

Rewilding the Future

Naturenomics™ Dialogues vol. 2: 16th June – 7th July 2021

ABOUT THE SERIES

Green is in. As the world gears up to set key climate goals at COP26 in Glasgow this year, countries and corporations are racing to institute new policies to limit carbon emissions and invest in sustainable business models and practices. Countries like China and the US have outlined ambitious programmes to ramp up government spending to aid a complete renewable energy transition while creating jobs for their economies and strengthening their GDP.

For climate vulnerable regions like the Eastern Himalayas, even a 1.5 C rise will transform its climate, impacting everything from its water sources, to the crops that can be grown, its biodiversity and by extension, the lives of the 246 million people living there. Climate resilience is poor: people lack access to resources that could help them weather these changes. For a primarily agrarian community, swift action is not a choice, it is a necessity, beginning with its rich natural assets.

The Eastern Himalayan region suffers from the historical problem of being natural capital rich, but money poor. As the world sets goals for the future of climate and biodiversity, the Eastern Himalayan region must seize this opportunity to take the lead on a new future for people and biodiversity.

Last year, at the 8th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, the Balipara Foundation held multiple conversations on the theme of **Ecology is Economy**. Building on these conversations and the key outcomes from this forum, this series of the Naturenomics™ Dialogues will explore and debate the theme of **Rewilding the Future**: moving beyond rewilding as a means of restoring the complexity of our natural ecosystems, to restoring the interdependence between our natural, social and economic systems by building a new, natural capital economy participatorily led and stewarded by indigenous and rural communities. This is the first step on the path to equitable climate resilience for people and biodiversity in the Eastern Himalayas.

Through this series, we explore the role that our rich forests can play in our wellbeing and resilience, in mitigating climate threats and its social repercussions, how to create an equitable ecological budget and how a rewilding economy could help communities achieve greater agency over setting their own development and wellbeing priorities beyond the limitations of the GDP. These key themes will serve as an introduction to the critical themes and conversations of the 9th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, as we continue to explore the idea of **Ecology is Economy** and shape the future of the Eastern Himalayas, its people, biodiversity and economy.



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Theme 1: Forests for all: Intersectional climate & environmental resilience (16th June 2021)

Format: panel discussion

Climate instability & environmental degradation disproportionately impact some communities over others. The resilience that forests build through their ecosystems services, however, are universal. Exploring the impacts of climate instability and environmental degradation on indigenous communities, women, migration & trafficking and the queer community in the Eastern Himalayas, this panel will also discuss how a rewilding economy around forests could foster an equitable resilience to rising climate threats and their effects, across these communities.

Theme 2: Forests for Health (June 23rd)

Format: one on one in-depth discussion/interview with expert

Protecting forests at a cost of \$2 billion is estimated to reduce pandemic risks by 40%. What does this imply in a world with rapidly disappearing forests? What are the risks facing the Eastern Himalayan region? What role can forests in the Eastern Himalayas play in protecting human health?

Theme 3: Rewilding the Ecological Budget (June 30th)

Format: Debate

There is a growing global movement to put an economic value to nature and account for natural capital in business and national accounts. Is this just greenwashing and profiteering by another name or could this fundamentally transform how we set economic priorities? Could participatory ecological budgeting protect against this?

Theme 4: Rewilding wellbeing & equity (July 7th)

Format: in-depth dialogue between two experts

GDP driven growth has failed to deliver on greater wellbeing and equity for all people and communities. How do we radically redefine human wellbeing and growth to foster interdependent relationships with nature? Can we foster this interdependence through stronger participatory systems for managing natural assets for communities? Can participatory natural asset management strengthen communities' ability to set development priorities, creating and delivering universal basic assets through the power of rewilding?



BALIPARA FOUNDATION

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ABOUT THE NATURENOMICS™ DIALOGUES

The Naturenomics™ Dialogues is a digital offshoot of the the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum. It aims to bring together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to debate pressing issues and opportunities for action in ecology, economy & community-centred conservation with a focus on the Eastern Himalayan region – India's North East, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and China.

The Naturenomics™ Dialogues is part of a broader initiative to pivot our flagship forum, the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum, to meet the challenges of the “new normal” through digitization.

The Naturenomics™ Dialogues will return next month, to explore new themes and questions, some raised over these sessions, for creating Rural Futures in the Eastern Himalayas.

ABOUT THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUM

The Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum is a global, interdisciplinary platform that brings together businesses, communities, the development sector, conservationists and academics to foster knowledge sharing, and generate grassroots actionable solutions to create Rural Futures across the Eastern Himalayas. Since 2020, the Forum has focused on the theme of **Ecology is Economy** for the region's future.

First instituted in 2013, the Forum has evolved and branched out into regional forums, the first of which was held in Sikkim in 2019, followed by a forum in Bhutan in 2020. The Forum held 12 digital editions of the regional forums in 2020 across all the states and countries of the Eastern Himalayas, and in 2021, held physical forums in Bangladesh and Manipur.



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Through the Social Recognition Awards



2000+
Participants



20+
Countries



100+
Discussion
Topics

9TH
EASTERN HIMALAYAN
NATURENOMICS™ FORUM
7-11 DECEMBER 2021

