



Zagros

Projects' profiles
Outcomes, Lessons learned and Impacts

GEF Small Grant Programme @ UNDP/Iran



Zagros Zagros gets its natural entity from Oak forests and these two are completely integrated. However Zagros Mountains consist of a variety of different biomes and we can say there is no single Zagros. Part of Zagros including Piranshahr to Sardasht forests, is the Oak genetic resource in Iran.

Zagros Mountains start in north Azerbaijan and in form of more or less parallel anticlines stretches towards south east of Iran. Then its direction changes to east and goes forward to Mokran strings in Baluchestan. The highest mounts in Zagros are Zardkouh (4571 m) in Kohgiluyeh and then Dena (Dinar) in Charmahal and Bakhtiari (4432 m). Cerographers divide Zagros to 3 zones:

North Zagros which is located in the south of Azerbaijan Mountains.

Central Zagros which is located between Kermanshah and Shiraz Delta and consists of 200 to 600 meters wide parallel strings.

South Zagros includes mountains in the coast of Persian Gulf and Oman Sea and stretches towards Baluchestan.

Zagros Ecologic Zones (Biome studies)

Studying the biomes existing in Zagros range, locates this range within mountains biomes. More interesting is that Zagros comes among the most various mountain biomes and owns considerable number of attributes which describe that biome.

It is good to remember that based on location, Zagros range goes through ecologically different grassland biomes and therefore we can find different ecologic attributes on the west and east foothills of Zagros which puts this

range within inter-zonal biome. Above mentioned characteristic is clearly seen in Dena range in Kohgiluyeh and Boyerahmad province (west foothills) and Isfahan province (west foothills). In the other words Dena range can be considered as climatic divider in the area.

On the other hand, Zagros range belongs to multi-zonal biome as well. It means this range runs through different ecological grasslands and consequently obtains part of characteristics of each.

Being more elaborated on existing biomes in Zagros demands more scientific analysis and discussions. (Bahram Soltani, Kambiz, independent environment news agency, Iran environmental news and information gateway, July 3rd, 2010) .

Global Environment Facilities, Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) and conservation of Zagros Range

Although conservation of Zagros environment has been the centre of focus in Small Grants Programme projects in the region, considering ecologic specifications, existing capabilities and threat priorities in defining projects has resulted in noteworthy methods and techniques applied by project implementers both in variety and attracting stakeholders' cooperation aspects.

Nevertheless, activities and innovations were partially started by local mountaineers and NGOs even before SGP grant was allocated. When local group heard about Small Grants Programme, defined small projects and were reinforced to follow and practice their innovations afterwards. Emphasizing on important role of local communities as the beneficiaries of natural resources and introducing new methods and procedures in this area, SGP has raised new issues in conservation dialogue among its activists.

So far in Zagros area 35 projects has been defined. Some of them are successfully completed, some of them are ongoing and third group are just about to start. Total budget Small Grant Programme allocated to these projects is approximately \$739,000. On the other side, project implementers succeeded to receive total of \$1,030,000 through attracting other stakeholders' and governmental sector's participation in the projects. Other parties' contribu-



tion consists of \$565,000 cash and \$464,000 in kind supports including volunteer activities and donated equipment.

Zagros projects cover a wide range of focal areas and since each small project applies different approaches to meet its target, project results can be evaluated from different perspectives. However, depending on dominant activities or specific climatic zone, each project is classified under one main category. These categories are distinguished according to main focus of projects or in some cases according to project achievements and functionality. Conservation of Oak forests, protection of endangered rangeland species, application of green energies, green ecotourism, Nomads and local community protected zones are the most important categories which mainly belong to GEF climate change, land degradation and biodiversity focal areas.

Small Grants Programme projects, practiced different approaches to “community and stakeholder mobilization”, corresponding to existing local demands. These approaches which have attracted social contribution to meet project objectives can be named “Entry Points” that initiated a dialogue with local communities. In Zagros region, main entry points have been as listed below:



- Adjusting forest exploitation methods (human and cattle)
- Green Energies
- Mountaineering professional skills on Dena climbing paths
- Ecotourism specialized workshops
- Rangeland and vegetation
- Empowerment and capacity building
- Wetlands and ICCA
- Wildlife
- Alternative livelihoods

Although each of Zagros region projects have been individually planned and regarded as distinguished entities, supporting neighbouring projects has been taken to account in approval and implementation process of each new project to ensure sustainability of previously executed ones. Planning project activities, different aspects of sustainable development (social, economical, political and environmental) were considered to meet local demands and consequently implementation of a new project in the area not only reinforced social mobiliza-

tion, but also empowered stakeholders and increased their capacity to deal with government and university authorities.

Alternative Livelihoods	Wildlife	Wetland	Energy	Eco-tourism	Rangeland	Forest	Field of Activities
							Locations
							Capacity Building and Networking (3 Pr.)
							Rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Bozghoush (3 Pr.)
							Participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation in Oak forest-Kurdistan (5 Pr. And 3 PG)
							Bustard's conservation projects in Darab- Fars (3 Pr.)
							Biodiversity conservation in Fereydounshahr-Esfahan (2Pr.)
							Biodiversity conservation based on nomads' indigenous knowledge and sustainable livelihoods in Zagros (7 Pr.)
							Participatory biodiversity conservation in Dena based on eco-tourism and sustainable livelihoods (6 Pr.)
							Participatory revitalization and conservation of Bistoun, Kermanshah (5Pr.)
							Participatory revitalization and conservation of Gavan-Gazi Rangeland in Faridanshahr, Esfahan (2 Pr.)





Zagros Oak forests

According to notable variety of Oak trees and shrubs in Zagros forests, hybrid species of Oak is spread throughout the region and dominant genotype of Oak forms the appearance of different forest sections. As a result most of Zagros forests are known as Oak forests.

At the time being, proceeding to 3 completed projects in the field of conservation of Zagros forests and their plant species, 5 other projects are ongoing to guarantee sustainability of former projects achievements in Havareh Khol, Kohkh Mamo and Eshtromel villages.

- Project Time Frame: 2002 to 2004
- Grant: \$20,000
- Grantee: Association of Young Conservationists (Daumoon)
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Traditional Forest Management in Haverh-Khol Village (Baneh region, Kurdistan Province)

IRA-G52-2002-018

Project Achievements:

National Forestry Policies practiced a radical change as a result of successful implementation of the project in 2003. Forests and Rangeland Organization (the main legal authority of forest management in Iran) decided to change the name of previous long term plan from **fighting against "Galazani"** into **Organizing "Galazani"** in the meetings of High Council of forests.

Upon project implementation, North Zagros Research and Development centre was formed in Kurdistan province to facilitate effective communication between education and development sector and executive agencies active in for-

est management. There has been several discussion sessions and at least 5 masters degree dissertations are prepared since the centre established.

Havareh Khol project achievements was a platform for a second project named "Organizing and managing Galazani in Armardeh area (In Baneh region)" which was designed and implemented by North Zagros Research and Development centre to promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce the pressure on natural resources in the area.

Setting up a small, local library which was first located in project office and then relocated to village mosque was a side activity of this project.

Related Projects:

When Baneh (a border town between Iran and Iraq) became a trade market between two countries, many villagers who mainly lived on cattle husbandry and forestry, changed their traditional livelihood and started trading consumer goods. In addition fuel export and its income as well as increase in fuel price at national level, raised the threat of forest overexploitation as an alternative to fuel. As a result, promoting participatory forestry through focusing on alternative livelihoods came to project top priority.



Galazani Operation:

In Kurdish language "Galazani" means cutting branches and leaves of Oak trees. In this traditional forestry technique, each extended family manages custom defined territory of forest "Galajar" and exploits its territory to collect wood for heating, animal husbandry and construction purposes while paying attention to sustainability of the forest. Families take turns to manage territories and each territory is exploited once in 3 years.

Khokh Mamo Bee Keeping Project:

Proceeding to traditional forestry project and focusing on promotion of local alternative livelihood, Khokh Mamo Bee Keeping project was proposed by local community. 10 families started managing 70 bee houses upon agreements with village Islamic council and religious head of the village. Each family, owning 7 bee houses, committed to annually return \$200 to invest on more bee houses for other families in the area. By the end of first year, local people of Eshtramel, who had never experienced bee keeping, succeeded to produce 600 – 750 kg of Gazou (a local plant) honey.

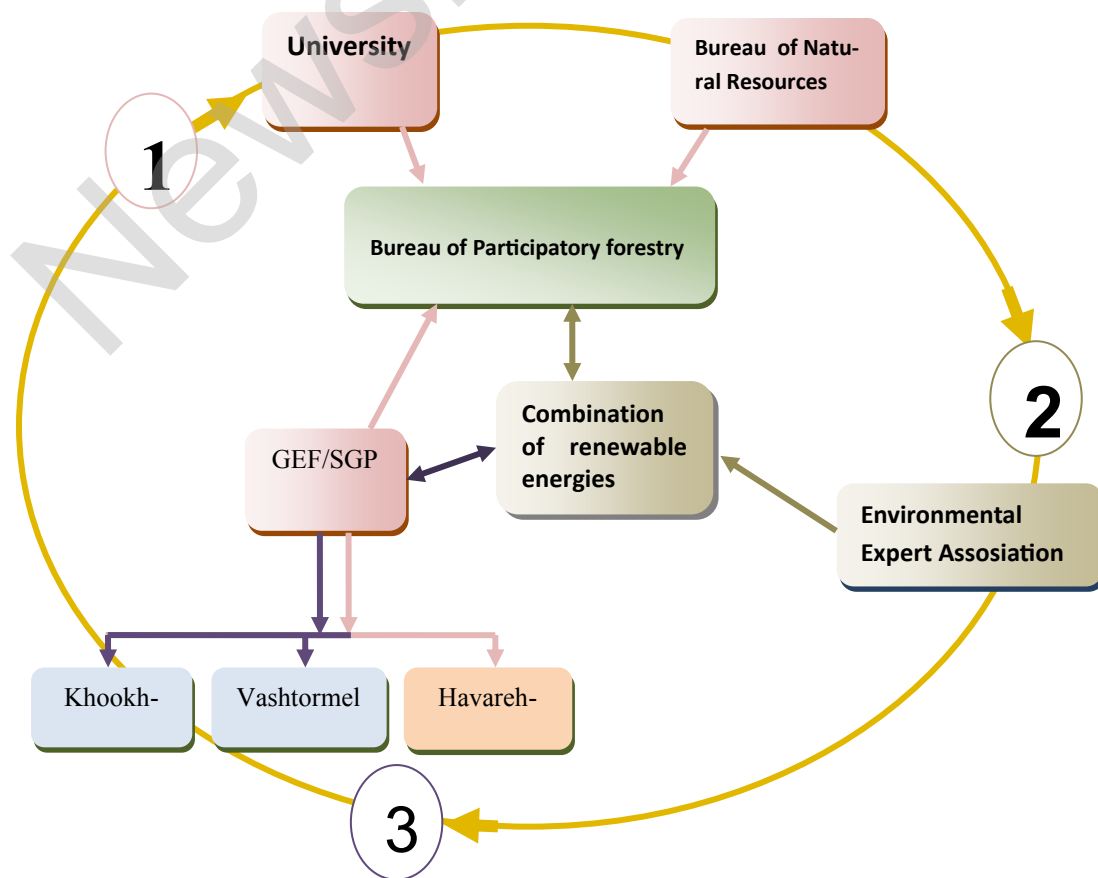
Project Sustainability Activities:

During implementation of Havareh Khol Galazani project and due to close ties between project team and Kurdistan Province Natural Resources head office, a project was defined on “participatory forest management” respecting the role of local communities and Kurdistan University to lead the pattern. Establishment of “participatory forest management office” in faculty of natural resources of Kurdistan University as the initial outcome of this cooperation was the basis for further activities protecting forests in the region.

Participatory forest management office which was established based on an idea and further supports of Small Grants Programme, Kurdistan University and Natural resources organization, later was joined by Iranian Society of Environmentalists as a supplementary scientific resource. As a consequent and as soon as baseline studies and village selection phase were completed, another project, Combination of renewable energies technologies, came into action in Armardeh region.

Stakeholders’ inter-sectional cooperation in this project and some other SGP projects in the region resulted in gathering of a professionally trained team to mobilize, empower and develop capacities of various stakeholders to preserve biodiversity and Oak forests in the area.

Inter-sectional cooperation diagram in participatory forest conservation projects



- Project Time Frame: 2007 – Under Execution
- Grant: \$50,000
- Grantee: Iranian Society of Environmentalists
- GEF Focal Area: Climate Change

Combination of renewable energies technologies in Armardeh, Baneh region, Kurdistan Province *SGP/OP4/RAF/07/04/(95)*

Proceeding to former projects achievements, this project was approved to introduce alternative energy resources in order to recreate and preserve Armardeh forests. Overexploitation of Oak forests to provide wood and fodder, impassability of area, lack of proper accessibility to facilities, high costs of energy resources except of wood and low efficiency

of heating systems (stoves and fireplaces) were the main reasons of pointing North Zagros as the project location.

Nowadays people in Koukh Mamo village are using one of the advanced energy resources for heating and lighting purposes; students in village school are not using frozen water to wash up in the cold season and prayers have access to hot water in the mosque; but this water is not heated up burning wood or fossil fuels, Solar energy heats up the water.





Ecotourism

From Dena Peaks to Ecotourism in Khafr village

Dena in 2002 and Empowerment of the Local Community, Publishing first Dena Zone Climbing Map *IRA-G52-2001-012*

- Project location: Dena Zone, Khafr village as focal point, Isfahan Province
- Project Time Frame: 2003 – 2005
- Grant: \$20,000
- Secondary Grant: \$25,000
- Grantee: Fars Green Center
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Fars Green Centre, a group of active mountaineers, had started its voluntary activities to prepare a map of Dena Mountains five years before SGP project started. With support of Small Grants Programme, first climbing guide map of Dena including 47 peaks above 4000 meters high was published while it was traditionally believed that there are only 2 or 3 peaks above 4000 meters in the area. During the project all climbing paths were identified and signed.

Although this project was initially based on previous activities of Fars Green Centre, considering the role of local community inhabited in Dena foothills as local guides, new activities started to identify alternative livelihoods in the area. Focusing on important role of local community parallel to mountaineers, led local people to increase their knowledge of their lands. Consequently inhabitants contributed to all other projects defined and implemented by local communities and NGOs in the region.

These contributions provided the basis for further mobilization of people in Padena (Dena foothills) villages and following to this project, other proposals were received from local CBOs and NGOs to promote ecotourism and protection of environment in the region.

Capacity Building for SGP Grantees

IRA-G52-2003-029(IRA98G52)

Implementing small project by local communities required familiarity with project planning procedures and criteria as well as appropriate needs assessment. Therefore a participatory project planning workshop was held by Green Reflection Protectors (Hamiyane Andisheh Sabz) for local people of Padena (Dena Foothills) who were interested. In the workshop apart from project planning, attendees practiced real project planning through indentifying project activities in their local neighbourhoods. During the project, inhabitants learned how to deal with real project bottlenecks and limitations through hands on action learning.



Cycling

Promoting eco-tourism and its potentials in Zagros through a national event of mountain biking for the Environment Week by bringing together the government stakeholders with civil society and the local tour guides (Zagros and Ecotourism) IRA/05/01 (49th)

Dena project introduced Khafr village and its tourist attractions; however, supporting activities and projects which followed the initial project completed the picture of Zagros as an ecotourism attraction and strengthened structures of projects in the region. One of very important samples of these activities was "Dena and ecotourism" cycling event.

Promoting Eco-tourism in Khafr/ Dena Region, IRA/05/06 (54th) (Cluster of SGP Dena Project IRA-G52-2002-012)

- Project location: Khafr village,
- Project Time Frame:
- Grant: \$20,000
- Grantee: Plan for Land Institute
- GEF Focal Area: Bio-diversity

Implementing rural ecotourism project required extended technical trainings and extracting codes of behavior in village tourism management projects. In this regard, professional teams who had received these trainings through Ecotour Institute, a very reputable ecotourism training institute, formed independent teams and started training local people.

Promoting ecotourism in Khafr village, cleaning up the village and training local guides are among these activities which executed by Plan for Land institute in the area.



Cleaning Up Khafr Village; meeting primary requirements of inhabitants

Organizing garbage disposing situation in the village was one of the latest activities recommended in needs assessments. Although study phase is completed, local authorities including ministry of interiors are involved, villagers has received trainings and even layout of trash bin locations are prepared, disposal dump and bury pit are not determined and people still have to carry village garbage to the nearby river. Village council is responsible for disposal process but they have to wait until bury pit is determined.



- Project location: Khafr village, Semirrom Area, Isfahan Province
- Grant: \$20,000
- Grantee: Plan for Land Institute
- GEF Focal Area: Bio-diversity

Ecotourism training for Dena local tour guides and establishment of local fund to promote mountaineering (Addition to Khafr Village Ecotourism Project) IRA/SGP/OP4/RAF/07/07 (98)

Although trainees of "Dena in 2002" project were already familiar with mountaineering principles, according to variety of tourist attractions in the village and villagers willingness to ecotourism ideas, professional mountaineering and tourism principles were in demand by interested inhabitants. Therefore a project was approved to train local ecotourism guides.



Capacity Building entering in sustainable ecotourism cycle in Khafr village and developing ecotourism standards for authorities and Sabz-Yaran-e Dena local - NGO IRA-06-02 (69)

This project was planned to prepare rules and regulations for Khafr village ecotourism and empower villagers to manage ecotourism as a sustainable livelihood. Project team tried to introduce Dena's natural tourist attractions to inhabitants and train them to share their knowledge with visitors who travel to the area. During the project ecotourism management plan including practical strategies and procedures for Khafr village was developed. The context of this plan was used in training local ecotourism guides afterwards.

Small Grants Programme lessons learned

Mountaineers did not possess a structured experience of participatory approaches to carry out their desired activities, however, Dena project activities and their close cooperation with local community to identify peaks and paths, provided them with a better understanding of important role of mountain in local community's livelihoods.

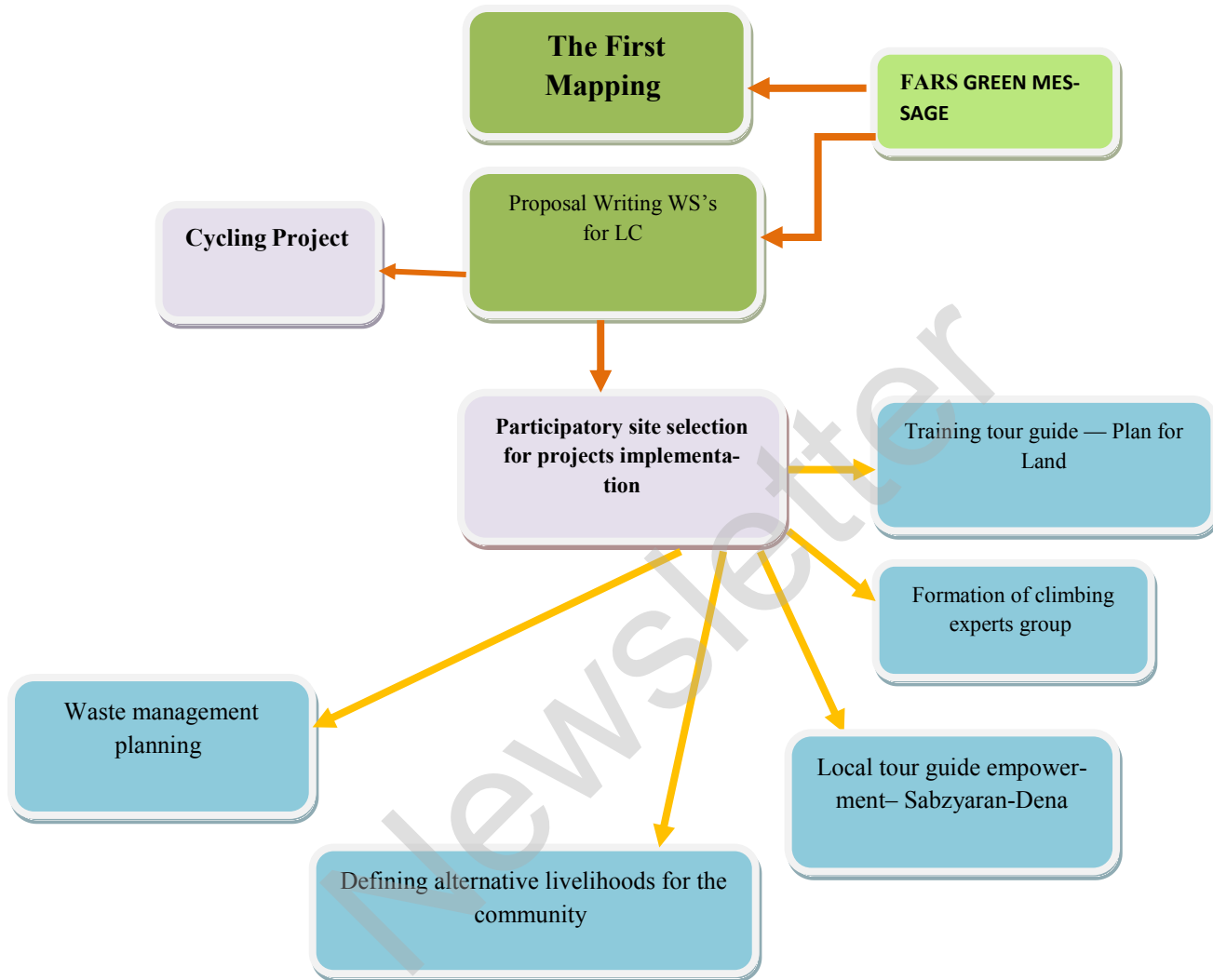
- Despite available knowledge and previous experience in communicating with local communities, Plan for Land institute faced some difficulties in participatory management of the Khafr projects. These difficulties led to a set back in indentifying primary requirements of villagers as well as recognizing the role of natural attractions and ecotourism in local community's livelihoods.
- Experienced gained from different active groups in Dena range especially involved in local development, indicates that entering local development field requires adequate familiarity with its literature. Although skills in communicating with local community are a must entering their zone of trust, they do not guarantee successful implementation of development projects and they should be supported by appropriate training before entering and even after determining communication strategies for the project teams.

Holding common coordination sessions and exchanging experiences with other stakeholders, site visits together with project teams and periodical evaluation of project achievements are essential activities to create and promote synergy among various groups involved in a project.



Interaction between projects in Padeane (Dena foothills) projects

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Environment protection activities in Bistoun foothills, Kermanshah province

- Integrated Management Plan for Preservation and Rehabilitation of Doshakh Valley in Parow Mountain through Local Community Participation (Bisotoun Area)
- Integrated Management Plan for Preservation and Rehabilitation of Taghboostan Green Path Through Local Communities Participation in Bistoun, Zagros Area
- Documentation

Bistoun region participatory rangeland management is another example of projects planned and executed based on capabilities of local mountaineers. Members of Protection and Instauration of Mountain Environment Society (Parow) decided to rehabilitate Bistoun climbing path through unifying the multiple existing paths and signing a single main one. However, this project owes its success to participation of all stakeholders.

Many different stakeholders including Natural resources and watershed organization, cultural heritage and tourism organization and municipality supported this project and project team participated in tourism workgroup formed by cultural heritage and tourism organization.

- Projects Time Frame: 2004 to 2011
- Grant: Total sum of \$100,000 for 4 projects
- Grantee: Parow Assosiation
- GEF Focal Area: land degradation



Undoubtedly important role of mountain environment and attempts of climbing groups motivated and promoted contribution of all stakeholders in Kermanshah projects.

Creativity and strong will of female mountaineers of Kermanshah (Parow mountaineers society) resulted in construction of a stone fence along side the climbing path using indigenous construction materials. Kermanshah province Natural resources organi-

zation confirmed that vegetation in the area was rehabilitated upon construction of the path.

“We, a group of female mountaineers, in early 1990s witnessed increasing number of tourists and climbers and creation of unnecessary climbing paths which destroyed vegetation, accelerated soil erosion and increased pollution in Tagh Boustan range. We decided to protect and rehabilitate mountains. So we started our activities by seeding plants, proper disposing of waste and garbage collecting in group activities. Respecting to the right to live for all creatures, we climbed in a single line not to step on a plant.

Eventually we realized increasing number of mountaineers demands an appropriate path, simple stone stoves, guiding signs and safety advocacy behaviours and on the other side our mountain environment needs protection through building platforms and small dams considering shallow soil cover, sharp slopes, numerous climbers and streams.

By support of GEF/SGP and cooperation of governmental authorities and local communities especially women and youth, developing activities for Tafeh Kouchineh green path started and afterwards to ensure sustainability of project achievements project was extended and replicated in rehabilitation of Taghvosan - Davashekoft green path.”

Documentation

Documentation of project practical steps is another example of developed capabilities of women and men who implemented the project and faced its obstacles and limitations.

During project implementation, activities were recorded and finally according to project proposal, experiences and lessons learnt through knowledge shared by governmental experts and local people came into movie clips or booklets.

As a result of these attempts project has published 5 booklets and 10 documentary films.

Plant species in Tafeh Kouchineh green path

A notable activity of Parow society was collecting, drying and taking photos of Tagh Bostan plant species which published as a book named "Tafeh Kouchineh green path plant species" in 1,000 copies through the technical consultation of Natural Resources Organization experts.

Forest and Forestry

This book gives us the true picture of a human caused disaster; destruction of Gilan e Gharb forests. In Gilan e Gharb region some farmers transformed considerable area of forest to farmland by cutting old trees. Information and pictures of this destruction are provided in the book.

Mysteries in creation of mountains

Kermanshah Mountains climbing paths

This helpful guide book provides the climbing paths, peaks information, caving and cave entry points, slopes access paths and mountain shelters locations in central Kermanshah Mountains and Parow and Bistoun range.

Project Scale Out

Proceeding to these projects, other climbing paths are organized, reconstructed and reinforced.



Rehabilitation of Native Fruit Garden in Ouramanat- Kurdistan through Community Based Eco-tourism

IRA/SGP/OP4/RAF/Y3/09/03 (127)

- Project Time Frame: 2002 to 2004
- Grant: \$50,000
- Grantee: Nasle Nouandishe Paydar Institute
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Ouraman has got a rich natural and cultural background. However non-efficient construction activities and their consequences, advertisements of tour and travel agencies, and drought have seriously endangered this area.

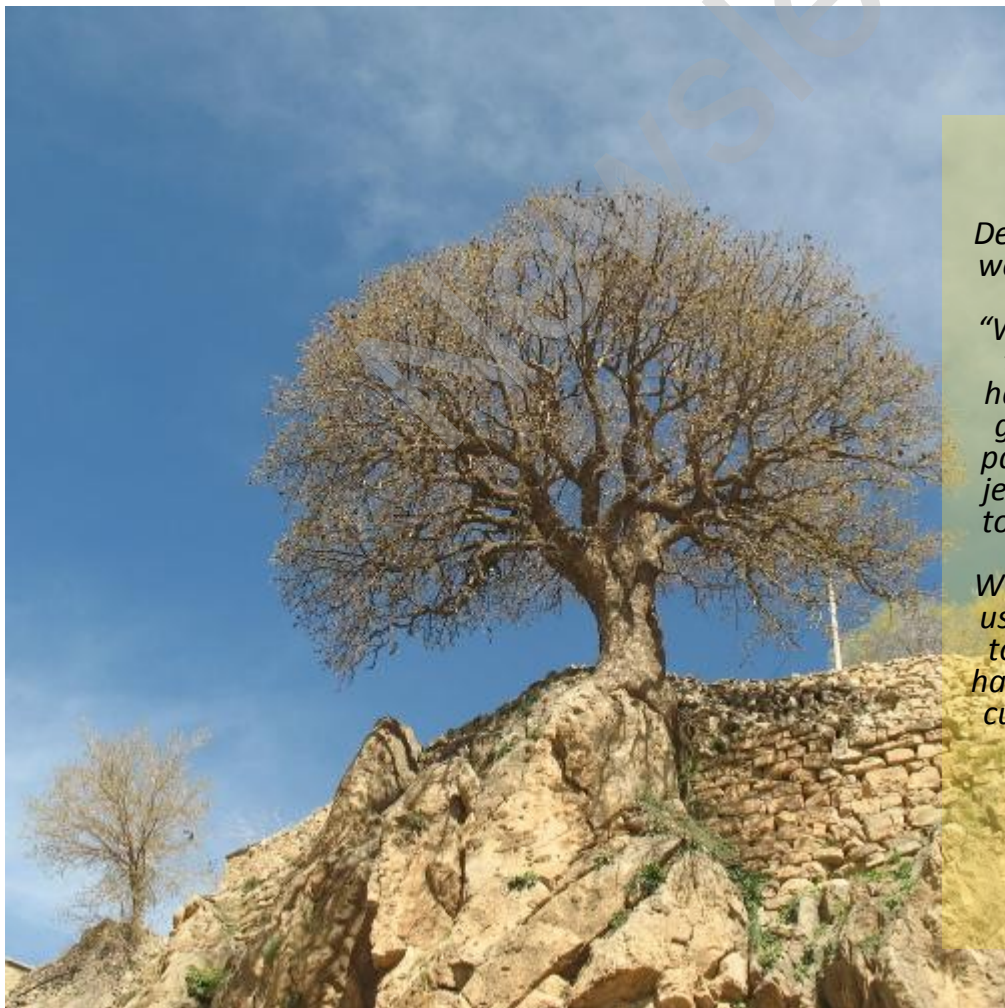
Today 30 gardens of Ouraman and Hevaran are in danger. Rehabilitation of native fruit gardens in Ouramanat Kurdistan through community based ecotourism project was planned and implemented by attempts of Nasle Nouandishe Paydar Institute, cooperation of local community, Ouraman tourism association and national ecotourism committee.

Upon consultations with local community, 5 gardens were chosen as pilot sites to develop stakeholders' capability through related group activities. Consequently handicrafts and environment local workgroups were formed.

Project has been successful increasing local community's self-confidence and promoting their cooperation (especially women) in social activities. Local community is very optimistic about the future.

Ouraman Valley includes a few amazing villages with outstanding natural-cultural views which are an appropriate base for development of community-based ecotourism.

Ms. Fahimeh Dehghani, handicraft workgroup responsible person said:
"Women's participation in producing handicrafts was neglected during the past years. This project rehabilitated us together with Ouramanat gardens. Women in the village used to wait for customers to buy their handicrafts but today customer send their orders to the village."





Protection of endangered species (Vegetation and rangeland)

Many inhabitants of Zagros region have long been living on its rich ecosystem. Bozghoush rangelands, Havareh Khol villages, Gavan Gazi rangeland and Karafs e Kouhi are examples of local livelihoods in the area. Today many of these livelihoods are destroyed or changed due to climate changes, transformation of lifestyles, nationalization of natural resources and consequently policy changes in exploitation by main beneficiaries and other reasons. As in some cases custom territories are neglected and territories are downsized due to changes in land functionality which has led to destruction of natural resources and distinction of plant and animal species.

Some of the projects in the area have been implemented through considering the economic value of natural resources and rehabilitation of traditional methods of resource management and integration of new technologies. Project teams have assessed sustainable exploitation methods of natural resources through close cooperation with local communities and other stakeholders. Project activities often increased local community's income therefore attracted its cooperation. In this way preservation and rehabilitation of natural resources and local community's sustainable livelihoods are integrated and each one guarantees sustainability of the other.

People's Participation for Plant Biodiversity Protection in Central Zagros Region (Phases 1 & 2)

IRA-G52-2001-011(IRA98G52), IRA-G52-2004-039(IRA98G52)

- Project Time Frame: 2003 to 2006
- Grant: \$50,000
- Grantee: Green Message Society of Isfahan
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Not far ago, Karafs e Kouhi grew in vast areas of summer rangelands and mountains of Isfahan, Charmahal o Bakhtiary, Kohgiluyrh and Boyerhamd and parts of Lorestan and Fars provinces. During the past 2 decades, road construction and ease of access to these areas, increasing number of human and cattle and inappropriate exploitation of lands, has seriously endangered this specie and consequently increased its price.

This project focusing on collecting seeds of Karafs e Kouhi, Rhubarb, vetch and milk vetch which are endangered species managed to stop inappropriate exploitation and seed these species through participation of indigenous people. Upon successful completion of this project, preservation activities were handed over to aware local groups.

Local inhabitants of Fereydoon Shahr and Poshtkouh were involved in all project justification sessions and effectively participated in decision making process.



An experience:

Divandareh, non-participatory management of a project

Following to project Traditional Forest Management in Haverh-Khol Village (IRA-G52-2002-018) in the area and Kurdistan Province Natural Resources Organization recognition of project achievements, a pilot project for participatory rangeland management was designed by Natural Resources Organization of Kurdistan province and rich rangelands of Divandareh were chosen as project site. The project aimed to protect and rehabilitate rangelands through job creation and if possible introducing alternative livelihoods related to the rangelands. The reason behind this project was the fact that vast parts of these rangelands were changed to farmlands to cultivate rain fed wheat and pea. This change destroyed considerable parts of rangeland and there was no clear policy to manage these lands. Proposal for this project meant to introduce a pattern for participatory rangeland management.

An important fact is ignored in natural resources organization rules and regulations; local community's role in participatory rangeland management. There for like other governmental projects, project implementation planned to be granted to contractors who were already ranked by legal authorities. Since no group was recognized qualified enough to implement this project, a natural resource expert – employee of the same organization – living in the area was contracted to execute the project. However, local community was ignored again and many activities of project carried out individually by the contractor.

Neglecting local community, project contractor failed to identify and address some problems of local requirements; a notable setback was ownership challenges, farmers who had changed rangelands to farms and lived on their agricultural activities, did not accept to give their farms away. Nevertheless stakeholder did not succeed to come to an agreement to resolve the challenges and share benefits.

Promoting local community's participation, SGP facilitators and experts suggested setting up a trust fund which started its activity by paying small loans to local businesses. Unfortunately even local trust fund did not manage to engage local community in the project.



- Project Time Frame: 2003 to 2005
- Project Location: Bozghoush Mountains, Mianeh township, East Ajerbaijan Province
- Grant: \$23,000
- Grantee: Mountain Environment Protection Society
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Alternative range and pasture management methods for the protection of wild (endemic) plant species in Agro-pastoral societies of North West Zagros Mountains (Bozghoush)

IRA-G52-2002-015(IRA 98 G 52)

During a Small Grants Programme planning grant in Bozghoush, many remote green villages of the area including Kalhor Valley, Varzeghan, Bloukan, Nashagh, Tousemanlou... were visited. In the visits through cooperation of local community and based on indigenous knowledge, samples of local plants were selected and dried systematically. Many photographs were taken from over 500 species only in south foothills of Bozghoush Mountains.

In addition to above mentioned activities and identifying garbage disposal problems in the village, some interested inhabitants of the village decided to introduce a pilot plan for rural garbage disposal activities.

Participation of Beneficiaries of Gavan-Gazi Vegetation in Conservation and Reaping of this Species in the Zagros

IRA/SGP/OP4/RAF/09/02(111)

Along side Zagros Mountains, hundred thousand hectare of rangelands is covered by Gavan Gazi as the main vegetation in the area which has a significant impact on soil protection and prevents land erosion and desertification. In Faridan area in the border of Charmahal o Bakhtiary and Isfahan provinces, this spicy is very important in natural ecosystem and soil protection. Gavan Gazi is the only host for *Cyamophila discora* Loginova, insect which produces Gaz e Angabin, and main source of income for nomads and inhabitants of the region. Overexploitation, livestock grazing and burning Gavan Gazi as fuel has destroyed these rangelands during the past years. Desertification has also decreased beneficiaries' income and made them migrate to cities.

According to importance of this region's vegetation, protection activities for Zagros forests are inevitable. Social forest management in protecting and rehabilitating of Zagros forests as well as considering requirements of forest inhabitants leads to sustainable development of natural resources.

- Project Location: Fereydoon Shahr in Isfahan Province and Ab Barik in Charmahal o Bakhtiary Province
- Grant: \$40,000
- Grantee: INSTITUTE of VOLUNTEER COOPERATION for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity





Poverty reduction, providing livelihood facilities and capacity building

Preservation of Bustards through Community Participation *IRA-G52-2003 & 2007-033(IRA98G52)*

Since poor people put much more pressure on their environment to make their living, poverty is a big challenge for environment. In such cases introducing alternative livelihoods might be an effective solution to environment threats. Some projects in Zagros region tried to attract local communities' participation through introducing alternative livelihoods and promoting their motivation to protect their environment as a result.

Minab town in Fars province is one the main habitants of Bustards. This spicity is very interested by hunters because of its beauty and high quality meat. Illegal hunting and smuggling Bustard to Arabic countries as well as low awareness of people in regard with its threats has seriously endangered this spicity. According to *International Union for Conservation of Nature reports, Bustard is within vulnerable group now.*

Above mentioned threats to Bustards, made Women's Islamic Institute to start a project in Qalatuyeh village, Fars Province in order to raise public awareness on the spicity, sensitize local community and protect it through local community participation. In 2003, when project started, there were only 50 birds observed in the area.

Overpopulation and low development indicators in the village, convinced project grantee to mainly focus on poverty reduction and local development. Consequently local communities were formed and alternative livelihoods were introduced to small groups of inhabitants.

- Project Location: Fadami, tashkouyeh, Mehrabad, Ghalatuyeh Villages, Darab Division, Fars Province, Zagros Region

- Grant: \$28,000

- Grantee: Women's Islamic Institute

- GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Educative activities

Meeting project main objective, part of project activities provided training sessions to introduce the spicity, its threats and protection methods. Following to trainings,

villagers formed 8-member watch groups and companied legal authorities to search, find and collect traps in the area. These activities not only reduced number of traps but also restricted hunters' activities.

**Alternative livelihoods and inter-sectional cooperation in the project**

General trainings on garbage disposal, healthy environment and hygienic water were also provided to inhabitants in workshops, books and notes. This project and the local trust funds set up in the project empowered local team activities and promoted participation of villagers and legal authorities.

Introducing practical alternative livelihoods was the primary target of project team to prevent hunting Bustards, therefore project executors had many negotiations with local authorities to set up trust funds and provide marketing facilities for local products upon training local community.



Policy Impacts

In addition of applying various approaches to attract cooperation of local community, Zagros projects group has notably developed implementers' negotiation skills with local and national authorities. In some projects including Galazani, which was introduced as the best national project on natural resources, and Gavan Gazi project, where baseline studies were performed in close cooperation with Agricultural-Jihad Organization, governmental authorities were completely involved in the project.

Study phase of the project "Participation of beneficiaries of Gavan Gazi vegetation in conservation and reaping of this species in Zagros altitudes" completed through participatory meetings with Isfahan Province agricultural-Jihad Organization and lasted a year to identify existing Gavan Gazi species and reproduction insect and their exploitation. One of the main achievements of this project was conducting training workshops on area evaluation study, spicing spread, capacity development, attracting beneficiaries' cooperation and close cooperation with governmental organizations and finally selecting appropriate sites for project implementation.

Stakeholders' cooperation including governmental and non-governmental organizations, local and academic authorities is quite notable in "Traditional Forest Management in Havareh_khol Village", Karafs e Kouhi, Bozghoush and Gavan Gazi projects. These projects not only empowered the base of local livelihoods through sustainable exploitation of natural resources as a result of rehabilitation of indigenous knowledge, but also attracted attention and cooperation of governmental authorities and research centres.

Cooperation with universities

Achievements of number of Small Grants Programme projects indicate successful interaction between executive bodies, local communities and university. A noteworthy example of these achievements is recognition and rehabilitation of indigenous knowledge on natural resources and developing that knowledge using modern science and techniques which is a consequent of cooperation of natural resources experts. Identifying and registering plant and animal species using scientific standards, recognizing economic value of natural resources respecting to sustainable exploitation of them, validating some traditional techniques of exploiting natural resources and reintroduction of important role of ecosystem in inhabitants livelihoods are remarkable results of university involvement in projects.

Proposing university dissertations and theses on potentials introduced by SGP projects is another outcome of this cooperation. A total number of 12 dissertations and theses are prepared in masters and PhD levels in Armardeh and Havareh_Khol forests as well as Fereydoon Shahr and Bozghoush rangelands and village architecture.

University

Domestication of rural spaces underlying sustainable rural tourism was a master's degree dissertation in Tehran University succeeded to introduce a pattern for rural ecotourism based on indigenous architecture through presence in the area and close cooperation with Khafr project teams.

**Mr. Sabbaghi's Dissertation:
Guidelines for sustainable
planning and design to-
wards promoting sustain-
able rural tourism develop-
ment in 2007**

In this project, master's degree for urban designing in Tehran University was proposed to prepare Guidelines for sustainable planning and design towards promoting sustainable rural tourism by Mr. Hamid Reza Sabbaghi and supervision of Dr. Bahraini.

Promoting sustainable rural ecotourism, this research studied and analysed Physical-spatial aspects of Khafr village, one of 22 target villages of ecotourism in Iran, as a pilot site.

Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs)

Migrating nomads have always been in focus of Small Grants Programme as a vulnerable group which has important role in conservation of natural resources especially rangelands.

First project with nomads was conservation of Char tang-e Koushk-e Zar wetland in Eghlid township through Kouhi tribe of Qashghaie nomads.

Although this wetland and Namdan rangeland territories have traditionally been under control of different tribes of the area (especially Shesh Billy nomads), during the past decades and due to implementation of some policies, parts of the area have been changed to farmlands by nomads and villagers.

In addition, changes in consumption patterns in recent years have seriously damaged the wetlands. Application of chemical detergents and non-recyclable wastes are examples of these damages.

Those changes in the area brought up worries among inhabitants, Council for Sustainable Livelihoods of Kuhi Sub-Tribe and visitors. Therefore being introduced to Small Grants Programme, Council for Sustainable Livelihoods of Kuhi Sub-Tribe proposed a project to conserve Koushk zar Wetland and its natural attractions in cooperation with Centre for Sustainable Development.

Protection of Char Tang-e Kushk-e Zar Wetland towards a Community Conserved Area with the participation of Kuhi Sub-tribe in Eghlid Township, Fars Province (Zagros Region)

Implementation method:

Protection of Char Tang-e Kushk-e Zar Wetland through community management was designed and planned based on Indigenous people conservation territories principles.

Project Time Frame: 2004 – 2007

Grant: \$25,000

Grantee: Community Investment Fund of the Council For Sustainable Livelihoods of Kuhi Sub-Tribe (CIF-CSL) with the technical assistance of Centre for Sustainable Development

GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

However, due to involvement of some governmental and non-governmental groups, parts of project were collaboratively managed and awareness raising and information sharing activities came to focus for governmental authorities and project objectives and their role in the frame of regulations were discussed. Within discussions it was mentioned that although Department of Environment is known as the owner and manager of the wetland, traditionally real owners are nomads who are inhabited in the region. Collaborative management succeeded to attract trust of stakeholders in the project.

In Zagros Region another project of rehabilitation of indigenous management of area and natural resources in upside-down tulips zone, conservative-livelihood territory of Hamuleh sub-tribe, Bakhtiary kinship, is in progress.

This area is covered by unique vegetation in Zagros range and Zard Kouh foothills. There are 350 plant species which grow only in this part of the world.

Nowadays due to climate and social changes, spring plants which grow in the early spring snows such as medical herbs and upside-down tulips, are in danger. Therefore it seems to be quite vital to identify appropriate conservative actions corresponding to region specific considerations including protection time frame, ecologic-biodiversity interactions, soil, species food chain, impact of species on each other as well as their importance for nomads and other interested groups.

This project aims to attract all stakeholders' cooperation (governmental and non-governmental) to protect upside-down tulips area through Hamuleh sub-tribe, Bakhtiary kinship.

Nomads are friends of the nature, if we stop being kind to the nature, it will definitely stop to be kind to us too.

Sayyad Soltani (Peace be upon him) the head of Council for Sustainable Livelihoods of Kuchi Sub-Tribe, Qashghaie kinship

Outcomes of nomad projects and their impact on protection of biodiversity and sustainable livelihood for migrating nomads as well as their enthusiasm in Small grants Programme projects convinced the programme to promote migrating nomads participation in projects to conserve rich biodiversity of Azerbaijan and Zagros regions. Considering nomads lifestyle and long distance between their summer and winter sites and dependency of region ecosystem, location of projects are going to be the migrating path of nomads.

Implementation Method

Although implementation in the form of small conservative projects, failed to identify wider scope of the plans in some cases, project teams were able to improve their project activities through learning in practice. This approach which is widely used in Small Grants Programme is called Participatory Action Research (PAR). In PAR technique, groups identify a problem and try to find a solution to that. During this process they observe their achievements and try to improve their activities in each failure (Rory O'Brien). Under this condition, all stakeholders are mobilized and project activities sustainability is more probable.

Since this method is not only focused on data gathering and analyzing, it provides us with various research tools. Data gathering, attendees' observation reports, questionnaire surveys, participatory learning, participatory rural evaluation, structured and semi structured interviews and focused group discussions are some of the tools applied in this method.

Since participatory action research is done in real conditions and highly depends on communication between implementers, some ethical considerations are vital during the execution. Respecting all parties, reliability, consensus, participation, accepting criticism, trust ability, fair judgment and sharing available information are important issues which have been noticed in participatory action research.

Projects' sustainability (replication, scaling up, scaling out)

Conservation and protection projects' sustainability is one of the most challenging issues for project teams. Although there are some different ways to ensure a project sustainability, during the past years replication, scaling up and scaling out are mainly used in small grants programme as sustainability strategy and as a basis for considerable number of new projects. In this context, each project has got an independent entity; however, in project approving policy, neighbouring projects or similar projects within the country are given more attention.

Consequently, implementing projects in specific region promotes social mobilization and develops capacities and capabilities of stakeholders in the area.

Applied tools and techniques

Ethical principles



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