

## **Ethno-botanical Survey**

**Purpose:** the purpose of the Ethno-botanical Survey was to collect information from three communities (Gndevaz, Gorayk and Saravan) on wild herbs; evaluate the importance of the herbs for the local communities and potential impact of the Amulsar project on the communities' abilities to collect herbs. Geoteam provided brief training and instructions to nine local data collectors. After the training and distribution of Questionnaire, they conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in respective villages. A total of six FGDs were organized, 2 in each community (Men/Women group/each), with roughly 15 respondents in each group, or a total of 90 persons.

### **A. General**

Herbs are collected in all three communities for years, as a traditional source of supplementary food generation after generation. As mentioned by most groups, normally all family members collect herbs, in some cases women or elderly are more involved; however, men help them in the process. The same types of herbs are being collected from year to year, mostly for family consumption and diet, but also for treatment of some health conditions. Those that do not collect herbs also highly appreciate and understand the medicinal, diet and nutritional value of herbs.

Most respondents collect herbs for the purposes of medicinal/health and food/improved diet. Gorayk indicates that they collect them also as a source of income (albeit very modest). The herbs are collected from early spring to late fall, from the same places people know. Men and women collect herbs for the same purpose – herbs for dietary food and health; flower leaves for tea. Most collected and/or mentioned herbs are: thyme, horsemint, yiperikum, mabricaria, sharp dock, garlic, white charophillum bulbosum, valeriana.

*Herders*, too appreciate the value of herbs and other plants: they collect herbs for medicinal, health, diet purposes (the Gorayk respondents added “income”). For cattle grazing, herders do not chose the sites, since the pastures are not planted: the cattle does natural selection based on the richness of the area with grass, medicago, onobrychis and water.

### **B. Household Food and Dietary needs**

The respondents indicated that households have been traditionally collecting herbs for food and dietary purposes for years. They all appreciate the value of herbs as a dietary food and as homeopathic medicine. Families consume herbs all year round: different herbs at different seasons. Some herbs are consumed fresh; others are dried and stored for winter use. Most common types of herbs for food and dietary needs are: sharp dock, charophillum bulbosum, thyme, horsemint, valeriana, falcaria vulgaris, chenopodium, malva, asparagus. Herbs are collected from the lower parts from Amulsar, and places known as Spitak Kyandal, Spitak Aghbyur, Darb to Artavan, Ughedzor area.

### **C. Medicinal implications & nutritional value**

For medicinal purposes the following herbs are being collected: thyme, mint, garlic, urtsikum, mabricaria, yiperikum, valeriana, sharp dock, mabricaria, rose hip, malva, urtica, astrodaucus, blue sailors - used for different health conditions (abdominal pain, fever, respiratory infection, hypertension, fungus, kidney,

intestinal and heart problems). Most families make their own mixture of herbs for medical purposes. Adults and children consume the same type of herbs; kids starting from 3-4 years old.

#### **D. Source of income**

Overall, the sale of herbs is not considered a serious source for income and most respondents mentioned that they do not sell herbs for income. The price for herbs is low and sale is not really profitable. Most families, therefore, collect herbs for their own use and share with relatives or neighbours. There are few families who sell herbs, albeit not as a major means for additional income; other families swap them with fruits or other products not grown in their village (apple, dried apricot or cherry, etc.). Normally, people collect herbs from the same places: for example, Vorotan gorge; rose hip from Amulsar area (II mine area); other herbs from Spital Kyandal, Spital Aghbyur, Darb to Artavan, lower parts of Amulsar (Saravan).

Herbs sold are: thyme, mint, mabricaria, yiperikum, asparagus, garlic, malva, charophyllum bulbosum, sharp dock, astrodaucus, falcaria vulgaris.