



drynet

www.dry-net.org

No. 1

June 2011

News from Drynet

A global initiative giving future to drylands

Drynet is a project of 14 organizations from all over the world. They work together to combat land degradation

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PUBLISHED BY
Society For
Conservation And
Protection Of Environment
www.scope.org.pk



Supported by:

This Newsletter is funded by the PSO



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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Drynet Update

Drynet -2 Bolivia Meeting Report:

Welcome to the first issue of "News from Drynet", a newsletter from the Drynet network on global concerns for drylands from local perspectives. This issue highlights the topic of drynet - II kick of meeting in Bolivia.

Due to current climatic changes and destructive land use, drylands are degrading faster than ever. Developing countries bear the brunt of this process, resulting in poverty and migration.

Since most drylands lie in marginalised, rural areas where few investments are made by central decision-makers and donors, communities themselves have a rich experience in developing their own solutions to the challenges of land degradation and drought. Many of these solutions are innovative and deserve more attention, as the largest investments in drylands still come from the local people themselves. Communities come up with their own management and delivery systems with relatively low overhead costs, and contribute labour, materials and skills. In other words, desertification could be tackled much more cost-effectively if local knowledge and action are taken into account when looking for solutions.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are recognised to play an important role in mobilising and supporting communities in their efforts to combat desertification. They are often also in touch with decision-makers at various levels in their country and abroad, making them potentially a crucial nexus between local land users and national decision making. Therefore, **Drynet** is focusing on building capacities of CSOs working in drylands across the globe.



The partners in **Drynet** all work in different countries, but have observed similar issues of concern:

1. Dryland development and resource rehabilitation feature low on both the national political agendas and the agendas of donor agencies. CSOs have a potentially crucial role to play in getting these issues higher on the agendas;
2. Policy frameworks that should ensure political and budgetary attention for drylands have had little effect so far, and

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should therefore be integrated into general development processes and aid agreements;

3. The majority of CSOs working in drylands are strong in working with approaches and strategies to combat land degradation locally, but weak in linking their successes to a wider political context and players;

4. There is in general a need for integrating environment issues in development cooperation frameworks;

5. CSOs - and many times the administrations as well - are not aware of, and are not able to utilise, the interconnection between the different development cooperation frameworks;

6. There is limited access for CSOs to information on best practices and the most recent, cutting edge research results local successes that could inspire others stay local instead of being spread and used to design innovative or replicate successful projects;

7. There is limited CSO capacity in project development and management techniques to transfer ideas into feasible and bankable projects;

8. Policy makers and donors sometimes consult with CSOs, but CSOs are no structural partners in the process. CSOs in drylands lack capacity to become structural partners in order to make the desired changes;

9. The knowledge about and experience with methodologies to facilitate participation in planning processes differ widely in the affected countries;

10. In most dryland regions in the world, CSOs working on sustainability and poverty reduction are not working

together and are not organized to have a larger impact together towards policy makers and donors.

In order to contribute to countering dryland degradation, 14 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from all over the world joined forces in 2007 in a programme called **Drynet**. To effectively counter degradation, local organisations and communities living in drylands should be at the heart of the effort. Unfortunately, their involvement in the national and international arenas of decision-making is often very low-key. By directly reaching out to local groups, **Drynet** intends to readress the current imbalance.

The first **Drynet** programme ended in 2009. The three-year networking and capacity building initiative aimed to strengthen the voices of local dryland communities through their organisations and was financed by the European Union, the Global Mechanism and the project partners themselves. By involving civil society groups in local and national development and planning processes, **Drynet** has successfully build a foundation for civil society across the world to strengthen its position in the struggle to sustainably manage drylands.

Drynet II 'A springboard to promote resilience in drylands' officially started its second phase on January 1, 2011 with the financial support of the Swiss Development Cooperation. In this second phase, the Drynet program continues to provide a unique opportunity for 14 CSO's around the globe to work together to promote the interest of dryland communities and dryland ecosystems.

The overall goal for Drynet II is to "enable CSOs to play a key role to improved livelihoods of dryland communities through capacity building,

knowledge sharing and advocacy".

Drynet II currently implementing by Both ENDS Netherlands, CAREC Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan/Turkmenistan, CARI France, CENESTA Iran, DCG/DCG Mali, EMG South Africa, ENDA TM Senegal, GRET Madagascar, LPPS India, OLCA Chile, PROBIOMA Bolivia, SCOPE Pakistan, TENMIYA Mauritania and TEMA Turkey.

The Drynet II kick-off meeting took place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia on Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th of January 2011. Drynet "A springboard to promote resilience in drylands", in short Drynet II, is financed by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and officially started on January 1st, 2011.

The meeting was followed by a two-day training '*Drynet: Effectively sharing experiences across cultures*' given by Jitske Kramer.

The first two days allowed the network to reflect, discuss and take important decisions on our work as a network in Drynet II. The opening ceremony of this event was attended by Cesar Altamirano, the representative of the UNCCD focal point in Bolivia. He addressed the importance of CSO input in national planning, referring to the fact that in Bolivia, Drynet achieved that 50 CSO's have given input in national planning. In the afternoon we visited the laboratory of the Bolivian partner PROBIOMA, that works intensively on biological pest control and land restoration. Field visits and exchange are extremely valuable in an international network, as network members have the chance to learn and share amongst each other. This can be truly inspirational!

The two day meeting was followed up by a training on intercultural communication. Working in an international network, where we face

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time distance, geographic distance and cultural distance, brings a range of challenges in our work. This training addressed these challenges by using practical examples and by opening a discussion on how we can improve our cooperation in an intercultural setting. Questions like “how do we keep each other motivated when we are back in our own countries” or “how do we keep the inspiration of the network alive” were key questions raised. Also issues of difference in communication styles were discussed, resulting in the development of a set of 'golden rules' for our communication. By using these tools we will have a stronger and more active network.

Based on the experiences with the previous Drynet structure, the network structure will be Slightly adapted in Drynet-2.

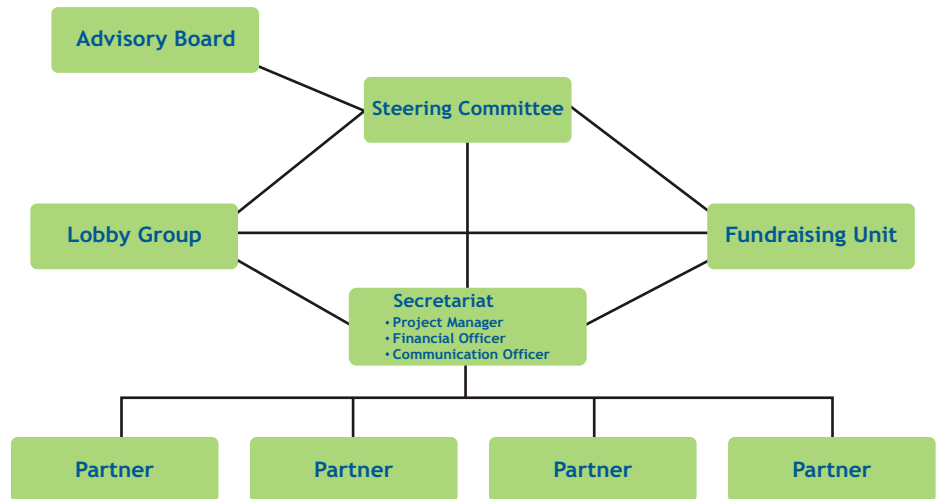
The new committees will be composition on following committees;

- Steering Committee
- Lobby group
- Secretariat/advisory Board/Communication officer/Fundraising Group

In this meeting all members set clear TORs for above groups, so that they can work smoothly. Members also make new organogram for Drynet -2.

The meeting has been an inspiring experience for all of us. There is a vibrant network and members look forward to continuing to work with different stakeholders on dryland issues in Drynet II. We can say that Drynet II has been launched and the network is on track and ready to take off and 14 Drynet partners will take this networking and capacity building

DRYNET II Functional Organogram



initiative in order to start overcoming these issues - beginning in their own countries.

SCOPE fighting desertification, mitigating drought effects in Thar!

Tharparkar: Fast expanding desertification and drought in Thar, caused by unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, loss of vegetation cover and reduced rains, has gravely threatened survival of the livestock, local people and wildlife in the area. *But the initiative 'Combating Desertification Through Agro and Pastoral Forestry Approaches in Semi-arid Tharparkar District', which have been lunched by the Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE) in support with the Drynet International, Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and the World Food Program (WFP) have not only helped reduce pace of the desertification but also protect survival of the man and the beast.*

There are several people have benefited from the initiative and have shown significant improvement in their socio-economic life thanks to strengthening of their livelihoods. Noor Mohammad Hingorjo, a 46 years old livestock farmer in Mehari village of Mithi taluka, was reeling under severe impacts of desertification and intermittent

droughts in the semi-arid Tharparkar district. Noor Mohammad Hingorjo narrated:

“I was seriously worried on rapidly depleting natural resources including water and vegetation, which are sources of the survival of the man and our livestock. But, economic support in shape of pastoral farm, help in managing it and capacity building for better and efficient depleting water resources for livestock and the agriculture saved me and my family from slipping into a trap of hunger, poverty and malnutrition” He now looks after 3,300 indigenous trees of different species and has grown fodder at his pastoral farm in the village. Sharing impacts of the pastoral farm, livestock farmer Noor Mohammad said: “The trees have helped check desertification by stabilizing moving sand dunes in the area in and around the pastoral farm, and his livestock stock has grown healthy and multiplied due to continuous supply of fodder from the pastoral farm spread over more than two acres.

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He said that initially SCOPE had provided him with 740 seedlings of different tree species in 2008, which have grown as high as 6 feet while some of them up to 7 feet. During last two years from the day I started to work on the pastoral farm, the number of my livestock has increased to 26 from 13.

Major tree species being promoted by SCOPE under the desertification control and drought mitigating effects initiatives include Beri, Gugral, Kumbhat, Kandi, Neem, Peepal, Manjhali Lemon, Papaya, Cheko and olive. "Rise in livestock number has also strengthened my livelihood and I am no more landless," he tells Pakistan Times in an euphoric tone.

Yaqoob Meyano of Bandhan Las village in Mithi is another beneficiary of the program. He narrated:

"I have planted different fruit and other indigenous trees as well as different vegetables. However, I have started eking out his livelihood by selling fruits and the vegetables in the local market while the fodder I cultivate has improved health of my livestock"

He said that before he started working on my agro-forestry farm, on which forest trees have also been planted to stop desertification and lessen drought effects, he used to earn my livelihood by rearing livestock. "But, depleted vegetation cover in our village, caused by reduced rains, depleting underground water resources, proved threatening to the survival of livestock of mine and other households in my village", he recalled.

However, this agro-forestry is not only

providing fodder for our livestock but also source of income. In addition, the indigenous forest trees planted at my farm has also stopped desertification in our village, expanding at a threatening pace.

The SCOPE has introduced pastoral farming in some 20 villages and agro-forestry in 12 villages situated in the Mithi taluka near Rann of Kuchh area.

"Basically we have introduced these initiatives in the areas on experimental basis, where desertification was at rise," said Bharumal Armani, SCOPE's coordinator in Mithi. Talking about primary goals of the agro and pastoral farming, the initiative 'Combating Desertification Through Agro and Pastoral Forestry Approaches in Semi-arid Tharparkar District' Bharumal Armani said that checking desertification, mitigating drought effects, strengthening livelihoods of those, who are depended on livestock and agriculture farming for incomes, checking tree cutting, halting unsustainable use of natural resources including vegetation, protection of the local wildlife, sustainable use of rangeland resources and improving socio-economic conditions of the locals as an integral part of drought mitigation for livelihood through community development plan are the fundamental objectives of the program.

According to data provided by SCOPE officials at the Mithi office, some 18,000 different local fruit and forest trees have been planted at the pastoral and agro-forestry farms over last two years. Bharumal Armani said that even these trees can survive in tough drought conditions once they are fully grown up and it takes some three years for these trees to become fully-grown trees.

Some beneficiaries of the program have



said that they need windmills and drip irrigation systems for supply as they have to walk long distances to fetch water for their farms.

Ali Akbar Rahimo of the Association for Water, Applied Education and Renewable Energy (AWARE) has said that underground water table at most of the pastoral and agro-forestry farms, provided by the SCOPE, is not deep beyond 36 to 40 feet. He said:

"However, establishing windmills and solar-powered water pumping machines is a viable option and can help rid the beneficiaries of the program of bringing water from distant dugwells through different sources"

Ali Akbar Rahimo said further that seeing the wind speed in the program areas, one could say for sure that windmills could be more viable and cost-effective option for bringing up the water from dugwells and supplied through drip irrigation to the pastoral and agro-forestry farms.

<http://www.pak-times.com/2011/06/26/scope-fighting-desertification-mitigating-drought-effects-in-thar/>

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