

**PROGRESS
AND IMPACT
REPORT 2021-22**



BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

Naturenomics™ : Building Rural Futures

**WE NEED FORESTS.
OUR FUTURE NEEDS**

FORESTS

Forests are our lifeline, providing us with clean air and water, nourishing soil, supporting our food systems, and regulating our climate systems. Today, as the Eastern Himalayas warm 3 times faster than the rest of the world and lose a quarter of land to desertification, over 400 indigenous communities face a future of declining incomes, yields and cultural loss in a primarily agricultural Eastern Himalayan region.

We need forests to break the downwards cycle of poverty and forest over-exploitation by creating income opportunities for rural and indigenous communities through forest restoration, agroforestry, and training for sustainable businesses.



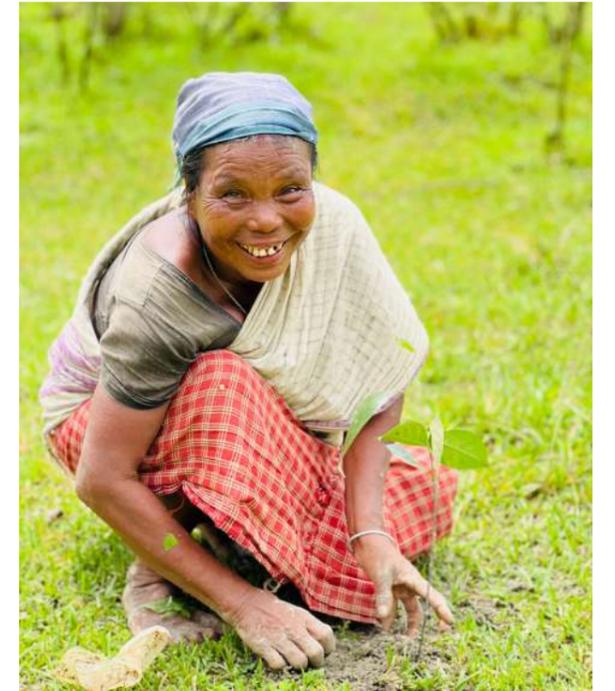
WE ARE



Community Leaders



Our Future



Foresters



Farmers



Women Entrepreneurs



Youth

FORESTS FOR ALL: 15 YEARS OF BALIPARA FOUNDATION



The world was a different place when we embarked on a journey for Naturenomics™ in 2007. Climate change was called global warming, and though the world was already gearing up for Copenhagen in 2009, there was no sense of urgency: we believed we had time. When the global economic crisis of 2008 unfolded, money poured into banks and financial institutions, but little into redesigning the economy, despite the many proposals made or Green New Deals introduced at the time. Biodiversity and ecosystem loss barely dented the public consciousness. Even though the idea that nature underpins our economy was first quantified in 1997 by Costanza et al, people would often express bafflement at the idea of

Naturenomics™: that ecology and economy could and should be interdependent.

Today, climate change is destroying billions of lives and ecosystems, through fires, floods and extreme weather events from unusual heat to unprecedented cyclones. Scientists increasingly agree we are living through the sixth extinction event. Biodiversity loss has morphed from an unfortunate reality to an emergency crisis. Tipping points are being breached: Arctic ice disappearing at unusual speeds, the Amazon turning into a carbon emitter, monsoons are becoming unpredictable. What were once fringe ideas are now becoming the mainstream around the

world: Green New Deals, green economy, circular economy, natural capital – the need for Naturenomics™.

When we first embarked on our journey, we began like many conservation organizations do, by focusing on a single mascot species. A decade and a half of iterative learning, of successes and failures, taught us that we have to think big if we want to drive real change. We had to move beyond working with symptoms, to fixing causes. We had to change how we imagined the Eastern Himalayas and its future. We had to think in systems. And what bigger system could there be, but the vast forest systems that stretch across the Eastern Himalayan region?

A decade and a half of fieldwork also visibly brought home the scale of the problem facing the vibrant communities and ecosystems of the Eastern Himalayas – and how little time was left to mitigate the worst damage. Farmers along riverine ecosystems were facing floods at times when there used to be none and at a level of destructiveness not previously seen. Unusual heat, prolonged summers, erratic rains had led to smaller crop yields and greater uncertainty about when to begin sowing crops. Swiftly disappearing forests had led to greater erosion, desertification, conflict with large animals in search of food, depleted water tables and ever shrinking livelihoods among forest-fringe communities.

When we embarked on our journey through Rural Futures in 2017, we began by thinking of Asian Elephants, only to soon realize that forests were the beating heart of the Eastern Himalayan region. They were the region's economic powerhouse. More than 80% of the region is employed in heavily nature-dependent industries. By putting forests at the centre of Naturenomics™ applied to the region's rural economy, we realized that the natural capital value generated by these forests even through direct produce, was enough to create an alternate, nature-regenerative pathway for development in the region. Communities could earn enough to not only meet their basic needs, but also create the agency to invest in their wellbeing and their living aspirations in the way they saw best.

In this five year journey to refine and perfect our model, we have seen the people we work with improve their incomes by 40% and use that money to invest in their homes and communities in innovative ways. Families in a village on the fringes of Nameri National Park used the income to ensure their children stayed in school, instead of needing to work to supplement the household's earnings. In Balipara Reserve Forest the community used communal earnings to invest in upgrading some of their local infrastructure. People returning from cities found decent employment and income in restoring and managing forests, or in converting their agricultural lands to agroforestry. Collectively over 16,000 people now manage and benefit from 5000 hectares of forest across Assam.

Today forests are the top of the global agenda for fighting climate change. For the Eastern Himalayas, these forests aren't just a stepping stone: they are a lifeline for its people and this lifeline is in critical danger. The Eastern Himalayas are already facing a 1.3 degree temperature rise, warming faster than the rest of the country. Despite the pledges made at Glasgow, our current global trajectory places the Eastern Himalayan region on course for a 2.9 degree temperature rise by the turn of the century. Assessments by the Indian government's Dept. of Science and Technology on climate resilience across the country point to the lack of forest cover per capita as one of the biggest climate risks for people in India's Eastern Himalayas. By 2030 nearly half of India's forest cover will fall under climate hotspots. According to the 2021 Forest Survey of India, India's Eastern Himalayas lost 102,000 hectares of forests in 2 years.

The magnitude of the problem facing Eastern Himalayas, its people and biodiversity is cataclysmic. But the opportunity for transformation is just as powerful. This is the moment in history for us to establish and take a lead on biodiversity, conversation, nature-based recovery and climate action for decades to come. Countries and corporations are pledging greater support to limit carbon emissions and invest in innovative sustainable business models and practices through adaptation and mitigation.

Momentum is growing for the movement to restore and preserve our forests. The question is: can we tap into this momentum and harness it to revolutionize the Eastern Himalayas?

The Balipara Foundation is taking its first step on an exciting journey to scale its Rural Futures model and put forests at the heart of the Eastern Himalayas' economy. The next eight years will bring unimaginable, unforeseeable new challenges, but we are eager to meet them head on. By 2030, we want to restore 100,000 hectares of forest in the region and touch the lives of over 400,000 people by creating over INR 106 billion in natural capital-linked incomes. Achieving this successfully means shaping the ways we work and creating new ways of implementing on the ground. We have to build new research and monitoring platforms, innovate new ways of working, foster local capacity and talent, build networks with communities across the region – and work ever more closely with partners to share expertise, strengths and capabilities to meet these ambitious goals.

The next eight years are imperative to place ecology front and centre in global and national action, to meet the world's growing threats to its food, water and survival systems and its rural communities. Investing in a transition to ecology is economy is no longer optional: it is a necessity.

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WHERE WE WORK

Note:The figures mentioned are forest coverage in the Eastern Himalayan region as per The Forest Survey of India 2021

Source- <https://www.fsi.nic.in>



OUR VISION : THE RURAL FUTURES INNOVATION

The Rural Futures model breaks the vicious cycle of poverty and illicit forest economies by creating economic opportunities for rural and indigenous communities through forest restoration, agroforestry and capacity building for other sustainable businesses. Payment for restoration programmes combined with agroforestry gives communities agency to pursue wellbeing aspirations while creating economic opportunities linked to protecting and restoring forests. With the economic freedom to access and deliver universal basic assets such as healthcare & education, community dependence on illicit forest economies to meet needs is eliminated, improving both human and ecological wellbeing in the long-term



STEWARDS OF OUR FORESTS

Indigenous communities in Assam are stewarding their forests to fight climate change - and build resilient lives.

Natural Capital for Basic Assets

Nizoram Mili is a resident of Baligaon Miri Green Village, working with us to restore forests for the past 2 years. A farmer with 8 members in his family, his traditional farming income wasn't enough to support his family: a challenge faced by most people in Baligaon village.

"We did not have a huge family income," says Nizoram. "We were scared that I would have to withdraw my child from school and find his work so we have some money at home."

Through the RuFu program, Nizoram has been able to afford schooling for his children. But for Nizoram, what made the program special was how it equipped the community to protect its ecosystems.

"Our village is called a green village for a reason," he says. "It is because we, the Mishing community, are extremely passionate about nature and we like to live in harmony with it. Rural Futures has helped us maintain that."



Women Entrepreneurship

Promina Mili and Bharati Payeng are from Baligaon Miri Green Village from Balipara and among the first to initiate Mushroom cultivation in their households. Both are homemakers and farmers and opted to get involved in mushroom cultivation after engaging with the Rural Futures programme.

"A training was provided to us by Mahan Borah, who made us understand the process of cultivating mushrooms. 10 of the village women from 10 households volunteered and we are happy we took that opportunity" recalls Promina. All the 10 women are now earning an extra income through mushroom. "It adds to our family income, and it does not involve much of our time. Once we get the spawn and start the process diligently, the mushrooms grow themselves. We just must make sure we provide them the nurture any sapling/tree would require" said Bharati.

Promina and Bharati also trained other women from the village who showed interest in the cultivation. Later more households joined hands and they are now using 5 units to grow mushrooms, with 10 households managing one unit. Promina and Bharati said that last year they sold around 10kgs of mushroom from one unit, earning INR 2000.



Youth Entrepreneurship

Mobilizing the community

In 2019, Pabitra Mili and his team, from the Mishing community in Baligaon Miri, began mobilizing their community along with the Balipara Foundation to introduce agroforestry instead of single crop farming.

Employment for reverse migrants

When 200 people returned to the village because of COVID-19 economic disruptions, they found employment in agroforestry, which had already nearly doubled community incomes. Many have now opted to stay in the village and continue to do agroforestry and forest restoration instead of migrating.

Creating new opportunities

By 2020, Pabitra and his team of young people had begun their own nursery business (including an independent floral nursery), set up their own homestay and formed their own NGO to continue driving the agroforestry and restoration work.



Youth & Citizen Sciences

Training the community

Biman Mili, a resident of Baligaon Miri Village, has been working along with his fellow youth to create agroforestry and homestays across land owned by his community and on vacant land at homesteads. Not only has he been benefitted financially, to sustain his family needs, but he has also been successful in driving the youngsters of his village towards conservation of natural assets.

Along with other youth in the village, he is also working on developing skills of their fellow community people in usage of camera, GPS device, computer, and other essential electronic devices with the vision that with so many people coming back to the village after the COVID-19 crisis, Rural Futures and other projects like these will be the way forward to creating jobs for them in their own areas.



FORESTS OF OPPORTUNITY : REFLECTING ON 2021-22



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021-22

Habitats

Community partnerships: (3 sites)

1. Balipara Reserve Forest - Phuloguri gaon- 4,50,000 trees
2. Dhakuakhana Jhanji gaon - 2,50,000 trees
3. Jhanjimukh - 4,50,000 trees

Area	Planted (#NatAssets)	Man-days	Productivity (#NatAssets/Mandays)	Revenue to community (INR)
Balipara Reserve Forest (Assam)	4,70,061	20914	22.5	5441040
Baligaon RuFu Lab (Baligaon & Sikom - Assam)	2,46,649	8977	27.5	2888920
Jorhat RuFu Lab (Assam)	1,04,809	3068	34.1	1192560

Total Mandays-34330
People impacted- 3975

Since 2017

 <p>3 million over 3000 ha Total Natural Assets Created</p>	 <p>5.4 million over 5400 ha Total Natural Assets Managed</p>
 <p>INR 153 million Direct community revenue generated</p>	 <p>11500+ Individuals Impacted</p>



Livelihoods

Agroforestry

Community Agroforestry partnerships (3 sites):

1. Kartik Chapori - 38,800 saplings planted among 50 households
2. Jhanjimukh - Started in 100 households with 1600 kg rhizomes
3. Panbari - Started in 15 households and 30,150 saplings are planted

Site Name	Household Covered	Area Covered (In acres)*	Plantation/Sowing			Harvest			People Impacted
			Saplings Planted	Colocasia (In Kg)	Turmeric (In Kg)	Ginger (In Kg)	Turmeric (In Kg)	King Chilli (In Kg)	
RuFu Lab Baligaon	176	36	11701	**	**	305	610	17	185
Kartik Chapori	50	50	38800	500	**	**	**	50	150
Panbari	15	15	30150	**	**	**	**	**	45
Jhanjimukh	100	55	**	800	800	**	**	**	300
Garo Hills	10	2.5	3750	**	**	**	**	**	55
Total	351	158.5	84401	1300	800	305	610	67	735

* 1 bigha = 0.3 acres.

**Planting has begun, harvest expected

Mushroom:

Site Name	Total harvest (in kg)	Total bags packed	Mushroom unit income generated (in INR)	Income generated (Mandays-Agroforestry & Mushroom) (in INR)
RuFu Baligaon	87	794	17400	72075



Research and Modeling

- Biodiversity assessment of the Balipara Reserve Forest
- Baseline biodiversity study of newly selected sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland
 - No of quadrates: 57
 - No of floral species: 135
 - No of faunal species: 110
- Biodiversity assessment training of the local community people of different restoration sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland

Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum - Regional & Global

Global

- Speakers:** 60+ speakers
- Countries:** 23+ nations
- Participants:** 500 + participants
- Sessions:** 15 sessions

Regional

- Forums:** 11 physical + 2 virtual
- States/Countries:** 8 North Eastern States + 3 Countries
- Communities:** 20 indigenous communities
- Participants:** 500+ participants across Eastern Himalayan countries & capitals

Naturenomics™ Dialogues

- 2nd Digital Dialogue hosted - 4 sessions with 20 speakers

Balipara Foundation Awards

- 13 recipients
- 126 recipients so far



Communications

Overall Reach



Twitter

Followers - 2040
Reach - 76,400



Facebook

Followers - 26920
Reach - 49M



Youtube

Followers - 842
Reach - 197K



Instagram

Followers - 3155
Reach - 25K



Newsletter

Subscribers - 1778



LinkedIn

Followers - 870
Reach - 10k



Website

Users - 10,299
Pageviews - 30,001

Partnerships

- Circular Bioeconomy Alliance - establishing and expanding the Rural Futures Living Lab in the Eastern Himalayas
- Kamrup District Administration - launch of Shyamalima Kamrup programme to rewild Kamrup
- Reckitts - expanding Rural Futures across India's Eastern Himalayas for food & water security
- EarthAnalytics - mapping & monitoring forests through remote sensing
- PRISM Institute - Using AI & risk modelling to monitor wellbeing

Outreach & Publications

- 52 articles
- 1 video
- 3 podcasts
- 31 webinars
- Our blog - The Himalayan
- Digital articles - 7 articles, 390 views

Internships & Volunteering

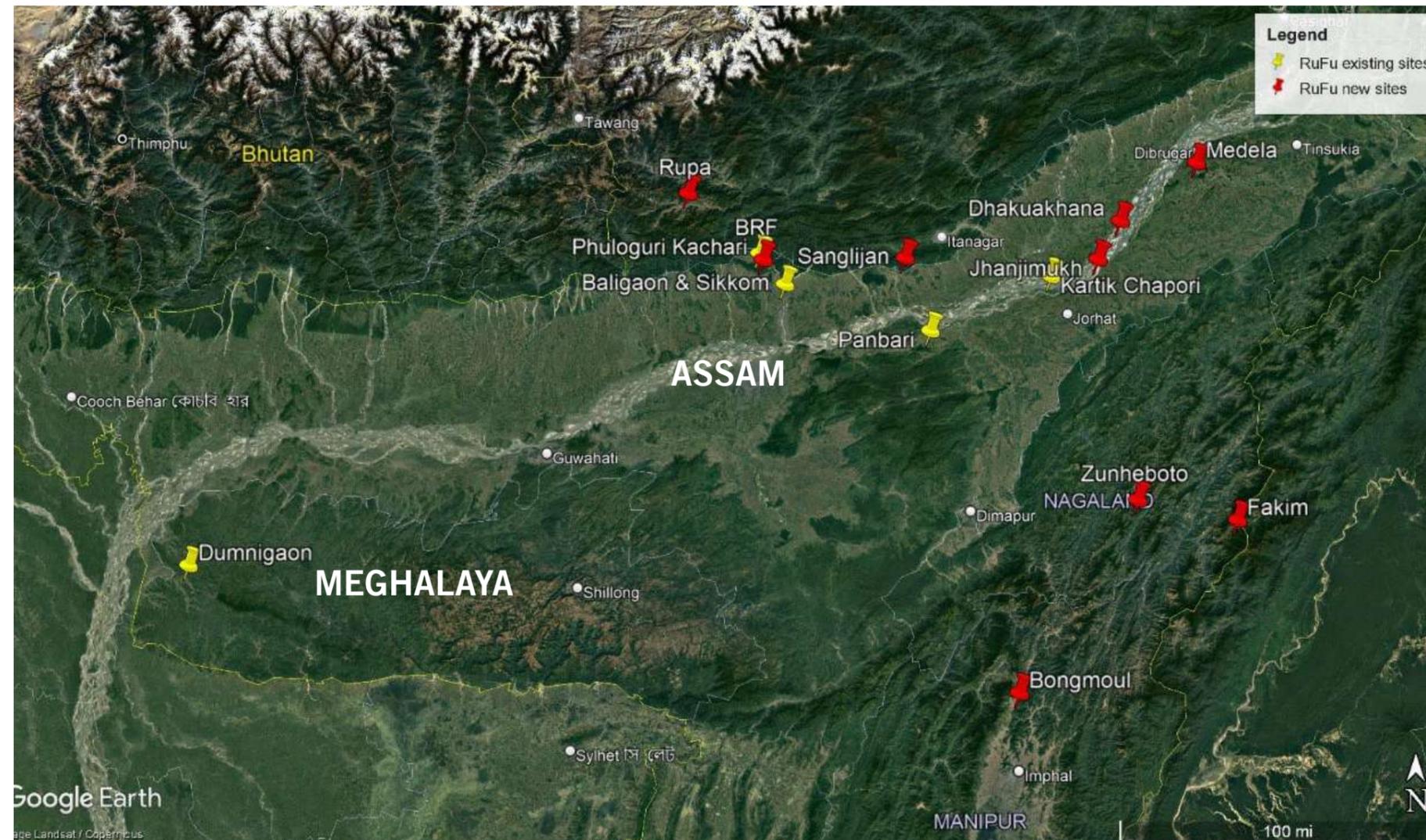
- 3 interns
- Communications
- Advocacy
- Indigenous Hub



REWILDING LIVES, LIVELIHOODS AND LANDSCAPES

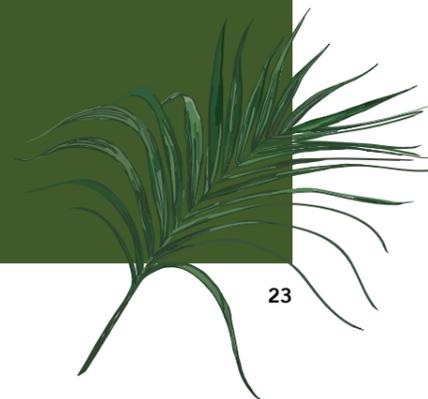
Introduction

Nature underpins the economy and extractive, ecology-destroying growth has spurred the climate crisis, calling for a fundamental rethink of how we use natural capital. Through Rural Futures, we strengthen local natural capital economies by rewilding forests and restoring farmlands. The outcome is an alternative to exploitative and destructive growth: sustainable development that balances lives, livelihoods and land to build resilience among communities and biodiversity on the frontlines of climate change.



Impacts 2021-22

- Total hectares restored
830 hectares
- Total natural assets created
8,20,000 trees
- Individuals Impacted
3,975
- Total Mandays created
33,000
- Total Income Generated
11.4 million INR



Case Study



Agroforestry

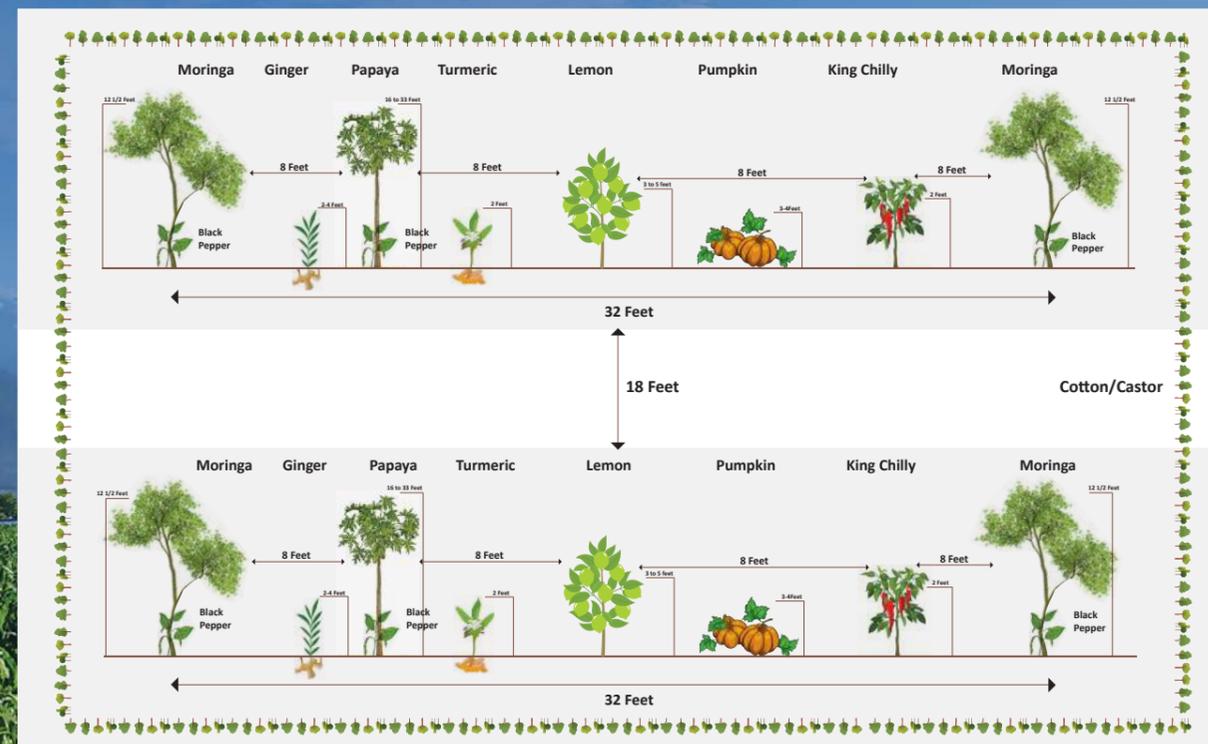
Tajuna Payeng is a farmerette from Sikom Village of Balipara, Sonitpur district of Assam. Being grown in a river island village, she faced many problems since her childhood. She has six members in her family. In her village there is no health centre, good education facility, good transportation facility and electricity. She always dreamt of sending her two sons outside of village for good education but she could not do this for financial problem. She and her husband grow only seasonal crops (paddy) which did not suffice the need of their family. In 2020 she got acquainted with Rural Futures and joined in as a planter.

Along with being engaged as a planter, Tajuna started Agroforestry in her paddy field where she started growing 7 different crops which are Moringa, Papaya, lemon, King chilli, Ginger, Turmeric and Black pepper. In first year (2021) she and her husband sold Ginger and Turmeric an additional benefit and also, they are hoping to harvest king chilli and papaya in the coming months (April-May;22). From this agriculture practiced she and her husband believed that they can change their life and also fulfil their dream of providing better education for their child.

Tajuna and her Husband are expanding this agriculture practice in a large area where they can get more income and also mobilising more community members to follow the same.



RuFu Agroforestry Model



Mushroom Cultivation



Faguni Mili is from Baligaon Miri Green village from Balipara, who is doing Mushroom Cultivation with her Self Help Group members. She has two children and her husband is a farmer. Her husband's income was never sufficient to run the household hence when mushroom cultivation was introduced in her village, she decided to give it a try

" I got opportunity of doing Mushroom cultivation through Balipara foundation NGO. Firstly, they gave training and provided mushroom spawn and also constructed the mushroom unit for us. I am doing this Mushroom Cultivation since from 2020 with my SHG members. At first cultivation, we harvested 56 kgs and earned Rs,11,200" According to Faguni, the mushroom cultivation is less time consuming with great returns as they can manage to pack 500 bags of mushroom from one unit and per bag weighs around 1kg, and each kg sells at INR 200/-. Faguni now feels independent as she can now contribute towards household expenditure and support her husband.



Rural Futures Habitat Restoration 2021-22

Baligaon RuFu Lab (Baligaon & Sikom - ASSAM) April 2021- March 2022

AGROFORESTRY IMPACT

Agroforestry households covered

20 households

Land area covered

6 acres

Agroforestry saplings planted and refilled

19501

Seeds(Rhizhome) planted

**250 kgs Turmeric and
250 kgs Ginger**

Agroforestry nursery

4000 saplings raised

People impacted

60

Harvesting done



Ginger
305 kg



Turmeric
610 kg



King chilli
17 kg

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION

One Mushroom unit house completed at Sikom

Mushroom packaging done

794 bags

Mushroom harvested

87 kg

Mushroom unit income generated

17,400

People impacted

185

(both agroforestry and mushroom cultivation)

Income generated

72,075 INR

(Mandays, Ginger, Turmeric, King Chilli and Mushroom Cultivation)



PANBARI (ASSAM)

Agroforestry Households Covered

15 Households

Land area covered
4.5 acres

Agroforestry saplings planted and refilled
32,150

Seeds (Rhizome) planted

Agroforestry nursery

People Impacted
45

***Work in progress to initiate in next suitable season of the crops



KARTIK CHAPORI (ASSAM)

Agroforestry Households Covered

50 Households

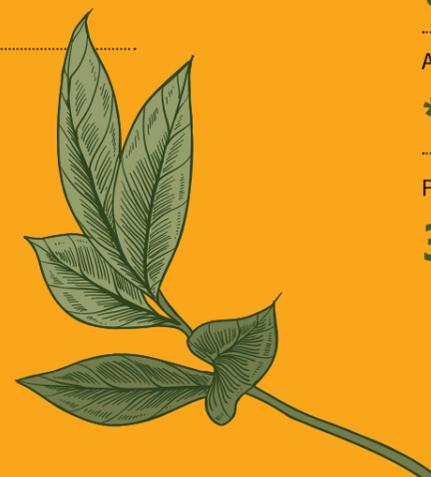
Land area covered
15 acres

Agroforestry saplings planted and refilled
38,800

Seeds (Rhizome) planted
500 kgs Colocasia Esculenta

Agroforestry nursery

People Impacted
150



JANJHIMUKH (ASSAM)

Agroforestry Households Covered

100 Households

Land area covered
16.5 acres

Agroforestry saplings planted and refilled

Seeds (Rhizome) planted
800 kgs Colocasia Esculenta, 800 kgs of turmeric

Agroforestry nursery

People Impacted
300



GARO HILLS (MEGHALAYA)

Agroforestry Households Covered

10 Households

Land area covered
0.75 acres

Agroforestry saplings planted and refilled
3750

Seeds (Rhizome) planted
200 kg

Agroforestry nursery

People Impacted
55

RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION: UNDERSTANDING ECOLOGY, UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITIES

Interconnectedness between well-being and the natural environment

Globally today, an area's growth and development is measured largely through economic indicators such as GDP and economic growth rates, coupled with arrays of indicators based on the Human Development Index. The overwhelming focus on economic indicators has meant that growth and development has focused exclusively on driving economic growth, with severe costs to the environment and climate. While attempts have been made to reconcile economy, social wellbeing and ecology, but few have generalised uptake and few capture the complex ways in which ecological health and wellbeing intersects with human wellbeing – especially among rural, indigenous and forest-fringe communities. In the Eastern Himalayan region, where around 70% of the population is rural and which is home to around 400 unique indigenous & ethnic communities, these indices cannot capture the ways in which nature plays an intimate role in economic and cultural survival, resilience and continuity.

The RuFu Index seeks to build a new inclusive index that is responsive and sensitive to the context of the Eastern Himalayan region, from Nepal to Myanmar. This index centres ecology, exploring the overlaps between social, economic and cultural wellbeing in relation to ecology and overall human wellbeing & satisfaction. The study for exploring & developing the index will explore the following:

- The critical gaps in existing “sustainable development” indices
- Participatory understandings of wellbeing, satisfaction and development
- The measurable ways in which ecology overlaps with culture, economic and social growth & development
- The interlinkages between ecology & overall human wellbeing
- The Eastern Himalayan specific cultural needs & dimensions that are linked to nature
- The array of indicators needed to measure the above



Thematic Areas

- Ecology: touching on the relationships communities have with the natural world, traditional management practices, benefits, threats
- Aspirations & Wellbeing: definitions on what it means to “live well” and what “development” means, sociocultural wellbeing, access to universal basic assets
- Socioeconomic Growth & Sustainable Sustenance: incomes, businesses, jobs, household investment and spending
- Stakeholder & Participation: tracking aspirations in participation and changes in how they see their roles in programmes towards greater stewardship

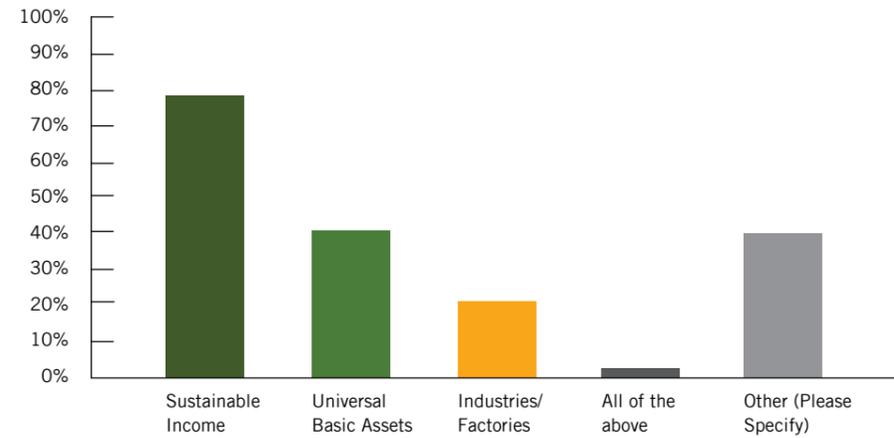
Ongoing Research

The pilot surveys were conducted through Focus Group Discussions and individual interviews in a number of places including Baligaon, Sikom, Panbari, Tarabari, Kartik Sapori, Japong Gaon and Dhakukhana. Some of the main themes that remained relevant in most of the places were increasing migration due to lack of livelihood opportunities, increased climatic vulnerability, deforestation and crop failure- all of which had an effect on the question of the community's relationship with nature. Contrary to popular belief, nature or forests are not static entities of reverence only, but rather can be considered to be dynamic realities that exist in relational ways to communities. Hence human-nature relationships are affected by factors such as increasing migration, and climatic vulnerability. Combatting the multiscale problems requires redefining the link between healthy ecosystems with better livelihood and earning opportunities for rural & forest-fringe communities.

People do not want “more” They want to be able to live well & access key services, invest in their children & households – and jobs which help them achieve this-There is a general assumption that there would be a preference for the mainstream narrative of development - that people in rural areas need higher income which involves a commodification of forests into agricultural land specifically commercial monoculture or factories - when in the fieldwork, it emerged (with very few exceptions), there was so such aspiration. Most communities wanted sustainable income in consonance with nature which would contribute to helping them run the households and afford basic commodities.

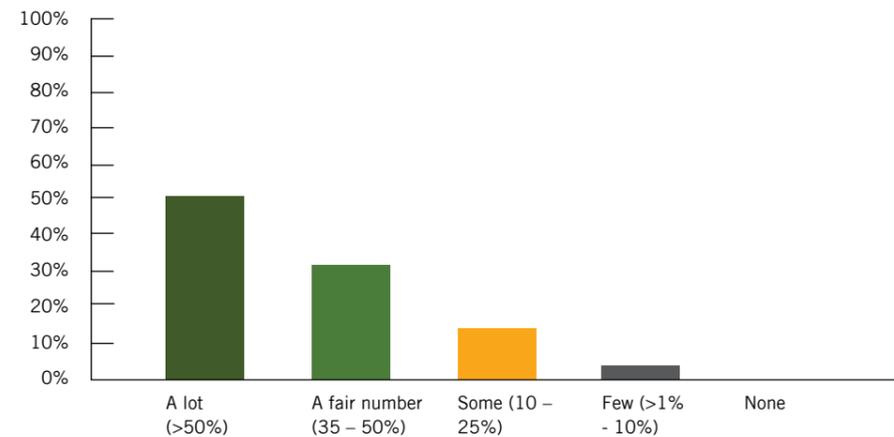


Key words to define “development”



“Home” is important. For many, being able to work and live off land belonging to their ancestors is important – poor economic viability forces migration-The absence of people in the age group 20-30 in the most of the areas leaving only the women and mostly the elderly in the village to continue the practice sustenance agriculture meant that the supposed embeddedness of nature and sustenance activities in the communities needed to be interrogated. Most people engaged in farming because they had no other option. This brings to question what are alternative income generation opportunities. Most respondents mentioned that working in cities outside implied higher expenses and most of the youth would be willing to return if they had any job opportunities in the village.

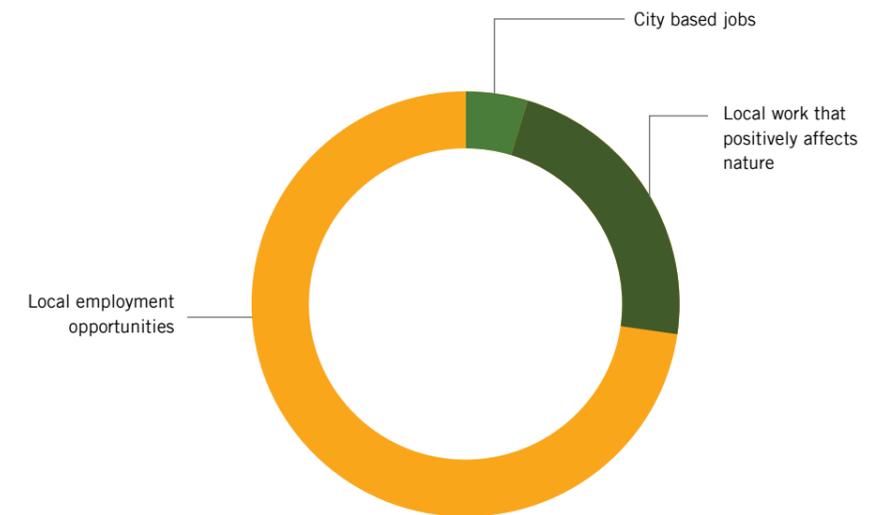
What is the proportion of young people who have migrated to cities?



Participation is key- People want to be able to control their development priorities, be involved in decision-making and shape their futures – not have someone dictate it for them- The narrative of “growth” allows for the extraction of resources and using people only as labour towards creating projects. Most projects from the perspective of the government and that from the NGOs looks at the end goal of a project- the result is usually seen as higher than the people and benefits accruing to the people are only secondary, or even ancillary to the actual project or goal especially in the case of social forestry. Stakeholdership in the long run is essential to the maintenance.



Which do you find more beneficial for your family?



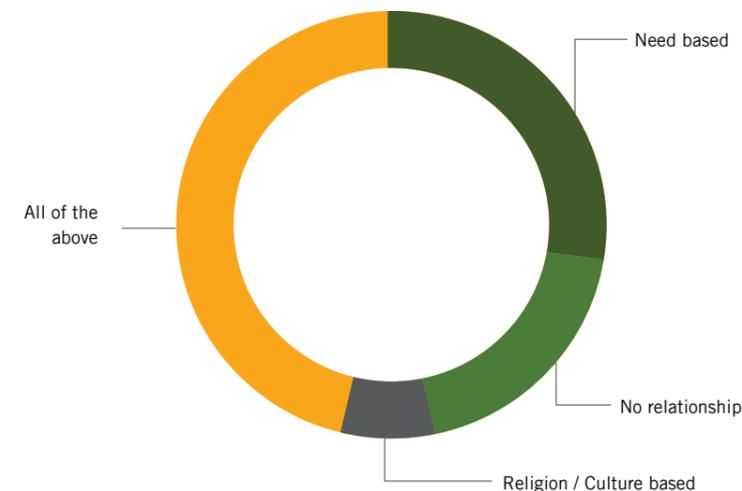
Relationships with nature are fluid There are a web of influencing factors, but economic pressures erode regenerative or reciprocal and identity linked relationships with nature- For most communities the awareness of wanting to save, conserve or protect nature doesn't come from an ideological place but is determined by real threats that the communities face. There is a need for infrastructure and this is often masked or understood under "development". A sizable proportion of the interviewees responded that they would like access to transport, healthcare, education etc. In every place what became evident is that forests mean different things but almost never signify a disconnected entity. So it would be inaccurate to say that all indigenous communities have reverence towards nature which brinks on ritual and worshipping aspects of it, as even in cases where aspects of nature are worshipped they are linked to very real and tangible benefits to the communities. In most interviews people alluded to a very need-based relationship with nature- it was a commodity but without the profit-making capacity that it has under capitalistic interpretations of it - which relies on absolute or optimal extraction from nature in the shortest time possible- this is not the sentiment which drives

most of the people in the villages- endless growth is not the goal. Most people were happy with the idea of having a small but sustainable income which fits into their daily life

The initial findings conclude that to be able to understand the positive relationship between biodiversity health and quality of life there needs to be a way to modulate the value of nature as an asset. While people do understand the value of nature and have started seeing it as an asset, this relationship needs to be incentivized to create participative growth.

The Balipara Foundation is now partnering with the PRISM Institute to use AI & risk modelling to understand how different factors impact wellbeing.

How do you identify your relationship for your family?



Understanding Forest Landscapes and Documenting Species: Biodiversity Assessment

Through the rural future model, we aim to make indigenous communities as the custodians of their natural inheritance through pilot programmes towards restoration of degraded forest habitats and enhancing natural assets, creating a system for sustainable natural capital optimization. This project helps the villagers to generate income and also provide employment from the forest which makes an important contributor to the rural economy. Under habitat restoration, the environmental assessment begins with the selection of the site followed by mapping of GPS coordinates. The selected team members collect data according to quadrant sampling in the field and then taxonomists study the origin and relationship of the different species found in the area. Quadrant methods were used to determine the frequency, density, and abundance of plant species in sample unit areas of the forest core zone. This study resulted in a model list of species that are indigenous and value-added. After the taxonomist has created a methodology about the area and after proper analysis of the data, the process of habitat restoration begins which includes selecting species, purchasing saplings and involving the community. Data from the initial assessment serve as a baseline for subsequent surveys.

Ongoing research:

- Biodiversity study of different restoration sites in Sonitpur district (Sikom, Baligaon, Bogijuli and Tarabari)
- Baseline biodiversity study of newly selected sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.
- Biodiversity assessment training of the local community people of different restoration sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.
- Model list of plants preparation for newly selected sites of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.
- Physicochemical analysis of soil and water of the different project restoration sites in collaboration with North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM), Tezpur, Assam.
- Communicated paper on “Biodiversity of Sukhai village of Zunheboto, Nagaland with special emphasis on traditional knowledge of plants in their livelihood”



NURTURING GRASSROOTS KNOWLEDGE: THE RURAL FUTURES INDIGENOUS HUB

The Indigenous Hub stems from the recognition of the limited presence of indigenous communities within the decision making process. A lack of access to opportunities for the communities' to take informed decisions for has compromised the spirit of 'inclusive sustainable development'. Envisioned as a decentralised, self-regulating and non-partisan system of knowledge sharing and experiential learning, the IH will act as a platform for the community members especially the youth to raise pertinent issues hindering the development of indigenous communities and the region in general. The IH also aims to function as a facility that will foster future youth leaders.

The IH will act as a common platform for all the youth to come together and work towards issues plaguing the North Eastern Region in the themes of livelihood, environment, governance, civic participation etc. It will also enable the youth of the region in becoming an active partner to the state governments and create a communication channel for them to pitch their ideas pertaining to inclusive development and poverty reduction to the government.



Functions

- Climate Resilience Plan
- Self-Advocacy
- Gendered Response
- Community Knowledge Centre
- Community Coalition Building
- Traditional knowledge documentation (practices, folklores, songs, customary laws & beliefs) in context to forest and nature.
- Citizen Journalism- (innovative AV & digital news content on various social issues)
- Skill Training – Handicrafts, Agriculture, Agroforestry, Weaving etc.



Work in Progress

- Formation of IH labs in Jorhat & Sonitpur - Documentation of traditional knowledge systems, Citizen Journalism.
- Workshops – Field interaction and introductory workshop on Indigenous Hub across Rural Futures site: 2 workshops completed in Dhakuakhana and Jhanjimukh respectively.

Key Themes

- Documenting indigenous knowledge systems.
- Community coalition for policy advocacy.
- Active Citizen Journalism.
- Building livelihood opportunities.

Hub Structure

- Network of all state forums operating at the NE regional level – INDIGENOUS HUB
- Network of all local hubs at the state level – STATE FORUMS.
- Individual local labs across all project sites – LOCAL LABS

Local Lab

These local labs would act as incubators at the grassroots level. Here, young minds from within the communities can come together and discuss issues/ideas and develop possible solutions based in scientific methods and traditional knowledge systems.

State Forum

It would act as the common ground to link all local labs within the state. Here, we can have people and leaders from the community, civil society as well as within the government mentoring the youth to devise sustainable solutions for pressing environmental and socio-economic challenges.

Indigenous Hub

As the name suggests, the HUB would see all the networks culminating. The hub would act as a knowledge sharing, experiential learning and data repository centre for all stakeholders (primarily the community and the youth) within the NE and the EH region.

A PLATFORM FOR FORESTS AND PEOPLE: EASTERN HIMALAYAN NATURENOMICS™ FORUMS

The Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum is a conversation dialogue developing collaborations across the diverse community of conservation practitioners and researchers around the globe. The aim is to translate discussions and conservation models into changes in policy and practical interventions which will make a positive impacts for our forests and people in the Eastern Himalayas.

Over the years, the the platform has been fostering critical debate on Rewilding the Eastern Himalayas, bringing together experts and on ground communities to chart a path and build action networks for rewilding degraded lands across the region.



Amplifying Community Voices



Community Conservation Models



Solutions for Conservation & Livelihoods



Partnerships for Action



126+ Earth Heroes
200+ Projects

Through the Social Recognition Awards



3000+ Participants



25+ Countries



100+ Discussion Topics



5M Reach



200+ Projects Through Earth Heroes



530+ Publications Supported through grant recipients



2000+ Hectares Forest Land restored through grant recipients



2800+ Livelihoods For grant recipients



Educational Apps Orchids of the Eastern Himalayas



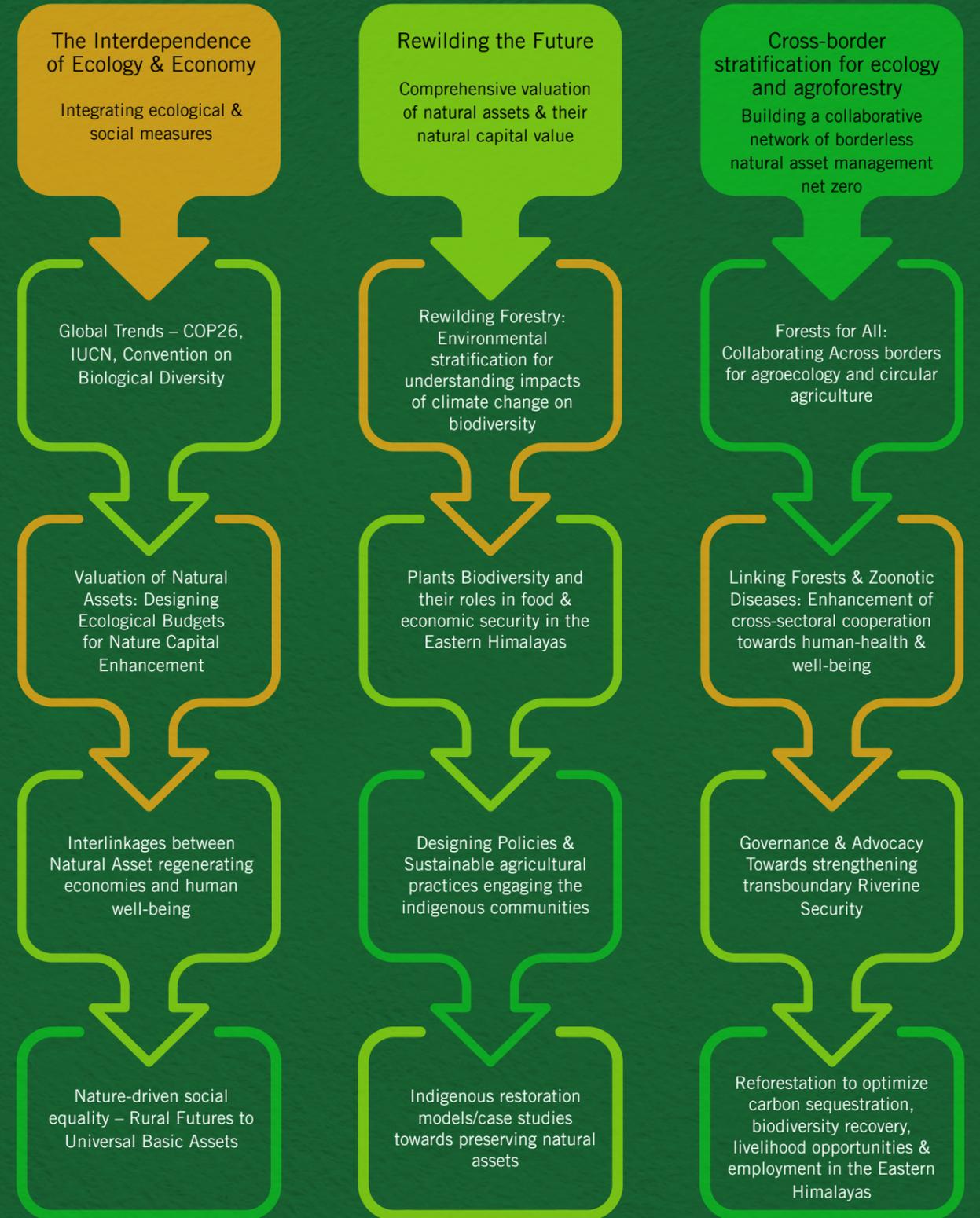
600+ Species Conserved through Earth Heroes



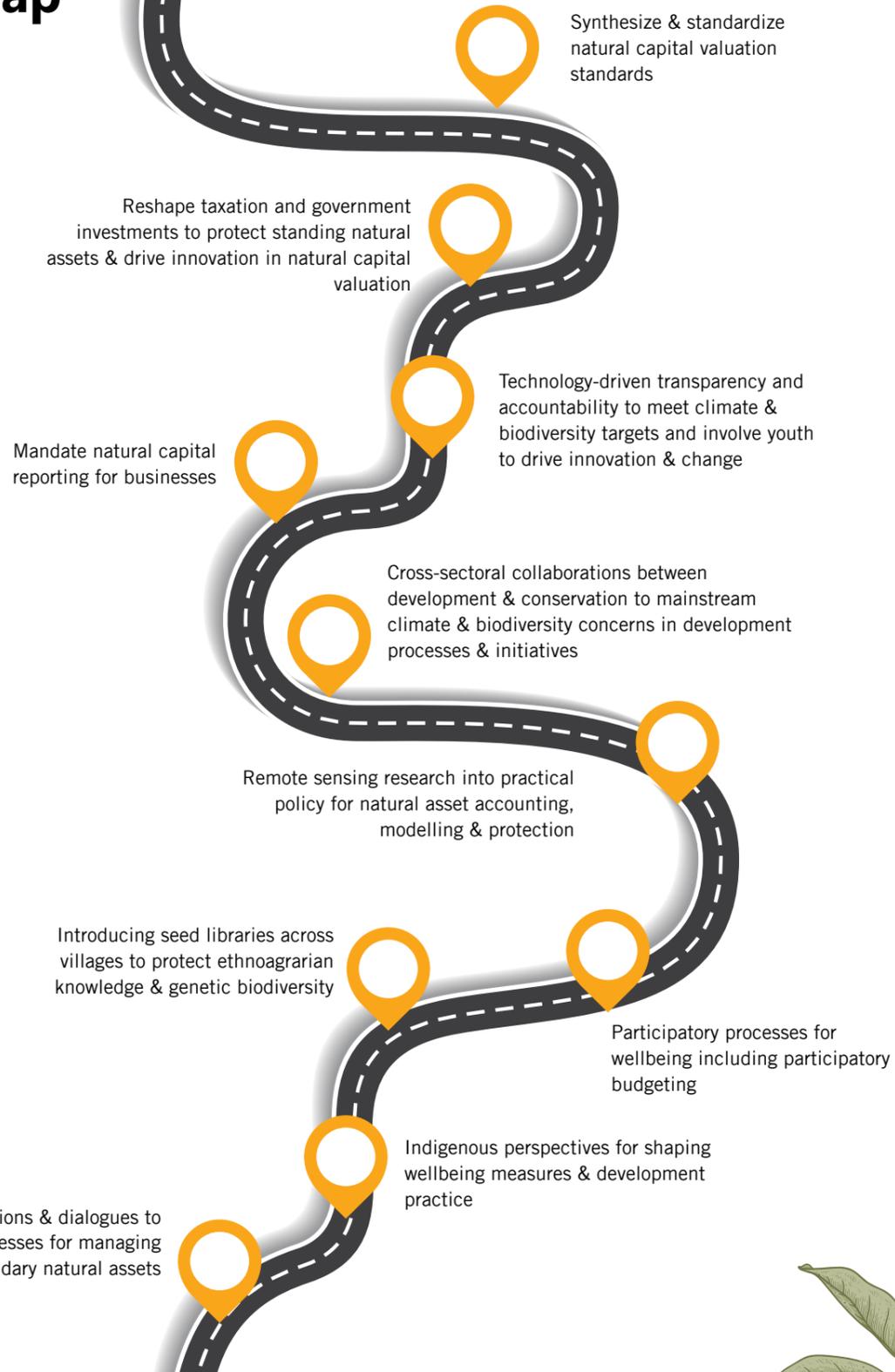
ECOLOGY IS ECONOMY

Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum 2021

The second edition of Ecology is Economy explored opportunities, challenges and recommendations for transitional changes to catalyse the shift needed for the Eastern Himalayan region, across three key thematic areas: the interdependence of ecology & economy, rewilding the future & cross-border innovations for ecology & agroforestry.



Roadmap for the future



EHNF 2021 – Key Delegates



Lord Nicholas Stern
Chairman Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics, UK



Gretchen C. Daily
Co-Founder & Faculty Director, Natural Capital Project, Stanford University, USA



Honourable Chief Minister of Assam,
Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma



Ambassador Shyam Saran
Former Foreign Secretary of India & Prime Minister's Special Envoy For Nuclear Affairs and Climate Change, India



Amanda Janoo
Knowledge & Policy Lead, Wellbeing Economy Alliance, UK



TV Narendran
Managing Director, Tata Steel, India



Ruchika Singh
Director, Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration, World Resources Institute, India



Pianporn (Pai) Deetes
Regional Campaigns and Communications Director, International Rivers, Thailand



Iris Visser
Nature Capital Analyst, Nature Squared, Netherlands



Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud
Member of Parliament, Bangladesh



Usha Lachungpa
Retd. Principal Chief Research Officer, Sikkim State Forest Department, India



Desiree Dreisenaar
External Expert at Blue Economy with European Commission, Netherlands



Regional Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forums: 2021-22

11 Regionals

350 Community voices

15 Partners



Regional Forum hosted in Dzongu, Sikkim



Regional Forum hosted in Sukhai, Zunheboto District, Nagaland

Regional Forums Timeline: 2021- 22



Outcomes

Sukhai CCA, Zunheboto, Nagaland

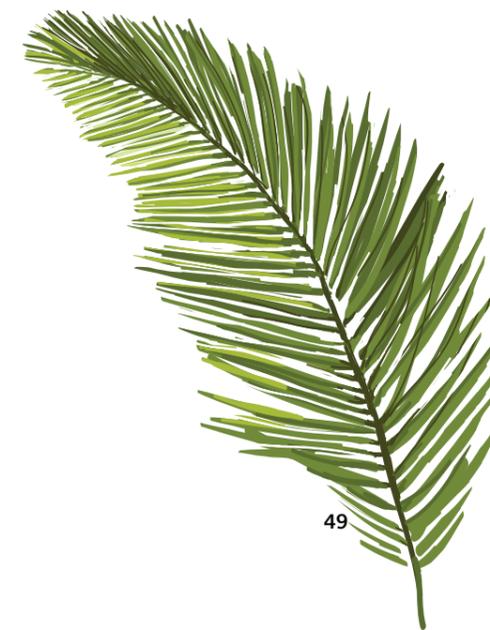
- Agroforestry with 70 households
- 1 lakh sapling raised in community nursery
- Habitat restoration activity in October 2022

Bongmul, Kangpokpi, Manipur

- Orientation & site identification
- Habitat restoration project in 2023
- 1 lakh sapling raised in community nursery
- Agroforestry started in pilot map

Thembang CCA, West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh

- Site identification & Mobilization
- Habitat restoration project in 2023



9th Balipara Foundation Awards 2021

Recognizing Earth Heroes in the Eastern Himalayas

Through the Balipara Foundation Awards, we award, and recognize these extraordinary visionaries of the Eastern Himalayas and their indomitable contribution. Our Awardees continue to live in harmony with nature and adopt sustainable methods for greening the economy.

These Grassroots Leaders empower, engage, sensitize their communities towards environmental protection and create opportunities for rural livelihoods. Adopting new technologies and inventions with indigenous knowledge, they are the custodian experts of the biodiversity in their region.

Recognitions

126 +

Earth heroes since 2013

Restored

2000 +

ha of degraded lands

Livelihoods

2000 +

positively impacted



Rural Futures Rewilding Award

Ivan Zhimomi
Nagaland, India



Naturenomics™ Award

Kurule Tenupa Village
Nepal



Naturenomics™ Award

Sonam Tashi Gyaltzen
Sikkim, India



Food For The Future Award

Momee Pegu
Assam, India



Recipients of Balipara Foundation Awards 2021



Food For The Future Award
Gopal Nag
Assam, India



Green Guru Award
Layland Marak
Meghalaya, India



Forest Rangers & Guards Award
Kime Rambia
Arunachal Pradesh, India



Forest Rangers & Guards Award
Dorji Duba
Bhutan



Green Guru Award
Amir Xamja Xihad
Bangladesh



Young Naturalist Award
Lal Vohbika
Mizoram, India



Special Recognition- Sustainable Entrepreneurship Award
Neeraj Mutha, Tripura, India



Lifetime Service Award
Dr. Prabin Saikia
Assam, India



Rural Futures Rewilding Grant

Manjit Patir
Assam, India

9th RABINDRANATH BARTHAKUR MEMORIAL LECTURE

Honourable Member of Parliament from West Bengal, Smt. Mahua Moitra addressed the Rabindranath Barthakur Memorial Lecture at the 9th Balipara Foundation Awards 2021. “The economy of the Eastern Himalayas relies heavily on ecosystem services. As I have travelled across the Eastern Himalayas, I have seen incomparably beautiful landscapes, green, verdant forests, people whose lives are intertwined with nature in harmony, flora, fauna and rare ecological wonders. But today we are witnessing a structural agricultural collapse, as more and more land is being converted to monoculture, a practice that is putting the earth’s fragile biodiversity at risk. These shrinking forests have cascading effects on the regional landscape and global economics. On an average, approximately 23% of the land in the Eastern Himalayan region has been converted into desert already. The full implication of our actions is apparent. A ‘green’ shift in focus is now extremely crucial in this decade and the next at least, if we want to stand a fighting chance. As we find ourselves with unprecedented challenges, humanity must also look at the unprecedented opportunity also. We have got to transform this crisis into prosperity. But driving such systems to change need systematic action - not just from climate-action leaders, but also for governments, politicians, and policy makers, who are key stakeholders in bringing about this transition.”





CREATING THE RURAL FUTURES BUZZ : STORYTELLING IN ACTION

A long-lasting relationship between people who believe in conservation and livelihood development around the world and the forest fringe communities from the Eastern Himalayas is the primary objective of all our digital platforms at Balipara Foundation. We want to engage our digital following with our vision of Rural Futures and Natureonomics™ with a certain level of credibility and influence. We are working towards a stronger and more effective global community each day to bridge the gap between grassroots conservation heroes and committed individuals who want to contribute in the field of conservation.

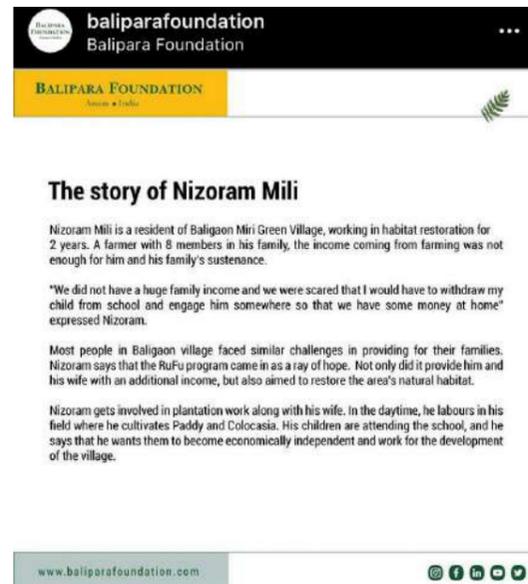
REACH Focus diving deeper with content
Local, National, Global

AWARENESS & EDUCATION
Balipara and its efforts towards driving the natural ecosystem and Sustainability

ENGAGEMENT
Driving valuable conversations, Shareability and building a two way communication

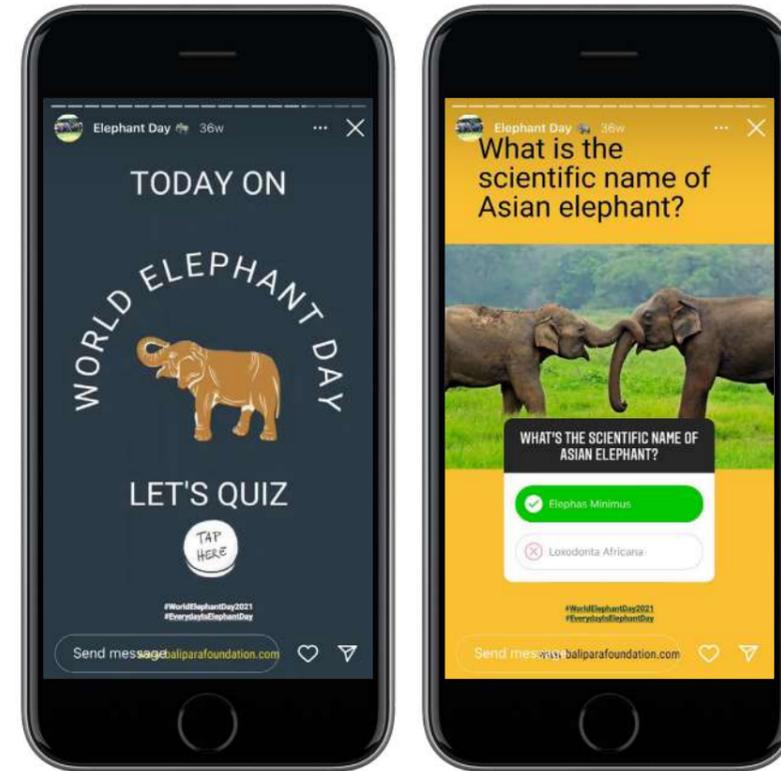
COMMUNITY BUILDING
Building a Strong Community of experts and people who believe in the conservation and livelihood development

Community Case Studies:

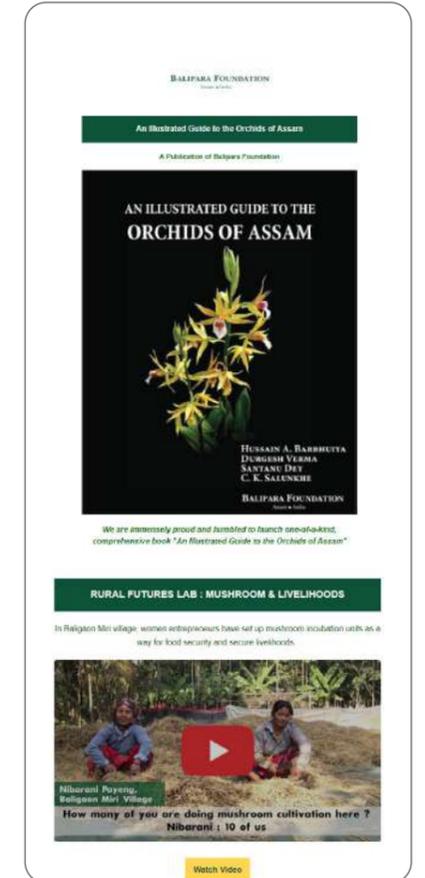


Creating awareness through campaigns:

Earth Day, Environment Day, El ephant Day, Water Day

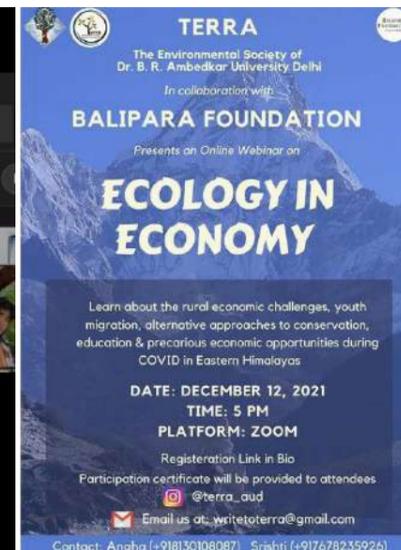
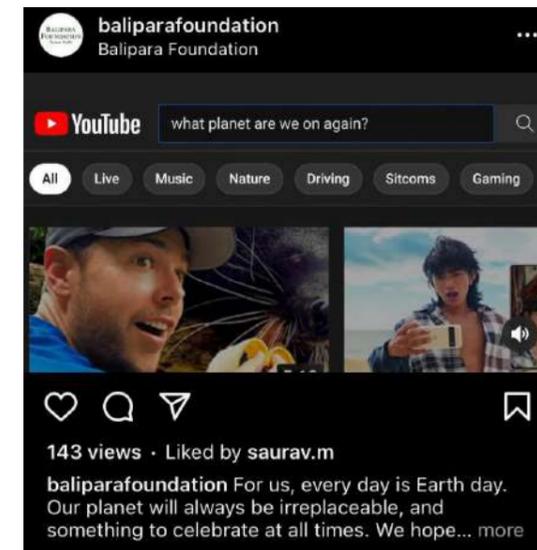


Newsletter



Global Collaborations:

Youtube, TERRA, NGO International Film Festival



Current Numbers

- IG : 3153
- Youtube : 842
- Twitter : 2040
- Linkedin : 868
- Facebook : 26,291
- Newsletter : 1700+



PARTNERSHIPS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

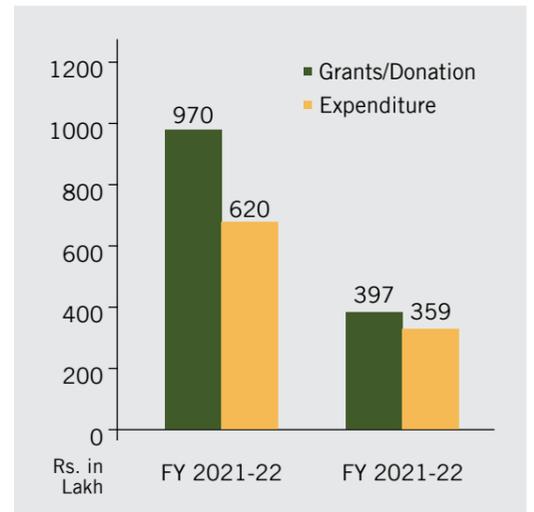


FINANCE

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the Year Ended 31st March 2022

	₹ In Lacs	
	FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21
INCOME		
Domestic Grants	589.44	391.39
FCRA Grants	373.48	-
Other Income	6.85	5.16
Total Income	969.77	396.55
EXPENDITURE		
Programmatic Expenditure	487.58	297.52
Depreciation	3.50	3.10
Administrative Expenditure	128.55	58.19
Total Expenditure	619.63	358.81

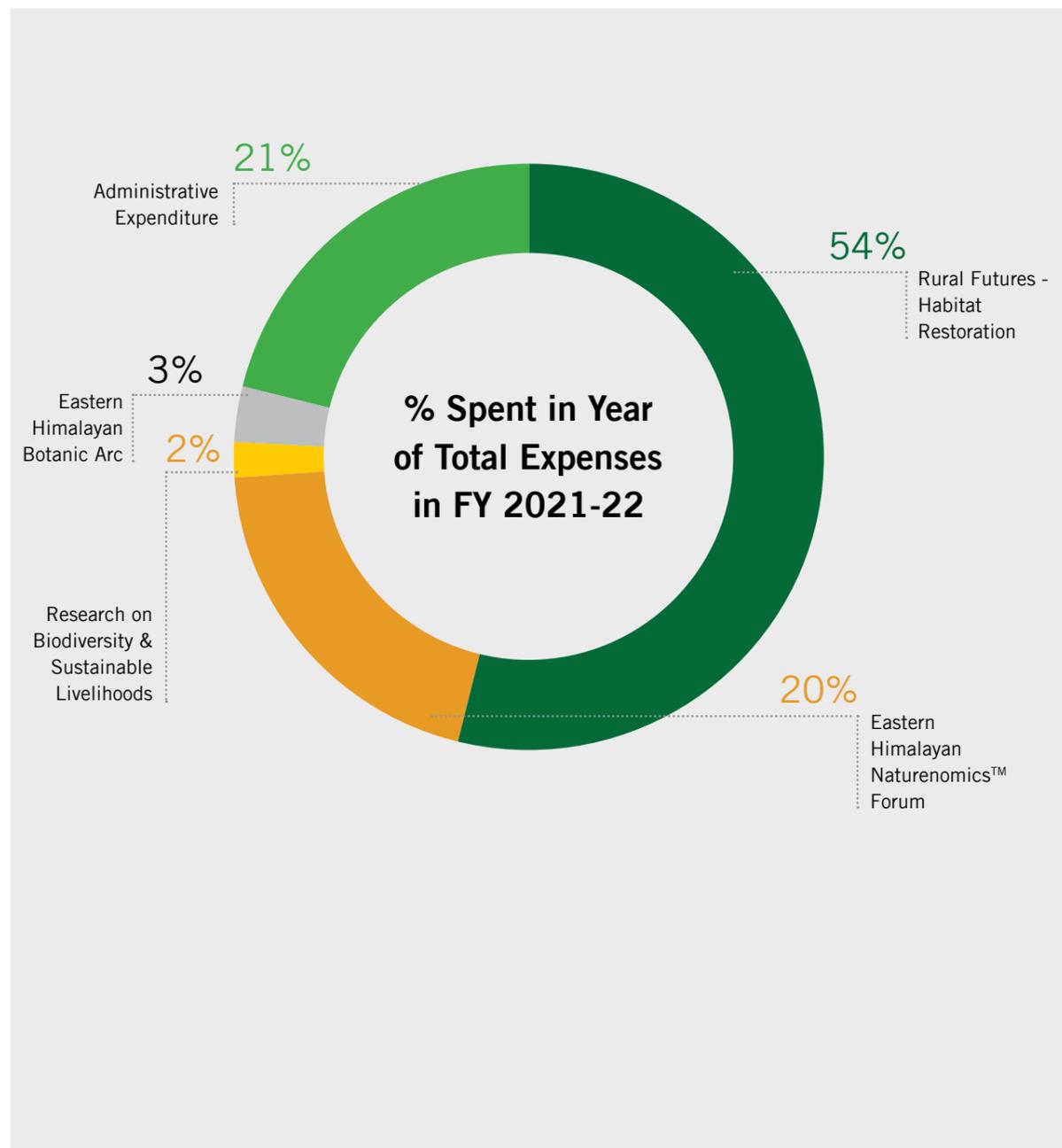


BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st March 2022

	₹ In Lacs	
	FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21
FUND & LIABILITIES		
Trust Fund & Corpus	87.66	87.66
Grant Balances & Programme Fund	149.06	112.1
FCRA Fund	342.24	5.73
Non Current Liability	33.15	33.15
Current Liability & Payables	6.21	9.67
Total	618.32	248.31
PROPERTY & ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	25.94	22.68
Investments	252.75	46.77
Cash & Bank in Hand	332.82	176.59
Other Current Assets	6.81	2.27
Total	618.32	248.31

Particulars	% Spent in Year of Total Expenses in FY 2021-22	Amount Spent for FY 2021-22 (Rs. In Lacs)
Rural Futures - Habitat Restoration	54%	334.60
Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics™ Forum	20%	123.10
Research on Biodiversity & Sustainable Livelihoods	2%	11.48
Eastern Himalayan Botanic Arc	3%	18.20
Administrative Expenditure	21%	128.55
Total	100%	615.93



WHAT'S NEXT 2030



100,000 hectares

Rewilding



400,000

people



100 million

natural assets



INR 10,640 crores

natural capital incomes

Launching the Rural Futures fellowship for indigenous & rural youth to rewild the Eastern Himalayas
 Payment for ecosystems services programmes for long-term community incomes linked to carbon sequestration



TEAM BALIPARA FOUNDATION

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| 
Andrés Bateman
Rural Futures - Social Ecologist | 
Ankit Jha
Rural Futures - Knowledge and Advocacy | 
Ashok Kumar Gupta
Rural Futures - Natural Capital Curator | 
Mahan Chandra Borah
Rural Futures- Ace Agroforester | 
Manoj Gogoi
Rural Futures- Wildlife Wizard | 
Nibedan Kurmi
Rural Futures- Forester |
| 
Awoto L
Rural Futures- Forester | 
Bankim Hazarika
Rural Futures - Operations Architect | 
Bhadra Nahak
Rural Futures- Forester | 
Nikita Kumari Verma
Finance Consultant | 
Nilakantha Deka
Rural Futures - Assistant Natural Capital | 
Nripen Mili
Rural Futures- Forester |
| 
Bijit Kumar Dutta
Rural Futures- Ranger | 
Biman Mili
Rural Futures- Ranger | 
Binita Kakati
Rural Futures - Human Ecologist | 
Phulen Das
Rural Futures- Forester | 
Prabir Banerjea
Managing Member | 
Pranab Jyoti Kalita
Rural Futures - GIS |
| 
Chandra Bahadur Darji
Rural Futures- Taxonomist | 
Cynthia Doley
Rural Futures - Communications Architect | 
Deva Pratim Das
Rural Futures- Ranger | 
Rabijeeta Lahkar
Rural Futures- Operations Architect | 
Rajen Kurmi
Rural Futures- Ranger | 
Ranjit Barthakur
Founder - Forester |
| 
Gautam Baruah
Rural Futures - Chief Operations Architect | 
Gunjana Chaudhury
Rural Futures- Ecological Analyst | 
Harikrishnan Palampatta
Rural Futures - Grant & Impact Curator | 
Ranjan Boro
Rural Futures - Ace Gardener | 
Rohit Chauhan
Rural Futures - Impact Curator | 
Sandeep Borah
Rural Futures - Communications Architect |
| 
Jiten Deka
EHNF - Government Liaison | 
Joanna Dawson
Rural Futures – Anthropological Visioner | 
John Sona
Rural Futures - Natural Capital | 
Sangita Deka
Rural Futures- Ecologist | 
Saurav Malhotra
Rural Futures - Co-Founder & Designer | 
Sunil Colaso
Rural Futures - Catalyst & Transformer |
| 
Jyotisman Bora
Rural Futures- Forester | 
Karishma Ahmed
Rural Futures - Chief Communications Architect | 
Lina Gogoi
Rural Futures- Ace Researcher | 
Susil Ngate
Rural Futures- Forester | 
Trecy Gomes
Rural Futures - Enabler | 
Tsuseki
Rural Futures - Forester |

REACH US



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[balipara foundation](https://www.youtube.com/balipara-foundation)



[The Himalayan](https://www.medium.com/balipara-foundation)



Growing since 2007



BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

Naturenomics™ : Building Rural Futures

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the-himalayan