

Grassroot

Annual Report 2019-2020



**Wahingdoh, Block III (Opposite MIMHANS Hospital) Shillong 793001,
MEGHALAYA**

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

The year 2019-2020 marked the upheaval of a cultural pride among the young people of the state. Languages and traditions were exchanged and showcased to brave the richness of our heritage. The 9th of August 2019 was the year of Indigenous languages where for the first time, Grassroot hosted an array of young minds to create a platform that will cater to the future of where our heritage stands.

Ongoing projects like the Sustainable Livelihood for Women in East Jaintia Hills witnessed many women challenging the existence of mono- cropping and imbibe Integrated Farming System with the support of the organization. They also began agricultural journeys sans mining to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for themselves and their generations to come. I am more than proud to mention here that for the first time in the history of Mutong village, they have a local bakery.

The Integrated Farming System extended to places we never thought the organisation would reach. Amazingly, most trainees who attended the training are women who are willing to take farming to an entrepreneurial level. It is empowering to see this mindset taking off in a manner of tremendous growth!!

Projects and initiatives would have not been possible without the passionate and professional efforts of the team. It is with the young and fresh ideas of professional social workers in the organisation that we see it growing into a mighty team of where it stands today. We are proud to have seen three team members representing the Khasi and Jaintia tribes of the state at the United Nations Level in Geneva and Newyork. This has not only brought the organisation's name at the international level but has also broaden our intellect and deepen our passions to work stronger with the indigenous tribes of our

state, Meghalaya.

Our Finance team, the backbone of the organization has a committed support to back up the programmes with their sound technical and financial input and suggestions for better work of each activity. For this, I bow humbly at the support they render.

I stand with pride, gratitude to the team and solidarity with my people,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mayfereen Ryntathiang', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mayfereen Ryntathiang

President, Grassroot

ABOUT GRASSROOT

Grassroot works with communities, government and non-government agencies and like-minded individual in empowering economically and socially oppressed sections to achieve and enhance their rights.

As the years came about, Grassroot have thrived its roots in the field of Health, Livelihood activities, research and Empowerment through capacity building programmes. This can be witnessed through the extensive works at the community level. This report therefore brings snippets of the activities the Organization had conducted during the year 2019-2020.

NO	PARTICLUARS	BRIEF
1	Entity Name	GRASSROOT
2	Head Office	Wahingdoh, Block III (Opposite MIMHANS hospital) Shillong – 793001 Meghalaya
3	Mission Vision	Responsibility and Power of the Individuals and the Community Achieving the Mass Responsibility through Social Empowerment
3	Profile	Social Enterprise with a rights-based approach towards: 1. Youth Engagement 2. Livelihood Development 3. Advocacy and Awareness in the Citizenship space 4. Curation & Preservation of Tradition and Culture
4	Incorporated	Founded in September, 2007 Registered under the Meghalaya Societies Registration Act, 1983 12 AA of IT Act 1961/F.no 136/12 AA/CIT (TECH)/SHG/11-12 FCRA: 214250108 under the registration under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, Ministry of Home Affairs,

		Government of India
5	Years of Existence	13 years
6	Services Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultancy Services for Human Rights - Surveys, Research & documentation - Youth and Community Mobilisation Efforts - Awareness campaigns for Health based Interventions, Livelihood, rights entitlements', breaking gender based stereotypes - Market Linked Interventions for livelihood up -gradation - Life Skills Interventions
7	Operational Territory	East Khasi Hills District, Ri Bhoi District, East Jaintia Hills District, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in the state of Meghalaya.
8	Contact Person's Details	Mayfereen Ryntathiang President, Grassroot
9	Contact Details	PHONE +91.8974632962/03642950406 EMAIL: grassroot2007@gmail.com Website: www.grassrootshillong.org
10	PAN No	AAAAG7114J
11	Ongoing Projects/Programmes (2017-2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrepreneurship Development Training and Capacity Building Interventions National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) Client: Meghalaya Urban Development Authority Impact: 250 individuals across 21 Self-Help Groups were mobilized and trained Period: Commenced in 2015; Completed 2. Integrated Farming Training and Capacity Building Interventions Client: Meghalaya State Skills Development Society/ADB Impact: 100 farmers were mobilized and trained; projected impact is 200 Farmers Period: Commenced in 2018; Ongoing 3. Sustainable Livelihood post NGT banned on Coal

		<p>Mining for Women in East Jaintia Hills Client: Bread for the World, Germany/Church for Auxiliary Social Action Impact: 1200 individuals, 10 Community Based Organization were mobilized and trained Period: 2017; Ongoing</p> <p>4. Food Security: Documenting the traditional herbs of women practitioners in the state (Completed)</p> <p>Client: International Indigenous Women Forum(IIWf)</p> <p>Period: 2017-2018</p> <p>Impact: 32 direct women practitioners and 100 indirect</p>
12	Soft Skills and Youth Development Training (2017-2020)	<p>1. Building Leaders Programme Training and Capacity Building for Undergraduates Client: Shankar Dev College, Communities Format: 25 hours per Participant</p> <p>Impact: 600 individuals Period: 2016-2017, 2019-2020</p> <p>2. Youth Parliament Young Engagement Workshop Supported by the Voluntary Action Fund Chief Minister's Fund of the Government of Meghalaya</p> <p>Impact: 150 Youth from assorted colleges and districts Period: October, 2018</p> <p>TOTAL SOFT SKILLS IMPACT: 650 Individuals</p>
13	Team Strength	<p>02 Administrative 05 Team members 02 Field Staff</p> <p>Staff Members belonging to Scheduled Tribes: 100%</p>

ORGANISATION'S OBJECTIVES**CULTURE
AND TRADITION**

Ensure efficient local, social and political structures allowing communities to build the future of their own region without eroding biodiversity

Ensure people to be in a position to upgrade traditional skills, know-how and culture

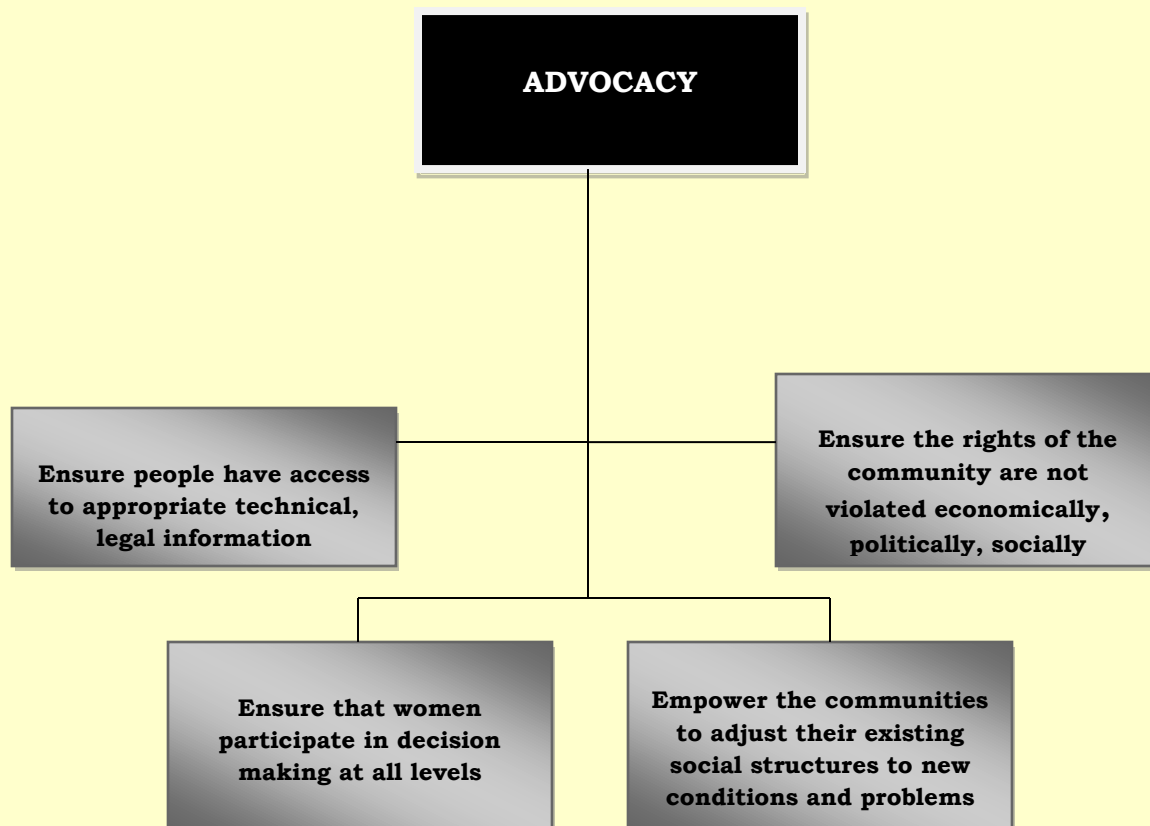
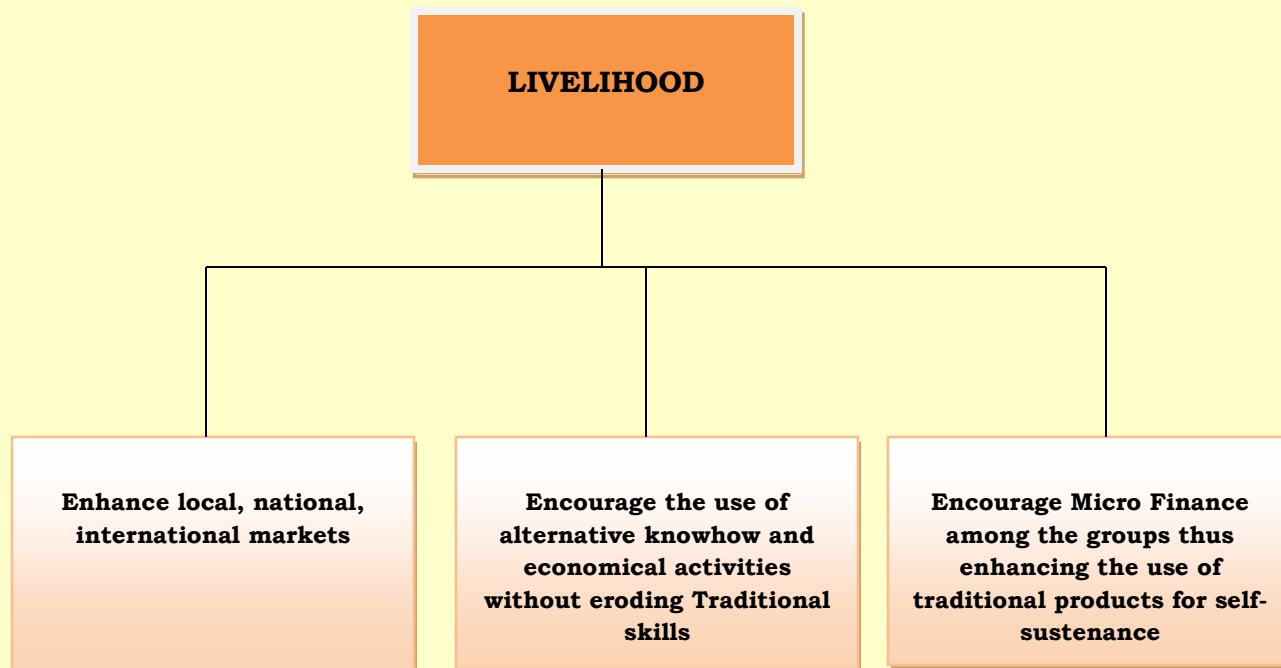
Encourage utilisation of natural resources to develop human resources to meet social needs

YOUTH

Encourage self employment of educated/uneducated youth

Encourage young people to take responsibility in the development of the community

Empower young people to think beyond formal education and take interest in the culture and history of their community



PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN 2019-2020

NATIONAL URBAN LIVELIHOOD MISSION (NULM)

The National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) started in April 2006 as an initiative with the Meghalaya Urban Development Authority (MUDA), to reduce vulnerability and poverty in urban households. Grassroot is involved in handholding 30 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the municipal area. Grassroot facilitates enhancing livelihood opportunities through linkages with allied agencies. NULM aims at reducing poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households. Urban poverty being multi-dimensional leaves economically backward groups with various uncertainties like occupational, residential and social.

Since the year of partnership, Grassroot has conducted a myriad activities for the SHGs formed. This partnership came to an end in the year 2020.

Activities

1. The SHGs from Mawiong were networked with Bethany Society for the training on Integrated Farming System (IFS) which was held on the month of May to June 2019. 13 members received the training. On 18th of June 2019, the Resource Organisation/Grassroot visited the four SHGs from Mawiong who attended the training on Integrated Farming System conducted by Bethany Society. While interacting with the SHGs members we got good response that this training helps them to start up their own activities which can help them to earn income and support their family.
2. On 19th June 2019, a meeting was held with the city manager and the President of Lumlang Area Level Federation at Shillong Municipal office. The agenda discussed were on:

- Follow up all the groups regarding the monthly meeting, collection of money, activities of each group and follow their future plan.
- Note down all the products producing by the groups.
- Planning to organise two days Mela Market to showcase all the products



produced by the group members.

3. On 24th June 2019, a meeting was held with Grace SHG at Police Reserve. The president and secretary of Grace SHG are very active and they have tried to start up with the

activities like making Garo traditional attire to sustain the group.

4. On 25th June 2019, a meeting was held with Iaid Shaphrang SHG members at Mawiong. Iaid Shaphrang is a newly formed SHG in the month of March, 2019. There are seven members in this group, three of them they have completed one month training on Integrated Farming System conducted by Bethany Society. These three members will trained other groups so that to sustain the members.



5. A mela market was organised on the 9th of September 2019 at State Central Library. The mela market was supported by SMB with a goal to build confidence and enthusiasm of small entrepreneurs and to provide platform not only through direct sales of products but encouraging entrepreneurs to various aspect of marketing and developing linkages with other markets. 4 stalls were hired for this mela but only Grace SHG



c

e Reserve turned up and sold their traditional food. The event was not successful due to the absence of the other SHGs.

6. An exposure trip was organised by Grassroot on the 3rd of December 2019



for the Sisterhood NGO based at Dimapur, Nagaland. The goal of this trip is to expose the SHGs to other NGOs doing similar work for the exchange of ideas and expertise. The team visited to Kyntiewlang, Iaineh, Persara and IaidShaphrang SHGs.

7. Exposure trip to Rural

Resource Training Centre (RRTC), Umran, RiBhoi District, for the SHGs members was organised on the 9th of January 2020. The objectives of organising the exposure trip is to help the SHGs' members to get exposed with an idea to start up activities which they are interested and also to build network



with other institutions like RRTC, Bethany Society and other departments. Interactions were held with the RRTC Administrator and Training Coordinator. We visited the Food Processing Unit where they are making pickles, candy, jams and local wine by using the local fruits. We also visited the Vermi Compost, Beekeeping, Piggery Unit, horticulture and Flora Culture Units. The trip has inspired the SHGs' members to start their own units.



The SHGs formed by Grassroot are given below:

Sl. No	Name of Self Help Group formed under Day- NULM	Address
1	Grace	Police Reserve, Shillong
2	Khalsa	Garoline, Shillong
3	Lakshmi	Jhalupara, Shillong
4	Megha	Lumsophoh, Upper Mawprem Shillong
5	Prena	Upper Mawprem Shillong, EKH
6	Shiva	Upper Mawprem
7	Peace	Bara Pathar, Shillong
8	Annie	Punjabi Line
9	Rose	Punjabi Line

10	Gimini	Jhalupara
11	Namrata	Jhalupara
12	Samridhi	Lapalang
13	Kyntiewlang	Mawroh, Shillong
14	Iaikyntiewlang	Lumparing, Shillong
15	Persara	Mawiong, Shillong
16	Iaineh	Mawiong, Shillong
17	Iatyllilang	Mawlai, Shillong
18	Iaidshaphrang	MawiongShillong
19	Pynroi	Mawiong, Shillong
20	Laweibabha	Wahingdoh, Shillong
21	Iasnokhtilang	Mawlai, Shillong

Achievements: It is noted worthy that four Self Help Groups namely Iaineh SHG, Gemini SHG, Kyntiewlang SHG and Iaidkyntiewlang SHG have come forward to participate in different programmes at the Cherry blossom and Saras fair. Lumlang Area Level Federation is one of the federations which have been able to take the initiative in organizing training programmes for the SHGs.

Challenges: The delay in the releasing of the revolving fund is one of the challenges because some groups who have already formed were waiting for the seed money from the Municipal office to start up their activities.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR WOMEN

The partnership between Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) and Grassroot began in the year 2017. Grassroot works on the project called Sustainable Livelihood for Women in the coal mining areas of East Jaintia Hills. This project is partnered with CASA with the support from 'Bread for the World', Germany. It started in the month of June 2017 in 20 villages of East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat Block, Meghalaya. The goal of the project is to empower individuals and communities for sustainable development.

Project objectives:

- To understand the negative and positive impact of NGT on livelihood
- To identify the impact on health issues as a result of extensive mining
- To Empower youth and other social groups as agents of positive change
- To advocate for women's contribution towards a better livelihood possibilities



Project areas: The 20 villages are divided into four clusters according to their geographical location.

Table: Project areas in East Jaintia Hills				
Cluster-1		Cluster-2	Cluster-3	Cluster-4
Tuber	Kmai,	Byrwai,	Dkhiahwest,	Moolang,

Tuber Sohshrieh, Wapung Shnong, Wapung Skur, Iongkaluh	Sohkymphor, Pamrakmai, Pamrapithlu	Dkhiaheast, Umtyra, Kairang, Byndihati, Iapmala	Lumshyrmith, Chamcham, Mutong, Musniangrim
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Activities completed and Processing:

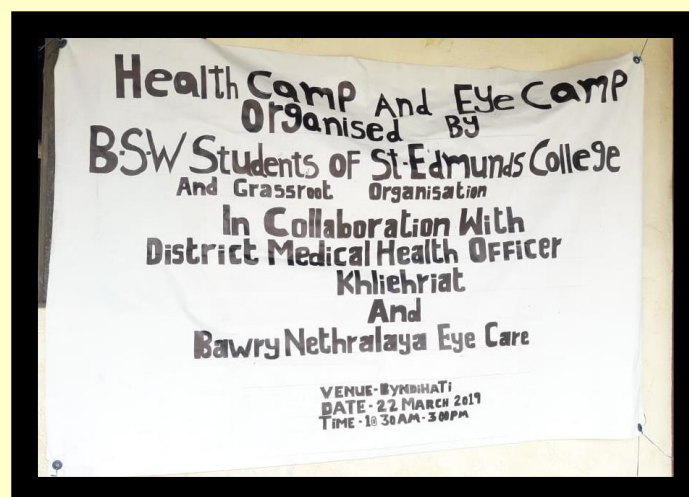
Activities	Completed	Processing
Baseline Survey	Completed baseline study at the 20 villages	To follow up and update the present status regarding schemes which are available in the community
Participatory of Rural Appraisal	Completed Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) at 18 villages out of the 20	
Formation of CBOs	18 CBOs are formed with 400 members	Strengthening the CBOs from time to time with activities and regular follow up
Awareness on Rights and Entitlements	Around 200 community members are made aware on the rights and entitlements	More awareness programmes on rights and entitlements will be conducted to strengthen the knowledge of the people and empower them

Health Camp	100 community members have received free checkup during health camp conducted by Grassroot in collaboration with the health department of Khliehriat CHC	More health camps will be organized on a need basis
Integrated Farming System Training	39 farmers from Mutong village have been trained on Integrated Farming System	The training on IFS will be carried forward in 2020 to other villages of our project areas
Plastic Festival	Grassroot in collaboration with Mutong Tourism and Environment Society, Swacch Bharat Mission and Deputy Commisioner of EJH had organized a two days Plastic Festival at Mutong village in the month of February 2020	
Cleaning Drive	200 community members of Mutong Village participated and	

	at the Cleaning drive organized by Grassroot in collaboration of Mutong Tourism and Environment Society on the 14 th of February 2020 at Lad Rymbai Market, East Jaintia Hills	
Livelihood Skills Training for the youths		180 youths will be trained on Livelihood Skills
Exclusive Football for Gender Mainstreaming		Grassroot will be organizing an inclusive football tournament to the youth in Khliehriat Block

Achievement:

- Building rapport with the community members through programmes conducted thus sustaining the interest of the people.



Way forward:

- Strengthening the CBOs.
- Advocating the rights and entitlements.
- Networking with line departments.
- Gender mainstreaming.
- Mainstreaming local capacities for peace and working on conflict.
- Strengthen communities for rights entitlements.



INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM (IFS)

Grassroot is partnering with Bethany Society and Meghalaya State Skill Development Society (MSSDS) for the training on Integrated Farming System (IFS). The Integrated Farming System (IFS) approach introduces a change in the farming techniques for maximum production in the cropping pattern and takes care of optimal utilization of resources. A judicious mix of agricultural enterprises like dairy, poultry, piggery, goatery, fishery, forestry, etc., suited to the region and socio-economic status of the farmers would bring prosperity in the farming.



The overall aim of the training is to enable the farmers to **learn new technologies** in order to **earn and increase their income**.

The IFS training is an inclusive training and lasted about 25-30 days with 8

hours of training per day. Both practical and theory sessions were taken on different

components of IFS which includes soil management, vegetable cultivation, piggery and poultry farming based on *bokashi* technology,



entrepreneurship and enterprise development, soft skills and developmental schemes. The sessions were taken by the trainers from Grassroot along with the expertise of other line departments such as Agriculture Technology and Management Agency (ATMA) which took session on soil management, Horticulture department, Centre of Learning, Knowledge and Services (COLKS) on beekeeping, Veterinary department on livestock rearing and caring and Entrepreneur Ms. Kerbhalin D. Diengdoh on Food Processing.

A total of 100 community members have been trained by Grassroot team from these villages. The training is expected to extend to other parts of Meghalaya in the coming financial year.



Table: Training Status on IFS						
Name of Village	Blocks & District	Distance from Shillong city (in kms)	Date of training	Number of trainees		Total
				Male	Female	
Umtyrkhang	Umsning Block, RiBhoi District	92.7	12-03-2019 to 06-04-2019	4	26	30
Umsaw	Jirang Block, RiBhoi District	105	12-06-2019 to 16-07-2019	0	31	31
Mutong	Khliehriat Block, East Jaintia Hills District	95	06-09-2019 to 14-10-2019	6	33	39
TOTAL						100

The training has created a positive impact on the trainees. There are success stories amongst the trainees who have been able to sell the bio-concoctions for their profit, improve the health of plant and animals through the use of the bio-concoctions, the start of a bakery enterprise by a young woman from Mutong village, selling of jams and pickles.

At the end of the training, the trainees are able to:

- Prepare their own bio concoctions and use them for their agricultural products

- Implement what was taught during the training that benefitted them
- Demonstrate effective competency and productivity.

Some of the Feedback from the trainees:

“The training has improved our skills and knowledge”; “I love that the training has both theory and practical which are all relevant”; “I love working in a group as I learn faster”; “The bio-concoctions that I prepared are very useful to the plant, animals and even us humans”; “The duration of the training is very lengthy which bars me from doing other work”; “I want to attend more similar trainings to benefit me”.



RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LINKAGE-PROJECT WITH SELCO

Sustainable Energy and Livelihood Company or SELCO partnered with Grassroot in the year 2019. With Grassroot working to improve livelihood in the communities, using of renewable energy sources has become a top priority in order to meet the continuing demand for energy in the region. Grassroot acts as a facilitator to the communities to advocate for renewable energy usage through the application of technologies for agriculture and other livelihood activities and in order to become less dependent on fossil fuels and reduce carbon footprint.

Activities

- SELCO team along with Grassroot members went to Dkhiah East, Dkhiah West and WapungSkurvillages, East Jaintia Hills District, on the 4th of September 2019 to facilitate the use of renewable energy through the use of machines run by solar energy. Computer lab, solar street lamp and solar run washing machine were few of the suggestions made by the headmen of the three villages. Few stakeholders from these communities were chosen for the project and will be contacted for further intimation.



Based Organisation (CBO) members from Chamcham, Lumshyrmit, Mutong and Umtyrkhang villages attended the North East Trade Facilitation Fair for Sustainable Energy and

Livelihood Technologies exhibition held at Guwahati, Assam. The objectives of bringing ten community leaders to this exhibition are in order to build leadership and ownership and to facilitate the Application of Technologies for Agriculture and Livelihood activities. Participants came from different Districts of North East region to attend the exhibition. There are good responses from the CBOs members as they were very enthusiastic and happy to attend these kinds of exhibitions. SELCO members interacted directly with the CBO members on the available livelihood technologies that can speed up their production. The exhibition enabled the team to connect and network for the purchase of solar technologies such as rice pounding machine, turmeric slicer, solar street panel, solar cooking utensils and others which are required by the farmers in the communities.



**DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT
(GIZ)/GERMAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT*****Bokashi* piggery shed construction****Location: Umtyrkhang village, RiBhoi District, Meghalaya**

Grassroot is partnering with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) who provides fund for agricultural and allied practices. With the fund obtained from GIZ, Grassroot is constructing a *Bokashi* piggery shed at Umtyrkhang village, RiBhoi District, Meghalaya. This technology was implemented at Umtyrkhang village post integrated farming system (IFS) training which was given to 30 farmers.

Bokashi piggery, one of the components of IFS, is a method of rearing pigs using a climate smart technology, where the pigs can grow upto 100 kgs within 6-7 months only. The *bokashi* piggery shed is filled with logs for providing oxygen and other mixed ingredients such as charcoal powder, sawdust, rice bran, dried leaves, top soil, black salt, bamboo vinegar and Indigenous Micro Organisms (IMO). These ingredients have different qualities that benefit the pigs. These benefits include- no smell, no flies, healthy pigs, reduces loss of food, good compost for gardening and the floor can be used as feed for the pigs.

The construction of the *bokashi* piggery sheds (2) at Umtyrkhang village is left incomplete due to financial constraints. One of the sheds is completed while the other is left incomplete. It commenced from the 10th of September 2019 and was



stopped on the 30th of November 2019.

The size of the *bokashi* piggery shed constructed at Umtyrkhang village is 16 square feet. About 60 per cent of the construction is done and the remaining 40 percent is yet to be completed. Funds need to be raised again for this construction.



GIRLS EMPOWERMENT MOVEMENT (GEMS)

GEMS is a movement established in 2012 in USA. Its mission is to empower women (mainly through education) to think big and realise their full potential. GEMS help women and young girls to better themselves, their communities and in fact, the entire world.

Grassroot supports the initiative and render help in the construction of a multipurpose educational space of a school at Umroi Madan, Ri Bhoi District, Meghalaya. This initiative is funded by GEMS from Melville, New York, USA. The Multipurpose educational space is constructed to create space for the students to expand their creativity and life skills learning beyond their

academic curriculum. Grassroot took this initiative believing in empowering the girls not to be only equipped with grades but to sustain themselves with God given skills and values and these traits needs to be tapered, explored and

shared for the upliftment and growth of an individual and community.



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CAMPAIGNS, INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

WORLD INDIGENOUS DAY COMMEMORATION

Theme: '*Ka Ktien Baiar U Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum*'

The two-day programme was held at the Pastoral Centre, Shillong, on the 8th and 9th of August, 2019. It was organised by Grassroot and supported by the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI). The programme included remarkable events pertaining to the acknowledgement, the preservation and enrichment of the Khasi language, or in its wider sense, the language of the *U Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum* (an umbrella term identified by the indigenous sub tribes of the region) as evident in its theme, '*Ka Lawei ka Ktien Baiar U Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum*'.

The **goal of this programme** is to introduce to young people ancestral history and knowledge, encourage the art of conversing in one's mother tongue, and inculcate a sense of ownership of one's roots.

The objectives of the Training include:

- 1) To impart the importance of culture, roots and traditions in our everyday lives among 40 representatives.
- 2) Enhance the understanding of the importance of one's mother tongue and encourage in preserving the community's individual practice and ancestral knowledge



Activities:

1) A panel discussion by Indigenous Practitioners from the Khasi, Jaintia, Garo and Bhoi on “Indigenous Language is important and it’s role in passing on Ancestral Knowledge”

Theme: ‘Ka Ktien Baiar U Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum’



2) Group Discussions and formation of Group for group activities

Description of the above activities

First Activity: The panel discussion consisted of experts from respective dialects of the Khasi language, chosen specifically from different parts of the Khasi-Jaintia, Ri Bhoi, Lngam and War region Hills were invited to speak on the threats and possibilities concerning the language. The discussion that followed was highly informative and many of those present, would concur that this is indeed a start of something remarkable, perhaps a transition of some kind for the Khasi language and its persistence in the world that is gradually heading towards multiculturalism.

Second Activity: The youths attending the event, participated in an ice breaking activity and in providing feedback, identifying, addressing and solving various issues that afflict our language in the present day. The subsequent presentations were surprisingly colourful as each presenter had to present in their own dialect, further elevating the theme of the event. The activity would continue until the next day as it is a long series of discussions, particularly fueled by relevant points from the panel discussion such as:



- (i) To preserve the alphabets 'ĩ' and 'ñ' on the backdrop of present day digital parlance of communication where these alphabets do not feature.
- (ii) To incorporate other alphabets wherever necessary, such as 'c' or 'ch' or 'chĩ'.
- (iii) A question arose as to whether preservation and enrichment of the language solely lies in the culture or more so in the oral culture?
- (iv) To accommodate words from all dialects for enrichment of the vocabulary.

Major Difficulties Encountered

Time constraint – The programme would have been more effective if the sessions were held for at least three days. But due to budget constraint, the same couldn't be held. A training session on Indigenous Rights would have added a wholesome experience for the participants. However this was solved as participants were given copies of the UNDRIP which is a very useful advocacy tool that the youth can read anytime.

However, overall the programme was enriching and we hope to be able to continue with this programme in the years to come involving more youth.

Results Achieved

A panel discussion was held to impart the age old knowledge on gender balances and imbalances as very well facilitated by Kong Sweetymon Rynjah.

This was further enhanced when questions were raised and prodded by the representatives of the event on reviving age old tradition vis a vis a modern changing society.

The young representatives of the event are still aware of their dialect and cultural heritage as we witnessed the discussion of the many societal issues in



their own dialect. It is seen that these young men and women are enthusiastic to take this forward in daily interactions and discussions as most presentations of such were deliberated in their own dialect.

Recommendations and Suggestions On/Or Activities and Results

- 1) In-depth research on the existing and dying dialects.
- 2) Written documentation on dialect to enable the exchange for generations to come.
- 3) Folk tales and folk lores to be written in our own dialect.
- 4) Exchange of discourse between different cultures in our own land.

TESTIMONIES FROM THE COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD INDIGENOUS DAY HELD ON THE 8TH AND 9TH OF AUGUST 2019 – ORGANISED BY GRASSROOT

Name: SOLOMON F. PATHAW

Age: 23

Gender: Male

Community: Khasi

The World Indigenous Day which was first held in Shillong, Meghalaya on the 8th and 9th of August by Grassroot in collaboration with the International Indigenous Women Forum, was a great initiative which gave a platform to share views and ideas with regards to sustaining our language and also our traditions and culture.

With the theme “Ka Lawei Jong Ka Ktien U Hynniewtrep”, as one of the participant it was really one of an eye opening program that I have attended, for throughout the program all the brainstorming and the discussion sessions that we had was truly based on the theme mentioned above.

Being a participant I felt privileged to have had the chance to attend the program as being a Khasi I gained more insight about our culture, tradition and most importantly about our people and the language which I had little knowledge about before, but through this program I began to understand the richness of our culture, our music and our language.

The whole program was beautifully executed by all the members of Grassroot. Besides the lack in punctuality from our side (participants) the program was systematically organized with no delays in starting and in moving from one activity to the other which shows how well planned the program was.

The inclusion of games in between the sessions and the presence of many great panelist who made it more interesting, brighten up the whole session.

The whole program was a blast, I had a great experience and learned so much about our rich culture, I hope that in the future it could be a one week program for I feel that two days was too short.

Signature: S. Pathaw

KITCHEN GARDEN REVOLUTION

Kitchen garden is an old concept. However, its implementation is not widely done in our State. The importance of a kitchen garden is great and manifold. A kitchen garden ensures an inexpensive, regular and handy supply of fresh vegetables which are basic to nutrition.

With the knowledge on Integrated Farming System, in 2019 Grassroot team initiated a plan to start a kitchen garden in schools with mid-day meal programme. The objectives of starting a kitchen garden in schools are:

1. To supplement the need of fresh vegetables and nutrients to students who are getting mid-day meals.
2. To reconnect students with the natural world and teach them valuable gardening and agricultural concepts and skills that integrate with several subjects.
3. To inculcate personal and social responsibilities among students.
4. To encourage schools to undertake kitchen gardening as extra-curricular activities for students to stay fit and healthy while spending time outdoors.

With the help of intern students from St. Edmunds College, Shillong, starting from the month of October 2019, Grassroot team approached schools and had started the activity at Synjuk Secondary School and Arya Vidyalaya Secondary School in Shillong. After orientation and theory



classes on the preparation of bio-concoctions, students from these schools along with the interns started cleaning and planting few vegetables.

The Revolution will expand and reach to other schools as well in this coming financial year.

GREEN CAMPAIGN INITIATIVE

Grassroot partnered with Green Ammo, a team of individuals who are environmentalists, to use innovations for improving livelihood in the communities as well as reduce carbon footprint. The collaboration began on January 2020. Green Ammo team taught Grassroot team the concept of bottle bricks or eco-bricks using only plastic wastes and single-used plastic water bottles, which can be used for construction purposes such as fencing walls, garden fencing, furniture in the schools and cafes. This idea will solve a social issue because there is creation of economic opportunity and minimize environmental issue as the plastics will not end up at the landfill which is a greater menace. It is an innovation which converts pollution to solution.

ACTIVITIES

Collection of Plastic wasted from Cafes, restaurants, guest houses and hotels in Shillong: Grassroot team, Green Ammo along with few volunteers had approached the managers of the cafes, restaurants, guest houses and hotels in Shillong area seeking collaboration in the green campaign initiative. The team collected the dry plastic wastes from these establishments for the purpose of making the bottle bricks. The month of January is engaged with this activity and is continuing.

Golf Course Cleanup Campaign: Grassroot, in collaboration with Green Ammo and Robin Hood Army, conducted a cleanup campaign on the 26th of January 2020 at the Golf Course.

The plastic waste collected is used for making the bottle bricks. 35 members



participated actively in this cleanup campaign and about 100 bottle bricks were made this day.



Bottle Brick Workshop: On the 27th and the 28th of January 2020, Grassroot team members and Green Ammo collaborated in this fun activity of converting waste into resource by making bottle bricks using the plastic wastes collected. There were storytelling and singing during this activity which adds to the fun.

Grassroot team members continuously



engage the interns with the activity of making bottle bricks and promoting the idea of environmental conservation.

Cleaning Drive: On the 14th of February 2020, Grassroot in collaboration with Green Ammo and Mutong Tourism Promotion and Environment Protection Society organized a Cleaning Drive at Lad Rymbai market, East Jaintia Hills District. On this day, 200 community members from Mutong village participated. It was successfully conducted and supported with a positive response from the local headmen of Ladrymbai and Mutong villages and also government official from Swacch Bharat Mission.



Plastic Festival: The Plastic Festival is a two day event held on the 21st and 22nd February 2020 at Mutong village, East Jaintia Hills District. This festival was organized by Mutong Tourism Promotion and Environment Protection Society in collaboration with Grassroot, Green Ammo, Swacch Bharat Mission and the office of the Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills. The main objective of the festival was to reach out to as many as possible on to how the plastic wastes can be reduced, reuse and recycled.

To mark the beginning of the festival, a green trek and cleanup was conducted from Lumshyrmit-ChamCham and back to Mutong on the 21st of February 2020. Local food stalls, housie and other games stalls were set up to entertain the crowd. Plastic art exhibition was displayed by Nongsyntoin Memorial Secondary School and to celebrate the plastic festival, a bottle brick

competition was conducted and an award of Rs. 15000/-, Rs. 7000/-, Rs. 4000/- and Rs.1000/- was given as prized money to the winning contestants securing first, second, third positions and consolation prizes. The bottle brick will be used as foundation for the first eco-museum at Jaintia Hills. The prize money is increased for the following year's bottle brick making competition that will incentivize people to continue with the making of bottle bricks.

On the 22nd of February 2020, a role play was conducted by the interns of Grassroot from St. Edmunds College, Shillong and Womens College, Shillong, which depicts the harmful effects of plastics and how plastic wastes can be converted from pollution to solution.

The programme was successful as people from the villages turn out to participate during the event. Participation from schools and colleges from around the state added colours to the festival. The festival culminates with a DJ night-celebration with music and dance.



TRAININGS IMPARTED/NETWORKING

Leadership Training for Grassroots Women Leaders

Date: 12&13 October 2020, 15&16 October 2020

Organised by North East Network (NEN)

Venue: Mawthadraishan Community Hall, Mawtharaishan, West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya & Mawryngkneng Block, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya

Trainers from Grassroot: Ms. Mayfereen Ryntathiang, Ms. Memorial Khongkai and Mr. Chenmiki Laloo

North East Network (NEN), another prominent NGO in Meghalaya and Grassroot's partner, organised a training on 'leadership' for their women leaders in their communities. The objectives of the training are to inculcate ideas on the women on how to become leaders in their respective communities and to discuss and share ideas on how to reduce community problems. The training was given for two days at each location. The women were trained on how to know themselves (knowing oneself); Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Strength (SWOT) analysis; meaning of leadership; qualities, attitudes and beliefs of a leader; leadership styles; importance of communication; negotiation



skills; networking and confidence building. Each topic was explained comprehensively with a variety of activities such as role play, games, group discussion, exercises and activities using chart papers.

At Mawthadraishan, more than 40 women attended the training from 12 different communities and 35 women comprising of 5 communities in Mawryngkneng block, East Khasi Hills District. The women were very happy with the training and suggested that the trainers

should go to each one of their villages and train other women as well because they said that the training would not have the same impact as it did to them.



IFS Training at Umsawriang, RiBhoi District
Organised by: Faith Foundation
Trainers from Grassroot: Ms. Memorial Khongkai & Mr. Chenmiki Laloo

Grassroot partnered with Faith Foundation, another NGO based in Shillong, in the year 2019 for the training on Integrated Farming System (IFS). With the intention of spreading the knowledge and skills of IFS, Grassroot is outsourcing its knowledge and skills and render help to other NGOs professionally.

A series of trainings on the different components of IFS is done with the Faith Foundation team as well as the community members at Umsawriang located at RiBhoi District, Meghalaya. Many more sessions and trainings will be imparted which include Enterprise development, market and financial linkages will be continuing in the coming financial year.



WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS/CONSULTATION MEETINGS PARTICIPATED**Organisational Building Workshop****Date: 7th May 2019****Venue: Avenues, Shillong**

Grassroot often conduct activities to help all the team members to have an in depth understanding about the organisation. To strengthen the team, Avenues was approached to conduct the team building exercises. Avenues, Shillong, organized a one day organizational building workshop on the 7th of May 2019 where the Grassroot and Faith Foundation teams participated. The aim of the workshop is to build the participants to be a unified team and understand the core values of the organization (respective NGOs).



Mr. Mark Stone Laitflang, the founder of Avenues and impact coach, facilitated the sessions based on a GROW (Goal Reality Options Will) model. The sessions include understanding our self-impressions on our posture, our presence and our connection; our personal impact, crisis and values; professional impact, crisis and values; understanding personal vision and values; understanding

Grassroot's values and the issues that the team believes in; setting a goal for Grassroot and the team's commitment; and exploring the team members' strengths and weaknesses. The sessions were taken with the use of group discussions, drawings and presentations.

The workshop enabled the team to understand their own strengths and weaknesses; their combined skills and capacities; values of the organization which are **empathy, making a difference** and **coaching and mentorship**; and commitment of the team. The team was also able to comprehend their motivation of coming to work every day because of the belief in "equal accessibility, responsibility and opportunities for everyone". The team also made a resolution that in the following 3 years they shall create sustained accessibility and opportunities.

Consultation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**Organised by North East Network (NEN)****Date: 17th and 18th August 2019****Venue: Lily Hotel, Guwahati****Attended by: Ms. Mayfereen Ryntathiang and Mr. Chenmiki Laloo**

A consultation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was organized by North East Network on 17th and 18th August 2019. The Programme was conducted at Lily Hotel Guwahati. Two representatives from Grassroot attended the two-day consultation.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (Beijing Platform for Action) is the most ambitious roadmap for the empowerment of women and girls everywhere. In 2020, it will be 25 years since the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) set strategic objectives and actions for the achievement of gender equality in areas of poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment and the girl child.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment (UN Women) is leading the Beijing+25 Review with a campaign titled 'Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future' calling governments and other development stakeholders to plan ways to tackle the unfinished work of the BPfA.

A huge participation of NGOs and activists from around the country was observed with maximum enthusiasm and energy to bring about Gender equality.

Workshop on Understanding Emerging Development Issues and Feminist Strategies

Date: 27th August 2019 to 29th August 2019

Organised by: Foundation for Social Transformation (FST)

Venue: Saimika Resort, Cherrapunjee, Meghalaya

Participant from Grassroot: Ms. Memorial Khongkai

Context: The world at present is at a tremendous moment of crisis. According to scientists and accepted by global political leaders, the planet itself is facing irreversible damages due to human actions that have led to climate change. All over the world, the political forces are becoming more divisive, inhuman and warring. While using the rhetoric of ‘development’, a handful of power elites using trade, development policies and fascistcommunal ideologies have been accumulating more power, wealth and control over world politics. Injustice is rampant. The world has more landless, poor, water, health care, education and human rights protection today than any other time. The root cause of all this is one- the patriarchal system that creates and promotes inequality, greed and violence.

The three days workshop involved discussions on the following points-



1. Demystifying Feminism
2. Gender and Intersectionality of Women's Identities
3. The patriarchal development model- globalisation, militarisation and fundamentalism
4. The impact of the current system of communities
5. Trade and development-

the unsaid in the trade agreements and their impact on women and communities

6. The Feminist Development Justice Framework

Resource persons were invited which includes Ms. Trimita Chakma from Asia Pacific forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Mrs. Ranja Sengupta from Third World Network.

The workshop explores feminist analysis of the current development paradigm



and suggested new system for equality and justice through the Justice Development Framework which emphasised on redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice,

environmental justice and accountability of government to people.

Many activities were done in order to help the participants understand the topics which include drawing of mandala, presentation group discussion and games. The power mapping is one of the activities that was taken in the workshop that help the participants to consider the social and political context within which strategy is developed. It enables the participants to creatively consider allies, opponents, targets and constituents prior to embarking on a campaign.

The workshop brought together people from various NGOs and organisations



working for the development of their communities and those who are interested in and are in a position to shape policies and programmes of their communities, organisations and the government. It culminated with an evening of fun and games.

Training on Mushroom Shed Construction**Organised by Bethany Society, Shillong****Date: 10th September 2019 to 17th September 2020****Venue: Laisparbah farm, Umpling, Shillong****Members from Grassroot: Mrs. Arzenia Ryntathiang, Ms. Memorial****Khongkai and Mr. Vijojo Pucho**

Edible mushrooms are a delicacy and a boon to the people ever since humans acquired the knowledge and the skill to cultivate it the right way using proper mechanism and technology. Bethany Society, one of the most renowned NGOs in Meghalaya had recently incorporated cultivation of mushrooms under the Integrated Farming System (IFS) project with a motive not only to substantiate life but also to generate surplus/ profit through commerce which can and will bring about changes in the people's lives considering the fact that it is taking the market in a storm.

Grassroot has partnered with Bethany Society for the training on IFS and learning about mushroom shed construction is another added bonus which



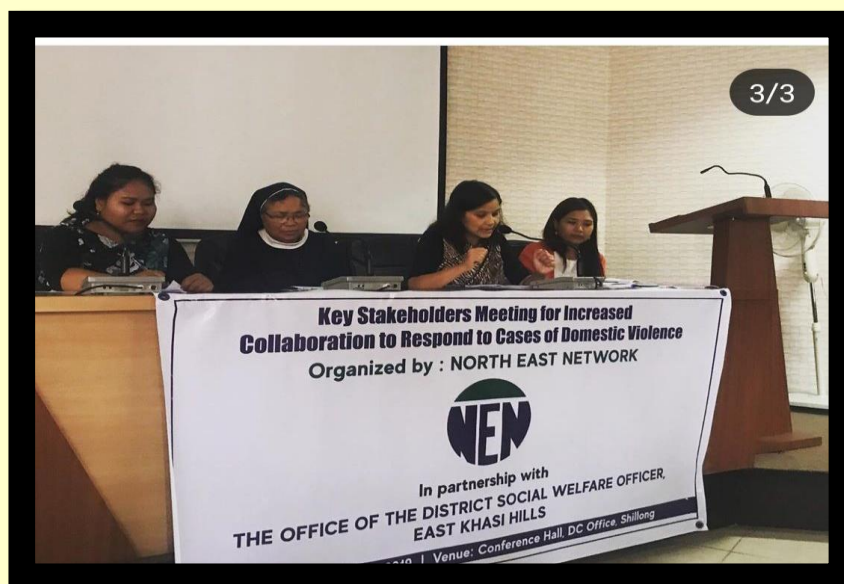
will help the trainers to disseminate the information to the trainees. The training enables the team to know and understand the strategy and measurements involved in constructing a mushroom shed using available materials around nature. The training lasted for 6 days and it is practically done

where everyone is involved with a hands on experience. The mushroom shed includes the production unit, the soaking unit and the packaging unit for a complete mushroom production process.



Key Stakeholders Meeting
For Increased Collaboration to Respond to Cases of Domestic Violence
Organised by: North East Network
In partnership with the Office of the District Social Welfare Officer, East
Khasi Hills
Date: 4th October, 2019
Venue: Conference Hall, DC, EKH
Participant from Grassroot: Ms. Memorial Khongkai

Context: Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (UN, 1993). Despite many decades of global and national level activism, legal reform and social sensitisation, VAWG continues to persist in various forms, across social settings in all parts of the world. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported that in India, crime against women have recorded a whopping 83% increase from 2007 to 2016. In Meghalaya, available statistics such as the National Family Health Survey conducted in 2015-2016 recorded that 28.7% of every married women aged 15-49 years have experienced spousal violence. The record in Meghalaya is low because domestic violence is rarely reported as it is considered as a family matter/clan level.



The objective of the meeting is to examine whether infrastructure under the PWDVA is adequate in meeting the objective of the law, namely, realising a woman's right to live in a violence free home; to identify best practices, shortcomings and suggest remedial measures and also to build/strengthen formal agencies towards implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005.

The discussions revolved around gender-based discrimination and violence against women. Statistics was shown to the participants on the data collected by NEN. The stakeholders shared on the challenges faced while dealing with gender-based discrimination and a way forward was planned.

Present during the meeting were officials from the Office of District Social Welfare, Officials from Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Officials from District Legal Services Authority, Non-profit Organisations, civil society organisations and counselling centres.

Subsequently, a one day training on the PWDVA was held on the 12th November 2019 at Eldorado Guest House, Dhankheti, Shillong. The training was held due to the fact that majority of the stakeholders were not well versed with the Act. Ms. Satrupa Bhattacharji, Advocate, trained all the participants on the Act and the process to register a case with the Social Welfare Department also known as domestic incident report (DIR).

Workshop on Peace Building
Organised by: Initiatives of Change

Date: 01st November 2019 to 04th November 2019

Venue: SechuZubza, Nagaland

**Members from Grassroot: Ms. Memorial Khongkai and Ms. Salome
Suchiang**

The 'Peace Circles' are part of the movement to strengthen the role of women as Creators of Peace in society everywhere. It is part of the worldwide movement of 'Initiatives of Change'.

It challenges women everywhere to:

- Share responsibility for their part in the perpetration of conflict and in its resolution.
- Engage in the creation of peace at every level of society.
- Break the chains of hate and revenge.
- Build networks of forgiveness and friendship across racial, religious and social divides.



The objective of the Circle is to empower women to move beyond blame to



responsibility and creativity. The gathering involved women having different faith and cultural backgrounds from various states of North East Region including from Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The meeting period was for two and a half days from the 1st of November to

the 4th of November 2019. Facilitating the workshop is Ms. PenuoHeikha and the Resource Persons are Mrs. LeenaKhatra and Mrs. Christine J. Iralu. It is held at the beautiful residence of Mr. and Mrs. Iralu known as *Kerünyüki*.

An intense discussion on Peace is held on the following points:

1. Circle of Concerns and the Circle of Influence.
2. What destroys peace and what builds peace.
3. Qualities of Creators of Peace.
4. How we can build inner peace.
5. What does inner peace means to us?
6. Why is inner peace important?
7. What destroys our sense of inner peace?
8. What restores our sense of inner peace?
9. Qualities of good listening.
10. Elements of Time of Listening.
11. Aids for inner listening.
12. How do I know that what spoke to me is my inner voice?
13. The Power of Forgiveness.
14. Peace on Practice.



One of the most significant sessions was the sharing. All participants shared about their personal life stories and experiences which have contributed in making how everyone is today. There is a huge sense of relief and healing in sharing which helps the participants.

The Peace Circles meet is not only about training but it is also about building a team through honest conversations and sharing of life stories in an atmosphere of trust and respect. We worked through exercises which explore personal challenges and cost of creating peace, the role of

personal transformation and inner listening, the particular needs of the communities of which we women are a part of. There was also a plan and a search for peace creating initiatives to be taken together. The participants taking part have connected with each other on a deep level and saw the possibility of individual or joint action that they can take to meet the needs of their families or community.



Monitoring and Evaluation Training

Date: 18th November 2019 - 21st November 2019

Organised by: The Institute of Development Action (IDeA)

Venue: Don Bosco Institute Guwahati, Assam

Attended by: Mr. Chenmiki Laloo

A four days training was conducted by IDeA on Monitoring and Evaluation. The Institute of Development Action (IDeA) is a part of the Action Northeast Trust (the ANT), an NGO from Assam, India, and it lends expertise in training personnel of various NGOs and in conducting Northeast centric social research. The main aim of the training is to inculcate ideas on monitoring and evaluation including research to all the participants. The main trainers were Jennifer Liang, Enakshi, Ronald and Maytree Paul. All the trainers are from IDeA.



Participants: The participants are various NGOs from all regions of northeast. Three of them represented Meghalaya viz, **Grassroot, Faith Foundation and Bosco Integrated Development Society (BIDS).**

Course of Training:

Date	Day	Course	Trainer
18-11-2019	1	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning	Enakshi
		Understanding critical path in project management	Enakshi
19-11-2019	2	Project implementation plan and scheduling	Maytree Paul
		Project Scheduling and Gantt Chart	Maytree Paul
20-11-2019	3	Monitoring and evaluation training with quantitative data	Ronald
		Evidence beyond numbers	Jeniffer Liang
		Participatory monitoring and evaluation	Jeniffer Liang
21-11-2019	4	Reporting and Documentation	Jeniffer Liang

		Photography session	
		Most Significant Stories of Change	Jeniffer Liang
		Case studies and stories of change	Maytree Paul

The 8th Session of United Nations Forum Business and Human Rights

Venue: UN Headquarter Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 25th-27th, November 2019

Attended by: Ms. Salome Suchiang



Brief summary of the sessions attended at the UN Forum Business and Human Rights:

The International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI), a global network that represents Indigenous people from the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Pacific, reaffirms the progress made in the last twenty-five years within the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People states in Articles 3, 5, 20, 21 and 23 that Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain and develop their own economic systems and in Article 21, it calls upon States to take effective measures to ensure the continuing improvement of economic conditions for Indigenous People.

The four Indigenous Women of International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF/FIMI) attended the 8th Session Forum Business and Human Rights at UNO Headquarter Geneva, Switzerland. Ms. Salome Suchiang from Grassroot, Shillong represented Asia. There were around 2000 participants who came from different countries and participated in this event.



The three days sessions started from 9:00 am up to 6:00 pm daily with multiple sessions going on simultaneously. The first session was on the 'Human Rights due diligence: trends and challenges'. The speaker of this first

session was Tyler Gillard Brodeur, Danielle Essink, Dante Pesce, Teresa Fogelberg and Margaret Wanchenfeld.

Points of Discussion during the Three Days UN Events of the 8th Session

Forum Business and Human Rights:

- Human Rights defender and Land Defenders should be protected.
- When there is a mining exploitation, water is a fundamental issue.
- How to Protect and Respect the Business on Human Rights-
 - Protect, Respect and Remedy
 - Land Rights
 - Online and Harassment is increasing, therefore needs to be addressed
 - Rights to Privacy
 - State must respect and Company must respect each other.



- Gender Guidance for the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Free, prior and informed consent- Why companies need to act on indigenous peoples rights.
- Sustainable Development Goals: Respect Human Rights. The top prior sector is Mining and Agriculture, Information Technology and Tourism, Economic and Social Rights.
- Gender: The Principle of Sexual Harassment at UNGP mentioned that is Prevention of Sexual Harassment at work place by filing of written complain, maintain strict confidentiality, forming of Internal committee,

law of business license, judicial remedies, government agencies and awareness of progressive response.

- The key aspect of Gender Guidance, safety equipments for women, gender reconstructive, assessment and rights of information is a part of fundamental rights.
- Addressing Environmental Harms: The next step of Environmental Rights is modifying of environment and 60% of environment are indigenous communities which are facing issues of water. The role of the State is to address the issues especially to avoid different companies to operate in our State.
- The other session we the FIMI team gets an opportunity to attend was the Spanish class with the government policy maker of Spanish. During this class we shared on the water issues faced by the indigenous people in our own State. The main theme of discussion in this class is focused on Sustainable Development.

The **suggestion from the Spanish Government** is to Promote Education, Keeping the youths in their own place by provide traditional knowledge, traditional culture or by training them to practice agriculture and upgrading traditional knowledge and culture.

- **Human Rights Defenders: Prevention is better than Cure.** The Declaration on Human Rights mentioned about the Indigenous People Rights and Environmental Rights Defender. The resolution is clearly to identify the Human Rights of Indigenous People and Protecting Human Rights Defenders. A key priority on environmental and climate change should be addressed. The key issues include:
 - Lack of recognition of Indigenous
 - Lack of Justice for governance
 - First Prior Information Consent for every community is important.
 - Economic Growth is more the target than sustainability.

- Imbalance between power and the opposition.
- The common complain issues from the communities: Displacement, Livelihood and Environment.

On the last day of the sessions, FIMI read the declaration to the UN Forum Business and Human Rights for all the stakeholders to take into consideration the following recommendations:

- We urge the States to take measures to ensure that Indigenous Peoples, and particularly indigenous persons with disabilities, Indigenous women and Indigenous youth, do not suffer from discrimination in their attempts to access financial services.
- We urge Governments to make investments so as to help mitigate climate change in indigenous territories, including a strong participation component of local leaderships as an active part in the processes of defining and administering actions, and not just as simply beneficiaries.
- We demand an immediate end to criminalization, incarceration, any type of intimidation, coercion, death threats, and the murder of all defenders of indigenous and environmental rights.
- The States should start legal and policy frameworks that recognize, promote and protect that rights that allow Indigenous women to carry out business on their lands safely and viably.
- The Governments are urged to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, especially those articles related to the protection of their environment (Article 29) and the obligation of Governments to guarantee FPIC in relation to hazardous materials (Article 32) as well as the application of FPIC in related to development activities in our lands (Article 20, 23, 24 and 31).
- Indigenous women acknowledge, in each of our struggles, traditional knowledge, as well as our spirit of warriors, cultural and territorial

safeguards, accepting our work to defend our Mother Earth, our children and future generations.

- Lastly, the declaration encourage Governments, business representatives and investor organizations to support the economic empowerment of Indigenous women based on the recognition of our traditional knowledge and indigenous entrepreneurship and respecting our intellectual property right.

Lesson Learned and Good Practices/ Experience:

During these three days events I have learnt many things about Human Rights and as an indigenous people we should be protected and so is our indigenous land. I have attended many sessions which are related to environmental issues and on the second day I got an opportunity share on the water issues of Meghalaya with the Spanish Government.

Overall, events were successfully organized and I would like to thank the International Indigenous Women Forum (IIWF/FIMI) for selecting me to attend this 8th UN Session Forum Business and Human Rights 2019 at Geneva, UNO Headquarter. Lastly, I would like to thank Grassroot's President and my colleagues for the support and motivation to reach there.

Recommendation:

- There was limitation of time for our indigenous people to share on our State's issues. They should give more time and more platforms for the indigenous women to represent at the next event.



Judicial Colloquium on ‘The role of Law Enforcement in Combating Human Trafficking’

Organised by: Meghalaya State Judicial Academy

Date: 30th November 2019

Venue: Yojana Bhavan

Members from Grassroot: Ms. Mayfereen Ryntathiang, Ms. Memorial Khongkai and Ms. Joy Pathaw

One of the most profitable criminal activities is human trafficking. Trafficking in women and children is one of the most despicable forms of violations of human rights. It is a gross commercialisation and commodification of innocent human lives. The Palermo Protocol defines trafficking as: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation (UN 2000). To prevent and protect anyone who is caught in this malicious trap, our Constitution under Article 23 (1) prohibits trafficking and makes it our fundamental right. However, the report shows 8132 cases of human trafficking in India in 2016 and North East India is a vulnerable region due to many factors and one of which is unsafe migration.

The objective of the colloquium is to strengthen the technical capacities of law enforcement agencies and judicial officers towards prosecution of crimes of human trafficking, sharing information and promoting



best practices and to evolve mutually acceptable strategies in ensuring expeditious disposal of human trafficking crimes and protection of the rights of victims.

The inaugural speech was delivered by Honourable Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge High Court of Meghalaya and the keynote address was delivered by Honourable Mr. Justice H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge High Court of Meghalaya. A short video 'The Rice Mill Story' which depicts bonded labour and a video on 'sex trafficking' were screened by International Justice Mission (IJM).

Mr. Saptarshi Biswas, Director, Legal, International Justice Mission (IJM), Kolkata presented on the role of law enforcement in combating human trafficking based on his experience and reiterated that "Justice should not only be done, but also seen to be done".

There was sharing from the Survivors who were once victims of Human trafficking. Ms. Rosanna Lyngdoh shared an IMPULSE model they use in combating human trafficking which has earned recognition around the world.

A panel discussion was held in the afternoon which examines the challenges of delivering justice to survivors and victims of human trafficking which includes lengthy trials; no identity of victims if they are below 18 years of age and compensation cannot be given as there is no bank detail; research and documentation for missing children is not done and the untraced is never followed up. The root causes of human trafficking were discussed at length and some of the causes are impunity of the brothels and private institutions and profit gained from the pangs of hormones of the customers.

Through this colloquium, it is clear that more measures are needed in order to prevent and protect innocent children and people who are caught up in human trafficking. Customers should be held accountable, demand should be curbed and fear should be instilled among those who buy sex.

Consultation on Women' Rights to Natural Resources and Livelihood in North East

Date: 3rd and 4th of February 2020

**Organised By: Keystone, Dhaatri and Mines And Minerals and People in
collaboration with North east Network (NEN)**

Venue: Don Bosco Institute, Assam

**Participants from Grassroot: Ms. Salome Suchiang and Mrs. Arzenia
Ryntathiang**

Context: Indigenous And Rural Women have immense ecological knowledge of their natural Resources which is nurtured through their traditional system of sustainable land and Forest management. They have deep wisdom over their land, forest, rivers and ocean resources and continue to depend on cultivating, fishing and foraging for wild food as their primary source of food and income. However, the industrialisation and commercialization of the natural resource are destroying these resources and causing a threat to traditional livelihood at the cost of the community rights and security.



Indigenous and Rural Women in South Asia are the most marginalized sections of the poor due to the historical gender inequalities and patriarchal values of discrimination. Mechanization of agriculture has alienated women from their rights over their lands which offers them food security, or for prevention of environmental destruction.

Conservation and wildlife protection policies stand coexistence with communities and animals.

Discussions:

Women who are trying to bring this visible link between environmental violations and violence against women are faced with many challenges. In most areas, women affected have no access to information. The women has very little awareness of the legal safeguard and much lesser proximity to decision making bodies for self-representation although they have a way stronger relationship and perspective towards an engagement on sustainable development through the contexts of natural resources.

Strategies:

In this context, Women's rights organization and environmental movements have come together to enable the leadership building of women from local communities and civil society groups to address the different and complex interconnections between resource rights and women's lives. The consultation brought together diverse stakeholders, women's rights and environmental groups, scholars, practitioners representative of the forest department and community representative of different region and discussed, share experiences, work together and explore ways to connect for leadership building programme, collective action and design strategic actions to be taken for to support women a sustainable and equitable future and protection of their natural resources.

In order to bridge the gap between women's knowledge and access to decision making, many of the groups in the region of South Asia have been identifying the need for building women's capacities to negotiate and address the environmental justice issues from a gender equality and women's rights lens. Although social and customary structures of community decision making and the larger political dynamics vary from place to place, we as the consortium of environment and women's rights groups are working together to understand the commonalities of gender-based violence and explore strategies and cross learning for strength and collective actions to strive for sustainable economics.

Therefore this consultation allows us to work together in many states through training on understanding laws and legal safeguards. As Partners, we will try to strengthen field research on environmental violations and gender impact assessment building capacities to engage with governance structure and public institutions and to exchange advocacy tool and learnings. With a conscious approach, the women's group enhance collective lobbying and field visits and meetings. After a year the group will meet and bring these learnings into a regional exchange process through multiple ways of planning leadership building network.



Consultation meeting on Adolescent Sexuality and the Law

Eastern Regional Consultation

Date: 4th and 5th February 2020

**Venue: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Kolkata,
West Bengal**

Organised by Praajak, Swayam and Partners for Law in Development (PLD)

Supported by AJWS & UNFPA

Participant from Grassroot: Memorial Khongkai

Context: Adolescence, the phase between the binaries of childhood and adulthood, has unique sets of attributes and experiences. Being conflated with children they are considered asexual by law, not acknowledging factors of puberty, their curiosity and desire to explore sexuality. There is no naming of issues faced by the adolescents and no policy to response to their needs; they are mostly treated as children in the 0-18 category. POCSO in defining sexuality considers it inappropriate and sexually abusive till the age of 18 years which has in a way criminalized adolescent sexuality. The age of consent pulled up to 18 years has also contributed towards criminalization of adolescent sexuality.



Responding to these concerns, and the troubling lack of consensus between the child rights, child protection, women's rights and public health spaces, this consultation brought together many NGOs and institutions with varied experiences and analysed the intersecting ways in which different

laws operate and built consensus against criminalizing adolescent sexuality.

The regional consultation facilitated the exchange of research findings, experiences of service providers in working with adolescents (particularly in the context of consensual relationships), widened cross sectoral outreach that brought together concerns relating to sexual and reproductive health, law, child abuse, and sexuality education. Apart from these, the regional consultation helped in building a community of stakeholders committed to recognition of adolescents as a distinct population group, deserving of rights protection commensurate with their development, within child rights narratives.



The meeting was conducted bilingual (Hindi & English) in order to benefit everyone representing different states.

Group discussions and Panel discussions were held on these two days on various topics such as:

1. **Mapping Areas of our Work and Adolescent: Approaches and Challenges.**
2. **Early and Child Marriage-** Cases of elopement and the usage of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) for preventing and exiting under age marriages. 'Why Girls Run Away?' and 'Grassroots Experiences of using the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006.'
3. **Adolescents and Health related concerns-** Health related concerns among adolescents in relation to accessibility and availability of sexual and reproductive rights, medical termination of pregnancy, mental health, HIV and childbirth.

4. **Criminalization and Sexual Consent**-Ways in which Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) has rendered adolescents more vulnerable to harm in some contexts (without discounting any violations under the law).
5. **Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Formal and Informal Spaces**-Work on the Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) initiative under the Rashtriya Kishore SwasthyaKaryakram (RKSK) programme as well as autonomous efforts relating to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

Closing the two days meet was Madam AnanyaChakravarti, Chairperson West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR) with the mapping of key concerns and ways forward.

Workshop on Packaging and Financial Linkages**Date: 18th February 2020****Organised by: Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE)****Venue: Matti Building, IGP, Shillong****Attended by: Ms. Memorial Khongkai**

Context: Farmers or producers many times are selling products at a very cheap rate. When the products are packed and branded they are sold at twice or ten times the rate of the original price. Packaging and branding of products will substantially improve the original products in terms of sale. Entrepreneurs play a major role in the packaging of the products and they will also need financial assistance for their startup. Finance for agricultural activities and other entrepreneurial establishments will help to support sustainable economic growth.

A one day workshop was organised by Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE) for packaging and financial linkages on the 18th of February 2020. The main aim of this workshop is to link farmers/producers and entrepreneurs to financial institutions and to increase the quality of selling through packaging.

Packaging is also known as the ‘Silent Salesman’. Mr. Eric from Aspire Venture explained on the packaging process and all its contents. What constitutes ‘Good Packaging’ are Packaging elements which constitute colour, shape, texture, text content and typography. He reiterated the importance to know ones customers for better packaging. The solutions offered by Aspire Venture include:

- Making packaging readily available in Shillong
- Product suitable and market appropriate packaging
- International quality packaging
- Create a brand identity
- Handholding its customers

Branch Manager of North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB), Ms. Iba Mawthoh, offered the participants a solution to financial loans. NESFB offers Micro Banking Loan (MBL) and Enterprise Development Loan (EDL) to customers with moratorium period according to the loans. It collects EMI every 15 days and the bank employees goes to the customers' houses for the collection which reduces the stress for farmers and entrepreneurs who are pressed with time.

There were about 40 participants at the workshop coming from different communitites both rural and urban. Mr. B.K. Sohliya, Director of MIE, encouraged the participants to start doing something for themselves and network with people from various departments having myriad of expertise in order to benefit more and ultimately increase their income.

**Two-day National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism and Environmental
Conservation: A Tool for Community Development**

Organised by: Sankardev College, Shillong

Date: 12th and 13th March, 2020

Venue: Sankardev College

**Participants from Grassroot: Ms. Mayfereen Ryntathiang and Ms.
Memorial Khongkai**

Context: Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries with an annual average growth rate of about 5 per cent and is one of the main generators of employment. It is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries. In the tourism sector, natural resources are used and consumed intensively and therefore tourism industries has major impact on natural ecosystem and society. In order to achieve sustainable tourism, there are many issues such as efficient use of human capital, new approaches to social entrepreneurship, marketing, community capacity building and community involvement, which policy makers and community at large need to engage with. Ecotourism is preserving travel to natural areas to appreciate the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to disturb the integrity of the ecosystem, which creating economic opportunities that make conservation and protection of natural resources advantageous to the local people. Hence, it is necessary to create awareness among the different strata of the society so as to preserve the cultural and natural history of the environment.

Participants: People from various backgrounds participated in the seminar. PhD scholars, academicians, Enterprise developers, Tourism Associations and Societies, representatives from tourists' spots, media personnel, Researchers, Tourism Department, NGOs, government officials, interested individuals and students are present in the seminar.

The seminar commenced with an inaugural function. Dr. Abhik Gupta, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Assam University, Silchar, delivered the keynote address on the focal theme-Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Conservation: A Tool for Community Development. Mr. Paul Lyngdoh, one of the invitees, shared that tourism can be an alternate source of livelihood and music and other cultural activities are important components in our growth trajectory. He also reminded everyone about ‘Thought Leaders’, a term coined by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and said that “most people who think do not act and most who act do not think, therefore we need convergence”.

Dr. Mukul Sangma, Leader of the opposition team and former Chief Minister of Meghalaya, believed that tourism can be an effective tool towards creating sustainability and urged everyone to realise their responsibilities to ensure sustainable development.

A **colloquium on Sustainable Tourism** was conducted with speakers speaking on the theme and sub themes that include:

- Impact of Tourism on Local Environment
- Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth
- Resource Efficiency, Environmental Pollution and Climate Change
- Role of Tourism in Enabling Peace and Security in NER
- Tourism Trends and relevance of Tourism to poverty Alleviation
- Gender and Tourism

Smt. Patricia Mukhim, Editor of Shillong Times, accentuates that tourism is a double edged sword that is both beneficial and harmful to the State. She shared her grievances and suggestions to make the State a sustainable tourist hub. She expressed that tourism in Meghalaya is unregulated and said that tourists are also the cause of unsustainability. When tourism is supposed to inject money into our economy, however, a policy is not even implemented in the State. She also spoke against mass tourism and questioned why every

tourist spots need to be a bazaar. She suggested tourism education to communities to make every tourist as stakeholders so that they will not be disruptors. She encouraged story telling among tourist guides and to have banks, internet facilities and health facilities in the vicinity of the tourist spots.

Ms. Mayfereen Ryntathiang, President of Grassroot NGO, presented a paper on the subtheme-Resource Efficiency, Environmental Pollution and Climate Change which reflected the experiences from the project areas. She emphasized on human beings as the greatest resource that can play crucial roles for existence, progress and development.



Different presenters gave significant points in their presentations which reflect their experiences. Some of the suggestions from the discussions include:

- Not every tourist spots need to have concrete infrastructure, some need to be left in its pristine form.
- Documentation of the cultural elements for posterity.
- Use solar energy/renewable energy to run activities in tourist spots.
- Assessment of carrying capacity of every tourist spots and should have a specific number of people per day visiting a particular place.

- Legalise wine selling in Meghalaya in order to boost tourism.
- Do not depend only on government to make policies but follow own regulations that will create sustainability. Example, plastics should not be allowed in tourist spots and it need not come from the government.
- Promote community-led initiatives for tourism to be sustainable.
- Encourage innovation in tourism and implement them.
- Synergy between academic institutions and stakeholders for sustainable tourism.

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Friends of Grassroot

IMPULSE, NGO Network

Bethany Society

Faith Foundation

MSSDS- Meghalaya State Skill Development Society

VHAM- Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya, Shillong

ADR- Association for Democratic Reforms, New Delhi

NEN- North East Network

MSWC- Meghalaya State Women's Commission

MIE- Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship

CASA- Church Auxiliary for Social Action

YI- Young Indians, Meghalaya

MUDA- Meghalaya Urban Development Agency

BRDC- Bio Resource Development Centre

Kiron Joshi, Chartered Accountant

The ANT- The Action Northeast Trust

COLKS- Centre of Learning, Knowledge and Services
Deputy Commissioner's Office, East Khasi Hills District

ABBREVIATIONS

NULM – National Urban Livelihood Mission

SHG – Self Help Group

PHC – Primary Health Centre

RO – Resource Organization

MSRLS – Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society

MUDA – Meghalaya Urban Development Agency

MEH – Medicinal Edible Herb

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

FAO – Food and Agricultural Organization

ADR – Association for Democratic Reforms

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

MHRC – Meghalaya Human Right Commission

NEW – National Election Watch

MSSDS – Meghalaya State Skill Development Society

IFS – Integrated Farming System

CASA – Church Auxiliary for Social Action

SHG – Self Help Group

GIZ – German Agency for International Cooperation

GEMs – Girls Empowerment Movement

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PHOTO GALLERY



