**Reaching Out – Education and Extension Services**

A FORRU should use knowledge generated from research to build capacity amongst all stakeholders in forest restoration initiatives. Such an outreach program may include training courses, workshops, and extension visits, supported by the production of publications and other educational materials, tailored to meet the different needs of each of the various stakeholder groups, such as government officials, NGOs, local communities, teachers, school children etc.

**Education Team**

Recruit a team of education officers, with specialized experience of environmental education techniques, to work alongside the FORRU researchers and provide stakeholders with the knowledge and technical support they need to implement restoration projects.

The research team must first familiarise the education team with research results and provide frequent updates as the research delivers new information. The education team must then decide how to present the knowledge to stakeholders in user-friendly formats.

**Education program**

The educators’ job is to design curricula to meet the different needs of the various stakeholders involved in forest restoration. A modular system is best, with basic subject material presented in different ways to match: i) the target audience and ii) the location where the module will be taught. For example, teaching forest officers about the framework species concept in a field plot requires a very different approach to teaching school children about the same concept in a classroom.

An education program can include:

* workshops to introduce the general concepts (usually for government officers, NGOs and community groups;
* more detailed training in forest restoration best practices for practitioners, responsible for running nurseries and implementing planting programs;
* extension visits to forest restoration projects – to provide on-site technical support;
* hosting interested visitors to the unit e.g. scientists, donors, media etc;
* helping with the supervision of college student thesis projects and
* presenting research results at conferences.

Special events for school children and a train-the-teachers program may also be undertaken, since children have the most to gain from forest restoration (½ day to several days, for camps and teacher training).

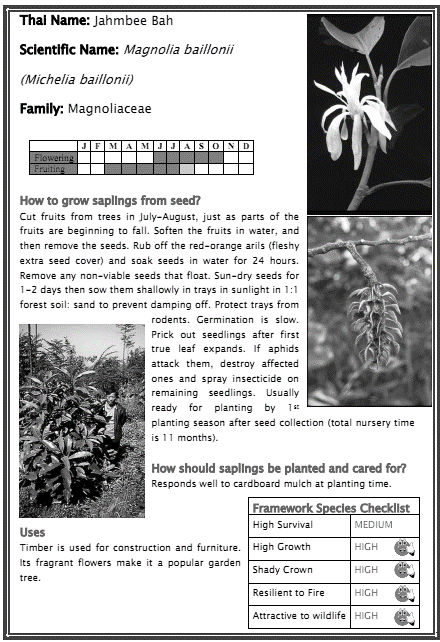
**Educational materials**

A FORRU education team should produce a wide range of educational materials to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders.

Videos can provide a concise overview of the FORRU and its work for the opening sessions of workshops and training programs, whilst a website can keep all stakeholders informed of a FORRU’s outputs on a regular basis.

Publications are important educational outputs of a FORRU. Producing them can include a participatory component, involving consultations with, and inputs from, workshop participants. This ensures that the information provided by the FORRU is combined with indigenous knowledge.

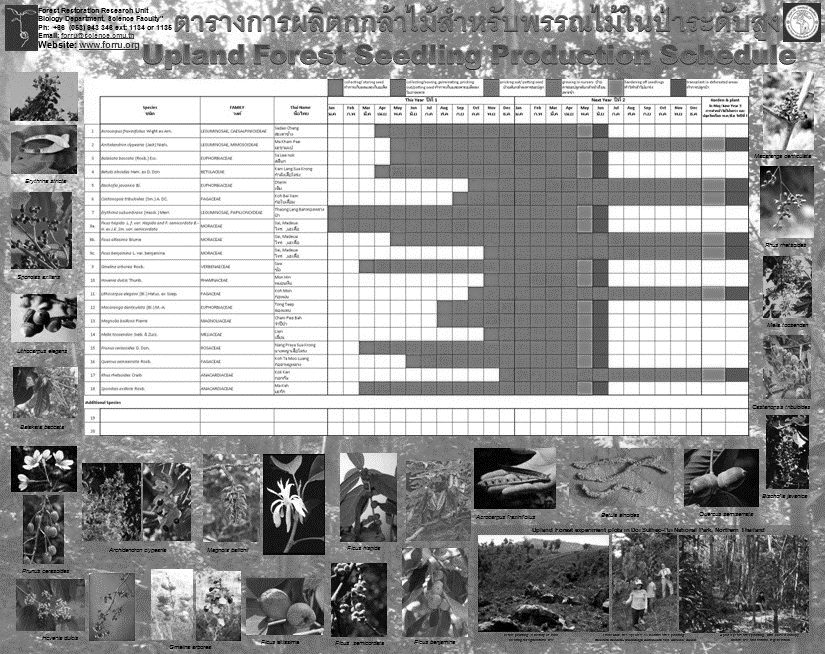
**Pamphlets and handouts**

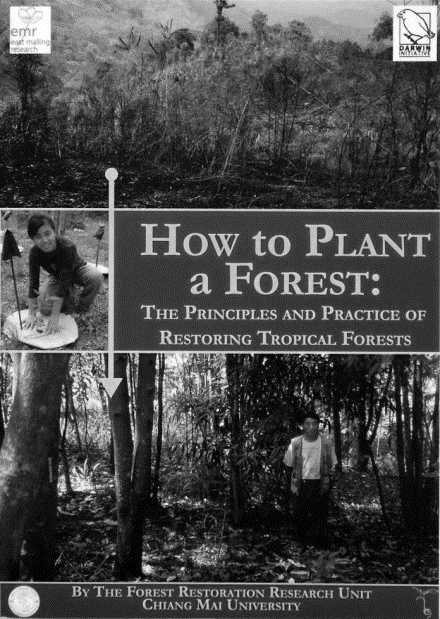
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Handouts and pamphlets are one of the first outputs of a FORRU. They should be both informative and help to publicise the unit. One of the first pamphlets produced could simply describe the FORRU’s research program to visitors. As the research program develops, more technical literature should be produced, such as species data sheets and production schedules.

*Convert species information into user-friendly formats, such as this species profile card for Magnolia baillonii. Then compile information for all target species into a production schedule poster.*

*Production schedule posters help nursery staff to keep track of what seed species to collect, when to collect them.*

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**Practical Manuals**

Produce an overview of best practices, which combines the original skills and knowledge derived from the FORRU’s research program with indigenous knowledge. The manual serves as a text book for training stakeholders during workshops and extension events, as well as newly recruited staff and visiting workers. For an example, see FORRU-CMU’s *How to Plant a Forest*. This volume proved so popular that it has now been translated and adapted for use in 7 SE Asian countries.

<https://www.forru.org/library/0000153>

**Research papers and an international audience**

Original scientific results produced by the Unit should be published in international journals or presented at international conferences. The purpose of publications aimed at an international audience is to share research results with other people working in a similar field. They enhance the status of the research unit and raise its profile in the eyes of donor agencies; they strengthen bids for funding.

**Develop a communication strategy**

The education team should also reach out to the general public by engaging with mass media. Recognition for the work of a FORRU helps to build public acceptance of forest restoration and attracts support and funding. It also helps to establish a network of contacts with other organizations that might otherwise be unaware of the FORRU’s work.

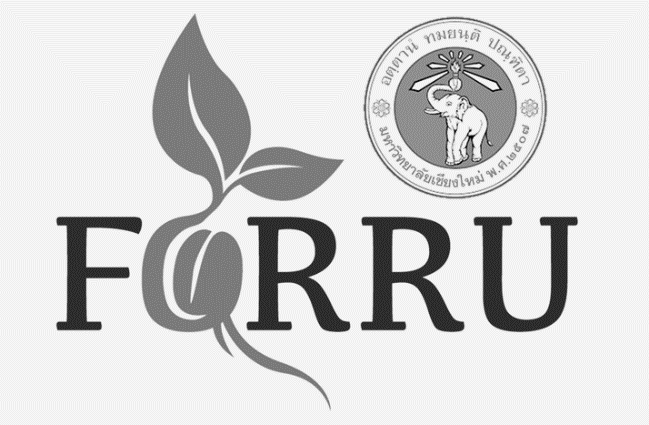
**What questions should a communication strategy answer?**

Firstly, determine what the purpose of the communication is, what resources are available, and how to evaluate whether the message has been effectively communicated. Decide on who is the intended target audience. For example, it could be the general public, land-holders, staff from government agencies, environmental organisations, teachers and students, sponsors and potential sponsors, industry organisations and so on. Be clear on what issues concern the audience, what message to communicate to them, what tools will be used and who in the FORRU will be responsible for the communication.

**Writing for an audience**

Develop the skills needed to present information clearly and concisely. Articles in newspapers, brochures, newsletters and on display boards will be read by people from a wide variety of backgrounds with different levels of technical expertise and language skills.

**Developing a logo and promotional style**



Develop a FORRU logo and a signature style (colour scheme, font style etc.) for presentations, publications, uniforms and so on. This will help audiences to recognise the FORRU “brand”.

*A recognisable logo helps to build a sense of unit identity and project recognition.*

**Photography**

Good photographs can be used for a wide range of communication activities. Attractive, clear photos will increase the chance of getting articles published. Use a database to catalogue and organize the photo collection to easily select the most appropriate photographs for each purpose.

*You can never have enough photos. Learn how to take good ones.*

**What communication tools can be used?**

Open days, workshops and other events at the unit are all good ways to communicate with the wider public, but publicising your work at international meetings can have a broader impact. Accept invitations to speak at conferences and symposia or present posters, which can later be used around the FORRU. Invite journalists to planting events and the opening of workshops etc. Write press releases and prepare information packs for journalists in advance so they have accurate facts and figures at their fingertips when writing articles.

Maintain a website for regular communications with a network of interested organizations and individuals. In addition to a general description of the unit and its research and education activities, include pages with announcements of forthcoming events, a picture gallery of recent events and an interactive bulletin board. Publications and educational materials can be also posted on the website.

Steve Elliott 8/11/22