Mr. Renzino Lepcha from ECOSS was assigned to undertake a feasibility study with special focus on the institutional aspect of the Pro-Poor tourism development strategy.

The expected outcomes of the project are to:
- Create more even distribution of socio-economic benefits from tourism development
- Develop sustainable tourism destination products
- Increase capacity of tourism related stakeholders
- Improve understating of opportunities / constraints of Pro-Poor sustainable tourism
- Improved market linkages and public- private partnerships

To kick start the project, a stakeholders workshop was conducted in Gangtok on 11th August 2006 jointly by STDC, SNV and ECOSS. The workshop was an endeavor to bring all the stakeholders on a common platform, to jointly identify the key destinations in Sikkim, based on tourism potential and poverty reduction criteria and develop Pro- Poor sustainable tourism.

The destinations identified in the participatory workshop included the following:

1. Barsey and Uttarey (West Sikkim)
2. Ravangla and Namchi (South Sikkim)
3. Tsomgo and Rhenock (East Sikkim)
4. Dzongu and Mangan (North Sikkim)

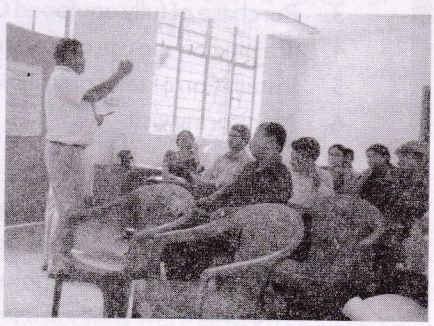


A steering committee was formed to provide overall guidance and make appropriate recommendations based on the report generated by the consultants. To undertake the feasibility study several community field consultations were held at Mangan, Soreng, Rongli, Namchi, Ravangla, Pakyong, Aritar, Uttaray and Pelling. Apart from the stake holder's workshops and community consultations, a series of interviews were also conducted, covering officials from both the Public and Private sector.

Based on the above work, a report was generated, where recommendations were incorporated towards developing an institutional framework, which would create an enabling environment conducive to Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism development in Sikkim. The report has been completed, and submitted to STDC, who will take up the next steps of developing a project proposal based on the findings.







VILLAGE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT (NABARD)

Introduction

Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim in collaboration with community based organization partners from the four pilot sites have been collaboratively working in strengthening the Sikkim Himalayan Homestay.

These CBO's involved in the facilitation and strengthening of this village activities, however, lack the basic common infrastructure of telecommunications. Subsequently, the access of the villagers to their potential market is at the mercy of the tour operators and other players in the market chain. Similarly, the potential clients do not have direct access with the service providers, hence lacking vital information for their travel. This lack of communication had greatly affected the business prospects of the villagers. Even so, many visitors keep in touch with local communities and strengthening their bonds of friendship, but opportunities for this activity also gets impaired, due to lack common infrastructure facilities of communication. Therefore, to leverage the services and to develop direct contacts with the potential tourists, a telecommunication project was planned upon.



To address this issue, Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim approached National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, NABARD, Sikkim unit, to create basic infrastructure of telecommunication and internet facilities in these four project sites, which would assist in strengthening their communication skills and enhance their access to various platforms and markets.

Meanwhile visitors at the community based tourism sites would also be benefitted by keeping in touch with their family and dear ones. Visitors could also like to keep in touch with their business and work and also be informed while on travel.

With the project approval from NABARD under the 'Rural Innovation Fund' in September 2006, a grant of Rs. 3,30,000/ (Rupees Three Lakhs and Thirty Thousand) was handed to ECOSS for the implementation of the telecommunication project.

In future, ECOSS plans to develop common marketing tool for the developing destinations so that the market access for the villages can be greatly enhanced.

The project activities for the telecommunication center included :

1. Meeting with CBOS for finalizing the operation and management of Community Based Telecommunication & Internet Facilities
2. Draw up of terms of agreement for user fee and operation
3. Purchase of fully equipped Computer system with internet facilities
4. Training on the use of Common village Infrastructure
5. Installation of telecommunication and internet facilities
6. Monitoring visit.

Meeting with the NABARD and Project Partners



A meeting was held at ECOSS with NABARD officials and project partners from four district to discuss the establishment of Village Telecommunicati on Center for the Himalayan Homestay project, funded by NABARD under the Rural Innovation Fund.

Mr. Renzino Lepcha informed the participants about the genesis of the innovative project of VTC and how the partnership had been forged with NABARD to support the program.

Mr. K. Vaiphie, NABARD representative, gave a brief introduction of NABARD and various schemes and role it played in strengthening the livelihood of local communities and bringing development through innovative mechanism. He stressed on organizational functioning and requested all the CBO's partners involved in the VTC project to sincerely execute the project and be a role model for development.

Mr. Renzino Lepcha outlined the list of equipments that CBO's partners would receive, which include the following:

1. Desk Top Computer
2. Printer with scanner and photocopy facility.
3. UPS
4. One GB Pen drive
5. Webcam
6. Internet connectivity with handset phone
7. Computer table
8. Sound speaker

It was also explained that these assets would be handed to partners only after getting the requisite training for operation and maintenance. Commitment letter received from partner CBO's were also read out to emphasis that the partner also contribute and ensure that these assets have maximum access to the villagers and the visitors.

At the conclusion of the meeting a work plan was developed jointly and the tentative dates were blocked to undertake the various project activities. NABARD contribution for this innovative scheme was highly acknowledged and all the members were committed to make the project a success.

Capacity building training at Yuksam and Gangtok



A capacity building training program for the Community Based Organization from Yuksam and Kewzing was held from 29th to 31st January 2007, at the KCC Office in Yuksam, West Sikkim. The training was conducted by ECOSS and funded by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Gangtok, Sikkim under the Village Telecommunication Center.



The participants for the training at Yuksam were representative of Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC) from Yuksam in West Sikkim and Kewzing Tourism Development Committee (KTDC) from South Sikkim. There were total of 12 participants, 4 from Kewzing and 8 from KCC, who attended the training at Yuksam. In Yuksam, the training was conducted at KCC office for 3 days, where all basic facilities were available with minimum expenditure.



Second Capacity Building Training program was conducted at Gangtok for the Community Based Organizations from Pastanga and Dzongu. It was held from 1st to 3rd February 2007, at ECOSS Office in Gangtok, East Sikkim. There were a total of 7 participants, 4 females and 3 males, who represented Khedi Ecotourism and Ecodevelopment Promotion (KEEP), Pastanga, East Sikkim and Dzongu Ecotourism Committee (DEC) from Dzongu in North Sikkim.

Both the training programs were conducted and organized by Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim in collaboration with project partners from four districts. The resource persons were all from ECOSS.



A training manual was developed for free distribution and future reference for the participants. Both the class room sessions and practical exercises was imparted to make the training program effective and interesting. For practical classes the community information centre at Yuksam was also utilized, where internet access was possible.

During the training the participants were introduced to basic Computer applications which include the following:

- Introduction to computer and peripheral (hardware and Software)
- Introduction to computer softwares like Word, Excel and PowerPoint Presentation and how each software is used to execute different task.
- Creating folders and filing system
- Introduction to menu bars, tools and shortcut keys.
- Writing CD/DVD and using a pen drive
- Printing, scanning and downloading images from digital cameras.
- Assembling and disassembling computer peripheral.
- Live demonstration and practical exercises.
- Writing minutes of the meeting, report writing and proposal development
- Internet browsing and working on E-mails
- Operation and Maintenance of Village Telecommunication Center

During the training session participants were asked question frequently on the topics so as to evaluate their level of understanding about the topics covered. The focus on experiential learning was emphasized and participants were asked to be interactive as much as possible and share with their peers.

During the training at Yuksam Mr. K. Vaiphie, representative from NABARD, had made a visit to the training center to monitor the training program. He appreciated ECOSS for their procedure of working.

The trainees have understood what the basic knowledge of computers with the three day training course and the resource persons were also satisfied with the outcomes of the Capacity Building training program. The participants were encouraged to practice once to they returned to their respective villages. Participants proposed a vote of thanks in the concluding session with special reference to NABARD for initiating such innovative project and assisting village based CBO's to strengthened.





Pastanga - Inauguration of Village Telecommunication Center





A village ecotourism awareness camp was organized by Khedi Ecotourism and Ecodevelopment Promotion Society. ECOSS also took part in this event which coincided the Village Telecommunication Center inauguration.

Almost 150 local people participated in the program. Some of the important guests were from Gangtok and Government. The Chief Guests was Hon'ble Shri. Kunga Zangpo, other important guests included Mr. Akshay Sachedeva, DIG Range, Mr. Alok Srivastav secretary Tourism along with Doctors from Ayruveda Center .

The Village Telecommunication Center, a project implemented by (ECOSS) in partnership with KEEP and supported by National Bank for Agriculture and rural Development (NABARD), Sikkim unit was officially inaugurated by the Hon'ble area MLA, Mr. Kunga Zangpo. He thanked the donor and implementing agency for the commendable job that it had extended to village tourism initiatives and he hoped that local communities would be self reliant in the days to come with all the modern technologies at their disposal.



On the occasion Executive Secretary Mr. Renzino Lepcha addressed the participants and informed how NABARD supported this unique program. Mr. Lepcha highlighted how this Village Telecommunication Center would benefit the villagers and the visitors. He read out the list of equipments that were being officially handed over to KEEP and along with the signed MOU to Mr. Huna Rai, office Secretary of KEEP. Mr. Lepcha also informed the participants about similar Telecommunication Centers being established in the village sites of Yuksam, Kewzing and Dzongu.

Mr. Subrata Gupta, Dy. General Manager, NABARD Sikkim unit also addressed the gathering. He informed participants that NABARD has a mandate for Rural Development and would pursue to take up initiatives in the future to support such innovative village projects in Sikkim. He mentioned that this project was diligently taken up by ECOSS and implemented in time. The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Mr. C.D. Rai, Ward Panchayat of Pastanga village.

Kewzing - Inauguration of Village Telecommunication Center

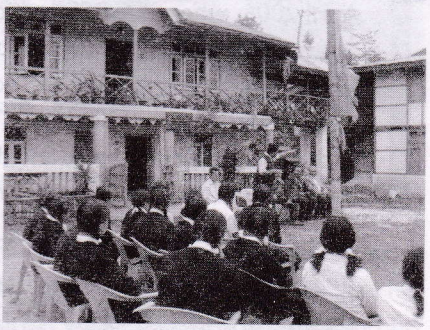


Ecotourism and Environment Awareness Program along with the inauguration of Village Telecommunication Center was organized at Kewzing, South Sikkim. It was held on 30th March 2007 by ECOSS in partnership with Kewzing Tourism Development Committee (KTDC) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD, Sikkim unit.

There were total of 81 participants who attended the function which included school Children from Classes VIII to X, School Headmaster and Teachers, local Panchayat, NABARD officials, guest from Anthropological Society of India, ECOSS and KTDC representatives.



With the welcome address by Mr. Ugyen Bhutia, President KTDC the first presentation was made by Mr. Renzino Lepcha on concept of Ecotourism and Environmental awareness. He introduced ECOSS and its various activities in with the mention of Homestays at Kewzing village. He explained about the concept of ecotourism and mentioned why it is best suited for Sikkim thanks to its rich culture and natural resources. He encouraged all the participants to support conservation programs and have wider knowledge on the same.



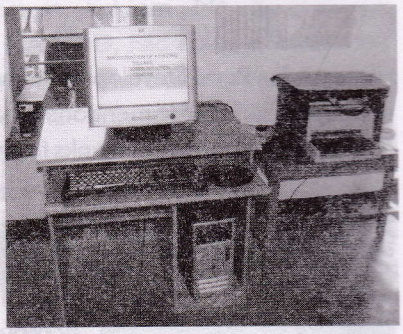
This was followed a presentation by Mr. Subrata Gupta, Dy. General Manager, NABARD Sikkim. He informed the participants about NABARD and its various schemes and how they have been involved with ECOSS to implement ecotourism project in villages. He mentioned about the Village Telecommunication Center that is being established in the village and all the students and the local community should make use of the facilities and benefit from the center.



The final presentation was made by Mr. K.N. Bhutia, advisor of KTDC. He gave a brief background of Kewzing village and how the Kewzing homestays started. Before he concluded, he informed the participants about the formation of KTDC, its objectives, Kewzing homestays operations, and highlighted some of the important village attractions.



After the break a film on Ecotourism was screened. The film was about a success story of Ecotourism in Chambok valley, Cambodia where the community was involved in promoting ecotourism and at the same time contributing to conservation. After the film screening, all the participants were invited to attend the inauguration of Village Telecommunication Center at KTDC office. At the KTDC office Mr. Lepcha addressed the participants and informed how NABARD has supported the Telecommunication facilities and how it would benefit the student and the local community. He read out the list of equipments that was being officially handed over to KTDC and along with the signed MOU. Mr. Lepcha also informed the participants about similar centers being established in the village sites of Yuksam,Pastanga and Dzongu.



Finally the Village Telecommunication Center was officially inaugurated by Mr. G. M. Doorado, General Manager of Sikkim Co-operative Bank. All students were invited in turns inside the center and were explained about the computer components and their functions. Finally the program concluded with tea and snacks.

OTHER ACTIVITIES 2006 - 2007

Chaite Dasain Festival

An annual festival observed in most of the villages of Sikkim, Chaite Dasain is a time, when rhododendron bloom in the forest and village folks make a trip into the forest. It is an occasion to enjoy the beauty of nature and an opportunity to appease the mountain goddesses and deities.

Khedi Ecotourism and Ecodevelopment Promotion (KEEP) organized a village ecotourism festival on 3rd April 2006, where ECOSS participated by putting up awareness materials in the educational museum and interacted with visitors to educate them about responsible tourism practices. The day was marked with cultural performances and distribution of code of conduct and together education materials by KEEP.



A Symposium on 'Nathula Reality'

A symposium on 'Nathula Reality' was held at Gangtok on the 30th of June 2006. The participants were an eclectic mix representing civil society, including representatives from various NGO's and educational institutions, professionals, students and representatives from religious institutions. The symposium was held to understand the issues and concerns with relation to the re-opening of the Nathula trade. This was the first ever kind of a civil society meet, to genuinely understand the implications of an important event and to also flag off issues that may be relevant to the people of Sikkim in the future.



The event was a purely civil society driven initiative to discuss the prospects of the 'Nathula Reality'. Such a civil society



meet was triggered due to many questions, which were not in the public domain. Participants were informed about the trade potentials and the various developmental issues which the government had taken up successfully.

The discussions and deliberations focused on trying to understand the positive and negative fallouts of the Nathula Trade and how people of Sikkim could be best positioned to benefit from this event. Some of the important issues were highlighted and debated.



It was decided upon that the civil society groups should continue to meet and debate on issues of development that concern and secure the future of Sikkim. It was agreed that such actions should be taken up in a responsible manner and that civil society needs to address these issues in a subtle and substantial frame of mind.

Ecotourism workshop cum Training for IFS Officers Thekkady, Kerala



A two days workshop cum training was organized in Perirar Tiger Reserve by Wildlife Institute of India for senior level IFS officers on 5th and 6th July 2006 Mr. Renzino Lepcha of ECOSS was invited as a resource person to share a case study and facilitate the Ecotourism enterprise and community empowerment session. Key recommendations were drafted for submission to the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF).

The strong conservation approaches and the use of Ecotourism activity by the forest department as a tool for conservation was clearly demonstrated through its programs and activities. *(The ecotourism workshop recommendations are available for members for research and study on.)*



Japanese University Exposure Study Group



ECOSS facilitated a group of 18 students from Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, who visited Sikkim from 14th to 17th August 2006. The main objective of their visit was to meet and interact with civil societies who were interested in general development issues in Sikkim, including poverty reduction, women's empowerment, modernization, environment conservation, conservation of culture and language at school educational levels.
They met and interacted with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim Dr. Pawan Chamling, Researcher and Scientist from Sikkim Government College, members from Association for Social Health in India, Buddhist scholars and various NGO heads.

Seminar on Micro Financing

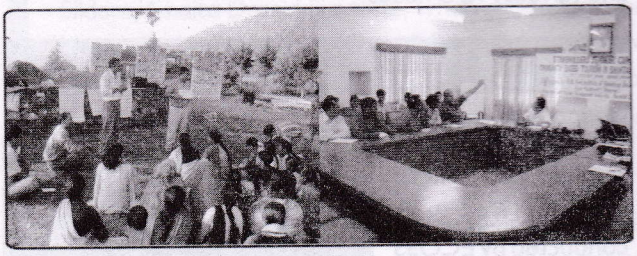


An interactive seminar on Micro Financing was conducted by ECOSS on 31st August 2006, at Gangtok. Mr. Nesheto Doulo, a representative from Entrepreneurs Association in Nagaland was the main resource person. He highlighted on the prospect of employment generation scheme via the same non-governmental organization for the unemployed youth of Sikkim. He shared about the great challenges faced by him and his fellow friends towards the formation of Entrepreneurs Association way back in 2000. And their efforts of employing some 500 unemployed youths in different profitable businesses. He shared his micro financing and the team's journey from penniless nobodies to a group that can now finance projects from Rs.5000 to Rs. 7 Lakhs. The seminar was attended by various CBO's, NGO's, ECOSS members and representatives from the media.

Community Based Tourism Feasibility Study in Bhimtal Lake Catchment Area Uttaranchal



ECOSS received an assigment from the headquarters of G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development Kosi Almora to conduct a feasibility study in the Bhimtal Lake catchment area in the Nainital district of Uttaranchal. This feasibility study was undertaken from 10th to 20th October 2006. Site visits to the project area were made and community consultation meetings were conducted with stakeholders. After fact finding and assessing the community structure and dynamics, a detailed feasibility report was prepared and submitted to the GB Pant team, at their headquarters. This project, supported by World Bank, tourism initiatives are being planned as part of the Bhimtal Lake Catchment area conservation strategy. A roadmap for tourism development was formulated and submitted after securing consensus from the communities. This feasibility report would be reviewed by G.B. Pant and donar agencies for implementation.



Ecotourism Training for IFS Officers Corbett National Park

A week long compulsory training on Ecotourism for IFS officers was organized in the Corbett National Park by the Field Director Mr. Rajiv Bhartari from 5th to 11th November, 2006. ECOSS was invited as a key resource personnel. The training schedule was designed by ECOSS and the training was imparted by Mr. Renzino Lepcha and Mr. Rajiv Bhartari as the two main trainers.



More than 20 senior IFS officers from different parts of the country had signed for the course. It was interesting to observe the different perspectives of senior officers from the IFS cadre and they perceptions towards the trends in development and conservation.



The course was designed in a manner that exposed participants to the concepts of Ecotourism and also provided ample opportunities to them to visit the sites and interact with communities, who are involved in Ecotourism activities. Corbett National Park, one of the finest managed parks of India, was also one of the highlights of the training program. Similarly in contrast to Ecotourism, a visit to Nainital was also organized, which was a perfect example of mass tourism.

Workshop on Community Based Ecotourism Planning, Hyderabad



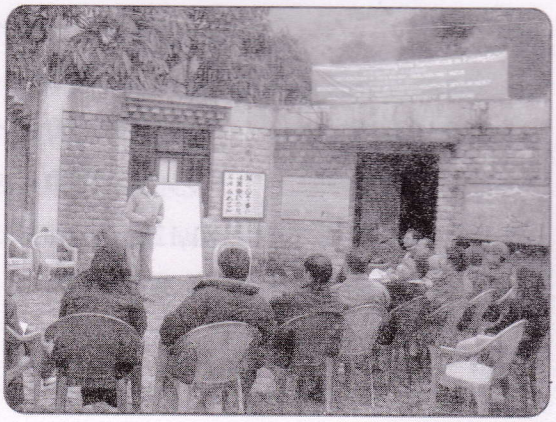
ECOSS conducted a 6-day training on Community Based Tourism Planning for Forest officers of Project Tiger, Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh and for the village community representatives from 8th to 13th February 2007. The course was coordinated by Mr. K.N. Benarji, (IFS) Field Director, who had earlier attended the Community Based Tourism program that had been held at Corbett National park.

There were more than 50 participants, who attended and completed the training program successfully. Field visits to nearby tourist locations were also organized, where practical exercises on community planning were



conducted. The Forest Department intends to introduce Community Based Tourism around the protected areas of the Tiger reserve and effectively involve the local communities in this enterprise to reduce their overall dependency on the natural resources.

The Regional Ecotourism (Community Based Tourism) Hands-on training, Yuksa



The Regional Ecotourism (Community Based Tourism) hands-on training was jointly organized by the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal and Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim, Gangtok. The training was held at Yuksam (West Sikkim) and Mangmaya (Darjeeling) from 22nd to 28th February 2007.

The objectives of the training were to help the participants:

- Understand the concept of Ecotourism, Community Based Tourism (CBT) andHomestay
- Understand the potentialities and challenges of developing projects
- Get insight of the local context and feasibility
- Enhance capacity on planning and implementation
- Develop plan of action and networks.

The training touched upon various components of CBT, its characteristics, potentials and challenges including the issues of community mobilization, product development and marketing. Additional sessions on the use of participatory planning tools such as Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) along with few Participatory Rural Appraisal tools (PRA) were also explained. Methodologies for imparting the training were interactive sessions with the participants, inclusion of interactive presentations, group exercises and field visits. There were 18 participants from Bhutan, Nepal, Darjeeling district of West Bengal and Sikkim.



Community Based Ecotourism Training Program, SIRD, Karfectar, South Sikkim

Community Based Ecotourism training for the community based organization from west Sikkim was held from 22nd to 24th March 2007 organized by the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Karfectar, South Sikkim and conducted by ECOSS. The main objective of the training program was to introduce and train the CBO's on Community Based Ecotourism.





There were 32 participants from west Sikkim representing different CBO's including Ecotourism Service Provider Association of Yuksam (ESPAY), Hee-Bermoik Environmental Organization, Chakung Nature Society, Himalayan Environment Tourism Development Organization and Women Self-Help Group from Ribdi and others.

Organization Name: Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim
Address : Gangtok (East Sikkim)

BALANCE SHEET

Statement of Affairs As At 31st March 2007

	AS AT 31.03.2007 AMOUNT Rs. P	AS AT 3 1.03.2006 AMOUNT Rs. P
1. FUND AND LIABILITIES		
GENERAL FUND	0.00	0.00
FIXED ASSET GRANT FUND	275,103.00	275,103.00
LOAN FUND	0.00	0.00
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	1,199,199.64	1,127,078.61
DEPOSITS	0.00	19,441.00
CURRENT LIABILITIES & PROVISIONS	0.00	61,903.00
TOTAL FUND AND LIABILITIES (1)	1,474,329.64	1,483,579.61
2 ASSETS		
FIXED ASSETS	383,216.46	419,938.93
INVESTMENT AND DEPOSITS	2,880.00	2,880.00
ADVANCES	5,700.OO	3,000.00
RECEIVABLES	106,700.00	191,285.50
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	975.833.18	866,475.18
TOTAL ASSETS (B)	1,474,329.64	1,483,579.61
NOTES ACCOUNTS	0.00	0.00

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

Place: Gangtok
Date: 17.05.2007

CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TREASURER

Organization Name: Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim
Address : Gangtok (East Sikkim)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2007

PARTICULARS	CURRENT YEAR AMOUNT Rs. P	PREVIOUS YEAR AMOUNT Rs. P
A EXPENDITURE		
ESTABLISHMENT EXPENDITURE	652,487.00	691,750.40
INTEREST ON LOANS	0.00	0 .00
PROJECT AND PROGRAM EXPENSES	1.518,062.0	3,235,741.00
OTHERS	13515.00	102,279.00
DEPRECIATIONS	36,722.47	51,201.60
RECEIVABLES WRITTEN OFF	104,399.50	144,399.50
TOTAL EXPENSES (A)	**2,325,185.97**	**4,225,371.50**
B INCOME		
MEMBERSHIP FEES	27,500.00	20,990.00
INTEREST ON SAVING		
BANK ACCOUNT & F.D	53,478.00	38,903.00
DONATIONS	0.00	0.00
PROGRAM &PROJECT INCOMES	1,544,187.00	3,204,503.00
OTHER INCOME	772,142.00	1,548,474.10
TOTAL INCOME (B)	**2,397,307.00**	**4,812,870.10**
C SURPJUS / (DEFICIT) (B-A)	**72,121.03**	**587,498.60**
BALANCE B/D	1,127,078.61	539,580.01
	1,199,199.64	1,127,078.61
LESS: TRANSFERRED TO OTHER FUND	0.00	0.00
CARRIED OVER TO STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS	**1,199,199.64**	**1,127,078.61**

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

(B.C. PERIWAL)
PROPRIETOR

Place: Gangtok
Date: 17.05.2007

CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TREASURER

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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 also 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 local 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, 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 trade.

Designed: Peter Lepcha & Radhika Kothari. Printed @ Tarun