

## **CASE STUDY**

# **COMMUNITY AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) PARTNERSHIP IN HIGHLAND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA**

### **Subtitle**

This case study describes a community-NGO partnership in addressing water resource and catchment management issues, and the significant milestones achieved as well as the challenges faced.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Description**

The highland forests on the Main Range are important natural water towers that serve as water catchment areas for a large part of the Peninsular Malaysia. The district of Cameron Highlands, in the State of Pahang and located on the Main Range, has been developed as a tourist destination and for temperate agriculture farming since the 1930s. In the pursuit to further capitalize on Cameron Highlands' natural resources for development, a range of environmental problems have surfaced ranging from landslides, mudslides, erosion, siltation to water woes. The local residents have been and continue to be adversely affected by these problems. In addition, the ecological functions of Cameron Highlands as a water catchment area and habitat for biodiversity have also been jeopardized.

In 1999, WWF-Malaysia, a scientific and environmental based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), established a partnership with the local community in advocating sustainable highland development to safeguard Cameron Highlands' delicate ecosystem. WWF-Malaysia succeeded in mobilising the local community to establish their own community-based organisation called Regional Environmental Awareness of Cameron Highlands (REACH), which was formalized in 2001. In the partnership, WWF-Malaysia provided technical assistance in capacity building and facilitated in harnessing the efforts of different stakeholders while REACH coordinated community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Although a lot more remains to be done to improve the situation, REACH and WWF-Malaysia jointly have managed to create nation-wide awareness on the environmental issues relating to water catchment management in Cameron Highlands specifically and on sustainable highlands management generally. The joint efforts by both parties have also contributed towards influencing the Government's decision to place sustainable development of the highlands high on its agenda.

### **Lessons learned**

- The empowerment of local community like REACH in knowledge base and skills is an important pre-requisite that leads to self-mobilized community actions.
- Collated actions taken by the community themselves are more meaningful and have a more positive influence on Government decisions.
- NGO interventions are beneficial in terms of providing support for building local community capacity, facilitating stakeholders' dialogues and creating synergy of existing efforts by different stakeholders.
- NGOs can play a catalytic role in motivating communities to become united under their own society and facilitate them in monitoring, addressing and communicating key local water related issues to relevant target audiences.
- Engaging partnerships among main stakeholders is vital to overcome capacity constraints in tackling problems and addressing issues that cannot be resolved in isolation by individual stakeholders.
- Collaborating with the media, the use of appropriate communications tools and balanced publicity can help in facilitating awareness efforts and in advocating for positive policy changes.
- Unbalanced publicity that is slanted too much in favour of local community groups can create strong feelings of not being given sufficient opportunity to explain on the part of the government, which can cause tension between the community and the government.
- The good intentions and image of local community groups like REACH, if not effectively and accurately projected, can be wrongly perceived by other stakeholders and can result in the alienation of the community group.

## Importance of case

This case study highlights a win-win partnership between a local community group residing in a highland catchment area and a scientific, environmental based NGO in raising awareness on development and environment issues in the highlands. This case study also show cases examples of initiatives, projects and actions that local communities can embark on once given relevant skills and capacity building. The overall environmental outcome from this partnership is that it has led to actions that promote policy and administrative changes at the Federal and State Governments levels for better management of the highlands as water catchments. This can be seen as a significant step forward in addressing the environmental problems in Cameron Highlands specifically and generally, all the highlands in the country. The ultimate goal however, would be to ensure that the policy and administrative changes promoted through this partnership are translated into effective and continuous implementation on the ground.

## Main Tools used:

- B1.9 Civil society institutions and community based organizations
- B2.1 Participatory capacity and empowerment in civil society
- C4.3 Information and transparency for awareness raising
- C4.2 Communication with stakeholders
- A1.2 Policies with relation to water resources
- C6.4 Land use planning controls and nature protection

## Keywords:

Community organised participatory actions; stakeholder partnership; campaigning; policy advocacy; awareness and capacity building

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## MAIN TEXT

### 1 Background and Problems

#### 1.0 General Description of Cameron Highlands

Cameron Highlands is located on the Main Range, Peninsular Malaysia's remaining continuous pristine forest block. It is an important headwater catchment for several river systems that drain into at least two of the Peninsular Malaysia States. It is also the Peninsula's largest hill station and is administered as a district in the State of Pahang. The Cameron Highlands district encompasses 71,218 hectare, of which 91.2% is under forest cover, 8.0% is agriculture land and the remaining 0.8% consists of built-up area. Its landscape is mountainous with altitude ranging from 1,000m at river valleys on the eastern boundary to 2,031m on the western boundary. Its terrain is predominantly steep with about 60% of land areas steeper than 20°.

There are several small townships in Cameron Highlands and as of year 2000, the population of Cameron Highlands was 28,080 people. Being a center for agriculture and a holiday destination, Cameron Highlands generates significant revenue for the State of Pahang. Its cool climate and natural surroundings, temperate vegetable, fruit and flower cultivation, and tea plantation, altogether serve as important tourist attractions enticing about 4 million tourists a year. However, the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure and agricultural areas (both legal and illegal) has caused an ever increasing threat to Cameron Highlands' environment and natural resources which are now in danger of being over exploited.

Although only 8.8% of Cameron Highlands is developed, environmental problems such as soil erosion, siltation of rivers and lakes, and biodiversity loss have become eminent. The rugged terrain and steep slopes that characterizes its topography makes the area highly susceptible to soil erosion and landslides. The excessive usage of pesticides and fertilizers for agriculture is causing pollution to water bodies in Cameron Highlands. Additionally, there is frequent water supply interruption both during peak tourist seasons when water demand increases and during periods of heavy rainfall when river water quality deteriorates due to increased soil erosion and sedimentation.

## **1.2 General Situation Pertaining to Management of Peninsular Malaysia's Highlands**

To date, there is no specific policy to guide the sustainable development and management of highland areas in Malaysia. Legal provisions relevant to the highlands, are found within sectorally-based legislation that can generally be categorized into three types:

- (1) legislation relating to land administration and planning;
- (2) legislation regulating and controlling development activities;
- (3) legislation for habitat and species protection.

The Federal Constitution, which is the country's supreme law, distributes the power of governance between the Federal and State Governments. The Constitution places greater powers on land, water, forestry and agriculture to States. This means that States own and control the land and water within their respective boundaries. There is however, some exception in cases where the Federal Government is afforded legislative powers under the Federal Constitution to ensure uniformity in policy and administration of land as exercised in legislation such as the National Land Code 1965 and Land Acquisition Act 1960. The existing land resource management procedure that determines the final usage of any land is land alienation, land sub-division and land conversion. The Federal-State division in powers underpins the processes by which all land (including highlands) is developed and has at times, given rise to tension between the Federal and State Governments.

In the case of the Main Range, which spans across five states, the scenario is that its management is fragmented firstly according to the respective States' development agendas and secondly by government agencies jurisdiction. As a result, inadequate consideration is often given to matters (including environment), which transcend state boundaries and agency jurisdictions. The lack of integration may lead to a haphazard and fragmented development of the highlands that could destroy this fragile ecosystem alongside its functions and services.

## **1.3 Situation in Cameron Highlands which Stimulated the Start of the Partnership**

There are a number of key problems that relate to the political, social, resource and environmental situations in Cameron Highlands, which are of major concern to the local community as they are being directly and adversely affected. These problems are the main factors that motivated the local community and WWF-Malaysia to enter into a partnership aimed at increasing community participation and actions to address and resolve the problems. The following are some explanation of the key problem areas:

### Frequent disruption of water supply

Following rapid development, the water supply that was sufficient to meet the water demand in Cameron Highland in the past has now become inadequate. Water shortages and disruptions in supply have also become more frequent. There are several factors contributing to this situation. This include the increase in water demand from rising population and development, higher tourist arrivals especially during peak holiday

periods, and increased uncontrolled tapping of water from headwater streams higher up in the highlands for crop irrigation by farmers. Another reason is the low water yield feeding into the water supply system in Cameron Highlands because the water intake points are located in the upper reaches of the catchment areas.

#### Deterioration of river water quality

The pollution of rivers in Cameron Highlands is critical as Cameron Highlands forms the headwaters for a number of river systems draining the States of Pahang, Kelantan and Perak. Several studies undertaken by research institutions and government agencies such as the Malaysia Agriculture Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and Department of Environment (DoE) have revealed the poor state of the river water quality in Cameron Highlands. These studies among others reported alarming levels of agrobased pollutants from excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides in the farming activities, and high turbidity and suspended solids in the rivers attributed by tree-felling and hill-cutting. The Ringlet River is probably the most badly affected river with records of incidences where permissible levels of certain parameters such as suspended solids, agrochemicals and sewage have been contravened.

#### Severe soil erosion and sedimentation in rivers

81% of the land in Cameron Highlands has high erosion risk. Over the years, Cameron Highlands has experienced increasing and more severe soil erosion particularly during periods of high rainfall. This situation coincides with the increase in land clearing for various types of development including agriculture, which is carried out on steep slopes with insufficient soil conservation and erosion control. This causes widespread soil erosion and consequently, leads to the increase in sedimentation of rivers in Cameron Highlands.

#### Poor agricultural practices

A majority of the farmers in Cameron Highlands operate on Temporary Occupation License (TOL) land, which is renewed annually. There is no security of tenure, as the farmers do not have ownership of the land. Therefore, there is no incentive for the farmers to invest in good agricultural practices. Instead, the farmers tend to resort to practices aimed at maximising their production within their tenure period such as high usage of pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers, illegally extending their plot and leveling down the hillsides for flat planting ground. Such poor practices have caused soil erosion which lead to siltation of rivers.

## **2 Decisions and Actions Taken**

### **Start of the community and WWF-Malaysia partnership (1998-1999)**

In late 1998, WWF-Malaysia began a 3-year conservation action programme called 'Forests for Water, Water for Life (FWWL)'. Among others, the FWWL programme was aimed at creating public awareness of the importance of highland forests as catchment areas and the source of freshwater for the nation and the people. To achieve this, an emphasis on community environmental education was required. The community focus was especially relevant in Cameron Highlands where the community has been adversely affected by environmental and specifically, water resource problems for some time. WWF-Malaysia established a full-time presence in Cameron Highlands by setting-up the Cameron Highlands Nature Education Centre (CHNEC) equipped with two fulltime education officers. Through activities of the CHNEC, WWF-Malaysia was able to foster good relationship with the Cameron Highlands community. This marked the beginning of WWF-Malaysia's active involvement and partnership with the community in Cameron Highlands.

### **2000**

Based on initial meetings with the community, WWF-Malaysia's officers at the CHNEC observed the existence of strong community awareness towards the environmental degradation in Cameron Highlands and willingness to be united in demanding for better environmental management to improve their quality of life. With encouragement from WWF-Malaysia, a group of community members came together to form a pro-tem committee. This provided the platform for the community and WWF-Malaysia collaboration focusing on strengthening community capacity and facilitating the formalization of a community-based organization to be known as REACH (Regional Environmental Awareness of Cameron Highlands).

WWF-Malaysia worked with key members of the community in highlighting indiscriminate land clearing in Cameron Highlands in the media. WWF-Malaysia provided assistance in engaging the support of a reporter from a local television station to investigate and report the environmental problems in Cameron Highlands and in encouraging the community to voice their concerns. The media coverage that followed awakened the nation to the gravity of the problems in Cameron Highlands. This sparked off intense public outcry over the

way development projects were being undertaken in Cameron Highlands and the extent of the consequential impacts from these projects.

Following the media publicity, the Cabinet reacted by instructing all projects in the highlands to be stopped pending a study to assess environmental impacts of on-going and planned development. Another positive move by the Government was the formation of a Cabinet Co-ordination Committee on Highlands and Islands Development to oversee the streamlining of development in the highlands and islands, both regarded as sensitive ecosystems. The Cabinet Coordination Committee selected Cameron Highlands as the first case study area for highland development. Several months later, the Cabinet Committee drew up the terms of reference for guiding the planning and implementation of highland development.

## **2001**

The Government's recognition towards sustainable highland development was further demonstrated when it commissioned two major highlands studies to WWF-Malaysia. The two studies namely, the 'Study on the Development of Hill Stations' (completed December 2001) and 'Study for the Sustainable Development of the Highlands of Peninsular Malaysia' (completed August 2002) strongly featured Cameron Highlands with respect to the recommendations and strategies for sustainable highlands development. These include aspects of strategic land use planning of highland catchment areas that are consistent with Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principles.

In mid-2001, a public appeal calling for Government commitment and actions to save the highlands was submitted to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, and the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee on Highlands and Islands Development by the Malaysian Hills Network (MHN). The MHN is a coalition of 5 local environmental NGOs of which WWF-Malaysia was a member at the time. The MHN members share a common concern with respect to the current unsustainable manner in which the highlands are being managed. In the appeal, the MHN called for the formulation of a national highland policy and an integrated land use management plan for the highlands, and the abandonment of the proposed Highland Resort Road on the Main Range.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November, REACH, WWF-Malaysia and Malaysian Nature Society had an audience with the Minister for Science, Technology and the Environment to discuss issues relating to the development of Cameron Highlands. REACH, represented by its Committee Members highlighted to the Minister the problems affecting the local community. At the meeting, the Minister expressed his support for REACH and endorsed their efforts. This was a positive indication of the Government's recognition on community involvement in planning, decision-making and monitoring.

In November, REACH, DoE and WWF-Malaysia jointly organized a forum entitled 'Towards a 2020 Vision for Cameron Highlands' to initiate the visioning process towards sustainable development in Cameron Highlands. The forum benefited from the participation of relevant authorities, which provided insights on the mechanisms used by the Government for charting future direction in highlands management and development.

The WWF-Malaysia Mobile Education Unit visited schools in Cameron Highlands to promote the Greening of Schools Concept, which encompasses water conservation. The responses were encouraging as indicated by the teachers and students receptiveness towards the environmental awareness programme. Jointly with the Cameron Highlands Forestry and Education Offices, WWF-Malaysia also held educational activities targeted at schools.

The establishment of REACH was formalized following the approval of its registration with the Registrar of Society in September 2001. The first Annual General Meeting was held about a month later to elect REACH's Executive Committee.

## **2002**

In January, the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department with assistance from WWF-Malaysia as the consultant of the 'Study for the Sustainable Development of the Highlands of Peninsular Malaysia' organized a National Consultative Workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to disseminate the findings of the study and the proposed strategies and guidelines. Stakeholders' consultation, at the national and state level was important to solicit feedback on the results and recommendations of the study. Such consultation also helps create awareness of the need to overcome policy, legislation and enforcement deficiencies that are preventing effective management of the highlands in Malaysia.

In October, the National Land Council announced the adoption of specific guidelines for future development at six hill stations in Peninsular Malaysia (including Cameron Highlands) based on the recommendations of the 'Study on the Development of Hill Stations'. This Study, which was commissioned to WWF-Malaysia, recommended that each hill station is unique and should be treated according to its specialization. In this case, Cameron Highlands was identified for agriculture-based tourism and as a centre for cultural heritage.

Another significant event in October was the launch of a forest rehabilitation initiative involving REACH and the Forestry Department in Gunung Brinchang Forest Reserve that was illegally cleared in 2001. Following the replanting activity, REACH members and staff at the CHNEC embarked on a monitoring programme to record the growth and survival rate of the tree saplings. Data from this monitoring programme is maintained in a database for reference.

In November, both REACH and WWF-Malaysia were appointed as members of a district level committee to oversee river rehabilitation efforts in Cameron Highlands. This committee was formed through the directive of the Cabinet Coordination Committee on Highlands and Islands.

### **2003**

In January, WWF-Malaysia and REACH received the Winter Olympics 'Spirit of the Land' Award from the International Olympic Committee in conjunction with the Winter Olympics Environmental Awards in Salt Lake City, United States of America. This award was given in recognition of WWF-Malaysia and REACH collaborative efforts in spearheading environmental education to address the environmental problems in Cameron Highlands.

In January, REACH highlighted to the media the extensive land clearing and hill slope cutting for a farming project, which had defied two stop-work orders issued previously by the authorities. Once again, the Government reacted positively through the issuance of directives by the Prime Minister for stiffer penalties, including jail sentence to those who disregarded environmental laws for profit. The Chief Minister of Pahang subsequently announced the freeze on all development projects in Cameron Highlands until relevant laws were amended and this affected 11 of 68 ongoing or planned projects. Unfortunately, the Pahang State Government lifted the restriction in May due to pressure.

This incident also stimulated the Government to take several other follow-up actions. This included the Cabinet Coordination Committee's proposal to amend the Land Conservation Act 1960 to incorporate stiffer penalties including jail terms against illegal land clearing. Another follow-up was the proposal to curb the power of land administrators and any other State agencies in issuing approval for land activities and making them legally accountable for approving development in such areas without proper environmental studies. Related to this was the announcement by the Housing and Local Government Minister concerning the Federal Government's power in determining the final decision in all new development of townships, major infrastructure projects and projects located in environmentally sensitive areas including the highlands. Following this, all development plans are required to be referred to the National Physical Planning Council prior to getting the approval of the States and local authorities.

By March 2003, the CHNEC was renamed as the Community Nature Education Centre (CNEC) to better define the role it serves in Cameron Highlands.

REACH with WWF-Malaysia's assistance conducted several initiatives intended to train and equip community members with knowledge and skills on specific aspects of catchment management. These initiatives included water quality monitoring on tap water sampled at various locations in Cameron Highlands, which commenced in May. A private water-testing laboratory was engaged to assist in analysing the water samples and interpretation of the results. Prior to starting the water quality monitoring, WWF-Malaysia facilitated the training of REACH members by inviting representatives from the laboratory to conduct a talk and demonstration on water testing. REACH members also learned to scrutinize Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports, which enabled them to make constructive comments on the EIA of a proposed residential project in Cameron Highlands.

To address the problem of solid waste dumping in rivers and contamination of water resources from the municipal solid waste dumpsite, REACH and CNEC together with other stakeholder groups such as the farmer's association, the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and the Waste Collection agency collaborated in a pilot recycling project. Both REACH and CNEC also participated in a recycling programme involving the setting up of 3 collection centres for recyclables in Cameron Highlands including one to be run by REACH.

In September, REACH and WWF-Malaysia participated in a stakeholders' consultation seminar on the preparation of the Cameron Highlands Local Plan, organized by the Cameron Highlands District Council, and the Town and Country Planning Department. The Town and Country Planning Act 1976 provides the legal requirement for consultation with stakeholders in the local plans preparation. Through this consultation process, the community was able to air their concerns regarding the planning and management of natural resources in Cameron Highlands and contribute inputs into the Cameron Highlands local plan.

#### **2004**

At the end of May, WWF-Malaysia withdrew its presence from Cameron Highlands with the closing down of the CNEC. One of the reasons for the withdrawal is funding constraints on the part of WWF-Malaysia for continuing long-term conservation activities and maintaining office space and staff on-site. Another reason is the readiness of REACH to become independent in the planning, consulting, organizing and implementing its own activities and this was attained over the years largely through the partnership with WWF-Malaysia. It is also the aim of REACH to gradually reduce its dependence on external assistance through time and to have the capacity to decide and select which parties to engage with. Additionally, when this partnership was established, both parties recognized that REACH is not expected to maintain exclusive partnership with WWF-Malaysia only. For WWF-Malaysia, the absence of full-time and physical presence in Cameron Highlands does not mean it is no longer interested in advocating sustainable highland development. In fact, WWF-Malaysia seeks to continue to participate actively in discussions and efforts on highland conservation either directly or indirectly. Both REACH and WWF-Malaysia are also still keen to cooperate and work jointly in future conservation endeavours pertaining to Cameron Highlands.

### **3 Challenges for Sustaining Community Actions and Strategies to Overcome Them**

#### ***Continuity of REACH***

WWF-Malaysia's presence in Cameron Highlands is not planned for the long term. This was the reason why the formation, leadership and direction of REACH was determined by the community themselves right from the start. During the beginning of REACH's establishment, there was skepticism among the community of WWF-Malaysia's intention in supporting the formation of a community-based society. This was due to previous unsuccessful attempts on similar initiatives by other external groups. The approach used by WWF-Malaysia of motivating influential key people in the community to take interest in leading the efforts to form their own community based society was effective in helping to gain the trust, co-operation and friendship from key people in the community and made it easier to reach out to others in the community.

#### ***Motivating REACH members***

The members of the community can only commit to REACH activities on a part-time basis as most of them are working people. Therefore, many activities move at slow pace and after a while, members tend to lose interest and motivation to be involved. To address this, taskforces on specific areas of interest such as on biodiversity and solid waste recycling were formed within REACH to coordinate related activities and sustain members' participation and motivation. Acknowledgements and encouragements of REACH's efforts by WWF-Malaysia and other stakeholders also provided some sense of motivation. Additionally, the dedication and strong bonds among REACH members have kept REACH moving forward.

#### ***REACH-ing out to wider community***

The current membership of REACH represents a good percentage of the community. However, REACH would become stronger if its membership base was expanded to include a wider spectrum of the community. With members from a more diverse background and expertise, REACH will be in a better position to provide effective feedback on a broader range of issues. REACH is also challenged with negative labeling as an anti-government and anti-development society, resulting in some community members especially those working as government servants, developers, farmers and tour guides turning away and refusing to be involved with REACH. REACH needs to work harder to convince the individuals from these professions and sectors to support and participate in its cause. In addition, REACH is also seeking to involve the participation of more non-English and non-Malay speaking groups in the community.

### ***Financial Sustainability and Integrity***

REACH derives financial income largely through membership fees, donations, and fund-raising. Some of the secured funds are restricted grants for conducting specific projects. REACH has limited funds for the purpose of running membership drives and to cover its operational costs. Some members of the community have questioned REACH for receiving foreign funding and for associating with foreign organizations. (Unfortunately, WWF-Malaysia is often identified as a foreign organization with the Malaysian public despite it being independent in its direction and role in Malaysia). To dispel the negative views regarding foreign aid, REACH needs to demonstrate the use of the grants to achieve outputs, which directly benefit the community.

### ***Effective and Tactful Leveraging***

The use of media to highlight the problems in Cameron Highlands has proven to be effective but has also created tension between REACH and the local and State Governments. The authorities felt that they were not given enough chance to explain and resolve the problems before the problems were brought to public's attention via the media. One of the strategies used by REACH to overcome this situation is to provide constructive recommendations by focusing on solutions to the problems raised in the media. Another strategy is increasing REACH's engagement with government as partners in joint projects to develop better understanding of each other's roles.

## **4 Lessons Learned and Replicability**

This partnership has demonstrated several important lessons and among the key lessons learned are:

### ***Benefits of NGO intervention***

In this case study, it has been shown that interventions by NGOs such as WWF-Malaysia can bring about several benefits. These benefits may include provision of support in building local community capacity, and in the facilitation of stakeholder dialogues as well as in creating synergy of existing efforts by different stakeholders.

### ***NGOs role as catalyst***

The appropriate role for NGOs in a partnership with local communities should be as catalyst in motivating communities to become united and interested in acquiring skills for monitoring, addressing and communicating key local water related issues to relevant target audiences.

### ***Importance of local community empowerment and actions***

Empowering local community with the necessary knowledge base and skills is an important pre-requisite for enabling the community to undertake self-mobilized actions. The transfer of knowledge and skills to the local community will enable efforts and actions to be sustained in the long run by the community. Often, actions taken by the community themselves tend to be more meaningful and have more positive influence on Government decisions.

### ***Complementing capacity deficiencies through stakeholders partnerships***

Partnerships involving all main stakeholders are vital to overcome capacity constraints in tackling problems and addressing issues that otherwise cannot be resolved in isolation by any individual stakeholder. Such partnerships are also beneficial to ensure appreciation regarding each other's roles in achieving sustainable highland development and solving catchment management problems. Another advantage of bringing together the relevant stakeholders into a partnership especially from the onset is that this allows all partners to be sensitized to the issues of concern, which need to be resolved.

### ***Optimization of media and ensuring balanced media publicity***

Appropriate communications tools and channels such as the media can help to facilitate awareness building efforts and in advocating for positive policy changes. WWF-Malaysia's considerable experience with external communications and media campaigns, in addition to good relations with the local media provided some leverage which enabled optimum use of the media to get important conservation messages across to the target audience. However, some sensitivity towards the government needs to be exercised to avoid creating unnecessary tension, which may affect the relationship with the government. Comments and recommendations made in the media that are targeted to the government should be constructive rather than confrontational to ensure better acceptance by the government.



### ***Avoiding negative perception and alienation of REACH by other stakeholders***

Building REACH's image as a local independent entity, which is interested in local issues and not against government or development, is vital. There have been indications suggesting that REACH needs to strengthen its image in order to reflect its true identity and intentions. This was demonstrated by the alienation of REACH by some stakeholders due to perception that it is an anti-government and anti-development society, and suspicion about REACH receiving foreign funding and being associated with foreign organizations.

### **Replicability of the case study**

This case study, which illustrates a community based approach in calling for better highland catchment management that is supported through partnerships with NGOs and other key partners can serve as a model project. With adaptation where appropriate, this case study in terms of the approach, set-up and implementation, has the potential to be replicated elsewhere especially where it involves communities residing in highland catchment areas subjected to non-compatible and non-sustainable development.

## **5 Links to Further Information**

### **5.1 References and websites:**

#### **I. Reports**

WWF-Malaysia, "Forest for Water, Water for Life" Programme  
Quarterly Progress Report July- September 2001 (Internal document)  
Quarterly Progress Report October-December 2001 (Internal document)  
Quarterly Progress Report January-March 2002 (Internal document)

WWF-Malaysia, "Biodiversity Conservation in Peninsular Malaysia's Highlands and Lowlands (Cameron Highlands - Module 2)  
Quarterly Report to National Programme Director, WWF-Malaysia January-March 2003 (Internal document)  
Quarterly Report to National Programme Director, WWF-Malaysia April-June 2003 (Internal document)  
Quarterly Report to National Programme Director, WWF-Malaysia July-September 2003 (Internal document)

WWF-Malaysia 2002: Spirit Of The Land Award Application (Internal document).

WWF-Malaysia 2002: "Spirit of the Land Award". *Green Heart/ Berita Tabung Alam Malaysia*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Issue, pg. 4-5

WWF-Malaysia 2002: 'Forest For Water, Water for Life' End of Programme Summary Report 1998-2002. WWF-Malaysia, FWL (Internal document).

Malaysian Hills Network 1997: Malaysian Hills Network Memorandum January 1997 (<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/2701/h11.htm>).

Economic Planning Unit, 2001. *Study on the Development of Hill Stations*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Economic Planning Unit, 2002. *Study on the Sustainable Development of the Highlands of Peninsular Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### **II. Newspaper Articles**

##### **STAR newspaper**

12 November 1996: High price of development

14 March 2000: Steep stakes

11 October 2000: Protect Our Highland Catchment Areas, says WWF and MNS.

19 October 2000: Review all highland development projects, says WWF.

4 December 2000: Protect our highlands from further destruction. Plan and monitor all highland development, says Malaysian Hills Network.

8 December 2000: WWF-Malaysia: Government's decision for a national highland development policy lauded.

27 April 2001: Floods and Landslides: Symptoms of Ailing Environment. Environment on the verge of collapse. Act now, says WWF.

21 September 2001: Make DOE highland study public!

26 September 2001: Co-ordinate all development activities in Cameron Highlands before it's too late, says MHN

26 November 2001: Uphill task to preserving Camerons

9 March 2002: Protection for Camerons forests

23 August 2002: Council to conduct study on water woes

16 October 2002: New rules for hill resorts' development

16 October 2002: Adoption of new guidelines for hill resorts development a step forward, says WWF. States urged to support and implement the guidelines.

24 January 2003: WWF shares Winter Olympics "Spirit of the Land" Award with REACH. REACH receives RM5,000 assistance from WWF.

27 January 2003: Landslide at Camerons project site

5 February 2003: PM: Impose stiffer penalties against greedy developers

7 February 2003: 5,000 farmers affected by decision to stop developments

8 February 2003: Land Act to get more bite

8 February 2003: NGOs: No excuse for breaking environs law

11 February 2003: We must overcome ecological ignorance

11 February 2003: New lows in the highlands

25 February 2003: Displaced by farms

26 February 2003: Tough steps to save the land

27 February 2003: WWF welcomes Selangor Government's intention to gazette hillsides in the State

2 March 2003: Environmental Groups welcome freeze on hillside development

29 May 2003: Maintain Moratorium on Development in Cameron Highlands, says WWF. Amend Land Conservation Act to allow for stiffer penalties.

19 July 2003: Importance of proper highland farming

20 July 2003: 'Wrong farming methods can damage highlands'.

1 August 2003: Group: Project not sticking to EIA

1 August 2003: REACH praised for environs work in the Camerons

3 August 2003: Remedy for trash in Camerons

#### **Strait Times, Singapore**

23 October 2000: Camerons losing its charm to development. Illegal land clearing by farmers, rising temperatures and decreasing forest cover are causing the destruction of the popular Malaysian hill retreat

9 February 2003: Cameron Highlands resort loses its cool

#### **New Strait Times Property Times (<http://property.nst.com.my/Weekly/PropertyTimes/>)**

15 February 2003: Highlands of shame

23 August 2003: Shift in environmental balance

#### **New Strait Times**

20 November 1996: Degradation of Cameron Highlands

9 March 2002: Cameron Highlands development guidelines approved

#### **Berita Harian**

13 May 1996: Langkah jadikan Cameron Highlands Hutan Simpan Kekal

### **III. Websites**

REACH website

<http://www.reach.org.my/> (In English)

WWF-Malaysia website

<http://wwfmalaysia.org.my> (In English)

## 5.2 Organisations and People:

**Ramakrishnan Ramasamy**, President, REACH, No. 1, Jalan Besar, 39100 Brinchang, Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia, Tel: +605 491 4950/ 491 5950, Fax: +605 491 5832, e-mail: president@reach.org.my

- *Current President of REACH; provides leadership and responsible in overseeing the planning and implementation of joint activities of REACH with other partners/stakeholders including WWF-Malaysia; main spokesperson for REACH in functions/meetings with government, donor organisations and to the media.*

**Daria Mathew**, Technical Coordinator (Freshwater), Programme Department, WWF-Malaysia, 49, Jalan SS 23/15, Taman SEA, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia, Tel: + 603 7803 3772, Fax: + 603 7803 5157, e-mail: dmathew@wwf.org.my

- *Main author of case study; one of the project executants of the 'Study on the Development of Hill Stations' which was commissioned to WWF-Malaysia; provided technical assistance including participating directly in some of the activities under the WWF-Malaysia and REACH collaboration.*

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- *Co-author of case study; data compiler and reviewer; liaison person for WWF-Malaysia in dealing with REACH for inputs and comments in developing this case study.*

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