**KVCTT trekking trail evaluation report submitted by Ms Sattu and Ms Hanna , Finnish volunteers -Year ( Feb 2010 till May 2010)**

 **-Infrastructures**

In general, the information boards seemed to be on their destined places and provided useful information considering the tourists' needs. Also, they increased the visibility and presence of Netif and Suomen Latu thus fulfilling their task.

On the other hand, the signs esiintya vaihtelevasti. In our opinion, the tourists couldn’t, without a guide, follow the trail at certain passages without getting lost. Some problematic parts of the trail are from Mulkharka to Chisopani, from Chisopani to Nagarkot and some on the way from Nagarkot to Dulikhel. We thought that for example going through the rice fields on the way from Nagarkot to Dulikhel was a great route but might need clearer signage. Also, going through backyards doesn’t feel intuitive to western tourists – no harm in it otherwise. Instead, from Dulikhel to Namobuddha the route was clear and the same applied to the passage from Namobuddha to Panauti.

* **Waste bins**

We observed many waste bins in the villages but only few along the trail outside habitat. The bins are needed in villages but some could be implemented along the trail and in the tourist shelters too – or at least have some instructions on where to take the waste. Especially on an eco-friendly trail one could expect the trekkers to be motivated to take the nature into consideration and thus take part in improving the environment. Picnic places would require bigger bins and clearer instructions about waste disposal as well as information about the community’s efforts to reduce the amount of waste - as a way of making especially Nepali tourists understand the effects of their action since from what we heard during the trek, this seems to be a special problem.

We heard from several people that the waste bins lying further from the villages cause problems as there is no one to take care of them. We wondered if this is because no one is responsible for this outside the villages. Could the problem then be solved by hiring someone for the job the same way as in the villages? It seems crucial to us that someone should be held accountable for the maintenance of the trail and thus be paid for it.

* **Incinerator**s

Many incinerators were under construction in the villages. Not a sustainable solution but a short-term necessity perhaps….

* **Shelters**

In addition to the existing shelters, two more were under construction on the passages between Dhulikhel and Namobuddha and Chisopani and Nagarkot. The intended places seemed fine although we maybe failed to see their specific importance other than shelters in case of rain especially if there aren’t any extra facilities provided.

* **Toilets**

In the same way, we would see toilets as a less urgent investment especially compared to the trouble of their maintenance. In the villages their existence is perusteltu.

* **Waste management**

Being one of the most obvious problems in the area, practically everyone interviewed also mentioned the reduction of waste as one of the main benefits of the project. This was often mentioned spontaneously without asking. Because of the clean-up campaigns, the waste issue might also be the one associated most clearly with NETIF.

Many of the respondents asked for more waste management and more training for it. Many people, especially the farmers, could benefit from composting bio degradable waste, which only the organic farmers seemed to be doing at the moment. Others used the traditional method of digging and dumping. Other waste was managed by burning or was picked up by the Madhesi (plastics) and sold on.

The most problematic areas seemed to be Chisopani and the picnic or recreational areas for example on the way from Dhulikhel to Namobuddha. Similarly, there was a lot of waste at the entrance to the Shivapuri National Park. A sign pointed a waste disposal point on a hill but no bins were placed there so all the waste was thrown directly to the nature. Furthermore, many simply disposed the trash just outside their own yard or “let the wind take care of it”. Here some awareness raising might prove fruitful.

The Shivapuri waste problem isn’t anything NETIF could easily affect especially since we heard that attempts to co-operate haven’t been successful. Being the starting point of the trail for many it provides the first impression. The national park would surely benefit from removing overlaps in the functions as well.

Another partnership that hasn’t yet been made the most of is the scouts for whom respecting nature is at the core of their ideology. As to the awareness raising, this would also be a good way of reaching pupils all around the country. The Scout Center’s director proposed different activities around the area, such as garbage cleaning ralleys, competitions and participation in the awareness raising.

* **Questionnaires**

Conducting the short interviews gave us a good excuse to talk to the locals and as sample shows, to the stakeholders, mostly those who have the most to gain. The questionnaires were short and aimed to measure the familiarity and image of NETIF, the KVCTT project in general and the village coordinators and to evaluate the effects the project has already accomplished. In our opinion, the questionnaire should have been more concentrated to get some depth to the answers. The questions and concepts used should have been fitted for respondents’ lifeworld. An additional problem was caused by the translation; Loss of information and increased risk of misinterpretation and of leading the answers of the respondents. Our interpreter bypassed gender and caste discrimination related questions as unnecessary since according to him such problems don’t exist in the area. On the other hand, anonymity should be guaranteed in all the surveys. This wasn’t the case especially as one the interviewers was a village coordinator and thus had at least indirect control over the allocation of resources in the area. Especially those who seemed to have the most to gain from the project gave the most positive feedback. Bearing all this in mind we weren’t surprised by the criticism, as subtle as it were, given by women.

For the above mentioned reasons we stopped conducting the surveys after the most critical areas, that is Sundarijal, Mulkharka and Chisopani, conducting still a few in Nagarkot. In all we did 18 interviews with hoteliers and villagers. 12 of the respondents were men and six were women. None of the respondents claimed themselves dalits and only 6 belonged to the Tamang community. In most cases there were other people present as well and the interviews resembled more a group discussion than a personal interview.

According to the interviews, the KVCTT wasn’t recognized as a brand but most knew about the trail. All had heard of NETIF and many had participated in activities such as trainings and especially clean up campaigns. As mentioned before, NETIF was mostly recognized in relation to the clean up campaigns. Most people seemed to know their village coordinator by name but not always by their title. The organizational structure didn’t seem clear to many and a few wished for more transparency in the village development activities.

Other criticisms regarded the problems of including women. All except one of the women interviewed felt men had gained more from the project. We learned that men had participated more in the trainings, such as the local guide training and hotel management training. One respondent wished for more cooperation with the women’s group but on the other hand this might only underline their particularity instead of bringing them to mainstream and incorporating them to the decision making processes.

All respondents recognized at least some benefits from the project and wished for NETIF to continue working in the area. Most asked for more resources but a few also said they will continue for example improving the waste management independently after the phase out.

 **Own remarks**

We enjoyed the trail’s diversity and consider it the main attraction. We heard of adding some shortcuts through the forests and agree that this would enhance the charm of the trail even more, especially in the passages that are mainly road, for example from Chisopani to Nagarkot. Following jeep trails is less interesting no matter what the scenery might be. It is a tough climb from Sundarijal to Chisopani but an interesting one because of the jungle. We loved the pine forests near Dhulikhel too. The trek to Namobuddha was .. and we were impressed by the place, possible social and infrastructural problems except for the trash near the shrine uphill weren’t visible to tourist.

Lopuksi

* Rahankeruu: netti /kahdet eri hinnat – miten kaytannossa jarjestetaan, donation boxien nakyvyys?
* Awareness without action…
* Problem of need for fast cash
* Hotellinpitajien kirjanpito turistimaarista
* paremmat kartat / enemman kyltteja + kyltteihin korkeudet ja kilometrit, luontokyltit kuulostavat hyvalta
* namobuddhan ongelmat eivat nakyneet ulospain, vaikutti kiinnostavalta ja kauniilta paikalta