A Report on
AF Program Officer’s monitoring visit to Cox’s Bazar, Bandarban and Khagrachari

During this quarter (January to March 2016), Arannayk Foundation’s Program Officer Mr. Abdul Mannan along with Mr. Harun Ur Rashid, Consultant of AF and Ms. Anima Ashraf, Intern of AF have visited two projects sites on 14-16 March 2016. The objective of the visit was to monitor the activity level progress of the project and to provide necessary backstopping support to the implementing entities for successful implementation of the project.

The Team first visited Inani PFA Co-management project site at Ukhiya, Cox’s Bazar. SHED—a local NGO is responsible for implementing the project. On 14 March 2016, the team visited Motherbunia Chakma Para; an indigenous community village, situated at Jaliapalong Union of Ukhiya upazilla. The team observed the ongoing construction work of Motherbunia Eco-resort. It was found that, the construction work was going on smoothly and about 70% construction work has been completed. But the team found that, resort’s washrooms were small in size (5X4 ft) and might not be suitable for guest’s pleasant stay. Hence, the team discussed the issues with AF management and following the suggestion of AF management, necessary instruction was given to broaden those as 7X5 ft in size. The team also performed an informal discussion with representative of indigenous community during construction work monitoring. The aim of this discussion was to explore how community is feeling the sense of ownership to eco-resort. It was learnt that, community assigned a representative to supervise the construction. Mr. Chandu Chakma, the community assigned supervisor used to inform the SHED and construction firm if there found any irregularities in construction work. The team also visited three households to observe the livelihood development of project participants.

Photographs showing Construction work of Motherbunia Chakma para Eco-resort center
On the way back to Ukhiya, the team visited a bitter gourd field at Swankhali village. Md. Karimullah, a project participant of Swankhali Village Conservation Group established this garden by taking loan from revolving loan fund (RLF). The cultivator expressed his gratitude to SHED and Arannayk Foundation for supporting forest dependent resource poor like him.

![Md. Karimullah in his bitter gourd garden](image)

On 15 March 2016, the team visited another indigenous people’s village called ‘Telkhola’ at Thaingkhali Union of Ukhiya upazilla. The team participated in a formal meeting of Village level forest conservation group (VFCG). Adjacent Beat Officer Mr. Md. Abdul Mannan was present in the meeting. From the meeting discussion the team learnt that, there was a strong collaboration between local forest officials and VFCG members. The VFCG consist of 60 forest dependent households, of which 15 members were selected as forest patrollers. The beat officer said that, patrollers used to perform their duties dedicatedly and without their help it would be difficult for him to protect the forest from illegal resources extractors. The team then visited two households and three shops to observe the progress of alternative livelihood interventions. In households visit, it was observed that, the participants increased their homestead bio-resources through project’s interventions. They planted fruit trees, fuel wood trees. They were found to rear local chicken, goat, cows, etc. They have established improved cooking stoves in their kitchen. They reported that, their income increased though it varied from season to season. The team was amazed by learning remarkable success of a female project participant named Upume Chakma. She as well as her family was dependent to forest up to 2010. She was selected as a participant of AF project and as a member of Telkhola VFCG, She took BDT 10,000 loan from RLF during 2011 and helped her son to establish a sewing/tailoring shop in village market. Her son learnt sewing from a local sewing shop by working there at night. Through RLF loan though Her son Somiron set up only a sewing machine earlier but during visit (March 2016), the team observed there were 5 sewing machines and four workers. Somiron’s hardwork helped him to purchase 4 new machines. The team also learnt that, Somiron’s business is very profitable now a days, He is now getting BDT 12000 to 18000 monthly incomes.
Meeting with Telkhol VFCF

Bamboo based handicrafts
AIGA by Indigenous Women

Somiron in his tailoring shop
The team then moved to Bandarban and visited pledey para; a Mro community living village at Ruma-Bandarban road adjacent area in Bandarban. There were 24 Mro families in this village. A local NGO called ‘Tahzingdong’ is working there as implementing entity of AF project since 2015. Tahzingdong has been working in Rowangchari upazilla of Bandarban as implementing entity of AF project since 2009 under ‘Community-based Forest Resources Management for Sustainable Development in the Bandarban (CFRM)’ Project.

Nature, Forest and People of pledey para
In Pleday Para, the community had been suffering from water born diseases for last 5 years as there were no sources of pure drinking water. There were water shed point in adjacent forest areas and the villagers had to drink this unprocessed water. Moreover, collection of water from water shed point was a really tedious job for the villagers as the water collectors had to walk down and climb up around 400 meter distance. In this context, AF project supported this community to establish a Gravitational water Flow System (GFS). Tahzingdong was facilitating the construction work. The team visited the village and observed GFS. It was observed that, more than 95% construction was completed. Through Tahzingdong’s technical backstopping and facilitation, the Mro community of pledey para constructed a wall in water shed point so that the static water can be flowed toward reservoir through plastic pipe by using gravitational flow of water. The community also constructed a reservoir having dimension of 10 ft X 7.5 ft X 5.5 ft. The reservoir can hold 2000 litter of water. The distance between water shed point and reservoir is about 300 meter. The reservoir consisted of a water purification system with three chambers. In first chamber water flowed from collection point (water shed point). Collected water then passed to second chamber through stone and course sand layer. Finally water passed to third chamber through a layer of fine sand. Third chamber was the final chamber where purified water remained stored. There were three water tape attached to reservoir through which water can be collected from stored chamber. The community use two tapes for drinking water collection and another remaining tape for bathing. A small water tank has also been constructed under that water tap so that women can store water there as indigenous women prefer to take bath through stored water. Tahzingdong also measured the per minute water flow of the GFS system, which was found as 1 liter water in 5 seconds.
The team then conducted a meeting with Village Common Forest (VCF) management committee. The team wanted to explore community ownership status and how community is going to maintain the newly constructed GFS. The VCF committee expressed their deep satisfaction on overall construction process and they acknowledged that, the GFS is a remarkable support for their life and livelihood. They expected that, the GFS might reduce the waterborne diseases of village inhabitants. After having a long discussion, the VCF management committee concluded with following decisions for GFS maintenance:

1. The VCF management committee will form a GFS maintenance subcommittee, consisting of villagers from all 24 families. Each week 3-4 members of subcommittee (by turn basis) will inspect the watershed point, pipeline and reservoir and shall do the necessary work such as cleaning the collection point and reservoir, etc;

2. If there observed any major problem, the subcommittee, VCF management committee and Tahzingdong will sit together for arranging necessary arrangement for maintenance of GFS;

3. The VCF management committee will oversee the VCF status periodically and shall develop necessary agreement among villagers to conserve as well as improve forest cover of the VCF, so that they can have water flow in water shed throughout the year.

The team also visited the VCF and it was observed that, Tahzingdong facilitated enrichment plantation in the VCF where seedling survival rate is about 90%. the team found some critically endangered tree species like Civit, Bajna, Batna, Bandarhola, Buddhhanarikel, chandul, etc were present in that forest.
AF’s Program Officer Mr. Mannan also visited Dighinala, Khagrachari during 29-31 March 2016. The purpose of the visit was to monitor the activity level progress of the project ‘Community based conservation of hilly biodiversity at Dighinala, Khagrachari’ and to facilitate training workshop of high school teachers of Dighinala upazilla for introducing ‘Environmental Education’ program component in that project. A national NGO named ‘Anando’ is the local implementing entity of that AF project.

On 29 March 2016, Mr. Mannan visited second phase project site. He visited two household level multi-tier orchards, a homestead based tree and bamboo plantation and a hill based multi-tier orchard and bamboo plantation. It was observed that, Anando’s facilitation of creating homestead bio-resources was excellent. There found no gap in multi-tier orchards as Anando frequently monitored the orchards and do the necessary gap filling. Within 2 years the trees attain height of 2-4 meter with good stem diameter, because Anando facilitated all necessary tending operations including mulching and weeding. Major species of multi-tier orchard was Orange, Wood apple, Mango, Litchi, etc. All homestead based multi-tier orchard contain a boundary line which is made up of lemon, pineapple and betel nut tree. In all boundary line, Mr. Mannan observed huge lemon production. The owner of this orchards reported that, they had been getting BDT 800-1000 added monthly income since January 2016. They were expecting that, the monthly income might rise to double or even more in upcoming days. All project participants conveyed their sense of gratitude to AF and Anando for helping them to have valuable bio- resources within their homesteads and adjacent hills. They also said that, though at the beginning they did not realize the benefit but they are now happy and do not have any doubts of their future prosperity.
On that day Mr. Mannan also monitored the construction of Jora bridge forest conservation association’s office and community service center. It was observed that, about 90% construction work completed and Anando maintained good quality of construction work by assuring best construction materials and constant supervision throughout the construction period.

During 30-31 March 2016, Mr. Mannan facilitated the training workshop of 20 teachers on ‘Introduction of Environmental Education at 10 high schools of Dighinala, khagrachari’ at Anando Dighinala office. With support of Dighinala Upazilla Secondary Education Officer, 10 schools were selected for this environmental education program and Upazilla secondary officer invited two teachers from each of 10 schools to participate in that training workshop.
Mr. Mannan is delivering the guided presentations in technical sessions of Training workshop.

After completion of each technical session, Mr. Mannan facilitated a participatory discussion session.

Participants group work for providing suggestions on AF-Anando’s EE program.
Mr. Mannan conducted all five technical sessions of this two day long training workshop. In these technical sessions, Mr. Mannan shared the AF’s vision and mission of Environmental Education and delivered guided presentations on chapter based content of draft Environmental Education guide book. In each technical session, after completing the guided presentations, Mr. Mannan facilitated an elaborated discussion session to develop the methods, techniques and approaches of teaching the guided book to students. Mr. Mannan observed that, all participating teachers (10 headmasters, 3 assistant headmasters and 7 associate teachers) were enthusiastic about this program. They showed their deep interest to the program and expressed their gratitude to AF and Anando for taking this important program. The outcome of this training workshop was a set of decisions and recommendations. The decisions were as follows:

a) Guide book content was finalized. The guide book will contain seven chapters and chapters are: (i) Our Nature and Environment; (ii) Nature’s Ecosystem and Environmental balance; (iii) Our Forests and Forest Biodiversity; (iv) Forest and Forest Biodiversity of Chittagong Hill Tracts; (v) Some important trees of Khagrachari; (vi) Some important wildlife of Khagrachari; (vii) Importance of forest conservation to mitigating risk of Climate Change;

b) The book will be pictorial description based so that students feel interested to go through the book;

c) The book shall contain description of real /true socio-economic issues, drivers, facts and factors of deforestation in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The assumption behind this decision is that- future generation will lead the nation in upcoming days; they should learn the real facts, so that they can have motivation for doing betterment of forest and forest biodiversity of Chittagong Hill tracts and this motivation may become action in near future;

d) As there will be no formal teaching of this subject within the schools, only teachers will refer students the guide book as further reading material during teaching regular subjects like general science, agricultural science, etc, AF and Anando shall develop a quarterly or half yearly evaluation and awarding system for students. This evaluation and awarding system may create motivation to the students for better engagement with this environmental Education.