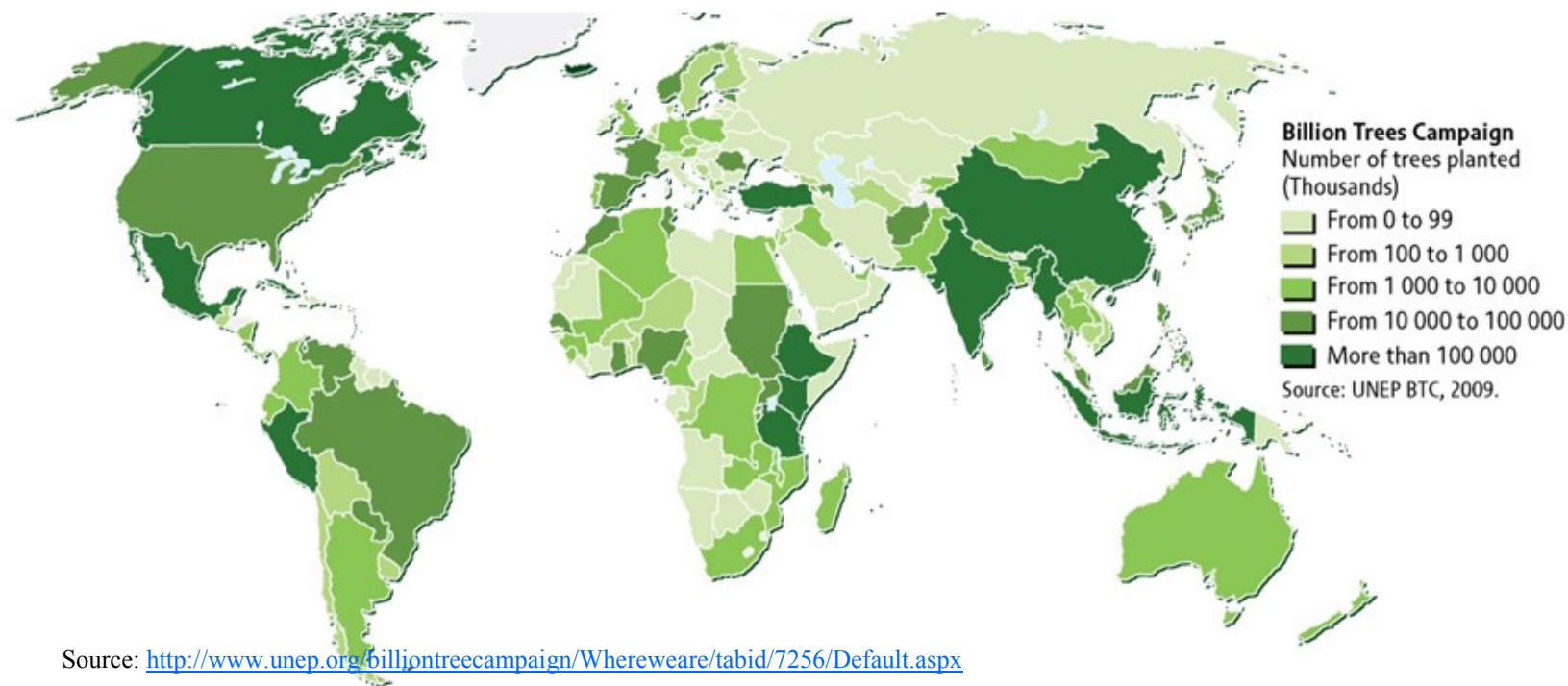


Rare Fruits Conservation: the case for public participation



Introduction

More than 400 species of edible fruits and nuts are found in Southeast Asia. Of these 90% are woody plants and 10% are herbaceous plants. Forty-five percent are considered cultivated and 55% grow in the wild. Fruits are source of food and nutrition and those growing in the wild are often neglected as they do not meet the demands of the market.



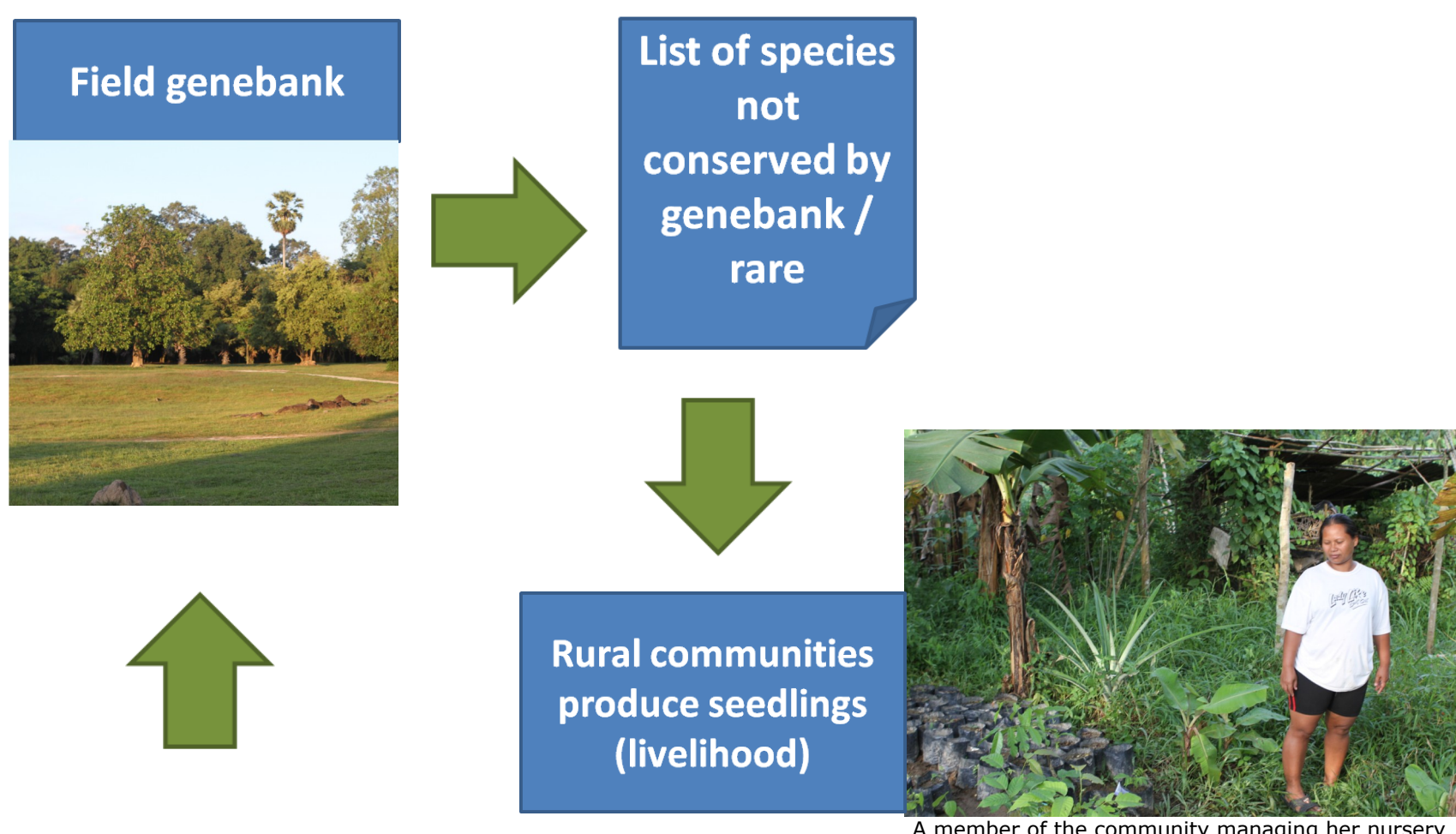
Source: <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/Where/where/tabid/7256/Default.aspx>

Tree planting a simple conservation tool where the general public can participate in. For example the "Billion Tree Campaign" has reached more than 7 billion trees, one for every person on the planet. A new target of 14 billion trees has been set and a total of 12 billion trees had been pledged with 11 billion planted.

Civil society initiatives and the increasing publicity of environmental protection in the public media have, among other things, promoted the practice of corporate social responsibility. The result is more resources are now available for environmental care and there are concerns on how to identify and distinguish between genuinely motivated private sector corporations and their public relation riddled private sector corporate counterparts in the area of sustainability in the constructive engagements. (Abraham 2010).



Cyber Plant Conservation Network – a collaborative effort between Ensearch and Bioversity International in conserving indigenous, rare plant genetic resources, in particular fruit trees species. The conservation process is to make the rare fruit trees common through widespread planting and through a web site to document these activities, encourage the creation of local content, creation of an on-line community of individuals and organizations to report and exchange information on these fruit trees. The knowledge base generated with the public participation can support the work of the scientists in conservation and research, e.g. Gene by Environment studies.



Tree Information	
Date of Measurement	DD / MM / YYYY
Plant Information	
Plant ID	00100102030998
Tree Owner Name	Ekhatur Roshak
Date Planted	2010/03/11
Plant Location	Selangor
Tree Species Info	
Local Name	Bnyau
Common Name	Bnyau
Botanical Family	Asteraceae
Scientific Name	
Genus	Species
Subspecies	Variety
Mangifera	Cassia
Growth Record	
Trunk girth	[mm]
Plant height	[m]
Canopy size	

CYBER PLANT CONSERVATION NETWORK

Environmental Management & Research Association of Malaysia (ENSEARCH)

CONSERVATION THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

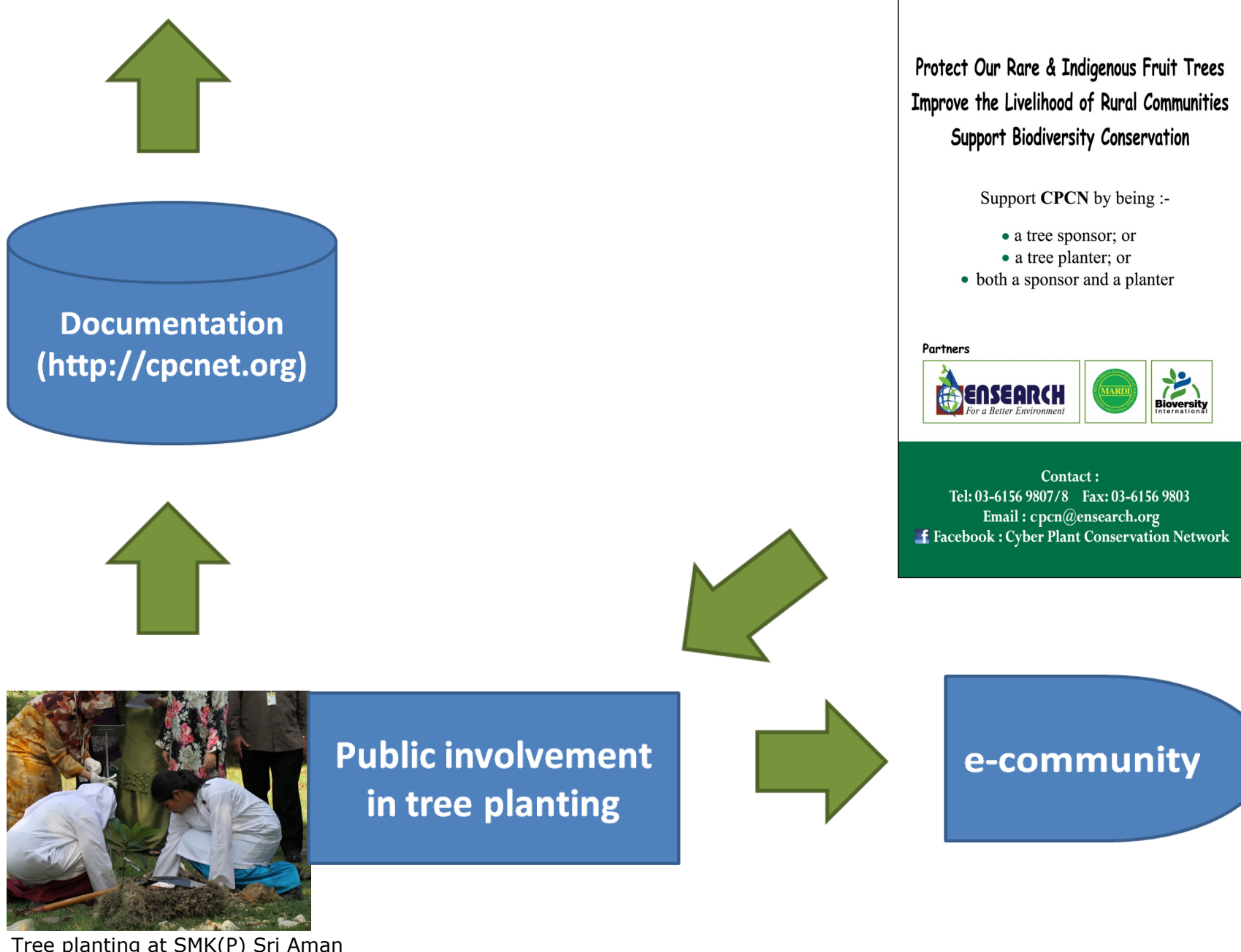
Protect Our Rare & Indigenous Fruit Trees
Improve the Livelihood of Rural Communities
Support Biodiversity Conservation

Support PCPN by being :-

- a tree sponsor; or
- a tree planter; or
- both a sponsor and a planter

Partners:

Contact :
Tel: 03-6156 9807/8 Fax: 03-6156 9803
Email : cpcn@ensearch.org
Facebook : Cyber Plant Conservation Network



Issues

- The conservation of tropical fruit trees and its wild relatives with recalcitrant seeds is widely carried out in field genebanks requiring large land areas and resources
- Land use changes and degradation of forests threatens *in situ* conservation stands.
- Genebanks have to prioritise the species to conserve as not all can be conserved due to limited resources.
- Interests in nutrition, food security, increased awareness of traditional knowledge of useful plants meant that more underutilised and neglected species have to be conserved.
- The proliferation of Internet connectivity and the information and communication technology (ICT) changes the approach for awareness .
- Rural communities need to improve their livelihood with the diversity of rare fruits and the knowledge they have.

Discussion

The space constraints experienced by genebanks will be difficult to address by acquiring more land as increasing financial resources are also needed. There are many green spaces in parks and gardens in the urban areas and these could be harness as space for conservation. The general public can assist in sharing the cost of maintaining rare fruits in urban areas by adopting trees. In a field genebank situation, accessions conserved have to be well documented and growing in public areas could demand more resources on the genebank for monitoring. This is the scope where ICT can assist by allowing the general public to contribute to the documentation besides sharing in the maintenance of the accessions. To coordinate such an effort for public participation in conservation, the CPCnet has to link the needs of the genebank, the rural communities and the urban communities. The genebank provides a list of fruits species that they are not able to conserve or are rare. Based on this list the livelihood of the rural communities could increase through the production of seedlings. CPCnet in turn will encourage tree planting of these seedlings in the urban areas and setting up the CPCnet.org site to document the planted trees over their lifespan.



A Highway Operator Corporate Social Responsibility

Malaysia is one of the Mega diversity Centres in the world with rich flora and fauna but her citizens hardly know a handful of their own indigenous trees. With 800 km of highways running from North to South of the country, it will be useful to have different trees planted along the whole stretch so that driving through the highway will be an educational experience for both drivers and children. Literally speaking if 800 species of indigenous trees are planted (i.e. 1 species per km) we could drive through the rain forest! The highway can take the name of the trees, so if a car breaks down, the caller says that s/he is along the Keranji stretch or the Sentul stretch of the road. The highway operator can gain both customers (tourist included) and contribute to the conservation of the environment. Providing students with views of practical ways to conserve the environment and reinforcement of the conservation subject learnt. The social impact of this CSR is to engage the rural communities living along the forest fringes to help in raising tree seedlings for the project

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Photographs by P. Quek