



Centre for Accelerated Development

Annual Report

Submitted to

Rainmatter Foundation

#35, Srikantan Layout, High grounds
Bangalore - 560001
www.sauramandala.org

2022-23

About Us

We are an NGO founded in 2018 with a vision to bring about systemic change in the lives of remote communities through empathetic, collaborative, and contextual solutions that are co-created with the communities themselves.

We aim to address the issues faced by vulnerable communities through the Centre For Accelerated Development (CFAD),

a platform approach to public problem-solving that focuses on improving development indicators in vulnerable communities in India. CFAD uses a systems lens while inviting insights from communities on the ground, building the capacity of local change-makers, and co-designing evidence-based programs in partnership with district and state governments and development actors.



From the Founders

The past year has proven to be instrumental for Sauramandala Foundation, marking significant progress since our inception. The financial year 2022-23 gone by, allowed us to lay a solid foundation and establish ourselves in a new region.

We are now in our second year of partnership with Rainmatter, and as our projects gain stability and our team grows more experienced, our approach becomes increasingly refined.

Continuous improvement is at the core of our efforts as we seek innovative ways to enhance our effectiveness. The support from Rainmatter has provided us with the necessary space, time, and resources to experiment, build, and expand.

Undoubtedly, the past year brought its fair share of challenges. With a new team, we faced the task of finding optimal ways to achieve the best results and create an environment for everyone's growth. New projects presented challenges in stakeholder management, operations, and the pursuit of sustainable outcomes.

However, these challenges were made surmountable through the unwavering support we received from our partners.

This report provides a glimpse into our achievements over the past year and outlines our aspirations for the years to come.

Karthik & Neil



Reflection

Partnership and collaboration have been instrumental in our role as an ecosystem builder, whilst addressing societal challenges faced by vulnerable communities. Our ability to make a meaningful impact in the lives of these communities is greatly enhanced by the expertise, experience, and networks of our partners.

Since 2021, Rainmatter has been a steadfast supporter of our mission and approach. Your support has provided us with a platform to showcase our work and generate impact, particularly in our early years. With your assistance, we have been able to establish a supportive ecosystem in a new geographical area and have the freedom to design innovative and sustainable solutions.

Among our partners, Rainmatter stands out as the sole supporter providing financial assistance for building our team, establishing processes, and strengthening our organization. The flexibility of your funding has been crucial in navigating the challenges of establishing ourselves in the region and ensuring our long-term sustainability.

As we reflect on this partnership and support, there are multiple dimensions we can look at, that extend beyond project objectives and outcomes.



Refining Our Approach: Developing Proof of Concept

The Centre for Accelerated Development (CFAD) by Sauramandala Foundation is a platform approach to public problem solving that addresses the challenges remote and inaccessible communities face by accelerating social and economic change through collaborative action. This approach involves steps that demand ideation and demonstration of pilots based on ground level insights, building partnerships and co-design. The flexibility of the funding allowed us to test, iterate and develop a Proof of Concept to the Centre for Accelerated Development approach with an aim of replication and scale-up.

Team & Institution Building

The start of FY 22-23 ushered in an exciting chapter as we welcomed our first team members to Meghalaya. What began as a small group has blossomed into a thriving community, with over 120 individuals now comprising our dynamic team. Notably, a significant portion of our team proudly represents the local communities of Meghalaya, fostering a deep connection to the region and its people. Across the many projects implemented here in Meghalaya, all the team members bring with them their diverse interests, skillsets and backgrounds. A significant milestone for our Meghalaya team has been establishing a permanent office space in the heart of Shillong. This serves as a hub for all our official functions, fostering collaboration, and providing a solid foundation for our endeavours.



Second Layer of Leadership

The second line of leaders is the one that emerges or is developed from within the team. The importance of a second line of leadership for non-profits is even greater than for for-profit organizations due to the unique challenges and complexities of non-profit operations. Creating the positions and providing the space for team members to grow, experiment, innovate and lead can contribute to building not only their technical skills but also their social and leadership skills.

The ability to access adequate funding has empowered us to embrace innovation and take calculated risks that have resulted in groundbreaking outcomes. By taking advantage of this, we have been able to grow and reach our goals with greater efficiency.

Projects and Partnerships Unlock

Our collaboration with Rainmatter has provided us access to a diverse ecosystem comprising social enterprises, media outlets, and non-profit organizations. As we progressed in refining our approach and designing large-scale projects, we fostered partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. We worked closely with corporate social responsibility initiatives and foundations that offered technical and financial support. Additionally, we engaged solutions providers, including individuals and NGOs, who co-created projects with us. Local businesses played a crucial role in facilitating logistical arrangements and providing access to resources. Furthermore, we collaborated with educational institutions, enabling us to tap into an extensive network of talented young professionals and assemble a team of highly motivated individuals.

PRIME-Sauramandala Rural Entrepreneurship Fellowship

In September 2022, we launched the PRIME-Sauramandala Rural Entrepreneurship fellowship, marking its first year of operation. The fellowship is dedicated to addressing the challenge of a non-existent ecosystem for entrepreneurs at the last mile, encompassing crucial aspects such as access to capital, mentoring, branding, market linkage, and more. By fostering a

conducive ecosystem, we aim to empower rural and last mile entrepreneurs and provide them with the necessary support to thrive. This fellowship serves as a noteworthy illustration of effective collaboration among corporate social responsibility initiatives, civil societies, and governments in addressing societal challenges.

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Overview

- 8 Blocks/ Districts Coverage
- 24 Fellows & Associates at the grassroots
- 1 Core Program Team

2

Achievements

- 268 entrepreneurs met
- 121 entrepreneurs mapped and are currently supported

3

Financials

- 75% (₹ 2.23 Cr) of the funding was unlocked from the Government of Meghalaya



Enabling Rural Entrepreneurship: A Ground-Up Approach

Our fellowship embraces a ground-up approach to support rural entrepreneurs, beginning with the meticulous mapping of entrepreneurs at the village level. Our dedicated team of fellows and associates actively engage with

communities, collaborating closely with stakeholders such as village councils and block administrations to gather essential data. This collaborative process not only facilitates the smooth flow of information but also ensures efficient allocation of resources to empower rural entrepreneurs.

Scope of Support & Achievements (No. of Entrepreneurs Supported With)



Books of Account & Pricing

Bookkeeping : 115
Unit Cost: 115



Business Planning

BP Blueprint : 30



Raw Materials

RM List: 125
RM repository : 5 Businesses



Branding, Packaging & Storage

Logo: 39 | Packaging: 100



Mechanisation

Machinery : 29

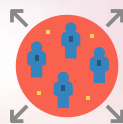


Training

Training Mobilisation : 100
Exposure visit to SARAS
and Mini Bazar: 100



Manpower



Marketing

Social Media: 15



Market Linkages

Networking & Collaboration : 25
Delivery Services: 3



Funding

Sanity Check for
Entrepreneurs needing
funding



Certification & Resgitation

FSSAI : 17 | PAN Card : 2
TRIFED : 12 | ST : 2 | MSME : 3
Financial Linkages: 37



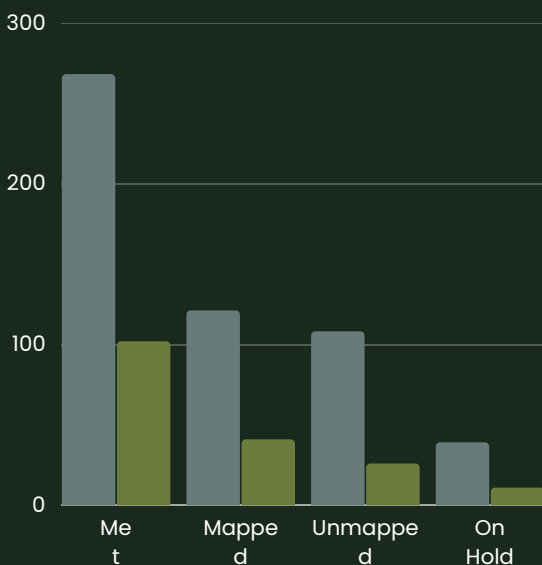
Other Challenges (Electricity etc)

TARGETING THE TOUGHEST

Of the total 8 districts covered in the first year of PSREF, 3 of the districts have been considered as focussed districts for the objectives we aim to achieve with Rainmatter. These three districts of South West Khasi Hills, East Jaintia Hills and South Garo Hills are among the toughest districts in terms of accessibility, terrain and other socio-economic factors.

Entrepreneurs Data

Progress so far

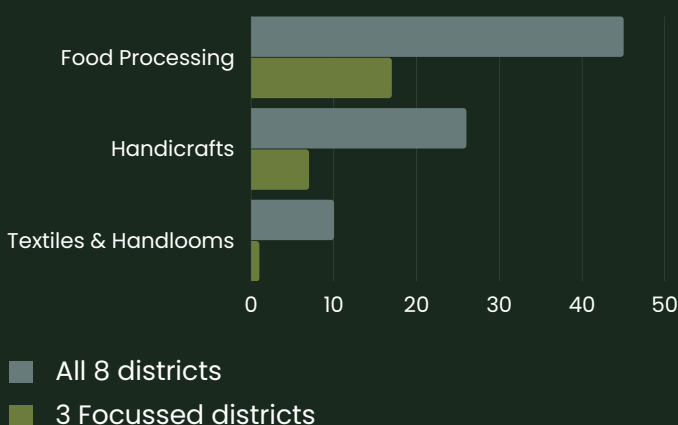


Mapped- an entrepreneur who is considered to be out of the ideation phase & is being incubated.

Unmapped- Met but cannot be supported due to type of business, lack of motivation to scale up.

On hold - Those entrepreneurs mentioned as 'on hold' are the ones requiring more convincing in subsequent visits.

Top 3 Business Choices



3 biggest reported challenges faced by the entrepreneurs across all 8 districts

17% Branding & packaging

12.5% Tools & Machineries

11.7% Market Linkages

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF KYRSIEW RYNGKHEM

Kyrsiew Ryngkhlem, a 40-year-old entrepreneur from Wapungskur, East Jaintia Hills, embarked on her entrepreneurial journey in 2020 with a vision to inspire and promote eco-friendly practices. She faced a personal setback when she bought a barren plot of land in her village for tree planting, only to discover the adverse effects of coal mining on the region's environment.

Undeterred, Ryngkhlem found a solution in making organic manure using animal waste, dry leaves, and grass. Her goal was to minimize the use of harmful chemicals and preserve soil health while benefiting the ecosystem. Her innovative approach not only made her enterprise profitable but also contributed positively to the environment.

In a region where coal mining is a widespread practice, the detrimental effects on the environment, agriculture, and the local communities are evident. Farmlands, once fertile and productive, are being used to store coal or for associated practices, resulting in the degradation of the land. This degradation not only harms the delicate balance of nature but also disrupts food production, putting the livelihoods of people who depend on farming at risk.



THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF KYRSIEW RYNGKHEM

Reflecting on her journey, Ryngkhlem expresses pride in the remarkable growth of her business, stating, "As an entrepreneur, I am proud to witness the immense distance I have covered to reach this level of success." She acknowledges the challenges she faced in procuring raw materials but credits her relentless pursuit of innovation for surpassing her expectations.

Kyrsiew Ryngkhlem's story exemplifies the power of entrepreneurship in fostering environmental conservation and inspiring others to make positive contributions to the preservation of natural resources.





FROM A FAMILY VENTURE TO EXPANDING HORIZONS

Situated in the charming town of Sahsniang A, West Jaintia Hills, Rida Sten Food Cottage is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and determination of its founder, Rida Sten (58). What began as a humble family-run business has now evolved into a flourishing enterprise, with Rida's daughter, Niwan Sten, joining her in managing the operations.

FROM A FAMILY VENTURE TO EXPANDING HORIZONS

Established in 2022, the cottage specializes in the production and processing of various culinary delights, including rice tea, chips, and pickles. Rida Sten's extensive knowledge of traditional recipes and her passion for preserving local flavors have set the foundation for their success. By using locally sourced ingredients and employing traditional techniques, Rida Sten Food Cottage offers products that resonate with the rich heritage of the region.

Despite their impressive growth, Rida and Niwan are not content with resting on their laurels. They aspire to expand their business further and reach a wider customer base. However, they face challenges in finding suitable platforms to showcase their products and connect with potential buyers.

The Teams | PSREF Batch 2022-23

■ East Khasi Hills



Yaleishon Kazingmei



Gwenda Lyndem



Amit Talukdar

■ Southwest Khasi Hills



Harsh Shah



Aibanshngain Kipa
Myllemngap



Ronald Wanniang

■ Ri-Bhoi



Ambrish Tiwari



Baiabudlang lawphniaw



Mikewell Khonglam

■ East Jaintia Hills



Anup Jyoti Sarmah



Hudderfield Rymbui



Twinkle Pohtam Kai

The Teams | PSREF Batch 2022-23

■ West Jaintia Hills



Alemchila Tzudir



Sanijajai Khyriem



Optimist Sdor

■ East Garo Hills



Tage Omin



Susmita Hajong



Christharis N. Sangma

■ West Garo Hills



Sumit Pathak



Chige T Sangma



Temsu R Marak

■ South Garo Hills



Dangmei Kasangaipou



Anikit R Marak



John Rangam R Marak



SALT Farming

Climate Action (SDG 13) serves as a foundational pillar in the Centre for Accelerated Development approach, permeating all our programs and projects. Every initiative we conceive and undertake is scrutinized through the lens of climate impact.

Even projects that may not directly align with climate change objectives are imbued with elements and practices that generate incremental positive impacts on a regular basis. We strive to incorporate climate-conscious design and operational practices into these projects, ensuring that they contribute to mitigating climate challenges to some extent.

However, projects like Sloping Agriculture Land Technology (SALT) Farming are explicitly crafted with climate action as their central focus.

Shifting cultivation is a widely practiced farming method in

Meghalaya. Scientific studies have shown it to be one of the most sustainable ways of subsistence farming that allows multi-cropping and agroforestry. The recent decades have seen a reduction in the yield from shifting cultivation due to unsustainable land-use patterns, poor choice of crops, and monoculture amongst others. This has seen reduced interest from the youths of the region to take up agriculture as a choice of livelihood.

In April 2022, Sauramandala with support from Meghalaya Basin Management Agency collaborated with Mr David Gandhi, an expert in Sloping Agriculture Land Technology (SALT) farming to co-design an intervention aimed at raising awareness and building capacities of farmers across Meghalaya on this technique, to ensure sustainable Natural Resources Management and increase the income of these subsistence farmers.



80 Farmers

80 Acres of Demonstrated Field

Why SALT?

- A sustainable method of cultivation for sloping lands in high-rainfall areas.
- Requires less labour, relies on low external inputs, produces food for the family, is a viable form of income generation, and is sustainable.
- Promotes the use of diverse cropping systems, including intercropping and agroforestry.
- Enhances biodiversity by providing habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, contributing to ecosystem health and resilience.
- Incorporate the use of organic matter, green manures, and cover crops, which improve soil organic carbon content and sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing carbon storage in the soil.

Catalyzing Support for other Projects

August 2023 marked the launch of our highly anticipated project: the establishment of 20 Open Learning Centres known as **Chief Ministers Youth Centres (CMYCs)** in remote rural areas of Meghalaya. These centres were conceived in response to limited learning options available to youth in these areas.

The CMYC project represents our **largest government-funded endeavor** to date. The initial support we received for the pilot labs played a crucial role in accumulating evidence and demonstrating our impact, allowing us to secure substantial funding on a larger scale within the system.

Through our accumulated learning and evidence from the ground, we successfully secured funding for **The Forgotten Folklore Project**.

TFFP addresses the need for contextualized storybooks in Meghalaya by collaborating with local storytellers and artists to create 45 books that capture the essence of local communities, their cultures, and way of life.

These books are designed to contribute to the early childhood development of children attending Anganwadis and Primary Schools, fostering a love for reading and nurturing their growth.



8.2 Cr- Funding unlocked from system



1.2 Cr- Funding unlocked from system



Building an ecosystem within projects

The youth involved in our TCLs and CMYCs have consistently proven that innovation in business can arise from unexpected sources. However, what we have identified as lacking is a nurturing ecosystem that can identify their potential at an early stage and provide the necessary support for their ideas to thrive until they become self-reliant. We were able to co-design our projects along with our partners in a way that they complement and support each other.

As an outcome to this ecosystem, 6 businesses that were born in the two pilot TCLs were provided financial support in the form of Nano-Grants to kick start their entrepreneurial journey. A total of 10 entrepreneurs are part of these 6 businesses who started their journey as learners in the NOOKS at these 2 labs.

Nialty, Tainisha, and Raplin from Nongwah turned fruit preservation into a project, aiming to add value to abundant local fruits and reduce wastage. They received a INR 22,000 Nano-Grant to develop their business, procure materials, and create natural jams, free from artificial preservation, contributing to reduced food waste and sustainable entrepreneurship.

On the Horizon

The PRIME-Sauramandala Rural Entrepreneurship Fellowship team have been gathering data and insights from the grassroots. This journey of creating a conducive ecosystem for rural entrepreneurs exposed us to certain problems faced by these nascent entrepreneurs.

Access to efficient energy solutions and built environment need have emerged as some of the common and widespread need for entrepreneurs across the state.

This led to another collaboration between Sauramandala Foundation, SELCO Foundation and the Government of Meghalaya (PRIME Meghalaya) to ideate and co-design a solution that is contextual to the needs of these entrepreneurs

From the data gathered from the field, we have so far understood the need of flexibility in the packing of loan products to access these much-needed facilities and infrastructures.

This proposed intervention aims to bring in collaboration between many stakeholders to ensure a streamlined and effective process, that feels less exhaustive to the rural entrepreneurs receiving the product at the other end.

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Years

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



Built Environment
& Energy Efficiency

300

Entrepreneurs

Looking Forward

Sauramandala Foundation is grateful for the past year and excited about the future. We achieved significant milestones with the support of the Rainmatter Foundation.

Our focus is to establish an ecosystem through CFAD, uniting remote communities and extending it to other regions. Rainmatter Foundation's support has been crucial in propelling us forward. We remain committed to making a lasting impact in people's lives, particularly addressing societal challenges in the face of climate change.

We appreciate the Rainmatter Foundation's invaluable support in creating transformative change. Thank you for joining us on this journey towards a better future.



Centre for Accelerated Development



Email

info@sauramandala.org



Website

www.sauramandala.org



Social Media

[/sauramandalafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/sauramandalafoundation)