

Youth Entrepreneur in Eco-Tourism Development

Authorizing Youth and Encouraging Eco-Tourism

USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC) project trained several youths to be eco guides and linked them with sustainable opportunities through a strategically designed value chain model. The trainings are bringing economic solvency for the participants and creating opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the growing Eco-Tourism sector. Today, these trainees are independent and proud to be working closely with Bangladesh's nature conservation and are utilizing their monetary revenues by providing their families with superior nutritional daily diets, finer clothing, better education and saving up for the future.

On 16 January 2011, a series of Eco-Tour Guide Trainings were held at the Sundarbans Cluster of IPAC at the cluster office based in Khulna. The training sessions were inaugurated by the Conservator of Forests - Khulna, Divisional Forest Officers - Sundarban East & West and Managing Director of The Guide Tours Limited. The training program was facilitated by local Forest Department Officials, representatives of the tour operators, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Khulna University and IPAC staff.

IPAC focuses on collaborative management, or Co-management, which is an approach used by government technical agencies to collaborate with local communities and other stakeholders in the conservation of forests, wetlands and ecologically critical areas (ECAs). To implement this approach, co-managers engage local stakeholders through a participatory process that empowers them with a voice and well defined roles in decision making and provides sufficient economic incentives to engage their interests in the successful achievement of agreed upon natural resource management objectives.

Trained Eco-tour guides are working as a bridge between economic activities and conservations. These self employment opportunities created by USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-Management Pro-ject (IPAC), are enhancing the entrepreneurs social mobilization, building relationships and adding a significant importance to the Eco -Tourism value chain activity.



"Take only photographs leave only footprints".
So goes the motto of Eco-Tour guides everywhere.

Eco-Tour guides enable people to enjoy and learn about the natural, historical and cultural characteristics of unique environments while preserving the nature and beauty of those sites. They are responsible for leading, guiding and teaching tourists as well as helping to stimulate the economic development opportunities in local communities.