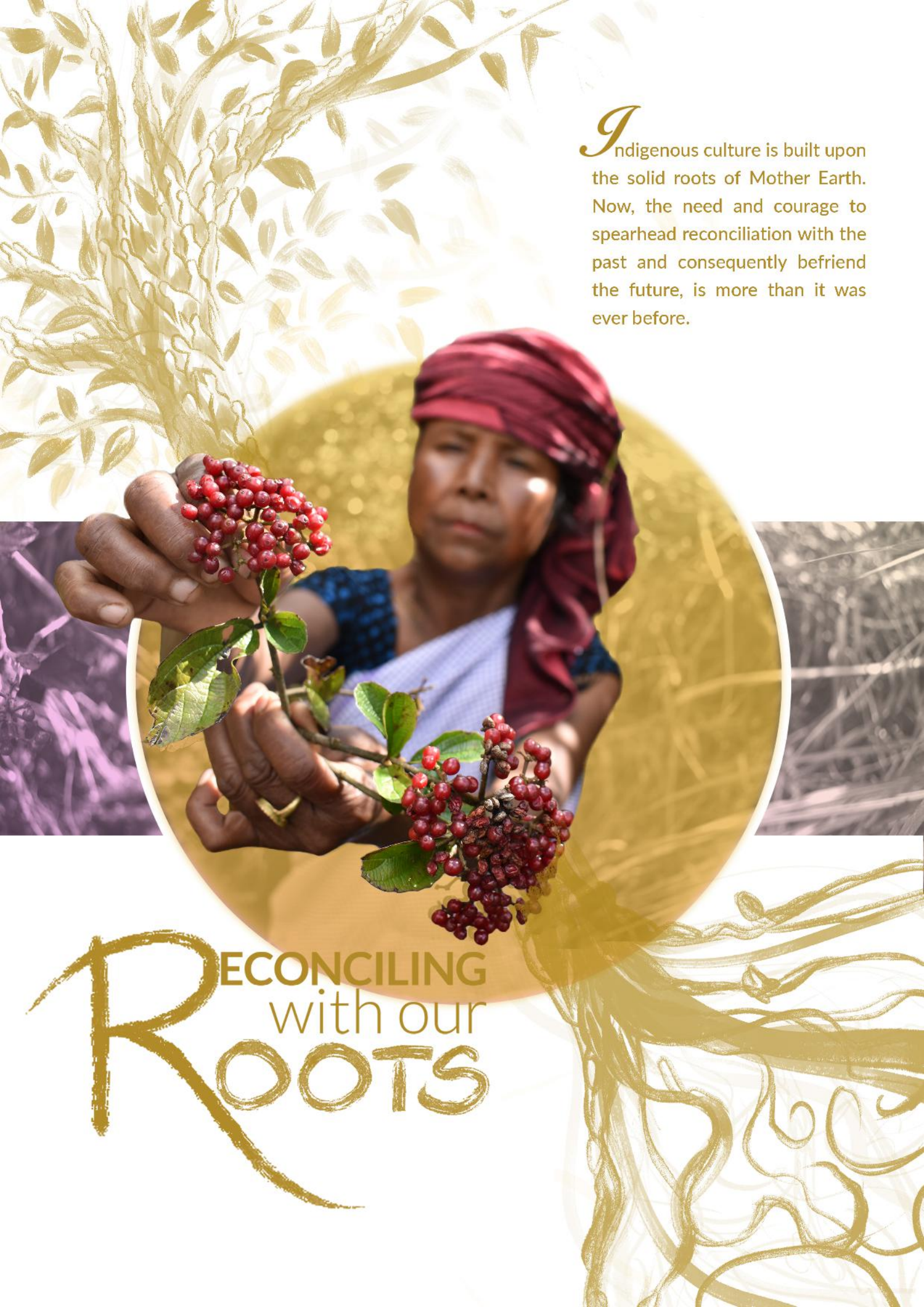




RECONCILING
with our
ROOTS

ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021



*I*ndigenous culture is built upon the solid roots of Mother Earth. Now, the need and courage to spearhead reconciliation with the past and consequently befriend the future, is more than it was ever before.

RECONCILING with our ROOTS



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About NESFAS



We are a platform that connects people to the pleasure and importance of local foods and in the process links them to its journey from farm to fork. A journey that generates awareness towards our responsibility towards the environment and the preservation of the indigenous cultures and traditions. Working as a regional reflection of TIP, **NESFAS** works towards offering a singular platform for traditional knowledge systems and modern science as equal partners to charter the course of the "Future we want" for the well being of indigenous communities. As an outcome of the discussions and resolutions of ITM, **NESFAS** has embraced the framework of agroecology- as a science, a practice and a social movement, to explore its expanded mission.

Our Project In Focus

"NO ONE SHALL BE LEFT BEHIND INITIATIVE"

funded by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Foundation

Biodiversity for Food, Nutrition and Energy Security for 3000 Households in Meghalaya and Nagaland, North East India.

This project, as its name suggests sheds much needed light on the minorities that are overlooked; it focuses on the youth, adolescent girls, women's groups and community elders under the umbrella of promotion of indigenous food systems to significantly improve nutrition and sustainable livelihoods of local communities of Meghalaya and Nagaland.

Through this Project, NESFAS has the goal of promoting indigenous food systems to significantly improve nutrition and sustainable livelihoods of indigenous communities of Meghalaya and Nagaland with special focus on youth, adolescent girls, women's groups and community elders.

It is doing so by improving the production and productivity of local food systems, by encouraging greater consumption of micronutrient rich local foods and by embracing innovations for local livelihood opportunities.

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



The progress of NESFAS in the last few years has been commendable. In 2019, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food declared NESFAS to be one of its Beacons of Hope. In 2021, the Indigenous Peoples Forum of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) honoured NESFAS with a global award for being the best non-IFAD funded project for Indigenous Peoples. Our policy that all rural activities require free, prior and informed consent of community members built the necessary trust. The support that NESFAS subsequently received from the participating community members, the hard work of its young staff (predominantly women) and the collaboration of its participating partners and the encouraging support of our main funder, the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited of India – these were the reasons behind this success. It is remarkable that despite all challenges, NESFAS during the COVID-19 pandemic period was able to promote, for example, 2296 kitchen gardens and 67 school gardens involving about 1932 students. This Report gives details of the other achievements of NESFAS. We will not forget the work done by the community facilitators and the rural health frontline workers. We are also thankful to them for reminding us that rural health also needs our active participation.

NESFAS has demonstrated that our traditional values of caring, sharing and reciprocity and our sacred relationship with nature are critical to build back better for the future we want.

As you read this Report prepared by the local team of 30, give us ideas how we can become even more effective to empower our communities to thrive.

Phrang Roy
Chairman, NESFAS

OUR BOARD MEMBERS



(L) Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih, Vice Chairman, NESFAS, Professor of Sociology, North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong



Dr. Carl O. Rangad, PhD Agriculture with specialization in Mycology (Mushrooms); Retd. Director of Horticulture, Government of Meghalaya



Dr. Gracedalyne Rose Shylla Passah, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Allied Health Sciences, Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong



Dr. Junie Pearl Lyngdoh, Scientist at the Bio-Resources Development Center, Shillong, Promoter of the Indigenous System of Medicine and Traditional healers of the state



Mr. Gavin C. Shullai, Programme Manager of the 1917 Integrated Technology Enabled Agri Management System (ITEAMS)



Mrs. Hamsniawpher Suchiang, Executive Member of the Dorbar Mulum, Jaintia Hills, Secretary of the Village organization Mulum, Secretary of Iaraplang SHG and Convenor of Iaraplang Group (PGS) in Mulum



Dr. Amba Jamir, Development Consulting Expert with 28 years of multidisciplinary and multi-team experience policy formulation to project development and implementation



Ms. Bisikrin Marwein, Farmer, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker at Mawlum Mawjakhsew, West Khasi Hills



Dr. Melari Shisha Nongrum, Executive Director, NESFAS

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Rest in peace

The passing away of our Pillar, a loss to our communities, a loss to our organization.



Dr. A. K Nongkynrih
1 September 1963 - 20 February 2021

Mr. Nongkynrih, also a founding member of NESFAS, played a big role in advocating the works and beliefs of the organisation. He was very instrumental and always continued to help and guide us through all times. He was a man of great intellect and vision who contributed immensely to the cause of preserving traditional knowledge, the indigenous food systems and advocating the role of women and youth participation.

He dedicated himself to building bridges to a better future and in this way, he touched the lives of all of us and especially the community members in the rural areas. He strongly believed that traditional farming is one of the many ways that we can preserve our traditional knowledge in this region. One of his aims was to defend the local food systems in the state.

Mr. Nongkynrih, also a noted sociologist, played an active role during the Indigenous Terra Madre hosted by NESFAS in 2015 in Mawphlang, East Khasi Hills as a speaker and a panelist. He was also a founding member of the Indigenous People Assistance Facility Grant Committee 2006, UN-IFAD.

NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2020 to 2021 has not been an easy one. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic created numerous setbacks for NESFAS; our field works were disrupted, delayed or even did not take place to some extent. Major components and activities were held back. However, NESFAS, its partners and the communities found a way around to continue the project and work towards achieving the set goals of defending the indigenous food system. Programmes and activities were innovated at the grassroots for smooth functioning in spite of the pandemic.

This year saw the increase in kitchen gardens established in the communities with a total of 2226. We successfully launched the Mei-Ramew Farm on Wheels initiative to tackle the livelihood crisis met during the ongoing pandemic. Our focus on health and nutrition served to be an important aspect and aligned with the prevention campaigns for the COVID-19.

NESFAS has always looked up to the elderly members of its partner village communities as traditional knowledge holders, many of who are the custodians of it's Food Network initiatives like millet, rice and honey and more. The organisation has been working closely with them over the last eight years on how one can preserve this indigenous heritage, which they see as the value chain in preserving the biodiversity hotbeds. However, presently, the Coronavirus anvil has identified the elderly as one of the most vulnerable. Keeping the tight knit nature of rural homes, distancing was difficult hence the need for constructing retrofit rooms was decided upon. With the support of friends and different networks we have been able to support around 79 elders across the different communities in Meghalaya.

The collaboration of the ASHAs, Anganwadis, custodian cooks, teachers and community leaders proved to be impactful for all our campaigns. The results of community ownership and self-reliance saw a ray of hope for the long term and sustainability of our mission. We are grateful to all the advisors, organizations, institutions and individuals for the alliances and strong network created over this one year period. Digital empowerment proved to be an important scope where our meetings, reporting, communication and information process shifted to on-line basis.

NESFAS' ongoing project which is funded by the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited Foundation "No One Shall Be Left Behind Initiative: Biodiversity for Food, Nutrition and Energy Security for 3000 households in Meghalaya and Nagaland" was selected as the winner of the 2021 IFAD Indigenous Peoples Award for the category "best performing non-IFAD-funded project". We are grateful to our main funder; REC Foundation, New Delhi and our partner NGOs namely: Society for Urban and Rural Empowerment (SURE), Social Service Centre (SSC) and North East Network (NEN), Nagaland particularly our 130 partner communities who placed their faith on us and worked hand-in-hand to meet the dream of "No One Shall Be Left Behind" initiative.



Pius Ranee;
Executive Director

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Our Team Members



Pius Ranee;
Executive Director



Janak Preet Singh,
*Sr. Associate,
Livelihood Initiatives*



Dr. Bhogtoram Mawroh,
*Sr. Associate, Research
and Knowledge
Management*



Khraw Borlang Wahlang,
*Adviser, Innovation
and Community
Empowerment*



Nangshanskhem Lyngdoh,
*Sr. Associate,
Administration and
Finance*



Fabian M Dkhar,
*Administrative
Assistant*



Nangkiew Diengdoh,
Finance Officer



Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh,
*Lead Associate,
Communications*



Damica Marcia Mawlong,
*Jr. Associate,
Communications*



Rundolf Mawlieh,
*Content Consultant,
Communications*



Merrysha Nongrum,
*Sr. Associate, Youth
and Women
Empowerment*



Gratia E Dkhar,
*Lead Associate,
Agroecology and
Training*



Badarishisha Nongkynrih,
*Lead Associate, Food
and Public Health
Services*



Chenxiang Marak,
*Sr. Associate, Garo
Hills and Nutrition*



Stefan W Lyngdoh,
Research Assistant



Jakrimre Ch Momin,
Research Assistant



Wayoolang Talang,
Research Assistant



Wankitkumar Fernando Nadon,
Research Assistant



Bankerda Chyne,
Field Coordinator



Naphishisha Nongsiej,
Field Coordinator



Ruth Sohtun,
Field Coordinator



Silkatchi Sangma,
Field Coordinator



Aurilia Tariang,
*Field Coordinator,
Mei-Ramew Weaves*



Lamphrang S Shabong,
Field Coordinator



Bashisha Kharsahnoh,
Data Entry Operator



Jessica Rani,
Office Attendant



Regina Ranee,
Housekeeping



Wankyrshan Warshong,
Gardener



Arm Kharbuki,
*Agroecology
Consultant*

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SUPPORTERS OF THE COVID-19 PREVENTIVE CARE FOR RURAL KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Mrs. Michelle Iadalin Swer
 Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti
 Mrs. Paige Fraxier Decker
 Mr. Ganesh Thapa
 Mrs. Maureen Auricia Kato
 Mrs. Maura Duggan
 Ms. Anita & Mr. Phrang Roy
 Ms. Bankerda Chyne
 Mr. Wankitkupar Fenando Nadon
 Ms. Bashisha Kharsahnoh
 Mrs. Ibaaijinghun Riti
 Mr. Nangshan Skhem Lyngdoh
 Mr. Gregory Kharshiing
 Mr. Khraw Borlang Wahlang

Mrs. Junie Pearl Lyngdoh
 Mrs. Pamela A M Roy
 Mr. Lasoki Sumer
 Mrs. Susanne Raswant
 Mr. Pius Rane
 Ms. Chenxiang Rimchi N Marak
 Mrs. Melarishisha Nongrum
 Mr. Ivan Shanlang Lyngdoh
 Mr. Gavin Swer-Roy
 Ms. Amrita Ravimohan & Mr. Ajay Nayak
 Mr. Man Mohan Singh And Suran Singh
 Mrs. Preeti Bhatia
 Ms. Gratia Embok Dkhar
 Mrs. Viviane Di Majo



SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS





NESFAS “Leaves No One Behind” as its project wins recognition on a Global Platform


NESFAS received
“Best performing project” Award 2021
from United Nations’ IFAD

NESFAS was honored with the 2021-IFAD Indigenous Peoples Award on the 15th of February 2021. The Indigenous Peoples Awards, organized by IFAD’s Indigenous Peoples Team in partnership with the members of the Steering Committee of the Indigenous Peoples’ Forum at IFAD and of the Board of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), are awarded biennially to recognize the efforts and the achievements of development projects that successfully engage with indigenous peoples living in rural areas.


As if in direct response to this challenge, NESFAS’ ongoing project funded by REC **“No One Shall Be Left Behind Initiative: Biodiversity for Food, Nutrition and Energy Security for 3000 households in Meghalaya and Nagaland”** was selected as the winner of the **2021 IFAD Indigenous Peoples Award for the category “best performing non-IFAD-funded project”**. The project submission showcased a

two-year activation by the organisation and its partners in 130 villages. Over the years, it has showcased innovative ways in which simple agendas can make a impact on adolescent girls, school children, youth, women’s groups and community elders who are also traditional knowledge holders. This project is intended to give a boost to the rural and remote landscapes and its indigenous food systems with renewable energy, community mobilisation and infrastructure strengthening that offers suitable and sustainable models for change. While being innovative, the keyword is also to see how they can be meaningful ways of restoring, regenerating and building the resilience of local actions for food, nutritional and renewal energy security, eventually resulting in community wellbeing.

The awarded projects will gain visibility and recognition throughout IFAD and its network of partners. The awards aim to establish that the Indigenous peoples hold valuable knowledge and traditions that provide solutions to major challenges.

Click  to read more

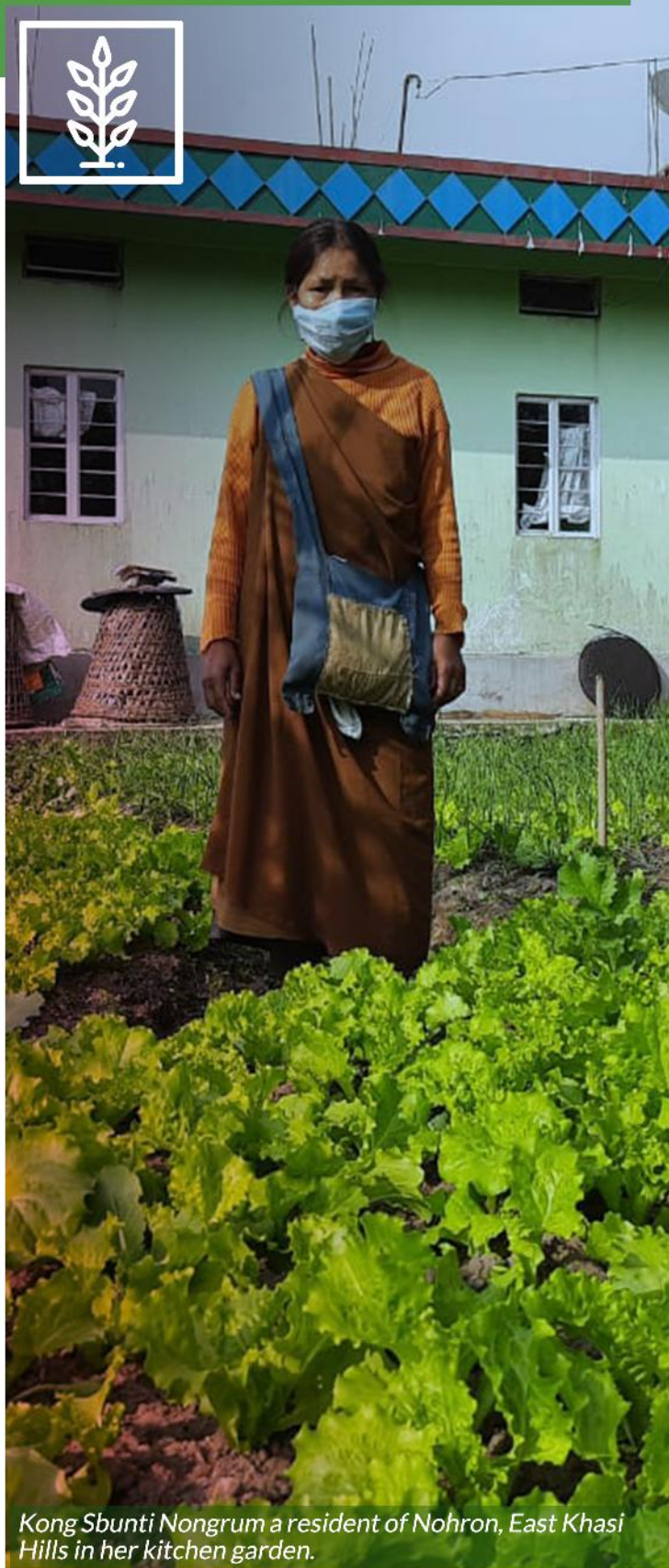


Click  to watch the video

After its nomination for the award, a budget of about US \$5,000 was allotted to NESFAS for the production of a professional video to document its good practices and successful experiences. The NESFAS film **“Sacred Futures-The NESFAS Story”** itself was a unique production of partnership between its team, mentors, remote advice from filmmaker Roger King from the United States and a local production team of The Hillspeople Collective in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. The video was then screened during the virtual award ceremony.

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ENHANCING THE PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY OF LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS



Kong Sbunti Nongrum a resident of Nohron, East Khasi Hills in her kitchen garden.

- Through the promotion of kitchen gardens during pandemic, about **2226 households** are now maintaining kitchen gardens across various communities. The PGS group from Rangwalkamgre, West Garo Hills supported families in their communities with the surplus produce from their kitchen gardens.
- **46 PGS group conveners** took part in the composting training. It was observed that there is an increased adoption of composting technique in different communities. Increase in yield and quality of potato crops were observed by farmers like **Kong Sitamary** (from Umsawwar) on application of Berkeley compost.
- **67 school gardens** established that involves **1932 students**. Produce from school gardens have supplemented fresh vegetables along with take home Midday Meals during the pandemic. Interestingly, 5 schools introduced Indigenous Food Systems as part of Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) curriculum. Also, a pilot study on knowledge of school children in traditional knowledge was carried out in 10 schools in Meghalaya. The study revealed that students in schools with school gardens had more knowledge about wild edibles than those who don't have one.
- About **166 farmers** are involved in strengthening the local seed systems and established **10 Community Seed Banks**. Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), Government of Meghalaya have reached out to NESFAS for awareness on Community Seed Banks. Such initiative has made communities realise the importance of preserving seeds and benefits of indigenous crops and are organizing farmer-to-farmer seed exchange as well as seed displays to create awareness about local seed diversity within and in the neighbouring communities.
- **29 Agroecology schools** have been established, comprising of **382 farmers** within the Agroecology Learning Circles (ALC). This platform has increased the confidence among farmers to make effective use of their traditional knowledge and combine it with contemporary knowledge from outside their farming systems. For example, ALC members from Umsawwar along with the youth club took initiative to do away with chemical farming by adopting agroecological practices of soil and pest management.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND



Community Seed Fair at Nongtraw, East Khasi Hills



Application of Berkeley Compost in soil and crops



Community Fair at Umsawwar, East Khasi Hills



Community Seed Exchange at Nongtraw, East Khasi Hills

- 👍 Madanrtiang to defend Indigenous Food System through Agroecology Learning Circle
- 👍 Comeback of the super-grain: Bringing millet back to life
- 👍 Dewlieh Community: Revival of Millet Cultivation
- 👍 Darechikgre brings back superfoods into their backyards
- 👍 Nongprut youths pave way for a fresher future
- 👍 ALC members forego synthetic pesticides for biopesticides
- 👍 PGS members conduct Berkeley composting training in Mawkma
- 👍 Reviving an old lost Indigenous seed in Garo Hills
- 👍 Home Gardens: Pathway to Food Security, Economic Viability and Ecological Sustainability
- 👍 Madanrtiang community aims to revive, save old local traditional seeds

- 👍 Garo Hills communities exchange saplings to increase diversity
- 👍 Ri-Bhoi communities to diversify their crops by reviving Millet
- 👍 NESFAS helps community members of Nongpriang, Umwang Nongbah pave way to healthy future
- 👍 Umsawwar takes step forward in achieving a chemically free farming system
- 👍 Nohron community members' obtain good quality Berkeley Compost
- 👍 Waste to Wealth: Beekeeper turns organic waste into extra income
- 👍 9 communities showcase indigenous seeds at seed fair in Umsawwar
- 👍 Farmers from Ri-Bhoi visit Mulum seed bank
- 👍 Success experiment: Khweng community member reaps new tomato variety
- 👍 Communities showcase 50+ types of Indigenous seeds at an inter village seed fair

Click 🖱️ for more details

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UPLIFTING CONSUMPTION OF TRADITIONAL FOODS FOR NUTRITION



An art installation of the 10 food groups, displayed at Khweng, Ri-Bhoi

789

WASH, Nutrition and 1000 Days campaigns conducted that reached 13413 community members. This has influenced Government agencies like **NABARD** to collaborate for **WASH** campaigns. The **WASH** pilot study was done in seven villages located in the Khatarshnong-Laitkroh block of East Khasi hills involving **179 households**. The study revealed that three villages have shown an improvement in one of the **WASH** outcomes, i.e., reduction of water borne diseases.

Dietary Diversity Survey (DDS) pilot survey was conducted in seven villages of Ri Bhoi District, Meghalaya. It was observed the increased consumption of green leafy vegetables, an important micro-nutrient rich food group. Understanding this **NESFAS** has initiated a nutrition survey in their villages using **NESFAS-Nutri App** that cover **79 villages**. More than **30%** of the households recorded an increase in **DDS**, i.e., improved dietary diversity.



Agrobiodiversity walk with children

997 participants engaged in cooking demonstrations. Through observation there is an increased knowledge and more importantly their increased interest to eat colourful food with local ingredients which are nicely plated that the children would like to consume by following **FAO Minimum Dietary Diversity**.

2057 children engaged in **88 Agrobiodiversity (ABD) walks**. This has built confidence among students about traditional farming knowledge in their area.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND




Biodiversity showcase in Nagaland, on World Food day 2020



A mid-day meal cooking demonstration by renowned Chef Joel Basumatri at Nongwah, East Khasi Hills



- 👉 Community members value the importance of WASH campaign during pandemic
- 👉 Agrobiodiversity Walk helps youths learn about nature's richness
- 👉 NABARD launches sanitation literacy campaign in Moodymmai
- 👉 Nature's Classroom: Children benefit from ABD walks while taking a 'break' from school
- 👉 Infants identify wild edibles, plants on ABD walk in Garo Hills
- 👉 Community children at Khweng identify aquatic life to strengthen biodiversity
- 👉 Mukhap community wins indigenous cooking competition

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SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECO-FRIENDLY LIVELIHOODS



A member of the Nangkyrsoi SHG, Khweng, Ri-Bhoi packaging pickles at the value addition training

- **6 Mei-Ramew Cafes** established. These cafes have led to a renewed interest among the local community regarding the importance of traditional food sourced from the local landscape.
- **27 Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) groups** that comprise of **188 farmers** initiated **Farm on Wheel** also online platform. This has improved income especially during pandemic.
- Revived the dying art of **Khng embroidery** by incorporating their work on the eri weaves products and by organising the artisans by forming a special group.
- **PGS groups and Self Help Group (SHG)** that comprise of **373 participants** engaged in processing training. This has built their confidence in making value added products of their own local species.
- **38 farmers market** organized with **134 group of farmers** participation. This has enhanced their income. A market survey was carried out in the five markets of Shillong to find out the demand of wild edibles. The survey revealed that good market potential exists for wild edibles in the local markets in the city of Shillong.
- Activated **Market linkages with 9 local entrepreneurs.**
- **97 local youths** were trained as community facilitators.
- **6 local youths** trained on **Participatory video**. This has enhanced with video making skills and are putting forth the skills learnt into producing grassroots stories of their respective communities.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND



Eri Silk Masks woven by local weavers from Khweng, Ri Bhoi District



Aman A●song Cafe (Mother Earth Cafe) at Darechikgre, West Garo Hills



Inauguration of the Mei-Ramew Cafe (Mother Earth Cafe) in Mulum West Jaintia Hills

- 👉 NESFAS asks Govt to hike farmers' weekly income during Covid-19 shutdown
- 👉 Participatory Guarantee System helps uplift farmers from Nongtraw
- 👉 India's Mother Earth Cafés Shine a Spotlight on Indigenous Crops
- 👉 Mawkynrew block administration starts mini market to support farmers
- 👉 "Covid-19 Crisis an opportunity for innovation", Mother Earth Cafe - Darichikgre village
- 👉 Safety with Style: Indigenous Eri Silk Masks from Khweng
- 👉 The new normal: Market at your doorstep
- 👉 PGS groups overcome livelihood challenges during pandemic
- 👉 Behind the Scenes of the New Food Culture: Value-added Products
- 👉 Building environmentally sustainable schools
- 👉 Farm on wheels in Laskein C&RD Block Jaintia Hills

- 👉 Five community youths learn film-making to document grassroots stories
- 👉 Mawhiang PGS members launch Pop-Up Food Stall to accompany FOW
- 👉 Meghalaya's Resilience in the face of COVID-19: The Beekeeper's story
- 👉 Aman A●song Café owner pioneers using local ingredients in the kitchen
- 👉 NESFAS team guides communities on how to improve value added products
- 👉 Two community members learn the art of Eri-Weaves at 55 & 65 years
- 👉 Mei-Ramew Cafe inaugurated in Cham Cham (East Jaintia Hills)
- 👉 Eri-Weaves training concludes in Khweng (Ri-Bhoi District)
- 👉 Value Addition and food processing at Khweng Ri-Bhoi
- 👉 Bamboo School: Uplifting the livelihoods of local traditional artisans in Darichikgre

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OVERCOMING COVID-19



The **NESFAS COVID-19 Committee** was conceived at the outset of the pandemic to provide relief to local communities with the alliance of partner NGOs and the appointment of community facilitators. It educated 2000 homes about the pandemic.

NESFAS gave proper training along with the community health workers on how to take a proactive step against the coronavirus which has been well appreciated by the local authorities.

NESFAS, with the support from three local MLAs (Shri. Gavin Myllem of Sohra constituency, Banteilang Lyngdoh of Mawkyntew constituency and Gigur Myrthong of Mawshynrut constituency) was able to distribute rice to **219 vulnerable families**.

The Gurudwara Shillong also reached out to the communities in rural areas, by supporting 54 vulnerable families with dry ration of rice, lentils and salt.

An appeal to all religious institutions to implement the concept of 'Jubilee' in the context of the impacts of COVID-19 had been sent out. Of which Laitumkrah Presbyterian Church has taken a proactive step in doing so.

An appeal to the Chief Minister was sent in order to re-examine the Wage Compensation Scheme of the Labour Dept. Government of Meghalaya. After few days, we also noticed a similar demand by CPI (Communist Party of India) to increase the income support from **1000 to 2000**.

Collaborated with 1917 ITEAMs to source vegetables from our local communities; facilitated by Kong Rikynti Syiem, our former board member. PGS groups from Garo Hills have been able to sell their surplus in Tura with the help of District Administration. Intra selling of vegetables happening among the two communities. Our partner SURE also implemented an online market in Jowai.

Lauren Baker, Director of Programs for the Global Alliance for the future of food at medium.com greatly appreciated the initiative where in NESFAS supported **79 local knowledge holders** with safety homes. Communities contributed **50%** of the total cost. The overall project cost is **Rs.10.3 lakhs** with contributions from friends of NESFAS which created an interest among the partner NGOs which made them come forward to render their support to the identified knowledge holders.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND



Quarantine centre at Laitsohpliah, East Khasi Hills



COVID-19 community youth of Plasha, Ri-Bhoi

Living in Rome in the Time of Coronavirus

NESFAS Govt to hike farmers' weekly income during Covid-19 shutdown

Victory Garden: A Way to Build Resilience in this time of COVID-19 Pandemic

Service to man is service to God

Pandemic & Lesson On Food Sovereignty

Nohron SHG helps vulnerable families during COVID-19 lockdown

SURE bridges gap between farmers, common man during Covid-19 Lockdown

Lessons learned from COVID-19: Self-reliance, Self-sufficiency, Solidarity

Behind the Scenes of the New Food Culture: Value-added Products

SSC lends a hand to communities under Marmain area

Nongkhrah-based society, SSC comes to aid of Nongpoh farmers

Lessons on food security from Nagaland amid COVID-19

Mawkynrew block administration starts mini market to support farmers

Nagaland farmer believes solution to cope with this pandemic lies within community

"Covid-19 Crisis an opportunity for innovation", Mother Earth Cafe – Darichikgre village

Comeback of the super-grain: Bringing millet back to life

Food Sovereignty: The Way Forward for Agriculture in Meghalaya Post Covid-19

PGS groups overcome livelihood challenges during pandemic

COVID-19 Safety Protocols Training: A SIRD & NESFAS Collaboration

Surviving COVID-19: A reflection by NESFAS Advisor

Pandemic induces importance of seed exchange at communities

Agroecology Pre and Post COVID-19: An opportunity to advance sustainable food systems

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STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE



- **Dietary Diversity Survey (DDS)** conducted that covered **99 villages** and **9157 households**. More than **30% of the households** recorded an increase in DDS, i.e., improved dietary diversity.
- Participatory Mapping of agrobiodiversity done in **32 villages** in Meghalaya and Nagaland, and Volume 1 of ABD (Agrobiodiversity) Book which is a repository of agrobiodiversity with information on nutritional content in North East India.
- Increased appreciation by different stakeholders on the experiments conducted by **Agroecology Learning Circles (ALCs)** which are the traditional Indigenous Food Systems solutions for crop management.
- Piloting of Resilience indicators in Khweng and Umsawwar can become a model of resilience indicators for North East India.
- Value chain of **Eri silk** in '**Eri Ryndia**' in Ri Bhoi district, Meghalaya has created an opportunity to expand the network of eri silk for improved livelihood.

Research articles and publications



Eri-weaving process at Khweng, Ri-Bhoi

Research articles

- 👉 **Grassroots innovators: Farmers like Enock Masynting crucial in building resilient rural economy**
- 👉 **There's always a way: GH cafe owner shows the way to survive in Pandemic**
- 👉 **The Way Forward: Meghalaya should focus on Food Sovereignty to avoid shortage during crises like the Pandemic**
- 👉 **Covid-19, Landlessness and Food Insecurity in Meghalaya**
- 👉 **Biodiversity in indigenous rice based food system of Meghalaya.**
- 👉 **National Education Policy-2020 and Indigenous Knowledge System**
- 👉 **A haughty State vs their undaunted Spirit**
- 👉 **Farm Laws 2020: Will it benefit the farmers of Meghalaya**
- 👉 **Contract Farming in Meghalaya: The hidden dangers to indigenous farmer**
- 👉 **Reaffirming Seed Sovereignty**
- 👉 **An alternative to Bush Meat: Need to strengthen Indigenous Food System to supplement animal protein**
- 👉 **Reviving Hill Paddy Cultivation**
- 👉 **Can Meghalaya feed itself?**

Click 👉 for more details



Research publications

1. Report on the The Survey on Dietary Diversity conducted in seven villages of Ri Bhoi District by the students of BSW, MLCU
2. Assessment of WASH Interventions
3. Best Practice of IFS in Meghalaya
4. Land Tenure System and Landlessness in Meghalaya
5. Analysis of Disaster Management Act 2005 and its effectiveness in tackling COVID-19
6. Bushmeat: The Hidden Dangers

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CHAMPIONING IN THE INDIGENOUS FOOD SYSTEM SPHERE

Events, achievements, representation (participation)

NESFAS associate represents organization at International e-conference

NESFAS was invited to speak at an international E-Conference of **Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2020**. Chenxiang Rimchi N Marak was asked to present on the promotion of local and indigenous food.

International Day Of The World's Indigenous Peoples 2020

Change text to : Recognising the fact that eighty percent of the world's remaining biocultural diversity is in indigenous lands and territories, can be a critical asset for building a more sustaining and pandemic-free world for all. To commemorate the **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**, NESFAS and TIP believe that supporting Indigenous Peoples is not only a social good; it is also a sound development policy.



World Food Day celebration 2020 at Pyngkya, East Khasi Hills

NESFAS Partner Communities celebrate World Food Day

NESFAS hosted several programmes across **27 communities** in Meghalaya and Nagaland. The theme for this year's celebration was Grow, Nourish, Sustain. All government SOPs and measures were followed during the events.

Research Team represents NESFAS at 2-week global Climate change

NESFAS team attended a **climate change** webinar hosted by the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi. The two-week workshop focused on the science of climate change and the impact of human activities. It also discussed ways to reduce carbon emissions from India's energy sector.



Team NESFAS, SURE and Preeti Kumari of REC Foundation visit the School Garden in Mulum, West Jaintia Hills

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Events, achievements, representation (participation)



Community feast to commemorate the NESFAS-REC's journey with communities

📍 NESFAS-REC celebrates journey with 130 communities in Khweng Ri-Bhoi

NESFAS has the goal of **promoting indigenous food systems** that will significantly contribute to improved nutrition, food security, and sustainable livelihoods. NESFAS organized a special event on Tuesday (December 15, 2020) to acknowledge the project's contribution in enhancing their well-being.

📍 REC Foundation impressed with the works of NESFAS at 130 Communities

NESFAS has the goal of promoting indigenous food systems that will significantly contribute to improved nutrition, food security, and sustainable livelihoods. NESFAS' **"No One Shall Be Left Behind Initiative"** won the **"Best performing project" 'Award 2021 from IFAD.**

📍 NESFAS "Leaves No One Behind" as its project wins recognition on a Global Platform

NESFAS was honored with the **2021-IFAD Indigenous Peoples Award** on Monday, the 15th of February 2021. The other finalists were Safari Doctors from Kenya, Africa and Cabildo Indigena de Guambia, Columbia. NESFAS' ongoing project which is funded by the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited Foundation was selected as the winner.



Felicitating our community facilitators, the local heroes

INNOVATING FROM THE GROUND UP



Bamboo craft products on display

- Assessment of 41 community halls and the design for intervention completed in 30 halls. The construction work has started in 11 community halls.
- A needs analysis on the use of resources to keep warm was completed. The Himalayan Rocket Stove Company's ECO 1 model has been identified as being quite suitable to the areas. The installation work will happen after the lock down has been relaxed.
- A needs analysis for vertical transportation has been conducted for one village, Nongtraw in East Khasi Hills. Tender has been initiated and work will commence after the relaxation of the lockdown.

- A need assessment for solar pump has been conducted in three villages namely: Laitsohpiah, Laitumiong and Laitthemlangсах. For the Solar project, consecutive meetings with SELCO Foundation has been held.
- It was observed during the implementation of 11 community halls and 3 Community Seed Banks, communities have come forward to contribute from their side in terms of free labour and local resource materials available in the construction work. This shows that the community are excited about the program and are willing to contribute from their side. Most importantly, by engaging the local mason and bamboo artisans with architects and engineers have enhanced their skills and knowledge in a more productive way.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND



Community hall beautification in Khweng, Ri-Bhoi and Water Tank Construction



A bamboo craft and training workshop at Khliehumstem, Ri-Bhoi

- 👉 NESFAS to build isolation rooms for traditional knowledge holders
- 👉 Grassroot Innovations: A Continuation of Indigenous Traditions
- 👉 Traditional Knowledge Holders shift to retrofit safety rooms as the pandemic maintains its spread
- 👉 Fuel to instigate future infrastructure: NESFAS workshop on Partner Think-tank for COVID-19 safety housing for elderly

Click for more details

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WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



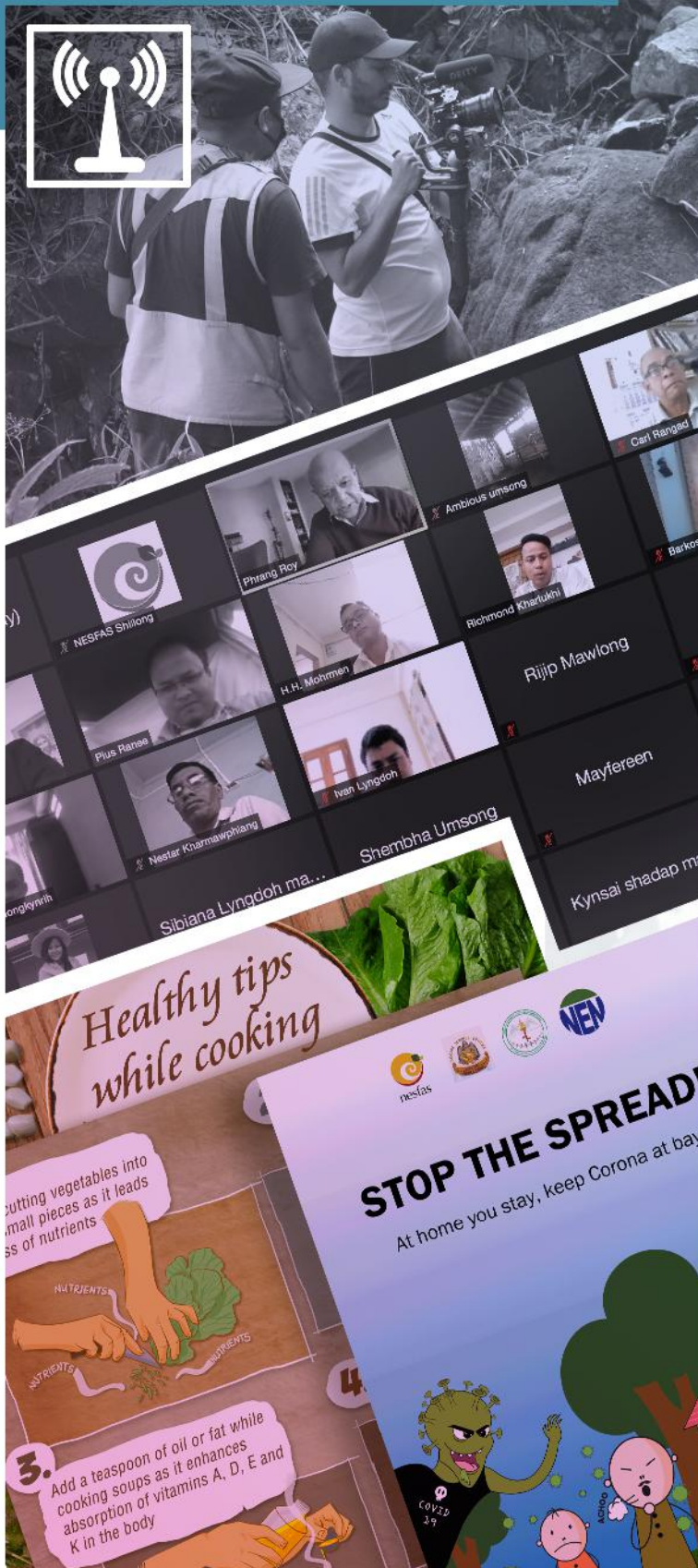
A local Eri-Silk weaver



- **114 youth campaigns** organized that involved 1546 young people. These youth have now become instrumental in mobilizing others for defending and promoting the Indigenous Food systems.
- Youth from Umsawwar, Dewlieh and Laitsohpliah, Nongtraw, in collaboration with women have initiated their **own community garden** supported by the village councils to grow local food plants for their own consumption. It was observed that there is an increased appreciation by young people towards Indigenous Food Systems.
- Youth of Umsawwar and Khweng, with the support of village elderly musicians, have created a local song with the theme to promote local foods.
- In the project villages, around **25 communities** have allowed women to be part of the Village Councils, they are Nongtraw, Dewlieh, Laitthemlangсах, Khapmaw, Pyngkya, Mawpynthymmai, Pashang, Umsawwar, Plasha, Umwang Nongbah, Mawlum Mawjahksew, Mulum, Lamsain, Umkhoi, Rangwalkamgre, Daribokgre, Darechikgre, Samingre, Sasatgre, Mandal Nokwat, Wakringtongre, Bibragre, Selbalgre, Misimagre, Tosekgre.

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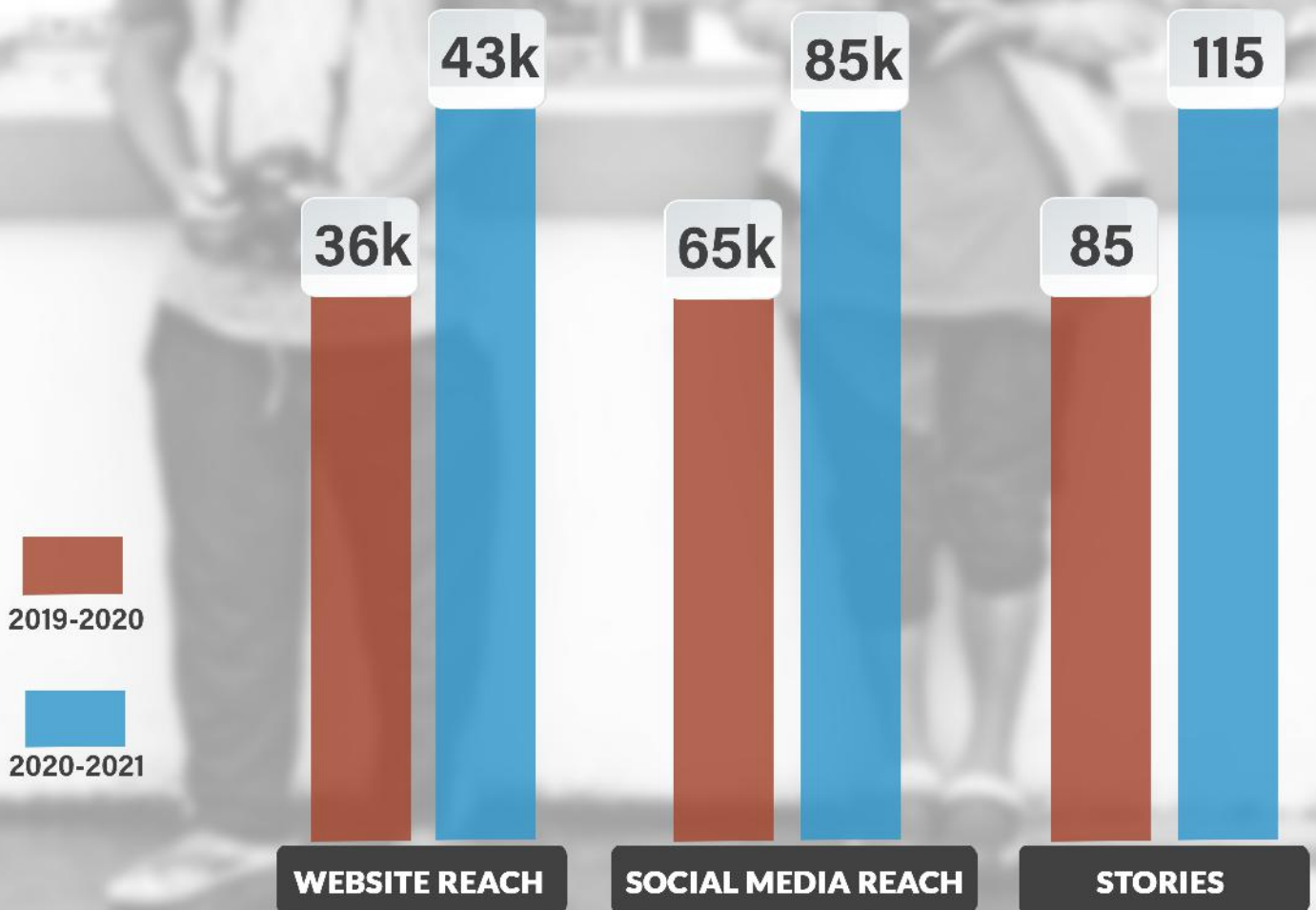
COMMUNICATING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES



Intervention through communication for community empowerment has been a major challenge for NESFAS over the years. However, communication has played an important role to not only support the various activities initiated in the field, but also focus on created narratives and engagement through storytelling, BCC (behavioural change communication), campaigns, IEC and changing mindsets. Besides focusing on the grassroots stories for a change, NESFAS has also highlighted the same in various media platforms, particularly Social Media and the press, which has enabled NESFAS to gain recognition for all the local initiatives and gained the attention of some of the State's Govt. departments and other National and International press for follow up stories as well as collaborations.

- Digital empowerment: Staying connected through digital media and online facilities.
- Strengthening local stories from the ground up: Highlighting voices from the ground up.
- Enhancing mutual learning through participatory media practices and documentation.
- Social Media- Changing the narrative.
- Local Voices for a Global Audience.
- Audio-visual stories: Recognised the value of films/videos for narrating stories.
- Grassroot stories in the news: Press releases and op-ed pieces for policy change initiative.
- Participatory videos (PV): 5 community youths trained in PV and have now taken up the role as grassroots journalist focussing on documentation.

Communication production and reach



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

CAPITAL FUND
₹ 3,31,57,758.62



EXPENDITURE
₹ 2,31,48,475.60



LIABILITIES
₹ 6,612.00



GRANT & OTHER INCOME
₹ 5,11,28,592.24



TOTAL ASSETS
₹ 3,31,64,370.00



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