

# Report on the HBS Future Workshop on Resources in India and Afghanistan

New Delhi, 14th- 17th of January 2013

By Neelab Hakim, Gitanjali More and Ralph Griese



**Facilitation, documentation, organisational arrangement:** Ralph Griese (Managing Director of finep, Germany), Gitanjali More (Programme Coordinator, hbs India), Neelab Hakim (Program Co-ordinator for Ecology and Public Relations, hbs Afghanistan) and Govind Pathak (intern, hbs India).

## Schedule

### Monday, January 14, 2013

- Morning excursion to Mangar Bani with Chetan Agarwal
- 16:30 – 20:45 introduction, getting to know and welcome dinner



### Tuesday, January 15, 2013:

- Problem phase 9:00 – 18:00 hrs

### Wednesday, January 16, 2013:

- Vision Phase and Implementation Phase 9:00 – 18:00 hrs

### Thursday, January 17, 2013:

- Implementation Phase 9:00 – 17:45 hrs



**Monday, January 14, 2013**

**Excursion:**

Chetan Agarwal specializes in natural resources management and policy analysis, and application of institutional and cost-benefit analysis to the same, with an emphasis on pro-poor approaches, especially in the context of securing environmental services and adapting to climate change.

He led the excursion to Mangar Bani, which is a sacred grove, and a protected area outside Delhi. This area has also suffered largely from massive digging and the evidence still exists where there are gaping holes in the landscape around the grove.

**Get together:**

The round of introductions at the Day 0 get together was to determine, among other things, the expectations of the participants from the workshop. None of the expectations mentioned were seen as unrealistic, and fortunately, could all be addressed in the course of the workshop. These included:

- To have fun!
- Maximise on the new workshop concepts
- Challenging present understanding, learning and unlearning, and to debate and disagree and to grow and go back with ideas
- To speak freely to each other, to be heard and to listen, to share experiences and knowledge about resource management
- Cultural exchange, since many of the participants were meeting people from Afghanistan or India for the first time
- Free flow of ideas, creativity and sharing on various concepts related to resources
- To learn more on linkages between security and natural resource management
- To highlight the problems in the context of the country and develop proper planning

Tuesday January 15, 2013



**Problem phase:**

After identifying the main and associated problems in various areas, that initially also included fisheries, waste, agriculture/food, cross cutting issues, etc. six working groups were formed according to the field everyone was keen to work on. These groups were:

1. **Mining:** The main issues highlighted in the group discussion mainly focused Afghanistan since being a very rich country in terms of having many mines in the region and encountering so many problems due to these naturally bestowed assets. Many problems in the area of mining addressed by the group specially highlighted the weak role of the government in terms of implementation of the laws and no controlling and monitoring mechanisms by the government on illegally extracted mines and as well presence of conflict in the areas rich of natural resources which mainly pointed power driven (caused by warlords and insurgents group mobilized by neighboring countries). Environmental pollution (air, water, soil & noise) due to mining and loss of historical heritages in the mining areas were also addressed as challenging issues in the mining area. On example that was discussed: Mes Aynek (Copper Mine) of Logar province one of the largest mine in Afghanistan which is located in the southeast of the centre of Kabul city. Over the last few years, public attention has turned to the impact of the Aynak project on one of Afghanistan's most important archaeological sites. There was no anticipation of this issue at the time the contract was signed, and there is no reference at all within it on how the archaeological impacts are to be evaluated and addressed.
2. **Water:** The biggest concern regarding water is the issue of ownership, especially due to the presence of the water mafia and black market for water in India. This group did not discuss water in Afghanistan since the general opinion was that it is better regulated as compared to India. Then, the group divided water problems into 3 aspects – environment, economic and social. However, it is very difficult to separate all three, since they necessarily overlap in some regards, so their classification is difficult. With this, roles of various actors like the government, communities, institutions, etc. were discussed. The in depth analysis of problems led to segregation according to international, national state/district and local/district levels– international treaties like the Indus Water treaty between India and Pakistan, industry, irrigation, water systems, etc.

3. **Power supply:** The main issues discussed were the differences and similarities in contexts between India, Afghanistan and Nepal. Interestingly, nuclear power was dismissed right in the beginning because of the dangers of nuclear waste, radiation, and so on. Events like Fukushima were touched up on but they decided to stay away from nuclear power. The group members looked more at other problems related to access, demand and supply ratios, and costs. Another problem that was stated was the need for large amounts of land and coal for thermal power – here again the discussion of mining starts up again.
4. **Forestry:** The group discussed all the problems initially and then focused on some issues that they delved deeper into. The group somehow kept coming back to the issue of ownership and rights of the indigenous people – that the lack of policy and regulation was leading to no accountability of the state. The consensus was these two problems are interconnected.
5. **Biodiversity:** The problems related to biodiversity divided into causes and threats. The group pointed out that the war, industrialization, excessive use of resources and habitat destruction are big threats to endanger the biodiversity mainly causes the extinction of some species which has impacts on the other species and will end up in nature imbalance.
6. **People :** After a long discussion on the way of distribution of resources and impacts to change people's attitude towards natural resource management the group came into the agreement that people as resource and as well as a controller of the resources play an important role. They pointed out culture of corruption & nepotism, lack of policy and no implementation of laws and regulations and unequal resource utilization are the hindrances caused by people.

After presentation of mind mapping of the problems, some important and interesting questions raised by the other participants like:

1. **Mining:**
  - What are the perception of people living around the mining area do they think mining as a blessing or as a curse?
  - How the investing companies are selected and contracted?
2. **People:**
  - In term of natural resource management is people group pro people or pro environment?

**Wednesday, January 16, 2013:**

**Utopian Phase:**

On the second day the groups narrowed down and some topics dropped since of being cross cutting issues and/or closely linked to other topics. So the second day started with formulation of new working groups on four most relevant topics. The participants voted for the most important key problems to enter utopian phase: 1) Water and Local Governance (14 points), 2) Mining conflicts and human rights violations (14 points) 3) Biodiversity and habitat destruction (14 points), 4) Inability to meet increased energy demand (12 points). Then the groups were asked to present their visions for each key problem in form of drawing for the year 2025 and 2050.

Adding to this phase, a short introduction of implementation phase was delivered to light up the feasible and achievable visions in to consideration of the participants.

- 1. Water and Local Governance:** Effective governance of water resources and water service delivery along with the commitment of government and various groups at local/community levels, together with the private sector marked as important achievements.

Water portrayed as a hero that people care and have respect for and will change the attitude of people through consumption of water. Transparency, equity and fairness also considered fundamental requirements. Equity between and among the various interest groups, stakeholders and consumers will be carefully monitored throughout the process of policy development and implementation in year 2025 and 2050. Good water governance will be based on the rule of law, which manifests itself most strongly in the issue of justice, property rights for use, access and ownership of free and clean water.



**2. Mining conflicts and human rights violations:** The vision for year 2025 incorporated with successive awareness raising programs for the communities, protection of archeological and historical sites, environmental safeguarding, considering of protection and compensation for the displaced people. The partnership between government, communities and companies will be strengthened and fostered which will lead to a just and peaceful nation state.

More people will have access to health and educational services. Media will play a prominent role in dissemination of the information to the people.

The more the awareness is raised the more the communities will be empowered. People (not the warlords and powerful ones) will have a strong ownership in mining (being part of decision making processes, monitoring the activities of the companies and obtaining a fare and equal share).

The development growth will increase. Environment consequences will reach to zero. Green mining will be promoted and finally the ownership will lead to peace by 2050.



**3. Biodiversity and habitat destruction:**

The group initially discussed the usage/exploitation of forests - local vs. government, and the link between the government and industry. The group almost started off a discussion about deforestation being a necessary evil. The question of how much development? Where should mankind stop, etc.?

The change needs to come from the Government – policy change was considered very important, as well as gaining freedom from private enterprises. Mining was named as a very important culprit of destruction of biodiversity. Cross cutting issues were names as attitudes, values and a possible solution is “Preservation through action”, i.e. ensuring proper implementation of existing laws.



**4. Inability to meet increased energy demand:** The most feasible and easily achieved element in the focus of power supply group was clean and sustainable energy. The group discussed that to reach the goal, impact studies and carrying out the researches on the issue of sustainable energy (how to produce electricity from renewable sources like solar, water, wind and bio fuels) are the first steps to be taken. The government should emphasis on the maximum use of renewable energy by inclusion of the topic in the educational curricula, involving the private sectors to invest, and NGOs to lobby and conduct public awareness campaigns.

The group also emphasized on decentralization of the energy adding that in a decentralized energy system, the buildings, instead of being passive consumers of energy, would become power stations. More solar panels, micro wind turbines, usage of the heat produced by burning fossil fuels would lead to dramatic reductions in overall carbon emissions..



Some important questions rose after the presentation of the groups as below:

1. How to measure the ownership of communities over partnership?
2. How the ownership of people lead to peace while it is creating conflict of the interests?
3. What is the future of rural areas and natural spaces for plants, animals, and nature?

**Thursday, January 17, 2013:**

**Implementation phase:**

In the implementation phase, for each topic discussed in the utopian phase a seven year plan envisioned.

**1. Water and Local Governance:** Access to (clean) water was pointed out as an important objective for the drinking, agriculture, eco system services and industries by the group. Supporting of consultation mechanisms with the local agencies, civil societies, land holders and marginalized people and as well as inclusion of water accounting and water auditing were also emphasized on. However conflict of interests, lack of political will, bureaucracy and presence of mafia counted as major hindrances.

The most interesting question that arose in this discussion was: If it is freely accessible, people won't preserve it, and if it is charged for, then people will continue to place blame.

**2. Mining conflicts and human rights violations:** The issue of inclusion of insurgents and Taliban as actors was the most discussed in the group while the strong argument was if the goal could be realistically achievable and if there would be a way to come across and negotiate with them? Whereas insurgents and Taliban are the preventing bodies in the area of the mining.

At the end the group agreed that the government along with civil societies, private sectors, media and as well as local communities are the key actors for the improving of legal mining framework.

Increased awareness also considered vital not only for the local communities but also for the civil societies, media and private sectors for the development of better mechanisms for the land acquisition and resettlement plan. On the other hand corruption counted as a main hindrance on the way of law enforcement and implementation of land acquisition mechanism and resettlement plans.

**3. Biodiversity:** In the implementation phase, the discussion was about reforms in the law regarding biodiversity in India and Afghanistan. Indexing of biodiversity across India, especially in the biodiversity hotspots was recommended as a solution, but the feasibility is to be seen. The discussion centered on the lack of Biodiversity Management Committees and Joint Forest Management. The case study of the snow leopards in Afghanistan was shared within the group, and thought to be an important element in biodiversity conservation.

**4. Power Supply:** Renewable energy was the understood solution to the problem. For this phase, the general discussion was of "Right to Electricity". The group would like to look into the possibilities of public private partnerships for electricity and believe the accountability would naturally increase in that case. However, the group finally settled on clean energy, rather than for all, as this might not be feasible in the short term. The discussion of "excessive use of electricity" led to questions like who is to decide how much is excessive?