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ဒို့...စီမံခန့်ခွဲ စို့။

We Will Manage Our Own Natural Resources

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Karen Indigenous People in Kamoethway Demonstrate
the Importance of Local Solutions
and Community-Driven Conservation

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Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region, Myanmar

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Preface

This piece of community initiated action research reveals a number of lessons we can learn. The authors try to reflect the challenges of and opportunities for community based natural resources management in a seemingly forgotten Karen controlled area of southern Myanmar. The paper examines a number of case studies including the construction of a local water supply system, the establishment of fish conservation zones and community-driven forest conservation. An evolutionary development of community based networks such as CSLD (Community Sustainable Livelihood and Development), TRIP-NET (Tenasserim River and Indigenous People Network) and RKIP (Rays of Kamoethway Indigenous People and Nature) and their collaborative action to address emerging Natural Resources Management issues in their land are well illustrated in the paper.

Local Karen people used participatory approaches and FPIC tools in their planning and decision making processes. The application of indigenous knowledge demonstrated that local wisdom regarding natural resource management – such as the management of medicinal forests – can provide tangible benefit to local communities.

Karen people are known for their bond to nature. They are freedom loving and their indigenous knowledge and inspiration regarding how to live with nature is extraordinarily remarkable. The Karen people in Kamoethway affirm this legacy by standing-up to protect their rights, land and culture. Their territory was previously a war zone, but has now become an attractive and opportunistic area for many outsiders under the name of development. The benefits of any development that will happen in the area must go to the Indigenous Karen people with their full participation and consent, and must be within their cultural norms and adaptation.

We all must stand together with the Kamoethway Karen to make sure they have enough capacity to deal with these external forces. We must ensure that their voices are heard by all stakeholders, particularly policy makers and decision makers. We must build strong networks of people and organizations that are striking for the same cause. Lessons we learned from this action research must be capitalized on and scaled-up for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples' while conserving their resources in the pursuit of locally accepted development.

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Introduction

In the wake of Myanmar's transition to a quasi-civilian government in 2011, limited democratic reforms, and the lifting of economic sanctions by the West, the country opened up for business. In 2012, the central government signed a preliminary, bilateral ceasefire agreement with the Karen National Union (KNU) ethnic armed organization, opening up many former "black-zones" along the border with Thailand, previously closed to outsiders due to one of the world's longest-running civil wars. That same year, with little room for democratic debate, Nay Pyi Daw passed business-friendly land and investment laws, sparking an epidemic of land grabbing across the country. Resource-rich Tanintharyi Region (formerly known as Tenasserim), a recent conflict-zone, is on the front-lines of this epidemic – facing a flood of foreign investment and unsustainable development projects. Companies and military cronies have flocked to Tanintharyi and begun the process of clear-cutting the forests for valuable timber, planting vast mono-culture plantations of rubber and palm oil, blasting entire mountains to mine for tin, lead, gold, and coal, and constructing highways, coal-fired power plants, and the massive Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and deep-sea port.

At the same time, influential international conservation organizations have arrived in Tanintharyi, identifying the same areas slated for destructive projects as high priority for environmental conservation. The region holds some of the last high value forest in Southeast Asia, as well as endangered species such as wild tigers and elephants. With

funding from international mechanisms such as REDD+ and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), conservationists are working with the central government to establish protected areas throughout the region in order to promote climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. Their aim is to create a wildlife corridor stretching from North to South in Tanintharyi, and contiguous with the protected forest areas across the border in Thailand.



Kamoethway Area

Local communities, largely dependent on the forest and farmland, are caught in the middle between these two powerful forces – trapped between top-down development and top-down conservation. Both the extractive and conservation industries have a troubled history in Myanmar and around the world of displacing indigenous peoples from their land and resources on which they depend. In Tanintharyi it is becoming increasingly clear that that under conventional, top-down approaches to development and conservation, local indigenous people have little chance to influence the decisions that will greatly impact their way of life. But what about an alternative,

bottom-up model? An approach where local communities control and manage their own natural resources to effectively develop their communities, preserve their culture, achieve climate change mitigation, and conserve biodiversity?



A typical residence in Kamoethway

The indigenous Karen people of the Kamoethway River Valley, in the uplands of Tanintharyi's Dawei District, are boldly pursuing such a grassroots alternative. They are asserting their rights as indigenous people to control their own resources and development, and showing that it is possible to conserve people and nature together. This report documents the work that the people of Kamoethway have accomplished over the past year, and explores the possibility of replicating and building upon this approach throughout Tanintharyi and Myanmar. It aims to engage key decision-makers, academics, conservationists, and activists working in Tanintharyi, inviting them to learn from the Kamoethway community and work together as equal partners towards a just and sustainable future. Most of all, this report celebrates the strength and unity of the Kamoethway community, who despite decades of violent conflict, have joined together to conserve their environment and culture for future generations.

About Kamoethway

The Karen people have likely lived in the hills of Tanintharyi for over 1,000 years,¹ and elders say the present-day villages of the Kamoethway River valley were settled more than 150 years ago. In the valley there are 11 villages, dependent on betel nut plantations, traditional rotational rice farming, and products gathered from the forest and streams for their livelihoods. A 12th village, Myitta, has grown into a town, located at the confluence of the Kamoethway and Paw Klo (Ban Chaung) Rivers. Together, these rivers flow into the ecologically important Tanintharyi River, which continues onto the Andaman Sea. Most people in Kamoethway are Christian, converted by Karen missionaries in the early 1900s. There are some Buddhists in Kamoethway as well, and many people still maintain older animist practices and beliefs. Today around 6,000 people live in Kamoethway, not including Myitta.

Kamoethway is under dual-administration by both the Myanmar central government and the KNU, so each village has both a Karen and Burmese name. The Myanmar government refers to the area as Kamounghway, which includes parts of three different

¹ *Voices from the Ground*



Areca nuts (also known as 'betel nuts') are laid-out to dry in the sun before the husk is removed

served as a dividing line between KNU and government territory, with civilian villagers caught in the middle of the fighting. Under successive offensives by the Myanmar military, villagers suffered forced labor and conscription, extortion, looting of property, destruction of homes and food supplies, and arbitrary killings. Suspecting villagers of colluding with KNU forces, the Myanmar military targeted villages on the Eastern side of the river, forcing many people to abandon their homes and live as IDPs on the Western side of the river. Since the ceasefire was signed in 2012, fighting has stopped in Kamoethway and some villagers have tentatively returned to farm their old land on the Eastern side of the river.

village tracts (Myay Kan Baw, Kyaung Mae Taung, and Taung Thone Lone) in Dawei District of Tanintharyi Region. On the other hand, the KNU administers the area under Mergui-Tavoy District, which occupies roughly the Eastern half of Tanintharyi region.

Kamoethway has experienced decades of violent conflict, including a heavy military offensive by the central government in 1997. For many years, the river roughly

New Threats

Although the ceasefire and ongoing peace process has given the people of Kamoethway an opportunity to recover from decades of violent conflict, it has also opened up their previously isolated community to many new threats in the form of top-down development and conservation projects.

ITD Access Road

In 2010, the Italian-Thai Development (ITD) Company built an access road from the Thai border, through Kamoethway, to the site of the controversial Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and deep sea-port. ITD confiscated villagers' farmland to build this road, without the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the local people, and without providing any compensation. Villagers responded by protesting the project, blockading the



This man was unable to prevent the felling of his fruit orchards by ITD

ITD road, and demanding fair compensation. In 2011, they formed a people's organization in order to address these issues, called Community Sustainable Livelihood and Development (CSLD). Through their efforts, CSLD has succeeded in securing compensation for some villagers, though it is far below the fair value, and many are still waiting to receive their share. While there are plans to turn the access road into an eight-lane highway and economic corridor – complete with a railroad line, power transmission, and oil and gas pipelines – connecting Dawei to Bangkok, the project has stalled due to financial difficulties. In December 2015, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation became an equal shareholder in the Dawei SEZ Development Company, signaling the Japanese government's commitment to see this project come to fruition.

Mining

Like many areas of Myanmar's ethnic borderlands, Kamoethway is rich in mineral resources. Many years ago, villagers practiced small-scale artisanal mining, but this has long been abandoned. In the past, no companies dared to come to isolated Kamoethway because of the conflict. Now, the ceasefire and the road built by ITD means that access to the area is relatively easy. Since 2012, four different companies have come to Kamoethway villages to propose mining projects. However, villagers are aware



The Pauk Dine River has been polluted by the Eastern Mining Company

of the terrible impact on the environment and local livelihoods that they have seen caused by nearby Heinda and Bawapin mining projects, so they united to reject proposed mining in Kamoethway with signature campaigns and public meetings. In Kaw Paw village, a Myanmar company with Chinese backing and a Japanese company both abandoned their plans and left Kamoethway after being rejected by the community. Villagers also rejected a Chinese-backed Myanmar company in Keh Gwaw village, which was forced to leave after signatures were submitted to both KNU and the Myanmar government. At the time of writing, another Chinese-backed Myanmar company remains, despite rejection by the community, continuing to build their work camp in Pway Poh Klah village.

Logging

The villagers from Kamoethway pride themselves on only taking what they need from the forest – cutting trees only to build their own houses and never to sell to outsiders. However, in 1994 the central government granted permission to companies from Thailand to do logging in Kamoethway's forests, felling vast amounts of trees. After logging by these Thai companies, villagers noticed a drastic decrease in the populations of wild animals in Kamoethway, and believe that many have moved across the border to Thailand. Unchecked logging also led to severe soil erosion. In 2004, this erosion caused massive flooding in Kamoethway such as villagers had never witnessed before.

Recently, no big companies have been logging in the area – but wealthy individuals with links to local authorities are suspected of secretly logging, in direct violation of a ban by the KNU, and selling the timber in Dawei.

Tanintharyi Nature Reserve Project (TNRP)

The Tanintharyi Nature Reserve Project (TNRP) is a 420,000-acre protected area established in 2005 by Myanmar’s central government. It is funded by oil and gas companies Total and PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP) as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program for the controversial Yadana Pipeline. The pipeline itself passes through the TNRP reserve North of Kamoethway, exporting natural gas across the border to Thailand. Although established in



The TNRP office in Kaw Pa village, Kamoethway

2005, in many ways the TNRP was a protected area on paper only, with little implementation on the ground. Because of violent conflict, forest department officials were never able to fully demarcate the protected area, including in Kamoethway where the proposed TNRP area overlaps with customary land managed by the indigenous Karen people for generations. In fact, villagers in Kamoethway had never even heard of TNRP until 2010, when the forest department came and told Htee Kler Hta villagers they were prohibited from expanding their farms into certain areas.



Elected members of the RKIPN Steering Committee

Since the 2012 ceasefire, the government has been more aggressively promoting TNRP, even placing boundary markers on Kamoethway land without the community’s knowledge or permission. The promotion of TNRP also aligns with the mission of the newly arrived international conservation organizations to connect Northern and Southern Tanintharyi through a corridor of forested protected areas. Faced with the threat of losing control and use of their customary territory

and natural resources to TNRP, Kamoethway villagers responded by forming a people’s organization called the Rays of Kamoethway Indigenous People and Nature (RKIPN) in November 2014. RKIPN, together with CSLD, has crafted a unique model of community-driven conservation. Due to their work, Kamoethway has a reputation as one of the strongest and most empowered communities in the region. The rest of this report chronicles the activities and accomplishments of RKIPN over its first year.

About RKIPN

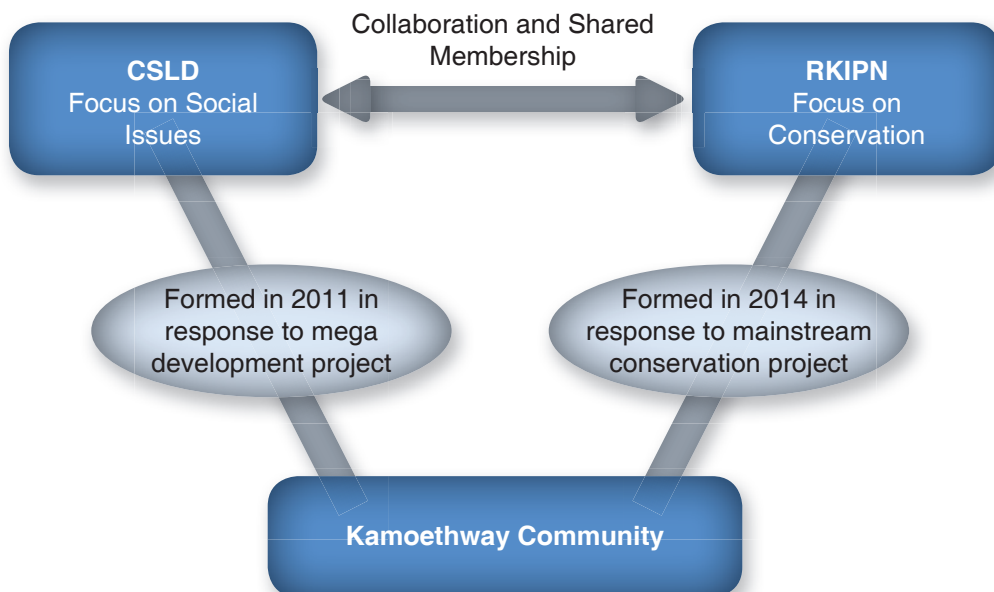
The idea to form a people’s organization was first suggested at a community meeting facilitated by the Tenasserim River and Indigenous Peoples Networks (TRIP NET) in October 2014. The villagers had invited Chai Prasert, a well-known Thai-Karen community leader and expert on traditional rotational farming practices and protection of forest ecosystems. At the meeting, Chai Prasert shared the experience of Karen communities living in the forested uplands of Thailand, many of whom have been deemed illegal occupants in national parks, despite having lived there for generations prior to the formation of the parks. Karen villagers in Thailand have been battling the Thai forest department for decades to secure community land rights and prevent evictions from their homes and farmland, and Karen people in Tanintharyi are beginning to feel similar pressures. So it was at this meeting that the idea came about to form a village committee dedicated to environmental conservation, as a way of proving that the local indigenous people can indeed effectively manage their own natural resources without government intervention, and thus preventing land grabs and evictions in the name of conservation. The response by the community was enthusiastic. At this meeting alone, 77 participants volunteered to take part in the new committee, villagers began brainstorming about its structure and approach to conservation, and a new people’s organization began to take shape.



RKIPN members

The organization grew organically, with participants deciding on everything from its name, its structure, and its leadership democratically. After several rounds of voting and discussion, villagers agreed on the name: Rays of Kamoethway Indigenous People and Nature (RKIPN or *Kamoethway Mu Yay* in Karen). Rays of sunlight, which are represented on the Karen flag and in many other places in Karen culture, are an important symbol of Karen freedom, and a fitting name for the organization.

One year later, RKIPN has grown to 94 members, representing each of the 11 villages in Kamoethway. More members are free to join at any time, as villagers feel everyone has something important to contribute. The group is led by a volunteer committee consisting of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, vice secretary, and accountant – all elected democratically based on their leadership skills and understanding of community issues. Each village also has a coordinator, to facilitate communication between RKIPN and other villagers. RKIPN formed six working groups, according to the traditional knowledge of the villagers. These are Vegetables, Herbal Medicine, Wild Animals, Handicrafts, Forest, and Rotational farming. Women’s participation is especially strong in the vegetables and herbal medicine groups, but still only about one fourth of the overall participants are women. Many of the members and leaders in RKIPN are also involved with CSLD, and the two groups collaborate closely.



RKIPN Structure



Philosophy of RKIPN:

In the past, the Myanmar central government allowed destructive logging and mining in forested areas around Kamoethway. Now, government representatives say they are interested in conserving the environment in these same areas, but the villagers do not trust this based on their past experience. Instead, the philosophy of RKIPN asserts that it is up to the indigenous people themselves to take the lead on conservation of their lands that they control and manage.

***“We do not believe that the outsiders will protect the forest.
Only villagers can take that responsibility.”***

For villagers in Kamoethway, their conservation activities represent much more than an opportunity to protect the environment, and hold deeper meaning. During one activity, members were asked to write one word on a piece of paper that inspired their work with RKIPN. Some of their responses are highlighted below:

Freedom:

To be free from oppression.

Future:

Outsiders want to take advantage of our area, so we must take action to protect it.

Sustain:

We don't want to lose our territory so we have to unite and work together.

Community Accomplishments

In only one year since its official founding, RKIPN has been impressively active, building on previous work by the Kamoethway community to advance community-driven and locally owned conservation efforts in their area. The following section provides some highlights of this work.

Local Knowledge Research

All of RKIPN's work is grounded in local knowledge, and so local-knowledge based research has been crucial both for documenting that knowledge, and empowering villagers to care for the environment. These research activities have helped villagers understand that they can produce their own knowledge, and do not need to rely on outside experts to tell them how best way to conserve their environment.

“We understand the environment in our area better than outsiders”

To date, RKIPN members have completed local-knowledge based research on the local fish diversity and herbal medicine, while research on trees and vegetables are ongoing. Indeed, for villagers this kind of research is never-ending, as they are constantly learning and producing new knowledge. These research activities have built upon previous research started by CSLD as early as 2012. Villagers were invited to participate based on their own expertise of the local environment



Local Knowledge-Based Research in action

and using traditional collection and identification methods. With support from TRIP NET, RKIPN researchers have published and distributed educational posters that document 123 medicinal plants by their local Karen names, and also 86 fish species by local and scientific names. TRIP NET published a research book, *Kamoethway*, documenting the outcomes of fish research and the background of the Kamoethway community. The knowledge produced by this research is important for education in the community about the value of their natural resources, and also to establish a baseline understanding of the tremendous diversity in the area to better inform future conservation efforts and environmental campaigns. However, it is not just the research results that are important, but the research process itself. By having local people themselves conduct the research, based on their own indigenous knowledge, they feel empowered to come together as a community and protect the environment.

Community-Led Socioeconomic Survey

One of the first activities of RKIPN, which actually started in August 2014 before the group's official founding, was to design and conduct a socioeconomic survey of the Kamoethway community. Recognizing that environmental conservation must be well integrated with securing sustainable livelihoods for the community, villagers aimed to get a baseline understanding to inform their future work. Rather than having a survey conducted by the government or an outside organization, Kamoethway villagers designed and implemented the survey themselves, as they are the best experts on their own community. Throughout the process they gained valuable skills and a better understanding of their own local economic situation.



RKIPN members conducting a socio-economic assessment

Villagers decided to first focus on three villages: Ler Wah Klo, Wah Shu Kho, and Htee Kler Hta. The customary territory of these three villages is being encroached on by the proposed TNRP area, so this survey would be a clear way to show the great value that the community places on conserving their own forest in this area. After designing the survey together, 25 villagers skilled in reading, writing, and interviews volunteered to join the assessment team. In two

weeks, they interviewed 122 households, roughly half of the population of the three villages. The data was then compiled and analyzed by TRIP NET. It is expected that data for these three villages is representative of all of Kamoethway.

Key Findings

- 88% of those surveyed use firewood for energy, while the remaining 12% use charcoal.
- The majority of cash income is from agriculture (68%), followed by non-agriculture such as daily labor (26%). Only 6% of cash income comes directly from the forest, such as selling Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs).
- However, the majority of non-cash income is from the natural forest or stream (56%), while the remainder is from agriculture.
- If you look at Cash and Non-cash income together, the value of the forest rises from 6% to 28%
- The highest expenditures are on food, household maintenance, agriculture, and children's education.
- Everyone answered that the forest benefits them. Most people recognized the benefits to them from food (82%), construction (86%), and watershed (74%). However only half (49%) recognized that conserving the biodiversity of plants and animals benefits them.

How much do Kamoethway people value the forest?

If you only look at cash income, the forest minimally benefits the people of Kamoethway, providing just 6% of their income by selling Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). Most of their cash income comes from agriculture (growing and selling Betel Nut) or daily wage labor. However, when participants were asked how much they would have to spend to purchase essential



Areca nuts and other fruit orchards are the main source of cash income in the area

items like fuel-wood, food, and medicine that they can otherwise gather for free from the forest, it becomes clear the forest has enormous value. Indeed, the forest accounts for more than half (56%) of non-cash income. When you look at cash and non-cash income together, the benefit of the forest increases from 6% to 28%. Without the forest, 28% of Kamoethway's income would disappear. This high value of the forest for local people might not be evident if an outside group were to conduct the survey without appropriately examining non-cash income. But because villagers already had a clear understanding of the importance of non-cash items for their daily survival, they were able to design the survey to understand these hidden values.

This enormous value of the forest for local people's livelihoods is also reflected in the responses villagers gave after they took the survey, some of which are included below:

We have depended on the forest for our entire lives, so I would suggest that we utilize it in a proper way.

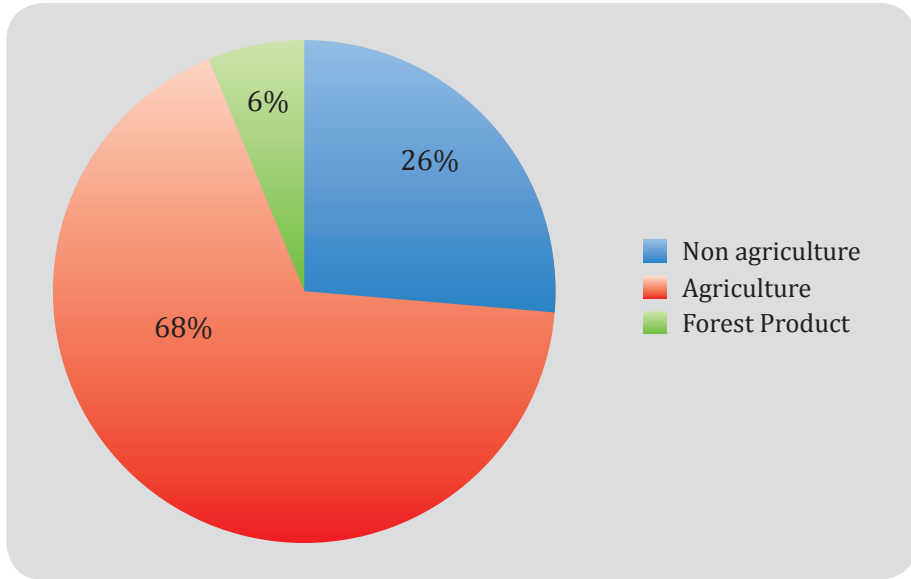
I am happy to see that poor people can go into the forest and harvest and collect forest products, so it will be good if we can conserve our resources for the future.

The forest and its resources should only be utilized for village purposes when necessary. It shouldn't be used for business purposes.

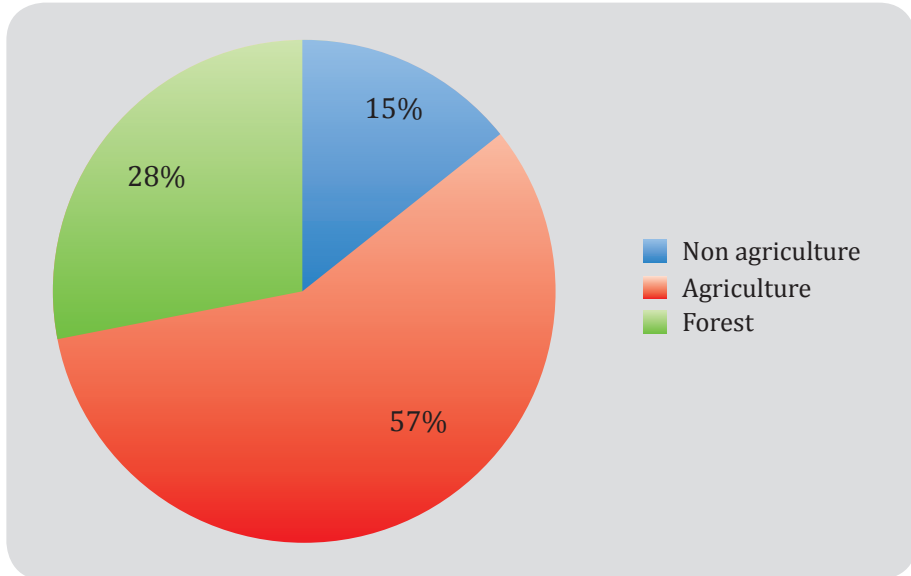
When outsiders come to utilize the forest, they cause degradation. But local people's utilization does not cause degradation. That's why we would like to utilize and manage the forest by ourselves.

How valuable is the forest?

Cash Income



Cash and Non-Cash Income Combines



Community Education, Network Building, and Public Events

Throughout the past year, RKIPN activities have successfully built up the capacity of local people through networking, training, information sharing, and engagement with various stakeholders. Kamoethway villagers have had the opportunity to present their work to government officials, exchange knowledge and experiences with Karen villagers from Thailand, participate in a collaborative training on preventing forest fires, and hold various public ceremonies showcasing their local conservation efforts. In this way, space has opened up for villagers to actively participate in conservation work, and build a network of empowered and educated indigenous peoples throughout the Tanintharyi Region.



A sign is raised to mark World Environment Day



Conducting a wildlife trade education activity



RKIPN members demarcating a fish conservation zone



Participants pose for a group photo on the final day of a forest fire prevention activity

Case Study: Collaborative Watershed Management by Providing Water Supply System

The experience of the Kamoethway community in designing and building their own gravity-flow water system provides an important case study in the difference between top-down vs. bottom-up approaches to development.

Conception

In a community meeting in November 2014, TRIP NET proposed improving clean water access in Kamoethway by implementing a gravity-flow system to transport water from a nearby mountain spring to Wa Shu Kho (Seik Pyone) Village and Ler Wah Klo Village. The project was to be implemented in collaboration with both CSLD and RKIPN, and facilitated by TRIP NET. TRIP NET proposed the project for funding by TBC (The Border Consortium) in January 2015 with the stated goal: “By providing efficient and clean water for household consumption, local villagers are mobilized to collaborate in watershed management.” The project aimed to not only provide clean water for villagers, but also to empower Kamoethway villagers to more effectively manage their watershed, protect the natural environment, and take the lead of their own development.



PVC pipes being delivered to Washuko village

Participatory Process

Villagers were involved in every step of the project’s design and implementation, building up their capacity and confidence throughout the process. In December 2014, an independent water engineer from the Netherlands visited Kamoethway, and together with TRIP NET and villagers conducted a survey in order to design the technical aspects of the water system. This provided villagers a valuable opportunity to learn the importance of calculating water volume, flow, and pressure when designing a gravity-flow system. In February 2015, TRIP NET conducted water quality tests, and found that the water contained no evidence of contamination and would be safe for drinking. These findings were confirmed by lab tests in the Netherlands.

In March, more than 60 RKIPN members began work on the project, clearing the ground where the pipe would be installed. At the end of April, RKIPN held a meeting to set up water management system, and clarify roles and responsibilities. They formed a committee tasked with managing the project, which included RKIPN members, CSLD members, and some villagers who were members of neither group. From May through September villagers constructed the system, laying the pipe underground and building

the break-tanks. Construction was completed in September, when villagers began to test the system and make adjustments so it would be ready for the official opening on 8 October 2015.

Villagers reject TNRP's top-down project

This bottom-up, participatory process is much slower than a top-down approach, and in the time it took villagers to discuss and agree and the project's design, secure funding and materials, and begin implementation, their efforts were undercut by the Tanintharyi Nature Reserve Project (TNRP). TNRP had attended the community meeting last November and attempted to pre-empt the community-initiated project by implementing their own gravity-flow water system project. Three out of the 12 villages in Kameothway have land located inside the proposed TNRP area, and would likely lose access to their forest and agricultural lands despite having lived there for more than 150 years. It is possible that TNRP is attempting to win the approval of these distrusting communities by providing the water project. So, without consulting local villagers, RKIPN, CSLD, or TRIP NET about the ongoing project process, TNRP dropped off a water pipe at Wa Shu Kho Village in April 2015. Angered that TNRP did not respect their plans to design and manage their own gravity-flow system, villagers in Wa Shu Kho and Ler Wah Klo villages rejected the TNRP project.

Rising Tensions

Unable to implement their project in Wa Shu Kho and Ler Wah Klo, TNRP decided to move their water system to nearby Kalet Pa Doh village. However, TNRP's project continued to cause a conflict between Kamoethway villagers. After Kalet Pa Doh villagers placed TNRP's pipe on the ground, on the site that RKIPN members had already prepared for their own pipe, they found parts of it were cut with a knife. Kalet Pa Doh villagers then accused villagers



Volunteers from the village work together to bury the water pipe system

from Wa Shu Kho or Ler Wah Klo of intentionally damaging the water system. Villagers denied they would take this kind of action, even though they were upset about the project. They agreed the damage was more likely done by farmers who were angry about the pipe going across their land without being informed. To avoid this problem, RKIPN always asked farmers permission before building on their land. TNRP also located their water intake at the same site where RKIPN and CSLD had already planned to locate theirs, not leaving enough water flow for both systems. This created some conflict, but after meetings in May, TNRP agreed to move their intake site further upstream, and to specially construct it to allow enough water flow so that both systems could co-exist. In the last week of September 2015, villagers from Kalet Pa Doh met with those from Wa Shu Kho and Ler Wah Klo to better understand the project and settle their tensions.

Design Differences

TNRP's design proved to be inferior to the RKIPN/CSLD design in several key aspects. First of all, their intake mechanism can be easily blocked, and it is not easy to access to remove the blockage. RKIPN/CSLD designed a special intake mechanism to avoid this problem. Secondly, TNRP laid their water pipe above ground, leaving it vulnerable to damage by sunlight or animals. Indeed, rats have already damaged the pipe in Kalet Pa Doh village. On the other hand, RKIPN/CSLD used the participatory process to discuss the need for long-term sustainability of the project, and in this way decided to bury the pipe 1-foot underground. This required substantial cooperation and labor among the villagers, but was completed enthusiastically.

TNRP System Failure

When Kalet Pa Doh villagers attempted to turn on TNRP's water system in June, the pipes burst. It seems TNRP had failed to account for the buildup of pressure caused by the altitude changes along the water system. Nobody has come to fix the system, and villagers still do not have access to water. On the other hand, RKIPN and CSLD specially designed their system to account for water pressure. With training by the independent water engineer, the villagers learned they would need to construct two break-tanks to relieve water pressure along the system. They did so accordingly, and the system is currently successful in bringing water to every household (more than 220) in Wa Shu Kho and Ler Wah Klo villages. After unsuccessful water transportation system, TNRP offered to hand it over its project to the local groups. Villagers still refused, instead preferring to continue with their own project.



The pipe burst due to a build-up of pressure

Local Ownership and Ongoing Improvement

Perhaps the most important difference between TRIP NET and TNRP's approaches is that under TRIP NET, local villagers are truly the owners and managers, and so they value the project more. For example, after the system was switched on, it was found that some of the farthest villages had a very low volume of water supplied. So the villagers took it upon themselves to fix this unfair outcome, by replacing the pipe with a larger one, and adjusting the break-tanks accordingly. They are using their own time and land to make this effort possible. So, not only has the water project empowered villagers



A prayer service was held after the gravity-flow water system was successfully installed

to take charge of their own development, but also it will lay the foundation for more projects to come – including hygiene, fish-raising, and home gardening. The water system was officially opened on 8 October 2015 with a thanksgiving ceremony in Kamoethway.

Key Lessons Learned

- A step-by-step, bottom-up process can help avoid design flaws.
- A rapid top-down approach to development can cause conflict in the community.
- Community involvement and open communication is necessary for a successful project.
- If villagers are the owners and managers of their own project they will value it more.
- A participatory approach does not simply bring water to the community, but through the process empowers villagers to protect the watershed, and manage their own development.

Water Project Timeline	
November 2014	TRIP NET first proposes project at a community meeting.
17 December 2014	Water engineer conducts survey to design project with TRIP NET and villagers.
6 February 2015	TRIP NET tests the water source and confirms it is safe for drinking.
11 February 2015	TRIP NET holds meeting and explains the project to Wa Shu Kho and Ler Wah Klo villagers.
7 March 2015	More than 60 RKIPN members begin work clearing ground for the pipe and water intake site.
20 April 2015	TNRP brings their own water pipe to Wa Shu Kho without informing the community, and villagers reject this top-down project, and TNRP moves it to Kalet Pa Doh village.
30 April 2015	Villagers form a committee to manage the water system that includes members from RKIPN and CSLD, as well as other villagers.
2 May 2015	Villagers meet with TNRP at Kaw Paw village to resolve issues relating to the location of the two water systems.
9 May 2015	Villagers visit the water source with TNRP and agree that TNRP will locate their system further upstream and specially construct it to allow enough water flow so that both systems could co-exist.
14 May 2015	TRIP NET's PVC pipe for the project arrives in Kamoethway.
23 May 2015	Villagers begin work on laying the pipe.
3 June 2015	Villagers begin constructing the break-tanks.
22 June 2015	TNRP pipe bursts when the Kalet Pa Doh system is turned on.
September 2015	Construction of the Wa Shu Kho – Ler Wah Klo water system is completed and testing and adjustments begin.
8 October 2015	The Wa Shu Kho – Ler Wah Klo water system is fully operational and officially opened at a public thanksgiving ceremony.

Fish Conservation Zones

In the past, each village had their own traditional fish conservation zone, located in deep areas of the river where fish are known to breed. By reviving the use of traditional fish conservation zones, Kamoethway community members not only aimed to allow declining fish populations to recover, but also were preserving and promoting older indigenous practices. The first conservation zone was established in February 2014 in Keh Gwaw village, and is known as Htar Ta Beh.



Local people and honoured guests assembled to witness the establishment of the fish conservation zone

Villagers in Wah Shu Kho village decided to also establish their own conservation zone, which was established with a public ceremony in 22 December 2014. While fishing is normally prohibited in this area, it is only allowed to supply Wah Shu Kho village with food for community events and ceremonies.



The event featured a multi-religious prayer service

The establishment of a Community Initiated Fish Conservation Zone is one of the outcomes from the local knowledge-based research. The local knowledge based research is a way of informing community members that they have rights to manage their local resources by themselves in sustainable way.

In order to do so, the quality of life of the local people will be improved when the ecosystem of the river and forests

have recovered. In addition, the development of community rights is playing a vital role in rural reconstruction in the future.

The objectives of the establishment of Fish Conservation Zone written by villagers are as follows.

- The recognition of Karen identity by maintaining Karen traditional practices on conservation
- The practice of balancing between utilization and conservation among communities
- The recovery of the river ecosystem and forest ecosystem
- The quality of life is improved by restoring resources and good quality water

The Rules and regulations are written by villagers themselves after consulting community members. The rules and regulations are as follows.

- No one can harm the community recognized Fish Conservation Zone for any purpose
- Harming and catching any aquatic species in the Fish Conservation Zone is prohibited
- Any water flows into the Fish Conservation Zone by chemical farming is prohibited
- Any inappropriate way of fishing techniques such as using poison, explosive devices, electric shock, diving and shooting with a spear at the adjacent rapids of south and north of Fish Conservation Zone is prohibited
- Those who violate the rules and regulations agreed by communities will be educated by village elders of CSLD
- The perpetrator who violates the rules and regulations agreed by communities for a second time has to do community service
- The perpetrator who violates the rules and regulations agreed by communities for a third time will be sent to the authorities (Myanmar/KNU) to take action according to the law

Indeed, the fish conservation zone was initiated by the people themselves without any influence and support from any governments and institutions. The fish conservation zone is based on ideas of the restoration of culture, biodiversity, and unity among people. By doing so, people have been empowered by the process so that they have learned that they have rights in the context of negatively impacting development projects in order to insure quality of life and environmental sustainability.

Community-Driven Forest Conservation



"We love our tree"

From its founding, RKIPN's main objective was to establish and manage community conservation zones. Unlike in a government led protected area, these zones would reflect the community's current land use and future needs, based on indigenous, local knowledge of the environment and older cultural practices. Through a democratic, and bottom-up process, villagers decided upon nine forest conservation categories – each with different rules and regulations

based on community consensus. These are very different than the categories TNRP would impose on Kamoethway.

Some of the forest categories established by Kamoethway villagers are unique to the indigenous Karen practices in the area, intricately tied to the land and forest, and being kept alive by the community. For example, in the past, every April during the full moon,

villagers would embark on a three-day trek into the forest guided by a traditional herbalist. Here they would follow special customs to take medicinal teas and steam baths deep in the forest, without fear of facing possible side effects should this medicine be taken in the village. Although annual medicinal trips to the forest have been slowly falling out of practice in Kamoethway, RKIPN members decided it should be a priority to preserve and promote this cultural practice alongside their forest conservation activities. For this reason they established Medicinal Forest as an explicit category for protection, based on the indigenous knowledge of which areas are best to find medicine. Similarly, RKIPN members have established the cultural forest to preserve and promote traditional rotational agriculture, called *Ku* (rotational upland rice farming), which is now only practiced by a few people in the community.



A newborn baby's umbilical cord is attached to the selected tree

They also established areas for reviving the practice of hanging or burying the umbilical cord of a newborn baby under a special tree – an important Karen custom which has also fallen out of practice in Kamoethway. These indigenous cultural uses of the forest are rarely recognized by government or outside conservation organizations, making it all the more important that Kamoethway villagers have taken the lead on designing their forest

conservation efforts from the bottom-up, to include cultural uses in their forest plan.

Even where the forest categories proposed by TNRP appear to have some benefit for the community, the reality on the ground is questionable. For example, under TNRP's proposed system, villagers would only be allowed to operate a small community forest area on the edge of the protected area, essentially as a buffer zone for a core protected area which no villagers are allowed to utilize. Rather than being free to decide how to manage the forest in order to best benefit the community, villagers would have to follow TNRP's plan, which is insensitive to the local needs and context.

RKIPN Conservation Zones

1. Wildlife Sanctuary
2. Watershed Forest
3. Herbal Medicine Forest
4. Cultural Forest
5. Umbilical Cord Forest
6. Utilization Forest
7. Agroforestry Area
8. Fish Conservation Zone
9. Cemetery

Conservation Objectives, Rules and Regulations as established by the community

Using a participatory process, villagers established detailed rules and regulations for each RKIPN forest zone, based on traditional knowledge and historical practice. After RKIPN members drafted the rules and regulations, they were brought back to each village for feedback and confirmation. Now the rules are in the process of being finalized, and will be published and distributed to the community.

Restricted Species

As determined by the community, it is prohibited to hunt any of the following animal species or harvest any of the following plant species in Kamoethway.

Birds: Great Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Pea Fowl

Mammals: Pangolin, Slow Loris, Serow, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer, Rhinoceros, Tapir, Wildcat, Bear, Tiger, Elephant, Porcupine, Langur, Gibbon

Reptiles: Python, Tortoise

Plants: Wild Orchids

Objectives, Rules & Regulations

Through a participatory process, RKIPN has established objectives and rules and regulations for each category of protected area, as follows:

1. Wildlife Sanctuary

Objectives

1. Ensure a safe habitat for wildlife.
2. Increase the populations of endangered species.

3. Protect the value of the forest ecosystem.
4. Maintain the co-existence of indigenous peoples and wildlife.

Rules and Regulations

1. It is prohibited to harm wildlife for any reason, including for scientific research.
2. Logging, mining, and farmland expansion are prohibited.
3. It is prohibited to harvest non-timber forest products (NTFP) for selling (personal use is allowed).
4. Development projects such as infrastructure, roads, bridges, electricity, and permanent buildings are prohibited.
5. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
6. Before the wildlife working group goes to monitor this area they must inform other working groups.
7. Any outside organizations that would like to conduct research or do other activities in this area must receive prior permission from RKIPN.

2. Watershed Area

Objectives

1. Conserve the water source in order to utilize water and its resources sustainably in the future.
2. Obtain adequate, clean and safe water.
3. Restore the watershed ecosystem.
4. Obtain sufficient water for household consumption and domestic agriculture.

Rules and Regulations

1. It is prohibited to collect, harvest, or clear any plants or flowers in the watershed area.
2. It is prohibited to clear land for mining, agriculture, or private expansion.
3. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
4. Brick making, charcoal making, and earth-extraction are prohibited.
5. Any activities harmful to water creatures in the watershed area are prohibited.
6. It is prohibited to hunt any wildlife species classified as restricted by the community.
7. No construction is allowed except for community-managed eco-tourism.
8. Non-native tree species are not allowed to be used for reforestation in this area.
9. Native tree species can be planted at the watershed area after agreement by the community.
10. Water supply system for domestic use shall not harm the watershed ecosystem.
11. Water from the watershed area shall not be used for private business.
12. NTFPs can be collected for household consumption only, not for sale.
13. Non-prohibited wild animals can be hunted for household consumption.

3. Utilization Forest

Objectives

1. Benefit the local indigenous peoples, future generations, and wildlife.
2. Obtain local construction materials such as timber, bamboo, rattan, etc.
3. Obtain firewood, food, and herbal medicine.
4. Show that, with good management, people can utilize forest resources to meet their needs in a sustainable way.

Rules and Regulations

1. Timber cannot be traded to outsiders.
2. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
3. Doing rotational farming or any agriculture is prohibited.
4. A family can harvest only 5 tons of timber (raw log) for house construction. If more is needed they need to ask permission from the community.
5. Anyone harvesting timber must receive prior permission and from RKIPN.
6. In order to show responsibility and accountability, those who cut trees must cut in locations where there will be less impact. They must also replant trees to replace those that they cut.
7. Those who cut trees in this area must do their best to not waste any part of the tree.
8. Permission from the community is required to collect NTFPs.
9. It is prohibited to cut trees less than 6-feet in girth.

4. Herbal Medicine Forest

Objectives

1. Maintain valuable medicinal plants.
2. Utilize these plants for health purposes when needed.
3. Benefit wildlife.
4. Maintain traditional healing practices.
5. Develop and package herbal medicinal plants for convenient medical treatment.

Rules and Regulations

1. Any form of destruction or clearing is prohibited in this area.
2. It is prohibited to harvest more than what you need.
3. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
4. Certain medicinal plants may be transplanted in the forest area to increase their number, according to traditional knowledge.
5. Outsiders are strictly prohibited from conducting research in this area for any purpose. If they would like to do so, they are required to receive prior permission from RKIPN and collaborate with the local people's representatives.

5. Cultural Forest

Objectives

1. Provide an opportunity to practice rotational farming which illustrates Karen tradition and culture.
2. Pass on knowledge about rotational farming to the next generation.
3. Maintain biodiversity and save seeds to improve food security for people and wildlife.
4. Maintain Karen culture and tradition through unity and working together.

Rules and Regulations

1. It is prohibited to plant permanent crops.
2. It is prohibited to use chemical fertilizer, pesticides, or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).
3. The rotation period must be at least 7-8 years before returning to a fallowed field.
4. When burning a field, steps must be taken to ensure the fire will not spread beyond that area.
5. It is strictly prohibited to sell this land.
6. Clearing the forested/fallow land outside of the normal rotation is prohibited.
7. Monoculture is prohibited.

6. Agroforestry Area

Objectives

1. Maintain food security for the community and the protect the forest ecosystem.
2. Rehabilitate the forest in a way that also generates income for the community.
3. Integrate planted food crops according to local forest type.
4. Maintain climate stability and groundwater supply.

Rules and Regulations

1. It is prohibited to establish agroforestry near a steep slope, stream, or salt lick.
2. It is required to integrate many species of trees.
3. It is required to practice ecological agriculture.

7. Fish Conservation Zone

Objectives

1. Ensure food security of the local people.
2. Increase the population of water creatures.
3. Achieve recognition of indigenous customs by practicing traditional conservation methods.
4. Restore utilization and protection practices amongst local communities.
5. Conserve the water and river ecosystem and rehabilitate degraded ecosystems.
6. Conserve the water source and maintain good quality water in order to improve the quality of life of the local community.

Rules and Regulations

1. Catching fish or any water creature is prohibited in this area.
2. It is prohibited to cut forest trees which give shade.
3. It is prohibited to destroy or harm this ecosystem for any purpose.
4. Any activity, such as mining or agriculture, which causes contaminated water to flow into the fish conservation zone is prohibited.
5. Destructive methods of catching fish, such as using electric shock, are prohibited in the fish conservation zone, as well as upstream and downstream of the zone.
6. It is prohibited to damage the water quality in this protected area.

8. Cemetery

Objectives

1. Provide trees for making coffins as needed.
2. Provide materials for building community shade structures as needed.
3. Restore the forest.

Rules and Regulations

1. Farming is prohibited in this area.
2. Trees and bamboo can only be cut to be used for burial and cemetery needs.
3. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
4. It is strictly prohibited to buy or sell land in this area.
5. It is required that the community plants more trees in this area.

9. Umbilical Cord Forest

Objectives

1. Maintain and restore Karen traditional culture.
2. Provide adequate forest trees for the traditional umbilical cord ceremony.
3. Rehabilitate forest sustainably in the local area.

Rules and Regulations

1. It is prohibited to cut or destroy trees in this area.
2. Burning the forest for any purpose is prohibited.
3. Building or construction in this area is prohibited.
4. It is prohibited to collect firewood or charcoal from this area.
5. It is permitted to collect vegetables and herbal medicine for household use from this area.

Forest Ordination, Mapping and Demarcation

RKIPN village coordinators discussed with villagers in order to map out the various conservation areas. So far, they have done this demarcation by hand using well-known landmarks and local knowledge of historic land-use patterns. In March 2015, they held a forest ordination ceremony of the Koe Ki Watershed Area, inviting religious leaders and government officials to participate and learn how villagers are conserving their own environment.



A forest ordination event

In the future, RKIPN plans to use GPS to clearly demarcate the community protected areas so everyone will respect the boundaries, and the rules and regulations that have been established by the people themselves.

Timeline of Key RKIPN Activities

5 February 2014	Htar Ta Beh fish conservation zone for Kamoethway community is established in Keh Gwaw village.
21 September 2014	Karen people from Thailand visit Kamoethway to share their experiences living in a government protected forest area.
28 October 2014	Villagers present their plans for community forest conservation to NGOs and government representatives at a multi-stakeholder meeting in Dawei.
29-30 October 2014	Villagers first discuss the idea to establish a forest conservation committee, which will later become RKIPN.
10 November 2014	The committee is officially founded and given the name RKIPN. Volunteer leadership committee for RKIPN is elected by villagers.
11 December 2014	RKIPN officially establishes 9 types of protected forest categories along with the objectives and rules and regulations. RKIPN also forms 6 working groups and starts to compile the map area of all protected areas.
22 December 2014	A second fish conservation zone is established in Wah Shu Kho. Village, for their own utilization during community events.
24 January 2015	RKIPN members help build a fire break and attend training on how to identify warning signs of forest fires.
11 February 2015	Villagers hold a ceremony to mark the one year anniversary of establishing the Htar Ta Beh fish conservation zone.
16 March 2015	Forest ordination event Koe Kee watershed in Wah Shu Kho village.

18-19 May 2015	Villagers join an exposure trip to a community forest area supported by TNRP in Yay Bone village, to learn about TNRP's model and share an alternative, bottom-up model with the villagers there.
6 June 2015	RKIPN members celebrate world environment day.
17 July 2015	Villagers continue to evaluate and check the rules and regulations of the 9 protected forest areas.
10-30 August 2015	Forest rules and regulations are confirmed with all villages.
15 August 2015	Villagers presented their model of community forest conservation to the Tanintharyi Region Forestry Director in Dawei.
3 September 2015	Villagers met with KNU and presented their model of community forest conservation.

What's next in Kamoethway?

RKIPN members and Kamoethway villagers have accomplished a great deal in only a short time – laying the foundation to pursue an alternative model that conserves nature and indigenous peoples' livelihoods together, and where local people are the true owners and managers of their land and resources. Currently they are constructing a local community learning center that will serve to support their activities in the area, and also host guests who wish to learn and collaborate with RKIPN. They are also planning to establish a community revolving fund that will raise money to support forest conservation and cultural activities. Many threats will continue to arrive in Kamoethway in Tanintharyi, as interest in foreign investment and forest conservation are both likely to increase dramatically in the coming months and years. But thanks to the efforts of RKIPN, the Kamoethway community is ready to confront these challenges head on, and assert their right to control their own future development and conservation.



Members of RKIPN demarcating land-use patterns

Conclusion

Overcoming decades of conflict and oppression, the indigenous Karen people of Kamoethway have maintained control over their customary territory in the uplands of Tanintharyi. The Northern part of Kamoethway territory is covered by lush forests, which have been cared for by the local people for generations. The Southern part of this territory is occupied by forest-dependent communities, who practice sustainable agroforestry for their livelihoods. Their way of life is centered on the forest, which they rely on for food, medicine, water, shelter, and cultural uses. However, after the KNU signed a preliminary ceasefire agreement in 2012, many companies rushed to Tanintharyi Region, rapidly converting forested land into monocrop plantations and polluted mining sites. Kamoethway was targeted by these destructive elements, but the villagers resisted firmly, vowing not to sell their land to wealthy outsiders or companies. To further protect their territory, villagers are democratically developing a community conservation system based on indigenous knowledge, which integrates economic and cultural values of protecting the forest. It is clear that indigenous, forest-dependent communities like Kamoethway are the strongest defenders of the forest from outside threats.

TRIP NET recognizes the Kamoethway community's collective rights as indigenous people, and supports their determined efforts to protect their natural and cultural heritage passed down by their ancestors. TRIP NET believes that forest-dependent communities are the best forest guardians. Their rights to take the lead in decision-making, planning, and implementation of conservation and development must be recognized by all stakeholders. A truly bottom-up approach to community-driven natural resource management serves to empower indigenous forest-dependent communities to take action for forest conservation, while simultaneously protecting their heritage, culture, and unique way of life. Kamoethway's approach described in this report should serve as an important model to inspire similar bottom-up efforts by forest-dependent communities throughout Tanintharyi and Myanmar. Creating space for local people to take the lead on conservation efforts done in collaboration with outside agencies who recognize and respect the value of local solutions will be the most effective way to stop deforestation, conserve biodiversity, and reduce carbon emissions in the country.

A Guide to Dual-Administration of Kamoethway Villages

In Karen, the river and area are called Kamoethway (ကမိုသွေး) but in Burmese called Kamaungthwe (ခမောင်းသွယ်)

	Karen Name in Roman Script	Karen Name in Karen Script	Karen Name in Burmese Script	Burmese Name in Roman Script	Burmese Name in Burmese Script	Government Village Tract
1	Wah Shu Kho	ဝၚ်ဆျၢၣ်ခိၣ်	ဝါဆူနို	Seik Pyone	ဆိတ်ဖြိုး	Myay Kan Baw မြေးခံဘော်
	Wah Shu Kho Ti Kler Ta Ler Wah Klo	ဝၚ်ဆျၢၣ်ခိၣ် ထံဆျၢၣ်ထၢၣ် လၢၢ်ဝါကၤ	ဝါဆူနို ထီးခလယ်ထာ လယ်ဝါးကလိး	Seik Pyone Nyaung Chaung Atet Seik Pyone	ဆိတ်ဖြိုး ညောင်ချောင်းဝ အထက်ဆိတ်ဖြိုး	
2	Kaw Paw	ခီဝိၣ်	ခေါပေါ	Myay Kan Baw	မြေးခံဘော်	
	Kaw Paw Kalet Pa Doh Kaw Paw Kee Sar Pweh Tah	ခီဝိၣ် ကလဲးဖးခိၣ် ခီဝိၣ်ခဲ စၣ်ပွဲၤထၢၣ်	ခေါပေါ ကလဲဖဲဒို ခေါပေါခီး စာပွဲထာ	Myay Kan Baw Kalet Pa Doh Atet Myay Kan Baw Sar Pweh Tah	မြေးခံဘော် ကလဲဖဲဒို အထက်မြေးခံဘော် စာပွဲထာ	
3	Ka Meik	ကမဲး	ကမိတ်	Ka Meik	ကမိတ်	
4	Kler Pu	ချၢၣ်ဖူ	ခလယ်ဖူး	Nyaung Done	ညောင်တုံး	
5	Naw Tru Taw	နီၣ်တြးတီၤ	ခနာ်တရူတော	Hnan Pa Yote	နှမ်းပရုပ်	
6	Koe Hsay	ခိဆု	ခိုးဆေး	Kaung Hsay Chaung	ခေါင်းဆေးချောင်း	
7	Toe Ki Poe Noe	ထီၣ်ကံၣ်မိနီၣ်	ထိုက်ဖိုးနီ	Kyay Thaw Inn	ကျေးသားအင်း	
8	Kaw Ti Law	ယိၣ်ထံလီၢ်	ခေါထီးလော်	Tha Byu Chaung	သပြေချောင်း	
9	Pway Poh Klah	ဖူမိကျါ	ဖွေးဖိုးကလား	Pyin Tha Daw	ပျဉ်းသားတော	Kyaung Mae Taung ကျောက်မဲတောင်
10	Keh Gwaw	ကၢၢ်ဂီၤ	ကယ်ပေါ	Ka Taung Ni	ကထောင်းနီ	Taung Thone Lone တောင်သုံးလုံး
11	Kalet Ki	ကလဲးကံၣ်	ကလက်ကီ	Kalit Kyi	ကလစ်ကြီး	
12	Way Tah Eh	ဝုၢ်တၢ်အဲၣ်	ဝေတာအယ်	Myitta	မေတ္တာ	n/a

Notes:

- Under the Myanmar government's administration the area is split into three different village tracts, but the KNU does not use village tracts, and refers to all the villages as in "Kamoethway Area."
- Myitta is considered a town and not a village, so does not belong to a village tract.
- Wah Shu Kho (Seik Pyone) is actually made up of three smaller communities that are sometimes treated as stand-alone villages but other times treated as separate quarters of the same village.
- Kaw Paw (Myay Kan Baw) is actually made up of four smaller communities that are sometimes treated as stand-alone villages and sometimes treated as separate quarters of the same village.
- Under the government, Kamoethway villages are part of Myitta Township, Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region.
- Under the KNU, Kamoethway villages are part of Ler Doh Soe Township, Mergui-Tavoy District.

Example of two different naming conventions for the same village:

KNU:

Kler Pu Village, Kamoethway Area, Ler Doh Soe Township, Mergui-Tavory District

Government:

Nyaung Done Village, Myay Kan Baw Village Tract, Kamaungthwe Area*,
Myitta Township, Dawei District, Tanintharyi Region

**Kamaungthwe is optional, so you could just say the village tract and then township.*

