

CASA in Action

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



INTO
**THE
EAST**

Empowering partnerships in the North-East

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*Into the East
CASA Manipur State
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in Ukhrul interacting with
beneficiaries.*

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

North-East India characterizes itself as an amalgamation of a variety of cultures and languages. The Seven Sisters are geographically united but culturally distinctive, as perceived by their different food and manifold of traditions. The states form a coalescence of diversity, with each state possessing its own unique identity.

CASA made impactful interventions in five sensitive states of North East India – Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. We tied up with a multicuity of grassroots level organizations, who are born and raised from the same community/tribe and have deeper understanding on solving the problems faced by the people. Through this combined effort, we attempt to make inclusive changes within the individuals and the communities. From the hilly districts of Meghalaya to the remote villages of Manipur, Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland, CASA makes sure of its strategic implementation of humanitarian and developmental programmes on the ground.

In this edition of CASA in Action 'Into The East', we travel to the project villages of our partners from the two vivid states of North-East India - Meghalaya and Manipur to understand the networking, functioning and bonding they share with the people. We bring you the voices of the marginalized communities, their moving stories and struggles; and the changes made in their lives through our alliances.

The beginning of this May saw the worst April cyclone in Odisha after 43 years. The impact of extremely severe Cyclone Fani continues to haunt the people of Odisha. The evacuation was well planned by the government but the immense damage to the livelihood sources could not be ignored. How did CASA respond to the May disaster in Odisha?

In 1994, a group of organisations from South Asian countries joined hands to develop a tool that seeks to bring peace in the conflict hit countries of South Asia and make the implementation of development and humanitarian programmes in their respective regions smoother.

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North Zone



Cutting across all our developmental programs, sustainable livelihood remains one of CASA India's focus areas. With help from its partner organization in Madhya Pradesh, CASA set-up a committee in Kans Kheda village through which it promoted fish farming as an alternate means for livelihood to the farmers in distress.

Starting with 5000 small fishes and feeding material received as a support from state pisciculture department, the committee's hard work led them towards a more profitable livelihood model. After 8-month of dedicated practice, the committee members were able to yield 100 kg of fish varieties that were sold in the local market, helping them earn Rs 12,000 for the produce. Inspired by the success, the women from other nearby villages also came forward to adopt the same sustainable model.

Training on Outcome & Impact Oriented Project planning & Management & Staff Induction

Compiled by: Sandhya, Arindam, Priyanka and Harish, February, 2019

A four-day residential training programme on 'Outcome and Impact Oriented Project planning and Management' was organized for newly recruited staff members of CASA from 4th to 8th February 2019 at Bhopal. The key objectives of the workshop in brief were: Developing shared understanding on development perspective, paradigms and approaches; Developing understanding and skills on impact-oriented project planning, monitoring and reporting; Understanding CASA's systems and policies related to Organization, programme and partnership management and to develop shared charter of commitments and actions for individual and organizational learning.

The workshop was facilitated by external facilitator Dr. Harish Vasishth. The facilitators from CASA remained Dr. Jayant Kumar, Mr. Joseph James, Mr. Dinesh Vyas and Mr. Tapan Kumbhalkar. The contents discussed during the workshop comprised from Development perspectives and paradigm shift to Social inclusion and gender

analysis. Various aspects of Project Cycle Management, various aspects of Problem Identification, and Objective Setting Articulation of Impact/Result Hierarchy, Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) etc. The various methods used to impart the training included Large Group Discussion, Case Analysis, Practice and presentation, Group reporting Card sorting etc. Apart from this various game sessions were also incorporated in the training process.

The workshop was attended by 28 participants from various regional offices of CASA from throughout the country. The intended trainees were the newly appointed staff in the respective offices of CASA. The participation was based from regional offices of CASA in Bhopal; Madhya Pradesh, Lucknow; Uttar Pradesh, Banswara and Udaipur; Rajasthan, Raipur; Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam; North East India (NEI), Dehradun; Uttarakhand Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. ■



Cyclone Fani

Strongest April Cyclone hits Odisha after 43 years

CASA team mobilises for response

The farmers were expecting a good paddy crop this year as the monsoon was approaching and they had high hopes from it. The fields were ready to welcome the rains. The seeds were stocked and stored. It was all going fine until the fateful day of 3rd May' 2019, when Fani hit the coasts of Orissa twirling at a speed of 175kmph.

Warnings had been issued prior to the storm but it is one thing to expect a storm and another to actually go through it. Seeing your house that you've put together with so much love, blown away is a site none of us can dare to imagine and there are people who've lived through it.

Fani is the first severe cyclonic storms to have formed in April since 1976. It brought back the horrifying memories of Super Cyclone 1999 which took a toll at around 10,000 lives. Taking a lesson from the erroneous past, provisions like cyclone shelters and feeding were already looked after and people were moved to higher and safer places. With a joint effort of the government and other organisations like CASA, the number of deaths has been minimised.

However, the loss of property has been tremendous. It is going to take some time before the uprooted electrical poles are fixed again and water supply runs regular. Lives of 1 crore 65 lakh people have been disrupted presently.

CASA had been running SDRM State Disaster Relief Management Programme in 27 schools in 24 villages of Ashtrang Block spreading over 10 Panchayats focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction & Community Orientation. Disaster Mitigation Task Force (DMTF) was formed at community level. DMTF became active once they got to know about the warning of Cyclone Fani, keeping a track of it, arranged evacuation and rescue a day before the land fall and continued to support the Feeding Programme done by CASA.

The Feeding Programme undertaken by CASA, involved providing cooked food to the people who were living in shelters in Puri, Jagatsinghpur and Khordah districts. It ran from 4th May to 6th May 2019, an effort that saved many from starvation.

Awareness is being caused about the hygiene and sanitation and how it becomes even more necessary in a time like this. CASA is extending its support to the people as they start moving out of the camps and reconstructing their houses. ■



Photo Caption: (Left) A house damaged by Cyclone Fani; (Center) Feeding Program for 200 people stationed at CASA India Resource Centre Banamalipur, Odisha; (Right) CASA Director Dr. Sushant Agrawal talks to the victims of Cyclone Fani; (Below) CASA Disaster Management Task Force members on ground zero to conduct its rescue work.

What CASA intends to do



FOOD SECURITY

To promote kitchen farming as the monsoon season is around and continue feeding at community centres



SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

Solar lamps/ lights with mobile charging until electricity is restored



LIVELIHOOD

Saline resistant paddy along with necessary cash grant



DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Proper response & recovery training to reduce any further damages



WASH

Special focus on clean drinking water, sanitation & hygiene



Cleaning

Immediate removal of debris and stagnated water

CASA'S INTERVENTION TILL DATE

2000

Relief & Hygiene/ Dignity kits distributed

20

Villages where damage assessment was conducted

11014

Meals provided to the people

13

Feeding centers

INTO THE EAST

Empowering partnerships in the North-East

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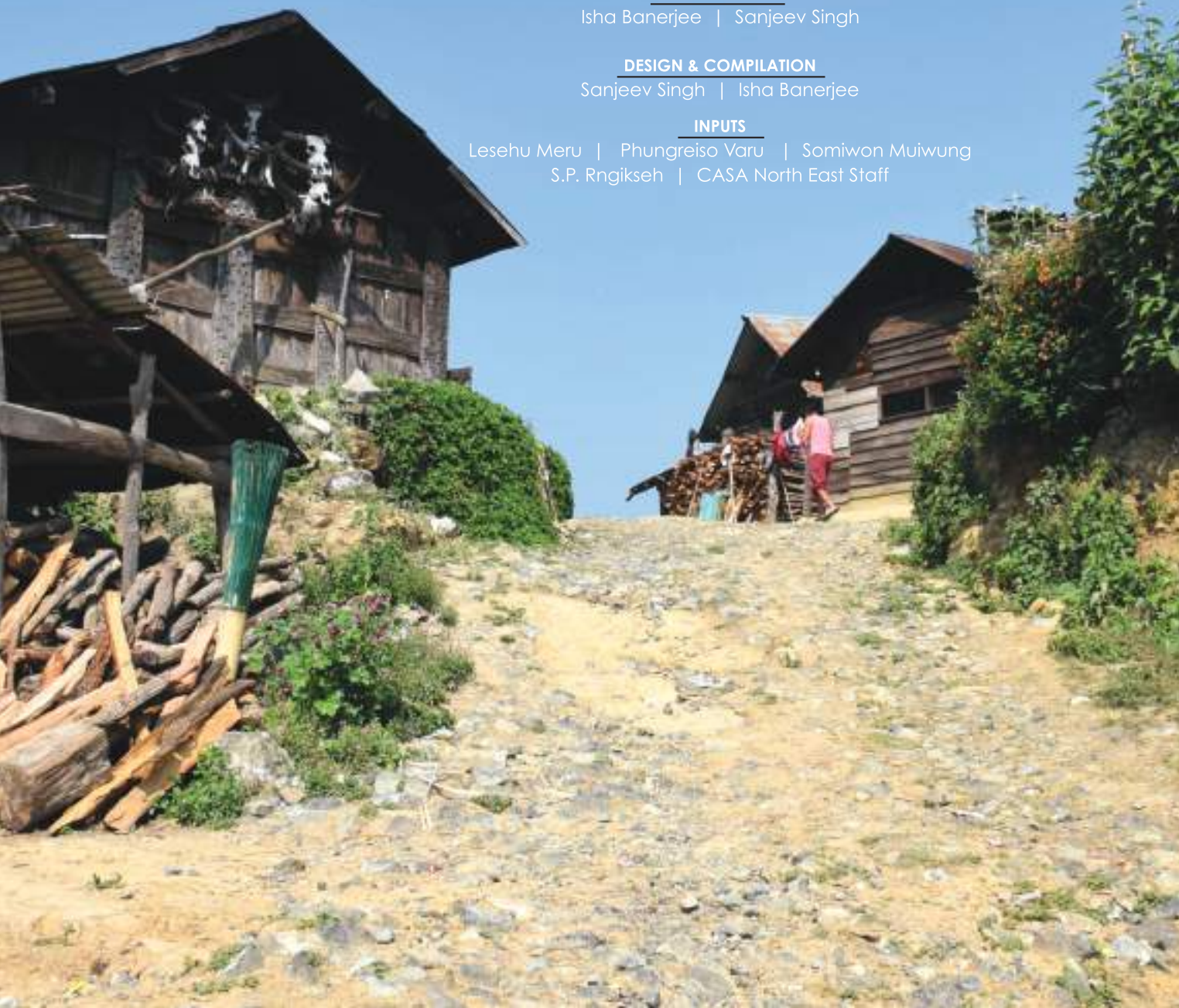
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COVER STORY



(Left) Inside a Kurei village in Ukhrul district, Manipur. (Right) Garo women from Chidaogre village in West Garo Hills District pose for a photograph in their traditional dress.

A new dawn starts with new partners in the five project states of the North-East. Led by youth and women, the new partnership model represents a changed North-East India.

CASA started working in the easternmost region of India when no other organisation dared to look east. For the very reason, North-East India holds a sentimental value for CASA. Its role with the partners does not remain limited to that of a donor or an administrator. CASA has also taken upon a bigger responsibility to empower the home-grown civil societies.



By Isha Banerjee
CASA Communications
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NATURE'S WILD CHILD!

In one of the project villages of Manipur, there is no mobile connectivity. And in some Meghalayan hamlets, tribes continue to live in self-made bamboo homes.

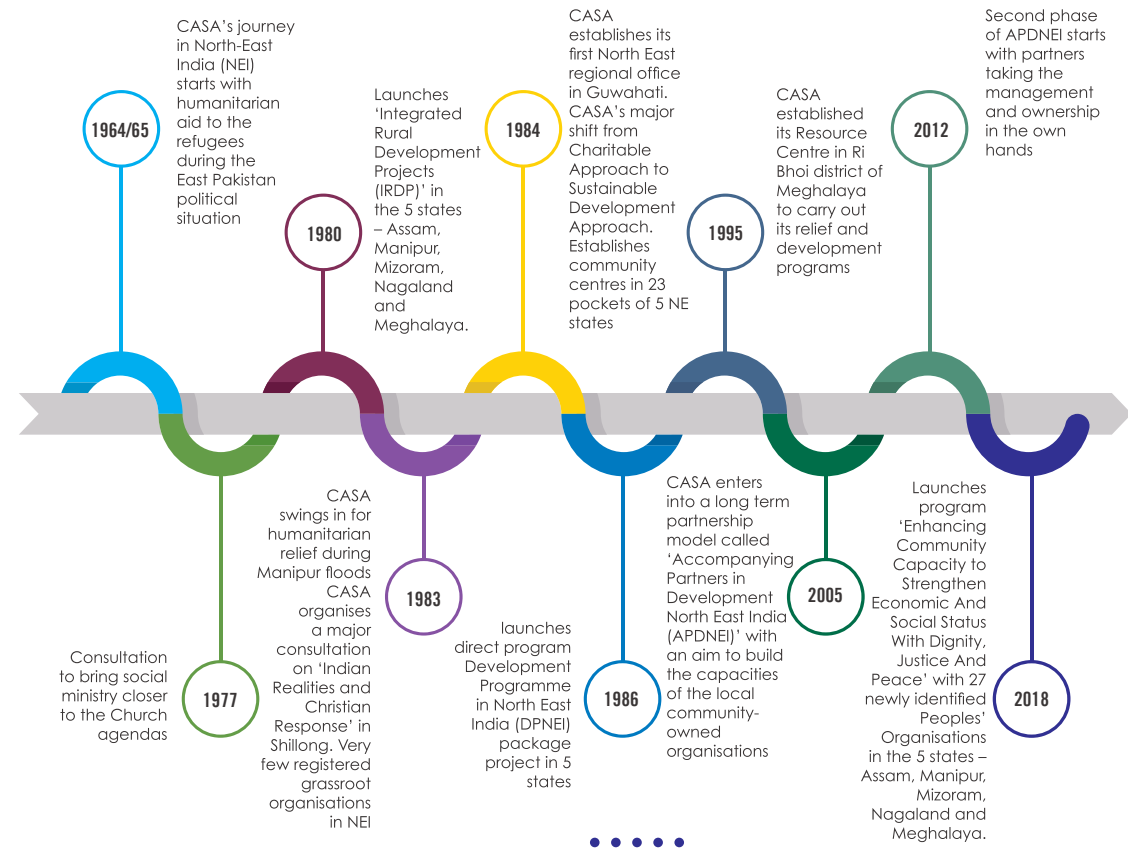
North-East India is nature's wild child. Every state within the seven sisters has its own share of tribes, rituals, food and ethnicity. They dance to their own music and wine. They wear Levis but also proudly adorn traditional outfit. It is a rare sight in India to see children practicing traditional Garo dance to the tunes of a rock instrumental, embedded with lyrics in Garo. "This is who we are. Our tribes define us. Our land is our identity," says CASA NEI Coordinator Lesehu Meru, who was born and brought up in Nagaland.

A SENTIMENT FOR THE NORTH-EAST

In 1984 when CASA started its intervention in the north-east, there were hardly any functional social organisations who would serve as credential welfare partners. Considering all challenges, CASA was determined to successfully implement a partnership model where people take charge of their own development.

"Nevertheless to say, CASA was already active in responding to humanitarian crisis in the North-East. However, it needed the support of people's organisations who were born and raised from within their own communities," says L. Meru, who has served over 35 years working in the region.

2018 marked a new chapter for CASA's partnership model in the North-East. CASA has already set a precedent by successfully



A preview: CASA footprint in North-East India

implementing developmental programmes with 21 people's organisations. Now it was time to work with 27 new partners.

PARTNERS' ROLE IN THE MAKING

Dwindling farm sizes and subsistence jhum culture have made agriculture in the North East uneconomic and caused "de-peasantisation" in rural areas of North-East India. These push factors explain why agricultural employment is falling and rural labourers are shifting to non-farm jobs at a faster rate.

A post-Graduate in Social Work, Hillary K Nongsiang returned to his hometown Shillong to work extensively for his community. He feels that he understands the plight of the people because he is "one of them." Hillary now works as a project coordinator for CASA partnership programme in East Khasi Hills district, Meghalaya. "Only because I don't want my future generation to face problems of migration, healthcare and education," says Hillary. The role of 27 freshly appointed organisations in the five states – Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Assam and Nagaland - will that be of a playmaker; a medium through which welfare policies will be channelized. Led by youths, the new partnership model represents a changed North-East India that is ready for action and more determined to bring change than ever. A hand-holding support on the implementation part is all they need. ■

(Left above) Manipur State Coordinator Somiwon Muiwung interact with women participants during a meeting in Nungbi Kajui village in Ukhrul district.

Working with local partners is always advantageous as they know about their communities better and have the ability to concentrate more time in the field.

Lesehu Meru
Sr. Programme Coordinator
CASA North-East India



Rural Volunteers Centre, Guwahati
 Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India (CBCNEI), Guwahati
 North East Research and Social Networking, Kokrajhar
 Assam Baptist Convention, Golaghat
 MASK, Sonitpur
 Satra, Darrang
 KABC, Karbi Anglong



ASSAM

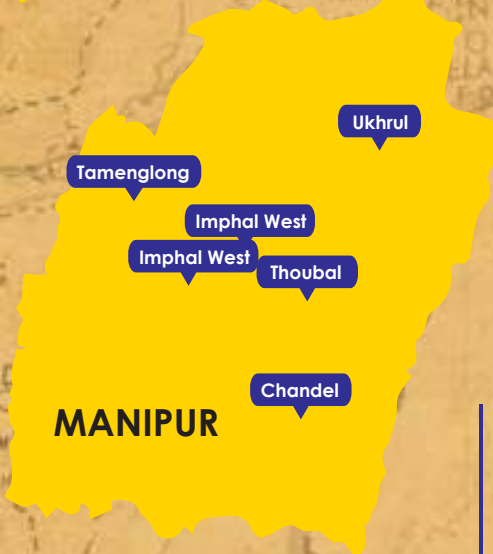
27 Partners in
5 states

A look at present partnerships in North-East India



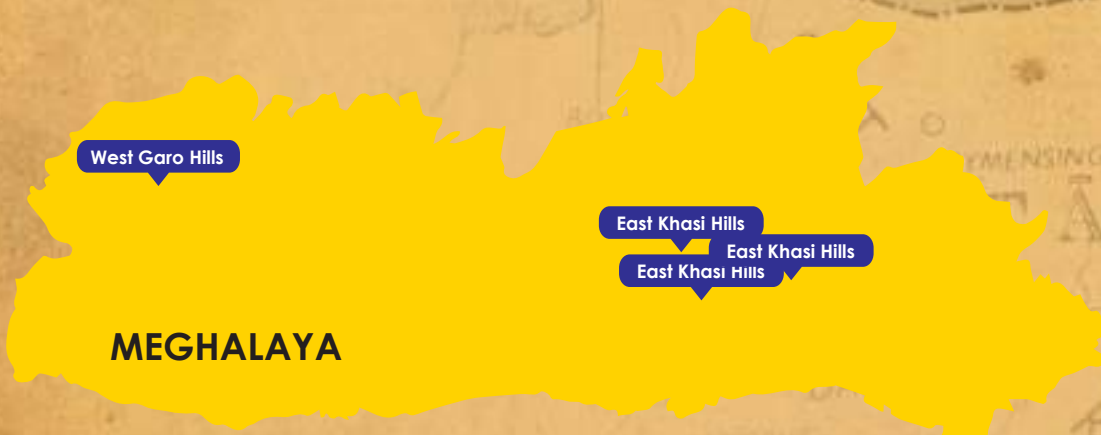
NAGALAND

PBCC, Phek
 Pro Rural, Dimapur
 Nagaland Development Outreach, Dimapur
 Pinnacle, Dimapur



MANIPUR

Zeliangrong Baptist Association, Tamenglong
 Integrated Rural Development Service Organisation, Thoubal
 Manipur Baptist Convention, Imphal West
 New Era Progressive Service Center, Imphal West
 Weaker Section Development Council, Chandel
 Action of Women in Development, Ukhrul



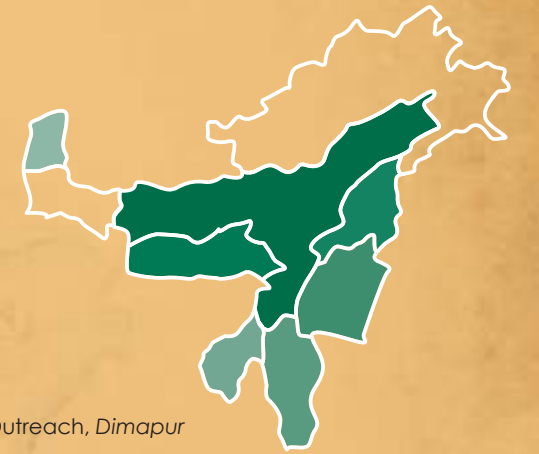
MEGHALAYA

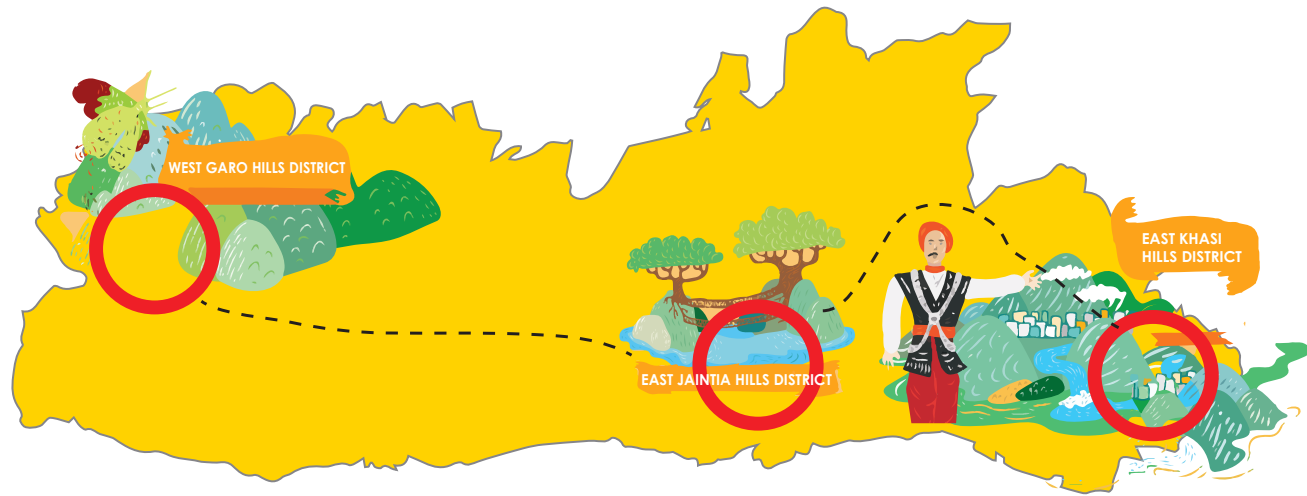
Grassroot, East Khasi Hills
 Agency for Sustainable Development Initiatives, East Khasi Hills
 Garo Baptist Convention, West Garo Hills
 Impulse NGO Network, East Khasi Hills



MIZORAM

Centre for Peace and Development, Aizawl
 Lairam Social Mission, Lawngtlai
 COD NERC, Aizawl
 Mizoram Synod Social Front Department, Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Aizawl
 Relief & Development Department, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Lunglei





 Indicative of field visits by CASA team



Meghalaya

4

**Partners
in
Districts**

WORKING WITH

Khasi, Jaintia, Garo,
Rabha, Hazong,
Nengali, Assamese
communities

The abode of clouds, Meghalaya, is one of the five north-eastern states where CASA is operational with four local partners, closely working with - the Garos, the Khasis, the Jaintias - the three predominant tribes in the state. Practicing the age-old matrilineal tradition, women here have an upper hand on the property and marital rights. On the contrary, most traditional village heads are men and not a trace of women attending the village council meetings. CASA's journey in Meghalaya started back in 1971 when the Bangladesh Liberation, simply known as the Bangladesh War of liberation, sparked genocide and migration. Our intervention towards the migrants has been based on relief and developmental programmes. We aspire more, to empower newer areas who are waiting for change. The four partner organisations in Meghalaya are the instruments through which we implement our programmes.

(Right) Garos perform their traditional 'Wangala' dance in West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya. The dance that is part of a festival is celebrated as thanks-giving after good harvest.



GARO BAPTIST CONVENTION

Location: Tura, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya

GARO BAPTIST CONVENTION



Motto

By Love Serve One Another

Project Name

Economic and Social Empowerment of Rural Communities in Interior Garo Hills region of Meghalaya

Tenure

3 years

Project Location

West Garo Hills District

Aims to Cover

3 blocks
30 villages

GOING BY CREDIBLE HISTORY

With its neighbour Bangladesh on south and west, and Assam on the east and north, the West Garo Hills district is home to Garo tribes - one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. GBC, founded in 1867, is well-established organisation that speaks of Garo history. "Garo Baptist Convention has been able to change the lives of the people - socially and economically. Our motive is to provide every village with clean drinking water, electricity, food, house, medical access, livelihood and education."

GBC Project Director Wanne M. Garrey answered when asked why GBC has been chosen as CASA partner in the district. In the year 2018, GBC entered into a partnership in West Garo Hills – a few pockets of which was already part of CASA's project since 1986. "GBC works in three blocks of the district irrespective of caste, religion and gender, and we link people with helpful schemes," says Wanne.



About
GARO
TRIBE

Second-largest tribe in Meghalaya, comprise about one third of the local population

Believed to have migrated to Meghalaya about 400 years ago from Tibet

Some rural pockets follow traditional animist religion 'Songsarek', but a large part follow Christianity

Youngest daughter inherits property from her mother and son shifts to his wife's place after getting married

LINKING YOUTHS WITH GOVT SCHEMES

Fifty kilometers from the West Garo Hills district headquarters Tura, community members of this small village with a population of hardly 70, are "hopeful" that GBC's intervention in their Sropgre village will be "very beneficial for the youths in particular."

"Most of my friends have moved out of the village in search of higher education. Others who have pursued higher studies are not getting qualified jobs in Meghalaya. Even if they are willing to come back, they can't." Denise B. Marak, 25, is finding it difficult to survive on a meagre income at a nearby local shop. Having sent his siblings to other parts, he chose to stay back to take care his ailing parents.

"If education and employment were better here, I would not be facing such monetary issues. As youths, we must be aware of government schemes and entitlements," Denise says. When GBC came to this village to take survey, Denise was one of the active members who spoke out about the issues troubling youths.

"Migration needs to be dealt with first, and GBC showed us how. I never knew before that government provides skill training to rural youths who are poor and provide them with jobs having regular monthly wages," says Denise. Denise is also the president of Sports Club in his village. The club hosts many kinds of traditional sports competition prevalent in Garo and Denise wishes to give a larger podium for Garo traditional sports. After GBC's trainings on scheme awareness programmes, the club will soon apply for financial assistance for promotion of tribal culture scheme to improve upon its sports infrastructure. ■

“ I was not aware that government provides skill training to rural youths who are poor and provides jobs with regular monthly wages



(Left) In yellow dress GBC Project Coordinator Mallika Marak and in white GBC Director Wanne M. Garrey. (Right) Denise B. Marak, a beneficiary of GBC-CASA Project in West Garo Hills District, Meghalaya.



'WANT MORE WOMEN TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR MEDICAL ENTITLEMENTS'

Septina belongs to the Garo community that follows matrilineal customs, meaning she has the right to acquire her parental property which should give her the freedom in family's decision making.

However, she feels that women are the ones who are not aware of any healthcare schemes. Septina B. Marak is an Anganwadi or Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) worker who hails from Sropgre village, cut-off from the main town Tura, situated in a remote location which only a few people would know about.

“ If more women join the cause, then I believe we will be able to secure health of every child, woman and man of our village

“Due to our remote location, many social schemes do not reach us or reaches very late. But availing the schemes under ICDS is essentially important for us. I started to respect my job as an Anganwadi worker more when I saw the benefits of government healthcare schemes changing lives of the people. If more women join the cause, then I believe we will be able to secure health of every child, woman and man in our village,” says Septina. GBC routed for Septina as one of the important women representatives of her village, playing a crucial part in entitlement awareness campaign. Even with a handful women, Septina feels that women participation rate is very less due to which they miss out on drives on immunisation and awareness on family planning. But Septina sees hope in GBC's programme. With the amount of resources available to the people of Garo Hills, progress seems possible but at a very slow pace. ■

Women have a dominant role in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya. The youngest daughter of the family inherits all ancestral property. After marriage, husbands live in the mother-in-law's home. The mother's surname is taken by children. When no daughters are born to a couple, they adopt a daughter and pass their rights to property to her. Unlike the rest of the country, the birth of daughter is rejoiced here.





Wanne M. Garrey
Project Director
GBC, Tura, Meghalaya

“ With CASA’s support, GBC will continue to work to be the voice of the voiceless

CASA's involvement with GBC in relief and developmental work can be traced back to the 60's. As a small charity organisation. It will be easier for GBC to work on awareness programs in remote areas with CASA's support. The partnership will end up increasing GBC's capacities to reach out to people and uplift the rural folks.

Other Projects by GBC

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya providing formal education to the underprivileged girls under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The school was started as an upper primary along with vocational training in different trades like knitting, sewing, embroidery, music, etc.

Environmental Mitigation Creating community reserve forests and catchment areas in 22 villages, imparted training on improved jhumming cultivation.

Integrated Farming at Edenbari where community practice multi cropping to sustain agri-productivity across all seasons.

(right) Garo houses are built out of locally available natural resources such as bamboo, cane, timber, wood from rubber trees, and dried palm leaves, and using hand tools during the dry months. The houses are found predominantly in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya.

(below) Wanne and Mallika takes though a tour of community-owned mushroom cultivation site.



“

North East India occupies a central place in the future perspective of CASA. Following the success of developmental programmes in other parts of the country where grassroots-level voluntary organizations were empowered extensively by CASA, a partnership programme was also decided for the North-East region.

”



Dr. Jayant Kumar
Head of Programme

During his 40 years of experience, the North-East holds a special significance for Dr. Jayant Kumar. He shares his experiences of implementing and monitoring programmes not only with dedication but also with great sensitivity.

Q: CASA could have done the Northeast project directly, why did we choose a partnership model?

A: Northeast India occupies a central place for CASA. North East India is incredibly diverse – comprising of seven states and a variety of different cultures and ethnicities. A certain amount of sensitivity is required for organizations to work here. The condition has improved significantly over the last 4-5 years and it has become easier to work there.

CASA's involvement in the North-East was limited to partnerships with the church and church related organizations in the 80s. We enabled small village communities and church related foundations to form their own independent organizations. Following the success of developmental programmes in other parts of the country where grassroots and voluntary organizations were supported extensively by CASA, a partnership programme was also decided for the North-East regions.

Q: We pick our potential partners through a strict screening process. Do you think this process ends up helping the growth of organizations?

A: CASA's engagement is not just as a donor or an administrator but we aim to help the organization build up its capacities, leadership and hence be in a position to function independently over a period of time. It is important for every organization to be self-sufficient because bigger organizations like CASA will shift to different places after a period of time and help our partners develop and manage their resources locally, and have the institutional capacity and take action independently.

Q: Do you think CASA chooses organizations who are more connected with the local problems and hence are better at taking the necessary action?

A: The partnership programme is a process of mutual learning. We become aware of local culture, customs, innovations and sensitivities through our partners who work directly in these regions. A lot of new ideas emerge from collective brainstorming. It is a participatory process and CASA gains from it equally, if not more. ■

A Khasi girl performs a traditional dance 'Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem' in East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya. It is an annual spring dance performed by both men and women to celebrate harvesting and sowing. The female dancers have to be unmarried (virgins), while their male counterparts do not have any such restriction.

Category 01

AUTHENTICITY & LEGAL COMPLIANCES
The focus is on local organization
Registered under government compliances
Having all the legal requirements like society registration, PAN card
Should be a credible organization with a clear vision and commitment to the project partner

Category 02

RAPPORT WITH COMMUNITY & WORK DONE ON GOUND
CASA Selection Team members visit the organizations to check the effectiveness of partner's work with the community
Like-mindedness due to the unique nature of the project
Ability to engage with Government schemes for sustainable livelihood
Internal discussion on the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

Category 03

PROJECT FINANCES & DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM
Accounting & bookkeeping process should be well managed
Ability to transform lives of the people/communities aiming to work with
Compatible policies
Strictly follow monitoring and evaluation of the project



AGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Location: Shillong, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya



AGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Motto

For Charitable and Sustainable Development

Project With CASA

Sustainable Development of the People of the Community by Adapting Reliable activities and accessing the Rights and entitlements

Project Tenure

3 years

Project Location

East Khasi Hills District

Aims to Cover

2 blocks
19 villages

A WALK TOWARD AWARENESS

In the 19 chosen villages of AFSDI - poor participation rate in village meetings added to the lack of functioning peoples organisations - echoed not once but many times. Considered one of the poorest and remotest blocks within East Khasi Hills District, AFSDI focussed on designing a project with CASA that could help the communities sustain in Mawphlang block. "The communities should learn to sustain, even at the gravest hour," says Rev. S C Diengngan, Project Director, AFSDI.

Throughout the implementation process, the main focus was given on forming peoples organisations by creating linkage with the state and district level platforms. Emerging as a social wing of a popular church-based establishment in Shillong, AFSDI is one of a very few social welfare organisations that is seeking to enhance the capacity of the Khasi tribe. "AFSDI is working on the ground to attach people with the entitlements and schemes of the government. Just recently, we concluded our household survey. Within the four most important clusters, the AFSDI linked the communities with government schemes," says Hillary, the project coordinator of AFSDI.



(Left) In white T-Shirt AFSDI Project Coordinator Hillary K Nongsiang. In black AFSDI Project Director Rev. S. C. Diengngan.

(Right) Community gathers for a meeting with AFSDI in Phanblang village of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

But this was not enough. AFSDI understood the need to help the majority farmers with sustainable practices. In more than 19 villages since September last year, the team conducted workshops on the traditional method of making organic manure/ compost, followed by the distribution of high quality pea seed packets in the villages.

"We know that the seed packet costs just the double in the market, that is why we are happy to see AFSDI take up our village for their programme. We never knew that availing government services can be this easy. We are now receiving awareness on many types of government schemes directly from the Government," says the Headman Writtenfast Mawlong of Lyndoh Phanblang village in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

In reality, the seed distribution is more than what meet the eyes – A direct linkage with the community and the authority. ■



About KHASI TRIBE

Largest ethnic group with around 48% of the population of Meghalaya

Earliest tribes who may have originally come to India from Cambodia

Live under an ancient matriarchal system with women serving as household heads and owners of the property

Speak an Austro-Asiatic (AA) language also known as Mon-Khmer, a large language family of Mainland Southeast Asia.

DELIVERY ON THE ROAD, SUNITA DOES NOT WANT HER DAUGHTERS TO FACE THE SAME



“

I wanted to give birth in the hospital... things would have been easier for my son and I, if there was transportation available in the village.

”

At 27, Sunita has seven children to feed. But the story of her third child would sum up the struggles Khasi women face in their day-to-day lives. Village Lait Sonphlang is three kilometers and a trye-made bridge away from the 'pakka' road.

“During my 1st and 2nd pregnancies, my husband carried me in a basket on his back for the on-foot journey. We had to wait to get local transport, and then change another to reach to the hospital. But the same did not happen the third time. My water broke midway and I had to deliver my boy on the road amidst forest cover. I was worried about whether my boy will be able to reach the hospital in time,” says Sunita, clad in a multi-coloured traditional sari.

As she sits next to Bilai, her boy who has now grown to the seven years old, she recounts more facts of the day. “I delivered him on an overcast day, with rains worsening the conditions of the already

deteriorated road.” With no transportation and proper road, even if her mind raced with worries regarding the health of her child, she had no choice but to accept the unavoidable circumstance.

“We feel really scared going to the hospital on foot during pregnancies,” said the women in unison during the meeting. The women of this small village in Meghalaya are living in a constant state of distress about the well-being of their forthcoming children. The road in their village is what causes their disconcert. “I wanted to be able to give birth in the hospital... things would have been easier for my son and I, if there was transportation available in the village. I do not want my daughters to face the same.”

Sunita and the several women of her community continue living in this predicament. She wishes AFSDI would link good roads and transportation to the village. ■

(Right) Men perform Khasi traditional dance 'Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem' in AFSDI project village Laitsohphlang in East Khasi Hills district.

(Top) Sunita sitting with her two children speaks to CASA about how she could not reach hospital in time and had to deliver Bilai, her seven-year-old son sitting on extreme right corner, on the muddy pathway due to lack of proper roads and transportation in her village Laitsohphlang village in East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya.





(Left) Among Khasi women, the knowledge of family planning methods is not much widespread. One of the reasons behind this is maybe the influence of culture and religion. The couples are encouraged to continue to procreate because of the survival of the society and the family. CASA/Arushi Narchal

(Right) Khasi women beneficiaries show their pea seed packets given to them as part of Seed Distribution workshop by AFSDI in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

AN EFFORT TO REVIVE SUSTAINABLE FARMING

“We know that the distributed seed packets cost just the double in the market, that is why we are happy to see AFSDI take up our village for their program. We never knew availing government services could be this easy. It is all about improving our living conditions,” says the Headman Writtenfast Mawlong of Lyndoh Phanblang village in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. In reality, the seed distribution is more than what meet the eyes – A direct linkage with the community and the authority. “ASFDI acts like a bridge - mobilising people to make them understand their value as equal citizens, and that government is there to uplift them whenever they need,” says Mawlong

“ We knew about many government schemes but didn’t know how and whom to approach for it. AFSDI helped us establish a dependable linkage with the agriculture department.

The seeds were distributed by the Meghalaya Agriculture Department in the months between September to November, the time when AFSDI started working actively. “We knew about some schemes but didn't know whom and how to approach. We did not have direct linkage with the agriculture department. Even if AFSDI withdraws from our village, our peoples organisation knows who to approach collectively and how to appeal for their schemes.” The village headman continues: “You see the advantage of such distribution programmes is that we are able to communicate our needs with the different departments.”

Other than the seed distribution, the organisation carried on its training on Organic Compost programme which helped the farmers to once again get habitual of using organic compost during cultivation. “AFSDI acts like a bridge between community and authority. We knew about some schemes but didn't know whom and how to approach. Now we have direct linkage with the agriculture department. ■





Rev. S. C. Diengnan
Project Director
AFSDI

“ NGOs like CASA and AFSDI are instrumental in mobilising people and bringing the benefit of government schemes to the people.

Connecting with the local NGOs/ People is always beneficial in understanding the pulse of the people. We understand the conditions of the people living in these villages. Most of them are farmers, especially women, and most men are daily labourers who leave their villages because they have to find work in other places only to earn and provide for their family. From the very beginning we try to educate, inform them about their entitlements and their rights, so they get more involved in training, awareness programmes. After the completion of this project, 30% families will have an upto the mark living standard.

(Left) A student introduces herself in front of her teacher in Amikha School for Disabled located in Shillong.
(Right) Inmates of New Life De-addiction Centre sing to a rock song.



Other Projects by AFSDI

Mairang Vidyajyoti Inclusive School for the persons with disabilities to receive inclusive education along with school-going students.

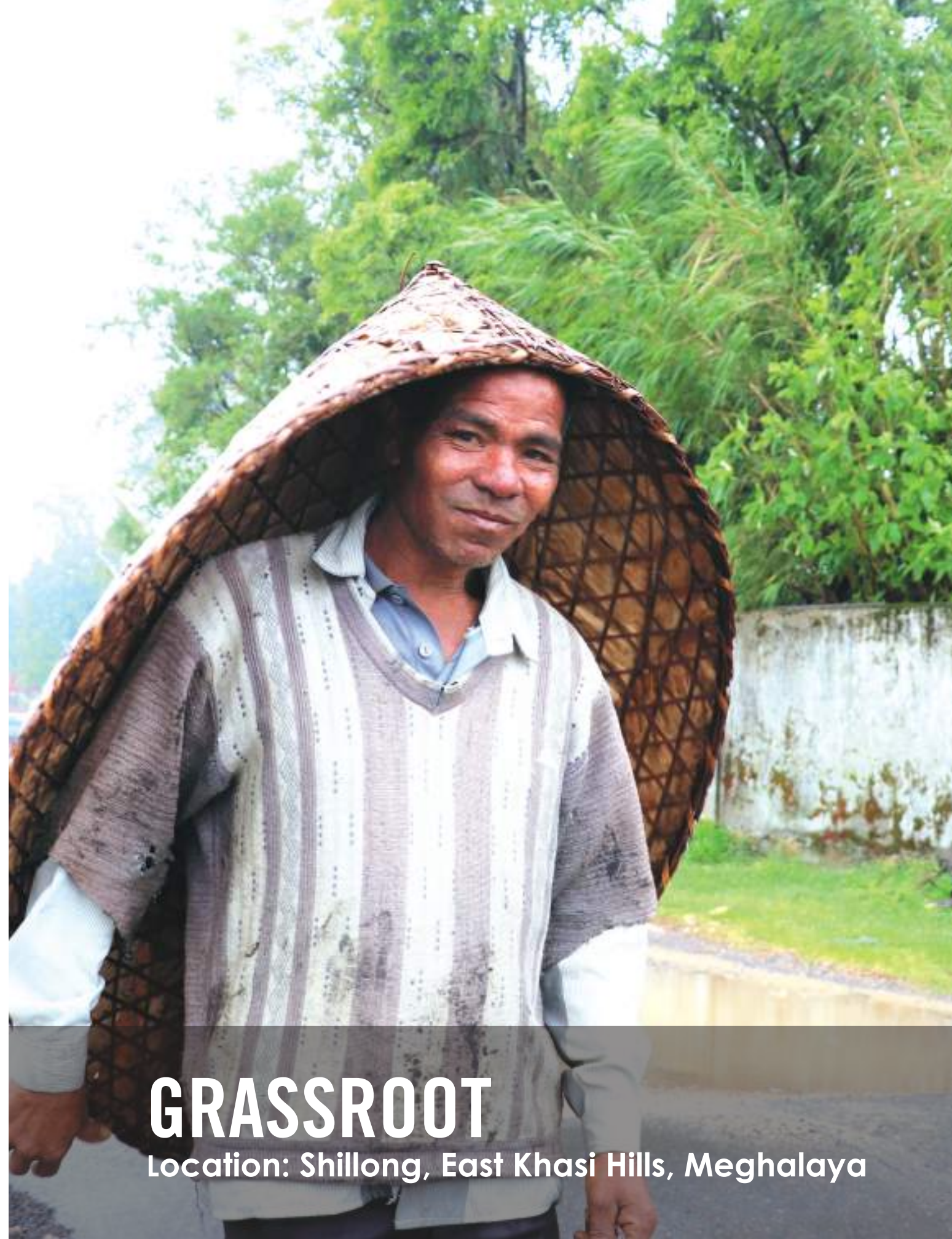
Rev. Amikha School for Disabled established in 2012 to provide opportunities for children with disabilities and adults to avail formal and non-formal educational services and vocational training.

Health Care Services organising health awareness programmes every year where preventive measures and proper sanitation taught to the community.

Community Based Rehabilitation Programme covering 30 villages and working with persons with disability under 6 areas – staffing and management, needs assessment, education, health, social, livelihood and advocacy.

Synod SEPNGI Training-Production Centre stressing on the need for economic independence and entrepreneurship through training and production centre.

New Life De-Addiction Centre providing motivational and medical guidance on quitting drugs and alcohol.



GRASSROOT
Location: Shillong, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya



GRASSROOT



About P NAR TRIBE

The Pnar, also known as Jaintia, are a sub-tribal group of Khasi Tribe in Meghalaya

Famous for artistic weaving, wood-carving and cane and bamboo work

Main occupations are the coal mining and Betel-nut plantation

Their original tribal religion is known as Niamtre, believing religion is God-given (not founded by man)

(Left) Grassroot members Clareen Nongbet (in white dress) and Salome Suchiang (in black dress) addressing the community in East Jaintia District in Meghalaya.

(Below) A woman attends a meeting organised by Grassroot in Mutong village in East Jaintia District.

(Page 29) A daily wage worker in East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya, braves heavy rainfall using a home-made traditional bamboo umbrella. CASA/ Arushi Narchal

went for cash by working or sending their children to enter the illegal coal mines. Because of the narrow and fragile tunnels, children are generally preferred. Easy cash coming at a greater price. While some children succeed in paying off debts with cash, some pay it with their life," says Salome Suchiang, the project coordinator of CASA-Grassroot project.

"The farmers now want to now return to cultivation that was steady yet promising income. Their only problem was that they did not know how to re-start cultivation," said Salome during a community meeting in Mutong village in East Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya. Years of coal mining on or under highly productive farmlands have altered topography, drainage, and fertility of agricultural lands in this side of the district. Different mining techniques and waste disposal practices have negatively affected farmlands in different ways, in addition to adverse impacts on local water and air quality.

Grassroot, working for the welfare of Pnar community, understand the plight of the community. "I, myself live in a nearby village and I know what they are facing," said Salome. Even with the customary matrilineal practice, the women remain the bottom receivers of all schemes. "We started a project for sustainable livelihood for women. We introduced a system of integrated farming and provided training for the same in two villages. Now in this village, we will start the training process which will include training on cultivation and making compost." ■



Goal
To Create Responsibility and Power of The Individuals and The Community

Project With CASA
Sustainable Livelihood For Women

Project Tenure
3 years

Project Location
East Jaintia Hills District

Aims to Cover
1 block
20 villages

FROM BEING QUIET TO OUTSPOKEN

When two young women – Salome Suchiang and Clareen Nongbet – entered Mutong village located in the East Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya, they were disappointed to witness hesitation on part of the native Pnar community. The people were much reluctant in sharing their issues with Grassroot during the survey period.

To understand the Pnar tribe is to understand the village dynamics. This part of the East Jaintia is popular for its coal, and unpopular for its rat-hole mining. Over a month after 15 miners were trapped in an illegal rat-hole mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, a team of Indian Navy personnel recovered a miner's body at a depth of over 200 feet flooded coal mine. It is being reported that more than two-third of the miners were children.

The miners, from where they come from, have seen, played and worked in these coal mines. "More farmers left cultivation and

MULLING OVER CULTIVATION: GRASSROOT SHOWS THEM THE WAY

Years of water pollution from coal mines have deteriorated the condition of the land on which our forefather cultivated rice." As Grassroot continues working with their community for another two years, a young man of 25, Pynkhreh Phawa is hopeful that his community will be able to harvest good quality rice next season.

Ever since the ban on rat-hole mining by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the farmers want to get back to their second and the only option - cultivation. However, they needed handholding support on ways to revive their fields just like their olden days.

In terms of agriculture, East Jaintia Hills cultivate brown sticky rice as their major crop. Besides rice, they also cultivate bettle-nut (kwai) and bettle-leaves (pathi/tympew) in abundance. Most of the farmers in the area are dependent on seasonal rainfall as only a few portion of the land are covered under irrigational system.

"Leaders of the community want everyone to return to earlier ways of earning livelihood i.e. farming land and cultivation. Earlier many people had land but now it is no good for cultivation as



“ We want to return to cultivation but don't know how. We were not aware of government subsidies and schemes before Grassroot

years of water pollution from the coal mines has deteriorated the condition of the land on which our forefather cultivated rice," says Pynkhreh.

Despite being a landowner, he has been out of regular work since the NGT ban. But he is certain that with good training he will be able to cultivate rice again. Earning a daily wage between Rs.250/- to Rs.300/- at paddy fields, Pynkhreh wishes if only he could do the same amount of labour in my own paddy field. "My land is not in good condition and I would require some training to clean it," Pynkhreh states.

Through Grassroot's initiative on integrated farming, Pynkhreh would become part of various trainings and meetings on government schemes on land cleaning. He found out a way where with could clear his land under MGNREGA, get paid and receive help from agriculture department to start harvesting again.

A HEALTHY TIME IN THE FUTURE

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), 40-year-old Theimoa expresses her regards to Grassroot for "at least bringing women under common roof and discussing all kinds of issues". "People in our Mulang



village do not take matters like health seriously. When we go door-to-door and talk to pregnant women about vaccinations and salt tests, they often turn us down and ignore us, claiming that they are in no such need for help." Theimoa says.

She wishes Grassroot to make women aware about health awareness programs in the village so people can be more educated and about the long-term impacts. Salome says: "Poor health of one individual signifies the health status of the entire community. Even though Theimoa is aware about her health rights, she may not be aware of her entitlements related to water or electricity. It is the time for the community to hold the banner of development in their own hands."

“ Instead of depending on only one livelihood, we want them to equally concentrate their efforts on integrated farming. It is an organic system; it is a new technology. They can make their own organic pesticide, fertilizers, compost, at the same time run cattle rearing. We work hand-in-hand with CASA to make these projects successful and sustainable.



Salome Suchiang
Project Coordinator
Grassroot

Other Projects by Grassroot

Project Community Based Tourism initiated as one of the livelihood projects with an objective to upgrade traditional skills and enhanced income of the community. It was implemented in Mawlynnong village – one of the cleanest villages in Asia.

Environmental Campaign to discourage use of plastic bags and designed environmental-friendly bags with personal pledge sold to customers at affordable prices.

Campaign on Human Rights Violation Grassroot partnered with many civil societies to increase promotion of equal treatment in the eye of the law and taking a guided response on human rights violations.

Documentation of Traditional Medicinal Herbs so as to enhance and preserve the knowledge of the traditional medicinal ways of treatment and practices.

Awareness on HIV/AIDS advocacy programs through counselling, street plays, media, events, role plays





Manipur

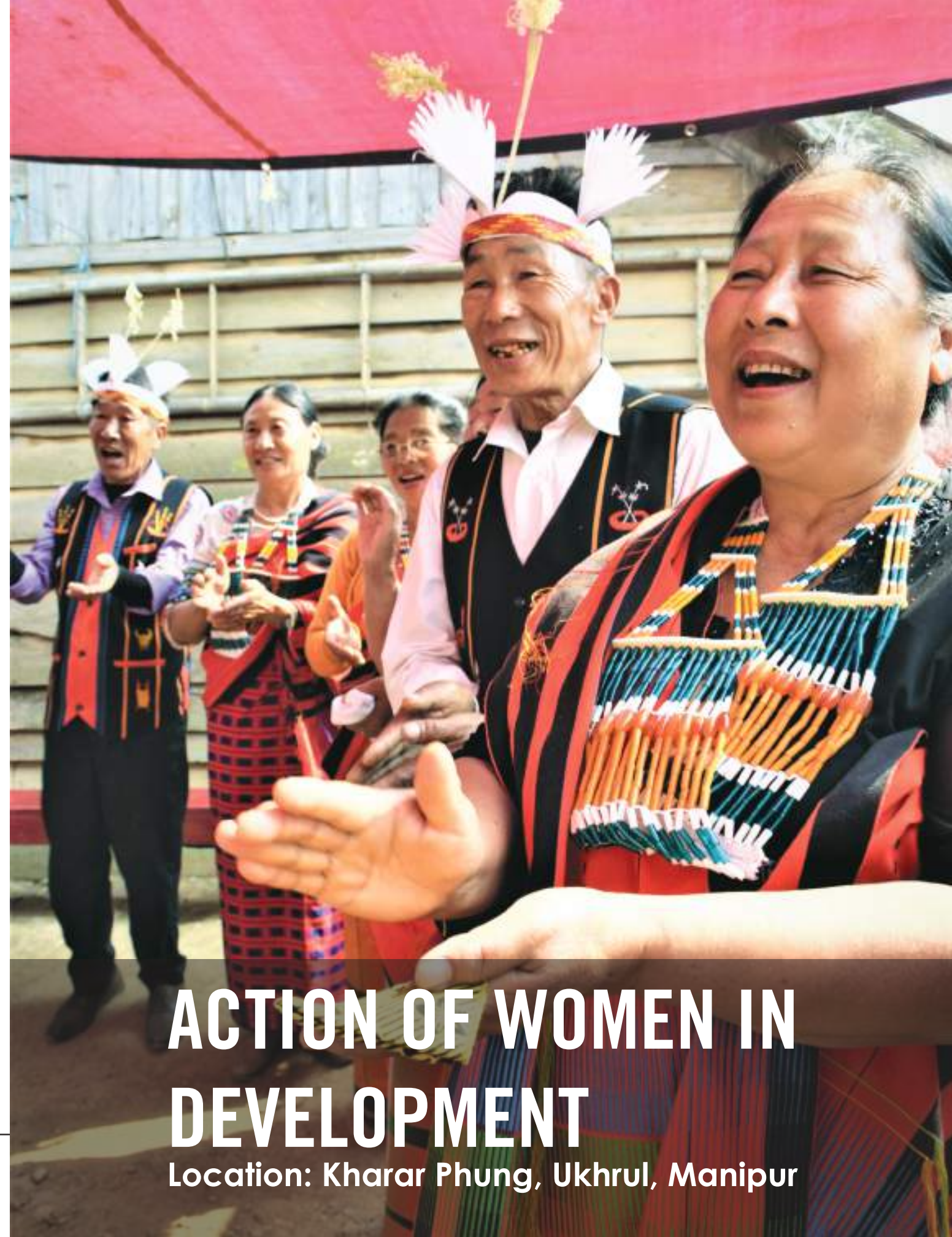
6 Partners in Districts

WORKING WITH

Tangkul, Naga, Anal, Poumai, Mao, Kuki, Gangtie, Paite, Zeliangron, Meitei, Chiru Communities

Bound by Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south, Assam to the west and Myanmar to its east, Manipur also has 'land of gems' to its title. Of the total 16 districts of Manipur, CASA works in 6 districts involving variety of tribes with variety of issues faced in their day-to-day lives. CASA has been present in the state during a number of humanitarian crisis. Through its office in central Imphal, it has given the baton of change to six newly emerged partners. CASA Communications did not get the opportunity to meet all the partners in the Manipur. But we were glad to start with Ukhrul district. Among all the qualities, Tangkul's beautiful way of hospitality could be well received. Located on the hilly eastern part of Manipur, Ukhrul district is home to Tangkul Naga tribes. A bit modern in approach, the tribe has its own share of problems.

(Right) Senior-most members of Tangkul community perform their traditional dance in their traditional attire in Hunphun town in Ukhrul district.



ACTION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Location: Kharar Phung, Ukhrul, Manipur



ACTION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Motto

Act and Develop

Project With CASA

Resilience building of socially and economically excluded groups through ensuring rights and entitlements and through sustainable livelihood

Project Tenure

3 years

Project Location

Ukhrul District

Aims to Cover

1 block
15 villages

SOME VILLAGES ARE JUST TOO FAR !

It was a long three hour trek through the woods to reach the salt pits in one of Ukhrul villages. Villages as remote as these are where CASA partner AWID implements its program 'resilience building of socially and economically excluded groups through ensuring rights and entitlements and through sustainable livelihood.'

The secretary of AWID Ningthingla Ruivanao sees it as a long partnership together. AWID is also one of 14 non-church organisations to be working with CASA. With all its members coming from the Tangkhul Naga community, AWID understands the realities quite well.

Ukhrul is the land of the plenty-full, but comes with a plenty of problems. Huge migration, lack of employment, infrastructure and water crisis add up to their woes. A couple of years back the tribes in the interior did not know of any welfare schemes run by the India Government. Naga society is very traditional in nature and follow their own ancient system of governance. The village has a headman and its village councils, where women are not invited to take part in decision making.



(Left) AWID staff Mingyaola Shaiza in extreme left, Secretary Ningthingla Ruivanao in centre and Assistant Coordinator Aton Shaiza to right during community meetings in various project villages of Ukhrul district. (Above) CASA NEI staff Phungreiso Varu in extreme left, volunteers and AWID staff Mingyaola Shaiza and Aton Shazia, with CASA Senior Programme Coordinator Lesehu Meru second from right and Manipur state coordinator Somiwon Muiwung pose in front of a salt making pit in Kuirei village in Ukhrul District of Manipur.

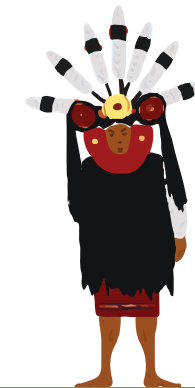
However, in a meeting with AWID, women were more in attendance than men. Quite shy at first, the women discussed problems of water connectivity and alternate livelihood sources. "A lot is changing already. Now women are coming forward for discussions in our SHG groups because we told them the importance of such people's organisations," said Ruivanao.

"It was a very difficult area. There were hardly any NGOs who worked in this part of the region. When we told them about our work, they could not understand what capacity building and awareness means. But the tables have turned now," says Ruivanao.

'YOU KNOW IT'S RIGHT TIME TO JOIN'

SHGs Groups were not just words for Mary, but she believed in one of them. 40-year-old Mary took the initiative and successfully formed an SHG through which a lot many women invested on livestock, education and livelihood. But couldn't sustain it. "Because we took our equal shares and closed the group. But AWID is training women to build independent SHGs and committees governed by neutral body that invest on their sustainability. This is how our people's organisation will become strong," she says.

Mary, now the President of one of the SHGs is working with AWID in the Kuirei village. "Most youths are out of the village, infrastructure



About TANGKHUL NAGA TRIBE

Originally migrated from Myanmar and have no concept of caste or classes in their society

Speak more than a hundred dialects among themselves

Unlike Meghalaya's matrilineal society, Tangkhul Nagas follow patriarchal system

Majority have embraced Christianity with Ukhrul being the birthplace of Christianity and Western education in Manipur brought as early as 1896



(Left) CASA Senior Programme Coordinator Lesehu Meru addresses the community gathering as AWID Secretary Ningthingla Ruivanao translates into Tangkhul Naga language.

(Below) Mary speaks about the problems faced by Tangkhul Naga tribe.

(Right) Village Headman of Kurei, Yongme, poses in an official attire. Right from its origin, every Tangkhul village had been a well organized and enjoys both internal as well as external independence of its own. Parallely, the villages are guided by their customary and traditional laws of village councils and has one Headman (Awunga) who inherits the title from his forefathers.



for education is lacking, huge losses in farming and unavailability of basic necessities - you will witness in abundance in our village. We want to replace our traditional farming tools with new instruments and have a permanent water supply," she says.

The work has just been started by AWID in the month of October 2018 when it conducted baseline surveys before sending the final list of recommended villages. "Though remote, it seemed fit for us. The Tangkhul Naga tribe were unaware of government schemes and how to approach it. The people had accepted the consequences of their situation and had no one to point out. When we started our evaluation of the village economy, we found them economically very poor," says the secretary of AWID, Ruivanao.

Mary confirms it by saying that the families did not even have the financial capability to buy extra blankets and woollen clothes. Elected President of her SHG group, Mary feels that with the advent of AWID they look forward to huge transformation in their lives. She along with several other women Jennifer, Pamshim, Worchang, Awonpam and Mahala are expecting to take charge of the development in Kurei.

"Our customary practice did not allow women to pursue education, but now every girl in our village goes to school. Change comes like this. We have once seen the power of women groups, we will again see a sustainable SHG this time. When you see so much pending work, you know it is the right time to join the SHG group," says Mary. ■

“ Our customary practice did not allow women to pursue education, but now every girl in our village goes to school. Changes come like that



EXPANDING PIG FARMING EVERY YEAR

Jennifer married and came to Kurei village. At that time, Mary was already mobilising women and Jennifer became a part of the cause. With her fair share of Rs 10,000 given to her by the SHG, she paid school fees and purchased books, uniform and two piglets.

27-year-old Jennifer practised the true meaning of sustainable income generation. And the piglets were her gold bank. Pig grows fast and is a prolific breeder, farrowing 10 to 12 piglets at a time. It is capable of producing two litters per year under optimal management conditions. Pig farming has been regarded as one of most profitable sustainable farming in India - mostly practised by small and landless farmers, uneducated youth and farm women. It is also regarded as part time earning

“ Because I knew the importance of pig rearing, I got additional income as a support for my children’s higher education

for educated youth having agriculture as occupation “Because I knew of the importance of pig rearing, I got additional income as a support for my children’s higher education. I am looking forward to expand the piggery this year. Pig farming is a very important component in our culture,” she says. Out of total pig population in India, 28 per cent are grown in this region.

At a time when the government is trying to empower small and marginal businessmen and women, Jennifer knows that with AWID’s support she will expand her income to improve her circumstances. She says “I will attend every forthcoming workshop and training to learn more and implement better.” ■



(Left) Jennifer feeds fodder to the pigs in her cattle shed.

(Right) Children as young as 12 make a climb to fetch drinking water from direct pipelines and carry water vessels weighing up to five litres at a time. Ukhul is reeling under a severe water crisis.





Ningthingla Ruivanao
Secretary
AWID, Ukhrul, Manipur

The main focus of our partnership was women, their livelihood, food security, their rights and entitlement involved. We are taking up gender mainstreaming as one of crucial points for our project. AWID with CASA are working in 15 villages, 5 from the northern regions, 9 from the Central regions and 2 from western regions of Ukhrul district. People in the remote villages do not get any benefits from the government or the NGOs. We feel very happy to work with CASA in a project that looks after the poorest of the poor in our society. CASA could have taken up the project directly, but it gives more importance on empowering local NGOs to work more effectively on the ground. A local organisation like ours belongs to the same community, we know their problems and can have a closer relationship with our own people.

“CASA could have taken up the project directly, but it gives more importance to empowering local NGOs to work more effectively on the ground.”

(Above) AWID Secretary Ningthingla Ruivanao. CASA/Arushi Narchal

(Right) A pottery maker shows CASA member on traditional art of pottery making in Nungbi Kajui village of Ukhrul district. AWID has been also working on promoting tribal livelihood and food security.



Other Projects by AWID

Food Processing Unit

wherein locally grown fruits like wild apple, plum, olive etc. are processed, packaged and marketed for fundraising and sustenance

Livelihood Projects

such as imparting training on pottery making and other livelihood opportunities

Project WinG Manipur

striving to be an agent of change by strengthening the role of women in local governance and decision-making across north-east India.

System of Rice Intensification – SRI

promoted in 20 villages of Ukhrul district of Manipur in an effort to increase the paddy production of 580 farmers.

Diversification Based Irrigation – DBI

constructed water reservoir and irrigation canals in 2 villages for regular supply of water for agricultural purposes

Promoting Tribal Livelihood & Food Security

through community-based land and biodiversity management in north eastern India. AWID was an active member of the project.



REVISIT PAST

CASA returns to its old project area Damal Asim village where it implemented its development programme from 1986-2005 and in partnership programme from 2005-2015. A glance at how our interventions have changed lives

‘CASA is as old as the freedom of India’

Sitting on the porch of his house, 87 year old Pardon B Marak remembers the time when he associated with CASA. Having crossed 50 years of age already at the time of his First Training with CASA in 1994, it was his zeal to do something for his people that worked as a fuel and ignited the fire within him. That training in Barapani near Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya changed his life completely.

Owing to his interest in developmental work, he returned to Barapani as a trainee again in the

year 1998. He utilised the knowledge gained from the lectures during his training. Laying down the developmental work brick by brick on the foundation of the theories taught to him, he helped the people of his hometown in West Garo Hills when he returned there as a leader. For years he held, he served as a charismatic leader, fulfilling the responsibilities and benefiting others as much as he could. Later, he also served as the Chairman for CASA in the area.

When asked about his contribution to the area, he says, “I considered it to be my duty bound responsibility to impart the knowledge I had acquired among others of my community.” He often got involved with people informally and advised them on livelihood projects and how they can take CASA’s help for the same. He helped many around him improve their economic status through developmental projects.

Talking about CASA, Marak fondly remembers that as our first Prime Minister JawaharLal Nehru, took over him the onus of uplifting the poor so did CASA. He says, “CASA is as old as the freedom of India”. It has played an active role in the reformation of the lives of the people. It is an old friend of the people and will be serving them in years to come too. ■



52-year-old Prinson Marak was capacitated during CASA training programmes on livelihood back in 1990. He learnt carpentry skills which helped him earn a sustainable livelihood. CASA revisits Prinson after 29 years in his hometown Damal Asim village of West Garo Hills in Meghalaya. "I have upgraded my skills over the time and now I am into masonry. I also employ people who want to work with me. Training programme by CASA was a stepping stone," says Prinson.



Marson R. Marak owns a cashew farm which gives him a profit of more than two lakhs in a year. "I remember when CASA came to our Damal Asim village in 1991 and distributed cashew saplings to initiate alternate sustainable cropping system. It has proved highly beneficial for me," says Marson.

East Zone

Struggle for existence is the tagline for the lives and livelihoods of the community living in Sunderban. CASA India is working in eight Community Development Blocks with its project on Capacity Enhancement of the People. As part of the project, a one-day State Level Workshop was organised on February 4th with discussions specific to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and its impact on livelihood and #gender. Government officials - Additional Chief Secretary, Special Secretary of Sundarban Affairs, Agriculture Researcher and Legal Practitioners - attended the workshop through which the village committee members were given a chance to present their initiatives and recommendations to the higher officials - with a vision to bring development to the mangroves region.



CASA India organises a two-day workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in Kolkata. The objective of the workshop, which will conclude today, is to develop clarity for social work practitioners on integrating gender perspective into every stage of policy processes. Discussions being held on meaningful participation of women at the familial, organisational and societal levels.

The tea gardens of the Dooars region in West Bengal have been much in the news for their frequent shut-downs and irregular payments to the workers. CASA India works in the region with its local partners towards economic and social empowerment of the tribal people, who have served the estates for generations.

A worker is seen spraying pesticide in a tea garden of Alipurduar District (West Bengal). Wrapping a plastic sack around their waist is all they usually do to avoid contact with harmful chemicals. They are not provided with gears to protect their eyes or feet. Most sprayers, after several years of work, undergo skin conditions and poor eye-sight.



CASA India members and volunteers reviewing and planning one of its crucial projects on Strengthening Disaster Risk Management implemented in Astaranga block, Puri district of Odisha.

This is one-of-its-kind project on disaster preparedness in India where vulnerable communities are trained on the important methods of search, rescue and evacuation that are highly useful during emergencies.



CASA India celebrated Republic Day with school children in Astarang Block under Puri district of Odisha. As part of the celebrations, CASA conducted drawing, essay and debate competitions in 27 schools for standards 7th, 8th and 9th depicting natural disasters like cyclone, fire, flood, earthquake, lightning, sunstroke, etc. Winners were awarded with prizes on 26th January.

Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow

Local Capacity for Peace

LCP has since played a key role in the peace building process as the ethnically rich South Asian countries have experienced a fair share of inter and intra state conflicts.



By Nishant Niel Lawrence

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Edited by Mansi Sharma

In late 1994, project Local Capacity for Peace (LCP) was launched to answer the question: How much assistance should be provided in conflict settings that disengage people from the violence surrounding them? Taking a step further, LCP also sought to develop alternative systems for addressing the problems that underlie the conflict.

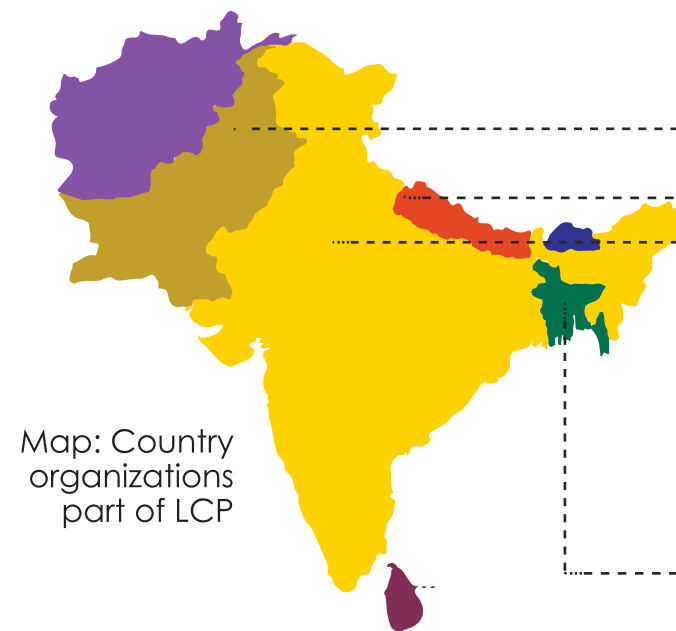
LCP has since played a key role in the peace building process as the ethnically rich South Asian countries have experienced a fair share of inter and intra state conflicts. The network within LCP, supported by Bread for the World (BftW), seeks to address issues of violations of rights, violence and abject poverty, issues related to ethnic minorities, inequality, casteism, conflict over resources, migration, disillusioned youths and atrocities on women.

Back in the days, non-profit organisations ranging from CASA in India to Christian Commission for Development (CCDB) in Bangladesh and others, felt that the increasing level of potential and actual conflicts in the south Asian countries were hampering their development and humanitarian programmes; thereby jeopardising their ability to achieve larger developmental goals.

The network partners shared and learnt from each other's experiences throughout its four phases. However, LCP has strengthened its foundation and moved beyond the mainstreaming of LCP/Do Not Harm and now working directly on conflict and in conflict. In the on-going fifth phase, the LCP tools are directly implemented on ground zero with contribution from youths in peace building.

While working with the communities for over 12 years, the network realised that it is high time to centralise the focus on youths and making them the active agents of change in conflict settings by capacitating them on some indispensable tools like conflict analysis and conflict transformation.

The children and youth are the most vulnerable in scenarios like these. Being gullible they can fall easy



Map: Country organizations part of LCP

- Community World Service (CWS), Pakistan
- United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Nepal
- Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), India
- Institute of Social Democracy (ISD), India
- Church of North India-Synodical Board of Social Services (CNI-SBSS), India
- Church of South India (CSI-SEVA), India
- United NGO Mission to Manipur (UNMN), India
- Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), Bangladesh
- Maleya Foundation, Bangladesh

South Asia fact check

In **2016**
20% of all world conflict took place in South Asian Region. (Economic Times)

40 million
people estimated to be displaced by 2015 due to climate change in South Asia (East Asia Forum)

1 in 2 women
faces violence at home in South Asia (Towards Ending Violence against Women in South Asia, Oxfam Briefing Paper)

for malicious practices and can be manipulated. While working with communities for so many years the network realised that young people today are used by the political and ideological leaders for their own vested interest. They are used to spread violence, hatred, intolerance and divide people. They are seldom seen as active actors in peace setting, instead they are viewed as agents of spreading violence. LCP has helped engage the youth in development activities while also giving them a chance to lead and create peace at the local as well as regional level.

The network in 2015, made a strategic decision to start a collective Youth programme, in which Youth are now the focal point of intervention. In the months of June and July 2018, two national level learning and sharing workshops were held in Dharamshala in northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh and Gopalpur in eastern coastal state of Odisha. Trained youth assembled under one platform to share their local experiences at regional level, understand from each other and realise the commonalities and the diversities of the region by mutually learning from each other.

In this contemporary phase, the aim of the LCP Programme is to direct the energy of the youth from the conflicted area by guiding them and providing them with a platform to use it in a manner beneficial to the community. They also raise awareness about the various cultures, working out a way for their harmonious coexistence and act as a catalyst in reducing the divide and increasing the connection in the society.

Apart from these national level workshops, LCP South Asia network invested a lot in building the capacities of its own staff in various capacity building workshops. Various workshops on conflict analysis, system thinking, non-violent communication, exposure visits and accompaniment processes were organised. Unengaged youth represent a wasted economic resource. LCP process so far has been instrumental in developing the analytical understanding of LCP practioners within the member organisations, youth, different faith leaders and the community at large. It has stimulated them to engage positively in addressing the conflicts at grassroots level and critically see the linkage of all these grassroots issues with wider macro level scenario in the South Asian region. ■

South
Zone

And.....it's a wrap!

CASA volunteer conducts Post Distribution Monitoring in the villages ahead of the closure of Unconditional Multi-purpose Cash Transfer Recovery Programme in Kerala. The programme was closed on 31st March, 2019 after seven months of intervention in the severely flood-hit villages of Kerala.



#NationalYouthDay



21-year-old Kavi Yasaral was in school at the time of the Tsunami in 2004, after which he decided to be a part of CASA's Disaster Mitigation training team. In its vision to develop communities' responsiveness and preparedness for disasters, CASA India identified many young volunteers like Kavi in Tamil Nadu and formed Disaster Management Task Force (DMTF) in which they underwent trainings on warning system, rescue, relief and coordination, first aid and shelter management.

"I learnt how to make knots within a rope, floating boats using coconuts, find the safest place to hide during disasters and other useful life saving and rescue techniques. I was made part of the disaster relief team when cyclone Thane hit the state of Maharashtra. I used these skills and helped save a lot of properties like boats as well as rescued many people in my area," he says.

CASA celebrates Women's Day



CASA ASSAM

Several women came forward to celebrate #WomensDay in Dhemaji district of Assam that was organised by CASA India partner Rural Volunteer Centre. The event felicitated women, who made a mark in various walks of life, and also honoured women entrepreneurs for their invaluable contribution within their region. The event concluded with a rally to spread awareness on Women's Rights issues and submitted a memorandum to the government official pitching for #BalanceforBetter.

8th March
Women's
Day

Fact Check

With
58.5 million
businesses

in India,

only 8.05 million
are managed by women
entrepreneurs.

CASA MADHYA PRADESH

CASA India and its welfare partner Spandan Social Service Group organised #WomensDay Special Program in Khalwa Block of Madhya Pradesh that witnessed a footfall of around 100 women and 70 school girls for the event. The participants were encouraged to come forward and share their stories of struggle and empowerment. As part of the program, harassment issues were highlighted in which the participants were made aware of the difference between a 'good touch' and a 'bad touch'. The women were given crash course on self-defence skills. The participants also took an oath to conserve water bodies in their villages.



International Day of Action for Rivers March 14

The CPCB has been examining the water quality of rivers since 1980. At present, it examines the 2,525 km long Ganga River at 80 sites, up from 62 a few years ago.



By Md. Mahfooz Alam

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If Dead Thames is Back to Life A hope for Ganga

Since ages, the river Ganga holds utmost reverence in Indian culture as the river is considered holy and is devoutly worshipped as *Ganga Mata*. In Indian mythology, it is believed, the river is blessed with godly power of *Brahma Dravya* or Divine elixir. A dip washes away all the sins and provides salvation of the soul.

The Ganga springs on snowy peaks of Himalaya from sanctum sanctorum of Gaumukhat, the end of Gangotri glacier; travels down about 2,525 km snaking through northern Indian and spearheading many tributaries along the route and finally empties in Bay of Bengal passing via West Bengal.

The river has been the lifeline of people settled along its bank in myriad ways - is the source for drinking water and for other domestic uses, the water is stored in dams to generate electricity and is diverted to agricultural fields supporting industries growing at exponential pace.

However, the beneficiaries of Ganga have not been so kind to her, they have unabatedly used it as their dumping pit- approximately 1.3bn litres of waste water flows in the river every day.

The river has become an open sewer - according to a report published in Indian express, an analysis of river by Quality council of India between November 1 and December 15, 2018 says, " 66 of 97 towns along the river have at least one drain flowing into river."

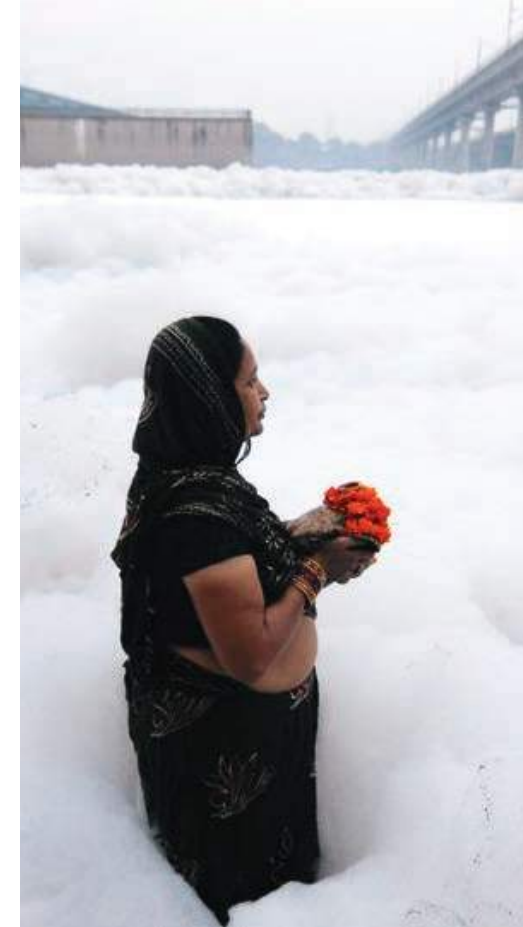
The living testimony of Ganga being endangered is the Yamuna - its second largest tributary. The Yamuna is often called the lifeline of Delhi and stretches 22-km across the national capital. However, it is gasping for life - 20 drains from the city directly pour untreated sewage and other waste into it.

Prominent ecologist CR Babu says that the Yamuna is in fact "ecologically dead" in the 22 km urban stretch - it virtually has no aquatic life.

The plight of the river is so bad that it is screaming for help, calling for a salvation of its own. There has been an extravagant campaign launched for cleaning the river, crores of money has been sanctioned for the same but the reality is that- the physical purity of Ganga in 2019 is at its low ebb. The question remains - will the Ganga ever be cleaned?

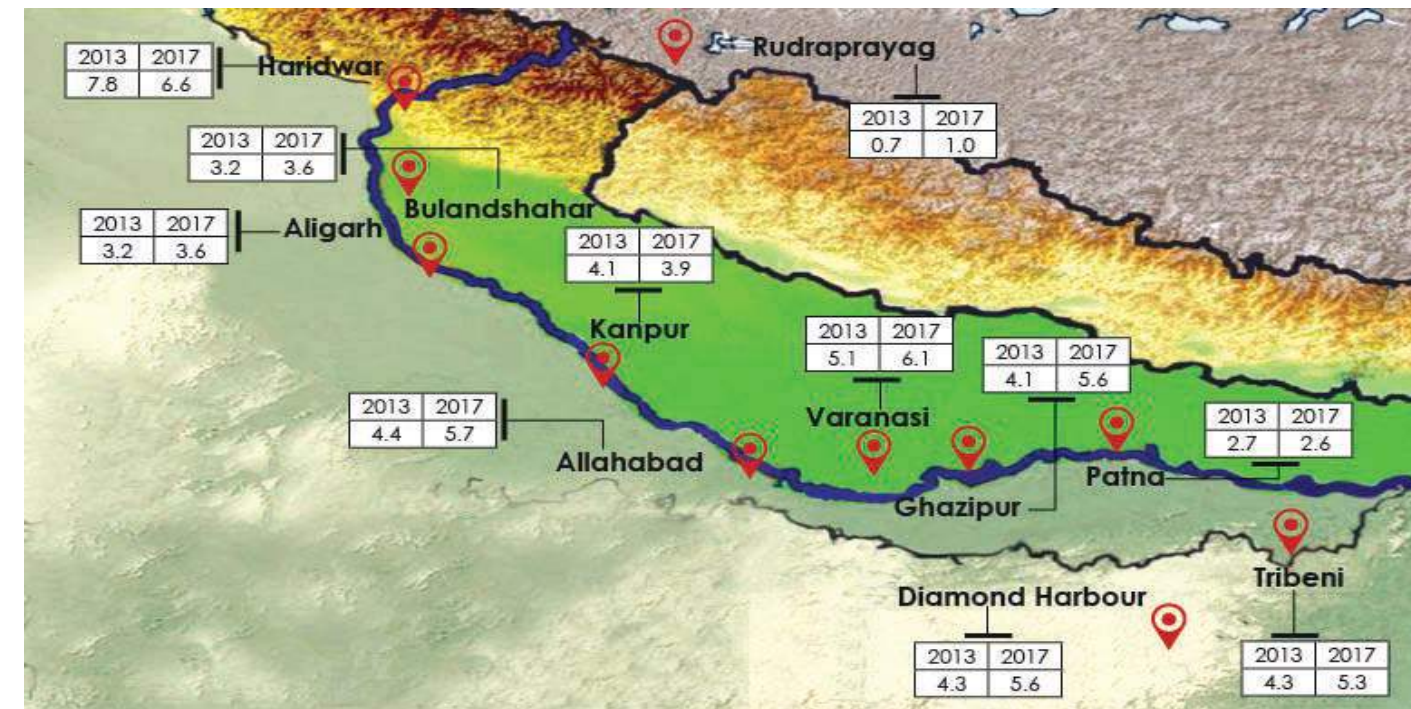
The simple answer is - River Thames of England was declared biologically dead in 1957; nonetheless, it is back to life with more than 125 species of fish thriving. Therefore, we need to take a leaf out of Thames' success story and rejuvenate Ganga to its sanctity. ■

A devotee offering Chhath Puja in the Holy river Yamuna. Source: reddii.com



BOD: Biological Oxygen Demand Comparative Measurement of BOD 2013 - 2017

Source: Central Pollution Control Board



BOD < 2mg/Litre: Water can be used for drinking without treatment but after disinfection
BOD between 2 to 3mg/Litre: Fit for bathing but not drinking
BOD > 3mg/Litre: Do not use without treatment and disinfection, not even for bathing

Events



Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of NCCI, addressing the gathering in presence of CASA Director Dr Sushant Agrawal and ACT Alliance Regional Representative from Bangkok, Anoop Sukumaran at the ACT Alliance India Forum meet held on 6th June, 2019 at NCCI complex in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

CASA Director Dr Sushant Agrawal (Fifth from Right) attends World Christian Council (WCC) Reference Group meet on Ecumenical Diakonia held in Geneva on 29th March, 2019.



CASA Fundraising Executive Gaurav Emanuel Masih interacts with potential donors at an event in Christ Church in Noida on 20th January, 2019.



Members of the core group visit villages in Keonjhar District of Odisha.



CASA Organisational Development (OD) workshop Session III held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, from 27-29th May, 2019. As many as 18 staff members from senior and middle management including the Director took active part in the meeting. Two consultants provided handholding support in the process.



Joycia Thorat of ACT Alliance Advisory Group on Advocacy reflected on her experience as a "faith feminist" at The Commission on the Status of Women #CSW63 with the ACT delegation.





**WE BELIEVE IN THE
POWER OF STORYTELLING
TO BRING CHANGE**

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