

# **SAURAMANDALA FOUNDATION**

## Centre for Accelerated Development

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**E-Newsletter**

Vol. 2 // February 2023



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# ABOUT US

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Sauramandala Foundation (CFAD) is in its 4th year of inception. While we started our work in Kashmir, the last few years have seen us focus more on the northeastern states, with most of our current projects focussing on remote rural communities in Meghalaya.

Sauramandala Foundation's Centre For Accelerated Development (CFAD) helps accelerate social and economic change to build the resilience of remote, vulnerable and disconnected communities through collaborative action. Our activities on the ground and our involvement with external and internal stakeholders follow the same approach. Our interventions follow an accelerator approach rather than that being an implementor.

Our work involves a simple 3-stage process:

**1**

**Gain insights and  
build social  
capital**

3-6 months

**2**

**Aggregate NGO  
partners for  
collaborative  
action**

3-6 months

**3**

**Co-design and  
facilitate  
implementation  
of projects**

24-30 months

# FROM THE TEAM

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Collaboration, Diversity, inclusion are not just mere words used loosely at Saurmandala, but the principles that guide our actions wrapped around deeper intentions. An organisation is a living breathing organism that needs to be constantly nurtured with the energy of its people, the love they put into what they do every single day, and the belief that together we can achieve great heights.

From building capacities internally at SMF to deliver more impact; launching CMYCs that became a playground for the communities to engage in self designed learning, sports & Library; a fellowship crafted to engage with and encourage the last mile entrepreneurs into their full potential; to bringing back the forgotten folklore of the Indigenous Communities to the forefront, last year was a rich and fulfilling journey to say the least and we have just begun.

And while we prepare ourselves for the onward adventures, I would like to leave you with this beautiful quotation that has been the light guiding my path.  
"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the World; Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" Margaret Mead

**Archana L. Tomar**  
**Lead – People, Program, Play**  
Sauramandala Foundation (CFAD)

# SNAPSHOT

2023 has presented numerous opportunities for our organization, as a young and growing entity. The projects initiated in 2022 have taken hold and have begun yielding tangible results. Our team continues to expand in both size and strength, and we are particularly proud of our partnerships with well-established organizations. These collaborations allow us to co-create innovative solutions and have a lasting impact on remote rural communities.

In this volume, we provide updates for December 2022 and January 2023.

## Partnerships & Collaborations

### PARTNER

### PROJECT

### TOWARDS A COMMON GOAL



Chief Minister's Youth Centres, Meghalaya

Developed on the learning of our 2 Salesforce Community Trailblazer Labs, the CMYC project plans to set up 20 such open learning spaces in rural locations across Meghalaya



Chief Minister's Youth Centres, Meghalaya

Enhance foundational literacy and create a space for empowering activities and capacity building for rural communities



The Forgotten Folklore Project

As partners since 2019, this time we collaborate to utilize their expertise and experience in developing children's books and educational content



Trailblazer Community Labs

This partnership extends the support for the TCLs in Sohrarim, Nongwah, Meghalaya, the first two pilot labs that led to the conceptualization of the Chief Ministers Youth Centres project.

## HEADLINERS FROM THE FIELD



Currently, **18 out of 20 CM Youth Centres are operational**, while the other 2 are in the final stages of setup. The tinkering spaces/nooks have been catering to the youth from neighboring villages of these 18 centres. Over **500 learners have registered** for the nooks, and more than **95 early projects** have already commenced.

During the festive season, the CM Youth Centres in various locations served as a hub for celebrations and gatherings. Additionally, they organized **Football World Cup screenings** for rural communities, followed by various activities to promote **community engagement** as part of the project.



As a part of the '**Sports and Arts for Development**' component of **CM Youth Centres Meghalaya**, **Ultimate Frisbee** was introduced to Meghalaya on **Feb 3rd, 2023**, in collaboration with the Ultimate Players Association of India. The **first cohort of 18 youth** from across Meghalaya has been trained as **Frisbee Coaches** to promote the sport in rural communities.

## HEADLINERS FROM THE FIELD



In the first 4 months of the **PRIME-Sauramandala Rural Entrepreneurship Fellowship (PSREF)**, fessociates immersed in different blocks met 195 entrepreneurs/ farmers/ business owners/ livestock farmers, of which **51 are mapped**. A mapped entrepreneur is beyond ideation and seeks handholding support through PSREF to scale up their business.

The **first work order** for the **Meghalaya Health System Strengthening Project** was handed over to the Chairman of Village Health Council, **Laitkyrhong, Mawkynew** block, on **Jan 6th, 2023**, for the construction of the New Sub Centre. The project aims to build climate-resilient healthcare centers, equipped with energy-efficient medical devices and powered by solar energy.



The **Nook in Sohrarim Trailblazer Community Lab** had its **second exhibition day on 11th February 2023**. After months of hard work and determination, these curious minds from remote villages shared their projects, including bakery products, handmade jewellery, a DIY electric guitar, floral decoratives, customized multi-purpose furniture and a video for ecological awareness.

# KNOW OUR PROJECT



In this section, we will delve deeper into individual projects. We will highlight one of our projects in each edition of our newsletter.

## The Forgotten Folklore Project (Early Childhood Development)

There is a huge void in content that is localised in communities that are remote and disconnected. This gap is particularly impacting early childhood development. Children in these communities lack access to culturally relevant materials, with only exposure to content in English or Hindi. The Sauramandala Foundation's Forgotten Folklore Project aims to address this issue by providing foundational-stage children with access to localized storybooks centered around folklore, culture, tradition, and environment. This not only promotes early childhood development but also enables parents to teach their children using familiar, culturally contextually rich content in local languages.



TFFP team member in conversation with Mr. Kyntiewbor War, Founder, Ever Living Museum, Shillong



TFFP team members in conversation with a household in Kongthong village, Meghalaya

The Forgotten Folklore Project, a collaborative effort between the Sauramandala Foundation, the Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Meghalaya, and Pratham Books, aims to produce 45 culturally rich storybooks, Read Alongs, audiovisual media, and educational activities for anganwadi centers throughout the State of Meghalaya. These materials are specifically designed for early childhood development and will be used for children ages three to eight.

### *Problem statement:*

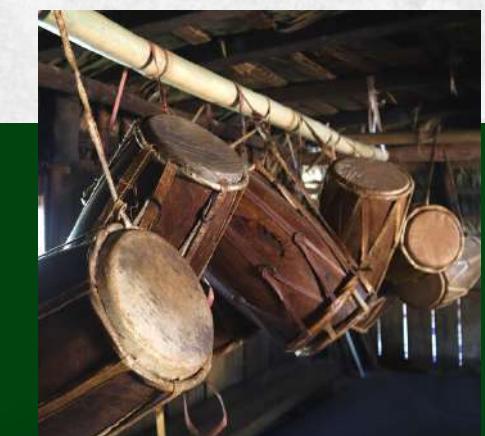
***Children's books lack contextualised content, impacting their ability to relate and learn.***

We asked ourselves a few questions during the design process :

- **What are some educational and engaging content for kids?**
- **How can children's learning be connected to their environment?**
- **How to make storytelling fun and educational for Anganwadi workers and kids?**
- **What partnerships support a pedagogical approach in content development?**
- **Why and how should the system invest in Early Childhood Development?**
- **Why is contextual learning so vital, especially for children?**

The Sauramandala Foundation, in collaboration with local experts from the State of Meghalaya, is executing an on-the-ground initiative to identify indigenous storytellers in the Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia regions. This effort involves documenting local stories and practices, which will be leveraged to curate culturally-sensitive, education-focused content for the 45 storybooks within the scope of The Forgotten Folklore Project. The outcomes of this project include enhanced learning, preservation of the culture and heritage of Meghalaya, and cross-cultural learning opportunities for students across India through the translation of these books and audiovisual content into other languages.

The documentation effort has resulted in a significant accumulation of understanding regarding Meghalaya and its inhabitants. With this initiative and the valuable insights gathered by the team, we anticipate the books produced to yield a noteworthy influence on the development of a young individual. This is due to the notion that the tales imbibed in childhood linger, shape one's perception, and significantly sway their grasp of cultural heritage, familial ties, individuality, and ethics.



In an attempt to collect and preserve folk stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, the Meghalayan Folktale Competition was launched. Cash prizes across numerous categories were offered to the competition's winners. Left- the winning submission for the competition.

Traditional Khasi drums photographed in Wahkhen Village, Meghalaya

# Meet the TFFP team



## LANUANGLA TSUDIR

Program Lead

Lanu, a University of Delhi alumna, has expertise in entrepreneurship with a focus on women and youth in Nagaland. As a doodle comic artist, she is passionate about storytelling through content and shares her creations on her Instagram page, "the midget".



## SAMUEL KHARSOHNOH

Program Associate

Samuel, a social worker, and a TISS Guwahati Alum, has been focusing on holistic nutrition and early childhood development. He is committed to improving the quality of education for children and making a meaningful impact in the field.



## NAZARENE F. JYRWA

Research Assistant

Nazarene has a passion for dissecting social challenges, coupled with her qualitative research skills, and is an alum of TISS Guwahati. Her calming demeanour is only matched by her unwavering work ethic.



## MAYANKA CHRYMANG

Research Assistant

Mayanka's training and spirit lie in the field of Public Health, and it was her dedication to social work that brought us together. She holds a strong belief in advancing her career through ongoing, progressive training experiences.



## JODY B. SANGMA

Research Assistant

Jody is a recent B.Sc. (Agriculture) graduate from CAU, Imphal, who works well in different environments and adjusts easily to people around her. She has a keen interest in reading novels and enjoy singing and playing their guitar in their free time.'

# E-Newsletter

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### **Looking forward**

Experience joins the team!

Archana Tomar takes the reins as Lead – People, Program, Play in Meghalaya, bringing with her decades of sector experience. We are looking forward to valuable guidance from a seasoned pro – we warmly welcome Archana to our team.

We will be coming to you with more updates from the field and our team through the upcoming editions of this e-newsletter.

**For partnerships, volunteering and other opportunities, write to us**

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**Visit us**

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    /sauramandalafoundation