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SUCCESS STORY

Nishorgo Shahayaks – Nature Advocates

Climate Change Community Adaptation Plan



Top: Rezina Majhi conducts a session on Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Rezina Majhi, a Nishorgo Shahayak (Community Facilitator) from Chandpai, Khulna joined the Nishorgo Network more than two years ago in the Sundarbans forest region. Rezina is from a family whose main source of income comes from fishing and today she successfully handles her household chores, helping her family earn a living as well as carry out her duties as a Nishorgo Shahayak (NS). Ever since Rezina became a NS, her main responsibilities have included raising awareness about environmentally friendly methods of fishing in the Sundarbans. While Rezina advocates against harmful methods like poison fishing, she has also been actively campaigning against poaching and logging in the mangrove forests. She believes the Sundarbans forest is more like a mother to the nature dependent dwellers residing in its shadow.

The Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) project is implementing collaborative management of natural resources between local communities around forests and wetlands and the respective governing bodies, Department of Forestry, Department of Environment and Department of Fishery. By socially and economically empowering the local communities, including them in forest and wetland management and giving them ways for alternative sources of incomes the IPAC project is building awareness and partnership between the government and the local people in 25 protected areas of Bangladesh. Through Co-Management Committees (CMC), with elected representatives from the communities and government officers, conservation friendly decisions are taken and activities are implemented to empower the poor while protecting forestry and wetlands of Bangladesh.

Rezina Majhi through her leadership in the Co Management Committee (CMC) proved successful in implementing stringent control measures against poachers and loggers, thereby checking the covert system of filling truck loads with tree stumps which are taken away from the forests. Through community mobilization and lobbying with the Forest Dept. officials, Rezina and other members of her CMC have contributed significantly towards biodiversity conservation in Chandpai Forest Range. Also as part of her responsibilities as a NS, Rezina facilitated the development of community-based Adaptation Plan on Climate Change issues. As an active nature advocate, Rezina was invited to talk on behalf of the forest and wetland dependent communities at the CMO Congress and won the hearts of those present with

her honest comments and opinions about conservation vis-a-vis living in an ecological hotbed like the Sundarbans.