

Report for Minority Rights Group on the evaluation of its Programme to promote the rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia through training, skills exchange and reports

Mike Dottridge, 5 February 2009

1 Introduction

This MRG programme, “Promoting the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia through training, skills exchange and reports”, ran from 2002 until 2006. It involved MRG working with organisations representing or themselves working closely with indigenous or tribal communities in seven countries in Asia (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand). It focused on advocacy activities and capacity building.

2 Methods used by the consultant

I received a large number of documents generated during the programme, some printed and some on a CD, for review. These included donor reports, activity reports and internal memos exchanged by MRG staff about the progress of the programme and about obstacles encountered. In addition, I sought extra information on the Internet that would clarify what the results of some programme activities were. For example, once I learnt that an alternative report had been presented to members of the Human Rights Committee after two meetings in Thailand, I downloaded the Committee’s concluding observations to assess if and how these had been affected by the alternative report.

I visited three countries – India (Ahmedabad and New Delhi), Nepal (Kathmandu) and Thailand (Chiang Mai) – and talked directly (and sometimes by phone) to members of organisations in these three countries who had been involved in the programme. In these three countries I tried to contact and get comments from people who had not been involved in the programme but who could be expected to know about its impact or about the progress that indigenous and tribal organisations were making at the time the activities were implemented. I was somewhat successful in these attempts in Thailand, but not in India or Nepal. In part the lack of success was due to my asking for ideas on whom to talk to from MRG’s partners when I met them, meaning that there was little time to set up a meeting before my departure. However, there was also fair clear reticence from some of those I contacted to open up and give comments to an evaluator whom they did not already know.

Following these visits I tried to arrange telephone interviews with programme participants in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Philippines. Fortunately I was able to talk to one of the relevant people from Indonesia while I was in Thailand, as she was working in Bangkok at the time I visited Thailand. In all three

countries I sent a list of the questions I wished to raise to individuals suggested by MRG. In Bangladesh the principal person (and author of an MRG report) indicated that he was too busy. I was able to obtain some information from someone else he suggested (who had attended the Bangladesh Roundtable), by exchanging a series of e-mails (when the telephone line proved too poor to use), but received with little feed back about the author's perceptions of the impact of *Traditional Customary Law and Indigenous Peoples in Asia*.

I was able to talk by phone to only one of the two people I contacted in the Philippines. I was able to obtain additional information about the activity organised in Indonesia from a Yahoo messenger exchange with the former director of AMAN: he preferred this format to a telephone conversation. MRG did not suggest anyone to talk to in Malaysia and I did not make any contacts there.

I also talked by phone to one former MRG staff member, Minnie Degawan, who was involved in managing the programme in Southeast Asia (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand) during 2003 and 2004. MRG's Asia regional programme coordinator, Shelina Thawer, responded to my repeated requests for new information or clarification and other MRG staff also responded patiently to all my questions.

A draft of this report was submitted to MRG in October 2008. Its staff suggested reasons for changing a number of points. This final report incorporates the proposed changes that I felt were justified.

3 Observations on the achievement of the project's activities

The project was planned to have six sets of activities. The project logframe summarised these as follows.

ACTIVITY 1 4 thematic Roundtables will be held in 4 countries (according to need), for up to 35 participants at each.
ACTIVITY 2 4 Skills Exchange / Training workshops will be held in 4 countries for up to 25 people at each.
ACTIVITY 3 Local follow up activities, including publication and wide dissemination of the report of each of the 4 Roundtables (1,000 copies each) and the report of each Skills Exchange/Training workshop (again 1000 copies each), and of their translations.
ACTIVITY 4 Publication and wide dissemination of 2 thematic reports on issues relevant to indigenous and tribal peoples (2,000 copies each)
ACTIVITY 5 Participants engage in networking, joint lobbying and advocacy at a country-level.
ACTIVITY 6 Facilitation of the participation of up to 28 indigenous and tribal communities' representatives at international fora.

However, no resources were allocated to Activity 5, which was described as a continuation of Activity 3 – local follow-up activities. As a result, most implementation reports reported on only five activities. For the purpose of this evaluation, Activity 5 is subsumed into Activity 3.

Activity 1. Roundtables

4 thematic Round Tables will be held in 4 countries (according to need), for up to 35 participants at each.

The four Roundtables accounted for 29 to 32 per cent of the costs of all the (direct) activities, excluding MRG's own costs.

The project proposal said that, "The round table workshops, which will be based around particular themes, will focus on ways to foster intercommunal cooperation, share an understanding of mutual concerns and discuss the status and implementation of existing national and international standards and mechanisms".

Roundtable 1 was held in Sarawak, **Malaysia**, in September 2003, a three-day regional meeting on Globalisation and Security issues and their impact on indigenous peoples. There were 11 participants from Sarawak, but only one from peninsular Malaysia. A substantial number of invitees were denied visas to Sarawak: four people from Burma, India and the Philippines and also two expected participants from peninsular Malaysia. This measure evidently surprised the organisers, particularly the inability of those from peninsular Malaysia to attend.

There were two to four participants each from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Philippines.

The Roundtable was on the theme of 'Globalization and Security and the impact on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples'. The 29 participants reviewed the impact of both globalization and recent 'anti-terrorist measures' on indigenous peoples and activists.

The organisers felt it was disappointing that eight expected participants were denied visas and could not participate in the meeting and offer their perspectives on the issues. The focus on the impact of anti-terrorist measures nevertheless led to Follow-up activity 1 in the Philippines, giving attention to the effects of the government's anti-terrorism policy on indigenous peoples.

Roundtable 2 on "Emerging Issues of Indigenous Peoples in **Bangladesh**" was held on 24 and 25 March 2005 in Dhaka. Forty five people (34 men and 11 women) participated, ten of whom financed their own participation. Initially there was a plan to hold a series of regional consultation meetings within Bangladesh prior to the Roundtable in order to identify key themes and devise an agenda. Due to financial and time constraints however, a single

preparatory meeting was held in Dhaka just two days prior to the event, which included 12 participants (all men) representing the different regions.

The Roundtable reviewed developments since a previous conference funded and organised by MRG in 1997. Three key themes were identified for discussion: land and forest rights, the right to self government and networking among participating organisations. The Roundtable adopted 28 recommendations on these and other issues.

Various problems were encountered in organising the meeting, as no NGO representing an indigenous or tribal community was entitled to receive funds from abroad (i.e., from MRG). Another NGO, Nijera Kori, agreed to receive funds from MRG and manage them, but still had to get approval from the government's NGO Affairs Bureau to hold the conference. This was given only received a few days before the conference started. The funds arrived from MRG relatively late, because of this late approval, without which it could not act. This created a series of difficulties.

Less women participated than initially planned (they accounted for a quarter of all the participants). This seems to have been due in part to the way that each community attending was invited to send just one representative: most chose a male delegate. Further, the women who did attend were not initially given much opportunity to participate. The MRG participants reportedly expressed concern about this to the organisers at the end of the first day and women's participation reportedly increased on the second day.

Nevertheless, the Roundtable brought together organisations which did not usually work together closely and issued a public statement calling for constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. There were talks about setting up a National *Adivasi* Committee, but nothing definite was agreed by the end of the Roundtable.

Roundtable 3 was on "Finding Practical Solutions in Addressing the Problem of Citizenship Granting for Highland Ethnic People in **Thailand**" and was held in Chiang Mai in June 2005. It occurred six months after the skills exchange mentioned under Activity 2 below, which was its precursor, along with a series of preparatory workshops financed by IWGIA (the Denmark-based International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs), and organised by IMPECT (Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand Association) and the HPT (Highland People Taskforce), held with different highland ethnic communities in Thailand during the first half of 2005.

The Roundtable was an opportunity for final consultations with highland community leaders over the text of an alternative report to be submitted the following month to the Human Rights Committee (on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Thailand). In addition to this assessment of the human rights situation for highland ethnic groups, another preparatory report considered at this Roundtable concerned children in Thailand who had no citizenship (prepared with funds from

NOVIB), as well as the publication (in Thai) which had resulted from the previous December's Skill Exchange training session.

The Roundtable was attended by government organisations as well as representatives of highland communities. It is reported to have represented an important stage in seeking solutions to the lack of Thai citizenship of many highland ethnic groups.

Roundtable 4 was held in the **Philippines** in April 2006. The 'National Summit on Indigenous Rights for Government Employees' was organised by two organisations: DINTEG (the Indigenous Peoples' Law Center) and COURAGE-Cordillera (a trade union for public sector workers). Over 20 trade union leaders and employees from government offices across the Philippines attended, along with indigenous rights activists.

This was reportedly the first time that leaders of the trade union representing government employees were mobilized around indigenous rights issues. It was also an opportunity for government employees from various parts of the country to share experiences and talk among themselves. The approach of the two constituencies participating in the meeting to selecting participants was evidently rather different: on the indigenous side, preference was given to grass roots activists; on the COURAGE side, the interest was to select workers' leaders, all or most of whom were men.

The Roundtable issued a public statement, calling for a review of the country's *Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act*. However, many of the participants seemed concerned primarily with issues closer to home for themselves as government employees – not just about indigenous peoples' rights.

Activity 2. Skills exchanges and training workshops

4 skills exchange / training workshops will be held in 4 countries for up to 25 at each.
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These activities accounted for about 24 or 25 per cent of the total costs of the programme's direct activities, excluding MRG's own costs.

Four skills exchange/training workshops were to be organised, each due to be attended by up to 25 indigenous leaders/activists and trainers drawn from partner organisations and the wider community. According to the project proposal, the four countries in which the meetings would be held were to be determined according to the need and the availability of civil and political space. The workshops were to examine the specific situations of indigenous and tribal communities in the context of relevant international and regional human rights standards. They were to provide a forum for participants to share techniques and experiences from utilising various strategic approaches in seeking indigenous and tribal rights.

In practice, one of the workshops was directly linked to a Roundtable (in Thailand) and functioned as a preparatory meeting for it. One workshop helped prepare the input of Asian indigenous rights activists to upcoming UN

meetings in Geneva and was not linked to developments in a particular country. The remaining two workshops, in India, and Indonesia, were autonomous meetings to strengthen the capacity of indigenous rights activists in the respective countries to carry out their work.

Workshop 1 was held in Chiang Mai, **Thailand**, in August 2003. It functioned as an Asia regional preparatory meeting for the upcoming session of the UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a focus of Activity 6.

Workshop 2 was held in **Indonesia** in September 2004 ('Skills Exchange Training on International Advocacy and Capacity building for Indigenous Peoples in Bali, Indonesia') and was organised mainly by Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), supported by Bina Swadaya (an Indonesian NGO that dealt with logistical issues for the meeting). The 21 participants came from all over Indonesia including Aceh, West Papua and Maluku. Only four of the 21 participants were women. They were described as 'new' activists and the session provided them with one week's training about national human rights institutions and international human rights mechanisms and meetings.

Most of the participants were reported to find it difficult to function in English. AMAN reportedly tried to select more women (than the four out of 21 ratio), but the majority of young people already identified as indigenous rights activists were said to be men and it proved impossible.

The activists who attended the workshop are reported to have acted subsequently as a peer group, with several moving into leadership positions within Indonesia's indigenous rights movement (including in AMAN). They are reported to have found the workshop useful. Nevertheless, a range of administrative and organisational issues before, during and after the workshop are reported to have marred the relationship between AMAN and MRG. Instead of trust being built, the perception on the AMAN side is reported to have been that MRG was not fully committed to working for indigenous peoples rights. The reasons for this were difficult to fathom and are reported in section 6.2 below.

Workshop 3 was held in **Thailand's** northern city of Chiang Mai in December 2004, a training session on the 'Application of National and International Human Rights Instruments in Addressing the Problem of Human Rights Violations against Ethnic Highlanders in Thailand'. This was reportedly attended by 29 young indigenous activists (26 men and 3 women) and oriented towards youth and women (despite the small number of women who attended). Equally relevant, however, it was attended by a representative of Thailand's National Human Rights Commission (set up by the government, but relatively independent) and was an opportunity not just for training, but also to initiate a series of activities which occurred in 2005, notably the presentation of an Alternative Report to the Human Rights Committee which was scheduled in July 2005 to examine Thailand's record under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Workshop 4 for senior *Adivasi* activists and trainers (indigenous and tribal leaders) was held in Hyderabad, **India**, in August 2005. It was attended by 25 activists, indigenous and tribal leaders and covered a good range of age and gender. This was a meeting for *Adivasi* activists and trainers from central, north and south India, but largely excluding activists from North East India, the area most affected by armed conflict and by calls for autonomy and secession. I understood it was a deliberate decision not to involve activists from India's North East, on the grounds that their presence in Hyderabad would have made the meeting look politically rather more dangerous to government officials.

The workshop resulted in the publication of workshop report in English (June 2006) and Hindi. At the meeting, the participants received copies of a human rights training manual in both languages (though not all the texts of international law in English were translated into Hindi).

Activity 3. Local follow-up activities

Local follow up activities, including publication and wide dissemination of the Routable reports (1,000 x 4); and [reports] of skills exchange/training workshop (1000 x 4), and of their translations.

These activities accounted for about 12 to 14 per cent of the costs of direct activities, excluding MRG costs.

The project proposal anticipated that, "MRG will encourage the setting up of networks of trainers in each country, who will pass on knowledge and skills acquired in the skills exchange/training workshops. Networks will act as an information centre for their local communities, supplying information and resources on indigenous and tribal peoples rights on request. MRG will fund their follow up activities for other activists/members of the community through granting access to discrete amounts of money after receipt of an application detailing proposed activities. Follow up activities may include: training seminars, round table meetings with decision-makers, translations of human rights instruments into local languages, local community awareness-raising activities such as community meetings."

In practice, the follow-up activities took many different forms, responding to different needs and possibilities, and did not focus exclusively on developing expertise for training or a single network to act as a future resource.

Follow up Activity 1 occurred in the **Philippines** as a direct follow-up to the regional Roundtable 1 in Malaysia. Activists who had attended the Malaysia Roundtable organised a meeting to plan how to document cases of human rights abuses committed against indigenous peoples and to submit these as complaints to legal bodies in the Philippines. A total of 36 cases were filed with the Joint Monitoring Committee of the armed opposition National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Philippines government. No action was reported within the following year to address the cases by either the government or the NDF. However, the mobilizing of victims of human rights

violations and filing of cases in Manila was seen as a useful exercise and reportedly helped develop the awareness of the indigenous people involved of their rights.

Follow up Activity 2 occurred in Chiang-Mai, Thailand, in November 2004. Like Workshop 1, this was a (two day) regional preparatory meeting prior to the December UN session on the Draft Declaration. The discussions focused on strategies to use, particularly on how to persuade Asian governments to state their positions regarding the Draft Declaration. The participants agreed to lobby at national level in the short time before some attended the December sessions of the Working Group on the Draft Declaration.

Follow up Activity 3 was held in New Delhi, **India**, in August 2005, at almost the same time as a Skills exchange/training workshop in Hyderabad (Workshop 4 under Activity 2 above). This was a National Consultation on the *Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill*, in August 2005, organised by the Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network (AITPN). It was attended by 36 participants representing indigenous and tribal NGOs from across India and a member of India's Parliament, of whom 11 (one woman, 10 men) were funded and supported by MRG to attend.

The meeting focused on a Draft Forest Rights Bill to recognise the rights of forest dwellers, which was under consideration in India's Parliament. At relatively short notice, the AITPN organised a National Consultation on the provisions of the Bill. Along with MRG's financial support, the meeting was supported financially by NCIV, a Dutch NGO, and attended by 34 people. This was not simply a meeting to encourage support for the Bill (which was enacted into law in 2006), but rather an emergency effort to head off opposition to the Bill from indigenous and tribal peoples' representatives from North East India, who feared that the provisions in the Bill concerning individual land ownership would undermine their own collective land rights.¹ In effect, it was a discussion between two different lobbies, both supporting indigenous and tribal peoples' rights, but potentially pushing in different directions. A report on the Consultation was published in October 2005. The Consultation achieved its purpose and apparently prevented significant opposition being voiced to the Bill from North Eastern lobbyists. This activity emphasised the importance of MRG keeping contingency funds available to support events of this sort. While all the events that might be important cannot be predicted in advance (or mentioned in a 'blue print' project plan), the general need to have funds available for such contingencies is clear and it is not apparent what sort of budget line can finance them unless it is included in a project in a rather unspecific way. Donors might hope that such contingencies can be financed by core funds which NGOs raise from the general public, but this would be unrealistic.

Follow up Activity 4 was held in **Nepal**. In practice this was a Roundtable type event. It involved two meetings, a preparatory event in June 2006 and a major conference in August 2006 organised by the Indigenous Nationalities

¹ According to Suhas Chakma, AITPN, 23 April 2008.

Peace Commission (INPC) on the topic of *Ensuring the effective participation of indigenous peoples in the peace process in Nepal*. This was an extremely timely event which took advantage of the political opportunities in Nepal that opened up as a result of mass protests in April 2006 and the ending of autocratic rule by the King. The conference reportedly brought together four different marginalised groups: indigenous ethnic groups, Madhesi (Madeshi) from the Terai, Dalits and one other. More than one thousand people are reported to have attended the three-day event in Kathmandu, making it larger, in quantitative terms, than any of the Roundtables. Each of the component groups was reported to have included a group of women who first held their own session and then compared their concerns and suggestions with the groups representing women from the other three communities, before bringing these to the attention of the conference as a whole.

By being arranged by the INPC, however, the conference largely excluded a significant indigenous organisation in Nepal, the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). MRG's Asia programme coordinator was aware of the need to involve both INPC and NEFIN and had taken steps to do so by also involving a third, apparently neutral Nepali NGO, INSEC. The programme coordinator's departure on sabbatical coincided with major political changes in Nepal that partially marginalised INSEC, however, meaning that it failed to respond to MRG's various messages. The replacement staff member consequently proceeded to set up a conference with INPC, unaware of the history of disagreement between the organisations or of the importance of involving NEFIN. As a result, NEFIN reportedly felt excluded and the conference was less inclusive than it might have been. Further, the representative of NEFIN, Om Gurung, reportedly suspected that MRG had been manipulated by the US Embassy in Nepal into excluding NEFIN. Despite these difficulties, two years later MRG's relations with NEFIN are reported to have been mended.

Activity 4. Publication of two thematic reports

Publication and wide dissemination of 2 thematic reports on issues relevant to indigenous and tribal peoples (2 x 2,000)
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These publications accounted for 10 per cent of the costs of direct activities excluding MRG costs. The publication of two thematic reports by MRG was intended to raise the profile of indigenous and tribal issues in Asia. The two reports supplemented an earlier report by MRG on *Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia*, published in 2003.

Thematic report 1 was published in March 2005 about *Traditional Customary Law and Indigenous Peoples in Asia*. The author was Raja Devasish Roy, a prominent indigenous activist in Bangladesh. The dissemination of the report was deferred until the executive summary (to accompany the report) was ready for publication in August 2005. MRG reported that it sent printed copies of the report to 950 leading legal and human rights academics, activists, UN personnel, government officials and opinion-formers. The evaluator saw two lists of recipients of the printed report: 325 academics and 245 advocacy

targets (i.e., a total of 570). It was noticeable that out of the 325 academics, just over 100 were based in Europe and 112 in the United States, but only 36 in Asia. Among the advocacy targets, an even smaller proportion were based in Asia (only three). It was clear that the largest proportion of these recipients were in UN offices in Geneva and New York. The focus on targets outside Asia reflected in large part the priority that MRG's partners felt should be given to influencing target audiences outside Asia itself.

In addition, the PDF version of this report was downloaded directly from MRG's web site. By March 2007 the report had reportedly been downloaded 1469 times, indicating that there were many more downloads during 2006 than in the year of publication, 2005, when there was just 344 downloads. However, even 344 was regarded by MRG as a substantial number at the time.

However, it is not clear that any of this dissemination was directed at indigenous peoples' organisations in Asia or at government officials in Asian governments with relevant responsibilities for policies affecting indigenous peoples. Staff at MRG recalled sending the report to organisations in Asia, but none of those visited by the evaluator recalled receiving them (which does not mean they did not get them – simply that they did not make a great impression or that they did not receive them). The author himself reported not receiving printed copies of the report until several months after its publication. He reportedly used the report as a source of information in 2006, when preparing a legal brief for a challenge in Bangladesh's High Court to the constitutionality of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord.

In summary, the report was sent to what, for MRG, was its relatively conventional audience for its reports, in part because its partners in Asia agreed that the main institutions and individuals who needed influencing were situated in Europe and North America, rather than in Asia itself. Evidence this conventional assumption, that institutions in Asia are less important or feasible to influence by published reports than those in Europe and North America, is one which needs to be reviewed regularly, so ensure that opportunities for influence in Asia (or other regions, such as Africa, Latin America and the Middle East) are not missed.

Thematic report 2 on *Good Governance and Indigenous Peoples in Asia* was issued in December 2005. The author was Lejo Sibbel, a Swedish activist on indigenous and labour rights. This focused on the activities of international and regional financial institutions and the commitments they had made to indigenous peoples in Asia. MRG reported that printed copies were sent in February 2006 to 950 addresses, including over 500 academics working in relevant fields and others who included government offices, international institutions, regional development institutions, regional NGOs and selected decision makers. The evaluator saw three lists of recipients of the printed version of this report: 74 academics, 91 general advocacy targets and 256 specific advocacy targets, totalling 421 recipients. The last of three lists makes it clear that a special effort was made to send the report directly to individuals in international and regional financial institutions (such as 13

people at the World Bank and three in the Inter-American Development Bank) in order to influence them and their institutions policies on indigenous peoples. However, there was no mention in the address lists that were reviewed of recipients in the Asia Development Bank (and, at the time of writing, the evaluator had only just asked for confirmation that copies were sent to the ADB).

Once again, copies of the PDF version of the report were downloaded from MRG's web site. By January 2007, there had reportedly been 511 downloads.

A minor issue of quality assurance on this publication is that on page 28 of both the printed version and the PDF, the source of Table 2 is given as "still to be added". This note was apparently overlooked when the report was finalised.

While these two reports were of a high standard, their dissemination does not seem to have been well coordinated with other parts of the programme, nor do indigenous rights organisations taking part in the programme seem to have taken part in their distribution. However, the evaluator did not find out if they had been asked to distribute copies or to suggest who should receive copies and forgotten that they had done so, or if they had been largely uninvolved.

The report on *Good Governance* dealt with issues which have a major impact on indigenous peoples and is one of several NGO initiatives to influence the policies of intergovernmental and international financial institutions relating to indigenous peoples. The evaluator was concerned that the report's title did not make it clear what the report was about and that this may have limited its impact.

Activity 5. General networking

Participants engage in networking, joint lobbying and advocacy at a country-level.

No financial allocation was made for this activity, which was associated with Activity 3 (local level activity) and seems more appropriate to consider as an integral part of Activity 3.

Activity 6. Participation at international meetings

Facilitation of the participation of up to 28 indigenous and tribal communities' representatives at international fora.

These activities accounted for about 20 to 22 per cent of the costs of direct activities, excluding MRG costs.

This activity involved MRG funding representatives of indigenous and tribal peoples and their organisations to attend three different UN meetings:

- the annual Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, which occurred until the UN Sub-

Commission on Human Rights was dissolved in 2006, along with its parent body, the UN Commission on Human Rights;

- the Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which continued to meet until the Human Rights Council, which replaced the Commission on Human Rights, adopted the Declaration;
- and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which was set up in 2000, with the first of its annual sessions held in 2002, shortly before the project started.

One representative was funded to attend the UN Human Rights Council which replaced the Commission on Human Rights. This activity also involved MRG support for two preparatory meetings mentioned earlier, which were held for Asian representatives before UN meetings (in Chiang Mai in March 2003 and November 2004 – Workshop 1 and Follow-up Activity 2). For example, the second of these two regional preparatory meetings was attended by 22 activists, 17 men and five women.

Indigenous representatives were also able to get support from a range of other organisations (UN and NGO) to attend UN meetings, so, in effect, for a couple of years MRG supplemented the funds available from other sources. The Asia preparatory meetings were jointly financed by IWGIA. These regional preparatory meets were said by the participants to be so popular that IWGIA was urged to replicate the experience (of regional meetings) in other regions and continued to support the Asia meetings after MRG had exhausted the resources that this project allocated and was unable to continue doing so. In February 2005, for example, a further 38 participants attended a preparatory meeting in India before the fourth session of the UN Permanent Forum.

This activity seemed to cause the most stress to MRG's administrative systems and to have prompted complaints that MRG did not reimburse travellers promptly or give them enough money to cover expenses while they attended UN meetings in Geneva or New York. In part this is because indigenous and tribal communities' representatives rarely have savings or capital with which to pay for expenses (such as flight tickets or travel costs to visit an Embassy and obtain a visa) themselves, and equally well lack the liquidity to wait for much time before they are reimbursed. This challenge may be slightly more acute for indigenous and tribal representatives than for representatives of other minorities, but the need to pay them expenses in advance and to reimburse rapidly is not unique.

However, the complaints also seem to have been prompted by the fact that representatives funded from other sources were held less accountable (notably did not have to submit written reports about what they did while attending UN meetings) or received slightly larger *per diem* payments while in Geneva and New York than they did from MRG.

The result was that MRG's practices caused a surprising level of complaint from representatives who were supported to attend international meetings and apparently also caused tensions within the NGO's office in London.

Already before the programme started in 2003, MRG's relations with one key regional NGO, the Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP), had become strained on account of complications surrounding reimbursement payments to indigenous representatives attending UN meetings in Geneva or New York or preparatory meetings in Asia. As a result, the AIPP board reportedly took a decision in 2003 to stop accepting funding from MRG.² The result was that, from 2004 onwards, MRG was deprived on the cooperation of this partner organisation in selecting and supporting indigenous representatives at international meetings. Further, representatives of organisations which did continue to accept funding from MRG seem to have become prejudiced against MRG. Section 5.2 comments further on this.

While those attending most UN meetings wanted to participate in general or thematic discussions about indigenous peoples' rights, in one case a representative of an NGO defending indigenous peoples' rights in the Philippines attended a UN meeting in Geneva in late 2006 specifically to inform the UN Human Rights Council that indigenous activists in the Philippines were being assassinated in an apparent effort to kill off indigenous leaders (after two leaders of the Cordillera Peoples' Alliance had been killed, one of whom had attended the Roundtable in April 2006). She delivered an oral statement to the Council. From late 2006 until mid-2008 there were no further reports of indigenous leaders been assassinated, though killings of other indigenous rights activists reportedly did continue.

4 Observations on the project's results

The project logframe lists six planned outcomes or results (while the project document mentions only five outputs). These were listed firstly as:

1. Representatives of indigenous and tribal communities have increased confidence, awareness of rights, ability to use tools, and expanded capacity to protect and promote their rights.
2. Networks of advocacy trainers are established, which can share knowledge with their communities.
3. New, specific tools to raise awareness of the issues and to strengthen the advocacy capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples are widely disseminated and used in advocacy initiatives.
4. Representatives of indigenous and tribal communities participate more effectively at international fora, resulting greater international recognition of their rights.
5. Increased links, understanding and cooperation amongst indigenous and tribal communities, and between them and the dominant community, and resulting increased recognition by the dominant community of the rights and needs of indigenous and tribal communities.

And secondly as:

OUTPUT 1

² Interview with Jannie Lasimbang of AIPP, 26 June 2008.

Increased links, understanding and cooperation amongst indigenous and tribal communities and between them and the dominant community, and resulting increased recognition by dominant community of the rights and needs of indigenous and tribal communities
OUTPUT 2 Representatives of indigenous and tribal communities have increased confidence, awareness of rights, ability to use tools, and expanded capacity to protect and promote their rights.
OUTPUT 3 Networks of advocacy trainers are established, which can share knowledge with their communities
OUTPUT 4 New, specific tools to raise awareness of issues and to strengthen advocacy capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples are widely disseminated, used in advocacy initiatives and achieve change of awareness.
OUTPUT 5 Participants engage in increased and improved advocacy/lobbying and networking activities in-country
OUTPUT 6 More effective participation of indigenous and tribal communities at international fora and resulting greater international recognition of their rights and needs

In this section, the results are reviewed initially under the terms of each of these ‘outputs’ (although the ‘outputs’ appear really to refer to what the evaluator considers to be ‘outcomes’). However, as the results are clearer when listed country by country, the second part of this section reviews the results in each country.

4.1 Results listed by ‘Output’

Output 1. Increased links, understanding and cooperation

Increased links, understanding and cooperation amongst indigenous and tribal communities and between them and the dominant community, and resulting increased recognition by dominant community of the rights and needs of indigenous and tribal communities
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In four out of the seven countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Thailand) there is evidence that the project activities established or strengthened links between indigenous/tribal activists. The evaluator did not obtain sufficient information from Malaysia to find out if this was so. In Nepal the links between organisations attending the August 2006 conference were certainly strengthened – but their links with NEFIN did not benefit. In Philippines links between indigenous activists and organisations of government employers were strengthened temporarily after the Roundtable, but the links do not seem to have lasted. Links between indigenous rights organisations benefited from the two other activities initiated in Philippines in response to violations of the rights of indigenous rights activists.

One of the activities in India specifically helped prevent divisions within the indigenous/tribal peoples' rights community.

The organisation of the Roundtable in Bangladesh promoted links between three NGOs presenting indigenous and tribal communities: the Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF), National Adivasi Coordination Committee (NACC) and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum (BAF). A member of one of them commented that it was positive that people from different organisations had met together and agreed on some specific recommendations. Asked whether the three organisations continued cooperating or would organise a similar meeting in the future, the same person commented, "I do not know if the same organizers will agree to work together in future".³

The Follow-up activity organised in Nepal in August 2006 (the conference on *Ensuring the effective participation of indigenous peoples in the peace process in Nepal*, organised by the INPC) resulted in the formation of a political front representing all the communities which had participated, the Broad National Democratic Republic Front, and was a launch pad for developments which resulted in the election to the Constituent Assembly (in April 2008) of significant numbers of both representatives of indigenous peoples and minorities and women from these communities. Although the broad alliance formed in August 2006 did not hold together subsequently, the joint strategic planning which occurred during the conference appears to have had a significant impact later on.

In five of the seven countries (India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand), there is evidence of positive contacts between indigenous/tribal communities and the dominant community and of their increased ability to influence the government or the dominant community. Examples are:

- The adoption in India of *The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006*.
- In Indonesia, one of the trained activists reportedly influenced local regulations on natural resources in South Sulawesi and another influenced local officials in Pasir District in East Kalimantan.
- In Nepal the August 2006 conference reportedly developed the ability of various participants to build links with other political groups in the run-up to Nepal's elections.
- In the Philippines, influence was mainly through complaints mechanisms at national and international level.
- In Thailand, the two meetings offered opportunities to build links with the national human rights commission and with government officials operating in the highlands.

Output 2. Increased confidence, awareness, ability and capacity

Representatives of indigenous and tribal communities have increased confidence, awareness of rights, ability to use tools, and expanded capacity to protect and promote their rights.

³ E-mail, MT, 7 October 2008.

There was evidence of enhanced confidence and ability to influence others in various countries, though it was difficult to ascribe this directly to participation at the meetings supported by MRG. It was more obvious that use was being made of new tools or knowledge when indigenous rights activists decided to make use of international human rights mechanisms, about which they had received information from MRG. The main example was in Thailand, with an activists preparing a report for the Human Rights Committee and travelling to Geneva to take part in the Committee's review of Thailand under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In Philippines, it was also evident, with an activists travelling to the first session of the UN Human Rights Council to present information about the murder of indigenous leaders.

Skills exchange 4 for senior *Adivasi* activists and trainers in India (August 2005) was reported to have resulted in improved confidence among the trainees. The 25 participants reported that they had gained in confidence, in particular to talk to government officials (it was particularly the women participants who reported this). Once again, it is questionable how much one skills exchange can achieve. One commentator in New Delhi observed that *Adivasi* activists require training in both administrative and evidence-gathering skills (to collect evidence about abuse) in order to improve and expand their work. He also felt they need to know to whom to pass information or make subsequent requests for advice and, to do so, need material assistance to improve their ability to communicate with both other activists and with organisations based in cities in India or abroad.

The Skills exchange in Indonesia in 2004 also generated the additional confidence and ability that was planned among a new generation of indigenous rights activists. It seems to have been an important stage in the training of these activists.

Output 3. Network of advocacy trainers

Networks of advocacy trainers are established, which can share knowledge with their communities

It was difficult for the evaluator to establish the extent to which individuals who were trained in advocacy techniques had remained in touch with each other or acted subsequently as trainers of others.

In India, it was evident that experienced indigenous leaders participated as trainers at the Hyderabad skills training in August 2005. For example, one of the trainers, Ashok Chaudhary, an indigenous leader from Gujarat, helped facilitate the skills training. In this sense, a network of indigenous trainers already existed in India – individuals know to MRG's partner, SETU. It is not clear that anyone who did not attend the various trainings in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand personally is aware of who has been trained or has sought to make use of their skills: personal contact and word of mouth remain more important than any central 'register' about who has been trained.

MRG reported making various attempts to establish a data base listing all the indigenous advocacy trainers in Asia. This represents a resource for MRG, but there were no reports that it has been used by other organisations.

Output 4. Dissemination of various 'tools'

New, specific tools to raise awareness of issues and to strengthen advocacy capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples are widely disseminated, used in advocacy initiatives and achieve change of awareness.

A variety of publications in English and other languages were produced during the course of the project. In addition to the two thematic reports issued by MRG itself, these were:

- Thailand. An alternative report was submitted to the Human Rights Committee (on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Thailand) and circulated to others.
- India. Participants at the Skills exchange received copies of a human rights training manual in English and Hindi. The workshop report was published in June 2006 in English and Hindi.
- India. A Report of the National Consultation on the draft Forest Rights Bill, 2005, was issued in October 2005 by the Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network.

Participants at the Skills training 4 in India in 2005 are reported to have particularly appreciated the publication in 2006 of the workshop report (notably seeing their own photographs in what they perceived to be a formal publication). The report was disseminated in English and Hindi, but no evidence was available to the evaluator to indicate whether it had contributed to achieving change or not. The evaluator wanted to find out whether the format of publications supported by MRG – relatively expensive-looking publications by local standards in India – was appropriate. He heard that some criticisms of the expensive paper used had been voiced, but there was an advantage in that publications had a longer shelf life than those printed on cheaper paper.

The Asia-based organisations which had taken part in the project and which were visited by the evaluator all appeared surprisingly ignorant of the publication of the two thematic reports that MRG published in 2005: *Traditional Customary Law and Indigenous Peoples in Asia* and *Good Governance and Indigenous Peoples in Asia*. This may have been because, when questioned in 2008, they had little memory of what had made an impact three years previously, in 2005. It may also have been because the partners had originally expected the reports to have an impact outside Asia, in Europe and North America, rather than in their own countries. However, it also implied that the two reports had not seemed particularly important to the organisations in Asia which were MRG's partners in this programme. Further, the evaluator was unable to talk to the author of one of the reports, based in Bangladesh, and consequently could not establish if the report made an impact in the author's own country.

These two thematic reports were directed at rather different audiences in comparison to the other activities that occurred in Asia. The consultant decided not to embark on a separate initiative to find out whether people who had received copies (most of whom were not Asia based) recalled the reports or could remember their impact, suspecting that, like MRG's partners in Asia, they would not recall anything significant after a gap of three years. However, it was disappointing that the Chiang Mai-based representative of another international organisation working for indigenous rights, IWGIA, had no memory of either of the reports.

Output 5. Increased and improved advocacy

Participants engage in increased and improved advocacy/lobbying and networking activities in-country
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It is clear that in all the countries involved in the project, with the possible exception of Malaysia (where the evaluator did not gather information), those who participated in the activities supported by MRG took part, before and after attending project activities, in advocacy for indigenous and tribal peoples' rights. It is more difficult to measure the value-added and to conclude whether the advocacy activities increased or were improved as a result. In Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand, it is apparent that there was some qualitative change and improvement.

Output 6. Effective participation at international meetings

More effective participation of indigenous and tribal communities at international fora and resulting greater international recognition of their rights and needs

Judged by the indicators listed in the programme's logframe,⁴ the fact that the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2006 and by the UN General Assembly in September 2007 suggests this Output was achieved. Furthermore, the support which this project gave to indigenous representatives to attend the UN Working Group discussing the Draft Declaration occurred at an opportune moment, just as substantial discussions about the Draft Declaration started (after years of delaying tactics by States opposed to the Declaration). However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the participation of any of those who attended meetings in Geneva contributed to the adoption of the Declaration. Indeed, MRG's own lobbying of the British Government (which it criticised publicly for its opposition to the draft Declaration) may have been as influential. The indicators listed in the logframe consequently appear too narrow and specific: the attendance of indigenous peoples' representatives at UN meetings focusing on indigenous peoples' rights should be considered an achievement in its own right, particularly if the person concerned returns home feeling that s/he has contributed to some UN decision-making process or learned anything useful from other indigenous representatives or even others.

⁴ One of the indicators was, "Positive changes in the opinions of governments currently opposing progress on the Draft Declaration".

Understandably, during the project MRG expected people attending international meetings to provide a report and feedback on their participation. MRG staff drew this expectation to the attention of all those who were offered financial support and explained that their expenses would not be reimbursed until they submitted a report, together with receipts justifying the expenses they reported incurring. Even so, some delegates seem to have been surprised by MRG's request for a report. As other international NGOs and the UN were known to have been supporting indigenous delegates to attend UN meetings for many years, it might have been possible to harmonise the methods used for paying expenses and asking delegates for reports with other donors, in order to avoid those receiving financial support from perceiving that some donors were "easier" or required less work than others – thus sparking resentment. However, even this might not have avoided some delegates complaining at the procedures that they had to follow.

One representative who had attended preparatory meetings in Chiang Mai commented that he did not think they achieved much. Even if an apparent consensus was reached on how 'Asian delegates' should vote (or what they should push for) at a UN meeting, once they arrived at the UN meeting in question, in Geneva or New York, other Asians, who had not attended the preparatory meeting, could voice different views. He felt, therefore, that it was not appropriate for Asian delegates at a preparatory meeting in Chiang Mai to draft and approve a statement for presentation at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, while he felt it was useful for a preparatory meeting to give guidance on particular points considered to require emphasis. This representative's views were not echoed by others. Once in New York, the Asian delegates had, of necessity, to discuss each issue with indigenous representatives from other regions. This does not make regional preparatory meetings redundant, but limits their scope.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was a relatively new institution when the project started and its role and influence not yet properly established. While it seemed appropriate to the evaluator for MRG to support the participation of indigenous representatives, it is too early to say whether this is resulting in a greater international recognition of the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, or rather a ghetto-isation of their concerns.

4.2 Results listed by country

Bangladesh

The Roundtable in 2005 built on the momentum created by a previous meeting held eight years before. It did not produce results at the level of changing government policy or wielding together a permanent alliance of indigenous and tribal organisations, but was a significant staging post.

India

In 2006 the Government of India adopted *The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006*. *Adivasi*

leaders reportedly lobbied for this and the skills training the previous year may have contributed to the success (although clearly many other factors contributed to the Act being passed, such as MPs' preoccupation with the number of *Adivasi* in certain areas and their potential impact, as voters, on election results).

Indonesia

Members of the peer group that attended the skills training workshop are reported to have remained active. One is now directing AMAN. One participant is reported to have been involved in redrafting a local-level official policy concerning relations with indigenous communities.

Malaysia

No results investigated.

Nepal

Although NEFIN felt excluded from the 2006 conference, the conference organisers felt it was a resounding success, empowering members of indigenous and tribal communities to make contributions to a new constitution for Nepal and to the political process that followed a peace agreement, right up to elections in 2008.

Philippines

The Roundtable was an effort to establish a working relationship between indigenous rights activists and trade union leaders. Although the meeting was positive, it is not reported to have resulted in an ongoing relationship between the two parties. It was reportedly difficult, from the indigenous activists' side, to find out what trade union activists did as a result of the meeting. In a few areas trade union activists reportedly established contact with local organisations representing indigenous peoples.

Since 2006, DINTEG has continued to work with some members of COURAGE in the Cordillera, particularly teachers. However, links have not been maintained with the leadership of the federation and it is not clear that it was appropriate for COURAGE to have asked its leaders (rather than grass roots activists) to attend the Roundtable.

Thailand

The two meetings organised in Chiang Mai in December 2004 and June 2005 helped bring about a cabinet resolution in August 2005, which represented one step along the path to recognising the right to citizenship of highland peoples and reducing violations of their human rights. Other initiatives on the issues of citizenship and human rights violations targeting highland peoples are ongoing. The training provided in December 2004 on using treaty-

monitoring bodies was not only useful in bringing about an Alternative Report to the Human Rights Committee in 2005, but has remained relevant, with the same actors participating in discussions (with government officials) about the State's report to CERD and intending to draft an alternative report when CERD reviews Thailand's record.

The key events occurred over a relatively short time, starting in late 2004 and concluding in mid-2005.

The first (Skills training 3) brought leaders of various Thailand highland ethnic groups together in December 2004 to review the procedures they could use at either national or international level to lodge complaints about human rights abuse and to press the government for remedies. This happened, apparently fortuitously, a few months after Thailand had submitted its initial report to the Human Rights Committee on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which had entered into force in Thailand at the beginning of 1997.

The second of the events funded by MRG occurred just over six months later, in June 2005. This was a Roundtable that focused on the question of citizenship (or the lack of it) for ethnic highlanders in Thailand. In practice, however, there was a series of other developments in the intervening six months, including a publication on stateless children, funded by another organisation, the drafting of an Alternative Report for the Human Rights Committee (the idea of which had come up at the December 2004 skills training) and a series of community consultations organised by the Highland Peoples Task Force (HPT), funded by IWGIA. As the various funding organisations were not coordinating closely to bring about this sequence of events, the main Thai NGOs concerned, IMPECT and the HPT, are to be congratulated on managing the disparate funds so well and ensuring that relevant preparations were made before an Alternative report was presented.

The June 2005 Roundtable occurred only a month before the Human Rights Committee was due to review Thailand's report, so time was extremely tight to get the draft (in Thai) finalised, translated and sent to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. The main author, who went to Geneva to present the Alternative Report at an informal briefing for members of the Human Rights Committee, Wiwat Tamee of HPT, said that MRG offered to pay for his trip to Geneva, but he concluded that he would be better off accepting a similar offer from IWGIA, which was reputed (among indigenous rights activists) to reimburse expenses more promptly. IWGIA also paid for an interpreter to accompany Wiwat to Geneva (although he received no fee), as Wiwat does not speak fluent English. Both before he travelled to Geneva and while he was there, Wiwat was reportedly approached by representatives of Thailand's National Security Council, who advised him that they hoped he knew "what to say" and "what not to say". The veiled threats became a reality several months after he returned from Geneva, when a grenade was thrown at the car in which he was visiting an Aka highland village and exploded. He was shaken but not injured. Evidence was obtained that this was an

undercover operation undertaken (or commissioned) by a branch of Thailand's security forces.

At the end of the Roundtable, at the end of June 2005, an umbrella organisation representing highland ethnic groups and others, the Northern Farmers Federation and Northern Network of Peoples Organizations, submitted a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister, Chaturon Chaisaeng, containing the Roundtable's recommendations for the resolution of indigenous and tribal peoples' problems. This focused on five issues, starting with stateless children. Two months later, at the end of August, Thailand's cabinet passed a resolution on the extension of right of residence to certain highland peoples. The June 2005 Roundtable is reported to have been one of the sources of pressure that led to this resolution. In contrast, no-one the evaluator talked to felt that the Human Rights Committee's concluding observations were a relevant causal factor.⁵ The resolution represented progress – but only one step.

Alongside Wiwat, who was presenting information mainly about abuses of human rights of highlanders, four or five other people from Thailand gave presentations at the informal briefing in Geneva for Human Rights Committee members.

Although the Human Rights Committee focused in its concluding observations particularly on the predicament of stateless children, it also responded to Wiwat's briefing by noting (in paragraph 22 of its observations):

“Notwithstanding the corrective measures taken by the State party, most notably through the Central Registration Regulations 1992 and 1996, to address the issue of statelessness among ethnic minorities, including the Highlanders, the Committee remains concerned that a significant number of persons under its jurisdiction remain stateless, with negative consequences for the full enjoyment of their Covenant rights, as well as the right to work and their access to basic services, including health care and education. The Committee is concerned that their statelessness renders them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The Committee is also concerned about the low levels of birth registration, especially among Highlander children. (arts. 2 and 24).

The State party should continue to implement measures to naturalize the stateless persons who were born in Thailand and are living under its jurisdiction. The State party should also review its policy regarding birth registration of children belonging to ethnic minority groups, including the Highlanders, and asylum-seeking/refugee children, and ensure

⁵ An MRG file notes: There has so far a cabinet resolution passed (on 23 August 2005) on the extension of right of residence to highland peoples that are in receipt of personal history forms [blue card], and personal history registration [green card with red border], and that persons missed by the government census have the right to reside temporary in Thailand for a short time till the national strategic plan in solving this problem is fully implemented. The latter is being negotiated between the Confederation of Northern Farmers and the National Security Council in term of nominating representatives to be sitting in the implementing committees at different levels.

that all children born in the State party are issued with birth certificates.”

The disadvantage of the fact that the two events funded by MRG occurred only six months apart is that the contacts between IMPECT, HPT and MRG did not last long. The two Thai NGOs consequently noted (in 2008) that they did not have much time to acquaint themselves with MRG and consequently do not feel they know what MRG represents and whether they would like to go on working with MRG. They are convinced, however, that the support in 2004 and 2005 was very productive and appear to think it would be in the interests of all the organisations concerned to develop an ongoing working relationship (notably to take advantage of MRG's technical advice and its high quality publications). Rather sadly, by the time the attempt was made on Wiwat's life in late 2005, he and the HPT felt that their working relationship with MRG had ended and that there was no purpose in informing MRG about the event or seeking MRG's political support in efforts to deter further threats or acts of violence against highlands rights activists.

4.3 Results relating to gender

MRG asked the evaluator “to assess how well gender has been mainstreamed in the work throughout” [the programme].

A good gender balance was achieved by MRG concerning delegates supported to attend UN meetings in Geneva and New York. Out of a total of 31 individuals supported to attend meetings between 2003 and 2006, just under half (15) were men and just over half (16) were women. The balance varied at individual sessions. At numerous sessions, MRG supported three people, either two men and one woman or one woman and two men.

In two countries, Nepal and Philippines, it was clear that women activists played an important role in the programme. In contrast, in four of the five others - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Thailand – less women participated in meetings and they appeared to be marginalised in the programme. This appeared to be despite the best efforts of MRG staff to urge partners to give attention to the gender issue and to ensure fuller participation by women activists. At the Bangladesh Roundtable, the proportion of women (11 out of 45) was relatively acceptable (almost 25%). At the Indonesia training sessions it was down to less than 20% (4 out of 21) and in Thailand it was markedly lower, at just over 10% (3 women out of 29).

In the two countries where gender was successfully mainstreamed, two different sets of circumstances led to this result. In Philippines the organisational culture of NGOs in general and of some indigenous rights organisations meant that women activists were likely to be well represented. In this case, those representing this organisational culture still had to battle against the male dominated culture of the trade unions, in particular the leadership of the organisations of government employees who took part in the April 2006 Roundtable.

In Nepal, the issue of gender was approached explicitly, with a women's group established within each of the communities represented at the August 2006 conference. This was due largely to Stella Tamang's leadership, along with that of her husband, Parshuram Tamang, and their ability to ensure that a technique was used that would both persuade women to attend the conference and give them a specific platform to share views with each other, rather than leaving them to try and get a word in edgeways between men. It also ensured that all conference participants were informed of the women activists' concerns and recommendations.

In Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Thailand, it seems that MRG's urging partner organisations to give attention to the gender issue was not enough (although the presence of MRG staff at the Roundtable in Bangladesh allowed them to express concern half way through, with the result that the women participants are reported to have been given better opportunities to express their views on the second day). A particular difficulty may have been that the organisers in Indonesia and Thailand planned meetings for 'young' adult activists – aiming precisely at an age group where many women are looking after young children and unable to leave home for several days or even a week at a time. In such cases, the age profiling represented a problem in itself. It was sensible to target young men but would have been more appropriate to target women who were older and better able to take time away from their household responsibilities.

In principle, it consequently seems appropriate to give partner organisations explicit advice about techniques, such as those used in Nepal, and to ask them to indicate, before a meeting's agenda is finalised and invitations sent out, how adequate participation of women will be ensured and what method will be used to allow the women participants to participate fully. The disadvantage of this approach is that some (male dominated) indigenous/tribal organisations are likely to interpret it as interference in their internal affairs (even if they are unwilling to say so) and a reason for not working with MRG. On this issue, therefore, it would be appropriate for MRG to compare notes on the techniques to use and the degrees of leverage to apply with other international organisations supporting indigenous/tribal organisations.

5 Comments on the project's impact and likelihood that it will achieve its purpose

The overall goal of the programme was to contribute to “the progressive implementation of international standards at a national and international level” in order “to protect and promote the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia”. It intended to do this by increasing,

“the capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia to articulate their rights, to use existing tools effectively for their protection, and to raise awareness of their rights nationally and internationally”.

Undoubtedly the programme did increase the capacity of some indigenous and tribal peoples to take action in ways which were likely to lead to greater respect of their rights. Unfortunately, at the same time, it also resulted in

deteriorating relations between MRG and some of the main groupings of indigenous peoples in Asia, making it difficult for MRG to continue with capacity building activities in Asia. From the point of view of achieving the programme's goal and purpose, this does not necessarily matter, for they can potentially be achieved with the support of organisations other than MRG. However, I concluded that the support provided by MRG was sufficiently positive to reckon that the goal and purpose would be achieved faster if MRG was to continue to provide support to capacity building activities for organisations representing or working with indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia.

5.1 Obstacles encountered to the project achieving its purpose

A repeated complaint heard during the evaluation – and, indeed, throughout the programme – was that MRG's internal procedures for making payments to partners in Asia and for reimbursing the expenses of individuals who had attended meetings, were inappropriate.

The message that MRG needed to address this problem was clear at the programme's start-up conference in Nepal in January 2003. The notes of this meeting stated:

“In light of the heavy bureaucracy within MRG regarding the transfer of funds, there is need for MRG to simplify the processes and ease the burden experienced by indigenous and minority individual / organisation as a result of MRG processes. This should be taken more seriously than has been the case to date”.

Unfortunately the problem was not resolved and the worsening relations which resulted (between MRG and various partner organisations around Asia) severely undermined the programme.

The difficult relations encountered with the AIPP have already been mentioned in section 3. AIPP's complaints about MRG's ways of working were not limited to the delays experienced by indigenous representatives in being reimbursed for the expenses they incurred but, according to the AIPP secretary, also to:

- The conditions attached to representatives receiving full reimbursement of their expenses – that they should submit a report on their activities at the meeting attended (a procedure that AIPP apparently agrees with) and that this should meet particular MRG quality standards, which were felt not to be clear;
- The nature of MRG's relations with various indigenous peoples' organisations, which were jeopardised by a perception that MRG was 'shopping around' for partners to host particular meetings, and that the criteria used by MRG in doing so were not transparent;
- Disagreements about quality standards relating to texts for publication, when MRG had commissioned indigenous representatives to write a text (concerning indigenous rights in Philippines) which was subsequently turned down by MRG for publication, with the author feeling he had not received adequate technical advice or input from MRG on the text – a

conflict, in effect, between standards habitually used by academic researchers and those of activists, a gap which MRG was perceived not to have done enough to bridge.

5.2 Relations with partners in Asia

While the programme ran for four years, for many of the NGOs in Asia, during the four years the programme ran, it only funded one activity that involved them. Consequently, the programme did not help develop long-lasting working relationships in the way that both MRG and its partners might have hoped.

Further, as noted in the last sub-section, MRG's relations with key indigenous rights organisations in South East Asia (but not South Asia) had already soured by the time this programme started, creating a regrettable negative momentum, particularly as far as relations in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand were concerned.

In northern Thailand, for example, representatives of two organisations commented that the support provided by MRG at the end of 2004 had been very helpful in precipitating them into the process of preparing an alternative report for a UN treaty-monitoring committee, but they did not get to know MRG or to understand what it represented. They observed that they continued to wonder, for example, whether MRG aligned itself with the policy of European governments (!). They knew MRG was well-known for publishing reports and asked (in 2008) whether it could publish one about Thailand's citizenship issues. One result of the feeling that they did not have a long-term relationship with MRG was that by the time Wiwat Tamee travelled to Geneva to brief the Human Rights Committee in July 2005, he considered the relationship with MRG to be over. Consequently, when he was the target for an assassination attempt, neither he nor others in Thailand thought it was important to tell anyone at MRG.

An expert on human rights issues in Thailand's highlands commented that he thought MRG had got involved in 2004 (in funding activities concerned with highland peoples' rights) without having an adequate understanding of the politics of the various organisations active on the citizenship issue. While I could find no evidence to support this criticism, I could appreciate that, for someone based in Thailand, it looked as though MRG had got involved over a fairly short period (2004-05) and was not committed to supporting organisations working for highland peoples' rights in the long-term.

It is difficult to suggest how MRG could build longer-term relationships without having substantial resources to invest in regular meetings and contacts with Asia-based NGOs, i.e., more substantial resources for relationship-building than this programme provided and also resources for developing the capacity of Asia-based NGOs on a regular basis, rather than just for one-off activities. On the whole, the experience of employing someone based in the region (see 6.2 below) did not resolve these difficulties. If resources could be found, a solution would be for MRG to establish a regional office in South or Southeast Asia. However, the evaluator realises this would be difficult to finance.

Although various NGOs in the region commented that they felt MRG had behaved too opportunistically, it would be appropriate for MRG to take advantage of new opportunities. One such opportunity may be created by the transfer of the international secretariat of the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forests from Chiang Mai to Panama at the end of 2008.

It would probably be an efficient use of resources for MRG to work closely with NGOs which have already made substantial investments in building relationships, such as the IWGIA, either to part finance certain activities (such as the Chiang Mai Asia regional preparatory meetings in 2004 for UN conferences) or to get advice on what other NGOs think needs supporting but do not expect to be able to finance themselves. This would, however, mean subordinating MRG's decision-making to that of another NGO. Further, it would probably be difficult to persuade a donor to make resources available simply to finance what might be perceived to be 'loose ends'.

Whatever conclusion MRG reaches, it seems important that MRG should provide clear information to the various NGOs involved in this programme to tell them whether MRG is likely to continue supporting any of the same sorts of activities or organisations that were supported between 2003 and 2007 in this programme.

5.3 MRG's relations with partners over financial matters

The first few years of the programme generated numerous complaints from Asian organisations that MRG was slow or late either in sending money to finance activities or in reimbursing individuals who attended regional or international meetings.

Once again, these complaints pre-dated the programme. As they were raised at the programme's initial planning session in Nepal and reportedly drawn to the attention of MRG managers, it is a pity that they were not managed more effectively by MRG. Whether the complaints were justified or not, by 2002 there was a perception among many indigenous rights activists in Asia that MRG was not acting appropriately. This undermined its position.

The evaluator experienced difficulty in getting to the bottom of these issues: on the one hand, individuals who were questioned about MRG's reimbursement of travel costs turned out not to have had particularly negative experiences; on the other, the (relatively new) finance team at MRG's London office interviewed by the evaluator in 2008 professed to being unaware of why delays had occurred and why appropriate remedial action had not been taken earlier. It sounded in August 2008 as though appropriate action had already been taken to establish clear and reasonable expectations when MRG offers to pay for and reimburse someone's travel expenses. As long as this is the subject of regular monitoring by MRG managers, it sounds as though appropriate remedial action has already been taken.

Some of the difficulties in transferring funds and the soured relations that resulted sounded to the evaluator almost unavoidable. For example, in Bangladesh participants at the Roundtable reportedly felt that MRG had booked accommodation for them that was too expensive (and that the funds could have been better used for other purposes. However, the precise circumstances, involving difficulties and delays in channelling funds via a Bangladeshi NGO and MRG having to pay for the accommodation and conference facilities itself (meaning it had to be a relatively large establishment that MRG could contact from outside the country), made this difficult to avoid. Why were the participants not ready to accept MRG's explanation for what had happened? Once again, this is easiest to understand if we understand that trust between MRG and the NGOs organising the Roundtable had not yet been fully established or if it had been undermined by other developments in the region – such as a sort of whispering campaign against MRG.

However, it is not necessary to resort to conspiracy theory to explain the poor relations. There were some specific events which undermined confidence and the result was to create a general feeling among indigenous rights NGOs that they should be suspicious of MRG. For example, in several cases MRG channelled funds for meetings via an NGO with whom it already had relations. In Indonesia, staff at AMAN reported feeling that MRG did not trust them (and that MRG therefore chose to channel funds via an established partner, Bina Swadaya). Even if MRG did this for pragmatic reasons, the AMAN perception had a negative effect, reducing the inclination of the NGO to build a long-term relationship with MRG. (As in other countries, funds to pay for a workshop turned up late (not until after the workshop was over), meaning that no money was available to pay the bill of the hotel that had hosted the workshop and its participants until later on. This led to further recriminations.

5.4 Relations with indigenous rights organisations and the issue of self-determination

On several occasions individuals I interviewed in NGOs which had taken part in the programme questioned whether MRG was committed to all aspects of indigenous peoples' rights, notably the right of self-determination. When I questioned them about why they felt MRG might lack such commitment, I was offered next-to-no evidence of any lack of commitment. Initially, therefore, I concluded that the irritation caused by financial problems was the main cause of dissatisfaction and of problems in the relations of indigenous peoples' organisations with MRG, paralleled by a preference for other international NGOs with which they were used to working with and felt comfortable.

I found references in internal MRG communications to arguments which had occurred in Kuching (Kuching declaration), when the issue of self-determination was raised and MRG had suggested some standard ways in which references to self-determination be presented – to avoid the use of language that would be regarded as intemperate by some governments. This evidently sparked resentment among some indigenous peoples' rights activists. It seems likely that, merely by raising questions on this issue, MRG

was perceived to be saying that it was less than fully committed to arguing strongly for self determination or land rights.

After completing my interviews, however, I felt I had still not got to the bottom of the matter. On the face of it, there was an inconsistency between the information I was given – that MRG organised useful meetings and participants acquired useful knowledge and skills and that, today as throughout the past five years, the NGOs concerned do not have access to enough resources at international level, so would welcome further support – and the reticence I detected in South East Asian countries about working with MRG. I concluded (though it remains supposition) that the missing piece in the jigsaw concerned the gossip that had circulated among indigenous rights activists (particularly from Asia, but possibly also from other regions) between 2001 (from the time of the Durban World Conference against Racism) and 2004 or 2005, during which activists probably discussed MRG's role and motives among themselves and shared their doubts about whether MRG was sufficiently committed (i.e., ideologically pure in some way) to be an appropriate partner to work with. One indigenous rights activist in Indonesia who shared his doubts about MRG with me nevertheless concluded that, "I think MRG needs to promote its work more widely in Indonesia". Despite the doubts, therefore, many activists have a feeling that MRG should be more present and more active on the issues that concern them.

In conclusion, if, as the evaluator hopes, MRG is willing and able to go on working with indigenous and tribal rights organisations in Asia, it will need to clear the air by circulating a statement to them that explains clearly what MRG's position or procedures are with respect to:

- indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, confirming MRG's support for this right (i.e., reflecting Article 3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and explaining that MRG has always been committed to this principle (or for a long time);
- Its financial procedures for financing or reimbursing expenses incurred by partner organisations and individuals, including conditions which must be met before reimbursements are made;
- Its quality assurance procedures in relation to texts written for publication by indigenous activists or indigenous peoples' rights organisations.

It might also help to include observations on how, if at all, MRG expects the support it gives to organisations working for indigenous peoples' rights to differ from the support it offers to organisations working for minorities (if at all).

At the level of its internal procedures, MRG should review (if it has not already done so), how to ensure compliance among relevant staff with its own financial procedures (to avoid excessive delays when reimbursing delegates' expenses). I was given verbal assurance that this had already been done.

As far as reports prepared for publication by individuals who are not MRG staff are concerned, and the quality assurance and editing practices which are appropriate in such circumstances, once again a review would be appropriate,

involving those managers or trustees at MRG who have responsibilities or concerns about the quality of MRG's publications. The review should identify standards and procedures which are appropriate when the authors are not academics, but belong to minorities or indigenous peoples, and which are also acceptable to the authors themselves (i.e., such a review would have to involve consultation with such potential authors, rather than reach conclusions solely on the basis of the views of people inside MRG).

6 Additional comments from the Consultant

6.1 Comments on the programme's objectives and logframe

In view of the diversity of the activities organised in this programme, the logframe appeared very ambitious.

It seems entirely appropriate that each activity should have an 'output', in the sense that it is clear what the completed activities are expected to consist of, and that a set of expected 'results' should have been identified at the outset, which the 'outputs' were intended to bring about. However, the programme's logframe has an extra layer of expectations. The 'Outputs' listed in the logframe were not simply the completed activities, but six relatively ambitious results. The logic linking the 'outputs' of the activities and these results was optimistic and somewhat tenuous. An initial independent review (before implementation of the programme started) might have resulted in the comment that more could be done to firm up the programme logic (also known as the intervention logic). The personal comment of the evaluator is that the 'Outputs' (with a capital 'O') listed in the logframe should have been listed as 'objectives' rather than outputs. This approach would have proposed one set of indicators for assessing whether the activities were carried out as planned, such as the one mentioned for 'Output 1', ("9-140 participants from indigenous and tribal/dominant communities [and others] attend RT", for which "Attendance lists" were proposed as the means of verification).

However, in relation to an 'Objective' (such as the one mentioned as 'Output 1' – "Increased links, understanding and cooperation amongst indigenous and tribal communities and between them and the dominant community, and resulting increased recognition by dominant community of the rights and needs of indigenous and tribal communities") this alternative approach would have proposed indicators which were quite independent of the programme's activities and outputs, i.e., to measure the 'real world' effects of the programme's activities. In this context, indicators such as 'government statements' and media coverage' might be appropriate, but it would be suitable to add some direct measurements of the "increased links" that were planned, such as reports on the levels of contacts between the indigenous and tribal communities involved in the project (6 or 12 months after activities were completed) or subjective, qualitative measures, such as comments from one or more organisation indicating whether their links with either other indigenous communities or with the dominant community had improved or not.

It might also have helped if, in addition to a project logframe, the donor had required MRG to indicate (a) what other MRG activities were likely to contribute to the programme's goal, and (b) how the MRG programme was expected to complement or supplement related activities financed or organised by other organisations in Asia. This was particularly important in relation to Activity 6 (international advocacy), where IWGIA was also a major funder of preparatory meetings and the participation of indigenous representatives at UN sessions in Geneva and New York. The goals set for the project made it clear that it was going to make a "contribution" to meeting them, rather than to meet them by itself, but did not indicate how the activities planned were expected to mesh with those of others. A simple flow diagram showing how the contributions of various different organisations were expected to contribute to the same goals could have illustrated this.

6.2 MRG Staffing considerations

A prominent indigenous rights activist from the Philippines, Minnie Degawan, worked for MRG on eight successive short term contracts between 2002 and 2005. She was expected to supervise the implementation of the programme in South East Asia (but not South Asia). Various aspects of the employment and management of Minnie Degawan in 2003 and 2004 caused dissatisfaction on Minnie's side, such as the short periods for which she was given contracts and the difficulties experienced in sending money to her in the Philippines.

On the whole it does not seem surprising that a someone who is employed on a series of short-term contracts, on different conditions to MRG staff elsewhere and without being fully conversant with MRG's values, priorities and working methods, found it difficult to feel 'part' of MRG.

Many of the difficulties experienced appear to have been due to two factors:

1. She was not adequately incorporated into MRG and its organisational culture;
2. MRG failed to resolve the problems that Minnie experienced, notably ones related to finance.⁶

Both of these two factors could have been resolved if MRG had been intending to establish a more permanent presence in Asia, a decentralised part of its own structure, with more than one (isolated) person working for MRG in Asia and with clear line management responsibilities and more substantial resources dedicated to incorporating the staff in Asia into MRG's organisational culture.

Once again, the evaluator's discussions with MRG staff in August 2008 suggested that suitable lessons had already been learnt with respect to decentralised programmes that were established by MRG subsequently, i.e., that MRG's staff as a whole require motivating (by training and other methods)

⁶ Questions related to Minnie Degawan's salary payments and expenses were apparently not included among the responsibilities of the Asia programme coordinator.

in order to make a collective effort to assist new staff based outside the UK and to ensure their integration into the organisation.

Just two extra points seem worth making:

1. It is possible that a more developed programme monitoring plan might have prevented relations with Minnie Degawan from deteriorating, as it would have been clearer when she was expected to report to MRG's London office and about what topics. This might have ensured that staff based in London did not make assumptions about what information would or should be provided to them by either staff in Asia or organisations and individuals receiving support through the programme.
2. In the case of substantial programmes or projects of this sort, MRG should clearly designate a project manager to supervise the implementation of the programme, with time available and an appropriate level of delegated authority within MRG to resolve problems related to a programme as and when they come up (i.e., with direct access to MRG managers). Such a project manager should have a strategic overview of the programme's progress and react to bottlenecks or obstacles. He or she should be paid more attention by MRG's management team than seems to have been the case with this programme between 2002 and 2004.

6.3 Format for reporting on programme implementation

The programme would have benefited from some clearer reporting formats by MRG and clearer instructions to MRG staff about the purposes of reporting.

The implementation reports did not make reference to the measurable indicators (proposed in the logframe) in any systematic way. A project manager could ensure this was the case and, if the indicators are proving difficult to measure or do not provide meaningful information, revise them.

MRG's implementation reports suggested Activity 6 and Output 6 ('More effective participation of indigenous and tribal communities at international fora and resulting greater international recognition of their rights and needs') were perceived to be a higher priority for MRG than other activities, possibly because these were activities which also contributed to other MRG objectives at international level. It was noticeable, for example, that MRG appeared preoccupied with the quality of the participation at international fora, when for indigenous rights activists, the mere fact of managing to secure financial support and to get all the way to Geneva or New York already represented a substantial achievement.

Appendixes

Appendix I Terms of Reference

PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES IN ASIA Evaluation

(from Mike Dottridge's contract with MRG dated 10 October 2007)

This programme ran from 2002 to 2006 and involved work with indigenous communities in 7 countries in Asia (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand).

The programme included a number of publications, skills exchange events, advocacy roundtable events and a programme of international advocacy and meetings. There was a wide variation in the progress in the work done between different countries with India, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand being relatively successful, whilst the partner in Malaysia proved unreliable and dropped out the programme in the early stages. We encountered difficulties in the working relationship between MRG and the partner organisations across the programme countries. These centred on delays in processing claims for reimbursements and delays in transferring payments by MRG but they impacted hugely on the programme as a whole. The programme has ended and we are no longer working on indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia but we would like to try to establish the factors that contributed to the success of the programme where this was the case. We would also like to ensure that the internal and communication problems that adversely affected the programme do not reoccur.

We will need to assess the programme against the logframe.

Activities level

Referring to the logical framework, did we complete all of the **activities** as planned to a reasonably high quality. What problems were encountered at this level? How did they affect the activities and to what extent were they overcome?

Output level

Where completed as planned, did the activities contribute to the planned **results**? Where this was so, refer to evidence. Where not so, what factors intervened and explain how they impacted. Suggest ways that the organisations tried to overcome any problems and how successful this was (or not). Document any changes in the external environment that may have helped or hindered the project. If there were any unplanned results (positive or negative) explain what these were and how they came about.

Key outputs:

OUTPUT 1

Increased links, understanding and cooperation amongst indigenous and tribal communities and between them and the dominant community, and resulting increased recognition by dominant community of the rights and needs of indigenous and tribal communities

OUTPUT 2

Representatives of indigenous and tribal communities have increased confidence, awareness of rights, ability to use tools, and expanded capacity to protect and promote their rights.

OUTPUT 3

Networks of advocacy trainers are established, which can share knowledge with their communities

OUTPUT 4

New, specific tools to raise awareness of issues and to strengthen advocacy capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples are widely disseminated, used in advocacy initiatives and achieve change of awareness.

OUTPUT 5

Participants engage in increased and improved advocacy/lobbying and networking activities in-country

OUTPUT 6

More effective participation of indigenous and tribal communities at international fora and resulting greater international recognition of their rights and needs

Impact level

If at all possible, make an assessment as to whether the results achieved are likely, over the longer term to achieve or contribute to the achievement of the **purpose** of the project:

To increase the capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia to articulate their rights, to use existing tools effectively for their protection, and to raise awareness of their rights nationally and internationally.

If it is unlikely that all or part of the purpose will be achieved, why is this and is this something that could have been foreseen or overcome?

Specific tasks of the evaluator

1. Read all project materials, summaries of participant evaluation forms, publications, selected visit reports and notes of advocacy meetings, review dissemination lists, advocacy letters etc.
2. Speak to MRG programme staff: Shelina Thawer, Neil Clarke, Samia Khan, Kathryn Ramsey (sabbatical cover) , Minnie Degawan (ex-MRG projects officer – based in the Philippines)
3. Speak to at least one key staff member in all main partners organisations (6 partners – excluding Malaysia). Possibly have face to face meetings with partners where possible.
4. Visit 3 target states and meet with partners, potential beneficiary communities, where possible and appropriate also meet with officials and diplomats to assess whether they have read any materials, or attended any events or had other contact with the project and, if so, whether the contact had the desired effect. One (success) target state to be selected

- by MRG, at least one to focus on more problematic country to be decided by evaluator.
5. Speak to around 8 global actors (e.g. other international NGOs, Special Rapporteurs etc) who could be expected to have come across the work of the project to assess in each case whether they have read any materials, or attended any events or had other contact with the project and, if so, whether the contact had the desired effect.
 6. We would also like to assess how well gender has been mainstreamed in the work throughout.

Appendix II – Sources

The Key individuals recommended (by MRG staff) for interview in six of the seven countries involved in the programme were:

Bangladesh: Devasish Roy ✕ (no phone interview: information on the report he wrote by e-mail, but not on the Bangladesh Roundtable)
 India (SETU): Achyut Yagnik ✓
 Indonesia (AMAN). Emil Kleden ✓
 Nepal: Parshuram Tamang ✓
 Philippines (CPA): Joan Carling ✕ (did not respond to repeated approaches by e-mail)
 Thailand (IMPECT): Sakda Saenmi ✓

Interviews in India

Achyut Yagnik and Ashok Shrimali, SETU, 17 April 2008
 Ashok Chaudhary, at SETU office, 17 April 2008
 Cecil Kharkha, Vela Ram Ghogra and Jebra Ram Muchahary, ICITP (Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples), New Delhi, 21 April 2008.
 Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, HAQ Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi, 22 April 2008
 Suhas Chakma, AITPN, New Delhi, 23 April 2008

Interviews in Nepal

Parshuram Tamang, 19 June 2008
 Chunda Bajracharya, South Asia Indigenous Women Forum of Nepal, 19 June 2008
 Angala Jha (Madeshi Women's Group) (with Parshuram Tamang translating), 19 June 2008

Interviews in Thailand (in Chiang Mai, with exception of first contact)

David Feingold (UNESCO in Bangkok), (telephone) 22 June 2008
 Minnie Degawan, former MRG staff member managing part of the project being evaluated until the beginning of 2005, now a staff member of the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forests Kitisak Rattanakrangsri, Executive Secretary, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forests. 24 & 25 June 2008

Sakda Saenmi, Director of IMPECT in 2005 (now an IMPECT staff member but replaced as director), 24 June 2008
Wiwat Tamee, Project Manager, Highland People Taskforce (CHONPAO – www.chonpao.com), Thailand tel 081-602-1931. Office telephone +66 53 246 213: 268/10 Aorapin Village, Thung Hotel Street (Soi 6), Watket Sub-District, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50000. 24 June 2008
Chris Erni, IWGIA staff member based in Chang Mai, by phone, telephone +66 869211615.
Jannie Lasimbang, AIPP, Chiang Mai, 26 June 2008.

Other telephone interviews

Rukka Sombolinggi, about Indonesia, though she is now based in Bangkok. I talked to her on her mobile: +66(0) 838117980. 24 June 2008

Rhoda Dalang, Dinteg, about Philippines. 7 August 2008

Detailed answer by e-mail

Mrinal Tripura, about Bangladesh. Phone call 28 August & E-mails dated 27 September 2008.

Conversation on Yahoo messenger

Emil Kleden, about Indonesia, Yahoo messenger conversation, 16 October 2008.

Interviews with MRG staff

Samia Khan (telephone), 31 July 2008
Kathryn Ramsay, 1 August 2008
Olu Coker, 1 August 2008
Shelina Thawer (telepehone) 22 August 2008

Principle documents reviewed

I was provided with a large number of documents, printed and electronic. Rather than cite all these, the notes below refer to the key ones only, in particular mentioning ones that I was not given by MRG (which are marked with *).

General

Project Proposal (final) to DfID and associated logframe.

Project implementation reports to DfID for October 2002 to December 2006 (four separate reports).

Narrative Report: Asia Permanent Forum Preparatory Meeting, Chiang Mai, March 2003.

India

Skills exchange and training for senior Adivasi activists and trainers. Report of a workshop. (Publication). SETU, June 2006.

Asia Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network (AITPN). Report of the National Consultation on the draft Forest Rights Bill, 2005. October 2005.

Radhakrishnan, Divya, and Dhruv Singh. Legislation briefing note. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (India).*

Draft Bills on Rehabilitation and Resettlement (of Persons affected by projects).*

Indonesia

Narrative Report. Training on “International Advocacy and Capacity Building for Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia”. Kuta Paradiso Hotel Bali, 6–10 September 2004

Nepal

Indigenous Nationalities Peace Commission, Nepal: Report of the project on indigenous nationalities' capacity building to ensure their effective participation in the peace process through Constituent Assembly. Pashuram Tamang.18 October 2006.*

Thailand

July 2005 Alternative report for the Human Rights Committee.

July 2005 Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on Thailand. UN doc. CCPR/CO/84/THA of 8 July 2005 *

Appendix III – Evaluation questions

Early on in this evaluation I draw up some standard questions for use when visiting organisations in Asian countries. I modified this substantially during interviews and prepared specific sets of questions for telephone and other interviews that were sent to respondents by e-mail in advance of each interview.

1. What activities was your organisation involved in during the Programme to Promote the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia?
2. What were the main achievements of the programme as a whole?
3. What were the main disappointments?
4. What were the achievements of specific activities within the programme?
5. What were the strengths and weaknesses in the way the project has been implemented?
6. What were the benefits for your NGO?
7. What, if any, were the disadvantages for your NGO?
8. What was achieved for the minority or indigenous peoples you work with?
9. What steps did you take to ensure that an adequate proportion those who attended meetings were women? (Did you encounter opposition to these steps?)
10. How easy or difficult was it for you to communicate & coordinate with MRG?
11. How effective has the project been at promoting the participation of the members of the minority groups concerned?
12. Have any unexpected risks or external factors had an impact on the project's progress?
13. Did the project have any unexpected or unplanned results (positive or negative)? If so, what were these?
14. Did any major administrative issues come up during the programme?

15. How did the financial procedures work out? (i.e. financial reporting, transfers of money from MRG to your NGO, transfers to others attending meetings, etc)?
16. What lessons have been learned since the project started, which you would apply in the future?