

EVERY SMALL EFFORT EXPEDITES MILLIONS

{Genesis story of Conservation Development (CD) by President/CODEFUND}

Could small input worth generating profound impacts?

"After my education from Norway, I spelled my learning with-&-from the Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area project from 1993 to 1997. I had an opportunity to work with the Rai communities of Bung and Cheskam, Solukhumbu. In this period, staff of Makalu-Barun of Solukhumbu conceived a scheme i.e., Self-Imposed Development Fund (SIDF) and practiced it. I don't know whether the name of scheme was appropriate but it was started like this. There were ten staffs in the Bung sector, who made an effort of paying 2 to 3 Rupees in addition over each meal they had. The guest visitors if any also had to pay extra upon each meal. In the first 8 months, the collection made a total of Rs. 36,000. The contribution collected in this way was utilized for those seeking immediate helped changing their life." Shailendra Pokharel. Refer first the Box story before proceeding ahead.

Box 1 presents outstanding stories an absolute reflection of how a nominal collective inputs and actions simply practiced unknowingly by the park staff of *Makalu-Barun* were meaningful to completely change the mode of life from rural people to project staff. The support that SIDF provided was a token in monetary term but impacts it generated were immense, it helped a blacksmith lady to have eye repaired, a native Rai girl studied and married with a medical professional, and a project staff enabled to access professional training from abroad country. The impact of SIDF made us think if this could be replicated to arrest broader conservation impacts skewing to development dimension.

BOX: A SMALL TIP ON MEAL OF SOME IS THE TIP ON LIFE FOR OTHER

One day a blacksmith couple from *Gude/VDC* having a breastfeeding child appeared at the *Bung* sector office. What had happened to this couple was a tragic event. Husband was chopping down fodder twigs from a tree having his wife collecting those chopped branches underneath the tree. In this extent, cut-side of twig suddenly slipped into her right eye while she was staring up to her husband as to assess him if he'd done with chopping and clearing branches. Her right eye was completely damaged and plugged with ruptured muscles and semi-clogged blood while couple appeared at the office with a hope of mercy and cooperation.

Project itself had nothing objectively to provide her any support, but the nominal fund staff collected under SIDF from their cut in meal. A small token fund from SIDF was relived to her, so that she could make a travel to for treatment in the *Tilganga Eye Hospital*, Kathmandu. In this process, project staff facilitated to the blacksmith couple to reach *Tilganga Hospital* with free air-ticket leveraged from the Chief District Office, Solukhumbu. The Lions Club helped those staying 3 months in the *Tilganga* with full help of hospital administration. With all these supports, retrieving of her right eyesight was not possible though the hospital was successful to remake her right eye in a way that it was absolutely good looking. Hospital also offered with Rs 200 per day to male couple through non-schedule work opportunity at hospital premises during the treatment period.

SIDF also helped two students of Bung. One Sherpa girl from *Najing/Cherem* studied 2 years in Kathmandu with full accommodation and educational support extended by the New Summit Boarding School, *Maitidevi*. After 2 years, she went home with her mother in holiday period but did not return to continue study. She helped her parent to run hotel in *Najing/Bung* in trekking route with the English proficiency that she'd from the New Summit School. A Rai girl sent for schooling in the Navodaya Bidhya Mandir, *Dharan* from grade three and completed 10+2 in 2007. Now, she is married with a medical doctor. Some fund was also provided to a project in charge of the Care Nepal in *Sotang* for travelling to Canada for a technical training.

SIDF was just an initiative to relief some needy one but proven superb to change life of some.

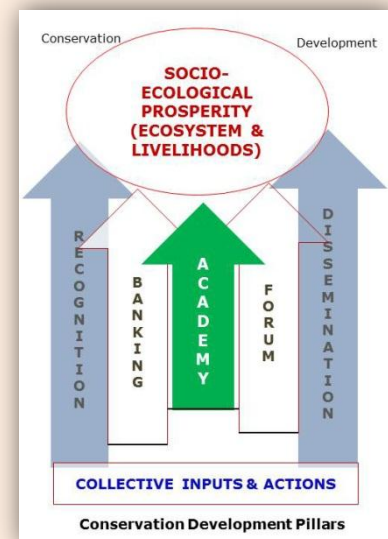
CD is neither medicine nor the miracle

Putting the impression from SIDF in a larger context, the concept of '*Conservation Development*' floated among the masses of conservationists in and beyond Nepal, and concept of Conservation Development emerged out which is neither a quick heal medicine nor the miracle of making nothing into something. It is a mechanism, neither principle nor theory. It has everything based on many learning that we'd in the past among the conservationists/development devotees. We consider this "*A dynamic process of creating*

enabling environment based on self-reliance guided by the principle of ecosystem-based management generating development impacts on Prosperity, Wisdom and Peace". It helps enabling communities to adapt against emerging conservation challenges in a dynamics of changing political and social environment. It prepares communities feel relieved; empowered; prosperous; and owner in harmonizing environmental and social conflicts with a little or no external support at the end. Having this concept agreed, an inception event of February 2012, Conservation Development Foundation (CODEFUND) evoked for the urgent need as institution devoted for conservation development in Nepal, later legitimized through all procedures set by the Government of Nepal.

CODEFUND, the commitment

CODEFUND is not an absolute answer of conservation development. One can find no new things on it, but it appeals for collective inputs and actions to bring positive impacts through conservation advocacy; conservation academy; conservation banking; green recognition and appropriate dissemination of conservation information of the *Nepalese* and all wishers who love us grow, we prefer to say this action pivotal gap the Conservation Pillars. CODEFUND has neither its territory specified within the nation nor too restricted scope within projects. Every bit of inputs if brought together would enable of conveying cumulative and unbelievable results for which CODEFUND humbly appeals all categories of citizens helping us the process to translate country to be recognized, respected and be a different the state of conservation actions. CODEFUND intends to utilize such fund in conservation development. It has 101 founders (Charter CODEFUNDERS) and other 26 members (CODEFUNDERS); these members do not have any power differences. However, the Charter ones are burden absorbers with the commitment from NRs 10,000 to 20,000 for actions in the establishment phase.



Changes never happen without commitment inputs

Every expression people made are created on the basis of their learning and experiences. What Nepal has achieved is full of frustration in >245 years of political instability from its unification to the rise and fall of *Rana* regime and reinstating of the *Shah* dynasty till 2007. In our assessment journey, people reacted about CODEFUND to be over ambitious because we put forth issues of conservation banking; dissemination TV channel; conservation academy and so on in a scene that Nepal had meager sign of development impacts while other state of similar development maturity like South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and so on have done incredible progresses. Nepal has demonstrated virtually no success examples of development impacts in its history. So, such reactions from people are very valid that may have many reasons; but one is the growing frustration of governance failure from over two centuries. Did we change one VDC, now *Grampalika*? Do we know what should a *Grampalika* looks like after successful interventions? Every entity knows that changing villages does mean changing entire Nepal. What made development actors not to proceed in this direction? This situation normally is the case when governing body fails to govern its actions & results. We need to break the growing frustration ever since among us.

Let's review business & industrial cases in Nepal like *Hulas*; *Chaudhary*; *Jagadamba*; *Panchakanya* and other groups. The financial institution (banks & cooperatives etc.) are consolidating citizen funds to make reward making investment in hydropower; infrastructures; industry; real-estate and so on. These all are remarkably successful to deliver their services. Why are these so successful? These success examples are made for economic incentives for them who made investments for their benefits; their actions are prized through bonus which let no spaces for frustration to grow. Collective inputs and actions of shareholders have made all these businesses the prolific success in Nepal.

External assistances are never certain

Consolidation of actions to strengthen 'Conservation Pillars' is not a simple task, it takes long time. However, collective inputs and actions of government; environmental institution; NGOs and citizens if make effort can make these happen. Our call for actions is like in business and banking communities but

what impacts it aims to generate is different. Conservation is a long process of generating sustainable impacts, and no external sources can ensure supports for longer period that conservation normally demands. It is obvious that conservation agenda are often changing, so trends of external sources are also oscillating. This left many conservation programs being aborted on its half-way done before any reaps/benefits. Recently, pull off of climate assistance from the USA pushed global climate agenda in the whirlpool of uncertainty, this decision is expected to curse entire globe to raise temperature by 3⁰C again. So, our call is to break this dependency monotony, even nonetheless how longer it takes.

Ours advocacy is for conservation benefits, no trade & business

Our call is for collective inputs and actions as similar as the ways business communities behave and act in their sectors, but it differs in the aspect of reaping longer term conservation benefits from volunteering a nominal contribution. Unlike investors grabbing the benefits, CODEFUND acts and advocates strongly for inclusive and equity based benefits, it is not a business institution. We repeat here that many people whom we shared the concept of Conservation Development and kindly responded to us about it being very ambitious. Yes, we agree that our programs are quite ambitious and remain ambitious till we don't start. Any single innovation in the beginning is always ambitious either this is a writing pen or space shuttle. Those will translate gradually in the reality based on magnitude and strength of collectiveness as catalytic to drive thing happens quicker. We therefore appeal all to catalyze us, inspire us and help us doing & redoing; our actions will never fail.

We see the strength of 'Conservation Pillars' CODEFUND has assessed and envisioned. We need to pursue these gaps into our development agenda sooner or later; no escapes but ensue.

Discoveries demands continuity over failure circumstances

The great sailor Christopher Columbus (the Genoese citizen & resident of Portugal) proposed his voyage scheme to explore the Indian sub-continent to the Portuguese government for the first funding in 1492 A.D. The plan of Columbus was ambitious adventure at that time in terms of the technology as well as funding, so the proposal was rejected. Columbus did not give hope to his mission. He submitted the same proposal to Spain. Spain funded this mission that eventually discovered the North America. Ambitious program of Columbus to access India actually discovered North America with rejected proposal from Portugal but accepted by Spain, the neighboring nation. There are so many discovery stories and innovations people made in the history that always had a fictitious start. The Apollo mission of the USA to touch moon and high altitude railway line in permafrost Tibet were never simple. A persistent continuity to overcome failures eventually results discovery. Discovery is internal but impacts spread all over.

Discoveries were never simple

Above stories inspired CODEFUND which does not have any backstopping yet from neither government nor any non-government entities. Our mission is not as complex as of Columbus, USA and China of exploring the Indian sub-continent, moon touch and rail in Tibet. We understand that every human has 'Unlimited Power' to deliver unbelievable impacts. In this sense, the prime task is to explore such power. One of the ways to disclose such power is through collective inputs and actions. Let's bring our strength accumulated at one place, the CODEFUND. Yes, with this accumulation:

- We can establish conservation academy;
- We can have conservation banking;
- We can have green recognition;
- We can have conservation advocacy forum; and
- We can have conservation dissemination center.

We will have all these at least in one *Grampalika* demonstrated with Ecosystem Conserved and Livelihoods improved on sustainable manner. This demonstration will induce impacts on other areas gradually. If impacts could be made by nominal inputs of ten park staff of *Makalu-Barun* through SIDF why not similar impacts we replicate effort for broader level conservation development.

WE CAN DO IT. WHAT WE NEED IS TO START. AND, CODEFUND IS A GOOD START

