

Enhancing biodiversity through seed storage and capacity building on environmental conservation

Project No: MON/SGP/OP6/Y1/CORE/BD/2016/04

Grantee Organization: “Tod Kharaa” CBO

Location: Bayangol soum, Selenge province

SGP Contribution: \$ 14,334

Cash Co-Financing: \$ 426 am

In-Kind Co-Financing: \$ 3,741

Project Duration: May 2016 – November 2016

Focal area: Capacity Development

Background

Training is one of the most important aspects to address community development and nature conservation through community actions. As of today, there are over 1600 registered community based organizations (CBOs) in Mongolia. During the period of 2003-2018, SGP has worked with about 300 CBOs. It means there are still 1300 registered CBOs that need to learn from SGP best practices, knowledge and

experiences. This situation suggests the SGP to conduct regular trainings on selected subjects that have been innovative and successful in the project and programme implementation with its grantees in the past. The project has been implemented in Bayangol soum of Selenge aimag in 2016 by Tod Kharaa CBO, a local community organization. It is assumed that not only new communities are in need to learn from experienced and successful SGP communities, but other SGP grantees are also to frequently improve and enhance their capacities and skills, going through practical trainings on many other subjects for growth and development. Trainings at the centre are conducted by the Partnership for Development NGO, and trainers have been selected from among experienced and knowledgeable SGP grantee NGOs and CBOs, who are easily available for free post-training consultations and advices to trainees-community members at phone and other communications.

There are about 140 tree and bush species in the country. However, there is no community tree seed bank or even community seed storage in Mongolia. Some community members collect tree or bush seeds in small quantities only and exchange with one another before planting them to raise seedlings in spring. First attempt has been made to establish a community seed storage, collecting natural tree and bush seeds from communities all over the country.

Project Objectives and Key Activities

To help replicate good practices enhance the environmental conservation, the main objective of the project is to establish a community training centre to regularly conduct trainings on environment protection and livelihoods improvement activities for communities and SGP grantees. The project also aimed at creating a seed bank by asking SGP grantees to collect natural tree seeds in their nearby respective places.



To facilitate the process, the grantee elaborated seed collection guidelines and made a request to over 30 SGP grantees, who are members of the Partnership for Development NGO, to collect natural seeds of trees in and around their surrounding places on a voluntary basis and send them to the grantee for primary processing, storing, packing and redistribution to those who are in need.

To enhance the capacity of community on environmental issues, the project also helped the Partnership for Development NGO establish a community training center named “Nature” or “Baigali” in Mongolian, and equip it with computer, projector, tables and chairs.

Environmental Impact

As a result, over 260 kg of different natural seeds had been collected in the fall of 2017 and re-distributed in the spring of 2018. Given the success, the grantee is currently preparing to organize seed collection for market purposes.



Over the period of 2017-2018, the community training centre conducted several training events for participant community members of SGP grants on many environmental subjects, including bee keeping, bio humus and bio char production and green manure. Furthermore, it is expected that the training centre will conduct 6-8 trainings for SGP grantees and other communities every year, not only during warm seasons, but over winter, when community members have more free time. Each

training can accommodate 40 community members in average. As the training centre is located in the countryside and its location is most suitable within the SGP target area, events are conducted at much lower expenses than in Ulaanbaatar or Darkhan cities. It is one of the first community training centres in the country, being operational at soum level. There is no doubt that the centre will greatly and continuously contribute to environment protection and achievement of sustainable development goals through practical and innovative trainings and social events for rural communities and other civil society groups.

Socio-Economic Impact

With trainings and different social events the Centre is making and will be making considerable socio-economic impacts for community members and other civil society groups by changing their attitudes towards positive approaches like the importance of nature conservation, living in

harmony with nature, sustainable livelihoods, etc, providing opportunities for rural residents to generate more job places, consequently bringing additional incomes, giving education and new knowledge to people, transferring best practices and experiences from one to another, and ultimately presenting improved quality of life to marginalized community members, herders and farmers in the countryside of Mongolia.

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Gender equality is an important concern for the training centre operators to take into consideration, when trainings or other social events are organized at the Centre. Both SGP and the Partnership for Development NGO, the operator of the Centre, are well aware that the training centre established by the project must respond equally to the needs of women and men, and always ensure gender equality is met in any event. The project itself was implemented by Tod Kharaa CBO, a woman-led organization in Bayangol soum and a member of the Partnership for Development NGO, which is the umbrella for 44 SGP grantee NGOs and CBOs.

Replication, scaling-up and policy impact

The training centre itself is an essential tool for replicating and upscaling the projects with best practices and innovations with transferring know how, skills and knowledge from advanced and experienced communities to communities in need. Replication of this project is highly probable in the near future, when the Centre becomes attractive to local governments and communities in neighboring and other regions.

Lessons learned

The community training centre is becoming a valuable asset for both SGP and communities to save a lot of resources, time and labor, being an effective way of learning for generating new jobs and additional incomes and transferring best practices and good experiences among communities. Because of such a centre with practical trainings conducted by most experienced and knowledgeable representatives of NGOs and CBOs, it has become easier for trainee community members to feel free, learn without any hesitation and exchange views with trainers. The community training centre has become an important place to get many different community members together in one place and provides a lot of opportunity to talk to each other, exchange views, express opinions and discuss things among themselves and with others.