



People
Partnership
Practices
khubor
NESFAS' journey of tastes, traditions, technology and teams



JANUARY-MARCH 2019

NESFAS to foster a global partnership by hosting the TIP Fellowship Programme 2019

Subsequent to the success of the Indigenous Youth Fellowship Programme in 2017 initiated by TIP (The Indigenous Partnership), NESFAS will host the programme for the Field Exposure and Exchange Initiative from 20th May to 17th June, 2019 in Shillong, Meghalaya, North East India.

TIP's Fellowship Programme 2019 has been refined according to the suggestions of indigenous elders and the 2017 fellows. There will be more intense interaction with community members through a field stay of about one month in Meghalaya, North East India. To endure the opening up of this experiential learning to other interested youths in the areas for the field visit, the Fellowship Programme will be open while in Meghalaya, to other interested youths that NESFAS may identify.

TIP's experiential learning Fellowship Programme will provide the fellows a unique international and intercultural experience, and skills that are not generally available to indigenous youth who intend to work for grassroots communities.



2017 TIP fellows with Phrang Roy

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we are working towards achieving our goal of enhancing the food and nutrition security of our communities through our traditional food, it has become imperative that we not only need the support of the local communities but of all stakeholders at the local, national and international level. Your continued support towards this cause will bring a change in the mindset of people towards the importance of traditional food and preservation of our own agrobiodiversity system.

Dr. Melari Nongrum
Executive Director
NESFAS

Jan '18 Community Seed Banks

Since the community seed banks establishment and management training by LI-BIRD in Laitsohpliah on November, 2018, the community has finally completed the establishment of a community seed bank on January 2019. Inventory work for the seed bank in Laitsohpliah started on 25 Feb 2019, and the exposure visit where 5 farmers from Khweng ALC visited Laitsohpliah CSB on was held March 6 2019.

NESFAS took part at the 'Pungzm' Millet Festival held on 1st and 2nd February 2019 at Longding HQ, Arunachal Pradesh. The Tirap Community Resource Management Society under the aegis of the NERCORMP Society, along with the Wancho Cultural Society, organised this festival to popularise the importance of millets and millets based food products.

Taste workshop on Millet by NESFAS at Arunachal Pradesh



Millet cakes



Inauguration of the Pungzm Millet Festival

Indigenous recipes



Ingredients of the Jhur Psem Ktang

NESFAS has recently started sharing indigenous recipes on its various social media handles and website. They have been specifically documented by the team from various events, food festivals and cooking demonstrations. Also, some of these have been contributed specifically by members of several communities and the NESFAS team has also shared the same with them so they can incorporate them in their mid-day meals and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centres. These recipes have been developed using indigenous ingredients which are grown or foraged locally around Meghalaya.



Jhur Psem Ktang, a speciality of the Pahambir community, Ri-Bhoi

1st and 2nd Feb'18

Pungzm Millet Festival

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NESFAS was invited to facilitate a taste workshop to promote the importance of Millet (or Krai in Khasi) as a heritage food of the indigenous communities of Meghalaya. The resource persons from NESFAS included Kong Karalin Rane, a community youth from Nongtraw, East Khasi Hills, and also from NESFAS team were members: Badarishisha Nongkynrih, Associate and Ruth B Sohtun, Field Coordinator. The team shared various recipes of millets at the workshop as well as showcased raw millet products and local honey. The recipes include millet cake, millet pancake, millet banana pancake, millet pusla, millet pu khleiñ. The workshop went well and people visiting the stall too were eager to learn about the multipurpose use of millet.



NESFAS representatives at the Pungzm Millet festival

11th Feb '19

@ Nongriangka,
West Khasi Hills

Agroecology Workshops

Agroecology workshops were organized at Nongriangka, West Khasi Hills and Chandigre, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya on the 11th and 13th February 2019 respectively. The workshop is aimed at making farmers understand Agroecology and the importance of incorporating it in their farming process. Farmers come together to develop action plans for ways to increase production and tackle the problems during farming. Their contribution in this work is important towards defending traditional farming and food production systems.

Members of the Agroecology Learning Circle from Khweng, Liarsluid and Khliehumstem communities, Ri-Bhoi were also introduced.

Millet recipes

NESFAS team received positive feedback by the Wancho Cultural Society regarding the recipes because in Longding District, millet is only used for making millet wine. Ms. K. Wangsa from the Wancho community shared that people in Longding district, especially the youth, can take up these innovative recipes shared by NESFAS and create livelihood opportunities. This platform was a great opportunity of knowledge exchange for the team as well as others who visited the stall.

Local MLA Mr. Thangwang Wangham shared in his speech that he will take forward the memorandum by the Wancho Cultural Society of having the millet festival every year.



Millet cake

13th Feb '19

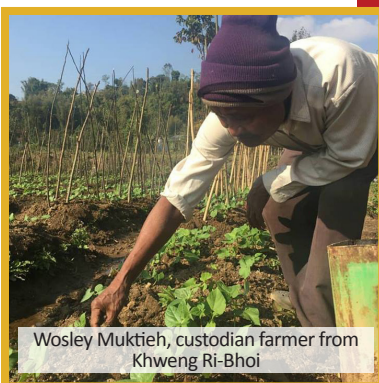
@ Chandigre, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya



Agroecology workshop at Garo Hills



Agroecology workshop at Garo Hills



Wosley Muktieh, custodian farmer from Khweng Ri-Bhoi

9 Agroecology Learning Circles have been formed. The overall goal of the NESFAS Learning Circle approach is to create autonomous spaces for community member-to-community member reflection, action, analysis and innovation for revitalizing and sustaining local indigenous food systems for improving nutrition sensitive production, consumption and livelihood opportunities based on the principles of Agroecology. These Learning Circles has been initiated in the project villages.

25th Feb '19 Session on 'Integrated Pest Management'

Mr. Thomas ĩangjuh, Jr. Scientist, BRDC, Meghalaya facilitated the session on the methods and techniques of Integrated Pest Management in agriculture and the initiatives taken by Bio Resources Development Centre (BRDC) to empower local farming communities. Through this dialogue, BRDC is willing to find out the local names and geographic locations of insecticidal indigenous plants that would be useful for farmers.

March '19 School Gardens

@ Laitsohpliah, Nongtraw, Dewlieh and Iewrunghep (Meghalaya)

As of March 2019, 5 school gardens have been established (in Laitsohpliah, Nongtraw, Dewlieh and 2 in Iewrunghep community) and 9 school gardens have been initiated in other communities.

PGS (Participatory Guarantee System)



PGS farm appraisal at Nongtraw

44 PGS groups have been formed in 17 communities. Presently, the PGS groups are being trained on minutes keeping, selection of convener and collection of farm appraisal is still ongoing.

28th Feb to 2nd March '19 NESFAS at the NE Science Fair

@ NEHU Convocation Hall, Shillong, Meghalaya.

NESFAS participated at the North East Innovators Meet and Technology Innovation Entrepreneurship (TIE) Expo 2019, from the 28th February to 2nd March 2019, at NEHU Convocation Hall, Shillong. The event was organized to mark the occasion of the National Science Day on 28th February.

The event was organised by the State Council of Science, Technology & Environment (SCSTE), Meghalaya in Collaboration with the North Eastern Council, Meghalaya Basin Development Authority, Bio-Resource Development Centre and National Innovation Foundation – India.



Preparation of wild edible 'Jatira' salad



Preparation of mint chutney

Nutritional Campaigns

The campaigns on Nutrition and WASH through the community programmes started in March 2019. Interns from Women's College, Martin Luther Christian University and Assam Don Bosco University, Dept of Social Work were also part of these programmes.



School children and teachers of Umsawwar community

It started with Umsawwar Community of Mawkyntew C&RD Block. The activities included an Agrobiodiversity (ABD) Walk with the teachers and students of the schools. Home visits with the message of Food Diversity and 10 Food Groups, and fun evening sessions with role plays and songs. The campaigns have so far been conducted in Umsawwar, Nohron, Iewrynghep, Pashang, Nongpriang and Laitthemlangzah in East Khasi Hills, and Langshonthiang, in West Khasi Hills

The campaign focuses on importance of local food consumption, nutritious wild edible plants, food groups, health, sanitation, cleanliness, water, hygiene and many more.

The campaign on nutrition moved forward with street plays in local markets. With the contribution of a local youth group called 'The Highland Crew Adventurers', the first campaign was held in ĩew Smit on 18th March, 2019, in ĩewĩewrynghep on 25th March, 2019, in ĩew Jatah on 29th March, 2019, and in ĩew Sohra on 30th March, 2019. The group performed a street play on the importance of consuming the right food groups to enhance nutrition in rural areas.



Badarishisha Nongkynrih, Associate, NESFAS, at the NESFAS stall

NESFAS received the opportunity to have a stall that showcased and promoted the Mei-Ramew Weaves, and local products like millets and honey.

Members of the NESFAS Cooks Alliance from partner communities, namely Khweng and Liarsluid Ri-Bhoi, and Darichikgre, West Garo Hills prepared food for the delegates and the participants at the event.

This became an important initiative to showcase and promote the indigenous food of the region to a wider audience from across the country.

March '19 @ Shillong, Meghalaya



Cooking demo at Thyllaw



WASH Campaign at Nohron



Street play at ĩew Smit

A woman's health today, A secure tomorrow!

1st week of March '19 Women's Day

@ Chizami, Nagaland

On celebrating the International Women's Day 2019, NESFAS has initiated the campaign on Nutrition for women and children since March 1st Week. The campaign emphasizes the importance of consumption of wild edibles and local food. Through AIR radio broadcast, NESFAS promoted the importance of consuming green leafy wild edibles, especially among women who have anaemia, for its rich iron content. The radio campaign ran for four days. On this occasion, a radio talk on AIR by Ms. Laribha Dohdong, Faculty of the Dept. of Allied Health Sciences, MLCU was aired on the importance of the health of women and to enhance the awareness of using local food for food and nutritional security.



Seed exchange between Garo community and Sangtam community



Dr. Bhogtoram Mawroh at Chizami



Khasi women farmers' representatives at Chizami, Nagaland

Dr. Bhogtoram Mawroh, Sr. Associate at NESFAS, had also presented research on 'Relationship of Agrobiodiversity and Dietary Diversity', which focussed on the importance of biodiversity for nutrition. Through this study, it was shown that there is a lot of agrobiodiversity in the surveyed villages, the number of food plants range from more than 180 to almost 300 items. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation for United Nations) has divided food into 10 groups of which one must consume minimum 5 groups for a nutritionally balanced diet. However, it was learnt that less than half of the people in the surveyed villages consumed less than 5 food groups. The presentation, thus, looked at the gap that exists between agrobiodiversity and local diet. In this regard, NESFAS is working in creating awareness to enhance food diversity through local food consumption in daily diets.

Simultaneously, custodian farmers from Meghalaya delegated at the 10th Edition Biodiversity festival organised by North East Network (NEN), Nagaland from the 7th to 8th March 2019, at their Resource Centre in Chizami, Nagaland. This year's theme is 'Strengthening Local Food Systems for a Resilient Future'.

Custodian farmer, Jeblin A Sangma from Durakantragre community, West Garo Hills was amazed by what the Deccan Development Society had shared at the workshop on Local Food Systems. Ms. Jayshree, Director of Deccan Development Society, Telangana shared about the Women Sangam and that there is autonomy over seeds, markets and food.



Representatives from Garo Hills at Chizami, Nagaland

Workshop cum exposure visit on Mei - Ramew Cafe Initiative

7th March '19

@ Shillong, Meghalaya

A workshop at NESFAS and an exposure visit to You & I – Arts Cafe were organized for potential local food entrepreneurs, to enable and encourage them to initiate Mei-Ramew Cafés at the grassroots level. The participants were 13 representative members from Umsawwar and Nongtraw, East Khasi Hills, and Khweng, Ri-Bhoi.

Mei-Ramew cafes will serve local food encouraging innovation of local recipes with maximum use of local ingredients promoting consumption in their own community and improving their livelihoods.

The group was first briefed about the concept of Mei-Ramew Café and the promotion of local food initiatives. Later, they visited 'You and I Arts Café' in Shillong, founded by Bah Wanphai Nongrum. Bah Wanphai welcomed the group to his café, and shared some of the practices adopted by him for running a café that integrates sustainable and local practices.

Kong Plantina Mujai from Khweng community, Ri-Bhoi, shared her story and journey with the participants on how NESFAS has given her the exposure and highlighted her role as a custodian cook. She shared that because of this, she now gets the offer from various Governmental and Non Governmental organizations to showcase local food and have food stalls in various events.



Wanphai Nongrum, Owner of You and I Arts Cafe



Community custodian cooks at You and I Art's Café

13th March '19

@ Liarsluid, Ri - Bhoi, Meghalaya

Mei-Ramew Rice Festival

**NESFAS organised its first ever
'Mei-Ramew Rice Festival'**

Nine communities from Umling and Bhoirybong C&RD Block, Ri-Bhoi, Meghalaya worked together to commemorate and promote the importance of this staple food.

This event aimed to document and display the different indigenous varieties of rice from different communities who participated at the event. Around 58 varieties of rice seeds were brought together in one platform.



Traditional dance of the Ri-Bhoi communities



Rice seeds display

RICE SEEDS VARIETY



Rice seeds display



Mei-Ramew Rice Festival



H Jalong, custodian farmer from Liarsluid, Ri-Bhoi

Bah. H Jalong, a custodian farmer from Liarsluid, Ri-Bhoi commented, "A festival like this is like a blessing to our community. It is through these festivals that we come to know about the gifts from Mother Earth and the diversity of food that exists in other parts of the state."

Rice is integral to the custom and tradition of indigenous communities and is cultivated over a stretch of alluvial lowland in the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya and as hill paddy in jhum cultivation areas in other parts of the state.

2 representatives each from 11 communities of East Khasi Hills, and West Khasi Hills also delegated at the event. The communities exchanged various rice seeds to diversify the rice cultivation at their home communities.

Cultural programmes at the inaugural ceremony were dedicated to stories on a local rice variety known locally as 'U Khaw Jwaiñ'. This variety is consumed very often at the communities of Khweng and Liarsluid as it is known to be very filling.

After the inauguration, the delegates from 20 communities, including the Ri-Bhoi communities, took part in the workshop called 'Nutrition and Culture in the rice farming systems' facilitated by ethnobotanist, Lukas Pawera, who is presently a consultant for NESFAS. The event also had 9 stalls, including food stalls, rice beer, farmers' market, bamboo handicrafts, etc.



15th March '19

@ Police Parade Ground, Tura, West Garo Hills.

Mei-Ramew Farmers' Market



Mei-Ramew Farmers' Market in Tura, Garo Hills

This year's first Mei-Ramew Farmers' Market, the "Aman A•song Farmers' Market" was held on 15th March 2019 at Police Parade Groun, Tura, West Garo Hills.



Producers meet consumers



Henry G Momin, farmer from Darichikgre, West Garo Hills



Producers meet consumers

The farmers from Dura Kantragre shared that the market is a real platform for them to get connected to consumers, and it was the first time they saw people taking importance in their vegetable produce.

Participating communities include Dura Kantragre, Darechikgre, Wakingrongre, and Bibragre from West Garo Hills, Rongram Block.



Mei-Ramew Farmers' Market in Tura, Garo Hills

Be a part of the next Mei-Ramew Farmers' Market

Mark the dates!

2nd Saturday of every month

11th May, 2019 . 8th June, 2019

MEI-RAMEW FARMERS' MARKET

Connecting you to tasty, healthy and local food



NESFAS Office, Laitumkhrach 10 AM to 5 PM

INNOVATIONS

A low cost rain water harvesting has been completed in Laitsohpliah community, East Khasi Hills with technical assistance from State Council of Science Technology and Environment (SCSTE).



Rainwater harvesting tank

Partners



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