

SEPTEMBER
2025

U D G A M “XX” EDITION

International Youth Day celebration



Youth Taking the Stage for a Sustainable Future

On August 12th, the energy and passion of our youth lit up the streets and hearts of communities in villages of Barpeta as we celebrated International Youth Day.

In Digjani village, 18 young collective members came together to create and perform a powerful street play titled “Aajir Yuva, Bhubishyot'r Aakhar Deep” (Youth of Today, Torchbearers of the Future). The performance tackled critical issues around climate change, gender equity, and rural development, sparking reflection and dialogue in the community.

Meanwhile, in Balaipathar village, 23 youth showcased their voices through an extempore speech competition, confidently addressing themes like education rights, local governance, and mental health. Their bold perspectives and articulate arguments were a testament to their leadership and growing civic awareness.

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Women Farmers Transform Agriculture in Manipur



We recently met with women farmers from Khongkhang and Wairi village of Manipur, and it was heartening to see the positive change of our work.

FST has been working with women farmers in 7 villages to promote low external input sustainable agriculture. The results are amazing! In Khongkhang, women farmers shared that using bokashi manure and rice husk charcoal has improved the growth of Thai Coriander, which grows naturally in the region. They've also seen better results in producing Heiribob, a native citrus fruit, which usually grows in the wild. One of the farmers was struggling to grow this fruit in her home garden. This fruit started growing in the homestead after the usage of rice husk charcoal and bokashi manure.

In Wairi, women farmers who previously used chemical manure and pesticides are now adopting natural methods after attending our workshops. They've seen positive results in their paddy cultivation and are convinced that going natural is the way forward.

Next, we're taking our intervention to the next level by including paddy in our programme, further expanding the scope of sustainable agriculture practices in the region.



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Responsible Tourism at the Heart of the Hills

On July 30th and 31st, FST, under the Footprint Project, hosted a two-day intensive training on responsible tourism for stakeholders in Mawmluh Village, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya.

Day 1 brought together 23 homestay owners and nature guides from Laitmawsiang and Mawmluh for a deep dive into:

- Guest relations & customer service
- Effective communication and cultural sensitivity
- Menu design using local ingredients

Facilitated by Damiano D. Malngiang and Pynhunlang Nongsteng, the session was participatory and rich in local context.

Day 2 focused on awareness-building. 22 eco-club members, youth, and local guides from Meitehsonglang and surrounding areas attended a session led by Ritupon Gogoi. Key themes included:

- Environmental stewardship
- Reducing carbon footprints
- Promoting indigenous knowledge and culture

The hands-on approach, combined with expert facilitation, empowered attendees with valuable skills in guest relations, environmental stewardship, and the promotion of indigenous culture. Many participants expressed their happiness with the training and shared their eagerness to apply what they learned in their communities.

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Education with Equity: Gender-Responsive Workshop in Barpeta

On June 27th, in partnership with the District Hub for Empowerment of Women, FST hosted a one-day workshop to build a gender-responsive educational environment in Barpeta.

Participants included representatives from~ Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), District Elementary Education Officer (DEEO), Social Welfare & Empowerment Dept, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Childline, and other community-based organisations.

Chitralekha Baruah, a leading voice in gender justice, led transformative discussions on:

- Gender stereotypes in the classroom
- Inclusive educational practices
- Policy gaps and future action



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From Homestays to Hospitality: Scaling sustainable Tourism in Meghalaya

📍 Laitmawsiang Village

From June 11th to 13th, FST conducted a three-day basic hospitality training for 18 homestay owners in the village of Laitmawsiang, East Khasi Hills.

Led by experienced trainers Miss Ibadondor Syiem and Miss Clarissa Nongrum, the sessions covered:

- Front Office Operations
- Food & Beverage Service
- Housekeeping Essentials

With a balance of theory and hands-on learning, the training emphasized guest satisfaction, hygiene, and safety — equipping participants to elevate their homestay businesses and contribute to sustainable tourism.



📍 Cherrapunjee

On July 3rd, 4th, and 7th, we conducted a specialized hospitality training for 21 homestay owners in Cherrapunjee.

Resource persons Ibadondor Syiem and Damiano Devenc Malngiang facilitated sessions on:

- Guest behavior and service recovery
- Housekeeping best practices
- Role-playing and real-life scenario learning

Participants appreciated the interactive, practical approach — particularly a session on managing difficult guest situations through shared local experiences.



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Breaking the Silence: Youth Take a Stand Against Substance Abuse



On June 13th, in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Department of Barpeta, we conducted a youth-focused awareness session in Pub-Kalgachia village.

Over 50 participants, including youth leaders from Balaipathar, Showpur, and Pub-Kalgachia, engaged in interactive discussions on:

- Psychological and health effects of drug use
- Legal rights and access to helplines
- Peer-led support and advocacy

Creating safe, informed spaces like these is critical in equipping youth to lead healthier lives and foster community-driven prevention efforts.



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Empowering Our Team to Empower Communities: Staff Capacity Workshop

From July 15th to 18th, FST completed a four-day capacity-building workshop for staff on Community-Led Development Approaches.

Core areas of focus included:

- Community facilitation techniques
- Participatory planning and assessment
- Results-based monitoring and reporting

This internal investment strengthens our team's ability to support and amplify grassroots-led change with confidence and clarity.



Annual General Meeting 2025: Reflecting on Progress, Charting the Future



On September 6th, we successfully convened our Annual General Meeting 2025, bringing together Board Members and staff.

The agenda featured:

- Updates on project performance and finances
- Strategic roadmap for the future
- Field-level reflections and learnings

We extend heartfelt thanks to our Board Members for their unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and inclusive transformation.

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Jarina's Story of Change

Jarina is a 25-year-old farmer from Santhel, Imphal. She participated in the training sessions on sustainable farming practices under the Khutlang project. She gained valuable knowledge on making natural pesticides and using rice husk charcoal to improve soil quality.

“I would like to have more training so that I can produce healthier and bigger seeds - Jarina”

After applying her new skills, Jarina noticed significant improvements in her crops. The natural pesticides effectively controlled pests, while the rice husk charcoal enhanced soil fertility. As a result, her plants' yellow leaves turned green, and her crops grew healthier. Our training programs aim to equip farmers like Jarina with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt sustainable farming practices.

