

## Research Labs

### Editorial Lab

In April 2024, the editorial lab published an interview with farmer and filmmaker Mr. Laxminarayan Devda. He directed a film called Jowar Gatha, under the Samaj Pragati Sahayog's (SPS) media wing, which explores the many rituals, varieties, and ways of eating jowar in villages in the hinterlands of Madhya Pradesh. This is the first time The Locavore has published a Hindi language piece on its website, and we hope to do many more collaborations like these under MRP in different languages to ensure we are able to reach more people in regional languages. We will also be working with SPS to now hold a limited time screening of Jowar Gatha on the MRP website and run a campaign around popularising it in May. We will be inviting Mr. Laxminarayan, and other members of SPS Media to interact with our readers through the May Beyond the Plate event, which is a panel discussion on what food can be, beyond eating. Here, we will discuss millet growing in the region, why jowar is so important to the communities that live here, and how the film was made, and its many messages for all of us. This will also be the first time The Locavore will be hosting a film on its website, and we are very excited to be able to engage with people around millets in these many formats. Hopefully we can continue doing this in the coming months as well. Mr. Laxminarayan was also part of our offline event in Delhi, where we screened Jowar Gatha and held a discussion with him afterwards. Before that, the film was part of our curation at the Serendipity Arts Festival in Goa. It is these long term collaborations, through talks, screenings, and written pieces that we feel we can create long lasting engagement and impact.

### Cooking Lab

Through April'24, Cooking Lab volunteers focused on finishing the regional recipes from 2 states in particular, Sikkim and Tripura. The volunteers were active and interactive during the entire month regarding discussions on the selection and execution of recipes which required trials and errors to create the desired end result of dishes like momos, handcut noodles, bangwi etc. The weekly touchbase calls saw more interactive participation from volunteers. A major shift amongst the attitude of volunteers in eagerness of learning and doing multiple permutations combinations of recipes were noticed this month. Also, each volunteer including the MRP Lab Lead, has taken up one video shoot of a recipe to be submitted by end of April. Noteworthy here is that, except 2 volunteers, video shooting of recipes with no previous experience of videography, without any external shooting equipment and taking the help of the kids or seniors of the family, was really touching. Video recipe of Mutton Pantheras for April'24 was curated by an ardent follower of MRP. The other recipes for April'24 were all curated and shot by MRP volunteers.

### Resource Lab

In April 2024, Resource Lab volunteers dedicated efforts to enhancing the volume of entries, including expanding the scope of level 1 engagement through in-depth interviews. Remarkably, this month witnessed nearly double the usual number of entries, with a strategic focus on leveraging in-depth interviews to gather feedback on the live

resource lab, thus enabling continuous refinement and enhancement for user experience.

To ensure that the valuable insights gained from these interviews benefit other MRP labs and the Locavore initiative, a collaborative platform has been established on Miro to ideate and foster a feedback loop. Furthermore, weekly touchbase calls have witnessed increased participation and active brainstorming among volunteers, aimed at fine-tuning the resource lab's offerings and identifying any gaps in user engagement, thus paving the way for targeted improvements.

In pursuit of optimizing the conversion rate from level 2 to level 1 entries, efforts are underway to strengthen collaboration with the Locavore and ChefTZac, tapping into their networks to elicit more effective responses and expedite response times. Looking ahead to May, anticipation is high for the first town hall meeting, which will bring together volunteers from all three labs for shared insights and collaborative planning.

Climate & Policy Lab

In April the Climate and Policy Lab focused on two main projects: coming up with a BTP calendar and reworking the longitudinal survey keeping resource and methodological concerns in mind. The BTP calendar charts out 5-7 potential BTP for the rest of the year, including themes, potential panellists etc. This shall help streamline our processes in the weeks leading up to the BTP. The new volunteers onboarded last month included people with considerable quantitative research experience. They raised some methodological concerns with our initial survey plans. They have worked to propose 3 alternate ideas which will allow us to maintain scientific rigour while keeping our bandwidth in mind. Both the Calendar and the survey proposal are in the fine-tuning stage before being shared with the TL team by May 3rd. We have also been working on the WASSAN collaboration research and brainstorming and have come up with questions for them, to better understand the project.

Team morale has been better this month as new volunteers have brought in a lot of energy and ideas. The issues with stagnancy have reduced considerably and work is moving at a better pace, which is great.

TL Interventions

Communications

In April, the Millet Revival Project focused its digital media communications on promoting millet recipes, stories, and engaging content to drive interest in millet consumption. While no events were hosted during this period, our external content strategy centred on fostering conversations around millets. This inspired people from The Locavore community to reach out to us, pitching a collaboration to create millet recipe videos for the project. So for April, we worked with Swati Bhaduri for the video. In the upcoming months, we aim to collaborate with more Locavores who feel genuinely passionate about millets, nudging people to perceive and consume them imaginatively. Although the view counts on these videos may not be as high in comparison, they resonate deeply within our community. The engagement reflects an authentic impact, driven by community members reaching out to us.

Looking ahead to May, we are excited to promote our upcoming interview feature with farmer-filmmaker

Laxminarayan from SPS Community Media. This marks our first bilingual article, available in English and Hindi, complemented by a screening of his film on our website.

Outreach

Nair on fire - a popular restaurant renowned for its Kerala flavours, is keen on doing a multi-level collaboration around millets.

Collaborations

On April 7th, The Locavore organized a pan-India birthday potluck across seven cities simultaneously. Numerous attendees, inspired by the Millet Revival Project, showcased millet-forward recipes, including upma made with barnyard millet, shinni - a prasad made with foxtail millet and a Pitha Paturi made with jowar flour and sweet potatoes. Sayani Sengupta, our MRP Cooking Lab lead, attended the Kolkata edition and brought a delicious pork pitha made using foxtail millet flour and a tangy mango, chilli and proso millet chutney.

On 12th April, The Locavore and ChefTZac collaborated with IMMERSE for 'She Moves Food @ House of Play,' hosting a five-course immersive dining experience. During the event, we celebrated women entrepreneurs who champion sustainable, ethical, and eco-conscious food system practices. Among the dishes featured in the dining experience was a vibrant Summer Millet Salad incorporating millets sourced from Tillage.

Overall

At the Millet Revival Project, we are currently engaged in an introspective phase, analyzing the impact of our work so far and strategizing for future expansion. To ensure comprehensive insights and foster collaboration, we are organising a town hall gathering, bringing together all leads and volunteers from our four labs. This platform will facilitate dialogue and idea exchange, vital for steering our collective efforts towards greater effectiveness and inclusivity. The inaugural Townhall Meet, scheduled for May 3rd, will mark an important milestone in our journey. It's heartening to observe the growing resonance of our work, evidenced by increasing interest from individuals, brands, and organizations eager to join hands, share insights, or co-create events. This surge in engagement reaffirms our commitment to the transformative potential of millet revival and strengthens our resolve to pursue collaborative pathways towards sustainable impact.