

Progress & Impact Report

January to December 2018
Plans 2019



Nature Communities Weaving Rural Futures

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

Acknowledgement

As we continue to embrace and learn on our journey towards building Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas, we are privileged to have received unstinting support from the vibrant local communities of the Eastern Himalayas and our partners. Some of our supporters have worked with us for many years and believed in our vision and mission of creating prosperous communities and preserving the biodiverse rich Eastern Himalayas through our concept of Naturenomics™.

Balipara Foundation greatly acknowledges the contribution made by Asomiya Pratidin, Atlanta Botanical Garden, ATREE, Conservation International, Cotton University, Current Conservation, Club of Rome, Dakshin Foundation, Devex, Diageo, Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer, Elephant Reintroduction Foundation, Globally Managed Services, Green Guard Nature Organization, Hemendra Kothari Foundation, H. T. Parekh Foundation, Japan Environmental Education Forum, Jio, IUCN, Kunming Institute of Botany, The Lily Hotel, Missouri Botanical Garden, MASK, Myanmar Matters, Mountain Futures, NE Focus, News Live, Niyomiya Barta, Pratidin Times, Rajiv Gandhi University, Sanctuary Nature Foundation, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motor Finance, Tata Steel, Tata Trusts, Tezpur University, Teikyo University, WUYA, Wildlife Conservation Trust, Wildlife Trust of India, WWF, etc.

We are indebted and grateful to all the Nine Communities -Adivasi, Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Garo, Mishng, Nepali, Nyishi and Rajbanshi Communities and our Earth Heroes for their constant guidance and inspiration.

We are very grateful to the participants and Panelists of the events held since 2013.

Our sincere appreciation to the team, who has worked hard to make this joint report possible and for their invaluable help, guidance, and feedback throughout the review process.

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Foreword

The Journey of Naturenomics™

“

A tremendous year making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people, the communities that we serve and our majestic biodiversity, which remains as the cornerstone of the Foundation’s enduring commitment towards the Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas

”

The journey since 2007 has been an intensive one. The very objective that we set for ourselves since inception was to make a difference and facilitate our vision of Conserving & Preserving the Natural Heritage of the Eastern Himalayas through a series of experiments. We have strived to securitize assets around land, water, energy and biodiversity resources. We have promoted organic agriculture and renewable energy, implemented water harvesting and animal husbandry; initiated elephant conservation projects, set up a native plant conservation centre, instituted an Asian Elephant Conservation Conference and the Balipara Foundation Awards.

We have had more downs in this journey and in doing this we found that the short gun approach and keeping a wide angled approach was not impactful enough.

Over the last two years, we have re-directed our focus. The very focus on community, conservation & botany and focusing doubly in rural areas and the nine communities – Assamese, Adivasi, Nyshi, Garo, Mishng, Bodo, Nepali, Bengali and Rajbongshi which we have. We have understood the need of the hour - the need for rural communities benefiting from conservation efforts

and to make conservation efforts more human centric from Snowline to Sealine.

2018 has been a step ahead towards the 11th year of Balipara Foundation. A tremendous year making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people, the communities that we serve and our majestic biodiversity, which remains as the cornerstone of the Foundation’s enduring commitment towards the Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas. We have taken a human-centric view of conservation and are firm believers of the fact that without social mobility of the forest fringe communities, no forests and wildlife can be saved. And that the responsibility for conserving our rich natural heritage lies in the hands of the people that live alongside it.

Through Naturenomics™ we have sought to emphasise the interdependence between humans and their ecosystems by creating ecologically compliant community assets and promoting re-ruralization. This catalyses social mobility through sustainable economic and ecological development and extensive learning initiatives, by unlocking the Nature Capital in food, water, energy, and biodiversity while giving the communities the stewardship of these assets.

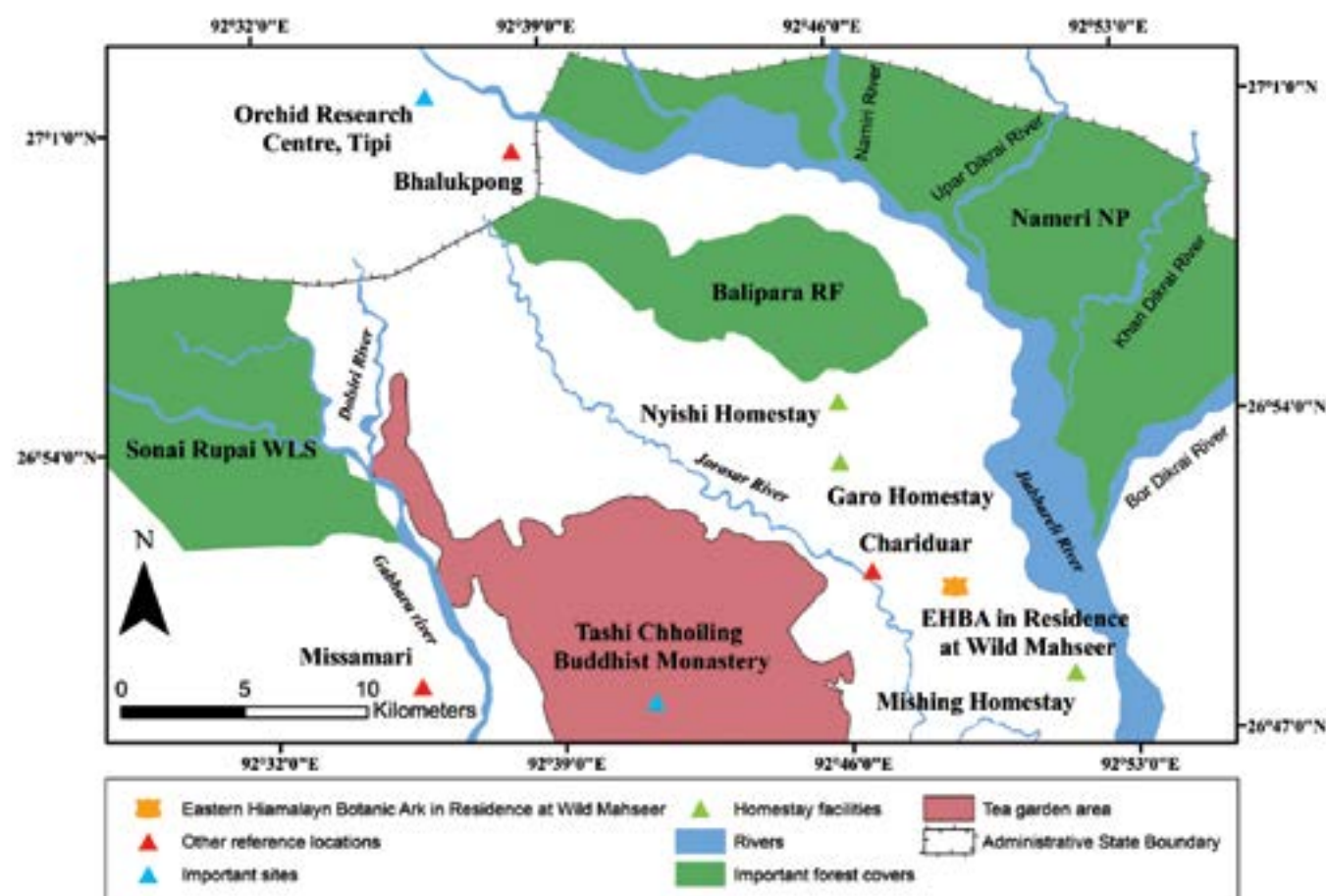
The decade of learning and experimentation in various aspects of conservation has led to the following in 2018-

- Increase in community participation
- Employment through ecosystem-based services
- Enhancement of Tourism Programmes
- Plantation of 3,62,327 saplings
- Propagating indigenous knowledge
- Securitization of natural assets
- Livelihoods generation
- Volunteering Programs

A great highlight of the year holds in identifying our focus in Balipara County and through the Balipara Joint Forest Reserve Management Programme we aim to restore 9 sq km of degraded Asian Elephant habitat and create a

community asset that provides direct economic, social & ecological benefits to the forest-fringe communities. The re-imagining of Balipara County will largely lie in the idea of balancing and the initiation of natural asset management through habitat restoration (whether it be the rivers, food, agriculture, etc.) and bringing about a balance in our natural habitat which will eventually lead to a positive change in the migratory patterns of the Eastern Himalayas, thus allowing the framework of Rural Futures to achieve its goal.

With a vision to 'create opportunities' in Balipara County that would lead to a nature bank for the people of the communities, it is important for us to take decisions keeping the needs of the people in mind and in a sustainable manner. As such, the role of school is important in building Rural Futures that will allow communities and community development to seize opportunities and act as a mediator for inter-generational socio-economic mobility. For promoting healthy learning activities and to create safe spaces for children, we have taken an initiative to establish Baligaon New Bodo School which will impart formal, informal or vocational knowledge and education to the children.



In the Balipara County, our team has successfully completed the ethnobotany study with five communities from the Sonitpur district of Assam. The study explored the importance of plants in the livelihood of our communities and helped us document their knowledge about the plants and the seeds and its uses.

Few other milestones of the year have been our partnership with Indo-China Climate Change Centre with an objective to measure, monitor and implement adaptive methodologies towards climate change resiliency in the Eastern Himalayas. And another Bioresources and Sustainable Livelihoods in North East India program in coordination with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD) under the sponsorship of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in partnership with a range of institutions in the northeast. The largest of its kind in Asia, the program is quantitatively assessing and mapping plant diversity and biological resources in Upper and Lower Assam.

2018 has also been a step ahead with our volunteering programs where students from 11 countries from world renowned institutions like Wharton Global School, Ashoka University engaged in Livelihood, Sustainability and Conservation study in Balipara County.

OUR EFFORTS			RATINGS
Habitat Management	Udalguri Landscape Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.79L saplings planted in Bhairabkunda Forest Reserve• Direct Employment Generated (mandays) – 4924• Direct income generated for the communities (INR) – 1146800	9/10
	Balipara Reserve Forest Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiated Balipara Habitat Restoration Project for the restoration of habitat and nature in Balipara County	3/10
Mindful Tourism	Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capsicum sonitpurensis, a new species of Capsicum was discovered at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark• 24 new medicinal plant species were planted (Total – 50 species)• 40 new species of indigenous orchids were planted at the Orchidarium (Total – 54 varieties)• 27 new bamboo species plantations (Total – 36 species)• 25 varieties of vegetables were planted in the vegetable nursery	8/10
	Homestays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three community homestays were launched in Nyishi, Garo and Mishing village in Sonitpur District• Elephant Country Camp was launched in Bhairabkund Reserve Forest: Hosted 547 visitors from 3 countries• Our social enterprise, the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer was recognised as number 1 Nature destination in India by Vogue magazine and earned the TripAdvisor “Certificate of Excellence 2018”	7/10
Livelihoods	Social Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancing social mobility of 9 communities in Balipara County through education, empowerment and awareness (creating an impact on a population of over 2000 people from 9 communities)	7/10
	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generating direct employment for 100+ local individuals through our social enterprise the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer• Empowerment of women and supporting education of children by donating 200 solar lamps in support of MASK• Community development Elephant Country store launched at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark	8/10

OUR EFFORTS			RATINGS
Education	Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awareness to 1000+ participants across the globe to local schools, students, colleges, community people and tourists of the Eastern Himalayas through 25 courses	6/10
	Training & Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">30+ Workshops conducted for the welfare of the communities	7/10
Technology & Conservation	Asian Elephant Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A virtual platform for Asian Elephant Secretariat which has a live helpline number, an Asian Elephant library, centralized project repository and an online community module	0/10
	Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launched an application – Orchids of the Eastern Himalaya	8/10
Partnerships	Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partnered with Kunming Institute of Botany for assessment of mushroom cultivation in NE IndiaPartnered with Indraprastha College for Women, Indo- China Partnership on Climate Change Secretariat, RED++ Working Group, Mountain Partnership, Earth University, Navdanya	8/10
Knowledge Delivery	Volunteering Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 students engaged in a volunteering program on Livelihood, Sustainability and Conservation with Balipara Foundation from 7 countries	7/10
	Conservation Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A seminar on Universal Basic Income was held in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social SciencesEastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2018 brought together 600 participants, 40+ speakers from 14 countries	9/10
	Naturenomics™ Publications	<p>In 2018, Balipara Foundation published</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Naturenomics™ 7.0 “The League of Earth Heroes” – documentation of eco-crusaders of the Eastern Himalayas“The Himalayan”- capturing positive case studies and thought leadershipIn partnership with Sanctuary Asia and Forest Department of Assam, launched the “The Sanctuary Nature Guide to Nameri”“Handbook on Biodiversity of Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark” with information on indigenous flora & fauna of the Eastern Himalayas	8/10

All our efforts are brought to fruition through an interdisciplinary team of over 50 people, who have passionately contributed to building this organization since 2007.

We believe local communities should continue being guardians of their natural capital and transform these assets into an opportunity. And with positive responses from our partners we are growing each day and we look forward to engaging more communities and the indigenous people in our work; we are ramping up our efforts to build a future for the Rural and future for our communities.

Our progress and impact report attempts to highlight our initiatives and efforts in the year 2018 and we look forward to working with you all in creating meaningful programmes over the next few years.



Balipara Foundation

The Balipara Tract & Frontier Foundation is based out of the Assam, India and is strategically located within the Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hot-spot. Established in 2007, the Foundation has promoted its concept of Naturenomics™ to organizations, industries and governments across the world. The Foundation has been the front-runner in strategizing an alternative developmental model for the North-Eastern Region of India.

Our Vision

Conserving & Preserving our Natural Heritage

Objectives

Facilitate co-existence through social-economic-environmental interdependence

Our Mission

Develop Symbiotic Models around Conservation-Community-Technology Imperatives

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Milestones Since Inception

Launch of
Balipara
Foundation

2007

2010

The Principle
called
Naturenomics™

2014

Asian
Elephants
in the Wild:
Elephant talk

2016

Eastern
Himalayan
Naturenomics™
Forum

2017

Rural
Futures



Our Nature Conservancy Till Date..

Saplings Planted – 3, 62,327 | Species Planted – 324



Bhairabkunda

– Joint Forest Management,
Udaiguri



Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark

– Balipara

Saplings Planted

2.79,000



Species Planted

24



Area

150 Ha



Saplings Planted

83,327



Species Planted

300



Saplings Donated

76,720



Highlights Of The Year 2018

Training & Workshops

30+ workshops held for 200 people from the rural communities- Nyishi, Garo and Mishing



Technology & Conservation

November 2, 2018: Launch of the Orchid Application



Community – Tourism

April, 2018: Launch of Community Homestays

Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer: Awardee of **TripAdvisor 2018 Certificate of Excellence**



December 2018: Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at **Wild Mahseer** has featured in Vogue's *"10 new concepts to visit in the Indian hospitality industry"*



Partnerships

April 11 2018: MoU with Indraprastha College for Women

June 18, 2018: India - China Partnership on Climate Change – India China Climate Change Centre

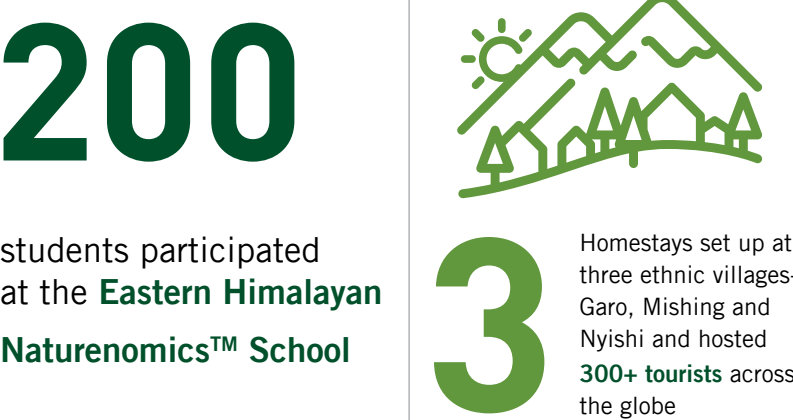
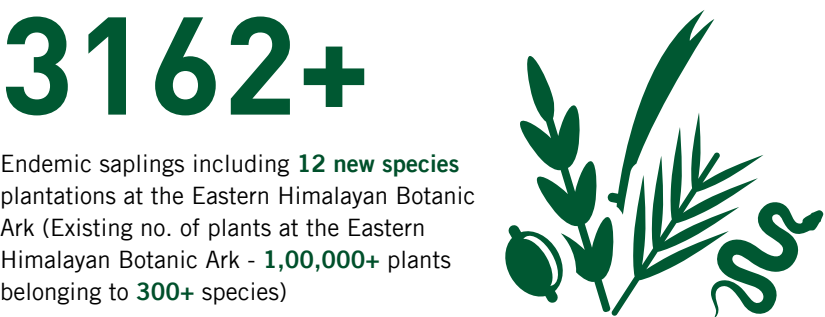
July 5, 2018: Balipara Foundation member nominated for RED++ Working Group

July 17, 2018: Balipara Foundation as a member of Mountain Partnership

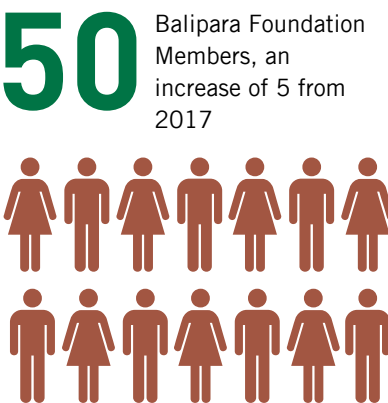
November 1, 2018: Collaboration with Earth University, Navdanya



The Year In Numbers



Created a bio-diverse haven with over **100000 plants** at the premises of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark sequestering over **5000 metric tonnes of Carbon**



Impacts
2018

Rural Futures

Social	Economic	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of workshops conducted, ranging from Women's health, Natural Dye & Handloom, Black Pepper Cultivation and local products under the Elephant Country brand for the welfare of the communities The initiation of socio-economic mobility as a result of ecosystem-based revenue generation Initiated talks on creating natural asset-based models for Universal Basic Income/Assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 14,00,000 as income for the partnering communities Economic mobility as a direct consequence of generated income Launch of Elephant Country homestay camp Enhancement of Elephant Country product line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~3,00,000 saplings planted Carbon sequestration that will be initiated as a result of these saplings Enrichment of soil, health and nutrition over 200 Ha Enhancement of ground water table as a result of new green growth Fungal Biodiversity Assessment Programme launched, and awareness documentary released

Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark

Social

- Enhancing social mobility of 9 communities in Balipara County through Education, Empowerment and Awareness (Creating an impact on a population of over 2000 people from 9 communities)
- Encouraging community conservation through Education and Awareness by the Naturenomics™ School programmes (Awareness to around 1000 participants across the globe through 25 courses)
- Four special workshops were conducted on GIS and Birding for colleges and universities
- Training on bamboo crafts supported by National Bamboo Mission and coconut crafts given to ethnic communities of the Eastern Himalayas
- Special workshop on rice varieties conducted for 17 community farmers
- Two outreach awareness programmes conducted in Tezpur College and one local school (Number of students -100)
- Workshops conducted on organic dyeing, handicrafts and photography at Pakke Paga Festival, 2018 for 200+ participants
- Guided nature trails –“Conversations with Nature” with 200 groups and 1000 people, encouraging concepts like forest bathing and tree hugging
- Supported MASK (Mahila Shakti Kendra, an NGO supporting 120 self - help groups of Balipara County) in the Internet saathi project by Google and Tata Trust and trained 88,900 beneficiaries from rural women on internet usage
- Empowerment of women and supporting education of children by donating 200 solar lights on International Women's Day in support to MASK

Economic

- Livelihood generation in villages through the initiative of Village Homestays, Balipara Habitat Restoration project and handicraft trainings (Supporting over 3000 community members from 20 villages)
- Three homestays set up at three ethnic villages- Garo, Mishing and Nyishi and hosted 300+tourists across the globe
- Through Naturenomics™ Bazar and Elephant Country products promoting the ethnic handloom and jewellery and empowering village women
- Skill development and generating direct employment of 100+ local individuals through our social enterprise, Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer

Environmental

- Created a bio-diverse heaven with over 100000 plants at the premises of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark sequestering over 5000 metric tonnes of Carbon
- Home to 75+ species of birds, 72+ species of butterflies, 19 amphibians, 14 snakes, 9 Lizards and diverse range of spiders and insect population
- Environmental awareness to 874 participants across the globe through Naturenomics™ School outreach programme
- Capsicum sonitpurensis*, a new species of Capsicum discovered at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark
- 24 new medicinal plant species planted at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark (Total – 50 species)
- 40 new species of indigenous Orchids planted at the Orchidarium of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark (Total – 54 varieties)
- 25 varieties of vegetables in the vegetable nursery of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark
- 138 sapling plantation in schools. And Sapling at Tezpur Airport
- 22,166 saplings donated to the Forest Department, Youth Clubs, schools and MASK
- Total of 16,182 saplings donated on World Environment Day to villages and schools
- Initiated Balipara Habitat Restoration Project for the restoration of habitat and nature in Balipara County



Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum

Social

- A multidisciplinary dialogue between informed, diverse and dynamic group of speakers and panelists provided for in-depth insights and actionable methodologies towards catalyzing vibrant high impact Rural Futures programs
- Balipara Foundation Awardees continue to mould future Green leaders to contribute to community and Rural Futures
- Live coverages through Jio and Balipara Foundation made the platform of Rural Futures reach a wider and more meaningful audience

Economic

- Balipara Foundation winners have created numerous opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, skill development programs and successful eco-tourism models

Environmental

- The Forum has provided inspirational and actionable inputs on the role of communities, organic growth paradigms, the importance of law and compliances, measurement of natural capital, etc. in conversation with speakers, panelists and SMEs from over a dozen countries

Naturenomics™ Publications

- Published Progress & Impact Report 2017
- Naturenomics™ 7.0 “The League of Earth Heroes” – documentation of eco-crusaders of the Eastern Himalayas published
- Published “The Himalayan”- captures positive case studies and thought leadership
- In partnership with Sanctuary Asia and Forest Department of Assam, launched the “The Sanctuary Nature Guide to Nameri”
- Supported launch of the mobile application on Orchids “The Orchids of the Eastern Himalaya”
- Published “Handbook on Biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark”

Communications

- Published regular press communications and thought leadership articles through traditional and digital media platforms to create awareness on Rural Futures
- Collaboration with global media development platform Devex (1 million users) for stories on Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas
- Driving online conversations through engagement with key influencers in the field such as Wildlife Conservation Trust, Devex, Priyanka Yoshikawa, WWF, ATREE etc.

- Highlighting the bio-cultural heritage of the Eastern Himalayas through publications, blogs, collaterals and social media
- Launch of Newsletters to engage with partners and advisors
- Live telecast of the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum for increased awareness and engagement
- Workshop on storytelling for Asian Elephant Conservation to educate, inform and sensitise children towards Human Elephant conflict
- Integrating collaterals and messaging on ground projects sites to enhance awareness and knowledge on community conservation efforts and impacts on the environmental footprint

Digital Analytics

Website

Balipara Foundation

Important Stats

Page Views: 69,307 (up from 66,142)

Users: 21,484 (up from 18,084)

Sessions: 28,680 (up from 24,180)

Elephant Country

Page Views: 33, 693 (up from 12,265)

Users: 17, 687 (up from 4,866)

Sessions: 20,243 (up from 5923)

Wild Mahseer

Page Views: 70,790 (up from 18,316)

Users: 18,572 (up from 6,913)

Sessions 24,014 (up from 6,939)

Social Media

- Total Followers

Balipara Foundation

Twitter- 2,000 Facebook-17,323, Instagram-365, YT-100

Elephant Country

Facebook-354 Instagram-44

Wild Mahseer

Twitter – 113, Facebook-4.2K, Instagram- 214

Yearly Data

Social Media Insights During Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum

Twitter

– 43.5K Impressions

Facebook

Reach 660,000

47K engagement against 42K in 2017

Website

Page views 23K against 10.1K in 2017

Session – 8K against 7K in 2017

Users – 5.6K

Facebook –

Balipara Foundation

Reach 888324

Wild Mahseer

Reach 1113219

Plans

2019



Rural Futures

Udalguri Landscape Mission

- To increase our intensity of afforestation by building relationship with 2 other JFMCs so as to have two sites running simultaneously
- The “Elephant Country Camp” Tourism Model will be expanded to cover 3 more camp sites and 2 home stays. This will increase room strength from 3 to 14
- Expanding the Product Portfolio for the Elephant Country Brand. Will build on momentum on handloom, black pepper and mushroom products, while always being on the lookout for fresh ideas

Balipara Forest Reserve Management

- Plant 1,50,000 trees
- Organize over 12 skill building workshops for the forest-fringe communities
- Generate employment opportunities of INR 35 Lakhs+ for the forest-fringe communities
- Provide safe habitat to over 500 elephants that pass through the Balipara Reserve Forest

Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ School

- Conduct One day Naturenomics™ School programmes for 24 schools (local and other)
- Conduct 12 special workshops for colleges of Balipara County
- 5 Special Training programmes to be conducted for community members
- Outreach awareness programmes to be conducted in community villages, schools and colleges (Target population – 2000)

Conversations With Nature

- Extended nature trails to Jia Bharali riverside and through the tea gardens to be initiated
- Extended nature trail at “Hathi Pahar”, located in Difloo Tea Estate to be initiated
- Experience nature through “Shinrin Yoku” a forest bathing programme

Eastern Himalayan Nursery

- Existing Endemic Sapling : 1.5 L - 1 L of the existing sapling to be given to Balipara Habitat Restoration project and the rest 0.5 L to be donated to the ethnic communities and schools
- Endemic Sapling Target for 2019: 3.5 L
- Plantation in Balipara Habitat Restoration Project: 3L
- Donations to the communities : 0.5 L
- Workshops and Trainings: 20 workshops on nursery sapling raise and awareness for communities and students to be conducted



Elephant Country Products

- Launch of a new line of organic ethnic wear
- Promote already existing tea related products
- Create an online store on the world wide web
- Create a new line of small sustainable timber and bamboo products

Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum

- To take conversation to grassroots level for impactful conservation, Regional Forum in the Eastern Himalayas will be hosted
- To host side events throughout the year and stand as a platform to boost the dialogue on Rural Futures and further expand the multi- disciplinary platform for conversation and innovation in conservation
- Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2019 will be held on 5th & 6th November 2019

Naturenomics™ Publications

- Publish Naturenomics™ 8.0
- The Himalayan
- Our Himalayan- a brighter future for investments in the Eastern Himalayas

Communications

Balipara Foundation

- Evangelize the Rural Futures framework by collaborating with innovators and thought leaders globally
- Engage with key influencers to inspire meaningful conversations about Rural Futures
- Highlight community conservation efforts and stories of environmental crusaders of the Eastern Himalayas through partnered content, projects, case studies, publications & events
- Build a rich repository of perspectives on conservation through our Naturenomics™ publication, The Himalayan (www.medium.com/the-himalayan)
- Partner with traditional and digital media platforms to promote the Foundation, new developments, workshops, programmes and annual event
- Drive thought leadership through articles and web stories
- Engage with stakeholders through newsletters, reports and brochures

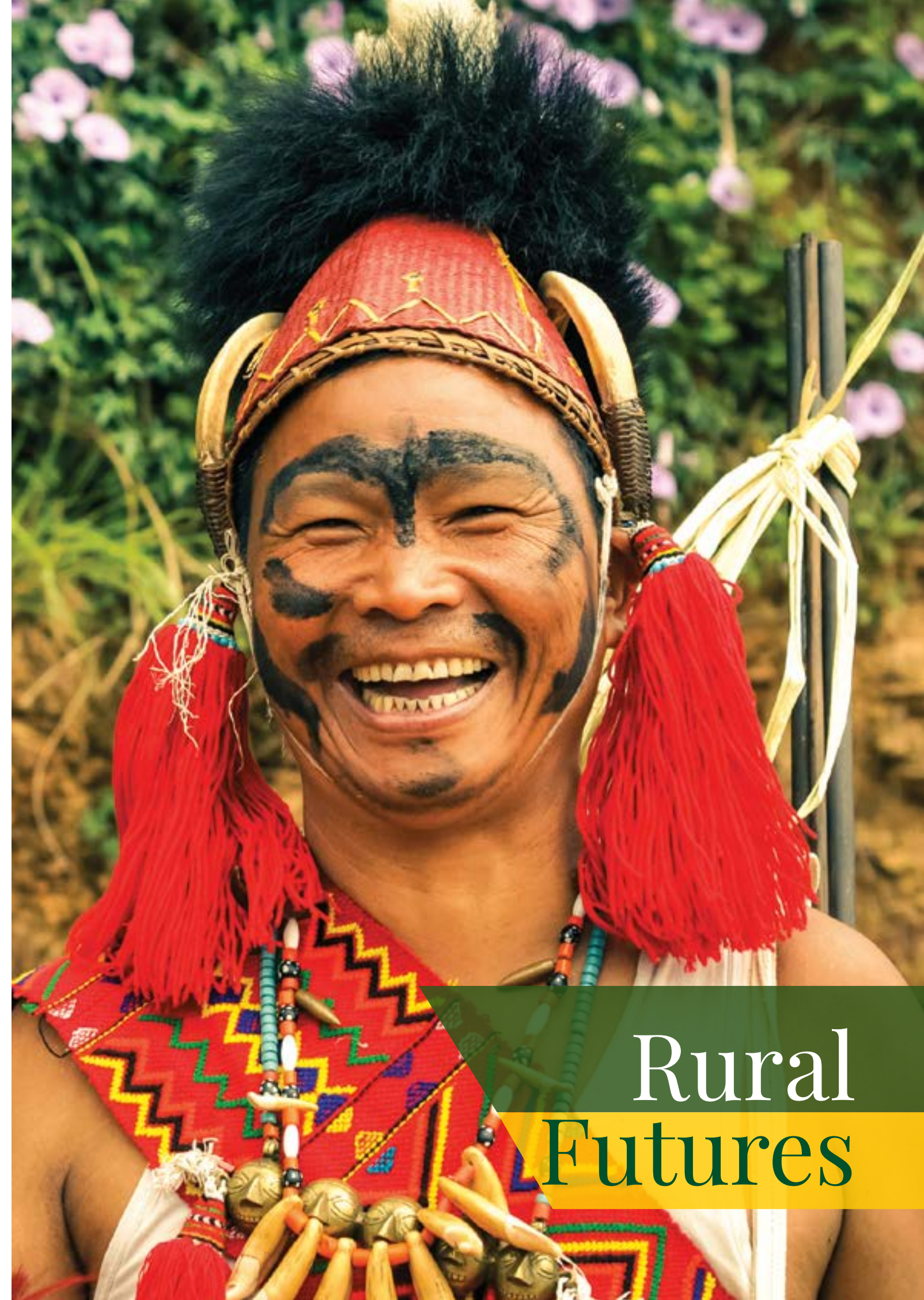


Elephant Country

- Drive conversations with partners to build an Asian Elephant Knowledge Repository that is robust and verifiable
- Highlight case studies of successful efforts and innovations in conservation
- Create awareness on Elephant Country products

Wild Mahseer

- Drive conversations with travelers, bloggers, nature & travel enthusiasts, adventure tourism enthusiasts, etc. to foster meaningful tourism in the region
- Highlight the rich bio-cultural heritage in the region and the role of local communities in conserving our natural and cultural assets
- Engage with key influencers and partners to inspire conversations about community-tourism in the Eastern Himalayas
- Create awareness on homestays, experiences and activities



Rural
Futures

Udalguri Landscape Mission: Conservation & Social Mobility

The Mission’s endeavor is to identify drivers for conservation & development and invest in projects that help balance ecological & social outcomes. ULM is an outcome of the realization that the real “decision makers” of biodiversity and natural heritage conservation are the people that share space with the forests and wildlife that needs conserving.

The Mission’s aim is to work with these communities through projects that will enhance “social mobility” and thereby, provide these communities with the capacity and opportunity to take voluntary decisions which naturally contribute towards conservation.

“

*Our goal is to create
interdependence
between human well
being and biodiversity
conservation*

”

Project Highlights 2018

- The Udalguri Landscape Mission came to life on the 1st of January 2017
- The first task undertaken was a community led afforestation project for planting 300,000 saplings in the forest areas of the Indo-Bhutan border. Phase 1 of the K-JFM Project is launched with support from Axis Bank Foundation and SBI Foundation. 2.79 Lakh Saplings are planted during Phase 1 between April 2017 to August 2018. Project Figures in table below:

Project Outcome Items	Planned Project Outcome Numbers	Actual Project Outcome Numbers	% of Actual vs. Planned
Afforestation			
Saplings Planted	300000	279139	93%
Species Planted	24	24	100%
Area Planted (HA)	150	155	103%
Saplings Planted per HA	1950	1800	92%
Expected Mortality %	20%	25%	125%
Community Employment & Income Generation			
Direct Employment Generated (Mandays)	6000	4924	82%
Direct Income Generated (INR)	1500000	1146800	76%
Indirect Income Generated (INR)	1000000	595000	60%
Auxiliary Income (INR)	0	123000	NA
Total Income Generated (INR)	2500000	1741800	70%

- The Project was jointly funded by the Axis Bank Foundation, State Bank of India Foundation and Globally Managed Services
- In keeping with the project’s primary objective of facilitating social mobility among forest fringe communities, a wide variety of ideas and opportunities were discussed and deliberated. In November 2017, Balipara Foundation launched the “Elephant Country” brand (trademark pending). The purpose of doing this was to provide a platform for local entrepreneurs to market and sell products & services. Here’s a brief case study of our most successful intervention:

Community Conservation Case Study: Elephant Country Camp:



The Bhairabkunda Reserve Forest, has had a long & successful history of community-led afforestation & conservation, dating back to 2005. The 22.4 sq km Reserve Forest had been devastated during the 1989 flash- floods. The destruction was such that the entire densely forested 2200 Hecter area was completely washed out and what was once a habitat for thriving populations of large & small wildlife, had turned into corrosive & unresponsive land, covered by sand, gravel and boulders. And it stayed like that up until 2005.

A Joint Forest Management Committee was instituted with the objective of reclaiming the Bhairabkunda Reserve

Forest, thereby generating income opportunities for adjacent communities. 15 Lakh Saplings are planted at the Bhairabkunda Reserve Forest, reclaiming 750 HA of land, thereby, creating a unique ‘man-made’ forest. The Balipara Foundation Awards winning Project was conducted under the aegis of the Dhansiri Forest Division.

Managed by the Gethsamane JFMC, the Camp is located within the 750 HA “man-made” forest. The enterprise was launched in Dec 2017 and as on the 30th of October 2018, has hosted 547 paying visitors from 3 countries, sold 33 room-nights, hosted 7 Workshops/Events. All of this has resulted in revenues of INR 1.23 lakhs . Work is under way to increase capacities and infrastructure from the up-coming tourism season, where revenues of INR 4 lakhs is expected. The then forest minister of Assam, Smt. Pramila Rani Brahma, visited the camp on the 24th of Feb 2018 to inspect and interact with the community. More can be read at the link below

<https://www.devex.com/news/a-community-led-vision-for-india-s-rural-future-93796>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/afforestation-changes-life-and-landscape-how-a-district-in-assam-lost-a-forest-gained-a-future-4997615/>

Project Pipeline 2019

As with all ideas, ours too have evolved over the last two years. Following are the operational guiding principles we have set ourselves for the next two years

1. Looking at things from a “landscape perspective” and realigning our ideas and projects to that
2. As a result, our priorities will have to move on from small-scale to large (landscape) scale
3. This would then require “gearing up” for extensive and intensive operations
4. The Smart Way to achieve this would be through partnerships & joint-ventures with both, State and Central Government Departments. Complimented and backed up by other Technically & Operationally sound partners

Below is a summary of our pursuits over the next 24 months

- Conduct a comprehensive Mapping Exercise of Udalguri District for a comprehensive Ecological, Economical & Social database. The database will provide the baseline information required for expansion
- Phase 2 of the Afforestation Program starts on the 1st of January 2019 with the following expected outcomes:



Project Outcome Items	Project Outcome Numbers
Afforestation	
Saplings Planted	3,50,000
Species Planted	34
Area Planted (HA)	250
Saplings Planted per HA	1400
Area Planted (Sq Km)	0.25
Community Employment & Income Generation	
Direct Employment Generated (Mandays)	11,393
Direct Income Generated (INR)	35,42,500
Indirect Income Generated (INR)	39,88,000
Total Income Generated (INR)	75,30,500

- To increase our intensity of afforestation action, we will build on our relationship with 2 other JFMCs so as to have two sites running simultaneously
- The “Elephant Country Camp” Tourism Model will be expanded to cover 3 more camp sites and 2 home stays. This will increase “Room Strength from 3 to 14
- Expanding the Product Portfolio for the Elephant Country Brand. Will build on momentum on handloom, black pepper and mushroom products, while always being on the lookout for fresh ideas

The Map below offers a closer view of the exact Afforestation Site



Our Sites



Drone Shot of Project Area. The river shown in the picture is the Dhunseri, running north to south. Intensive & In-filling plantation was carried out. The photo was taken from North facing South. (PC- Siddhant Sagar- AMDX Studio)

Close up Shot of Project Area. The picture describes the southern parts of the area, with varying canopy cover. Taken from north facing south. (PC- Robin)



Plantation Activity



A comparative shot of the landscape, before and after start of operations. Taken on Feb 2017 and May 2018 respectively, Taken from south facing north (PC- Left-Robin Eastment. Right- Subit Sawra)



Activity photos taken during May 2018 and July 2018 respectively. The one on the left was shot from the south facing north, and the one on the left was taken from the east facing west. (PC- Robin Eastment)



General shots of activity



Nursery Activity



A panoramic view of the project nursery taken on Mar 2017

A panoramic view of the project nursery taken on May 2018



Skill Development Program

Glimpses from Off-site Training & Exposure Programs (PC - Subit Swara, Anshuma Basumatry)



Snapshots from JFMC Meetings



Elephant Country Camp

Discovering an entire man made forest and spotting footsteps of elephants at Bhairabkunda

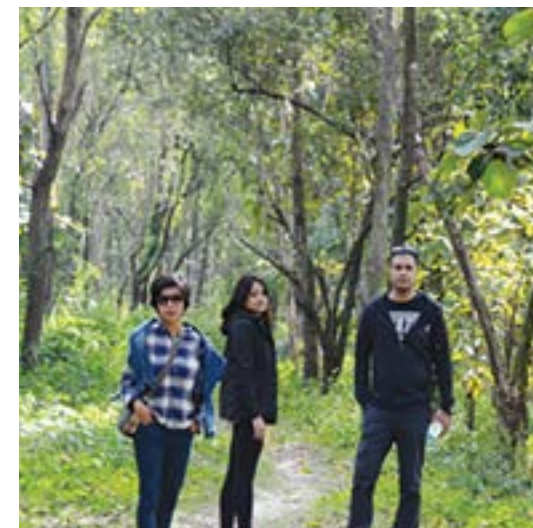
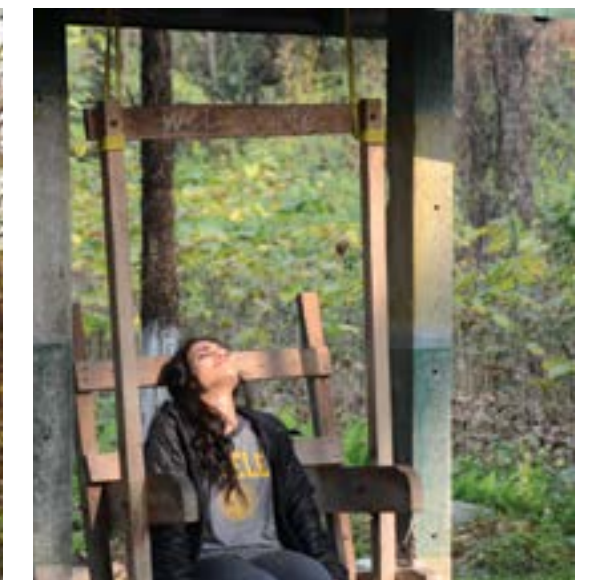




A collage of Workshops, ranging from Women's Health, Natural Dye & Handloom, Black Pepper Cultivation and local products under the Elephant Country brand



Snapshots of Guests @ Elephant Country Camp






Balipara Forest Reserve Management



The attempt of the Balipara Forest Reserve – Joint Forest Management Project is to identify drivers for conservation and development to invest in and help balance ecological and social outcomes through efforts of afforestation

The Balipara Forest Reserve Project is a landscape scheme dream similar to that of the Udalguri Landscape Mission but keeping in mind the opportunity to create a trans-boundary habitat restoration site – this would cut cross Bhutan, Assam (Udalguri), Balipara and so on. The nature of the mission is such that it will encompass the need for a long-term plan (6 years).

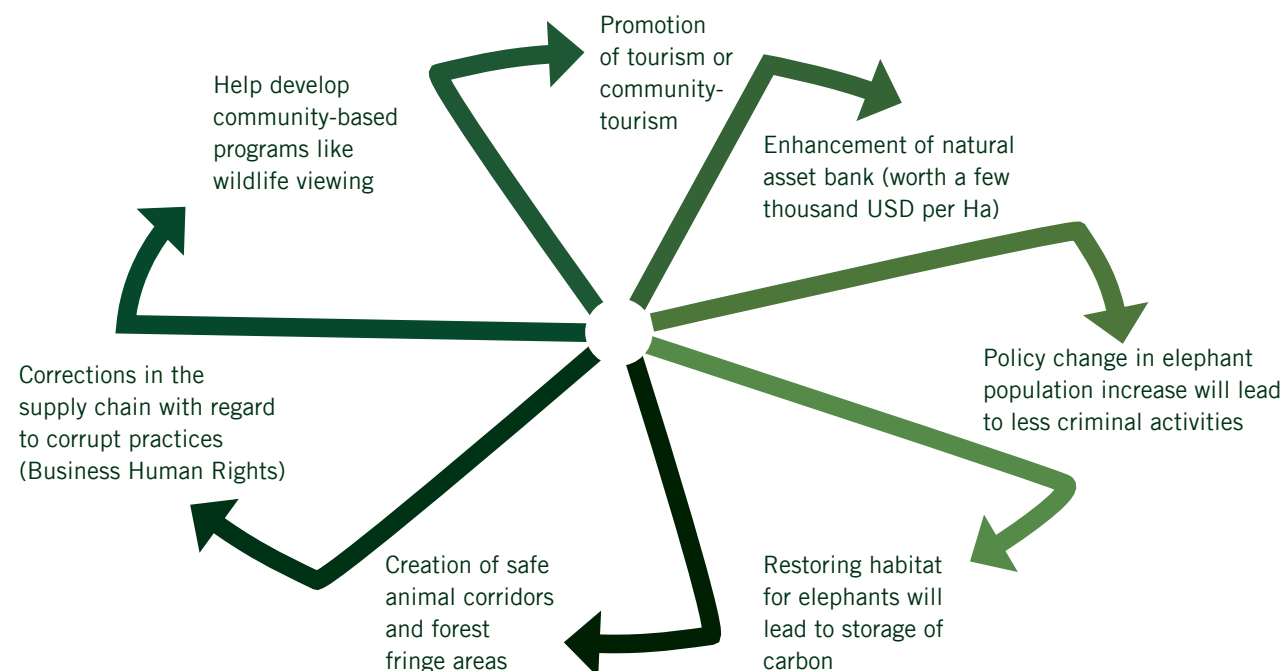
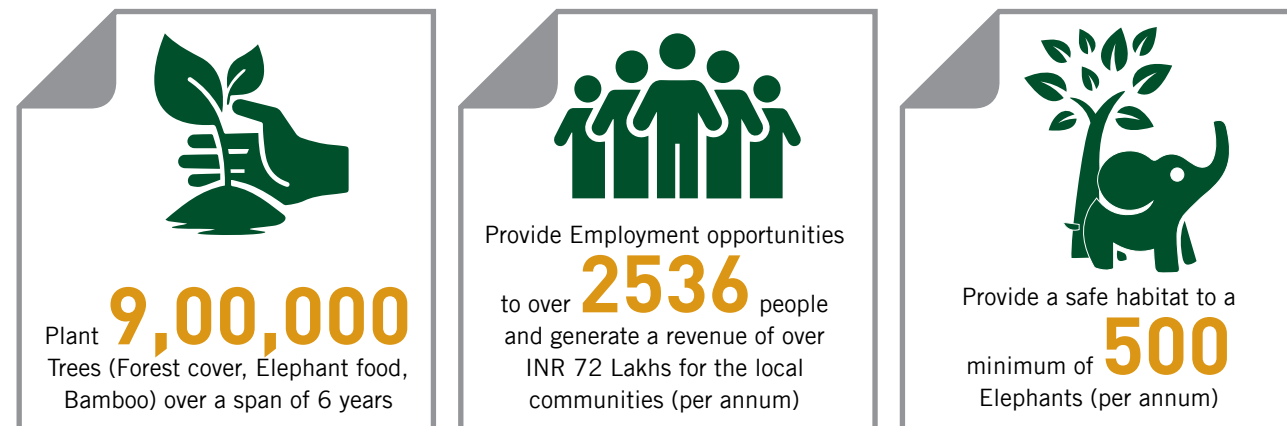
The communities/villages that have been identified and assessed, under the Balipara Forest Reserve Project, are similar in terms of socio-economic patterns. The presence of self-help groups have made it possible for women to acquire credits allowing the women of the villages to work with little or no pressure. The current position regarding the ownership of assets would include thrasher machines, power tillers and other similar kinds of machinery. There is a strong hold on the idea of micro-finance in these communities along the knowledge of loans that may help the provision of education and proper healthcare to the children in their respective households

 Village	 Households	 Population
Phuluguri Kachari Gaon	73	567
Huluguri Garo Gaon	80	600
Chenglimari Garo Gaon	176	986
Nichi Phuloguri	56	356
Torabari 1	64	420
Torabari 2	82	569
Torabari 3	45	297
Torabari 4	46	212
Torabari 5	84	574
Uttar Amloga	76	492
Total	782	5073



Project Impacts

- To be able to define and display a model of conservation.
- The model is based on the understanding that the future of our Natural Heritage (Forests & Wildlife) is in the hands of the communities that co-habit and directly interact with these “Assets”. Therefore, the prerogative of the Joint Forest Management Project is “afforestation by the people, for the people, of the people”.
- Provide employment opportunities over a span of 1 to 6 years
 - Create income opportunities through plantation revenues over a span of 5 to 30 years
 - Garner ecological and social benefits over the long-term plan which, will not specifically have a range per say
 - Ensuring environmental sustainability
 - To create social assets such as those of clean drinking water, address issues of sanitation, education for all and power supply keeping in mind the impact our actions may have on the environment or the ecosystems
 - Creation of volunteering opportunities and therefore, helping the youth to generate a knowledge base



Asian Elephant Secretariat

Elephant Country : The Asian Elephant Secretariat is a virtual platform for Asian Elephant Conservation. In 2016, the Asian Elephant Secretariat was launched with a vision to have a common platform for sharing knowledge and data on the efforts in Asian Elephant conservation.

It is a resource both caring and factual- that gives one and all, the data and facts they need to construct policies, attract concerns, and support the cause of preservation and sustenance.

The Secretariat has a live helpline number (1-800-300-00949), an Asian Elephant library which contains curated content from across the globe, centralized repository of information to educate and inspire current and future generation and an online community module.

THE NUMBERS
TOTAL: 4,561



To contribute knowledge, submit resources to ec_team@baliparafoundation.com & join our online community on www.elephantcountry.org

Elephant Country Store



The Elephant Country Store launched at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark is an initiative to bring forward the local culture through organic products handcrafted by the forest-fringe communities.

Designed to synergise Asian Elephant conservation and Community development, Elephant Country products in the store are symbolic of the inter-dependent relationship between man and elephants. Crafted by local artisans from Elephant Country, these products tell the story of coexistence and a unique bond of nurturing and being nurtured.

The idea behind these products is to provide alternative sources of revenue generation and therefore, livelihood to many forest-fringe communities.



Elephant Country Store at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark



Handmade scarves and stoles at the Elephant Country Store



Cotton cap dyed with a stone wash effect



Handpicked tea leaves bottled



Canvas bag dyed with tea



Elephant Country bookmarks



Stone washed effect cotton T-shirt dyed organically with tea



Elephant Country notepads



Elephant Country photo frames



Elephant Country bands dyed with tea

Assessment Of The Current Status And Potential Of Mushroom Cultivation In NE India

[A joint venture of Balipara Foundation and Kunming Institute of Botany, China (KIB)]

“

All the Mushrooms are edible but some only once in a lifetime

- unknown

”

Globally there has been a marked increase in the consumption of mushrooms, resulting in a growing demand for both wild and cultivated mushroom species. The past three decades of research have shown the importance of mushrooms as a food group, providing excellent nutrition and contributing towards improved immune systems. As such, the cultivation of mushrooms is becoming popular as a means of rural development, providing alternative, sustainable sources of income and household nutrition for rural and impoverished communities.

Balipara Foundation and the Kunming Institute of Botany jointly launched a study on the Mushroom diversity of the North-Eastern part of India. The North-Eastern part of India is endowed with an incredibly diverse Bio-Cultural heritage. mushrooms form an important part of this heritage, but it is rather unexplored. In neighboring countries such as China, Thailand & Vietnam, Mushrooms form a staple part of the diet and contribute to a large portion of protein content required for normal growth and development. At the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, 2017, we launched a book on the Medicinal Plants and Mushrooms of India and now, through this study we intend to understand the Wild Mushroom Landscape in this part of the world. Towards this, we have commissioned the following people: Stephen Axford; a master fungi photographer from Australia, Catherine Marciniak; an ABC Features Reporter & Videographer, Peter Mortimer; a soil ecologist & mycologist, Asanka Bandara; a scholar of mycologist and Gautam Baruah; an environmentalist from Balipara Foundation. In the past, we have successfully piloted a mushroom cultivation project at the Hatikuli Tea Estate and are taking that further by involving the above mentioned experts in the following stages of the project:

- Assessing the Mushroom Biodiversity in the North-East of India;
- Create scientific Journal and seminal book documenting and categorizing the Mushrooms of the area;
- Scientific research to assist in the cultivation of these Mushrooms;
- Passing this knowledge to the local communities to prevent malnutrition & ensure food-security

We have initiated phase (a), (b) and (c) of this project and a proposal has been prepared. We are in conversation with local partners to collaborate with us for this study. We are certain that the livelihood generation potential of this project will attract a downstream value chain enhancing social infrastructure services such as healthcare and education and that this will serve as a model for other non-invasive revenue generating activities leading to social and economic mobility of the forest-fringe communities.

The first field assessment was held to create a photographic documentation of both wild edible and inedible mushrooms of the region by Stephen Axford. A documentary “Planet Fungi: NE India” was made by Catherine Marciniak on the findings of the assessment to highlight the diversity and views of local communities on mushrooms of the region. In the second field assessment by Dr Peter Mortimer, Asanka Bandara and Gautam Baruah some of the key recommendations were sorted as:

1. Introducing new edible and medicinal mushroom species

Pleurotus ostreatus is the most popular mushroom species among the cultivators in the region. Edible and medicinal mushroom species, other than the *Pleurotus* spp., were found in field excursions (figure. 1) and those species have high potentials for domestication as local species / strains. However, domestication of local species / strains can be a time consuming process because it is necessary to do several cultivation trials and laboratory tests before they can be introduced to the growers. Therefore, exotic species / strains of the same genus (eg: *Auricularia cornea*, *Oudemansiella radicata*, *Ganoderma lucidum*) can be introduced to the mushroom growers to achieve short-term goals.



Figure 1. Potential edible and medicinal species collected in the field excursions
a. *Auricularia* sp. at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, Assam b,c. *Oudemansiella* sp. at Mawphlang, Meghalaya
d. *Ganoderma* sp. at Mawphlang, Meghalaya

2. Increase wild edible mushroom consumption of locals

Since the local knowledge of wild edible mushrooms in some areas is limited, people are not friendly to eat wild mushrooms, so it is necessary to educate locals about wild edible, medicinal and poisonous mushrooms. This should be done rather conservatively, introducing a few easily recognizable species at a time, to ensure that no mistakes are made. Posters displaying edible and poisonous mushrooms can be posted in villages, and pamphlets or booklets showing clear pictures of the different wild mushroom species can be distributed in local languages to ensure enough information is made available to local people interested in mushrooms.



Figure 2. Wild edible mushroom species with excellent taste a. *Cantharellus* sp. b. *Termitomyces* sp. c. collection of wild edible mushrooms by local women in Jakrem, Meghalaya d. with the local women collecting wild mushrooms in Jakrem

Following the two field assessments, Gautam Baruah from Balipara Foundation attended “training stakeholders in forest-Fungi system agroforestry in India, Myanmar, Nepal and China” workshop at the Kunming Institute of Botany to learn all necessary techniques regarding mushroom culturing, spawn production, and cultivation of mushrooms. Balipara Foundation with the Kunming institute of Botany will draft a proposal to establish a culture room, spawn production facility, bagging equipment and grow houses for cultivation of mushrooms at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark. Following this, grow houses for cultivation of mushrooms will be set up in Mawphlang (Meghalaya), Jaluki (Nagaland) and Udalguri (Assam). These facilities will not only act as an area for the allocated persons to continue learning and practicing necessary techniques in mushroom growing, but can also act as a demonstration site for local communities or farmers interested in learning more about growing mushrooms.

The Kunming Institute of Botany and Balipara Foundation is working together to create a Scientific Journal on Fungal Biodiversity of India and an user friendly atlas on the edible mushrooms providing clear description of species and their habitats, and useful tips on mushroom picking and classification. The goal of the atlas would be to open everyone's eyes, mind, and taste buds to the wonderful world of mushrooms in the North East part of India.

Photo Rapporteur

First and Second Field assessments in NE states of India



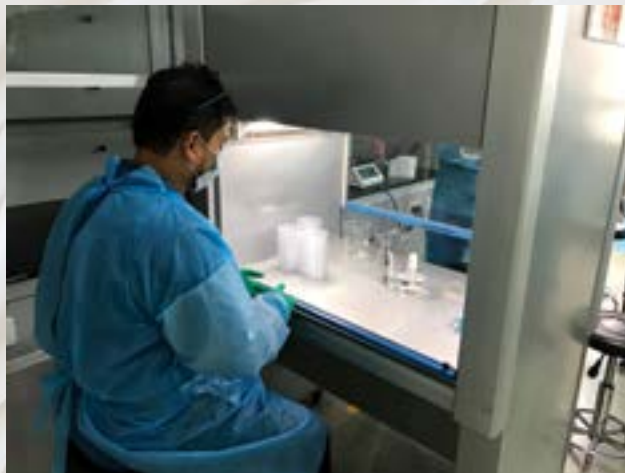
Catherine Marciniak, Stephen Axford and Dr. Peter Mortimer exploring and documenting the classification of wild edible mushrooms

Few edible mushrooms captured by Stephen Axford



a. *Fistulina hepatica*; b. *Auricularia* sp.; c. *Phallus indusiatus*

“Training stakeholders in forest-Fungi system agroforestry in India, Myanmar, Nepal and China” workshop at the Kunming Institute of Botany, China



Left to right: Laboratory workshop for mushroom spawn culture; Workshop on mushroom cultivation; Participants from India, Myanmar, Nepal and China attended the workshop



Acknowledgement:

Dr. Peter Mortimer, Asanka Bandara and Dr. Samantha Karunaratna (KIB), Catherine Marciniak and Stephen Axford (Australia), Gautam Baruah and Saurav Malhotra (Balipara Foundation), Arup Borgohain (APPL)



We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the Mushrooms

- Oscar Wilde



Universal Basic Income Seminar

Rural futures

Towards Social Environmental Economic Interdependence

In Collaboration with



WHAT IS UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Universal Basic Income is also known as Basic Income. It is a sum of money that is provided to people irrespective of their income, resources and employment status. The entire purpose of basic income is to reduce poverty and inequalities among people.

Some of the principles of Universal Basic Income are as follows:

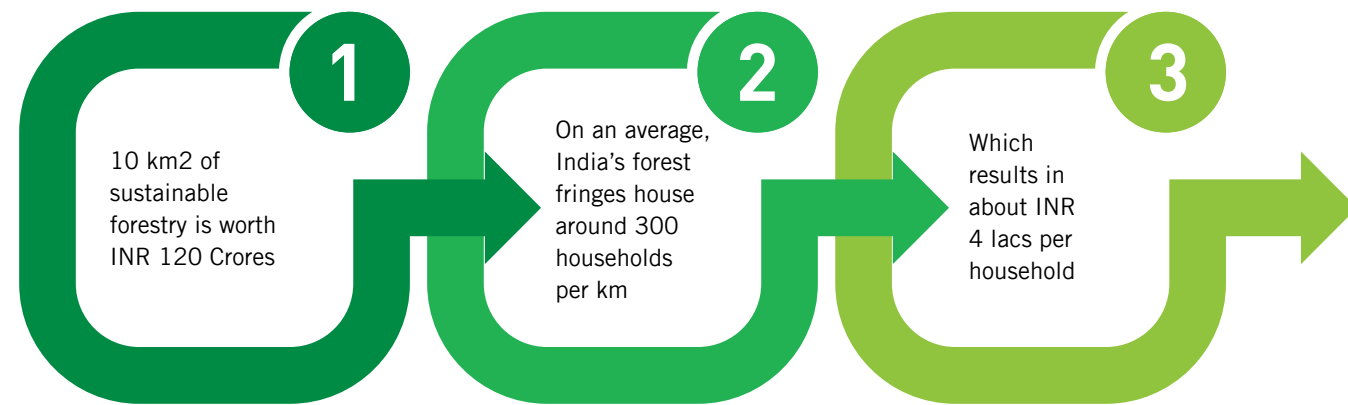
- To unlock human potential
- Entitlement to live-able income
- Optimization of natural resources
- Increase social security
- Education and healthcare for all
- Improve welfare of the underprivileged

The other aspect that could be tapped on regarding Universal Basic Income and Rural Futures, is that of Nature Capital. It is very well known to us that the fast-paced economic growth has led to either a higher demand on local eco-systems or act as stressors on the environment around us. Therefore, a long-term solution could possibly be restoration of our habitats. This in turn would allow people to generate a reasonable amount of income leading to better quality lifestyle, inclusive of education and healthcare facilities. The ultimate outcome would be socio-economic mobility through development of social assets inclusive of sustainable industries or businesses.



Natural Capital towards UBI?

Will it work?



OBJECTIVE OF THE SEMINAR

The objective of the seminar was to bring experts, organizations and students from different backgrounds together, and begin a dialogue keeping in mind the discourse of Universal Basic Income and its applicability in India.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 33 participants were present at the seminar. The composition of the participation included those from TISS-G, Guwahati University, Green Guard Organization, Oxford University, WWF-India, UNCTAD and Centre for Microfinance and Livelihoods (Tata Trusts).

KEY POINTERS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE DISCUSSION

- Is India ready when it comes to implementation of UBI?
- The 'U' in UBI could also have other connotations such as 'Unconditional' or 'Restricted' as the target audience may be certain underprivileged sections of the society
- How much will be enough for everyone?
- What will happen to the existing subsidies provided to the people?
- What are the ways of identifying the poor in the nation?
- The method of payment is questionable, as the debate is whether it should be done in cash or kind
- The need for change was recommended in the social behavior of the people in communities. This would inevitably bring about social change
- The consumption and production patterns are inevitable when it comes to implementation of basic income and the ever-changing graph of the market
- In the light of a 'tax payer's' perspective, basic income charges for the general population might get expensive
- UBI as a form of positive discrimination
- Could Basic Income be a 'beautiful utopian goal'?
- If the concept has to be accepted by society at large, then the process of implementation and execution must have utmost accountability – also, the need to meet all the conditions put forth
- Is Basic Income an alternate welfare scheme?
- To have better access of Universal Basic Income, it is important to have a knowledge of our social history and its changes
- The understanding of 'Universal Level of Productivity'
- The lens of UBI has to be changed and looked at through the Gender Perspective – this will include the role of women in households, domestic workers, sex workers, in the agricultural sector and so on
- The role of advocacy and awareness creation

Way forward

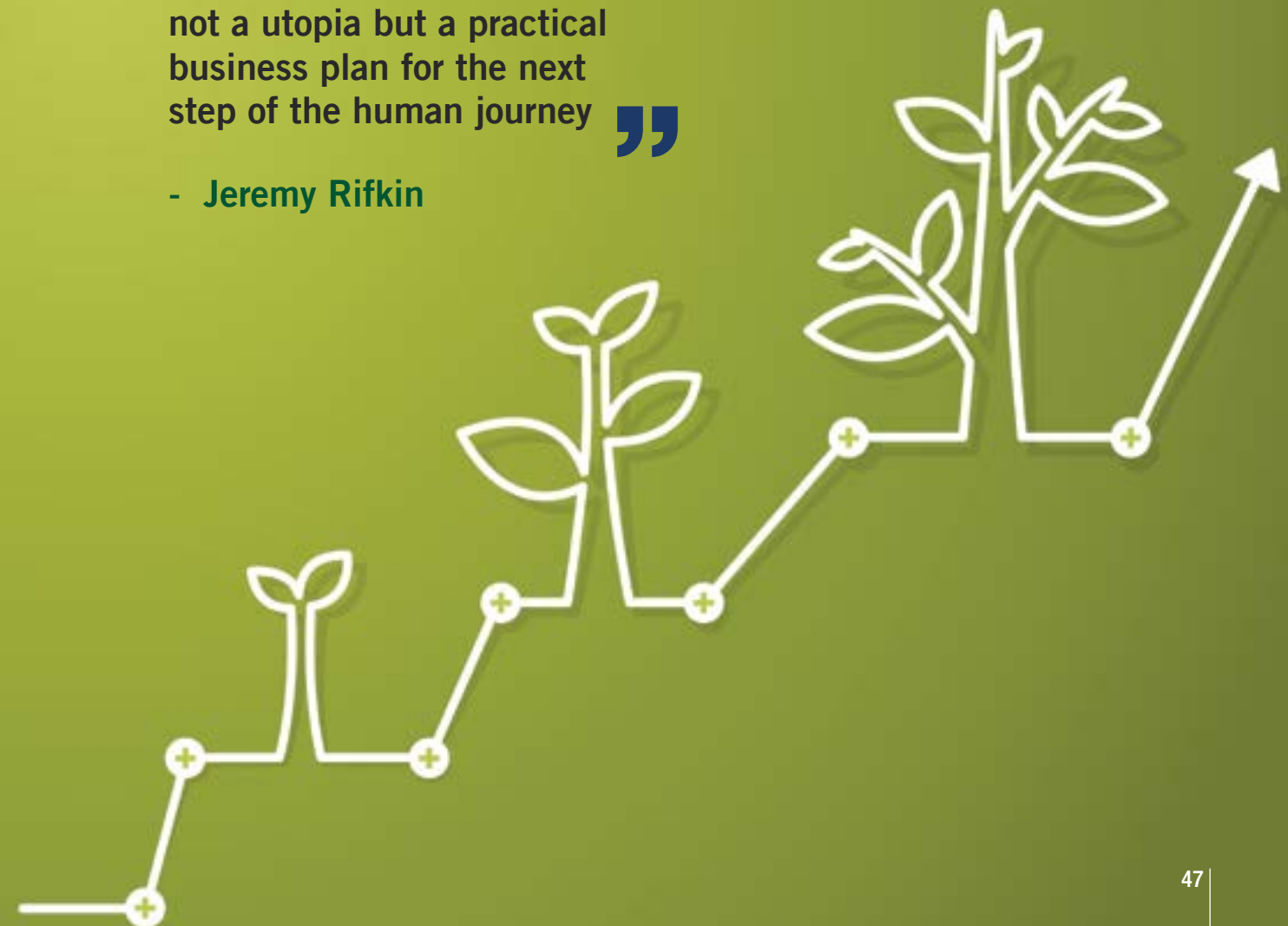
The intention is to create a path towards bigger conglomerations across the country. The identification and understanding of the complex nature of our social system will enable stakeholders to play an integral role in engaging with communities. The intersectionality of parallel systems has brought us to a threshold where we are to re-think of the concept of 'welfarism'. Since 2005 to 2016, multidisciplinary poverty numbers in Assam, have gone down from 600 million to 300 million, but is still the highest when it comes to addressing the issues of poverty and inequalities. Universal Basic Income has both negatives and positives but can be the newest form of welfare policy in alleviating discrepancies and inconsistencies from the grassroots level.

Security is a precious asset. It should be a goal of everyone who genuinely wants to build a good society rather than one that facilitates the aggrandizement of a privileged elite who knowingly gain from the insecurities of others. Wanting others to have what you want takes courage. That is what basic income is about.

— Guy Standing, *Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen*

“Universal Basic Income is not a utopia but a practical business plan for the next step of the human journey”

- Jeremy Rifkin

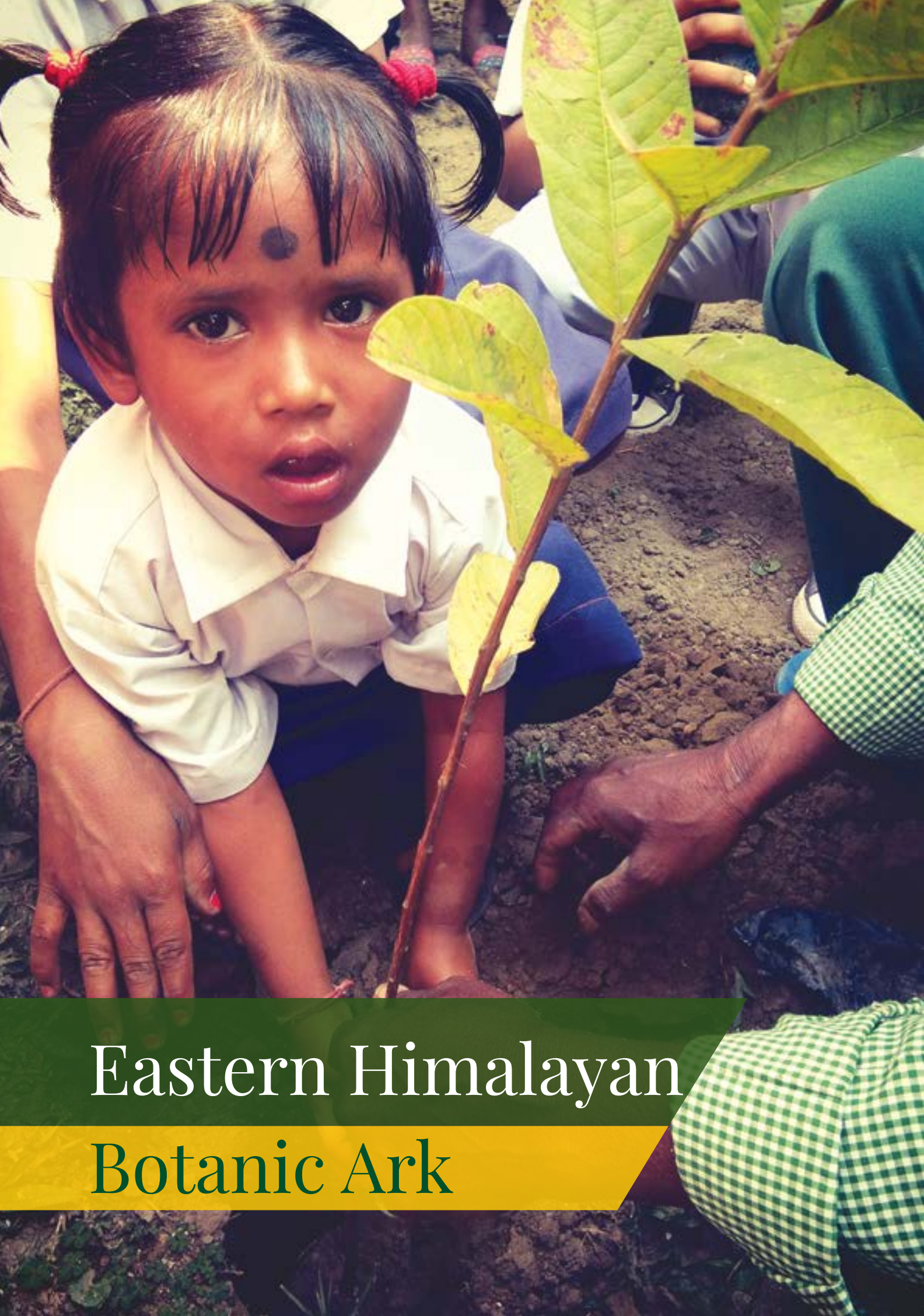


Living With The Communities

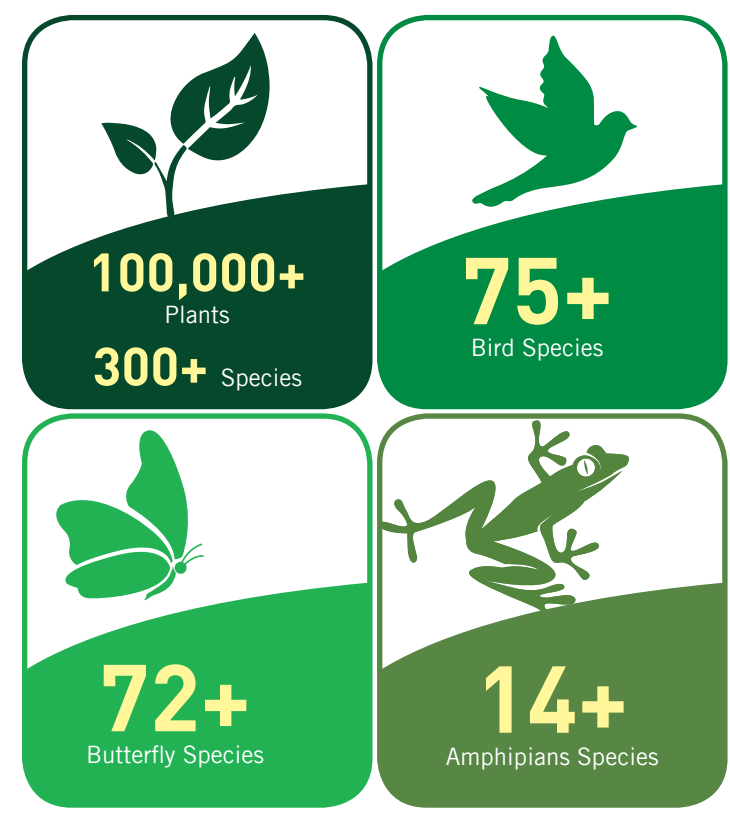


Photographs by
Ritvik Sharma

I am currently pursuing BA in social Anthropology from Ashoka University. These Photographs were made during my month-long internship with the Balipara Foundation in the summer of 2018. They show my fondness of culture, admiration for conservation and concern for nature.



Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark

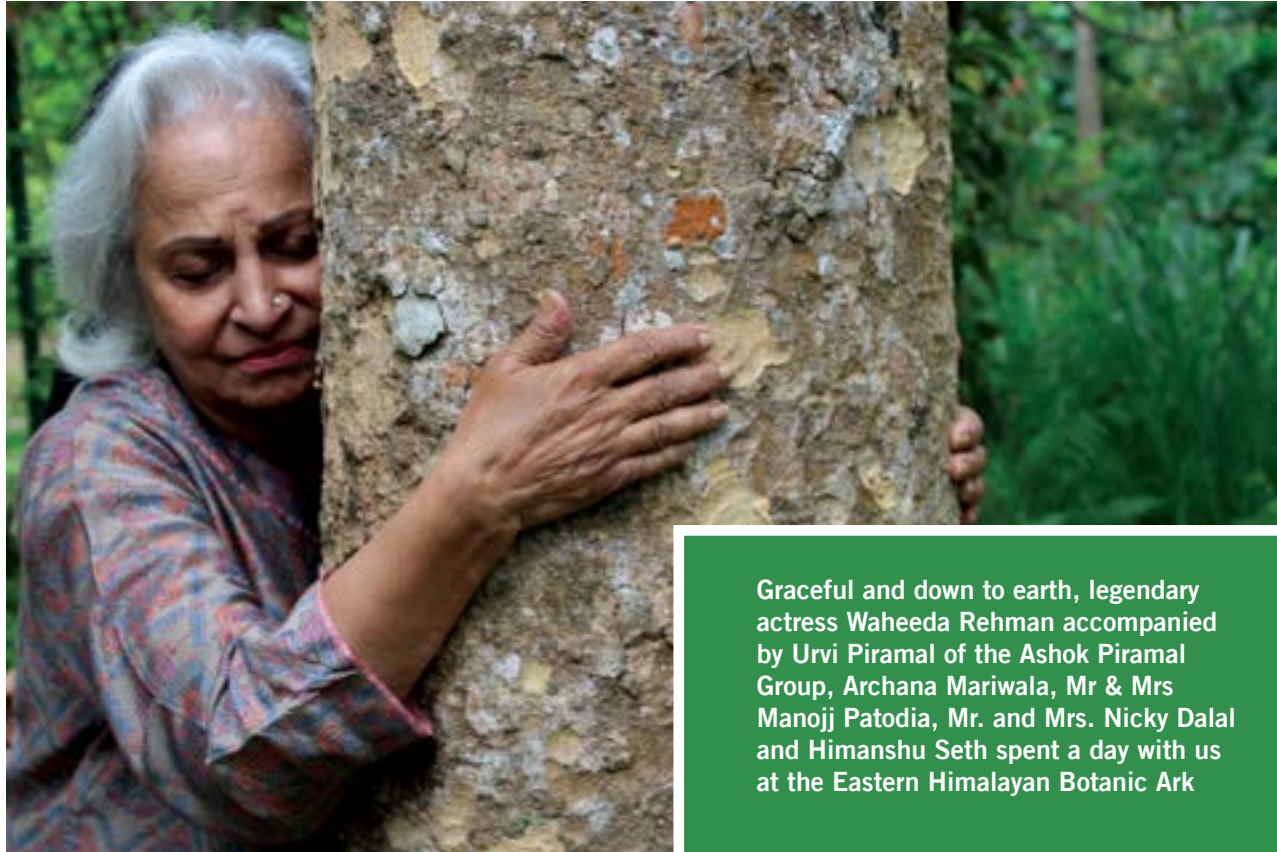


- ### 10 Thematic Sections
- Orchidarium
 - Herbarium
 - Bambusetum
 - Fern House
 - Medicinal & Aromatic Plants
 - Socio-economic Plants
 - Aquatic Plants
 - Eastern Himalayan Ecosystem replica
 - Economic Botany
 - Organic Garden

The Botanic Ark is a first of its kind site for Himalayan biodiversity reinvention and restoration through research and experimentation in the Eastern Himalayas. It is currently home to over 400 plant and animal species. The Ark is also home to our Naturenomics™ Nursery, where we nurture new species as part of our effort to regenerate biodiversity in the Eastern Himalayas



National Award Winner Waheeda Rehman Experiences “Jungle Bathing”



Graceful and down to earth, legendary actress Waheeda Rehman accompanied by Urvi Piramal of the Ashok Piramal Group, Archana Mariwala, Mr & Mrs Manoj Patodia, Mr. and Mrs. Nicky Dalal and Himanshu Seth spent a day with us at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark

Inclined to experience the abundant flora and fauna and community conservation efforts in the region, the day included activities that were a mix of natural and cultural experiences.

A blissful nature walk under the canopy of the green forest, “jungle bathing” to soak in the fragrance of the fresh forest air and hugging trees to connect with mother nature. She also spent time at the Naturenomics™ store, where she participated in local weaving and understanding the fine nuances of curating exquisite handlooms and handicrafts, artisan skill and ethnic heritage.

At the Naturenomics™ School, the team at Balipara Foundation took her through the journey of Rural Futures at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark and the inter-dependent relationship between nature and these communities. She was able to interact with the local communities and see how integrating rural livelihood with community conservation has multifold benefits for socio-economic and environmental development.

Impressed and touched by the simplicity of nature and lessons from the Ark on the nurturing power of forests to give back to those who nurture it, she planted a tree at the Nursery at the Ark adding a verse to the poetry of earth. She also mentioned that the Ark with its surrounding Tea Estate is the finest she has visited. Urvi Piramal, who is a wildlife and nature enthusiast and visits at least two wildlife sanctuaries every year, called the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark a paradise for nature lovers.



Earth Day

Dedicated towards Organic Farming & Rice Cultivation with Community Farmers



On the occasion of Earth Day, Balipara Foundation organised a one day workshop on Organic Farming and Rice Cultivation with the Community Farmers in collaboration with Annapurna Seed Library

Rice is cultivated in a wide range of agro-ecological situations in Assam: from the hill slopes of Karbi Anglong to drought affected upland and rain fed lowland to very deep water conditions. It is because of this exposure to a range of environmental conditions that there is extensive diversity in traditional landraces.

The one day workshop was delivered by Annapurna Seed Library- Northeast's first seed lending library and an initiative by Mahan Chandra Borah, a farmer from Meleng, Eastern outskirts of Jorhat. The workshop was successful with participation by 17 local farmers from Nyshi and Garo Village, Sonitpur District and 3 fieldworkers from the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark.

Mahan Chandra Borah is racing against time to stock up nearly-extinct and rare indigenous rice varieties, one grain at a time, in his unique seed library – to help secure genetic diversity for climate resilience. He has set up the Northeast's first seed lending library the Annapurna Seed Library which is also a sister library of the California-based Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library



Organic Farming

With an extensive knowledge on seeds and their indigenous varieties, Borah helped farmers understand the techniques and preparation methods during Organic Farming. With the means of both practical and theoretical approach, a clear picture of seed germination techniques, multiple cropping, preparing organic pesticides using cow dung and cow urine were delivered to the participants.

Borah helped farmers understand how pesticides and fertilizer run-off from conventional cropland and is one of the biggest environmental pollutant today and instilling that learning for better health of the earth, organic farming is the only way to go.

In-situ conservation of the rice varieties

The erosion of genetic diversity in many food crops that accompanies the spread of commercial agriculture is a major concern for farmers and consumers throughout the world. Borah highlighted the importance of in-situ conservation of rice varieties for encouraging the growers of native varieties through raising awareness.



Empowering Grassroots Women Through Solar Light Distribution



With an objective to empower grassroots women, under a joint initiative by Balipara Foundation and Mahila Shakti Kendra, funded by Assam Investment Advisory Society, 20 solar lights were donated to fulfil the needs of rural women entrepreneurs and families. The solar donation drive was conducted at Chariduar on 4th Jan '18.

In energy starved Indian villages, these women face a lot of hardships in their daily lives. They spend a large part of their income in buying lamps and candles to light up their homes after sunset. Women finish their cooking and children their homework before the sun sets for the day. Alternate sources of power, such as solar systems, are important as they provide basic electric light and power and are cheaper and safer than the kerosene and dry cell batteries currently used in households that lack a reliable electricity supply. The initiative is aimed at improving their quality of life so they live safer, brighter and more productive lives.



At Balipara Foundation, we focus on empowering grassroots leaders and rural development as community ownership has an important role to play in the sustainability development of the region and gender inclusion is one of the driving forces in the success of Rural Futures.

Women were given Sun King brand solar lights that is designed to deliver life-changing solar power for families living off the electricity grid. The solar lights were distributed by Prabir Banerjee, Gautam Baruah and Mallika Basumatari from Balipara Foundation and Dhruba Das from MASK. Dhruba Das presided over the event and also shared details of the challenges that these women face. A start up guide was also provided to the beneficiaries by Mr. Niranjana Thakuria, Senior Area Manager, Sun King.

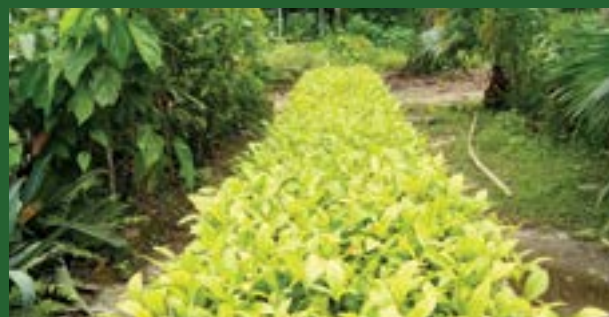


A Day In The Forests Of Van Vigyan Kendra, CHESSA

Established in 1981, Van Vigyan Kendra, Chessa, focuses on the needs of field research on Silviculture, tree improvement, quality seed production, germplasm collection, introduction and evaluation of both timber and non-timber species etc. With an objective to get trained, create a hospitality tie up and procure healthy saplings, we visited Van Vigyan Kendra in May.

Located at Chessa, in the foot hill plains of tropical semi evergreen forest, spread over an area of 100 hectares, it has the largest number of forest research plots and the largest Bambusetum in the country which is of 2 Hectares; it also has Germplasm bank for bamboo grass and medicinal plants. Dr. Ganguva Murtem, Mission Director, NABM and S.K Singh, Technical Officer, SFRI took us on a guided botanical trail and spoke about collaborative eco-tourism opportunities. We viewed Bambusetum, timber and non-timber tree orchards, medicinal plants plots, greenhouses and nurseries.

We also visited the Biological Park of Itanagar that has a butterfly garden, Zoo and Germplasm bank. Some of the key conversations included ideas and thoughts on sending



guests from Wild Mahseer to Van Vigyan Kendra camp for botanical trails to explore the natural heritage of the region. And also discussion on the expansion of the work on land that is not on lease with a suggestion to keep a dedicated piece of land for bambusetum.

Knowledge Partnership with Van Vigyan Kendra will be beneficial for the training of members at Balipara Foundation due to their extensive knowledge and experience. Our visit was fruitful, and we returned with gift of saplings of Jati cane, Raidang Cane and Bola, which is a class 1 timber tree.

Towards A Digital Approach To Community Conservation

“Internet Saathi – A Digital Literacy Programme”

Empowering women in Rural India through Internet Education



Supported By: Google and Tata Trusts

Implemented by: Gramya Vikash Mancha, Nalbari

Co-ordinated by: MASK and Balipara Foundation

Context and Background

Balipara Foundation as a coordination partner supported **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MASK)** for conducting the first phase of the **Internet Saathi Programme**. Led by Darshana Bora, District Co-coordinator of Sonitpur District for a duration of six-months, the objective of the programme was to cover 510 villages through a field staff strength of 128 Internet Saathis, resulting in a beneficiary reach of 88,900 rural women.

MASK, established in 2002 is a Federation of over 200 self-help groups and operates within the principles of empowering the poor and marginalized, especially women to bring about social change in their status, and to empower themselves economically and socially in order to live with dignity with the mainstream society.

Balipara Foundation and **MASK** have jointly collaborated in piloting initiatives related to livelihood generation through traditional skill development, botany and environmental education, solar lighting, rural homestays and wilderness management programmes in households across seven communities in the last one year – all of these initiatives are now being scaled up in Balipara County in Sonitpur District of Assam.

What is Internet Saathi??

India has the world's second largest internet population with over 400 million users, but only 30% are women. Even as the world becomes increasingly connected, rural India is witnessing a widening online gender gap — only one in ten internet users is a woman. Google is committed to bridging this divide. To help bridge this gap, in July 2015, Google partnered with Tata Trusts to launch “Internet Saathi”, a digital literacy program, an initiative focused on bringing women in rural India online through which women in rural India learns how to access and use the internet, and they in turn impart training to their community and neighbouring villages.

When women gain access to information and the tools to make the most of it, they start new businesses, make new discoveries, transform their communities and change the way we all learn, work and live. Through the Internet Saathi initiative, women ambassadors train and educate women across 300,000 villages on the benefits of internet in their day-to-day life.

Over 30,000 Internet Saathis, equipped with smartphones and tablets, are now working across 110,000 villages, helping women in their own and in neighboring villages to learn how to use and gain from the full potential of the Internet. Each Saathi is trained for two days by Google and spends the next eight months interacting with rural women.

Google jointly worked with the Foundation for Rural Entrepreneurship Development (Frend) — set up by Tata Trusts as an extension of the Internet Saathi programme. In 2015, a pilot project was launched in villages of Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Gujarat. The programme was then rolled out in 12 states: Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Internet Saathi in Assam

To help rural women in Assam get acquainted with the internet, Google India, in collaboration with Tata Trusts has launched the Internet Saathi first across 4 districts of Assam and later got extended to 7 more districts including Sonitpur. The implementation of the programme in Assam was given to a Nalbari based organization known as Gramya Vikash Mancha. This organization approached MASK to implement the programme in the Sonitpur district of Assam.

In Sonitpur, the Internet Saathi Programme came into effect from 20th of January 2018 and completed its first phase of the programme on 10th of July, 2018, while the second phase is still under execution. A total of 128 rural women from Sonitpur were trained to work as ambassadors of Internet Saathi in the first phase, who in turn targeted to train 89,600 rural women on internet uses. In the second phase, 100 more Saathis were trained to cover 400 more villages from Sonitpur District.

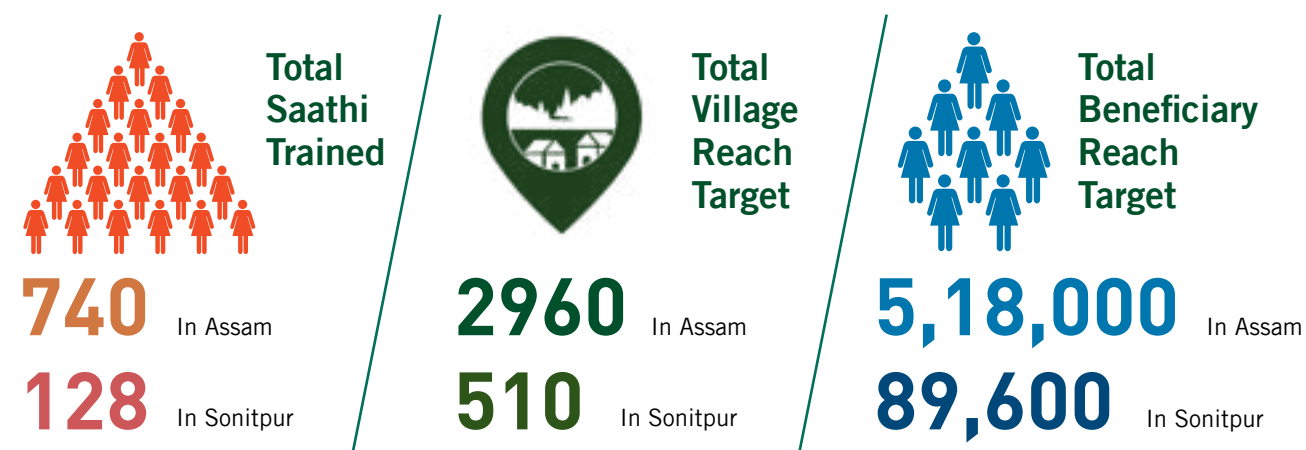


Figure showing demographics of the programme in Assam and Sonitpur

Results

The programme first started with selection of the project staff followed by mapping of the villages and selection of the Saathis village wise. Each Saathi was allotted four nearby villages and needed to cover a beneficiary target of 700. Saathis were given a training programme for 2 days on the uses and applications of internet. The work performances of the Saathis were reviewed monthly by conducting monthly review meetings.

Village Reach

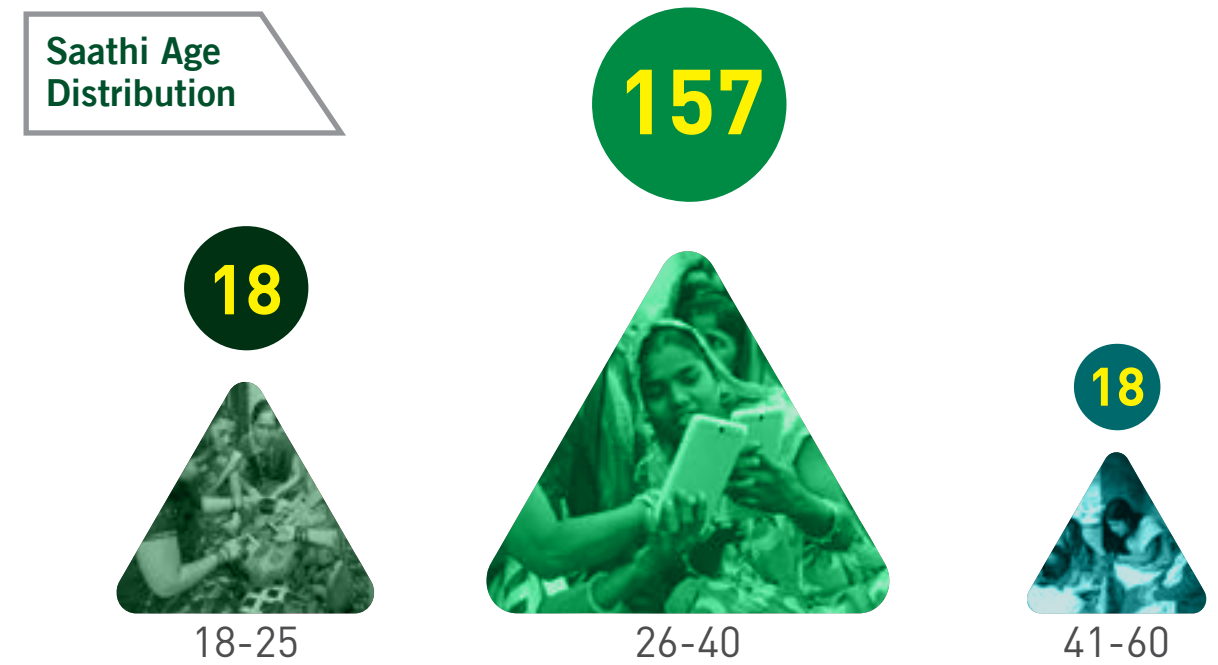
910 Target
508 Actual

Beneficiary Reach

1,59,600 Target
88,900 Actual

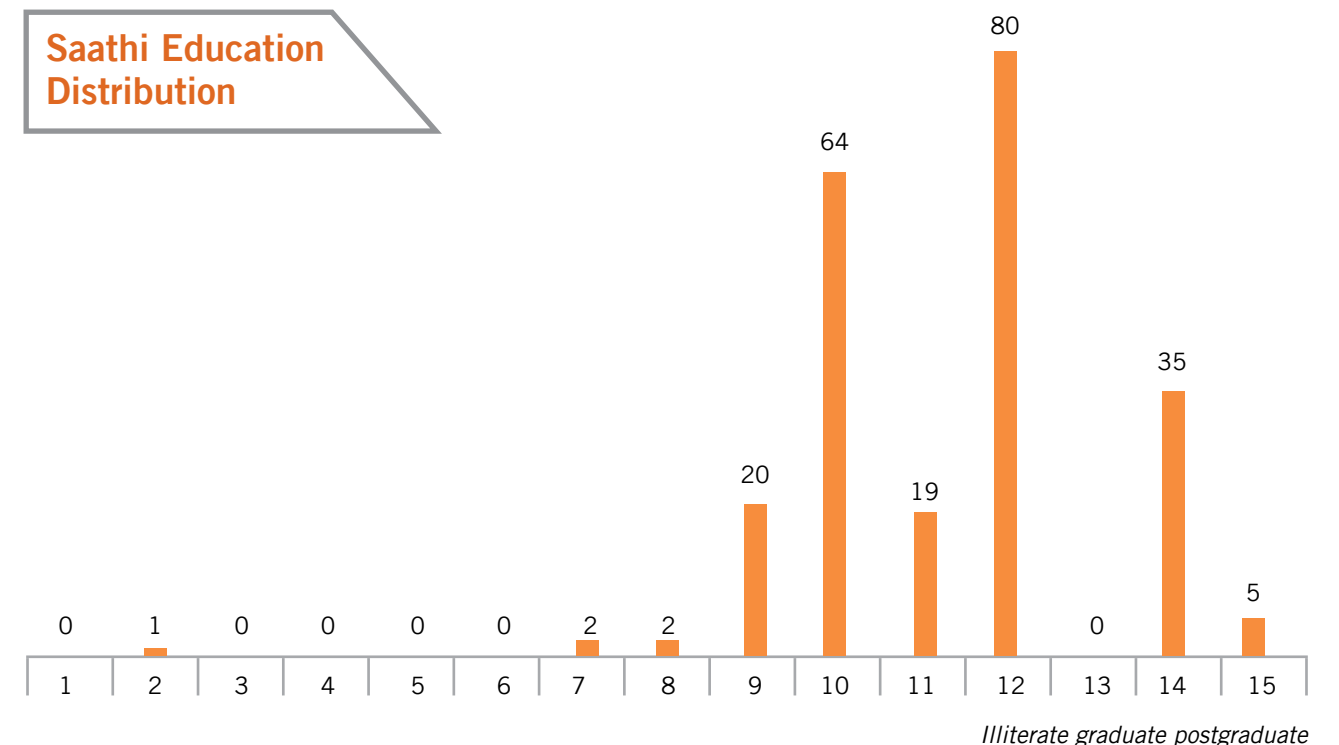
Results after completion of the programme

Data Analysis of Saathis



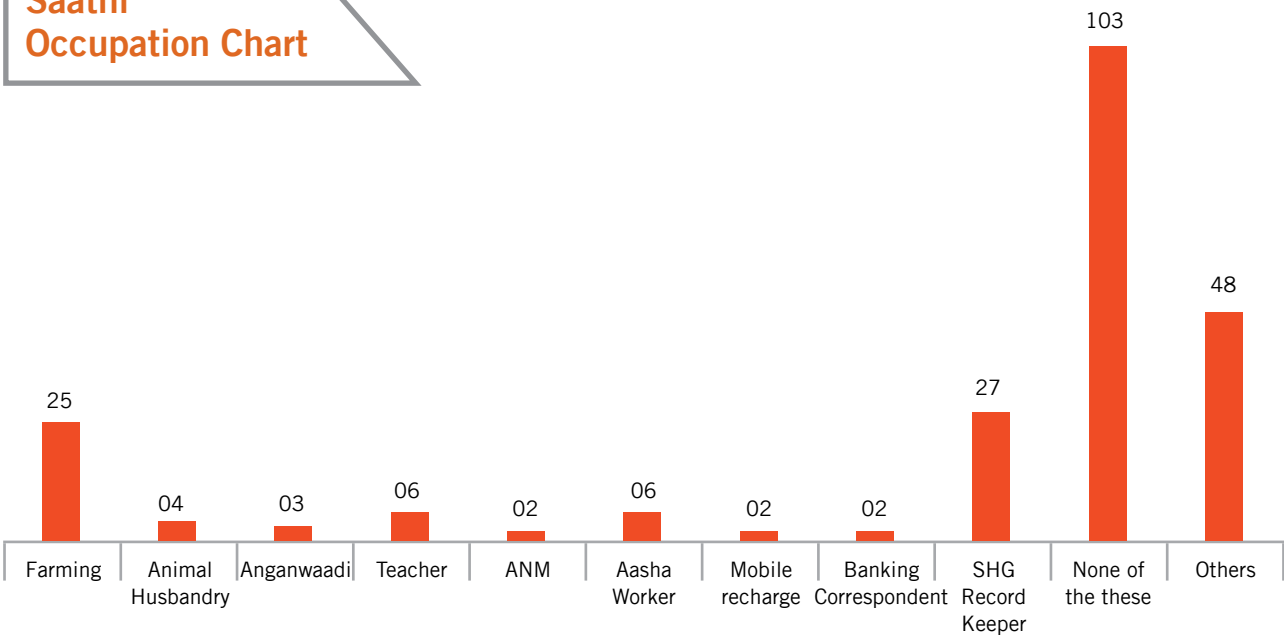
The figure above shows the age distribution of the Saathis of both first and second phase. Maximum Saathi belongs to the age group of 26-40 years, followed by 18-25 years and least belongs to the age group of 41-60 years.

Saathi Education Distribution



The figure above shows the educational distribution of the Saathis of both first and second phase. Maximum Saathis belongs to the category of 12th passed, followed gradually by matriculates and graduates. Least number of Saathis belongs to the category of middle school drop outs.

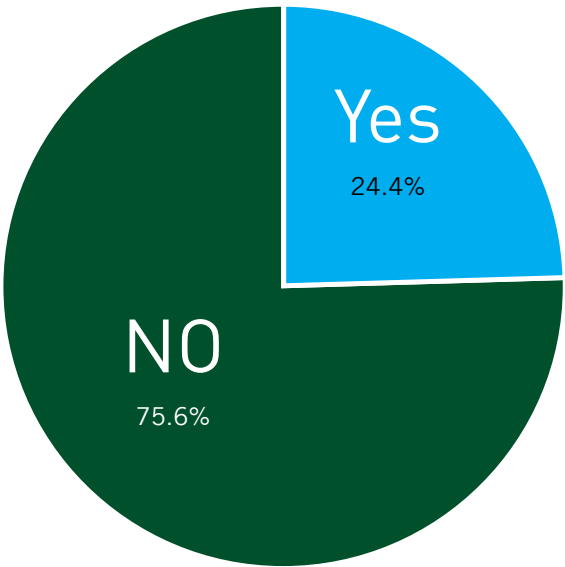
Saathi Occupation Chart



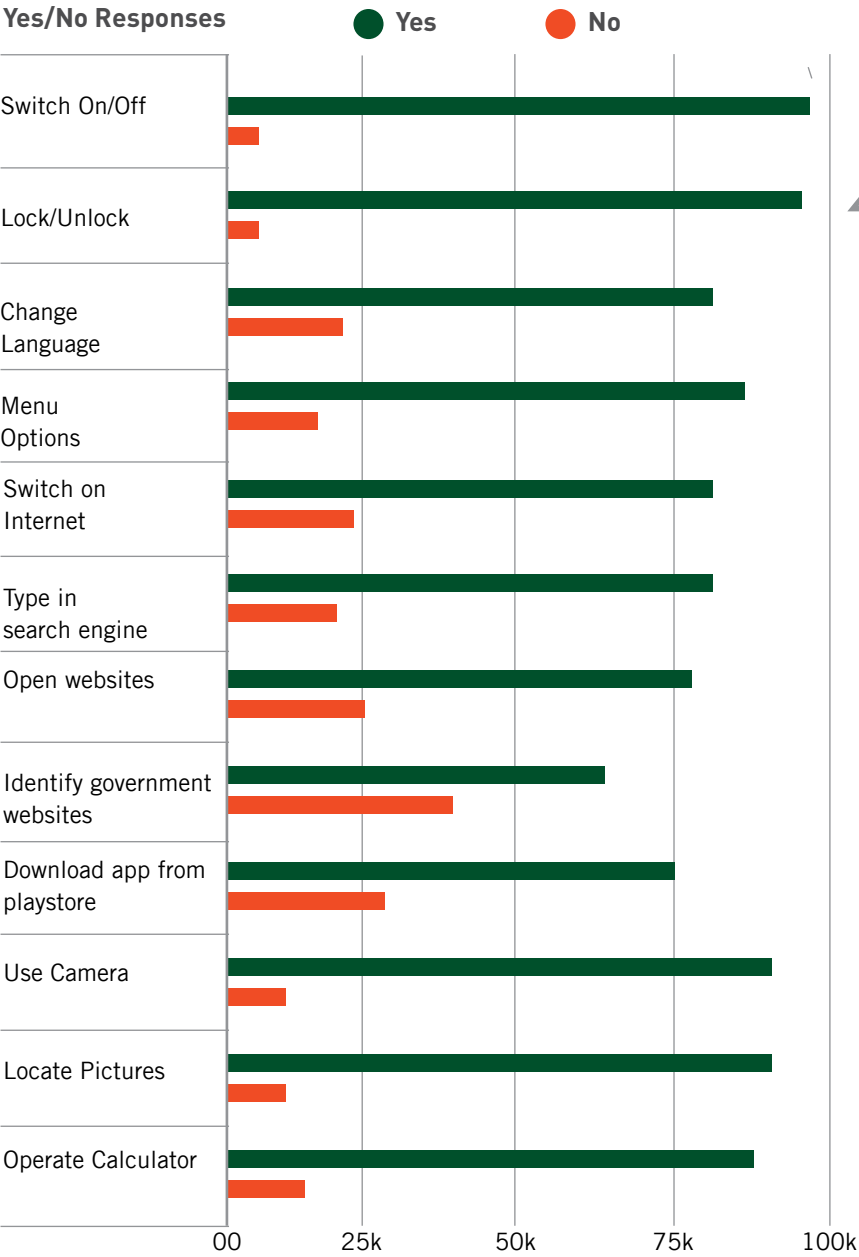
The figure above shows the occupational chart of the Saathis of both first and second phase. Maximum Saathis belong to the category of housewives followed gradually by some other village related work, farming, and self-help group members

Individual Part of SHG

The figure above shows the percentage of the beneficiaries based on their involvement in self-help groups. 24.4% of the beneficiaries belong to SHGs while the remaining 75.6% doesn't.



Yes/No Responses

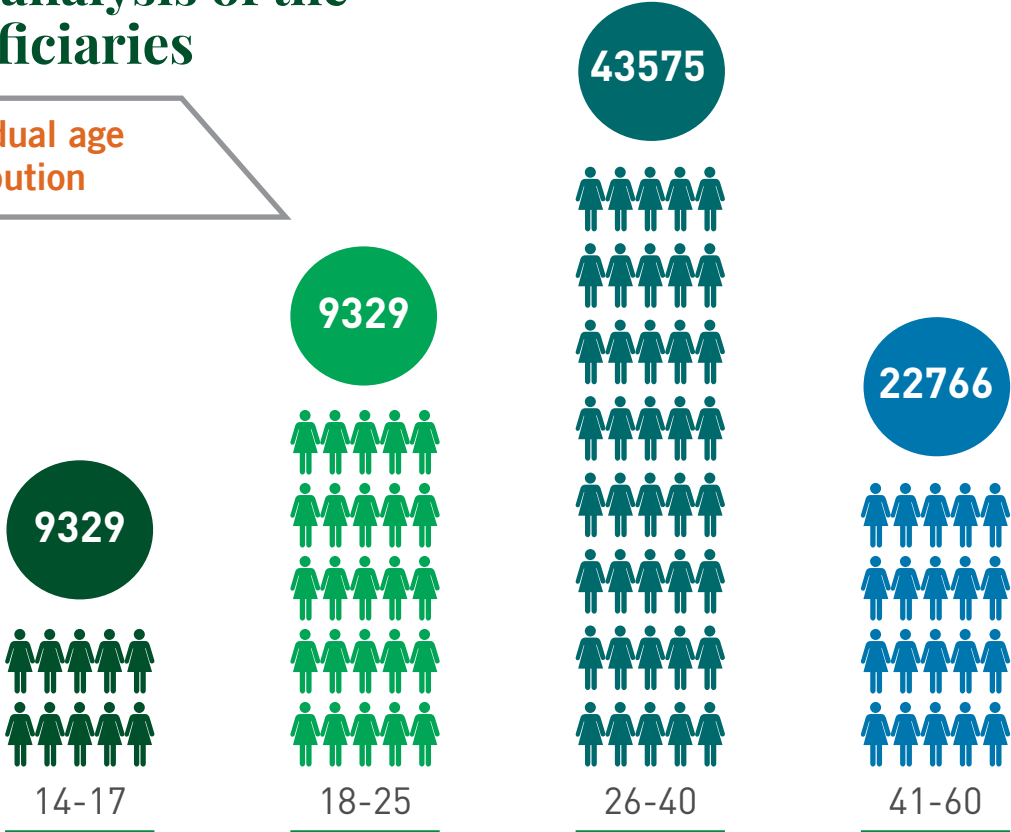


Response of Digital Literacy Questions

The figure above shows the responses of the beneficiaries based on the questionnaire designed for training the village women. It is shown from the figure that maximum numbers of beneficiaries have learnt the uses of smartphones starting from switching the phone on and off to downloading applications from Play store.

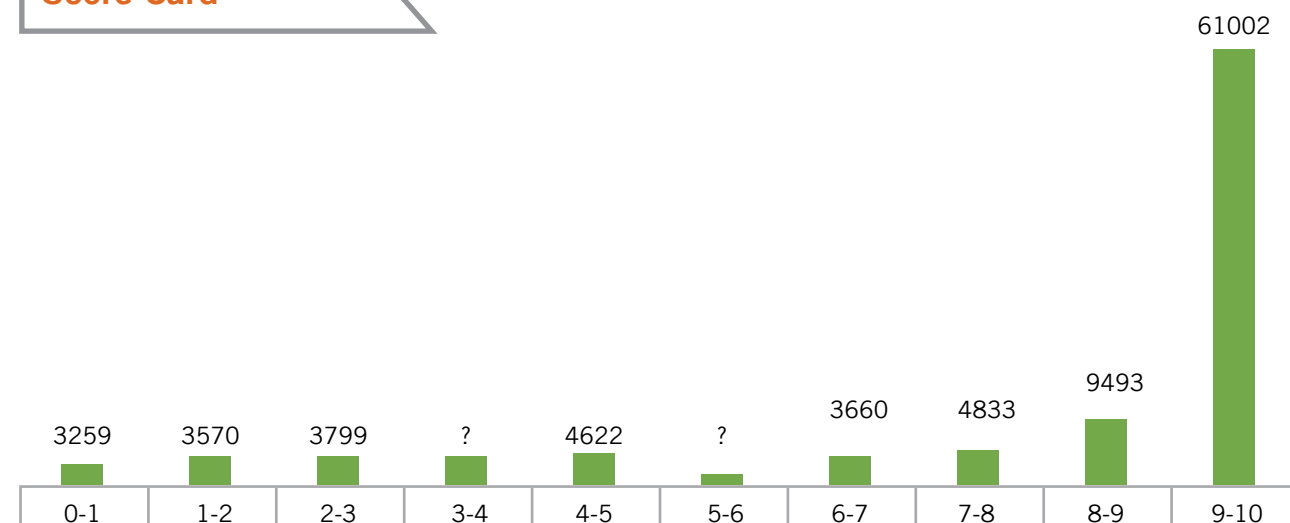
Data analysis of the Beneficiaries

Individual age Distribution



The figure above shows the age distribution of the beneficiaries of both first and second phase. Maximum beneficiaries belong to the age group of 26-40 years followed gradually by 18-25 years and 41-60 years. Least belongs to the age category of 14-17 years

Digital Literacy Score Card



The figure above shows the score card of the digital literacy programme. Maximum beneficiaries are seen to have scored in the highest category indicating that maximum number of individuals have learnt the uses of internet through this programme.



Social Impacts

Women who were part of the Internet Saathi programme, felt their social and economic standing had improved after the training. Many have set up their own businesses and this has inspired Google to look at creating a sustainable framework to deliver employment opportunities to the Internet Saathis.

When the team first went to the villages to train women, they faced certain mind barriers such as internet was a bad influence and that women should not be on the internet. Even if there was a smartphone in the house, they weren't allowed to touch it.

Two and a half years later, Internet Saathi has trained 45,000 internet Saathi across 1,50,000 villages, who have gone out and taught 1.5 million women on how to use the internet. And this programme has not only given them access to information but has also opened up new learning, employment and revenue opportunities.

The village women and girls have now even mastered the art of bridal makeup, cutting and tailoring, embroidery through the internet. The village women have also learnt how to use Paytm and other modes of digital transactions. They are now using internet for their electricity and mobile bill payment not only for their own household but also for their neighbouring households.

One such case is of a lady named as Madhavi Saikia from Sonitpur District. She is a middle-aged woman with strong interest in education, which she couldn't complete during her childhood due to financial problems. After getting the training of internet applications by one of the Saathis, she started to gain education through internet. She studied online and has now given the entrance test to qualify for the role of a primary school teacher.

Thus, the "Internet Saathi – Digital Literacy Programme" has changed lots of perspectives of the village women, made them independent and confident and helped them to move and think forward at par with the male population of the country.





Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark In Residence At Wild Mahseer



145 years of
Cultural Inheritance &

1000 years of
Environmental Heritage of
the Eastern Himalayas

- Social Enterprise run by members of the local communities
- Created 200,000+ 'man-days' of work
- Creating multiplier effects in terms of complementary services & livelihood opportunities in neighbouring communities
- Promoting the culture, biodiversity, cuisine and lifestyle of the Eastern Himalayas

Over **11,000** guests
from over **40** countries

Nurtured and tended to by local guardians – the communities of Eastern Himalayas

All revenue ploughed back to the
local communities

Trained and Employed over **300** people from
local communities

Restoration of the **145** Year Old Heritage
Bungalow

Awardee of TripAdvisor 2018
Certificate of Excellence

Launch of **Homestays**

Ethnic Community- Tourism Through Homestays

Organic & local living through village homestay with Mishing, Garo, Nyishi and other ethnic communities for meaningful tourism in the Eastern Himalayas



THE GARO COMMUNITY



© Rithvik Upadhyay



The Garo village in Sonitpur district lies in the foothills of Eastern Himalayan Range. With a rich cultural and traditional history, the Garo people have made tremendous efforts to keep their village green and clean. Rich in natural resources, the village people also have a keen knowledge on medicinal plants. They are experts in handicrafts, weaving, community fishing and cultivating economically important plants. The village is located a short 25- minute drive from the Ark.

THE MISHING COMMUNITY

The Baligaon Mishing village in Sonitpur district is Assam's first green village. It is rich in history, tradition and culture of the Mishings. Guided and inspired by the



Mishing village head- Kamison Mili, a man of the soil, to experience the hospitality and rich cultural heritage of local communities, the village today is a remarkable example of community conservation, rich in ethnobotanical plants, home garden farming, handicrafts, traditional fishing, weaving culture and agricultural tools of the Mishing community.

THE NYISHI COMMUNITY

The Nyishi village in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayan Range is bordered with a lustrous green hill; the Nyishi village is a real feast for nature lovers. With a strong belief in organic living, Nyishi villages are an epitome of sustainable, chemical-free agricultural production and are surrounded by lush and unexplored forests.



Activities at the Homestays

Welcome by the locals

Conversations with Nature

Handlooms & Handicrafts

Capturing Moments

Lifestyle and Chang Ghar

Ethnic Lunch

Boating

Home Garden Farming

Three tribal villages of Assam open up their homes

In Assam's Sonitpur district, an ecotourism initiative opens doors of three villages to guests as well as economic sustainability.

A homestay initiative started by the Balipara Foundation might just become a worthy lesson in the tribal culture of certain villages in Assam. Starting this month, three villages — Baligaon Mishing, Sengelimari Garo and Phuloguri Nyishi — will have designated homes that will function as homestays for anybody who wants to visit. The three villages represent three tribes from the region: Mishing, Garo and Nyishi.



“The project is part of the larger Rural Futures (RuFu) plan aimed at restoration of habitats, community development and improvement of the socio-economic condition of the villagers,” says Saurav Malhotra of the Balipara Foundation. The foundation has been around since 2007 working towards the conservation and preservation of the ecosystem of the eastern Himalayan region. In 2016, it launched Elephant Country initiative, with an aim to preserve the habitat of the Asian Elephant and mitigate the man-elephant conflict by creating an effective elephant corridor in Assam's Udalgiri region.

For the homestay project, the foundation has collaborated with the Mahila Shakti Kendra (MASK) Balipara that works for the cause of women empowerment in the region, specifically the Balipara development block. MASK works with 106 self help groups spanning more than 300 villages. In the homestay project, the registered beneficiary of each household in the village is a woman. “We helped the Balipara Foundation connect with women from various self-help groups,” says Dhruba Das of MASK, “Tourism is a big component of livelihood here.”

Guests will be able to tour the village, participate in traditional village activities from weaving to farming, sample local cuisine and spend the night in a chang-ghar, an authentic hut on stilts, typical of the architecture of the region. The night stay is priced at about Rs 2,000 while individual activities are charged for separately. “The benefits for the villagers are two-fold,” says Malhotra, “It helps the individual homeowners, and adds to the economic independence of the community too.” Fees for the tours in the villages, the food prepared, cultural performances etc. go directly to the community.

Published in Indian Express- 25th April'18

Bakery Training At First Flush

Enhancing the culinary skills of village chefs at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer



Chef Samandeep Singh with the Wild Mahseer Team

Baking is a superpower that allows one to connect to people universally and share the love for food. At the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer, chefs from local communities create dishes that are rich in culture and history. In order to enhance their culinary skills, a baking workshop with Chef Samandeep Singh and his apprentice Ratan Ghimire was conducted at the Ark.

Spread over two days, the village chefs were guided through the science of baking desserts and breads like Kalakand, Red velvet cake, cookies, pizza, bread, French bread and bread loafs. The objective of the 2 days training programme was to equip the restaurant chefs with required skills to have a bakery in house. With the skills learned, Wild Mahseer may offer an "À la carte" Menu for Cakes and Pastries to their guest. The team at Wild Mahseer was very eager to learn baking and were enthusiastic about the idea of starting Wild Mahseer's own bakery. They also look forward to more learning opportunities in the future which will add to their professional growth and knowledge. Chef Samandeep Singh is a passionate Chef with a diploma in Food Production from Institute of Hotel Management, Guwahati and his expertise is in bakery and confectionary.



Kalakand

Margherita Pizza

White Loaf

Butter Cookies

French Breakfast

Crème of Egg (Sausage and cheese slices are not in the picture)

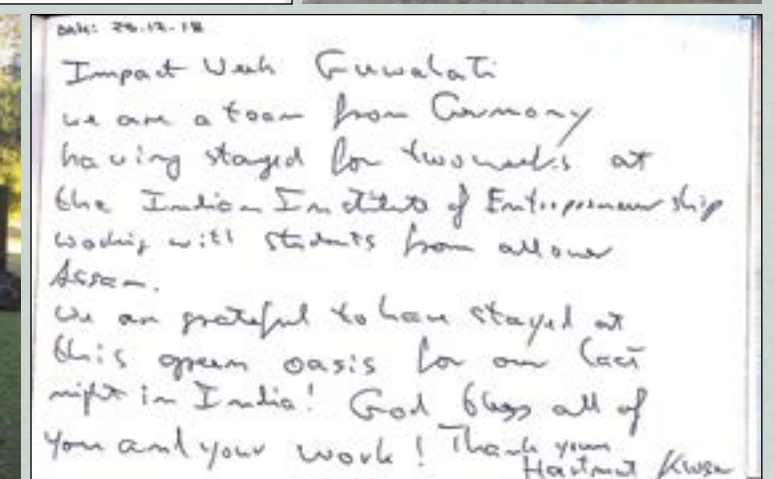
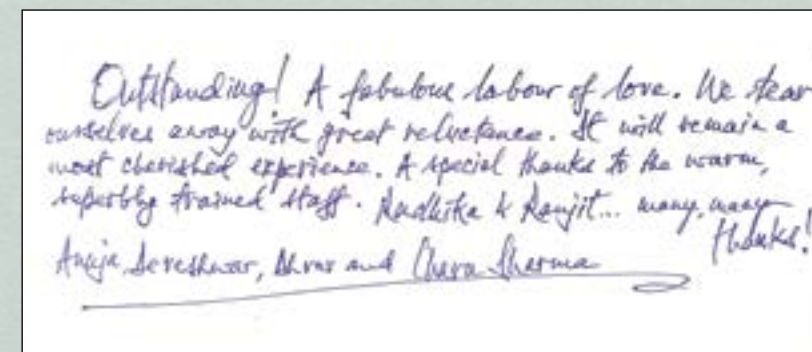
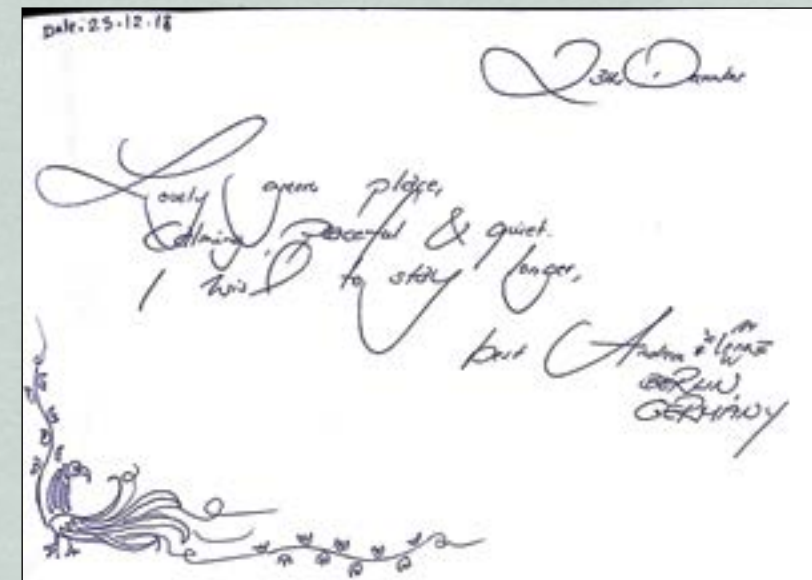


Italian Bread

Red Velvet Cake



Guest Comments



Naturenomics™ School

Workshop With Assam Valley School On Herbarium Techniques & Biodiversity Conservation

Nurturing young minds with lessons of the natural world to develop a love and appreciation for the gift of earth

At the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer, we focus on educating young minds through nature-based workshops to inculcate a love for nature and caring for it. On 26th May 2018, we conducted a Herbarium course for 27 students of Assam Valley School with the Biology faculty Prof. Joyce MacDonald.

Objective:

To learn tips and techniques for making own herbarium voucher of native plants.

Students were given hands on instruction on collecting, pressing and mounting techniques to prepare specimens suitable for creative art and scientific projects. Guest faculty Dr. Pankaj Bharali, who has a PhD in Botany from Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh is a renowned research scholar. As a specialist in Alpine Flora and Phytochemistry of medicinal plants, he was invited to conduct the workshop. Dr. Bharali has recorded a number of Alpine species as new to India and two as new discovery to science from the **Alpine Himalayan regions of Arunachal Pradesh**, which is a critical geography for research and study of botany and community conservation.



Students of Assam Valley School hold their Certificates



Conversation exchange between Dr. Bharali and the students included learning about the 2 new discoveries "Impatiens Pyrrohiza Sp" and "Rhodiola Sedoides", its significance and value to the ecosystem. They also learnt about the key role that a herbarium plays in preserving native plant, species, collection of facts and ethnobotany. Students were also guided on several career fields related to the study of botany, which can help them to make informed and abled decisions. "It was very exciting and encouraging to learn about new discoveries in botany and I look forward to becoming a botanist in the future" said one of the students from Assam Valley School.



15

No. of Boys

12

No. of Girls

01

No. of teacher

28

Total

Memorable stay! Thank you for your superb hospitality. Everything at the Bura Bungalow has been planned with such an exquisite eye for detail.. All the very best to the Balipara Foundation and its very commendable outreach programs. Radhika and Ranjeet — Muchas Gracias. Annu and SUNDAR CHATTERJI. Dec 9-12. 2018.



At Gen S S Saingha,
GOC 4 Corps, Tezpur. 20.12.2018
What a heaven in the midst of wilderness.
The serenity, the peace and quite, the biodiversity is simply overwhelming. Today I learnt for the first time that there are hundreds of types of Bamboos. Over 50 of them are here. It was an education to be here, which I had explored this exotic place earlier.

Women Economic Empowerment Through Non Timber Forest Products

"When you educate a woman, you educate a generation"

In many communities there are limited income-generating opportunities for women. Fortunately, Non-Timber Forest Products activities are one of the few cash-generating opportunities for women in marginalized rural communities. Non-Timber Forest Products are the minor forest products or useful substances or materials obtained from forests, which do not require harvesting or logging trees. They include nuts, seeds, berries, mushrooms, oils, medicinal plants, fish, spices, rubber etc. NTFP can be used as commodities for rural income and serve as an expression of traditional knowledge or as a livelihood option for rural households. It is also a key component of sustainable forest management and conservation strategies.



MASK has been continuously working towards the upliftment of the local communities by generating livelihood options to the self-help groups of community villages in the north east region. Supported by Balipara Foundation, a one day Naturenomics™ programme was conducted on 29th Sept'18 at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark with 11 women of Tarabari village to educate them and create awareness on the role of NTFP in rural livelihood and forest management. They were given the basic understanding of livelihood options for the hill tribes and many other minority groups that can aid their socio-economic development. Forest fringe communities have the opportunity to benefit from several sustainable livelihood options associated with forests because of their centuries old association with it.

Exploitation of NTFPs could yield higher net revenue per hectare of land than would timber harvest of the same area while still conserving vital ecological services. Thus, forests can be managed well to increase NTFP diversity and consequently to increase biodiversity and potentially economic diversity. Exposure to this knowledge and development training can encourage these women to build their own small scale enterprises. Women's economic empowerment and gender equality is key for inclusive economic growth to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development goals and Rural Futures. Financial independence can mean breaking out of poverty for these women and create prosperous communities.

The workshop concluded with a tour of the nursery and the ethnic museum to enhance learnings.



Engaging Future Green Innovators To Reduce Our Carbon Footprint

One-Day Naturenomics™ Program: Reuse of Waste Plastics



Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires that we urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods. For more than 50 years, global production and consumption of plastics have continued to rise, and plastic waste continues to damage nature and the ecosystem that supports life on Earth.

In order to creatively educate and engage school students of Roopkonwar Sisuniketan School, Chariduar on the Rural Futures framework leading towards sustainable development goals of waste management and responsible consumption, a one-day outreach Naturenomics™ School program was conducted by Balipara Foundation with the students of IVth and Vth standard.

57 Students and 6 faculty members took the workshop as a welcome break to fuel their creativity and learn in a fun way about the significant impact of plastic waste on the environment and the different ways to recycle it. Led by Darshana and Sangita, the students were guided through a presentation on the global plastic scenario and explained that every day, gigantic amount of plastic leaks into the environment, the seas and the oceans. In the sea and the ocean, plastics disintegrate into tiny pieces, which are eaten by plankton, which are eaten by fish and which can end up in our food.

Concerned by the harmful impacts of plastic waste on life, water, the ecosystem, our food chain and other beings on

the planet, the students enquired and discussed about solutions to protect the environment and on their role in building a healthy and safe planet. The discussion was followed by a creative session in which students were taught to redecorate plastic bottles and transform them into beautiful and usable items.

Developing a greater understanding on the sustainability and importance of healthy communities and environment, the students promised to use alternatives to plastics in their daily lives, such as bamboo straws, cloth bags, paper cups and plates and also encourage their friends and families to shift to sustainable products.

The workshop was designed to impact the reduction of plastic usage and educating children on its harmful effects and solutions to combat climate change and inculcate the habit of recycling.



Next Generation Leaders Learn About Sustainable Tourism In The Eastern Himalayas



Tourism is the 3rd largest export industry in the world and brings hope, prosperity, and understanding of different cultures, livelihoods and lives all over the world. In 2016, 1.235 million travelers crossed international borders and by 2030 the number is estimated to grow to 1.8 billion. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals recognizes Tourism as a grand 21st century human activity, to build a better future for the people, planet, peace and prosperity.

Education and Sustainable Tourism can help make the world a better place to live in by inculcating respect towards culture, nature and communities. With an objective to assess and understand the socio-economic and environment impacts created through Wild Mahseer, 15 students from Tezpur University's Tourism and Travel Management programme participated in a one-day programme at the Ark.

The social enterprise of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer engages 300+ people from local communities to preserve and conserve the bio-cultural heritage of the 22 acres of Addabarie Tea Estate providing livelihood opportunity and capacity building.



Students were guided through the history of the property and were given a tour of the Heritage Bungalow, Silver Tips and Second Flush Bungalows giving them an insight on the colonial tea planter's life. They participated in conversations on the discovery of tea in Assam, life in the tea gardens in 1930s and its legacy. Followed by a tea tasting session where they savored different blends of tea and interacted with the team at Balipara Foundation to understand the concept of Rural Futures, projects and efforts by the Foundation for synergizing community development and conservation.

They were also given an exposure to Homestays as an Alternative Tourism Product for Sustainable Community Development. The essence of sustainable tourism lies not just in the natural landscape of that particular place but also its indigenous communities and local way of life. Community villages in the periphery of the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark such as Garo, Mishing and Nyishi are popular destinations for experiencing



authentic sociocultural richness and as the communities are at the center of showcasing their bio-cultural heritage and these experiences, they are the primary recipients of tourism benefits.

The field trip allowed students to develop a better understanding of the multi-fold benefits of sustainable tourism such as economic growth, job creation, social and regional cohesion, protection of natural and cultural heritage and building peaceful relationships. They were given an exposure on the different prospects of tourism in Assam such as ethnic tourism, tea tourism, spiritual tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism and community tourism. As well as the problems associated such as lack of infrastructure, funding, policies and reforms and threats to its natural assets.



Eastern Himalayan Nursery

The Eastern Himalayan Nursery was created to conserve and propagate the endemic floral species of the Eastern Himalayan Region. Home to some of Asia's major rivers and 3 of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots, the region is significant to the communities residing not only in the Eastern Himalayan region but globally. Virtually unexplored, an astonishing 242 plant species were discovered in this region between the years 2005 to 2015, and many more are being discovered every year.

As a member of its diverse communities, Balipara Foundation understands the need to increase the propagation of endemic floral species to improve the hardiness of the green cover in this region in the face of human development. We seek to do this through the Eastern Himalayan Nursery and in doing so, also protecting species which are extremely important both economically and culturally to the region's population.

The Eastern Himalayan Nursery is a living prototype of Naturenomics™, which seeks to promote the principles of interdependence between humans and the environment. Our goal is to not only create a robust population of species, which can be sold as well as studies, but to also offer value added services such as landscaping and smart afforestation, which can help create more diverse forests.



Vision:

Conservation and Propagation of endemic floral species of the Eastern Himalayan Region through ex-situ conservation and spreading the knowledge about the floral biodiversity of this region

Mission:

A global leader in propagation of endemic floral species of the Eastern Himalayas preservation of indigenous knowledge, research and education

Objectives:

- Promote the conservation of forests by supplying robust saplings and seeds of endemic floral species from the region
- Create livelihoods for communities through education and employment opportunities
- Celebrate the indigenous knowledge of endemic plants and increase stakeholder participation in conservation, from the grassroot level to the highest levels of government



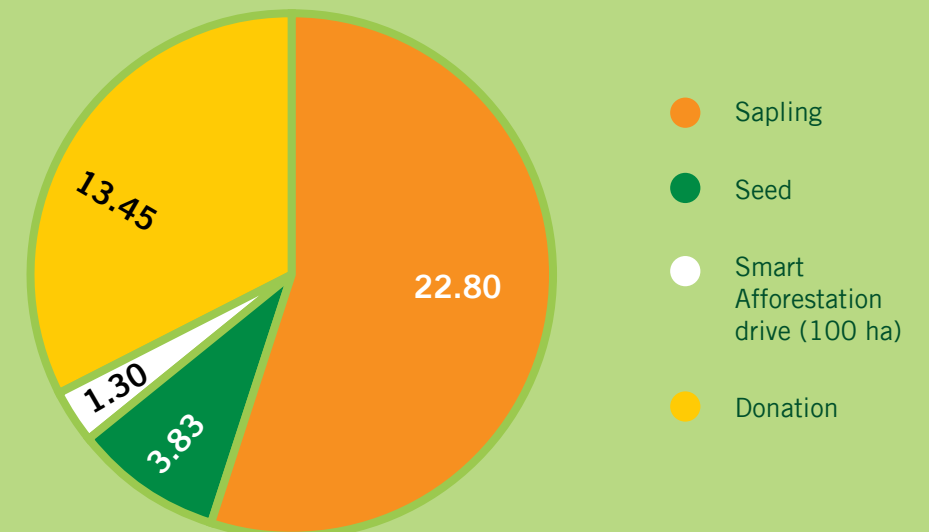
The nursery aims to become the global knowledge resource center for robust endemic floral species of the Eastern Himalayan Region. The biodiversity rich Eastern Himalayan region inspires our efforts to foster conservation through innovation to energize current and future conservation efforts globally.

Outputs:

1. The Nursery will nurture different types of plants: Endemic, Food bearing, Fruit bearing, Ornamental, Economically important. Total targeted sapling for the year 2017-2018 is 1.5 L of 21 varieties
2. The plants will be sold individually but also be in packages: the Forest package, the Kitchen Garden Package, the Ornamental Package, etc.
3. Apart from saplings of different ages, the nursery will also sell seeds, individually and in packages, and will conduct workshops and Landscaping services
4. The nursery will source high quality seeds and saplings for developing robust populations of endemic species, which are donated to the Eco Task force, forest department, communities and locals



Revenue/Donation Chart 2017-2018 (Values in INR Lakhs)



Partners:

The Nursery shares its partnerships with the following

1. Campa Forest Nursery, Dharikathi, Department of Forest, Govt. of Assam
2. Eco Task Force, 134 BN., Indian Army, Govt of India
3. Kunming Institute Of Botany, Yunan, China
4. Tezpur University, Assam, India
5. Gauhati University, Assam, India
6. Communities and Locals of Balipara region of Sonitpur district of Assam
7. ATREE

Impacts:

The Nursery will focus on becoming the center for promoting and studying the endemic species of the Eastern Himalayas and encourage a more robust ecosystem through high quality endemic plants. The revenue generated will also help to make the projects at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark self-sustaining through self-funding.



In the Future:

While continuing to be a center of excellence, research and development and revenue generation for the projects at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, the Nursery will expand into ancillary products such as gardening equipment and tools





ENVIRONMENTAL

- ▶ Habitat Enhancement
- ▶ Species Diversity & Wildlife Habitat
- ▶ Carbon Sequestration
- ▶ Prevention of over exploitation of nature
- ▶ Reduced Pressure on Protected Forests
- ▶ Soil Erosion
- ▶ Deterring Monoculture
- ▶ Ground Water Recharging

Employment Generation ◀

Timber & Bamboo Supply ◀

Non Timber Forest Produce ◀

Research & Education ◀

Revenue Generation ◀



ECONOMIC



SOCIAL

- ▶ Community Building
- ▶ Experiential Learning
- ▶ Research and Education
- ▶ Institutional Partnership

Conversations With Nature





Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum



Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2018- Rural Futures: Social- Environmental – Economic Interdependence was a highly- participatory gathering to explore the crucial role of local communities in the Eastern Himalayas, in conserving the local environment and at the same time supporting local economies and livelihoods. The conference brought together indigenous community, university, government, and NGO people from around the world, aiming to produce lessons of relevance to communities, policy- makers, researchers and a range of organizations- at all levels from local to global.

Carrying forward the legacy and keeping up the inherent spirit of Rural Futures through Naturenomics™, Balipara Foundation Awards 2018 once again acknowledged and recognized the Real Community Heroes of the Eastern Himalayas- people who have dedicated themselves to preserving the rich Bio-Cultural Heritage and are the environmental crusaders of the Eastern Himalayas.

Theme: Rural Futures: Social- Environmental- Economic Interdependence



RURAL FUTURES THROUGH NATURE CAPITAL FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

RESOLUTIONS-OUTCOMES



Community – Tourism:

Instituting home stays that serve to re-wild depleted areas next to biodiverse zones to drive community conservation efforts

Universal Basic Income:

Leverage Nature Capital to develop universal basic assets and achieve universal basic income

Social Delivery of Assets across Balipara County:

Sustainable Water Access solutions to the households in Balipara County

Education:

Naturenomics™ School to collaborate with Earth University, Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm in Doon Valley for Curriculum Development and Exchange Education programmes

Indigenous Knowledge:

Focusing on the role of indigenous knowledge in maintaining the sustainability of a community

Market Linkages:

Developing local and international market linkages to create social entrepreneurs across Balipara County through Elephant Country products

Mapping Best Practices:

Implementing social resource mapping for better insight into the social interactions with the location and distribution of natural resources

GLIMPSES

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN
NATURENOMICS™ FORUM 2017

&

RURAL FUTURES: SOCIAL -ENVIRONMENTAL –
ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCERanjit Barthakur
Balipara Foundation, India

Balipara Foundation's Founder and President, Ranjit Barthakur addressed that the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum is a space to discuss both failures and successes of the development sector across disciplines and issues.

Some of the successes and failures that were mentioned since the Forum held in 2017 were as follows:

- Engagement of people more than before with the hands-on work done
- Balipara Foundation has been able to bring about a handful of rural linkages and to further strengthen rural engagement
- The need for applicability of concepts in the field along with more connectivity and networking moving more towards modern ways of communicating ideas and ways of implementing the ideas
- We need to be able to bridge gaps under various trajectories: man-conflict along with the ability to mobilize people, the urban-rural divide, the Asian Elephant Secretariat, the disconnect between banking institutions/corruption inside funding agencies etc.

Barthakur concluded passionately by stating the following ***"We learn from what is impossible and what is possible. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to convince people to get back and work harder to achieve our goals and dreams".***

WELCOME ADDRESS ORGANIC RURAL FUTURES: COMMUNITIES, CONSERVATION & LIVELIHOODS



Vandana Shiva
Indian Scholar & Inspirational Leader,
Navdanya, India

Vandana Shiva has been a figure of great inspiration. At the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, she addressed the august audience by introducing the idea of forest conservation from the perspective of the Chipko Movement. The connection between conserving nature and the context of the Forum, which is Rural Futures, has had a strong base for years on end. The Chipko Movement demonstrated great power that lay in the hands of the community, especially the women who were defending their livelihoods generated from the forests. According to Dr. Shiva, it was one of the most amazing organization which entailed the practices of Mahatma Gandhi – they practiced satyagraha and the strength that was displayed, of facing the truth along with protests towards unjust systems and the violence against the Earth.

As one of her anecdotes and experiential yarns, Dr. Shiva shared the notion of –

- Engaging children who could possibly be a part of the incubation to save our environment and the Earth – she mentioned how children of today's generation think of our existence moving towards the "dinosaur way"

On a concluding note, Dr. Shiva has proposed a collaboration with Balipara Foundation in the next year where the vision would be to link Mahatma Gandhi's ideologies to conservation and rural empowerment leading to the following:

COLLECTIVE
CONSERVATION

DEMOCRACY AND
ECONOMY

CIRCULAR
ECONOMY OR
VASUDEVA
KUTUMB

RELEVANCE OF ALICE IN HIMALAYAN WONDERLAND



Mark Davies
Oxford, UK

Starting off with a mark true to a historian, Davies starts his speech quoting Sir Carol's greatest novel, written way back in 1882, Alice in Wonderland. Davies related the scenario of the state of Assam, bringing the pun in the title, referring to the Undulating and Hilly terrain of Assam - Alice in the Undulating Land or The Natural (Unnatural) History of Wonderland. He set out to explain the various facts about the original stories, bringing into light various facts and unknown stories about the land. Starting off with the Iconic Rabbit of the story, an animal still found on the banks of the river Thames, this character is responsible for the iconic term "Down the Rabbit hole".

Some of the facts from Davies are highlighted below-

- His ancestor Thomas Wood was the first man to have made the map of Assam way back 1793, the city of Guwahati precisely speaking
- Spelled as GWAHATTY in the original copy of the map exists in the British museum of History, while a printed copy is displayed here in India
- The story also unfortunately takes a grim turn as his Great Grandfather wasn't able to complete his journey due to undulating and difficult terrain through which rowing was next to impossible, hence the dream to tracking down the mighty Brahmaputra remained a dream

Following these footsteps, Mr. Davies now plans to recreate or rather relive this whole river journey in the coming days.

RURAL FUTURES: COMMUNITIES SPEAK



Objective:

To engage local community members in a dialogue to figure out the best ways to identify problems & find customized solutions

Panel Speakers

Chair: Gautam Baruah, Balipara Foundation, India

- Tambor Lyngdoh, Meghalaya
- Akeina Gonmei, New Jaloukie village, India
- Khem Chetri, Wild Mahseer, India
- Biswanath Sinha, Tata Trusts, India
- Komission Mili, Baligaon Green Village, India
- Binod Dulu Borah, Green Guard Nature Organization, India

The session was chaired by Gautam Baruah, Balipara Foundation and it consisted of discussions which transpired across representations from various communities. The panel began with the role of community engagement which is of utmost requirement for any rural area to develop. The representatives have had vast experiences for over 20 years in the field and continue to do the same for the furtherance of their communities.

Highlights of the panel:

- Spreading the importance of nature and teaching humans the value of sustenance
- Conservation of species in the ecosystem through indigenous people of the communities
- Importance and role of forests located in various parts of the North-East India such as the Mawphlang Sacred Grove (along with its sanctity)
- The importance of the role of leaders from communities to play dual roles of conserving rural ecosystems integrated with the task of balancing incorporating economy
- Encouraging community members to avoid cutting trees, training indigenous people and educating them about mindful tourism in congruence to tradition
- The difficulties of the communities in terms of livelihood generation, market linkage, gender-based occupation in rural areas
- The need for communities to be sensitized and aware of their surrounding and the benefits that they can acquire through traditional knowledge – leaving aside superstitious beliefs

RURAL FUTURES: NATURE TOURISM AS CONSERVATION



Objective:

Understanding how tourism can be used to fuel conservation efforts and leveraging our rich natural heritage to generate alternate sources of revenue

Panel Speakers

Chair: Prabir Banerjee, Balipara Foundation, India

- Bittu Sahgal, Sanctuary Asia, India
- Shankar Venkateswaran, India
- Kartik Shukul, India
- Tsering Wange, Himalayan Holidays, India

The chair of the Nature Tourism Panel was Prabir Banerjee, Balipara Foundation. At the very onset of the panel discussion, Mr. Banerjee began by stating that “Ecotourism and sustainability are two of the most abused words that I can ever imagine.” Subsequently, Bittu Sahgal added to the former’s statement by narrating about life 5 years ago when he visited places like Ranthambore, Tadoba and how he wouldn’t see anything and would engage in a cheerful celebratory drink if he did see one tiger. To him, at that time, there were serious human rights violation without any concept of doing it the right way. Highlights of the panel:

- Injustices of yester years have to be addressed to fulfill the demands of the present times
- Eco-tourism must not only benefit the community but enhance the biodiversity as well
- Facilitators and implementor must fight ‘tourism trade’ most of the time
- The State should also play a role in promoting the concept of homestays
- In most of the North-Eastern states, the locals have ownership over their land leading to negotiations and mutual understands (that must be done at the village level)
- On the other hand, tourists are watchdogs in national parks, accounting for presence and absences of animals in parks
- Businesses define sustainability as potential future growth, growth forever, therefore it is necessary to define sustainability precisely

CHANGING PATTERNS OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN INDIA



Vishal Massey
Club of Rome, India

Vishal Massey addressed the issues of and challenges of the changing patterns of livelihoods in Rural India. According to Mr. Massey

- The Indian economy should be sustainable, and the perspective of rural livelihoods should change as time progresses
- A worldwide phenomenon of generating income in a sustainable manner, which was developed in America and other European countries having single contribution in GDP
- There is a need for diversification of the household income and the people in rural India now have a variety of options/ opportunities or other sources of income besides agriculture – to help upgrade their means of earning a sustainable source of livelihood
- Mr. Massey has expressed their passion and goal, which has turned into their main aim: focusing on India as a solar energy capital
- Solutions such as focusing on underdeveloped areas, investments in resource regeneration, extensive research or work on soil and environment, cleaner energy in the manufacturing of materials

GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES ON MANGROVE ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION & LIVELIHOOD



Md. Maksudur Rahman
Bangladesh Environment and Development Society, Bangladesh

Md. Rahman began his talk with an introductory note on the beautiful Sundarbans. It is a UNESCO and RAMSAR Heritage Site with around 3.5 million people completely depending on the forest for their existence. Md. Rahman elaborated on the following:

- Intrinsic role of the forests in protecting the people of the communities from any form of natural calamities
- There seems to be no awareness in terms of conserving these forests and a lack of empathy towards the Earth
- The prevailing issues in the region are poverty, cyclones, rising sea level, water salinity, water shortage (for drinking), lack of electricity and river bank erosion

THE FUTURE OF SHIFTING CULTIVATION



Dietrich Schmidt – Vogt
University of Freiburg, Germany

The question that was placed before the participants and speakers at the Forum by Dietrich Schmidt - Vogt was regarding the relevance of shifting cultivation in the context of building Rural Futures.

- A definition of 'Swidden Cultivation' or shifting cultivation by Mr. Dietrich – it is an agricultural system in which land under natural vegetation is cleared, burnt and cultivated
- Extensive research on shifting cultivation for a long span of time
- He noticed that the women who were engaged in this agricultural practice cut trees of a certain diameter. Subsequently, he also realized that these trees being cut had certain characteristics: they were not very tall, easy to cut down and of a diameter

Keeping an open mind during his field visits, Mr. Dietrich realized that agroforestry is a viable alternative to shifting cultivation. However, to utilize the resources available within a landscape it would be important to map any form of alternate resources as well

RURAL FUTURES: UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME



Anindita Roy Saha
Indraprastha College for Women, India

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME – A CONDITION FOR HUMAN FREEDOM?

Anindita Roy Saha, with a background in Economics put forth a question to the participants at the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum incorporating the idea of development as a form of freedom. The idea of Universal Basic Income is to provide a guaranteed income to the people of a country and this income is to be provided by the State. The arguments that have been put forth for Basic Income are as follows:

- To rectify the point of 'inequality'
- Ownership of the Earth
- Benefits to economically and socially disadvantaged
- Avoid indignity by clarifying if UBI is going to be a subsidy or an allowance
- Lesser burden to pay all, than to accept the social evils of poverty

RURAL FUTURES: HUMAN-CENTRED GEOLOGY



Sunayana Sarkar
NMIMS University, India

Sunayana Sarkar representing NMIMS University put forth the idea of Rural Futures through the lens of "Human Centred Geology". Some of the issues that could be looked into in the Eastern Himalayas are: neo tectonics and the kinematics in the Shillong Plateau, apply the Plate Tectonic Theory in the Eastern Himalayas. According to Sarkar, there has to be a comparative study done based on the tectonic movements in the Eastern Himalayas:

- Convergent movements – where two plates are pushing away from each other
- Transform – where two plates slide past each other

PECULARITIES IN THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS

GEOGRAPHICALLY
INTRICATE, IMBRICATE
AND INACCESSIBLE

LARGEST OIL FIELDS
IN AN UNUSUAL
SEISMICALLY ACTIVE ZONE

7TH LARGEST
SEDIMENT INFLUX

PRESENCE OF RIVER
ISLANDS OVER 25 YEARS

ANALYSIS OF WILDLIFE NEWS COVERAGE IN AN ENGLISH DAILY OF ASSAM



Rakhee Sharma
Cotton University, India

Newspapers have had an important role in the lives of people ever since its inception. Rakhee Sharma an enthusiastic young woman took up a topic that not many people showed interest to research on: Analysis of wildlife news coverage in an English Daily of Assam. Over 5 years of sample collection and calculation on the giant media outlet 'The Assam Tribune' she was surprised to the core.

- The maximum number of Wildlife news that was reported was in 2013 and the numbers have been declining ever since, the last news reports were made in 2017
- This is proof how news outlets only focused on mainstream topics and targets masses to grow their empire
- Conflict of interest among the audience is also an issue, leading to the 'dominance of mainstream media'

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AT THE JAPANESE ZOOS



Misako Namiki
Tokyo University, Japan

Biodiversity conservation requires conservative psychology to be a part of the education system. This incorporation of conservation in the education systems all over the world shall help in bringing about change in the human lifestyle.

- Japan has extensive wildlife inclusive of polar bears and koalas
- The spaces that have been created for them are very naturalistic along with a healthy nutrition and proper company to provide a sense of belonging
- The zoos in Japan use program tools which entail observation worksheets. This observation inevitably helps to understand animals in their own habitat, without being disturbed

There are discussions held on various perspectives of wildlife behaviour, thus leading to an understanding of the need to conserve nature. The ultimate goal should be to use the study of psychology to conserve and change the world.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEPENDENCIES OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON RESOURCES OF DEEPOR BEEL



Jitul Kalita
Cotton University, India

Mr. Kalita started his speech with a situation which left the hall confused. What if all the people present lose their jobs, all of a sudden? What if the government bans the only thing, they are skilled at doing?

- Villages around the Beel, which depend on fishing for their livelihoods, find themselves in the exact same situation when the Government of Assam banned fishing from the Deepor Beel in 2009
- A village comprising of 975 families near Azara was chosen with the objectives of evaluating the depth between the Beel and the locals and to reduce the gap between the Beel authority and the locals
- The study concludes that 73.33% families take fish from the Beel, 66.67% families have fishing as their primary occupation and 93.93% of the people agree to the decrease of fish due to the degrading quality of the lake water. Mainly, 90.9% of them feel the need for conservation!

ESSENCE OF NATURE



Kalpesh Popat
Saras Ennovations, India

Mr. Popat, emphasized on the following:

- 'Relationships of humans with nature should be more desirable and are more profitable than Theoretical science with nature'. The Definition of relation, when one looks it up in a dictionary, is something only good for law firms and administrative systems
- Relations are defined as somethings, which are blood related, or maybe having contractual friends
- A Relation is an activity that one does engages in and feels deeply about
- We need to change the outlook of life, from a complex relation with nature, to a simpler one

RURAL FUTURES: THE MEANING OF EDUCATION



Kelli Rogers began the session on the context of communication, peer to peer education, need for children to experience workshops and learn from them based on elephant conservation as well. She emphasized the need for an educational environment which would include a lens which would allow children to envision our ecosystem in a positive manner.

According to Anish Andheria, the focus needs to be on "conservation education" in the rural sector. The phenomenon of this type of education requires proper market survey along with efficient implementation. The children in a way are also made to feel important as they are given a platform to express themselves in whatever way possible – that their perspective matter in bringing about better change.

In the panel Lt. Gen. Arun Kumar Shani shared his experience and expertise of being in the army. It helped him to see a lot of what happened in India. According to him, art being a medium of education could help in heaps when it comes to conservation. He went on to talk about Gardner's 7 distinct ways of connecting with students as they possess a different type of mindset. In the current types, education must have a culture to look through ideas.

Objective:

To Explore best ways to make conservation education through art widespread across schools

Panel Speakers

Chair: Kelli Rogers, Devex, Thailand

- Lt Gen Arun Kumar Sahni
- Anish Andheria, Wildlife Conservation Trust, India
- Lt Gen Arun Kumar Sahni

RURAL FUTURES: ASIAN ELEPHANTS & COMMUNITIES



Objective:

To Explore ideas and solutions to preserve and conserve the Asian Elephants and integrate community development

Panel Speakers

Chair: K.K. Sarma, Assam Agricultural University, India

- Jayanta Kr. Das, Assam
- Lisa Mills, University of Montana, USA
- Ranjan Barthakur, Green Guard Nature Organisation, India

K. K. Sarma or the Elephant Man of the country set the tone for the panel by stating the rationale for conserving elephants in the perspective of communities and that is, elephants are thought to be “destructive” by nature. But at the same time, elephants have all the answers for us, vis a vis the recent discovery of a leukemia eliminating factor in elephant genes. Therefore, the question that was put forth by Dr. Sarma to the panel was regarding the co-existence and elimination of man-elephant conflict.

Lisa Mills stated a few probable solutions based on her experiences: organize people or create a voluntary support committee where the conflict was occurring to supply relief and support the Forest Department where necessary, education and awareness efforts with the youth and training women to create plant nurseries with native trees, which serves as an alternate livelihood opportunity and also as a means to reforestation of elephant habitats. According to her, the key challenge would be to keep the initiatives going once the funding is over. Following Ms. Mills, other members of the panel such as Jayanta Kumar Das and Ranjan Barthakur added very important elements on the context of elephants. They have stated the following points:

- Elephants are migratory creatures and it is impossible to stop human-elephant conflict as things stand, because of the proximity of habitats
- Education and awareness can mitigate the worst violence of human-elephant conflicts particularly through helping communities understand the importance of not trespassing on elephant habitat land and in finding ways to make their lives less vulnerable
- Human-elephant conflict is the result of a conflict of interests brought about by the resource crunch in habitat areas

RURAL FUTURES: WATER & SANITATION

The session began with Founder and President of Balipara Foundation addressing the need for the civil society to pay more attention to the problem of aquifers. Water issues and sanitation are an important aspect in building Rural Futures. Women in rural areas in today's day and age walk more than 7 kms one way to collect water for household usages. Besides that, there are other issues that were already mentioned by Komisson Mili about the usage of river water or ground water which is highly contaminated leading to water borne diseases.

Rituraj Phukan, Md. Maksudur Rahman and Lt. Gen. Arun Kumar Sahni addressed some very pertinently common yet important issues at the panel such as those of the following:

- We should be in a condition to give immediate help to areas that may be going through a drought like condition in India
- We should be learning from natural disasters such as those of the Kerala Floods and have disaster management sessions so as to provide help
- Are all states in India aware of the high-water stress situation leading to Shimla stopping its highest earning potential – tourism

If we do not take action from now, the panel at the forum gave a red signal, alarming the audience and participants along with community people to take the matter in their hands. There might even come a time when there might be water wars at the Ganga – Brahmaputra valley.

Objective:

To focus on traditional models of accessing water in the Eastern Himalayas and leveraging this knowledge to develop efficient systems

Panel Speakers

Chair: Rituraj Phukan, Walk for Water, India

- Ranjit Barthakur, India
- Md. Maksudur Rahman, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society, Bangladesh
- Lt Gen Arun Kumar Sahni



RURAL FUTURES: LAW & CONSERVATION



Objective:

To explore reforms required in governance & policy that will have lasting impact on making conservation more participatory

Panel Speakers

Chair: Anindita Phukan, Altum Law, India

- Rohit Choudhury, India
- Prasant Choudhury, India
- Surendra Kumar, India
- Kartik Shukul, India

According to Kartik Shukul, there is an incoherencies in the Wildlife Protection Act, which prevents both police and forest officers from being able to successfully press charges against poachers because of contradictory mapping of their responsibilities, despite the relaxed evidence norms and stringent conviction and sentencing procedures. There is a need to empower field staff in their investigation efforts and to train them in the charge sheet filing process. A potential solution is the establishment of a special cell for wildlife protection which includes police, forest officers, indigenous & local communities who can work together to stop poachers.

Surendra Kumar on the other hand stated that there needs to be a focus on securing fast convictions. Fast convictions can serve as strong deterrents to future poaching activities. He went on to propose a different type of a solution where the forest officers could investigate wildlife and the police officers could work in liaison with them. He went on to state that there must be a time limit to the investigations.

Rohit Choudhury and Prashant Choudhury spoke about the role of border forces, introduction of reforms like those in Kaziranga, sensitization of the issues to be brought into attention by the state and so on. Towards the end of the panel discussion, Anindita Phukan concluding in these lines: “When implementation of laws are bad, corruption enters the system and implementation is often poor because of political reasons. The only way to make sure this work is to make everyone believe in something; to give them a stake in this particular subject. It is crucial to find ways of valuing wildlife that goes beyond the issue of mere money because once you ascribe money values to wildlife, you step on to a slippery downward slope.”

RURAL FUTURES: A ROADMAP TOWARDS LIVELIHOODS THROUGH NATURE CAPITAL



Saurav Malhotra
Balipara Foundation, India

Mr. Malhotra started his part with a short documentary on the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, a garden established in 2016. He talks about its plan of 6 years to plant a million trees in the Arunachal - Assam border. What people can do to help these organizations is to focus on converting natural capital into money. Their focus should be Universal Basic Income and Universal Basic Assets. According to Mr. Malhotra, the roadmap to Rural Futures entail the following:

- Nature capital as a means to achieving universal basic income
- A retrospective of the Udalguri Landscape Mission & Rural Futures as an experiment in social sciences towards building habitats for co-existence between species and humans
- The question is one of converting nature capital to money for facilitating social delivery
- Nature capital and forest capital to develop universal basic assets and use these to deliver various holistic development indicators (health; WASH; etc.)

WESTERN CENTRIC APPROACH & LOCAL/ CULTURAL NATURE



Rolf Von Bueren
Lotus Arts de Vivre, Thailand

Rolf Von Bueren is a person of inspiration with keen interest in Politics, Social Changes and History. For years western hegemony has prevailed, taking on the world. But Mr. Bueren thinks times are changing and soon the power will shift on Eastern side as countries like India and China are flourishing in various spectrums of globalization. An important question is how these upcoming governments will utilize their resources and natural capital to their benefit and also keep conservation in mind. Benefit of the locals should be the main agenda and to save the dying culture of self-sufficiency.

A very important question is how capital and the shift in capital from hands of the giants will have an impact on who will be shaped as the new superpower. Mr. Bueren believes the local culture in India is becoming extinct and if they are not preserved one day, they will become history. The politicians and bureaucracies are only reacting to people but not acting without invitation and that is one of the root causes why countries take time to develop.

Rolf Von Bueren also said, “many years ago I met a Chinese violinist who told me that some decades later all great violinists are going to be of Asian origin and I thought what nonsense!”. That is the truth of the world today. But what does the future hold for us?

RURAL FUTURES: NATURE CAPITAL



Anirban Ghosh Mahindra Group, India

Mr. Anirban Ghosh began his talk on Nature Capital by trying to make the august audience understand the trade-off between sustainability, population and development. So the point that was raised by him was regarding this “questionable” trade-off or can we possibly look into other ways of leveraging sustainability.

Bringing in the context of implementation, Mr. Ghosh clearly stated that the Forum was engulfed with individuals who were very engaged in the field and have brought about possible results in the communities and their respective areas of work. Therefore, instead of trying to what may be important – he wanted to know what could be done soon.

He raised questions like “How long will these hills in Guwahati be there with an ever-increasing population?” But in a Forum addressing Rural Futures, Mr. Ghosh was talking about Guwahati, which is clearly an urban set up because, the 70% of India which is living in the rural areas are gradually migrating to urban areas for better opportunities. So, another questionable matter at hand that was put forth by Mr. Ghosh was “whether we are moving towards a dystopian reality?”

Subsequently, the need to conserve our natural resources largely revolves around the need to respect our forests instead of turning them into commercial money-making sanctuaries.

Therefore, we must be a level of awareness on the consequences that has to be followed up with conservation practices as a part of our everyday life. Mahindra Group has therefore, taken up the initiative to plant trees which is the only way to absorb all the carbon dioxide in the air. They have planted about 2 million trees and plan to plant another 15 million trees in the next few years. He ended his talk by stating how natural resources are free for use but only when we feel that these resources are becoming less and less as the days go by, that we start to live within our means.

UNDERSTANDING & ADOPTING PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES: RURAL WORKSHOP



Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices, India

The workshop by Praxis Institute of Participatory Practices began with a film made in the 1990's. The concept of the workshop revolved around the idea of participation and rapport building in terms of rural development. Very often barriers are created between people working for the same cause but under a “structure”. As mentioned in the workshop, it is always very easy to externalize these barriers and not address them. But on the contrary, somewhere down the line as members of the civil society and those who want to make a change, must trigger a bit of thinking which would eventually lead to a more transparent and accountable way of working on the change that we keep addressing.

So the question that was raised with regard to participatory methods were about the “WALLS” – which may be created by us or created in the process of it all. In short: How do communities get affected by the ways in which we work as an organization or an individual?

Some of the answers acquired are as follows:

- Learning in the process of interacting with communities starts at a later stage which is not right.
- We need to talk about our failures than our achievements

Furthering the workshop, it was brought to our attention that there are different ways of working that we are accustomed to and thus, these systems need change in the most positive manner. The change will allow to break the barriers. Can there be ways of breaking barriers so as to design, measure and create projects? How willing are we to make transitions? These are some of the points given for PRA tools and methods:

- Mapping for better policy changes and data collection of the reality
- Time based and year-based mapping of resources
- Relational or problem trees for groups to come up with their solutions and causal factors (for clear vision and complexities)
- Local material usage: to let communities know that they may have more knowledge about their space – so involve different types of groups to engage

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE PLANNING FOR RURAL FUTURES



Chitrnanjan Kaushik

Ecofirst Services Limited, India

Pragyan Kalita

Ecofirst Services Limited, India

According to Mr. Chitrnanjan and Mr. Kalita it is important to take livelihoods to villages. By shaping architecture and villages spaces we can create model villages. For this to happen, it's crucial to create certain benchmarks to create a method of standardization for a model village.

The core issues at present is equipping villages for handling economic, social and climate resilience issues. These ideal villages are not a pipe-dream, but already exist e.g. Malgudi in 1943.

An example model was demonstrated with features such as ecological barriers to keep elephants out of villages, a single branch road with various amenities along it and a community fishery.

Every village must have elements which provide for food security, water and energy access, education and healthcare, carbon footprint minimization and zero waste. This can be achieved through collaborative and consultative processes with unique models and elements for different villages and differently prioritized implementation processes tailored to the most pressing needs of an area. It requires a three-pronged intervention strategy – Design/Socio-economic and Technological Interventions

- Design Strategy: includes the process of village planning. Through this process various individual village concerns and their distinct qualities will be unearthed and centred through the design process
- Also includes climate responsive architecture and conservation practices, mixed with zoning regulations that guide the organic growth of a village
- Designs must mitigate disaster

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN CONSERVATION

Maria's Public School, Guwahati, India: Nellie Ahmed Tanveer, Biswajit De, Upasna Patgiri



The talk included a brief history of conservation efforts by Marias Public School, beginning with nature-centric education in its early days and transitioning to field-based activities such as GPS mapping and geotagging photos of species in the nearby reserve, knowledge-sharing and exchange with village schools and then later, across national and international borders.

Maria's Public School have their own Botanic Centre in North India, where they engage with schools from nearby locations, engaging in the idea of collaboration to bring about a change in the communities. They believe in the concept of "Learning outside the classroom", bringing about a holistic development within the students and teachers.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: CAN SMALL TEA FARMS OF UDALGURI ENVISAGE SMART RURAL FUTURES?



Jatin Bavishi

APPL Foundation, India

Mr. Bavishi began with the idea that just because something is small, it does not really mean that it isn't great or good. Keeping this context in the platform, the participants and speakers were made to feel that anything and everything that may be small in nature, growing in our environment may also have some value to it. By subtly bringing in the idea of tea and the tea industry, Jatin stated that in the current times the tea industry is going through a transitional phase.

But there are challenges faced by the farmers in Udalgori such as militancy, climate change, poor communities and so on. Udalgori faces various local and global challenges which are interlinked. Many rural features can be envisaged which will have major implications on the livelihoods, social relations and other factors like production and distribution.

RURAL FUTURES: TRANSFORMATION OF TEA



Panel Speakers

Chair: Mike Korchinsky, Wildlife Works, U.S.A

- Ketan Patel, Jalinga Tea Estate, India
- Conrad Dennis, APPL, India
- Disha Barooah, Serenytea, India
- Lisa Mills, University of Montana, USA

Ketan Patel began the session with the ideas of transforming tea in context of Jalinga Tea Estate with the help of a few pointers such as those of carbon credit, creating climate friendly tea, organic technology, having farmer zones and so on. Adding to Mr. Patel, Mr. Dennis thought it to be important that we start shifting away from traditional methods of producing tea so as to address various issues that exist in the current times.

Disha Barooah, who is setting a tone of her own in the tea industry of Assam, stated that the marketing of tea entails a story which helps the people to connect to it and thus leading to its growth. The tea business according to her should not be a business but a culture that could be understood. There is also a need for our consumers to be educated leading to a healthy market and also to increase the availability of tea in every outlet possible.

Lisa Mills concluded the session by adding her perspective on the need for appositive value chain for the tea industry to transform – this in a way will help change the outlook towards tea in general. Tea should not be a reason for man-animal conflict, keeping a balance in nature.

RURAL FUTURES: MOUNTAIN FUTURES & ETHNOBOTANY



Jianchu Xu
Kunming Institute of Botany, China

- In China, according to Professor Xu anyone who chooses to live in the mountains are either criminals and or those running away from war
- Mountains have a long history in terms of ecological processes along with high biological and cultural diversity
- Pillars of mountain Futures for our wealth, our health our beauty and congruence between our living things and the country: microbes, plants, fungi, invertebrates and vertebrates
- Professor Xu also highlighted the very challenges of creating a sustainable mountain future, such as climate change and poverty
- Innovative solutions will be the ultimate key to Mountain Futures
- Education for conservation is the best way to emphasize and sensitize the masses

THE GEF-SATOYAMA PROJECT: BRINGING LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES TO THE CENTRE OF CONSERVATION



Yoji Natori

Conservation International Japan, Japan

Mr. Yoji began his talk with the components of the project: Landscape knowledge generation, Capacity building, Outreach.

He went on to emphasize on the need for institutional engagement by allowing different partners from various countries to collaborate and contribute to help landscape and seascape patterns to come under one umbrella concept of conservation Mr. Yoji also helped the participants to understand better, the nature of the project which is to provide the Japanese landscape with socio-ecological production. Some of the aspects that are covered under the GEF-SATOYAMA project are as follows:

- Sustainable development
- Issues of SEPCS
- Uses of SEPCS
- Governance and policy making

CLEANOPOLIS



Cleanopolis is a concept that has its establishment in Balipara, Assam. It tries to turn biodegradable waste into energy or rather electricity.

The production of methane on the other hand is more and the plan by 2025 is to reduce hydrocarbons. The technology of mini biodigesters was introduced by Tezpur University, located in Tezpur.

The project is also a zero-waste enterprise and is designed in such a way that it will lead to the creation of clean energy.

“SUSTAINABILITY - THROUGH ENCOMPASSING ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY AND ECONOMY”

Balipara Foundation Awards 2018



12 
Categories

 **16**
Winners



The Annual Balipara Foundation Award

Md. Maksudur Rahman

The Annual Balipara Foundation Award has been accorded to Md. Maksudur Rahman for social impact in Bangladesh and preserving the bio-cultural heritage of the Sunderbans through his organization Bangladesh Environment and Development Society. The award was presented by Mike Korchinsky, Wildlife Works, USA



Naturenomics™ Award

Narmmohan Das

Naturenomics™ Awardee

Narmmohan Das has pushed the boundaries of sustainability by propagating the production of Ahimsa Silk and creating a circular economy within the silk industry. The award was presented by Haiya Zhang, World Agroforestry Centre, China



The Green Journalist Award was accorded to Honorary Wildlife Warden of Kaziranga, Uttam Saikia for educating the forest department through his knowledge and a deep-rooted empathy towards the World Heritage site. This Award was presented by Prof. Misako Namiki from Teikyo University, Japan



Food for the Future Award

Dimbeshwar Rabha

Dimbeshwar Rabha was accorded the Food for the Future Award for his innovative idea of growing black pepper as an alternative source of livelihood through Small Farm Integration for Sustainable Agriculture and approved access to market project. The Award was presented by Jackie Leitch, Wild Mahseer, India



Tambor Lyngdoh was accorded the Eastern Himalayan Conservation Award for his contribution towards socio-economic development of forest fringe communities of Mawphlang, Meghalaya. The award was presented by Sunayana Sarkar, an ethno-geologist from Assam, India



The Green Journalist Award

Uttam Saikia

Eastern Himalayan Conservation Award

Tambor Lyngdoh

Forest Rangers & Guards of the Eastern Himalayas Award

Dorji Wangchuk



Forest Rangers & Guards of the Eastern Himalayas awardee

Dorji Wangchuk from Bhutan has contributed to the social development of forest fringe communities around the Royal Manas National Park and helped Bhutan realize its goal to double the tiger population by 2020 by preserving the animal. The Award was presented by Aneeta Dutta, RGVN, India

Habitat Conservation Award

Tenzing Bodosa



Allowing a safe passage to gentle giants in one of the most affected human-elephant conflict zones, Udalguri, tea planter and **Habitat Conservation Awardee**.

Tenzing Bodosa has begun a silent revolution by producing Elephant Friendly tea. The Award was presented by Thu Zaw, Chief Executive, Sithar Coffee

Forest Rangers & Guards of the Eastern Himalayas Award

Alemba Yimchunger



Protecting the wildlife of Fakim Sanctuary, **Forest Rangers & Guards of the Eastern Himalayas Awardee** Alemba Yimchunger is an inspirational nature lover who goes beyond the call of duty to preserve nature. The Award was presented by Alistair Morris, University Parks Department, UK

Eastern Himalayan Global Environmental Ambassador

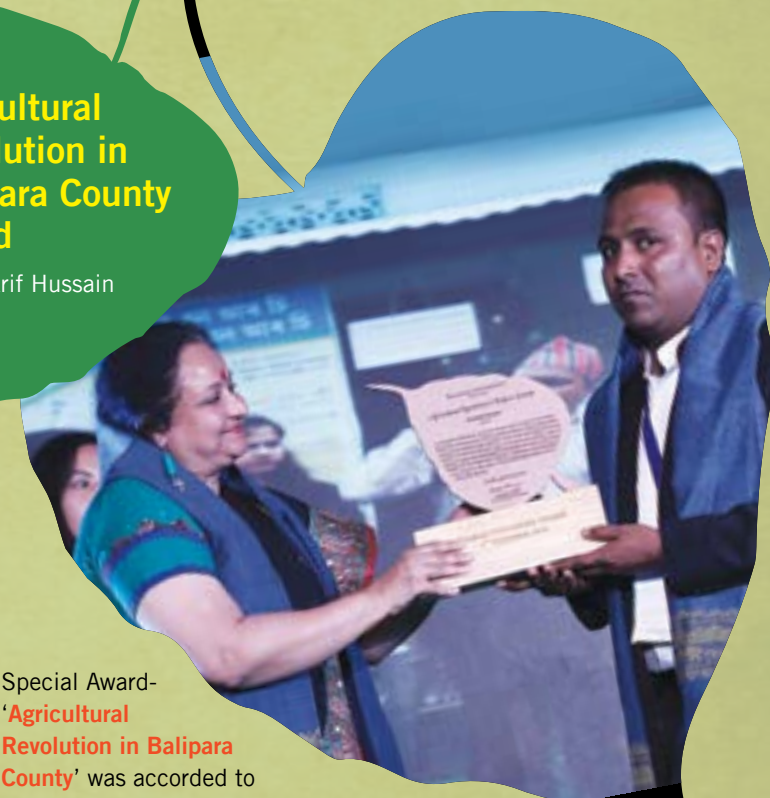
Dr. Anshu Jamsenpa



Mountaineer and Himalayan lover, Dr. Anshu Jamsenpa from Arunachal Pradesh, Special Awardee **Eastern Himalayan Global Environmental Ambassador**, is the only woman in the world to ascend Mt. Everest twice in 5 days. The Award was presented by Assam's Elephant Man, Dr. K.K. Sarma, India

Agricultural Revolution in Balipara County Award

Mehdi Arif Hussain



Special Award- 'Agricultural Revolution in Balipara County' was accorded to Mehdi Arif Hussain from Assam. The Award was presented by Prof. Kalpana Sarathy, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

High Altitude Training Centre, Mizoram was accorded the 'Special Awardee **Eastern Himalayan Sports Development Award**', which provides grassroots training to the youth of Mizoram and ample green space. The award was presented by film producer, Roopa Barua, Assam, India

Cross-Country Preservation of the Eastern Himalayan Award

Purshoram Choudary, Shankar Choudary, Raj Kumar Choudary, Lokhan Choudary

Eastern Himalayan Sports Development Award

High Altitude Training Centre

Purshoram Choudary, Shankar Choudary, Raj Kumar Choudary, Lokhan Choudary, the three generation boatmen, are the **Cross-Country Preservation of the Eastern Himalayan Awardess**. The Award was presented by Dr. Dietrich Schmidt Vogt, Germany, Richard Leitch, Indonesia, Dr. Parmanandu Rajbongshi, Assam and Ranjit Barthakur, Assam

Lifetime Service Award

Usha Lachungpa

The first Indian lady to do a Wildlife and Research Management course, **Lifetime Service Awardee**, Usha Lachungpa is a Green Crusader carrying forward the bio-cultural heritage of the Eastern Himalayas through knowledge and awareness. The award was presented by Diana Owen, Royal Over-Seas League, UK

6th Rabindranath Barthakur Memorial Lecture By Dr. Kamaljit Singh Bawa, ATREE, India



Biodiversity and Our Future

Dr. Kamaljit Singh Bawa delivered the 6th Rabindranath Barthakur Memorial Lecture, 2018. In honour of Shri Rabindranath Barthakur and his principles which inspired the people and also laid the stone foundation of Balipara Foundation, Dr. Bawa addressed the audience about the importance of our biodiversity and our future, the natural parameters, and the importance of the theme of collaboration of co-design, of co-implementation and co-determination of outcome which is emerging as a major theme in sustainability science



Few Words From Some Of Our Partners



“ The Forum this year saw a good mix of practicing conservationists, academicians, community leaders and youngsters- it was a good amalgamation of different streams and walks of life

”

TATA GLOBAL BEVERAGES

“ TGBL supports in providing WASH facilities and behavioural change in tea communities of Assam. EHNH stands as a platform to spread the word about the challenges faced by the tea communities and building solutions for them

”



“ The Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum is an opportunity to discuss many issues on conservation, climate change and on bringing people and communities of the region since many years. We are proud to say that WWF India has been a partner since its inception

”

“ It was a great learning experience and a good platform for networking with so many eminent personalities. Despite all the complexities and intricacies, the event went extra mile and it was a grand success

”



“ It's the only Forum that brings people together from diverse disciplines with different approaches and perspectives. The importance of the Forum holds in exchange of ideas and information, possibility of networking and possibility of more collaboration and the only way to address problems is by working together

”

Bioresources And Sustainable Livelihoods In North East India



The Partner Institutions

1. ATREE, Bangalore
2. NEHU, Shillong
3. National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow
4. Tripura University
5. Mizoram University
6. Agharkar Research Institute, Pune
7. Institute of Bioresources and Sustainability Development, Imphal
8. Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh
9. Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar
10. NERIST, Arunachal Pradesh
11. Nagaland University, Lumami



The program Bioresources and Sustainable Livelihoods in North East India is coordinated by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD) under the sponsorship of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in partnership with a range of institutions in the northeast.

The broad goal of this proposal is to develop a program that will strengthen taxonomy in India generally and specifically in the biodiversity rich northeast India, primarily by initiating a project on exploration and monitoring of biodiversity in the northeast that will involve multiple institutions. A subsidiary goal is to examine how the tremendous biological resources of the region can be used for sustainable development in the region based on the emerging principles of bioeconomy and biomimicry and the application of natural infrastructure to meet sustainable development goals.

Balipara Foundation is involved in the project component 1 - Inventories and Mapping of Bioresources in Northeast India of Sub project 2 entitled “Quantitative assessment and mapping of plant diversity and biological resources in Upper and Lower Assam.”

Key Highlights:

- Attended training programme for sampling methods and techniques at IBSD, Manipur along with 72 other participants from 11 other partner institutions
- Field work started for Bioresource survey in the Upper and Lower Assam
- Till date, 16 weekly markets and 500 households from 50 villages had been covered and approximate 100 bioresources had been spotted
- Attending workshop at IIE, Guwahati organized by ATREE on “Angiosperm Taxonomy, Bioresource conservation and its utilization” from 3rd to 7th December, 2018

Impacts:

- Quantitative and spatial data on richness, distribution, population status and diversity of flowering plant resources from the region.
- Checklists, monographs species pages of flowering plants from the region

Plans:

- Undertake a systematic, quantitative inventory of the distribution and diversity of flowering plants and biological resources in Upper and Lower Assam region of the Northeast using grid-based sampling approach.
- Identify biological resources used by local communities, including wild relatives crop plants in Upper and Lower Assam region.

India-China Climate Change Centre

Measurement, Monitoring & Implementation of Adaptive Methodologies towards Climate Change Resiliency in the Eastern Himalayas



With exceptional economic growth, China and India have become global economic powerhouses, but both are facing tremendous environmental challenges including climate change. The shared Himalayan-Tibetan Plateau has been warming at greater than global average rates and projections indicate continuing increases in temperatures by 2-4°C into the 2050s and beyond. Rising temperatures and associated changes in precipitation and evaporation are predicted to lead to reductions in soil moisture, river flow, glacial mass, and groundwater levels as well as shifts in ecological regimes. These changes will likely lead to impacts on local people who depend on natural resources and often have a low capacity to deal with climate change. Climate is not the sole driver of change. Socio-economic pressures on natural resources are also increasing. Drivers include regional population growth, ongoing needs for human development, growing food insecurity, strong rural-urban migration. Many resulting burdens are falling on the

rural/mountain as well as urban people (more than 100 recognised nationalities) and multiple livelihoods (from tea gardens to nomadic herding). The 45th President of the United States thought of the Paris Agreement as a 'bad deal' for the United States and therefore chose to not remain in a partnership that is trying to combat and build resilience against the greatest threat to the future of mankind. Although China has the second-largest GDP and India has the fifth GDP in the world, its per capita GDP is still much lower than global average; there is much room for further increase in GDP and consequent GHG emission. Due to their size (economic, population, territorial), China and India together have great challenges and opportunities in climate change - both adaptation and mitigation. Therefore, in the process, the United Nations has commended India, China and other major economies for ratifying the Paris agreement. Joint efforts from China and India can offer a systems approach to addressing



climate change and environmental sustainability worldwide.

The joint Centre (ICCC) will be located at the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Kunming, China; and TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India & the Balipara Foundation, Balipara, India. The locational appropriateness is because of the backdrop of the Himalayas and the largest freshwater reserve of the world serving over 3 billion people and currently under intense climate change-related stresses. The joint Centre aims to lead the world on climate change mitigation and adaptation via the implementation of projects designed to enhance biodiversity propagation & preservation models across the Eastern Himalayas; Facilitate the switch to Renewable forms of Energy in housing, industry & transport; Propagation of models for Climate-Smart Agriculture & Agroforestry; Green Business value chain support and delivery



BIODIVERSITY

Forest Restoration & Management

- Biodiversity Auditing & Classification
- Model Restoration Experiments & Optimal techniques for the Eastern Himalayas
- Human-Centric & Participatory Restoration activities
- Livelihoods through Natural Capital & Healthy Forests



AGRICULTURE

Climate-Smart & Adaptive agriculture

- Measurement of synergies & trade-offs for adaptation
- Restoration of degraded land & soil management
- High-yielding agroforestry
- Secure & Equitable rights and access
- Learning processes & Knowledge management



ENERGY & CITIES

Focus on Renewables

- Mapping & Visualisation
- Generator performance modelling
- Technical potential analysis
- Economic potential analysis
- Capacity extension studies
- Implementation of action plans



BUSINESS

Sustainable Products & Consultancy towards Resiliency

- Development of certification standards for green businesses
- Development of a Rural Mountain Futures product line
- Creation of a common online platform for marketing & selling
- Direct community impact & producer-centric storytelling

Stage 1 (in progress) (June 2018 - December 2018)	Signing of MoUs; Building Key Alliances; Government Endorsement; ICCCC Registration; Hiring & Management
Stage 2 (Preparatory Phase) (January 2019 - March 2019)	Preparatory workshop with all stakeholders (February 2019 in Delhi); Detailing of the work programme of the ICCCC & Roadmap
Stage 3 (April 2019 - March 2020)	Execution of the Work Programme; Timely reviews & Monitoring
Stage 4 (April 2020)	Assessment of Progress & Plans for Enhancement

Communications & Digital



Storytelling For Successful Community Conservation

Storytelling in conservation can help connect people and drive change. At Balipara Foundation, we believe in the power of storytelling to educate and create awareness on conservation issues and instill hope through bringing forward community efforts and stories of true natural leaders, who work tirelessly to protect the biodiverse haven of the Eastern Himalayas.

Conservation is about people as much as it is about natural resources. From the heart of Assam, its wildlife friendly tea gardens, abundant national parks, Himalayan streams and water bodies to a farmer who is revolutionizing traditional farming to protect endangered species or generate livelihood and communities that nurture, worship and live in harmony with nature, these stories convey inspiration, innovation and dynamism in the field of community conservation and further strengthen efforts for preserving our Nature Capital.

Communities are on the front line of conservation and need to be key partners in conservation. Through local stories, we are able to become more aware of indigenous worldviews to implement localized solutions for socio-economic-environmental development. At the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer, we continue to learn from the local communities, foster a deeper bond between nature and humans and guide our interactions with the natural world through curated experiences such as jungle bathing, tree hugging, community homestays, forest walks, river journeys and romancing with tea. Through Naturenomics™ school we draw on local community knowledge and technology to build experiential learning courses for future green leaders.

We are also building a rich database on digitizing information on the Orchids of the Eastern Himalayas with the App, which will serve as a reference for further studies and research for people across the globe. Our newsletters aid collation of information on initiatives, progress and impacts in the field and to stay in contact with our advisors and supporters. Through the multi-disciplinary platform of Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum and collaborations, we are reaching out to global audiences to educate, inform and influence behavior for ecosystem sustainability.

Some of our key milestones

Bio-cultural
experiences at the
Eastern Himalayan
Botanic Ark in
residence at Wild
Mahseer

Launch of the
Balipara Foundation
and the Eastern
Himalayan
Naturenomics™
Forum Newsletters
(Volumes 1-7)

Launch of app
“Orchids of the
Eastern Himalaya”

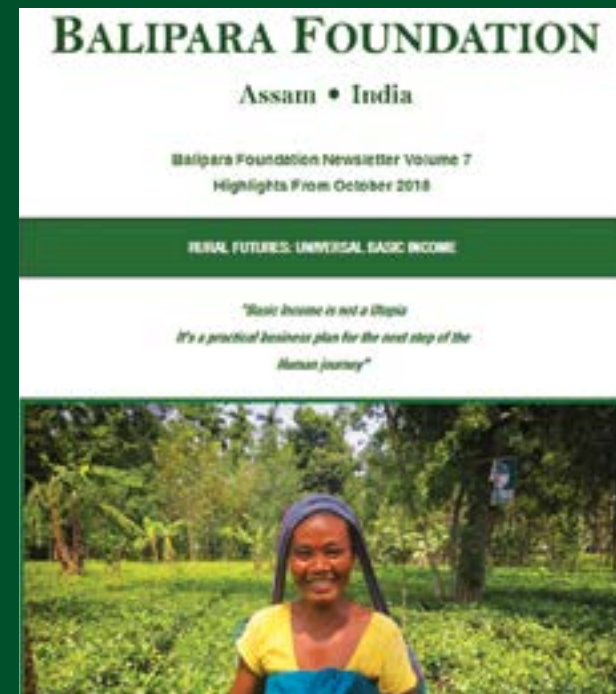
Storytelling
workshop with
Current Conservation
for Asian Elephant
Conservation

Partnership
with Devex
for stories on
Rural Futures

Live Coverage
of the Eastern
Himalayan
Naturenomics™
Forum

Launch of the
publications
“League of Earth
Heroes”, “The
Sanctuary Guide to
Nameri” and “The
Himalayan”

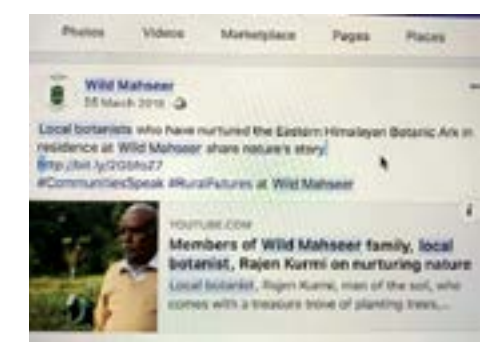
Newsletters



Bio-Cultural Experiences



Social Media



The Year In Numbers

Website



1) Balipara Foundation

Pageviews – 84,852 vs 66,662 in 2017
Users – 23,310 v/s 17,995 in 2017
Sessions- 30,647 v/s 25, 201

2) Wild Mahseer

Pageviews – 102,500 v/s 19,478 in 2017
Users – 35,719 v/s 7,376
Sessions – 45,988 v/s 8,691

3) Elephant Country

Pageviews – 72,281 v/s 12,405
Users – 21,303 v/s 4,950
Sessions – 24,029 v/s 6,335

- Cumulative across all platforms
Pageviews – 259,633,
Users- 80,332,
Sessions-100,664

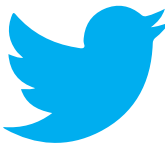
Social Media



1) Facebook

Balipara Foundation - 17K V/s 11K followers, Reach -889372, Engagement – 51,071
Wild Mahseer – 4K v/s 1000 followers V/s, Reach- 1123834, Engagement- 82,804
Elephant Country – 348 Followers, Reach- 3786, Engagement – 264

- Cumulative across all platforms - 21,348 Followers, Reach - 2,016,992 Engagement – 134,139



2) Twitter

Tweet Impressions – 62,192
Profile Visits – 3,719



4) Instagram

Balipara Foundation
Impressions - 45314
Reach – 33697
Engagement - 3598
Followers – 376 vs 245

Wild Mahseer

Impressions – 6067
Reach – 4042
Engagement – 546
Followers – 216 vs 108

- Cumulative across all platforms–
Impressions – 51,381, Reach –
37,739, Engagement – 4,144
- Newsletters
- Newsletters have an open rate
of 41% higher than the sector
average of 19% and 1100
subscribers across all platforms



3) YouTube

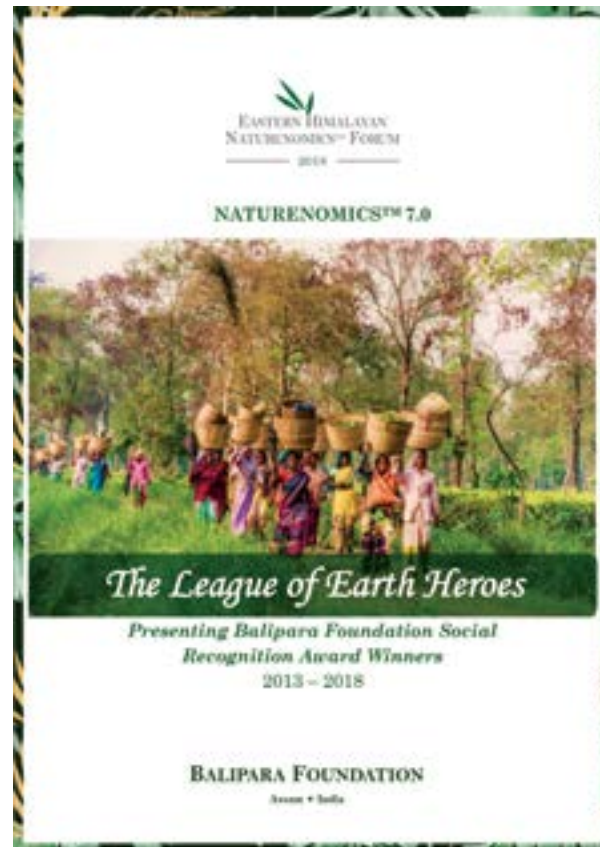
27, 029 Minutes watched
9,949 Views V/s 7,866 Views
No. of Videos – 120

Knowledge & Publications

The League Of Earth Heroes

Naturenomics™ 7.0 -The League of Earth Heroes by Balipara Foundation is a documentation of case studies of grassroots conservation heroes in the Eastern Himalayas. It talks about eco - crusaders from the Eastern Himalayas who are making measurable contribution to sustainability and the Rural Futures. It represents the ordinary people who have been making extraordinary achievements in the field of conservation since 2013. Through the Balipara Foundation Awards, we have recognised such earth heroes and we are proud to present them in the book "The League of Earth Heroes".

The book has been launched at the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum by Food Sovereignty Leader- Dr. Vandana Shiva and Philanthropist Dr. Diana Owen on 1st November 2018.

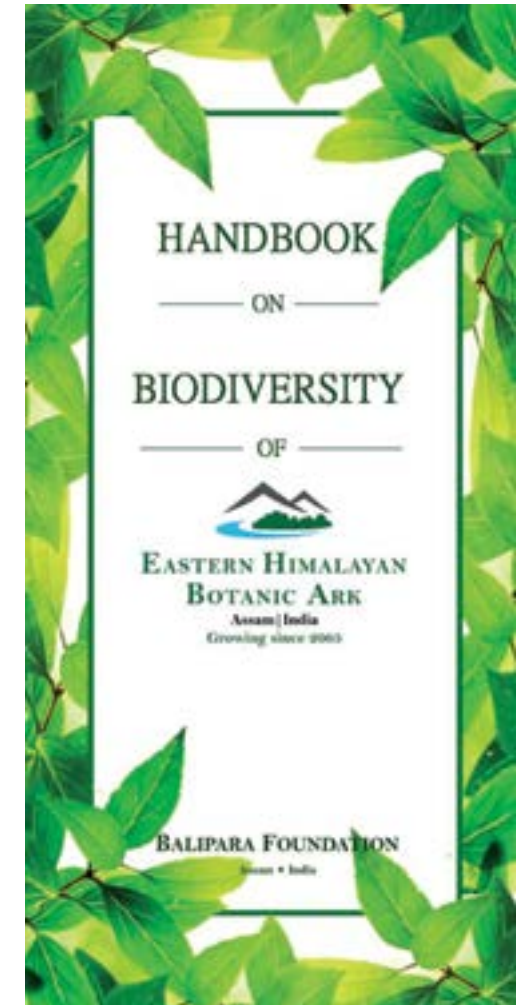


Handbook on Biodiversity of Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark

The Handbook on Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark published by Balipara Foundation – is a wealth of content on the biodiversity at the Ark and the independent relationship between nature and its nurtures.

The book gives us an insight on nature as the best architect and its ability to look after those who look after it. The biodiversity at the Ark has been tended to with care over the years and could flourish through the commitment and knowledge of local botanists.

Guided by nature, history and community, the first of its kind in the Eastern Himalayas- the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark is creating a Botany and Natural History of the Eastern Himalayas by preserving and conserving our natural resources and building botanic knowledge banks through community-based conservation for the generations to come.



The Himalayan



The Himalayan is also hosted as a publication on medium (a blog based social media platform). Through this, we aim to create positive, engaging content that appeals not just to people from the field of conservation but also to curate content that appeals to the millennials and nature lovers. We believe that communicating stories creates awareness and is a necessity for conservation success. The Art of Communicating Biodiversity is Conservation's Best Hope.

The Himalayan by Balipara Foundation published in November 2018 captures positive case studies, thought leadership, new discoveries and research papers on Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas.

It brings fresh thought and innovation into conservation and aims to catalyse a deeper interest, awareness and impact on human centered sustainable development.

To contribute to the Himalayan, we invite you to create an account on Medium(www.medium) & add your story to our Publication or submit your written work to us and we will add it through the Foundation's account with due credit

Orchids Of The Eastern Himalaya By Naresh Swami

Balipara Foundation in collaboration with Naresh Swami, author of Terrestrial Orchids (2016) and Hidden Treasures: Rare Plants of the Alpine Himalaya has supported in the making and launch of the App “Orchids of the Eastern Himalaya”- a first of its kind mobile application on orchids.

This application intends to present all the orchids in the region of Eastern Himalaya, comprising almost 1500 species.

Notably, an ardent orchid lover, Naresh Swami has travelled about 27,000 km on foot in search of unknown plants, particularly orchids. He has been on foot expedition into the greens of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and has documented over 530 species of orchids in Sikkim. The materials collected and documented by Swami have rendered a rich content to this app and surely stands out in the row of thousands of other apps. This app displays 200 species of orchids and will also be upgraded to 350 species next year.

The most important factor of this app is that, it can be viewed offline and is free to download, thus enabling usage of the same in far-off regions where internet is not available. Also, the free download will help everyone make the most of this application.

The application was launched at the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum on 2nd November, 2018.



The app can be found online at on the Google Play store at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.flower.orchids>

Saving Forests– Our Green Lungs, Gautam Baruah Joins REDD+ Working Group



Gautam Baruah, Balipara Foundation has been a key contributor to preserving the forests- the lungs of our planet, at the community-led conservation site of Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, Balipara. Recognized for his efforts in creating localized biodiversity Inventories, engaging with local communities for conservation and awareness and carbon estimation in the North East of India, he has been nominated as Member of REDD+ Working Group.

The Himalayas extend 1,500 miles and traverse India, Bhutan, China, Nepal, and Pakistan. The resource-rich region is critical to the communities that live in these regions. In an integrated approach, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) in collaboration with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu has initiated a project on 'REDD+ Himalayas REDD+'. Under this project, capacity building is being focused on North-Eastern states of India. This programme is aiding for developing and implementing of REDD+ actions, focusing on trainings, technology sharing and knowledge dissemination. The expected outcome of this programme are enhanced capacity for development and implementation of REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan at each level (community, sub-national /state and national levels) and improved understanding of scientific knowledge for precise estimation of carbon stocks.

REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) and role of conservation of forest carbon stocks, collectively known as REDD+ is now widely accepted as climate change

mitigation option under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Paris Agreement on climate change has also re-affirmed the role of REDD+ actions to meet climate change mitigation goals at global level.



UBUNTU- I Am Because We Are



Encouraging each one of us to delve deeper into our own personalities and that of the people we work with, the workshop was centered around activities to discover our individual and team strengths, understand the intricate relationship of interdependency and the essence of sharing a universal bond to achieve our goals.

Ubuntu is an ancient African word meaning 'humanity to others'. It also means 'I am what I am because of who we all are'. It embraces the idea that humans cannot exist in isolation. We depend on connection, community, and caring—simply, we cannot be without each other.

Making the most of the location of the workshop at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer, we participated in activities like jungle bathing, tree hugging, botanic walks, community village visits that inspire one to connect not just with people around us but also with the natural abundance surrounding us in the region.



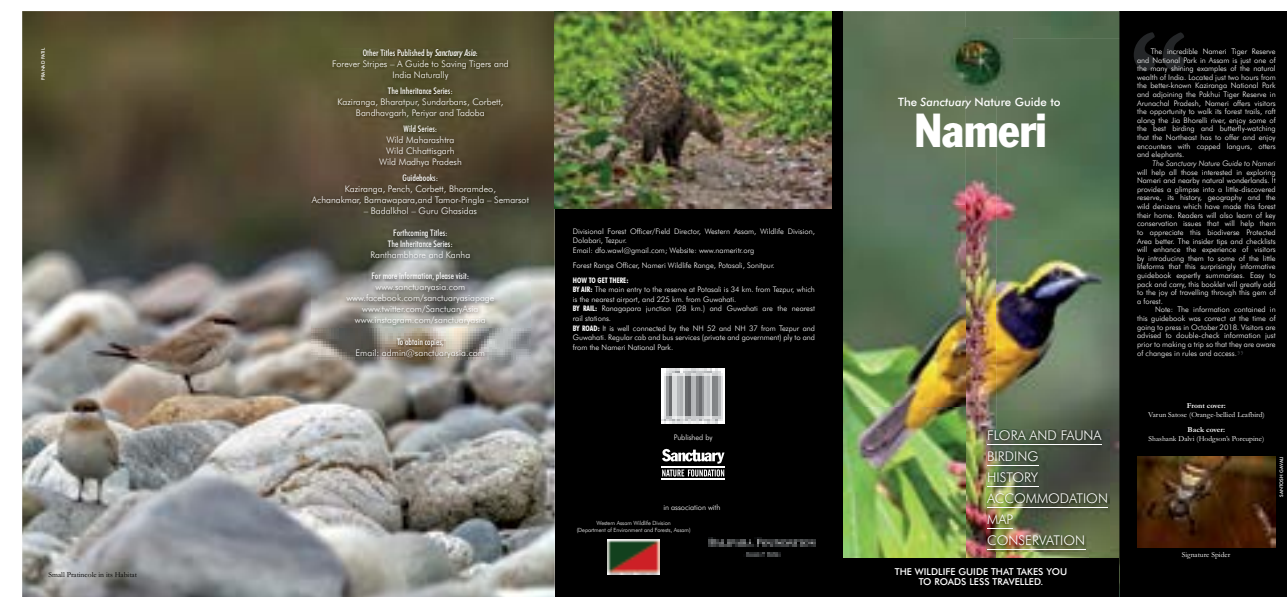
As a human centric nature-based organization, we are always learning, evolving and growing an inclusive community. Benaisha Kharas Image Consultancy, India's youngest certified image consultant conducted a 2-days' workshop with us on 15th Sept'18 in the forests of the Eastern Himalayas on the African philosophy of UBUNTU- "I am because we are".



Team Balipara Foundation



The Sanctuary Nature Guide to Nameri



"The Sanctuary Nature Guide to Nameri" is a definitive guidebook to the Nameri National Park & Tiger Reserve by Sanctuary Asia in association with Balipara Foundation and Western Assam Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Forests, Assam. Launched at the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2018 on 1st November 2018, the guidebook aims to provide an in-depth glimpse into the history, geography and wild denizens that have made this little-explored forest their home. Readers of this guidebook will also gain insight into key conservation issues facing this area, which we believe will help them better appreciate this biodiverse protected area.

The incredible Nameri Tiger Reserve and National Park in Assam is just one of the many shining examples of the natural wealth of India. Located just two hours from Kaziranga National Park and adjoining the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, Nameri offers visitors the opportunity to walk its forest trails, raft along the Jia Bhorelli river, enjoy some of the best birding and butterfly-watching that the Northeast has to offer.

The Sanctuary Nature Guide to Nameri will help all those interested in exploring Nameri and nearby natural wonderlands. It provides a glimpse into a little-discovered reserve, its history, geography and the wild denizens which have made this forest their home.

Celebrating Nature – 3rd edition of Pakke Paga Festival



The 3rd edition of the Pakke Paga festival partnered by Balipara Foundation celebrated the role and culture of Nyishi community in preserving the Natural Assets in Pakke Tiger Reserve and other wildlife around Pakke. Balipara Foundation is rigorously seeking and focused on creating community-based conservation models in the Eastern Himalayas, that will encompass all human needs and one, which allows Wildlife to strive alongside- through our Rural Futures framework. The festival took place between 18th January to 20 January 2018 at a venue on the bank of the Pakke River bordering the Pakke Tiger Reserve for successful community conservation effort and Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.

The 3-day event had an array of cultural, environmental and social activities that allowed participants to understand the role that local communities play in conservation of our natural assets, experience the rich cultural heritage of the Nyishi community through their food, music, dance, relationship with nature and to learn about preserving nature through workshops and educational programmes.

Balipara Foundation played an active role in the festival by financing the event and organizing Naturenomics™ workshops, awareness programmes and a cleanliness drive with the local student after the Event. Through the Naturenomics™ Store, we displayed handicrafts made from bamboo and coconut shell, Elephant Country products and organic dye crafts and materials. With the participation of above 90 students as well as other visitors at the Festival, the organic dyeing workshop was a successful one.



Community Tourism Through Local Resources

First published in The Assam Tribune
By Ranjit Barthakur & Bobby Dutta Baruah

The Eastern Himalayan bio-diversity region is one of the thirty four global biodiversity hotspots and extends across the following political entities – Tibet, North Eastern states of India, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The Tibetan plateau, the water tower of Asia, is a provider and sustains for the most part, the bio-diversity of the region through its glaciers. Though Bangladesh does not adjoin any part of the Himalayas, its existence nevertheless depends on the glacial rivers originating from the Himalayas.

The subtropical climate of Northeast India is influenced by northeast and southwest monsoons winds acting on its many hills and valleys with the Himalayan ranges to the north, the Brahmaputra Basin and Meghalaya plateau to the south and the hills of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur to the east. The vegetation of the region thrives on the monsoons and the many glacial rivers originating from the Himalayan ranges rendering the region a veritable bio-diversity hotspot housing several national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and world heritages which has been nurturing a myriad of flora and fauna.

The lesser known but perennially snow-capped mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, lush green forests of Assam and the many pristine water bodies has the potential to beckon nature lovers, trekkers, adventurers and holiday seekers. The region could be, due to its unique ecosystem of natural resources, an inspiration for promoters and an opportunity for local communities - the guardians of their nature capital.

Over generations the inhabitants of the Eastern Himalayas have woven bonds with nature and adapted to thriving from the services offered by the ecosystem – freshwater, alluvial soil and the food chain. Over centuries communities evolved symbiotic relationships with their natural surroundings had developed practices and cultures connected to locally available recourses.

However, the effects of climate change together with population increase and migration have put pressure on the services offered from ecosystems. Shrinking cultivable lands and agro-forests have negated the scope of incomes in farmers and forest dwellers. With growing unemployment in other sectors, poverty now looms large in families that have traditionally been connected to nature.

There is sufficient scope however for community based eco-tourism through launch of village home stays,



adventure sports, tea tourism and cultural and community experiences such as savoring local cuisines, local brew and taking home cultural legacies crafted in the handlooms and handicrafts. Community tourism can bring lasting economic gains where cash is remitted directly to the community thereby bringing in not just financial empowerment but a sense of independence.

Community based eco-tourism fosters cohesion where families work together to build a successful ecotourism venture. Funds raised can be used for community development purposes such as improved sanitation, clean energy installations, schools, libraries and improve alleys to name a few.

The 2017 United Nations International Year recognizes sustainable tourism as a tool for community development in developing countries, especially for farm based and

forest dependent communities. As forecasted by the UN World Tourism Organization, 57% of international tourist arrivals in 2030 would be in emerging economies. In 2018, emerging and developing economies were forecasted to grow nearly 5 % outpacing the 4.1% growth in 2016.

The Assam government's 'Amar Alohi' scheme for promoting self-employment in rural youths is a step in

the right direction. Applications from rural areas close to tourist hotspots, areas hosting events like fairs and festivals and showcasing regional heritage are some of the key criteria. It is hoped that the scheme has the flexibility and the mandate to ensure implementation of any projects that appear reasonably viable.

Corporate entities having business interest in the region should be also encouraged to support such community-led initiatives as a part of their CSR activities aimed at nature protection and livelihood generation. The multi-fold benefits of sustainable tourism have been recognized by a growing number of dedicated NGOs and the region can garner global attention from its plethora of cultural and natural experiences, its art and the warmth and hospitality that they still exuberate.

In April this year a community tourism programme was launched in three villages - Sengelimari Garo, Phuloguri Nyishi and Baligaon Mishing in Sonitpur district with the objective of fostering rural based tourism for not just gainful employment but also nature conservation through environmentally compliant practices. The participants were trained in hospitality, culinary presentation and guided nature walks by the promoting team. The objective of the program was to reinforce conservation values and integrate it with rural livelihoods to obtain the dual benefits of economic development and protection of the environment. The effort was a joint venture of Balipara Foundation, Mahila Shakti Kendra (MASK), Wild Mahseer and the Assam Investment Advisory Society.

The concept of homestays would bring inclusive benefits and is a great way to lessen one's environmental impact. The 'Rural Futures Framework', born out of the Naturenomics™ model, catalyzes conservation efforts through holistic models for community based economic activities to create social, environmental and economic interdependence.

Tireless standalone efforts are beginning to pay dividends. Baligaon Mishing Village in Sonitpur is Assam's first 'Green Village' certified by the Indian Green Building Council. Mawlynnong in Meghalaya is the cleanest village in Asia. Gangtok, Aizawl and Imphal are North East India's three cleanest cities. Concerted efforts have motivated participants in other areas to engage in community-led initiatives for livelihood generation and empowerment at the grass roots.

Tie ups with foreign based operators will lead to foreign exchange earnings and contribution to government revenues. Although other industries create greater export earnings, sustainable tourism is one activity that provides long-term environmental solutions.



Connectivity plays a vital role in bringing in footfalls and here investments on unpaved back roads to connect the East-West corridor will have a lot of meaning in the hyped tourism plans. Good roads are still a rarity in the North East and state governments will have to prioritize road building for all round development. The Regional Connectivity Scheme under National Civil Aviation Policy envisages connectivity to underserved airports. Zoom Air has started its Calcutta-Tezpur flight under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme and plans to fly to Pasighat and Tezu. Clause 4 (f) of the policy envisages state government's participation in multi-modal hinterland connectivity besides providing land free of cost. It is now hoped that the state governments capitalize on this clause for bridging connectivity to remote destinations.

The central aviation policy also mandates freedom to enter code shares with domestic and international airlines and therefore there are ample scopes for fruitful outcomes for regional stakeholders and intending airlines. However, the revival of airports would be demand driven depending on the demand from airline operators and it is here that local tour operators will need to converge together to hard sell the north east before the airlines.

The tourism activities mentioned above would underline the prospects of developing sensitivity towards not just the fragile nature but also instill the responsibility of preserving local cultures. It would also encourage communities to take pride in their culture and value their heritage. It goes without saying that the activities would facilitate economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits.

Deliberations need to be encouraged across community representatives, governments, NGOs and tour operators bearing the interest of community and environment in mind. The custodians of a successful community and green economy-based tourism movement are thus many – the communities in front, supported by the governments, and the facilitators behind, each having a specific role to play!



Volunteering Programs

Wharton Social Impact Consultants At Balipara Foundation's Social Enterprise

Top Business School students come to Balipara Foundation's Social Enterprise - Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark in residence at Wild Mahseer as a part of the Wharton Global Impact Consulting Programme. 6 Students from the MBA course, class of 2019 will serve as strategic advisors to enhance social impact by articulating the strategy and execution model of Wild Mahseer.

Designed to integrate rural livelihood through preservation and conservation of natural resources at the Ark, Balipara Foundation aims to empower local communities through socio-economic development and foster the interdependent relationship between nature and its nurturers. These Future Green Leaders will analyze the historical data, review financial and marketing models and help refine Balipara Foundation's growth strategy by addressing the complex societal and environmental challenges that they work around.

Their itinerary between 21st -28th May includes stay at Wild Mahseer, one on one interactions with stakeholders to understand the day to day operations, experience the local culture, nature and heritage that are promoted through experiential marketing and visit to the community villages for the homestay experience for meaningful conversations with the locals to add value to their learnings. They will also explore tea plantations and the tea culture of Assam and visit world heritage parks to soak in the biodiversity abundance.

The Wharton Social Impact Consulting programme is a non-profit student organized group that provides consulting services to address some of the most pressing issues of the times and achieve positive impact in the community. Students who have joined have a strong foundation in strategic roles and have studied in world class Universities such as Princeton, Stony Brook University, Lady Shri Ram College, IIT Delhi, etc.

Aditi Tusnial, who focuses on Marketing and Strategic Management at Wharton will work with Kartik Das, Public Policy, Multinational Management to identify solutions for maximizing overall customer experience, point of contact interactions and efficient operations for enhanced homestay experience. Jonathan Laguerre, Strategic Management and Kshitij Agarwal, Finance and Strategy, will focus on partnerships for fund-raising and create a robust finance model that will drive scale, impact and sustainability.

Julie Berkowitz, Strategic Management and Kathleen Liu, Marketing and Operations will analyse best practices in design and innovation in communication for the desired impetus in reach, engagement, awareness and brand loyalty.

"We seek to benefit from their in-depth analytics, sharp strategic insight, and the innovative application of digital technologies to magnify the impact of our social impact", says Prabir Banerjee, Managing Member, Balipara Foundation. Social Impact Consulting is gaining momentum as the new lens for Corporate Strategy that helps create social change and sustainable business, with more and more millennials being inclined towards jobs that make a positive impact. "We want to create strategic plans that include local communities and prioritizes greater good. Wild Mahseer is an ideal Social Enterprise Enhancement project for us to make tangible impacts." says Julie Berkowitz, Strategic Management, Wharton Social Impact Consulting.



The Meghalaya Guardian



Dainandini Barta



The Assam Post



Meditations on the Handloom: Interns from Ashoka University on Visiting Garobasti

Meditations on the Handloom: Visiting Garobasti
21st June, 2018



Sushila Sangma

Sushila Sangma is a resident of Garobasti, Sonitpur district, Assam. A Balipara based NGO Mahila Shakti Kendra(MASK) has promoted and nurtured self help groups that have vitalised the village. We were curious to learn about their handlooms and the cloth they weaved, and we were fortunate to have Sushila as our guide.

Handlooms are very relevant. The handloom industry has a pan-India presence and as per Ministry of Textiles', 2017-18 Annual Report it employed 43 lakh people, contributing to nearly 15% of the country's cloth production. Majority of the looms in the North East are engaged in domestic production and as per 2009-10 data majority of the weavers in the North East were female. The Central Government is in the process of setting up 195 Handloom Clusters in the North East with a financial outlay of 98.7 crores. Sualkuchi, in Kamrup District, is already renowned for its Muga Silk Sarees produced at its Handloom Cluster. Innovations that increased

productivity and improved quality developed here to meet growing demand. Deepak Bharali from Sualkuchi has been recognised and interviewed many times for his contributions. Setting up handloom clusters is an attempt to bring the skill out of the domestic sphere into the commercial.

Our guide took us to Pinky Sangma's house, who is considered to be a particularly skilled weaver. It was interesting to learn and hear about the natural methods the Garo community employed to obtain thread and dyes. Eri Silk, the product of the domesticated silkworm, is cultivated and its protein rich pupae is a delicacy. Thread is spun on a spinning device locally known as Takuri and dyed using a concoction of crushed leaves, alum and boiling water. Cloth produced on their handlooms is versatile being used to make wrap around skirts - known locally as Dakmanda, shawls as well as cushion covers.



Pinky Sangma operating the pit loom

It made us immensely happy to hear the pride with which members of the Garo community attached with their handiwork. What we refer to as "products" are items essential to the dignified existence of the community. It is no doubt an illustration of the wonderful relationship they share with their environment. Our conversation often involved references to the medicinal uses of the plant as well as the utility of bamboo in making sieves as well as furniture. Each community has its own distinctive style. Despite the many responsibilities women had - maintaining the house, cooking meals, gathering vegetables, ensuring the children went to school- some of them still took out time to weave. Being Christians the Garo community weaved their best cloth to celebrate Christmas.

In Garobasti, handloom weaving is a domestic activity. Not all houses keep handlooms nowadays, or more precisely not all houses required a handloom. Competition from machine made cloth in the market has played the biggest role in dampening weaving activity in the village. Sushila illustrated this with the example of a simple men's wrap-around that costs them 150Rs. to produce but similar machine made cloth is available for not more than 90Rs. Their hand woven dakmanda and shawls would have to retail at much higher prices to sustain a village industry - 1200Rs. and 3000Rs. respectively, and this makes it difficult to get buyers.

Where is the market that would appreciate the significance as well as the quality of their product? What kind of setup would ensure that the women weaving would receive the largest share of the profits, hence vitalising the industry? Having access to capital is empowering and ensuring that women received their well deserved earnings is an important step.

We truly have much to learn from the members of the many hard working and intelligent communities in India. NGOs as well as central organisations like the Handloom Export Promotion Council(HEPC) will have to work in sync to lead grassroot transformation. The sooner they are connected with the right markets the greater the chances that they will proudly retain their identity as India enters the future.



From left: Rithvik URS, Sachin Bhatia, Pinky Sangma's mother, daughter, Sushila Sangma, Pinky Sangma, Ayush Kukreja

About Author: I'm Sachin Bhatia. With interests in the intersection of History, Environmental Science and Computer Science, I finds that this leaves me with a lot to think. Ensuring that every human being can lead a life of dignity should be humanity's aim.

Photographs by Rithvik URS.

Creativity Fuels Sustainable Actions

As part of volunteering programme at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, Eduardo Ausocua from Spain uses his creativity to build an Earth friendly wall from glass & mud



His experience in his words:

My stay at the Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, a community conservation site by Balipara Foundation, was one of the most remarkable moments of my trip to India. My stay was from end of June to the end July 2018. During this time, I could explore this amazing place filled with incredibly friendly people, lush green environment & pure nature. The heritage Bungalow is an attraction by itself with its majestic interior and old-world charm decoration.

During my stay I was able to make a small contribution to this fascinating place. I completed 2 glass bottle walls with the idea to inspire the local communities and visitors that it is possible to recycle and make something useful using local resources and a bit of creativity. The wall was built using only glass bottles and mud.

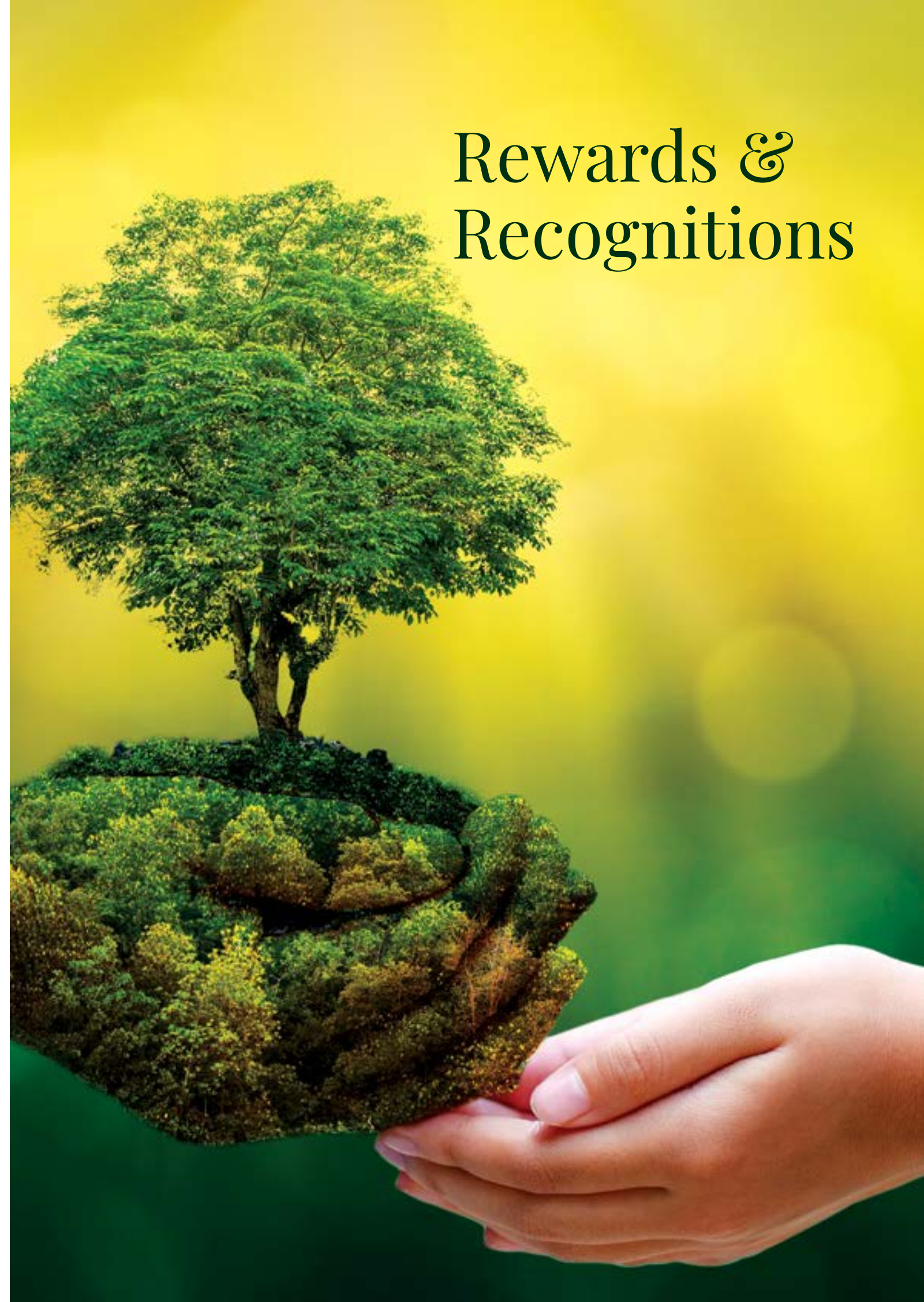
The bottles were cleaned & laid horizontally in the wall with mud. Although the whole construction could not be finished due to time and weather constraints, if what was built is preserved, it could stay there as a source of inspiration and motivate others to do the same in their respective villages. The same method of construction can be done using plastic bottles filled with trash, which are called “eco-bricks”. Bigger and stronger structures can be built using the same technique adding more resistant material like cement, clay, cow dung etc.

I would like to congratulate Balipara Foundation for their efforts and success and thank everyone enormously for their hospitality and care. May this place be an inspiration for other conservation actions all over India and the world.

May all being be happy!

Eduardo Ausocua

Rewards & Recognitions



The TripAdvisor “Certificate of Excellence” 2018



Balipara Foundation Member Nominated for REDD++ Working Group

Gautam Baruah, Balipara Foundation has been a key contributor to preserving the forests- the lungs of our planet, at the community-led conservation site of Eastern Himalayan Botanic Ark, Balipara. Recognized for his efforts in creating localized biodiversity Inventories, engaging with local communities for conservation and awareness and carbon estimation in the North East of India, he has been nominated as Member of REDD+ Working Group.

REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) and role of conservation of forest carbon stocks, collectively known as REDD+ is now widely accepted as climate change mitigation option under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Paris Agreement on climate change has also re-affirmed the role of REDD+ actions to meet climate change mitigation goals at global level.

Balipara Foundation as a member of Mountain Partnership



Rome, 17 July 2018

Dear Mr Ranjit Barthakur,

We are very pleased to welcome *Bailpara Foundation* as a member of the Mountain Partnership. We look forward to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world. We encourage the exchange of knowledge, information, expertise, and resources among our global membership, and to that end invite you to propose and take part in initiatives that promote the quality of life and sustain healthy environments in the world's mountain regions. We are confident that *Bailpara Foundation* will not only benefit from what the Partnership has to offer, but will also contribute significantly to realizing our agreed upon objectives and vision.

Please be reminded that membership is for four years, after which it may be renewed. Your membership will expire in July 2022.

We encourage you to visit the Mountain Partnership website for news, events and information about the activities and members of the Mountain Partnership.

We appreciate the commitment, energy and broad experience that *Balipara Foundation* will bring to this international alliance.

Sincerely,

Yuka Makino
Coordinator
Mountain Partnership Secretariat

Mountain Partnership Secretariat - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla - 00153 Rome, Italy
Fax: +39 06 5705-5137. E-mail: info@mountainpartnership.org.
Web site: www.mountainpartnership.org



Since 2007, Balipara Foundation has structured itself as a Conservation Incubator guided and led by local communities. Recognized for our commitment, energy and experience in creating social mobility and long-term sustainability in the Eastern Himalayan region through the concept of Naturenomics™, Balipara Foundation has been inducted as a member of Mountain Partnership.

Focused towards working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world, Mountain Partnership is a vibrant voluntary alliance of governments and organizations committed to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world. By tapping the wealth and diversity of knowledge, information, and expertise of and between its global membership, the Mountain Partnership stimulates concrete initiatives at all levels to address threats, improve quality of life and sustain healthy environments in the world's mountain regions.

“Creating a better world requires teamwork, collaboration and partnerships. We are very excited to be a part of an international alliance. Through Mountain Partnerships we aim for joint action and impact policies, reforms and identify solutions that build resilient communities.”

The Mountain Partnership is supported by a Secretariat which is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome.

Himalayan Botanic Ark is a first-of-its-kind project in the Eastern Himalayas," says Barthakur. "It seeks to become a centre for the preservation and restoration of biodiversity in the Eastern Himalayas through education, experimentation and research."

But more than that the project has taught villagers the importance of conservation and inspired them to join the movement. The old tea garden bungalows, which Barthakur and Banerjee converted into luxury cottages, helped them pull in tourists interested in studying or enjoying the biodiversity of the region. "The challenge to conserve biodiversity is great but the greater challenge is to empower the forest communities who have the opportunity to do so," says Barthakur.

A constant flow of tourists created jobs, which became the hook for the surrounding population to join the conservation project and make it economically viable. For instance, 27-year-old Bishkel Guwala, from Chilani Gaon, who had no permanent job, is the head chef of Ark cottages, earning Rs 15,000 a month, Jyoti Ranpal and his family from Boragaon provide traditional food to visitors and researchers, earning up to Rs 40,000 a month. Yet more than financial stability, people like Guwala and Ranpal have inspired hundreds in their villages to seek education and explore newer livelihood opportunities. "I never went to school, but my children attend an English medium school," says Guwala.

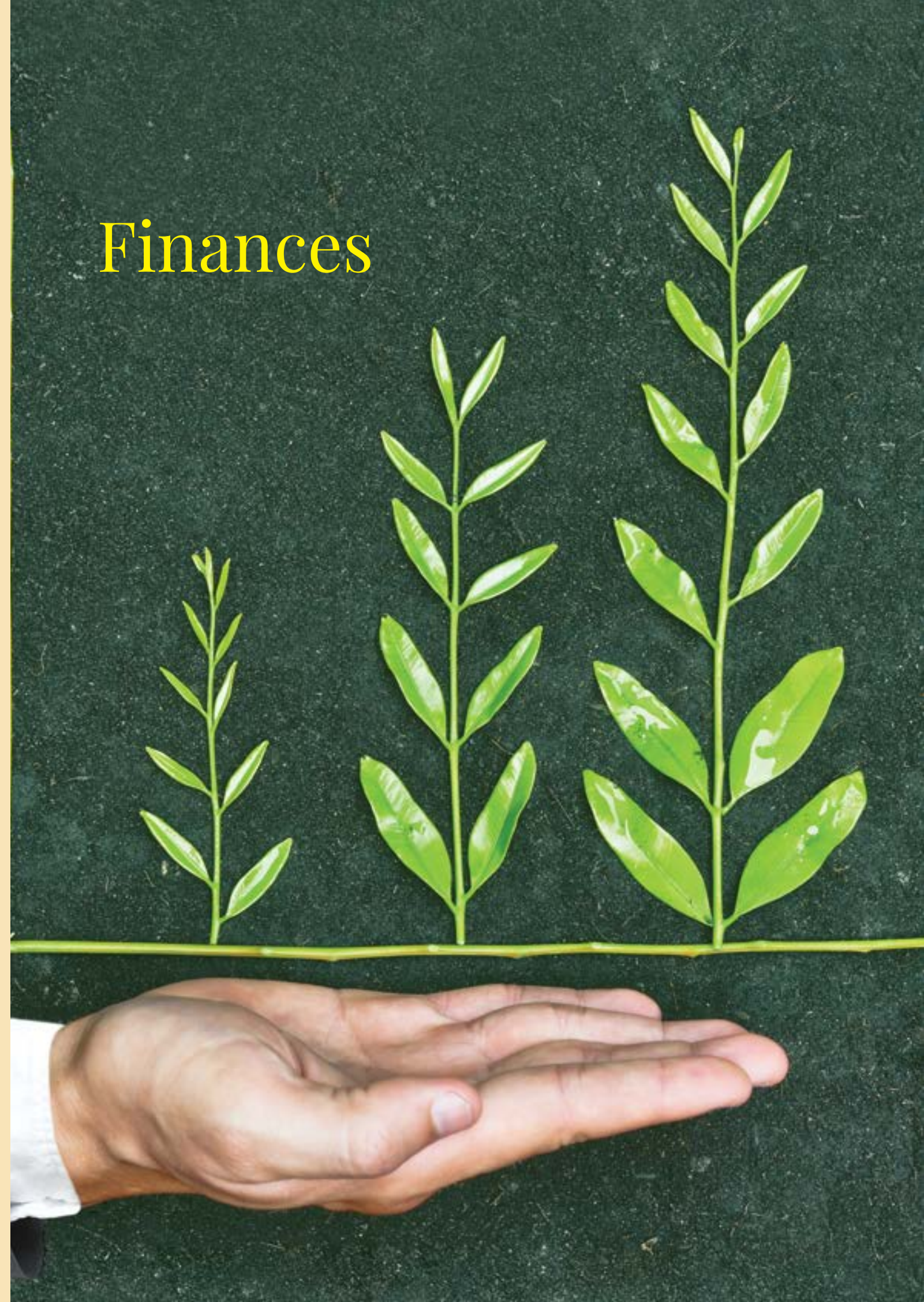
In 2016, Baligaon Miri was declared a green village by the Indian Green Building Council, a non profit organisation. Komission Milli, headman of the village, says, "We have learnt more productive farming methods from experts in the Ark. We have also diversified our crops and taken up organic farming. Our income from farming has been growing."

Saurav Malhotra, project executive with Balipara Foundation, the organisation behind the Ark, says the dissemination of traditional knowledge is two-way. "A person like Milli is a minefield of traditional wisdom, which has immense value in developing ecologically sustainable livelihoods and building assets for local communities," he says. "Focusing on local eco systems, we are also carrying out an ethno-botanical survey of indigenous communities to record the precious cultural knowledge available over generations."

For Barthakur, the project is just the beginning of his efforts to build a sustainable model of socio-economic development at 11 locations along the Indo-Bhutan and Assam-Arunachal borders. Balipara is witnessing that transformation with the fast expanding weekly market of organic and local products—a model praised by economist Joseph Stiglitz during his visit. Of course, there are some fringe benefits too—occasional visits by film personalities like Aamir Khan and Karan Johar.



Finances



Consolidated
Cash Flow Statement

for the period from
01-Apr-02 to 31-Mar-18

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT IN INR	RJBI	BTFF
INFLOW			
Own Fund:			
Share Capital with premium	63,042,741	60,841,141.00	2,201,600.00
Trustee's Contribution	7,729,300	—	7,729,300.00
Donation received from Associate Company	18,815,486	—	18,815,486.00
Loan received from Director	21,594,566	21,594,566.00	
	111,182,093		
Inflow From Operations:			
Donation received (others)	31,005,749		31,005,749.00
Income from operating activities	57,446,219	56,746,266.00	699,953.27
Income from non-operating activities	9,035,853	6,636,585.00	2,399,268.00
	97,487,821		
Other Inflow			
Loan received from others	4,263,202	947,790.00	3,315,412.00
Working capital	1,273,257	1,267,863.00	5,394.41
	5,536,459		
Total Inflow: 214,206,374 148,034,211.00 66,172,162.68			
OUTFLOW			
Revenue Expenditure	163,951,442	106,827,513.00	57,123,929.49
Capital Expenditure	43,817,532	40,869,851.00	2,947,681.00
Investment in Fixed deposit	2,688,557		2,688,557.00
	210,457,531		
Total Outflow: 210,457,531 147,697,364.00 62,760,167.49			
Net increase in cash inflow	3,748,842	336,847.00	3,411,995.19
Cash and cash equivalents available at the end	3,748,842		

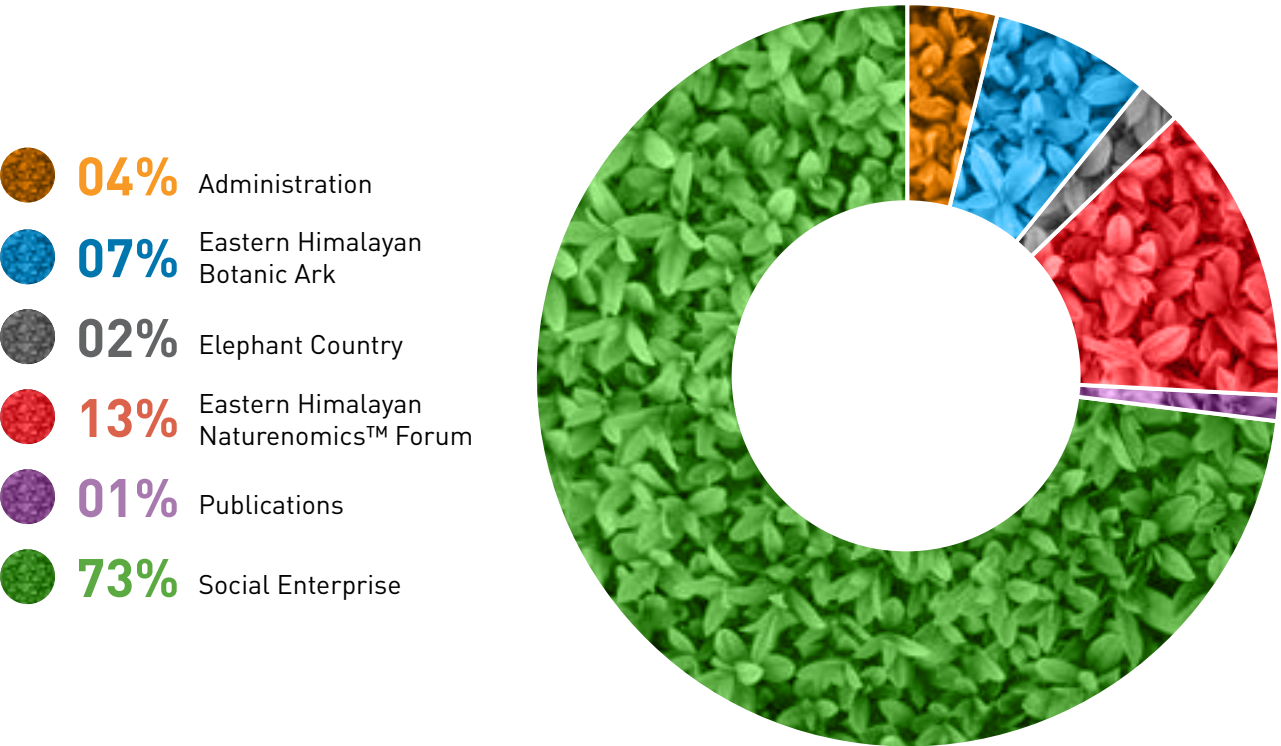
Certified By
A Joshi & Associates, Guwahati, Assam

FCRA Consultants -
AR Parikh & Co

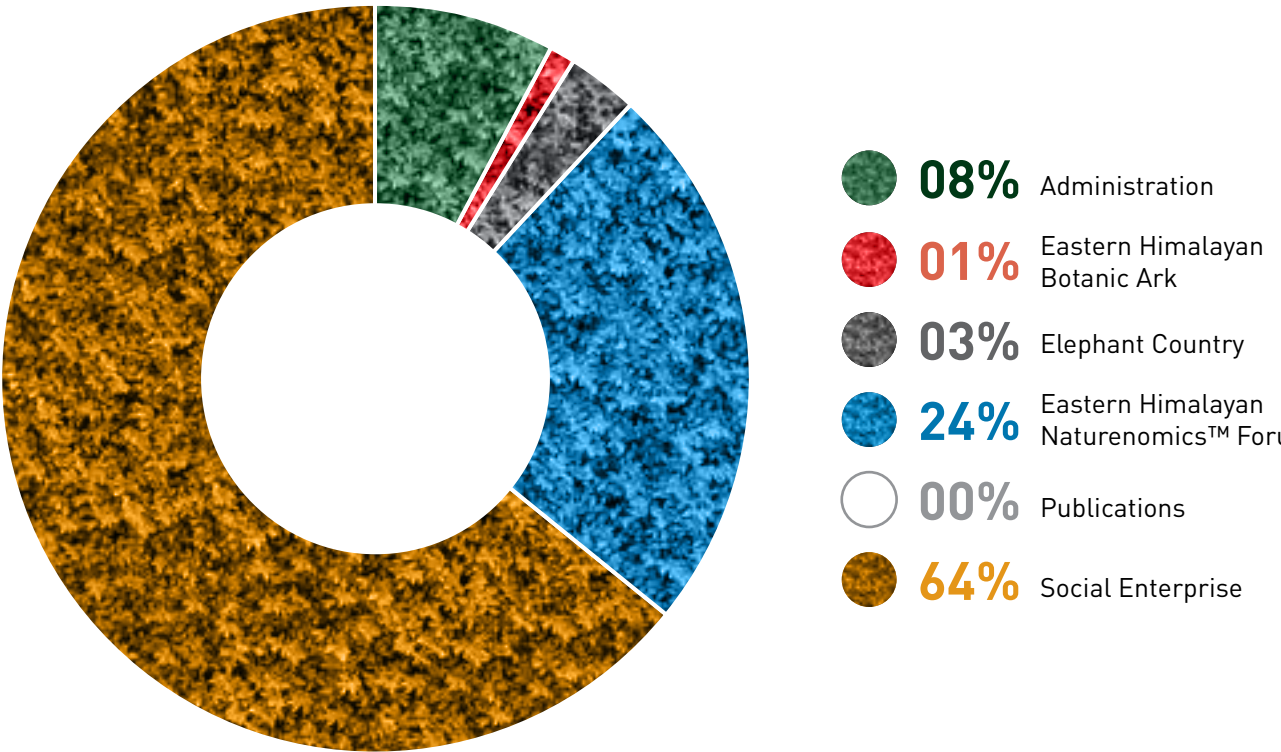
Ashish Jain
(Partner)
M.No. 412810
Firm Reg. No: 326304E

Date: 25/01/2019
Place: Guwahati

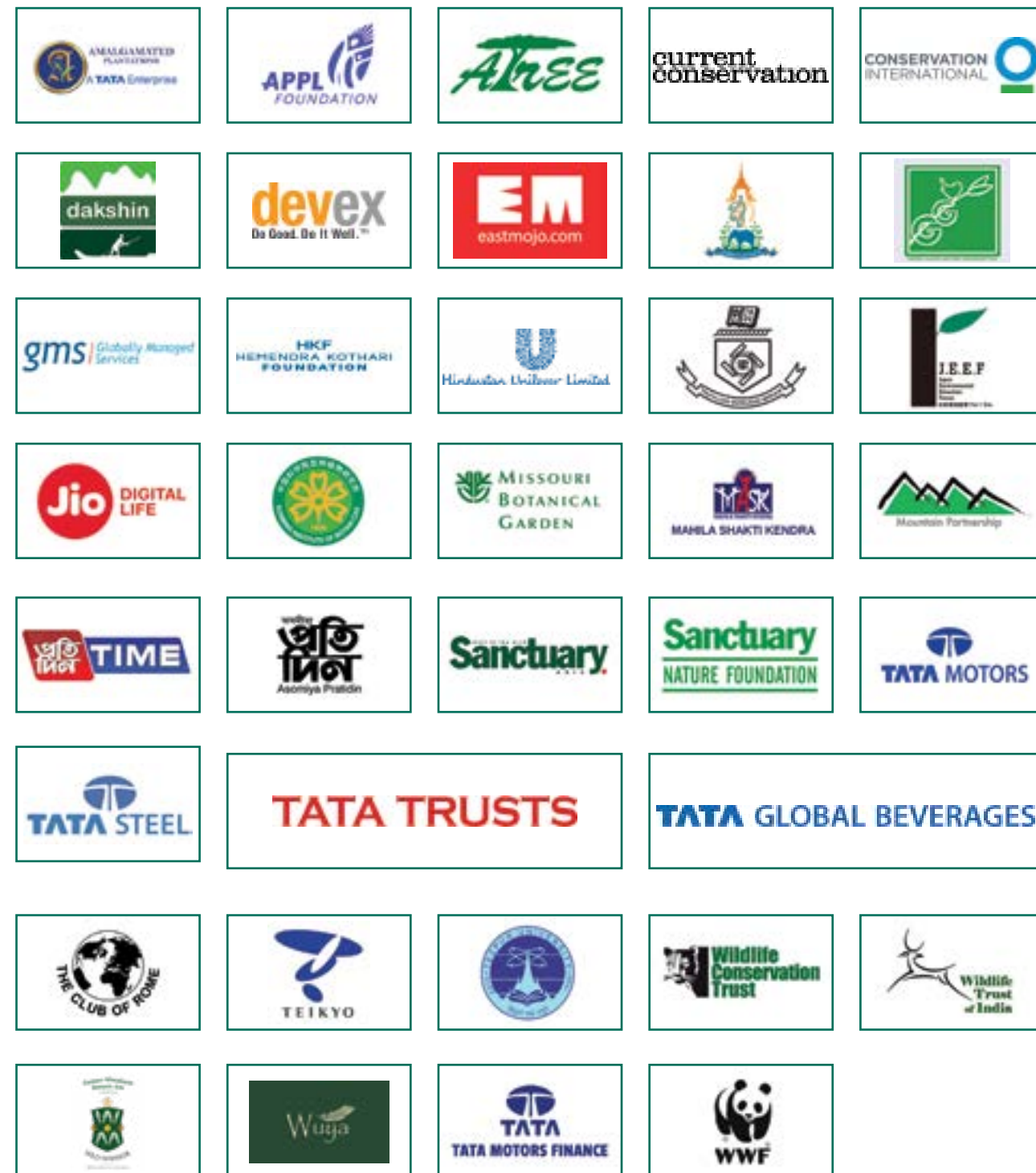
PROJECTWISE OUTFLOW



PROJECTWISE INFLOW



Our Partners



Initiatives with Partners (Some Examples)



Assessing the current status of Mushroom cultivation in NE India with Kunming Institute of Botany



Restoration of Misa Polo Club



Solar Light Distribution in association with MASK



Biodiversity Assessment Audit with Dept. of Bio Technology, Govt. of India & ATREE



Giveaways of uniform to Kaziranga National Park Forest Guards in association with WCT

Contribution towards developing Logos

by

Prabir Banerjea,
Managing Member, Balipara Foundation



Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2019

SAVE THE DATE



Rural Futures: Nature Capital Towards Universal Basic Assets

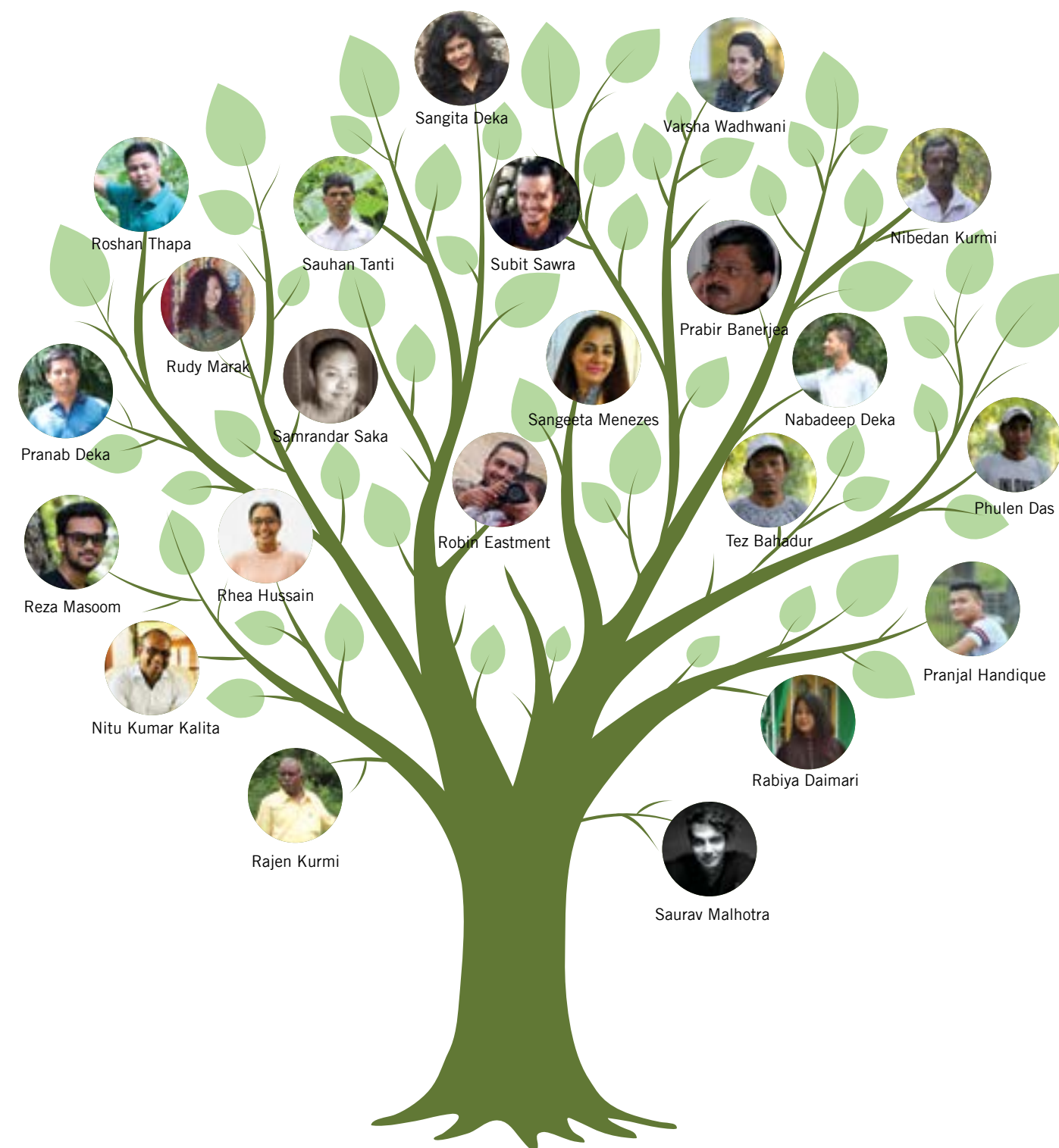


&

Balipara Foundation Social Recognition Awards 2019

For registration & sending us nominations, please write to us at ehnf@baliparafoundation.com

Team Balipara Foundation





League of Earth Heroes

BALIPARA FOUNDATION

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