



North East Slow Food & Agrobiodiversity Society

Envisioning a future where indigenous food and rural livelihood are defined by a strong bond between people, plate and culture.

Annual Report

(2015-2016)



PC: André J Fanthome

We are

NESFAS aims to CONNECT people to the PLEASURE and IMPORTANCE of tasty, local food that is inextricable from our responsibility towards the environment and the preservation of agrobiodiversity.

In doing so, the organisation attempts to create a platform where peoples at the grassroot level can voice their opinions, exchange knowledge and reaffirm pride in their local food systems.

NESFAS believes that food, when responsibly produced, protects the environment, enhances our health and well-being and highlights the role of women as custodians of our agrobiodiversity and our food lifestyles.

This way, NESFAS envisions a future where our food systems are defined by a strong bond between people, planet, plate and culture.



Letter from The Chairman

This Annual Report essentially focuses on how the Second Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM 2015) or as locally called International Mei-Ramew (IMR 2015) fully occupied NESFAS in 2015-16. Initiated by The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty (TIP) in Rome, Italy and Slow Food International, Bra, Italy, ITM 2015 was implemented by NESFAS as the local organizer, in Meghalaya from 3rd-7th November 2015. ITM 2015 was indeed a monumental undertaking, representing a first, for the size of the event and the scope of the programming, both for indigenous gatherings of this kind and for Meghalaya. The fact that this was accomplished by a small NESFAS team of relatively young professionals in the field, makes this accomplishment even more remarkable. ITM 2015 certainly achieved its goal of bringing together diverse indigenous peoples from around the world to celebrate and discuss their food systems, while also drawing attention to the agroecology of North East India. The event sparked discussion, spawned networks and left delegates wanting to dig deeper into a conversation that only began to scratch the surface in Shillong.

The Christensen Fund, the founding funders of TIP and ITM 2015 commissioned an evaluation of the event and their ITM 2015 Learning Report aptly concluded that “the Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 (ITM), held in Shillong, Meghalaya, India, was not only an event but, in fact, a process of great international significance and value with important markers leading up to the event itself. Curated by NESFAS, Slow Food International, and The Indigenous Partnership (TIP), ITM envisioned a “Future We Want” where indigenous peoples have a unique part to play in shaping a future more respectful of the environment and its biodiversity. The premise of ITM is that indigenous communities can set positive examples for promoting the pleasure of sustainable food systems that are more socially, economically and culturally just – where wellbeing comes not from the accumulation of wealth but from our connectedness with each other. The plenary and thematic sessions at Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 (ITM 2015) were designed as forums to explore these concepts and to spark future collaborative initiatives”.

With the last minute dropping out of some important indigenous and international leaders for personal and professional reasons, there was a concern that there could be a significant gap in leadership, particularly since many of those who could not attend were established forerunners in indigenous rights. Instead, a surprising development was that this gap left space for emerging leaders to step up and let their voices be heard. Indeed, the active presence of youth at the event was felt, and gave encouragement that there is a future for a youthful alliance of indigenous food communities. Proactive local involvement in the planning and implementation of the events particularly of the 41 co-hosting communities meant that the message of ITM 2015 took hold in Shillong, Meghalaya and Nagaland –both at the government and community levels—and residents are now eager to take the next step in implementing what was learned for the benefit of indigenous foodways and the environment. What was probably the most unexpected and spectacular result of the event was the massive local interest in regional agrobiodiversity, as evidenced by the over 70,000 people who attended the closing-day Food Festival held at the sacred groves of Mawphlang. The organizing team had no idea that the event would create such a strong local response.

Partnership building and three years of in-depth participatory preparatory work with local communities were key to the success of ITM 2015, and the event certainly could not have been as ambitious as it was without the active support of many members of state and local government, non-governmental organizations, local communities, funders and the private sector. Both the Sikh and Catholic communities in Shillong played an important role in building bridges with delegates by highlighting shared goals and expressing a desire to work together to have greater impact in protecting agrobiodiversity and promoting the idea of food for peace. The Langar dinner, initiated by the Sikh community of Shillong, was a moving example of this principle in action. Encouraged by TIP, NESFAS used ITM 2015 as an opportunity to engage with delegates, local communities and policymakers on many pressing issues by using a variety of engagement points—from participatory video, to research studies, to a chefs' alliance. As a result, the organization is now well placed to serve as a wider and credible platform. ITM 2015 demonstrated that an international indigenous organization like TIP with the support of a local partner like NESFAS, has strong convening power for indigenous groups. The next step is to build an effective communication bridge between local and international initiatives and ensure that grassroots stories are shared with a global audience. Based on the feedback received from delegates, there is a real desire to replicate the ITM model at the local level on a smaller scale. Another important takeaway from ITM 2015 was that delegates were eager to establish peer-to-peer learning exchanges. Consequently, the Shillong Declaration suggested the setting of Agroecology Schools as a platform to develop a better understanding of the transition towards more sustainable food systems based on diverse agroecological farming. Some of the strongest responses from delegates came during the sessions on storytelling where it brought forth that storytelling provides a means for indigenous communities to advocate for their lands and livelihoods, break cycles of oppression and showcase the dynamic nature of indigenous culture. Participatory videos projected during the event proved that while the tools of storytelling may change, the impact remains the same. TIP also conducted the Well Being Study in East Khasi Hills (9 villages), in West Jaintia Hills (8 villages), and in West Khasi Hills (6 villages) Ri-Bhoi (4 villages) using the story telling methodology. Based on these results, NESFAS will make storytelling a key component of its work moving forward.

TIP working with NESFAS conducted nutritional assessments in selected villages in West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya and in Phek District of Nagaland. The preliminary findings show some signs of malnutrition despite the fact that many of the sites were located in areas of high biodiversity. NESFAS along with TIP will explore this issue and similar nutritional security issues more deeply in the coming years particularly in the context of maternal and child nutrition. 2015-16 has certainly thrown many strategic issues that could drive change and transformation from our current conventional 'industrial' approach to food, education and livelihoods towards a more organic and sustainable way forward and thereby hope to engage a new generation of supporters and believers.

“ We hope that this Annual Report will be a small and humble contribution to engage a new generation of supporters and help them cultivate successful social movements on their own or with like-minded partners like us.”

PHRANG ROY,
Chairman, NESFAS

The Board



Mr. Phrang Roy
Chairman, NESFAS



Mr. Bibhudutta Sahu
Member Secretary,
NESFAS.



Mr. G. P. Wahlang
IAS (Retd.), Former Chief
Information Commissioner,
Meghalaya



Mr. Priak Riahtam
Executive Director,
KSO ,East Khasi Hills
District, Meghalaya



Ms. Anita Roy
Former teacher, AMBRIT,
International School,
Rome



Ms. Jarjum Ete
Chairperson of the
Arunachal Pradesh State
Commission on Women.



Dr. A. K. Nongkynrih
Professor of Sociology,
North Eastern Hill
University, Shillong.



Dr. Glenn Kharkongor
Pro Vice Chancellor,
Martin Luther Christian
University, Shillong.



Ms. Bibiana Rane
Grassroots Activist from
Nongtraw Village, East Khasi
Hills District, Meghalaya.



Ms. Rose Dzuwachu
Senior Asst. Professor,
Department of English
Nagaland University



Ms. Patricia Mukhim
Editor, Shillong Times,
Journalist and Promoter
of local food.

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Part 1 : An Idea is born.

2010:

Carlo Petrini, Slow Food Founder, visits Meghalaya.

Impressed by the agrobiodiversity and the people's close connection to their land, Petrini proposes an international event to be held here

2011:

The 2nd Mei-Ramew Festival takes place.

This gathering became the point at which NESFAS was conceived as an idea that went on to become a reality in 2012

2012:

NESFAS is born.

Agro-biodiversity networks and activities sprout at the grassroots via NESFAS's initiatives.

2013:

The NESFAS team expands.

The year-end sees 12 full-time staff members become a part of NESFAS and the launch of new initiatives.

2014:

International Mei-Ramew (IMR), groundwork for 2015.

Networks and activities multiply. Staff learns new Participatory Techniques for Agrobiodiversity management.

2015:

Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) 2015.

41 villages join hands with NESFAS to host the ITM in November 2015. 62 Countries, 230 Indigenous communities converge in Meghalaya.

2016:

A new direction.

NESFAS adopts Agroecology as a tool to address the needs of its communities.

AN IDEA IS BORN FROM A SEED TO SEASONS

FELLOWSHIP OF NESFAS : Coming together of diversity with one purpose.

NESFAS as an idea germinated from a seed planted by two international organisations; The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty (The Indigenous Partnership/ TIP) and Slow Food International. While Slow Food emphasises the rights and responsibilities towards good, clean and fair food practices, the Indigenous Partnership reaffirms the importance of the age-old role of indigenous peoples as the guardians of agrobiodiversity, agro-ecological practices, cultural identity and rights to food sovereignty and food security. In being so, they also are the connecting links to their significant heritage and practices in these changing times.

TIP was established in 2010 as an international body to be a platform for indigenous food communities to listen and learn from each other. Phrang Roy, head of TIP, being from the North East, saw an opportunity in directing the attention of the world to this biodiversity hotspot and initiated the first local food festival in Shillong in 2010. Dr. Carlo Petrini was in Shillong and was invited to be the chief guest. He was impressed with the inherent richness of the landscape and this started the link between Slow Food and the North East.

TIP found Slow Food's good, clean and fair principles very appropriate for its food festivals it had started to hold in 2010-2012 in Mongolia, Kenya, Tajikistan, Northern Thailand and annually in Shillong. The Shillong Festival was known as the Mei-Ramew Festival which in Khasi means Mother Earth Festival - a local translation of Terra Madre or Mother Earth in Italian. These relationships in the North East grew significantly and NESFAS was established in 2012 and two big delegations attended the 2012 and 2014 Terra Madre in Italy. Further to these TIP and Slow Food jointly proposed the ITM 2015 to be held in Shillong following the first ITM in Jokmok in Sweden. On behalf of both, TIP worked with the Government of Meghalaya and the main Funders of The Indigenous Partnership to give support to the evolving concept of ITM 2015 .

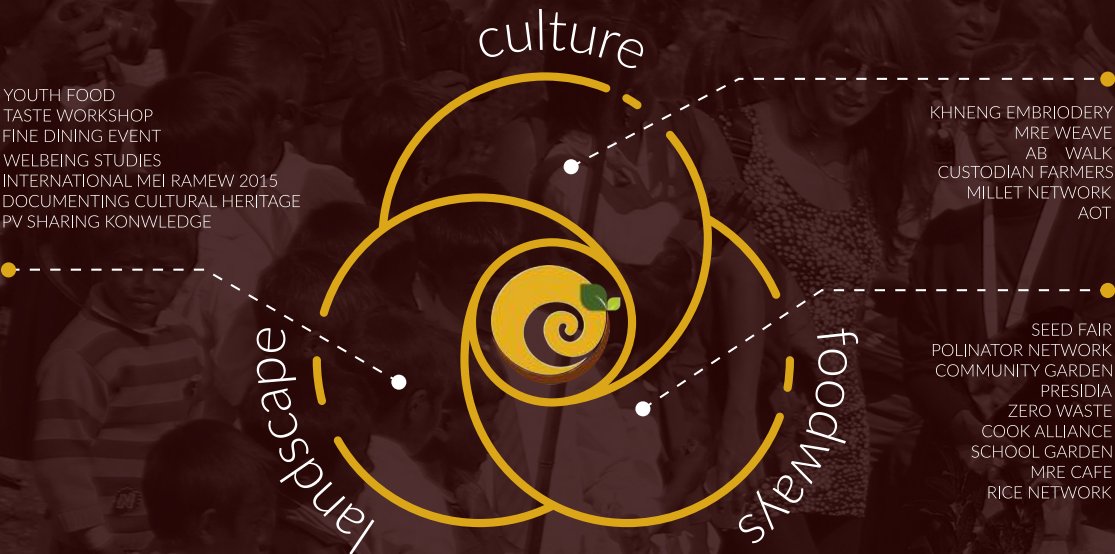
NESFAS today stands for a platform where the experience of the past mentors the strengths of the present to meet the needs of the future. To this end, NESFAS endeavors to join hands and converge its activities with other like-minded individuals, institutions, government, NGOs, etc., for the overall benefit, conservation and development of the indigenous communities in the North East of India.



Kong Icydora in her Kitchen Garden.
PC: Donbok Majaw

THE MISSION OF NESFAS

NESFAS is a platform that connects people to the pleasure and importance of local foods and in the process links them to its journey from farm to fork. A journey that generates awareness towards our responsibility towards the environment and the preservation of the indigenous cultures and traditions. Working as a regional reflection of TIP, NESFAS works towards offering a singular platform for traditional knowledge systems and modern science as equal partners to charter the course of the “Future We Want” for the well-being of indigenous communities. As an outcome of the discussions and resolutions of ITM, NESFAS has embraced the framework of agroecology- a science, a practice and a social movement, to explore its expanded mission. The journey of NESFAS and its young team, guided by global and local experts, was shaped by the priorities that emerged with the engagement with its communities in the rich biodiversity of the hills of Meghalaya and Nagaland. The festivals that brought together the indigenous peoples of the region, formation of networks based on the richness of their agrobiodiversity, research studies that were carried out and strong discoveries of well-being, nutrition, matriarchal societies, have undoubtedly been the driving force behind all of NESFAS activities. These activities fall within domains that are pertinent to securing a sustainable future, food being at the centre, with the aspects of landscape and culture holding just as important a place in their interrelatedness. NESFAS’s networks, projects and initiatives fall within these domains and, more often than not, connect all three.



COMMUNITY AS PARTNERS

Over the 5 years which led to the formation of NESFAS and the activities hence, 41 communities had come forward to dialogue, share, learn and develop a close association of purpose with NESFAS. Their proactive attitude towards promotion and preservation of local agrobiodiversity and involvement in NESFAS initiatives like school gardens, biodiversity walks, agrobiodiversity networks, food festivals, livelihood initiatives, traditional knowledge documentation and studies on well-being, Matriarchy and Women’s role in Nutrition amongst others is commendable. NESFAS sees the village elders and their families as the custodians of knowledge which has preserved the indigenous landscapes in their region making them biodiversity hotspots. Their cultural practices so linked to the land are symbolic and essential instruments to study and engage with climate adaption and other projected hurdles in the coming years. These communities together came forward to join NESFAS as co-hosts of ITM 2015 and participated in all sessions in not just ensuring the well-being of the international communities but also sharing their knowledge.





1) **Laitsohpiah**, East Khasi Hills, 2) **Laitthemlangсах**, East Khasi Hills, 3) **Dewlieh**, East Khasi Hills, 4) **Nong-traw**, East Khasi Hills, 5) **Wahsohra**, East Khasi Hills, 6) **Laitumiong**, East Khasi Hills, 7) **Pyrda**, East Khasi Hills, 8) **Mustoh**, East Khasi Hills, 9) **Tmar**, East Khasi Hills, 10) **Mawhiang**, East Khasi Hills, 11) **Nongwah**, East Khasi Hills, 12) **Rangshangkham**, East Khasi Hills, 13) **Nongnah, Nongbah**, South West Khasi Hills, 14) **Nongnah, Nongkdait**, South West Khasi Hills, 15) **Nongnah, Nongktieh**, South West Khasi Hills, 16) **Mulieh**, West Jaintia Hills, 17) **Mulum**, West Jaintia Hills, 18) **Moosakhia**, West Jaintia Hills, 19) **Samanong**, West Jaintia Hills, 20) **Dombah**, West Khasi Hills, 21) **Nongriangkа**, West Khasi Hills, 22) **Pyndengmawlieh**, West Khasi Hills, 23) **Porksai**, West Khasi Hills, 24) **Nongmawlong**, West Khasi Hills, 25) **Thawkhong**, West Khasi Hills, 26) **Lang-shonthiang**, West Khasi Hills, 27) **Nongmawlai**, West Khasi Hills, 28) **Nongjaiaw**, West Khasi Hills, 29) **Sohliya**, Ri-Bhoi, 30) **Khwenг**, Ri Bhoi, 31) **Khlieh Umstem**, Ri Bhoi, 32) **Thadnongiaw**, Ri Bhoi, 33) **Liarsluid**, Ri Bhoi, 34) **Madanritiang**, Ri Bhoi, 35) **Daribokgre**, East Garo Hills, 36) **Chandigre**, West Garo Hills, 37) **Sasatgre**, West Garo Hills, 38) **Wakringtonggre**, West Garo Hills, 39) **Ganol Songma**, West Garo Hills, 40) **Rangwakamgre**, West Garo Hills, 41) **Perkseh**, East Khasi Hills.

In partnership with the North East Network, NESFAS extended its reach to nine villages in Nagaland through the Participatory Video program. This includes the villages of Sakraba, Zapami, Thetsumi, Chizami, and Enhulumi in the Chizami District and the villages of Thang, Nokyan 'B', Noklak, and Komking Noklak of the Phek Districts.

FOOD WAYS

LINKING AGROBIODIVERSITY NETWORKS

Food is a channel that connects consumers and producers, and also the many people, processes and potentials in the journey from farm to fork. Not just that, its cultural and economic significance is undeniable and hence is in the centre of all NESFAS activities. With its partnership with the indigenous communities, who as producers influence agrobiodiversity by virtue of what they choose to cultivate become the heart of the foodways. NESFAS keeps them in mind as it shapes proportional programmes that engages, communicates and shares choices, learnings, consumer alignments and their changing trends. The agrobiodiversity networks connect like-minded people with each other along this entire channel of foodways from producers, academics to consumers. These networks lay emphasis on involving communities and individuals in dialogue to understand their roles as stakeholders in a bid to make a positive impact on food choices that are based on sustainability. NESFAS facilitates community-led agrobiodiversity networks on topics considered important by them, to collectively address issues and share modern and traditional knowledge among these key holders. Over the last four years, networks have emerged on the following topics, with the aim of reviving forgotten crop varieties and in discussing crop-diversity and agro-ecological practices.



Local Knowledge Holder who makes up the Custodian Farmers Network.
PC: Andre J Fanthome

THE MILLET NETWORK

The Millet Network, one of NESFAS's first networks, was born out of interactions with a small cluster of communities from Khatarnong in the East Khasi Hills District in 2010. Concerned about millet's disappearance from their food systems where less than 40 years ago it was a major part of their diet, Krais' (millet) declining relevance in the communities' dietary habits is evident from the fact that their younger generation have no taste for millet. Grown as a supplementary food grain in the past, millet has also become redundant in many other communities now. There are, however, some champions of the Millet Network; individuals who have worked on reviving cultivation of the grain. Kong Bilaimon, of Laitsohpiah successfully grew a batch of millet variety that was no longer found in her village from seeds she brought back home from a millet festival in Nagaland she participated the year before. It was a pleasure shared with friends from the Nagaland community when they visited her in her village. She, along with her community, has been able to influence 9 to 10 surrounding villages to regrow millet for consumption. Nongtraw, located a few kilometres from Laitsohpiah, celebrated a forgotten festival on millet in its efforts to reviving the crop.



Millet Network in Garo Hills.
PC: NESFAS

CUSTODIAN FARMERS NETWORK

Custodian farmers are local producers who protect, promote and preserve crop-diversity and thereby contribute actively to the global efforts to enhance the overall biodiversity. NESFAS has identified more than 126 custodian farmers over the last four years. It was necessary to find these individuals not just to help them realise the important role they play as protectors of the biodiversity but also create a platform where they can exchange knowledge with each other as well as other interested farmers. These individuals are repositories of knowledge, be it seed saving, or traditional agricultural practices which are based on years of trial and error and very often as scientific as they are sustainable.

COOKS' ALLIANCE

The 'Cooks' Alliance', that consists of a network of home cooks, highlights the role of these artisans as indisputable change-agents in connecting people to their food. They share a common love for food and cooking and understand and know the best use of food ingredients or wish to do so. NESFAS recognises that cooks have an understated hand in the preservation and promotion of agro-biodiversity that must not be ignored. Their penchant for timeless flavours offers great potential in food advocacy.

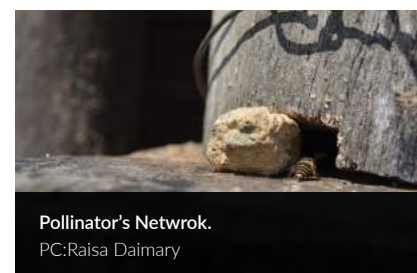
A conscientious cook knows the social, economic as well as environmental significance of consumption of seasonal local food. They are the intermediaries between a farmer and a consumer and could include anyone, ranging from professional chefs to street food vendors to home cooks. It is their ability to influence consumers through their skills by appealing to an irrefutable judge of good food - taste, which makes them so important. The Cooks' Alliance brings together community members as well as interested individuals and food professionals under one platform to share and learn from each other with a focus on capacity building and knowledge exchange in culinary aspects.



POLLINATORS' NETWORK

With the major decline of pollinators, a global phenomenon that took place over the last few decades, it would be unwise to ignore them considering their importance in cultivation. Unrestrained use of pesticides and harmful chemicals in large scale farming have been recognised as one of the major reasons for the decline of large populations of harmful pests as well as other insects including various species of bees, not to mention small mammals and birds who get affected through the food chain, which are indispensable for natural pollination. The Pollinators' Network is a small attempt to restore the numbers and quality of pollinators, in the areas occupied by the NESFAS communities to begin with. The Pollinators' Network works at creating awareness amongst the communities that bees and other pollinators, indicate the land's health and connect beekeepers and indigenous knowledge holders in order to share ideas, information and discuss issues faced by traditional beekeepers.

NESFAS has taken these efforts further and has engaged with the Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri, to conduct a study on pollinators in the region as part of its initiative to widen and strengthen the Pollinator's Network. The study would look at the variety of pollinators present in an area, food diversity in relation to these pollinators, and necessary interventions with livelihood and agrobiodiversity in mind.



INDIGENOUS RICE NETWORK

A strong demand for a 'Rice Network' was born from an interaction with the Nongkynrih community members, in Laskein Block, West Jaintia Hills in 2013. Rice being the staple food of all North-East Indian communities, it did not come as a surprise. The community claims that today in Jaintia Hills itself, at least 100 indigenous varieties of rice could be found. They were in fact able to display 32 of these seed varieties at the Mei-Ramew 2013 food festival. NESFAS recognises the potential of local rice to enhance nutritional security and market independence for local communities. The network thus encourages the maintenance of this diversity which is in danger of disappearing due to competition from the limited but popular varieties of high yielding types which are generally found in the markets. All cherished for specific characteristics such as aroma, high nutritional value, texture, these varieties are grown in limited volume and thus rather expensive; making their affordable counterparts, despite transportation from far off states, more popular. Local rice not only forms the base carbohydrates of most meals but also find their way into breakfast and tea time as indigenous snacks. Not just that, but also in the form of beverages, as seen in Jaintia Hills as 'Sha Kho' - a type of tea made from toasted local rice, or the very many types of rice beers brewed by a majority of tribes of the North East. Local rice has, thus, cultural significance to the indigenous people of the region and, therefore must be preserved.

SHIFTING CULTIVATION NETWORK

'Jhum' ties hill dwelling communities to their culture. Many communities reiterated to NESFAS the importance of Shifting Cultivation or 'Jhum' in their food security and sustainable livelihood. Looking at it in the conservationist point of view, Jhum steps forward as vital to biodiversity conservation; at one time farmers are known to grow more than 20 different types of crops. In fact, there is an increasing acknowledgement in the international science community too, that shifting cultivation can be a biodiversity-enriching practice as opposed to being environmentally destructive, as believed by the common laypersons, due to lack of in-depth knowledge. NESFAS believes that Jhum cannot be done away with and sustainable ways and means to practice Shifting Cultivation need to be worked on. What is more significant is that the Network has international significance with it being practiced among other similar cultures in other parts of the world. The network connects farmers practicing this form of cultivation with each other.



TASTE WORKSHOPS

It is often easy to forget that food is more than just the taste buds response to sweet, salty, sour or bitter. It is possible to directly equate a holistic gastronomic experience with food that is good for the body, mind and soul. A good meal is essentially not only good to taste but also smells delicious and looks fresh. Through Taste Workshops at various food events, NESFAS attempts at waking people through sensory education into rediscovery and appreciation of our collective heritage and diversity in all its facets through food and all the senses connected to enjoy it. The workshop tries to explain that experiencing food is a multi-dimensional process on the sensory level, irrespective of our consciousness. Triggering our gustatory senses, taste whisks us through the collective memory of a unique place and time, introducing us to all the people that put a meal on our plates, specially our farmers and our cooks.



Taste workshops.
PC: NESFAS

KKI at Mawphlang Lewis Boys' Home.
PC: Raisa Daimary

KIDS' KITCHEN INITIATIVE

The Kids' Kitchen Initiative (KKI) started in the year 2014 as a small exercise with the aim to teach children how to cook, keeping true to the values of good, clean and fair. A visit to the William Lewis Boys Home, Mawphlang, on 26th July 2014, by the NESFAS team gave birth to the concept and led to its prompt initiation. The boys' home caretaker, Mr. Samuel Jyrwa recounts how thrilled and excited the boys were, and still are, to be a part of the Kids Kitchen team – a small step for most of them towards the realisation of the dream of someday becoming a professional. 12 boys out of the resident 50 odd boys signed up for the food and cooking class which was to be facilitated by the NESFAS Flavours Development team. NESFAS has been conducting cooking classes with the boys at least twice a month on Saturdays and have had 20 classes so far. The boys were guided not only on culinary skills but were also taught about the basic principles of cleanliness, proper washing of vegetables, disposal of waste, importance of local ingredients, among other lessons. From making simple dishes like salads, they graduated to learning different methods of cooking such as blanching, boiling, pan frying, deep frying, simmering, stewing, searing, marination, etc. They were confident enough to cook a lunch for the fellow residents of the home and the NESFAS team.



ARK OF TASTE (AOT)

Designed to preserve at-risk foods that are sustainably produced, have a unique taste and are native to a distinct eco-region, the Ark of Taste is a Slow Food initiative that highlights their existence by bringing focus into a food's risk of extinction, inviting everyone to actively partake in its protection by seeking, buying and consuming them, spreading their story and supporting their producers. In some cases (such as in the case of endangered wild edible species) it leads to promoting their conservation and reproduction - thus seeking their rediscovery and to strengthen the local economies. The AoT, which could be any food product - a single crop, an animal breed, a recipe or even a traditional method, is characterised by its potential risk of extinction within a specific area/ community.

NESFAS worked with local stewards of indigenous knowledge and agro-biodiversity, and carried out the documentation by seeking their advice and consent. Slow Food's guide eased the tricky detailed documentation process of nominations. In 2014, NESFAS listed 20 items to the Ark of Taste, from which the Sha Shia Krot (wild root tea), Sohnamtra (the Khasi Mandarin) and the Lapunei (a variety of wild herb), were accepted as passengers. By November 2015, NESFAS nominated 97 AOT products to Slow Food International.

THE PRESIDIA

Presidia, the Latin word for 'Stronghold', symbolises the defence and promotion of agrobiodiversity products by showcasing them as well-established quality (Presidium) produce and linking them to ethical market value chains. Run by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, it is a project geared towards plants, animal products and cooking practices that are at the risk of disappearing. Looking beyond vital economic benefits, NESFAS follows the Slow Food objectives of social, environmental and cultural sustainability. Presidium products are at risk of disappearing because of a lack of economic assurance for the future. Thus, in partnership with Slow Food, NESFAS strives to support local economies that are built upon unique products and practices of our indigenous custodians.

The Khasi Mandarin, locally known in Meghalaya as "Sohnamtra" was first nominated for the Presidia project following a visit by Francesco Sottile, member of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity and the International commission for the Ark of Taste, Italy, in February 2014. The Sohnamtra, was accepted into the Presidia project after its assessment as a product that fulfills the criteria for the same – culturally significant, tied to a territory and declining in production.

The fruit stands out in its uniqueness as a direct result of the soil conditions of the southern belt of Meghalaya where it grows. The high limestone content of the soil neutralises the pH of the soil which makes the fruit more aromatic than those growing in higher acidic conditions. The low altitude makes for hotter temperatures which attributes to its sweeter taste. The fruit itself can be recognised for its pulpiness and thin and easy to peel smooth skin.

(TRIBUTE: NESFAS remembers Bah Running Thabab, one of the largest producers of the Khasi Mandarin from Umniuh Tmar and an irreplaceable knowledge holder, who was lost to us early in 2016. He planted more than 4000 trees in his orchard. His family shall carry his legacy forward.)



The Khasi Mandarin and its Custodian Farmer.
PC: Dr. Francisco J R May

CULTURE AND LANDSCAPES

EDUCATION, DOCUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY

Food is an essential part of culture because it is the storyteller of the land, its climate and its people that produce it. It would be impossible to obtain sustainable and all round success in influencing positive change if Culture and Landscape were ignored. Many of NESFAS activities fall under the purview of cultural activities. Globally, food and agriculture have mostly been reviewed from an agronomical viewpoint for, preferring quantity over quality. NESFAS was founded on the philosophy that traditional food systems inherently express the qualitative aspects of food. Unfortunately, while many research and development initiatives ignore these highly comprehensive aspects, traditional food systems' most salient features are actually, their intrinsic values. These values, though context specific, support a sustainable and bio-culturally diverse food system, dictated by socio-cultural norms based on how humans interact with the ecology. They embody the Traditional Ecological Knowledge and its umbrella practices, ranging from means of production and land uses to taste-appreciation and culinary skills within a food system. NESFAS believes that these values are critical to develop a good, clean and fair food system, that needs to be documented and promoted.



Youth Food Club.
PC: NESFAS

YOUTH FOOD CLUBS

Youth are most vulnerable to the changing food practices and dietetic patterns, constantly being drawn in by glamorous food trends which are, more often than not, unhealthy. Joris Lohman, Europe's Youth Food Movement's President, in his engagement visit to Meghalaya in 2013, emphasised the need to form a local youth movement for sustainable food and agricultural practices, and rightly so. It is only practical to induct the decision makers of tomorrow for a brighter future. NESFAS has taken steps towards widening the network throughout the state by meeting students across colleges and forming food clubs for the "Local Food Movement". NESFAS's Youth Food Clubs was initiated to connect youth to their local food and to further expand their food choices so as to transmit the idea on to the next generation. It is an effort that tries to give local food a fighting chance where, today, city dieters actively opt for fast food. Various talks and discussions spawned the idea of a Youth Food Club (YFC) with various schools, colleges and universities setting up their own clubs based on their individual strengths and potential to pave young initiatives. Between October 3rd to 6th 2015, NESFAS participated in a global get together of young people organized by The Slow Food Youth Network around the world at Milan. Kegitar Lyngdoh, an Associate of NESFAS, represented the organization at the event focussed around the theme 'We Feed the Earth'. The event brought several thousand young farmers, food artisans, fishers, nomads, indigenous peoples, chefs, students and activists to Milan serving as a learning experience of how an existing strong youth movement can move the world.



ABD Walk
PC: Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh

"ABD" (AGROBIODIVERSITY) WALKS

The ABD walk is an exploratory transition with the community knowledge-holders through their available forest areas that brings to light the variations and varieties of wild edibles and medicinal plants available in these areas. NESFAS's Biodiversity Walks concentrate on including children- and youth of the community and serve as opportunities for inter-generational knowledge transfer. The identification of local knowledge-holders is, thus, considered of prime importance. These walks give the youth and children a sense of the importance of forests and the resources they cradle by educating them about their value. Often, these walks lead to eat-ins with wild edibles collected from the forest leading to yet another level of education, where the participants learn how the plants they identified should be used.

WELL-BEING AND DIGITAL STORY-TELLING (DST)

Well being encompasses all of NESFAS activities which reflects in the mission of the organisation. The aim is pursued keeping in mind the equation inclusive of balance with nature and its future as envisioned by the community themselves. Given the global direction of debates on human well-being, the UN Development agenda, indigenous happiness and well-being were identified as one of the key themes of the Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) 2015.



PC: Andre J Fanthome

Based on this, a series of well-being studies were conducted in 2014 by the Indigenous Partnership (TIP) and NESFAS, who sought to develop case studies to drive discussions and provide a platform

for indigenous communities to reflect on their own well-being as a basis for making sense of modern ways of living in relation to their own. The research brought to the fore a diversity of viewpoints about ways of "being" that make life worthwhile for different people and cultures. "Well-Being studies" have been conducted in a number of villages spotlighting good and collective Governance, Access to Resources, Love and Mutual Respect, Preservation of traditional culture and lifestyle, agriculture, Sense of community- the 'we' feeling (support and co-operation), Peace and Harmony, Education, Health, Nature and Environment, Food and Seed Sovereignty and Spirituality.

Digital storytelling training.
PC: NESFAS

PARTICIPATORY VIDEOS

Participatory Video (PV) is a tool that is used by NESFAS to help communities document relevant issues and traditional knowledge, so as to encourage their visibility to a wider audience, ensure they are archived and transferred, all in a participatory manner. The various topics range from agricultural practices, cultural diversity, plants and most importantly, people's own stories. The videos' participatory approach entails the participating community's substantial obligations to the content's nature and theme. Storytelling through Participatory videos was brought to NESFAS by the Indigenous Partnership in collaboration with London based organisation, InsightShare which is known for facilitating Participatory Video documentation all over the world.



Participatory videos training.
PC: C Atkins

The participants are trained in basic video production skills such as camera work, scripting and editing and hence the videos produced are a reflection of what the community considers important and wishes to share with the world. NESFAS facilitates the training of the participants, supports the production as well as the sharing of the works of the PV teams who belong to particular hubs.

Five participatory video hubs around the north-east region including three in Meghalaya at Nongtraw and Mawphu, East Khasi Hills, Chandigre in Garo Hills and two in Nagaland districts of Chizami and Noklak have been set up till now. A total of 30 videos have been made by them so far and were screened at the ITM 2015



Khweng custodian farmers.
PC: NESFAS

LIVELIHOOD

Farming carried out together with fishery, animal husbandry, handloom and handicraft is the largest occupation of the people of the North East of India. The livelihood aspect of agriculture cannot be overlooked and is its biggest driving force, even more than food sovereignty. Improving livelihoods among farmers in a sustainable manner with focus on preserving agrobiodiversity and innovation is the focus of this sector of NESFAS. NESFAS works closely with interested communities to strengthen local economies through various novel interventions. Aiming for economic benefits in sync with social, environmental and cultural sustainability, NESFAS's initiatives lead to the economic promotion of local products, fosters closer relationship between producers and consumers.

Traditional folk artists of Garo Hills.
PC: Andre J Fanthome



Kong Plantina's Mei Ramew Cafe in Khweng village.
PC: Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh

Interiors of the Mei Ramew Cafe.
PC: Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh

MEI-RAREW CAFÉS

Building on the four decisive traits of a Chef - Knowledge, Skill, Attitude and Identity, a Mei-Ramew cafe is a public eating space, where local produce and indigenous recipes are served as glamorised cuisine to conscious consumers. NESFAS works with interested cafe owners, who wish to improve their already existing establishments. The individuals are provided with training and advice on areas of customer service, hygiene, menu, flavour development, management and presentation, amongst others.

These initiatives enhance local economies by bridging the gap between producers and consumers, by encouraging use of local and seasonal products in traditional as well as modern dishes. Owned by Kong Plantina Kharmujai the first Mei-Ramew café in Khweng village, Ri Bhoi, features traditional food from the district which is strikingly different from the rest of the state. She cooks and serves food that incorporates wild edibles collected from nearby forests and vegetables grown locally.

The Mei-Ramew Dhaba along the highway between Shillong and Sohra, popularly known as Cherrapunjee, in Soharim is owned by Bah Hamlet Khongngain. Hamlet supplements ingredients he sources from local markets, with herbs and vegetables that he grows in the vegetable garden behind the café. Based in Laitumiong, East Khasi Hills District, the Latreilang Mei-Ramew Cafe sits pretty on top of a hill overlooking the Sohra Valley. Named after the Self Help Group that supports it, it is run by Kong Lucy Khongngain and serves simple food. Latreilang has many patrons, but it is the truck drivers who specifically come to this café because the kitchen is open to them to cook their own food.



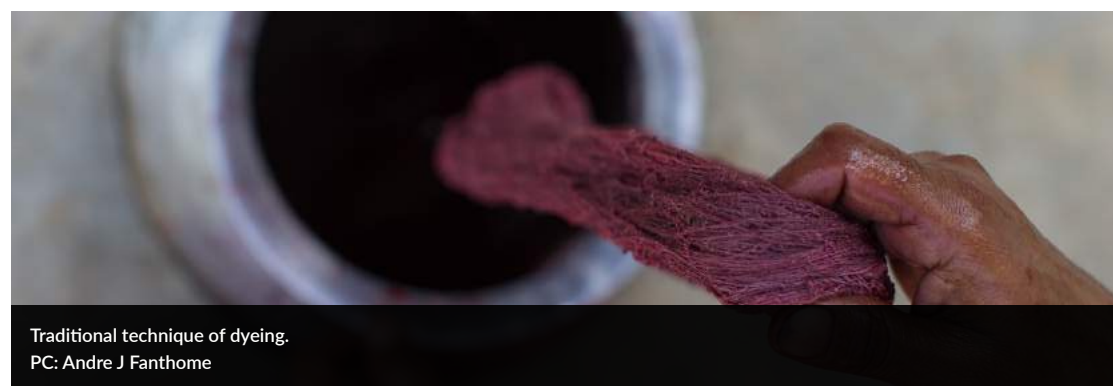
MEI-RAMEW WEAVES

NESFAS began work on preservation of the traditional skill of Eri weaving in early 2014 with the visit of Carol Cassidy of Lao Textiles (South East Asia). Her visit to the weaving communities of Meghalaya allowed her to assess the traditional weaving skills, existing product and the quality and quantity of the Eri silk, also locally known as 'Ryndia'. She observed the challenges faced by the weavers and recommended NESFAS develop a traditional Eri silk preservation and handicraft programme. The Eri is one of the many different types of silk found in Meghalaya, drawn out from the cocoon of the Eri silk worm, which feeds on the leaves of a variety of food plants, including castor.



There is very little investment required for Eri cultivation, hence Eri silk has earned the name, "poor man's silk". It is appreciated for its beautiful texture and flexibility. The fabric remains cool in summer and warm in winter. Eri silk is also known as "ahimsa silk" or "peace silk" as the extraction of the thread from the cocoon does not involve killing of the worm. The hand-spun, naturally dyed and hand-woven fabric is a reflection of the local environment and NESFAS actively supports these traditional methods of production. The weavers use traditional floor-looms and frame-looms, and production time can vary up to at least one week for one stole.

NESFAS considers local collaboration essential for long term success and is working towards cross-institutional collaboration and has partnered with the Department of Sericulture and Weaving, and other local and international development agencies working in the field of Eri silk. The first collaborative effort between NESFAS, the Department of Sericulture and the Department of Forestry was a Plantation Day of food plants for the Eri silk worms, that took place on the 6th of June 2015 in Khweng village.



KHNENG EMBROIDERY WORKSHOP PRESERVATION OF THE TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Khng embroidery
workshop at Mustoh village

MUSTOH VILLAGE
CHERRAPUNJEE, MEGHALAYA

KHNENG EMBROIDERY

Khng embroidery is a traditional craft from Mustoh, Shella and other nearby villages. It caught NESFAS's attention as a beautiful yet endangered art. The Khng is a unique threadwork that embellishes the traditional outfit of the people of Mustoh and Shella which consists of a wrap round made of Eri called the jainpien, a cape made of fine silk called the jainit, and a shawl called the jainkup. An original jainpien has a thick band of Khng running vertically and a jainkup has two running horizontally. Khng was rediscovered when the danger of its disappearance was brought to light to Mr. Phrang Roy, Chairman NESFAS, by his family who have their ancestral home in Mustoh. Around the same time Special Purpose Vehicle Society (SPVS), Meghalaya, under the Chairman Mr. G. P. Wahlang (IAS), former Chief Information Commissioner of Meghalaya, was looking to support activities within the region through his society.



The two organisations took a decision to jointly work to revive the Khng. Following preliminary visits in December 2014, NESFAS initiated a workshop on preservation of Khng from the 28th January to 5th February 2015 with the help of local consultant, Ms. Lajoplin Nongsiej and Ms. Anna-Loiuse Meynell, a textile consultant from Scotland who represented NESFAS. It was conducted with the last three knowledge holders of Khng and 11 trainees from the village who were willing to take it up and focussed teaching of simple patterns and identification of other patterns. SPVS further supported the workshop by funding a medical eye checkup for the Khng artisans later that year in September based on the fact that the Khng needlework strains the eye and could lead to vision issues. It was no surprise that eight of the artisans were found to require spectacles. After the training, small orders were placed with the women and their pieces were showcased at ITM 2015 which was held in November. The three trainers, Bliwtibon Mawa, Asibon Mawa and Victoria Synrem will still continue to teach 9 trainees till they are reasonably proficient before new trainees are taken up; many of them are waiting in the wings, eager to learn.



Part 2 : Journey to ITM 2015

Kong Redian Syiem. Custodian farmer and Local
knowledge holder from Khweng.
PC: Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh

AN ALLIANCE OF THE INDIGENOUS NARRATIVE IS BORN

The foundation stone of the Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) was planted in 2010 as the Sápmi People of Arctic region invited Slow Food to join them in the first ITM event in Jokkmokk, Sweden in the year 2011. It also led to the formation of the namesake ITM Network dedicated to focusing on the indigenous peoples as the gatekeepers of timeless agrobiodiversity. The event brought together representatives of indigenous communities from around the world to celebrate their food cultures and discuss how to bring their knowledge and vision of food production into modern times.

ITM 2015 was the second time that such a gathering was proposed. The Indigenous Partnership (TIP), Slow Food International, UN Agencies and other global supporters came together to create in the North East of India this event that had scaled up exponentially, with NESFAS as the cradle to nurture the event. The aim remained to showcase indigenous traditional knowledge, evolving skills and sustainable practices that safeguard natural resources and contribute to a resilient food system that promotes a more humane future for a diverse world. ITM 2015 became a platform for these food communities to interact and engage with scientists and policymakers as they reflect on the theme, The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions. This international event served as an occasion to celebrate the wonderful cultural and biological diversity of indigenous communities as expressed in their songs, dance, dress, folklores and food systems that have evolved through generations of close interaction with nature. The traditionally marginalised voices, such as youth, women knowledge holders, the physically challenged, and indigenous farmers, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, remote dwellers and fisherfolk, who would actively participated in the deliberations. The event was possible by the consistent efforts of the international alliance.

THE ORGANIZERS



THE SPONSORS



THE SUPPORTERS



ITM also becomes International Mei-Ramew (IMR 2015) -

A PARTNERSHIP FOR “The Future We Want”

While the first step was this global coming together, the foundations were laid by the successful alliance created between TIP, NESFAS and the Government of Meghalaya. The Meghalaya Government not only showed its support by matching the 50% international funding the organisers received for ITM 2015 but also contributed to the success of the event through the hard work of the various departments supporting NESFAS’ ground activities. The departments instrumental in turning into an event of collaboration include the Department of Arts and Culture, Directorate of Agriculture, Directorate of Horticulture, Botanical Survey of India, Department of Sericulture, Department of Tourism, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills. From the time of its inception NESFAS rallied the communities for an event of such a scale. Through various networks and activities NESFAS garnered strength among the communities and bolstered the connection the people had with their land. From among all the communities NESFAS worked with, 41 communities of Meghalaya and Nagaland came forward to take onus of the event and become co-hosts. To mark this initiative with respect the ITM 2015 was also christened International Mei-Ramew (IMR2015) which means mother earth in the local Khasi language. With this alliance between the Government as the capital and the grassroot peoples as the pillars of activities the road to ITM 2015 was a culmination of efforts of numerous groups and individuals, a plethora of activities that were done to lead up to it. Activities that tuned up the workforce for the big event, allowed interested parties to fit into their role and created an aspiration value among the denizens of Shillong and its surrounding towns and villages to become volunteering partners in welcoming the world of indigenous peoples to Meghalaya. This pre-planning included exchange programs with the nine visiting villages of host communities by delegates. Though all IMR Host communities were eager to host participants and convey traditional hospitality, 9 villages located at short distances from Shillong - between 40 minutes and 90 minutes from by car were selected as field trip host sites. In collaboration with the various departments of the government, the communities were prepared to host international delegates by ensuring presence of community toilets and ODF (Outdoor Defecation Free) status, solar lights and motor able roads. NESFAS also guided the communities in designing programs for the visitors so they can experience life in their communities and be witness to their wealth in biodiversity.

PRE ITM INITIATIVES

SELECTION OF EVENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

Following a tendering process that called upon top event management companies nationwide for executing ITM /IMR 2015 a Selection Committee comprising NESFAS representatives, government officials and a consultant selected the EMA (Event Management Agency). The Selection Committee included Dr.Carl Rangad, Rtd Director, Department of Agriculture; Ms. A. Tariang, Finance Accounts Officer, Department of Agriculture, Government of Meghalaya; Ms. Mary Kurkalang, Director, Khublei; Ms. Marak, Department of Arts & Culture, Government of Meghalaya; Ms. Wansalan Passah, Project Manager, NESFAS; Bibhudutta Sahu, Project Director NESFAS, Kaushal Upreti, Sonsultant, Ms. Anandi Soans, South Asia Director, Slow Food International (Committee Chairperson). The Presentations were made by the following Event Management agencies, in response to the criteria outlined in the RFP-Encompass (<http://www.encompass.in/>), Wizcraft - (<http://www.wizcraftworld.com/>),Shobiz (<http://www.shobizexperience.com/>), Fountainhead (<http://fhmktg.com/>), Showtime (who could not join due to unavailability of dates suiting the selection process. The 3-days (March 25th -27th 2015) of the process started by submission of all technical and financial bids.

Community preparation.
PC: NESFAS



PBR Training at NESFAS Headquarters.
PC: Donbok Majaw

All event management agencies (EMAs) made their creative and technical presentations to the selection committee and NESFAS staff. Each presentation was followed by detailed Q & A sessions to ascertain the capabilities of each EMA, cost, previous experience, ability to adjust for flexibility, sensitivity to indigenous issues, creative and technical strengths. The Technical bids were opened and reviewed and finally three EMAs were shortlisted based on the understanding of the ethos of the event, creativity and technical competence. All had similar comprehension on the philosophy of the event and technical strength. Financial bids of the 3 shortlisted EMAs were unsealed and evaluated by the selection team. As all financial bids were beyond the available financial budget, the 3 shortlisted EMAs were requested to revise their financials and correspondingly scale down presentations. The revised financial bids along with the amended creative presentations were reviewed again by the selection committee and was based primarily on the budget and creativity. FountainHead’s budget was lowest, followed by Shobiz and then Wizcraft. Considering that FountainHead put forward the most competitive financials for what was required for the event, and their technical and creative design was strong, it was unanimously decided by the selection committee that FountainHead was the best EMA for Indigenous Terra Madre 2015.

DOCUMENTATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MEGHALAYA

As NESFAS prepared for this world gathering, it was desirous that original, innovative and engaging photo documentation from individuals, journalists, photographers, and production companies on the unique cultural heritage aspects of Meghalaya’s local food and livelihood systems were commissioned. Together with the Arts and Culture Department of the State Government, NESFAS facilitated the production of four films and two Publications that showcase the cultural heritage of Meghalaya. The selection of film makers was done through a tendering process and also an open invite that allowed diverse talents to participate in the compilation of a Coffee Table Book and Photo Essay Booklet that focused on various cultural aspects of Meghalaya. The books included cultural stories that are unique and rare, and are driven by strong characters, compelling voices and narratives, insights into events and issues that are local but resonate globally. They also highlighted traditional practices connected with the youth, future and the world at large; practices that needed larger understanding and were in danger of extinction. The tendering process included a technical bid and Financial bid that was later moderated by all partners during selection.

ITM 2015 BOOKS PUBLISHED

- Coffee Table Book titled " **Shifting through the Cloud** " (200 numbers)
- Photo Essays Book titled " **Meghalaya** " (550 Copies)

ITM 2015 INITIATED FILMS

- Between Forest and a song- *Red Dur Productions, Wanphrang Diengdoh*
- Ka shad lukhmi- *Green Hills, Natalie Diengdoh*
- Material Culture- *Green Hills, Natalie Diengdoh*
- Ka shad Shoh kba- *Green Hills, Natalie Diengdoh*
- Hooked- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- When tongues go silent- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Songs and secrets of Sadolpara- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Sounds from the truck country- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Kings have their resorts, people have their songs- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Brief life of insects- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Love songs of Sotja and Ringjeng- *Tarun Bhartiya*
- Escaping Museum- *Tarun Bhartiya*



STATE LEVEL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEI-RAMEW MEET

As part of his address to the people of the state of Meghalaya on the occasion of the Independence Day 2015, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Dr Mukul Sangma, promoted the Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) 2015 through his speech. Post that with strong government involvement the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, chaired the State Level Steering Committee of the IMR/ITM 2015. NESFAS and Government departments met and shared the enthusiastic steps being taken towards the success of the event on the 2nd of September 2015 to review the progress. This was one among the series of State meetings that had been organized for state review. Over the earlier months, NESFAS and the co-hosting villages had received very good support from the local district administration and most of the BDOs and concerned line departments. The Chief Minister informed the members that this was a time for all energies to shape the arrival of delegates from international indigenous communities and many more national nominees to celebrate this confluence of culture and science, over celebrations of traditional food and flavours from across the world. Mr. Phrang Roy, Chairman, NESFAS, emphasized the importance of according suitable hospitality to the delegates but also ensure inclusion of the people of Meghalaya in the ITM 2015. He informed the forum that NESFAS has made efforts to create a buzz by involving the North East Students groups in NEHU, MLCU and St. Edmunds at the ITM 2015 through the various NESFAS activities. Mr. Sampat Kumar (I.A.S), Resident Commissioner informed the forum that NESFAS has been preparing for the ITM 2015 with a few curtain raisers with a tie-up with radio channels, theme song collaboration, involvement of the Shillong Chamber Choir and lecture series that allow young minds to interact with world-renowned scholars on agroecology, nutrition, and other food-related issues. Ms. Phidarilin Uriah, Associate, NESFAS made a presentation on the NESFAS journey to the IMR/ITM 2015 that was widely appreciated by all the members.

She established the activation of local voices in preparation for a global audience as the villagers are not just getting their villages ready but also sharing plans for the visitors' feasts. The program of the IMR/ITM was shared where discussions, tasting sessions and participation of international organizations. This would be implemented by NESFAS prior to the event. The synergies with the Tourism department was discussed wherein they will allot a kiosk at the Guwahati airport and also support with government hoardings to promote the International Mei-Ramew / Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 in the minds of visitors, residents of Shillong and the 41 host villages to make them ready for the global audience. Mr. Pankaj Jain, Principal Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, along with the Deputy Commissioners would identify various stretches of land for waste management drives and beautification projects incorporating seasonal flowers that would accentuate the approaches to venues at NEHU in time for the arrival of international and national delegates. These became a part of the "Clean and Green Shillong" campaign as the prep for ITM 2015.

CATERING FOR DELEGATES AND VOLUNTEERS

With Food playing a central role in the ITM 2015 narrative, the organisers wished to ensure that food served to the delegates would be of top quality. A rigorous process via tendering was conducted to select groups that would cater to food requirements for the delegates as well as the hundreds of volunteers that made ITM 2015 possible. It was seen to that apart from comfort food for delegates who would be far away from home, the caterers also presented a menu that would encompass Indian food with a special focus on dishes from the states of North East India. The latter also aimed to make the local indigenous delegates comfortable. NESFAS floated an Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed Catering Companies, aspiring but proven young catering entrepreneurs and locally well known caterers for weddings etc., to submit proposals for meeting the catering requirements of the International Mei-Ramew 2015. The broad scope of catering comprised providing adequate food (lunch and dinner, including snacks) at the venue of International Mei-Ramew (NEHU Campus, Shillong) between 600 – 800 plates per meal/daily for approximately 3 days. 50% of the food will be based on local indigenous food and the remaining 50% will be gourmet Indian and continental food. Criteria for application included a minimum of one-year experience in catering, execution of at least three events with a minimum billing of at least 2 lakhs, should have catered for more than 400-500 people, should provide adequate evidence meeting hygiene and quality standards, should have expertise in providing gourmet Indian and continental cuisine., should have experience in serving local tribal cuisine, deemed competent to take part in the EOI process as per the legal requirements of the district administration or any other competent authority. This was followed by final tender process. Proposals for local tribal cuisines were separate from the proposal for Indian and continental cuisines. However, all interested parties were allowed to submit proposals for either of the cuisines or for both.



For the field visit day, the 6th November 2015, the communities prepared food for the delegates themselves following close review of NESFAS and consultants and the NESFAS Cooks' Alliance. The Cooks' Alliance from ten villages displayed an array of delicious traditional foods at the NESFAS office. The spread consisted of dishes made with wild edibles, snacks, salads, chutneys, broths and meats as samplings of what the communities will be serving to the visiting delegates. The dishes on display included 'pu tyndong' – rice snack cooked in hollow bamboo barrel, 'pu thap' – boiled rice cake, 'doh shalynnai' – fried paddy fish and 'dohthlie' – fish cooked with bamboo shoot water among others. This display was the presentation of their menus to the Food & Flavor Development Department of NESFAS in hopes to take away reviews on the foods prepared by them so as to be able to improve upon them. Kong Theina Shabong and Aisi Kharnaier from Pyrda expressed their excitement and hopes that the visitors will enjoy their food. "I hope they like our food. We are proud to have the opportunity to host people from all over the world. We will do our best and cook with our hearts. I wish to welcome the delegates and let them know that we are excited to have them. We really hope that their visit is memorable and that they feel like visiting us again," said Kong Theina. Kong Plantina from Khweng spoke about how she was happy to have had the opportunity to present their food prior to the event. "I look forward to suggestions on how to improve my dishes because I want our guests to go back happy," she said. An owner of a Mei-Ramew Cafe, Kong Plantina served traditional foods from Ri-Bhoi. Her dishes are unique as she mostly works with wild plants foraged from forests surrounding her villages.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS & CAPACITY BUILDING

Local volunteers included 100 volunteers from Mawphlang, 163 from Shillong who were joined by others from Slow Food. The volunteers tirelessly worked under various heads including management of delegates, food, promotion of the event, communications, waste management, traffic control, among others. The volunteers comprised young professionals and students. The Schools and colleges of Shillong played an important role in making this happen especially Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU), St. Edmunds College/ St. Edmunds School, Laitumkhrah, St. Mary's College/ St. Mary's School, Laitumkhrah, Synod College/ Synod School, Jaiaw and Womens College, Laitumkhrah



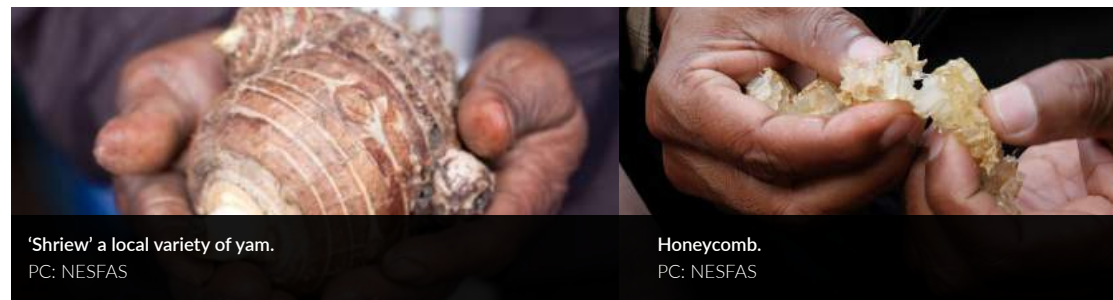
SCHOOL GARDENS PLANNING & PREP

"School Garden are places where children learn about farming and the food they eat and form a bond with the land," said Mr. Shaiphar Dohlieng, principal of the local school and headman of Dewlieh, East Khasi Hills. NESFAS has been working with its communities in building these places for learning for the school children there. With the Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 around the corner, and for the 10 villages hosting a place to be showcased, the children and the adults were busy sprucing up their school gardens in preparation. An orientation programme was organized for Teachers of Schools from the visiting villages of Indigenous terra Madre 2015 on 11th September 2015 at Bethany Society hall. Agendas discussed included School Gardens, Seasonal Calendars and Agrobiodiversity Walks in these villages. The group took up issues that School Gardens face and the way forward by joining hands to solve these together. The group will work on improving the existing school gardens in each of the villages and facilitate Biodiversity Walks with Local Knowledge holders and students and youth in an attempt to foster intergenerational knowledge transfer. Seasonal calendars were also planned which would depict explanations of what the vegetables are and their availability in different seasons. This will take complete involvement of the school children of these villages and the teachers. Infact the teachers present at the programme decided to take full responsibility of these activities and engage not just with the students of their respective schools but also with interested community members. The ten villages include Pyrda, Diewlieh, Nongtraw, Laitsopliah, Nongwah and Mawhiang from the East Khasi Hills District; Khweng from the Ri-Bhoi District; Moosakhia and Mulieh from West Jaintia Hills; and Dombah from West Khasi Hills.

OPEN DEFECATION FREE CAMPAIGN

NESFAS focused on the Open Defecation Free campaign (ODF) in collaboration with the District Water and Sanitation (DWSM) East Khasi Hills district, Meghalaya, and the 41 host communities so as to improve the general quality of life in the villages by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation, a shared dream of NESFAS and the Government of Meghalaya. The campaign was conducted at the state level with the initiation at the Shillong Gurudwara on the 12th of May 2015. This was then taken up at district levels to establish the processes and practices. The sessions were facilitated together with Mark West Kharkongor, District Coordinator, Water and Sanitation Mission. This led to the declaration of a number of villages associated with NESFAS as Open Defecation Free and all ready to receive guests to stay in comfort and privacy.





COLLECTION OF ARK OF TASTE

Another area of collaboration between NESFAS and the departments of Agriculture department and Horticulture, and the Botanical Survey of India was in the collection of nominations and documentation of forest and agri products for the Ark of Taste, an international catalogue of food plants and animals and recipes and methods of preparation that are at risk of disappearing. More than hundred products were documented and shared with Slow Food. These also became a driver of the displays at the Biodiveristy Fair as part of the Final Day Mawphlang Food Festival.

ITM KITCHEN TRAILS

On 4th October, 2015 the NESFAS Cooks' Alliance of Chefs Osbert Rynjah (Little Chef), Daniel Syngkon (The Jade Room) & Artet Kharsati (Alelang) came together to do trails an share notes for the ITM Kitchen. Joining them enthusiastically during this journey was Chef Leony Rynjah from NESFAS Food & Flavours team. The kitchen at Little Chef was transformed into a gastronomic laboratory of sorts, with local ingredients being given a fresh twist by these young chefs who are keen to rebrand Khasi cuisine in the eyes of locals and visitors alike for the event. Preparations for this experimental tasting session began early in the morning with the chefs brainstorming on the menu, individual components, and presentation, among other aspects. Then came the actual cooking where the process was as detailed as it was experimental; since many of the recipes were being literally invented for the first time, many changes & suggestions were only to be expected. Finally, by late afternoon, the dishes were ready to be presented to the eagerly awaiting 'tasters'. The dishes were well-appreciated by all, especially for their stylised plating and contemporary tweaks that still resonated with traditional flavours. While the Chefs were clear that they do not want to be individually credited for the creation of these exclusive dishes, they are united in their agenda of making Khasi cuisine at the event as aesthetically pleasing to the eye as any world cuisine, an aspect which they feel is lacking in the current Shillong restaurant scene. As the popular saying goes – We eat with our eyes first.

ERI & KHNENG

Through collaborative works with the department of Sericulture, Germany based organisation Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur Internationale (GIZ), and Special Purpose Vehicle Society, Meghalaya, NESFAS was able to conduct various activities to improve livelihoods of communities that are involved with eri (ryndiah) weaving and the various aspects related to the craft and Khneng embroidery which until the intervention from NESFAS was a dying traditional handicraft unique to Meghalaya. Trainings were conducted for the artisans and interested individuals to build their capacities on the various aspects of the traditional handloom.

Khneng embroidery.
PC: Andre J Fanthome

RAISING THE VOLUME FOR “ LOCAL VOICE GLOBAL AUDIENCES ”

A resonating communications was the need of the hour as the hype of the international event built up. The objective was not just to reach out globally but to build a parallel local line of communication that prepared the local and then national audiences and gave the event its due recognition. The media and outreach plan generated awareness among the people of host city of Shillong and the 41 host villages of Meghalaya and Nagaland about ITM 2015 and 600 delegates from 62 countries thus switching not just the written script but also a visual language from foods, landscapes and peoples...along with their preparedness. Thus creative content, press releases and advertising agents were developed that captured the minds of the media, partners, indigenous communities and mainstream audiences. Parallel activation reached out to the national and local journalists, potential delegates, partners with key messages of the ITM and its agendas.



To do this a core team for Communications was developed comprising communications professionals from around India and Shillong, who developed the communications plan, public relations, events and advertisements. This was supported by interns and volunteers closer to the event. The DIPR (Department of Information and Public Relations - Government of Meghalaya) offered support in coordinating with local media companies. International and national Communication experts and volunteers joined the team to ensure the handling of press, press release updates and data sharing. The Public Relations & Outreach plan included a series of events and collaterals that prepared and maintained the call to action. The Pre ITM Events included the NESFAS Lecture Series of International Experts at Local Institutions, ITM Theme Song Release, Chief Ministers Dinner at Meghalaya House Delhi, Exhibition on Meghalaya in Delhi, Clean & green Shillong Meetings with DC, Government, Schools & Colleges, Clean & green Shillong Survey, Press Conference in Shillong, Local Communication platforms, ITM Information Kiosk at MUDA Mall; Posters at Cafes, Schools, Colleges; Hoardings at 18 Locations in Shillong and Guwahati; Volunteer training Programs at Schools and Colleges; ITM on Campus Lectures, Exhibition; Advertisements in all Local news Papers (English, Khasi, Garo; Promotional videos online and in local TV channels; stalls at local event like NEAT Fest; MIES System of the government for playing Theme Songs and announcements of ITM; Interviews and Playing of theme song on All India Radio – Shillong & Red FM; Advertisements in local TV Channels & Cable Network; Interview of Board of ITM & Supporters on National TV National Communication Platforms; Media Partnership with Woodpecker Film Festival; Visibility at the NEN Millet festival; Social Media Activation on FB, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram; Flash mobs by volunteers promoting “eat local, grow global”. A Rapporteurs training course was organised for young students who would be the day-to-day capturers of the voices at ITM. This was done in partnership with ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development). The data they would collect became a daily news letter for the delegates in 5 international languages of the ITM 2015 and also in local regional languages.



NESFAS LECTURE SERIES

As a pre-event initiative, NESFAS organized a number of lecture series on topics pertinent to ITM 2015 with educational institutes, Government departments and host communities with experts like Harriet V Kuhnlein, Professor Emerita of Human Nutrition, Founding Director, Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) McGill University (Montréal, QC) and Dr Francisco Rosado May Jr., on subjects of Nutrition and Agroecology and many others. The idea was to also tie the intent of local awareness to the scientific aspects of food, nutrition and farming besides its fanfare.



TASTES OF MEI-RAMEW

A series of events marked this build up. One among them was on the 18th of August 2015 NESFAS along with cooks and chefs from around Shillong and villages of Meghalaya, with the support of the Directorate of Tourism, Meghalaya, got together to look at how cuisine and hospitality can be improved with a central theme of "help local producers help our economy". The program included the cooking and presentation of various dishes by community members and urban chefs and tastings and review of the dishes. Mr. Phrang Roy, Chairman NESFAS addressed the gathering on 'The cuisine & hospitality of a destination – an important aspect in the quality of the holiday experience'. He expressed gratitude to the Dept. Of Tourism for extending their support to the program. The aspect of Food Plating with main focus on the idea that our sense of sight and smell play a big role in how we experience the food we eat and how customers feel when food is presented was shared by Mr Daniel Syngkon from the Jade Room, Shillong. He also took up matters of presentation and revolved around Hygiene. Resource person, Mr Artet Khasrsati, spoke to the group about hospitality and food innovation. To add to his contribution he presented local breads like pu khlein, putharo and pu syep with modern twists.

The participating communities from six villages including Khweng, Pyrda, Sohrarim and Ladmawphlang displayed various dishes revolved around local and wild ingredients while chefs from The Jade Room, Pine Wood Hotel, Halaiing, among others, showcased fusion food that incorporated local dishes with a modern twist. Although the community cooks voiced their reservations about adopting modern dishes they spoke of the possibility of fusing certain elements in the future. "The people from the villages have a very conservative taste, however, with changing time, tastes will change and we will have to cater to them," said Plantina Mujai, owner and cook of Mei-Ramew Cafe, Khweng, Ri Bhoi District. Alternately, the urban chefs took note that the community cooks used a wide variety of indigenous ingredients that have the potential to be incorporated into their menus.



CLEAN AND GREEN CAMPAIGN

With the aim of making Shillong Clean and Green with the advent of the ITM2015 and the arrival of delegates from all over the world, representatives from NESFAS along with representatives from various government departments and to discuss and plan for various cleanliness issues not just within the city of Shillong but also areas of concern like the highway leading to the capital city, solar lighting for villages, disposal of waste, among others. In one of the steps to fulfill the Hon'be Chief Minister, Dr. Mukul Sangma's and NESFAS' Joint vision for a cleaner and greener Meghalaya, NESFAS with the Khrawsing Eco Club and the Block Development Officer of Mawngap carried out clean up drives with the communities. "Each one will have their own roles and responsibilities and they should perform efficiently," said Mr. N.K. Lyngdoh of the Hima Mawphlang at a meeting organised with NESFAS to discuss roles and agendas prior to Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 at Mawphlang on 11th September. He stressed on the community's need to take ownership of the festival as it is a matter of representing not only their community but the state of Meghalaya as a whole. Speaking on the preparation done so far, Mr. N.K. Lyngdoh commended the various Government Departments of Meghalaya who are lending their full support to the event. Dr Carl Rangad, ITM 2015 Expediter, NESFAS, reminded the gathering that the biggest contribution to this event is from the Indigenous People because they are the custodians of mother earth and they are the ones who are still preserving it. He also spoke about how Carlo Petrini, founder of Slow Food, in, suggested that the Indigenous People of Meghalaya should host ITM 2015 after he visited the Sacred Grove of Mawphlang in 2010. Dr Rangad also took the opportunity to announce that on the 7th November 2015, the final day of the event, a Shillong declaration or resolutions by the Indigenous People will be drafted which is to be adopted by the United Nations. Agendas that were taken up in the meeting included home stays, volunteers, Mei-Ramew committees (local "Mother-Earth committee for ITM 2015), waste management, tie up with IHM for training of some of the youth of Mawphlang, cultural representation, and security during the event, among others.

PC: Raisa Daimary

FLASH MOBS

Stepping away from the commonly used means of promotion of events, NESFAS took the effort to inform people of Shillong not just through bill boards, posters, outdoor advertisement vehicles, news articles but also through kiosks at strategic points run by volunteers and flash mobs at various areas in Shillong. With the theme song becoming the clarion call of the event it became the backdrop of this Flashmob trail across 3 locations.



ITM Theme song release.
PC: Daryl Khyriem

ITM THEME SONG

To generate the vibe and to cue in the crowds locally and globally a theme song was envisioned keeping in mind the music scene in Shillong and its role of a media nucleus to the music loving peoples of Meghalaya. Titled “Ko Mei-Ramew,” meaning call to mother earth, the theme song is truly a fusion of traditional music, instruments and lyrics that resonate every tribe of Meghalaya. The song brought well-known artists of Meghalaya like Kit Shangpliang, Key Lyrics and Melody; Mr. Phyrnai Marbaniang, Lyrics Verification and Additional Melody; Mr. Tegnad Sangma, Translation for Garo verse; Ms. Amabel Susngi, Translation for verse in Pnar; Mr. Maxter Warjri, Melody Structuring; Mr. Rangdap Kharshiing, rhythm and overall structuring. The organizing team, shared a vision of a song that would speak for the Indigenous Peoples gathered for the event. Centered on the theme of ITM 2015, “The future we want, Indigenous perspectives and actions,” the song sings of mother earth or “Mei -Ramew” and the connection that the Indigenous peoples have with Her. The song speaks of land, agriculture, harvest, food, traditions and celebrations. Its key chorus establishes these sentiments as...“Ko Mei-Ramew,” as the song has been named, is the cumulative efforts of well known lyricists, musicians and singers of Meghalaya. The rhythms, tunes and traditional shouts in the song are all borrowed from not just the tribes of Meghalaya but also the North Eastern region of India and are stitched together beautifully and reflect the collaboration.

*“O Mother Earth, Let the hills and rivers live eternally in our land,
O Mother Earth, Let the rice and millet spread abundantly in my cultivated land,
O Mother Earth, The future that we want,
One mind, one hope, one life”*

Lyrically, the song is written and sung in Khasi, Garo and Pnar languages with a spray of English. The words, the rhythm and the melody reflects the indigenous culture, stressing on the food, land and environment keeping in mind that it starts and ends on celebratory notes.

THE FLAVOURS OF MEI – RAMEW, Shillong

As the countdown to the ITM 2015 went into no of days mode Mr.Phrang Roy, Chairman-NESFAS and the Chief Secretary of the Government of Meghalaya, Mr. P.B.O. Wajri hosted an evening that brought together all stakeholders from the Government and communities to highlight two essential elements of the ITM 2015– Food and Music. The Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr. Mukal Sangma was the Chief Guest for the evening that saw the release of the ITM 2015 Theme Song. Post the release of the song NESFAS Cooks Alliance presented the first tasting of the ITM 2015 indigenous menus to the CM. Alongside, the members of the press were also present to witness first-hand the dishes developed by the rural and urban cooks. The Cooks Alliance had Chef Basumatri of Nagaland and Border Area Development Officer stationed at Tura- Ms Gunme Marak, from Garo Hills adding value to the Meghalaya buffet table which accentuated the food display from the various ITM 2015 host communities.Under the invitation “Flavours of Mei- Ramew, an Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 Pre-event”the evening at the Hotel Pinewood on 13th October 2015, resonated with flavours of indigenous meeting the contemporary in music of the theme song, the taste of the foods and the spirit of the people.

The flavours of Mei-Ramew.
PC: Daryl Khyriem

Carlo Petrini, Slow Food founder and
Dr. Mukul Sangma, Chief Minister of
Meghalaya

The theme song creators who had spent almost 70 hours in the studio trying to choreograph what would be a fitting tribute to the spirit of the indigenous food Movement and the peoples behind it.Speaking at the event, Dr Sangma said, “I am enthused and excited at the upcoming ITM event and also happy that he said ‘Yes’ to the proposal to hold this mega international event in Meghalaya. makes economic sense to create a platform for people to pursue a sustainable livelihood even while we all connect to our roots by rediscovering our indigenous foods and flavours,” adding that the people of this region should leverage upon the ingredients that go into preparing traditional cuisines and turn it into a profitable economic activity.NESFAS, Chairman Phrang Roy while speaking at the function said that the nearly two years of preparation for the ITM has taught him and the team that collaboration is the rule of the universe and working together and listening to the voices of villagers is the key to sustainability. “There is a connectedness to land, nature and culture that we need to understand and respect,” Later, the chefs introduced their dishes to the audience and invited them to taste the assorted cuisines from all the nooks and corners of Meghalaya.



Meghalaya Exhibition At the Earth Kitchen
PC: Andre fanthome

Chef Majit Gill ,ITC Hotels
PC: Pallavi Menon

‘IING SHET JA’ The Earth Kitchen in the Capital, Delhi

On31stOctober,2015,ChiefMinisterofMeghalaya,DrMukulMSangmahostedapreIndigenousTerraMadre 2015 evening, ‘Iing Shet Ja’, the Earth Kitchen,at Meghalaya House, Delhi, ,unveiling for the guests what ITM 2015 would be with a fusion of flavours and dialogues. The curtain raiser event was also attended by Union MinisterofState for Home, Kiran Rijiju, Minister, Social Welfare,AH & Vety, Meghalaya, Deborah Marak, Chief Secretary, Meghalaya, PBO Warjri, Ambassadors of Italy, Slovak Republic and Bangladesh and senior officers from different departments from the central and state government.Dr Mukul M Sangma, shared how this initiative was in sync with his vision of developing ‘Destination Meghalaya’ and gave an opportunity to the state and the North East in general to connect with the rest of the country and the world. He also added that the intention is to encourage people to remain connected with their way of life which is farming and the international conference at Meghalaya would help people change their perception of farming activities and reverse the problem of urban migration. He also shared the ITM theme song, which was the interpretation of the social grandeur that ITM deserves as a coming together of the cultural, social and artistic. It is a rendition that has moved the locals of the host city, Shillong and its reflections were seen in the capital. Carlo Petrini, the Founder of the Slow Food movement was the Guest of Honour who shared his concerns for the farm to fork tradition that is being diluted and small scale farmers and producers need to be protected in this age of global modernization. He added that the economy indigenous communities are based on two pillars local economy and community economy and this type of economy brings happiness because people learn to live in harmony with nature. Chef Manjit Gill, Corporate Chef, ITC Group of Hotels who have been major collaborators for the Food and Flavour segment of ITM shared the willingness of his Group in supporting this endeavor as it is a conscioustakingforwardofthetimelessprinciplesofvediccuisine-everything‘Good,CleanandFair’.TheChief Ministeralso unveiled the Exhibition Wall, ‘From the Eyes of Mother Earth’ by eminent photographer Andre J Fanthome.The exhibition is a result of a fortnight spent by Mr Fanthome in the villages of Meghalaya with the villagers who are the co-hosts to the event. The beautiful landscape and its people inspired the words of the exhibition title. Later, Chef Daniel Syngkon from Meghalaya, representing theITMCooks’ Allianceintroduced the menu of the evening and welcomed the guests to indulge in the ‘slow life’ on offer on dinner. The menu was a true celebration of the indigenous flavours with a twist. The evening also had the Pynter Orchestra from Khasi Hills adding glamour to the evening with their soulful rendition of popular Khasi, Garo and Jaintia songs.



Indigenous Perspectives and Actions



Part 3 : ITM 2015 : A PARTNERSHIP FOR “The Future We Want”

DAY ONE 3 NOVEMBER 2015

INAUGURATION VENUE: Convocation Hall,
NEHU (North Eastern Hill University)

The inauguration was a cultural fanfare with keynote
speeches and cultural performances.

DAY TWO 4 NOVEMBER 2015

PLENARY SESSION 1

ADVANCING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS FOR THE
FUTURE WE WANT

CHAIR: Dr. Sanjay Kabir Bavikatte, Incoming Executive Director
of The Christensen Fund, USA

KEYNOTE: Dr. Daphne Miller, Physician, Associate Clinical
Professor at the University of California, San Francisco, The
Prevention Institute, USA

PANELISTS

Ms. Esther Wanjiku Mwangi, Porini Foundation, Gikuyu, Kenya
Chef Sean Sherman, The Sioux Chef, Oglala Lakota, USA
Ms. Helianti Hilman Najib, Founder and CEO of JAVARA,
Indonesia

THEMATIC SESSION 1

YOUTH & THE MARGINALIZATION OF GOOD,
CLEAN & FAIR FOOD SYSTEMS

CHAIR: Mr. Mattia Prayer Galletti, Lead Technical Specialist at
International Fund for Agricultural Development, Italy

KEYNOTE: Dr. Carlo Petrini, Founder of Slow Food
International, Italy

PANELISTS

Ms. Nicole Yanes, Programs Assistant/Youth Outreach for
International Indian Treaty Council, Opatá Nation of Sonora,
USA
Ms. Dali Nolasco Cruz, Tlaola Nahua, Mexico
Mr. Jorge Carlos Gonzales Llanquileo, Mapuche, Chile
Ms. Phidarin Uriah, NESFAS Associate, Khasi, Northeast India

FROM FIELD TO FORK: THE STORIES OF CHEFS,
COMMUNITIES & WRITERS

CHAIR & KEYNOTE: Chef Manjit Gill, Corporate Chef for ITC
Hotels, India

PANELISTS

Dr. Philip Stark, Professor of Statistics, University of California,
Berkeley, USA
Mr. Ashish Chopra, Food Historian, India
Mr. Rahul Antao, ITM Food and Flavours
Coordinator, NESFAS, Northeast India
Mr. Joel Gonçalves de Oliveira, Xakriabas, Brazil
Ms. Margaret Mpati, Kalanga, Botswana
Ms. Kaylena Bray, Native Foodways Program Coordinator at the
Cultural Conservancy, Seneca Nation, USA

BUILDING A NETWORK OF LOCAL CLIMATE SMART
CROPS & CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

CHAIR & KEYNOTE: Dr. Stefano Padulosi, Theme Leader,
Marketing Diversity at Bioversity International, Italy

PANELISTS

Ms. Kaichou Titiana, Fishing Community, New Caledonia
Dr. Pat Roy Mooney, Executive Director of ETC, Canada
Dr. Israel Oliver King, Principle Scientist (Biodiversity) at MS
Swaminathan Foundation, India
Mr. Gilani Daniel Mnisi, Tsonga, South Africa

Dr. Wolde Tadesse, Research Associate at the African Studies
Centre, Oxford University, Gamo, Ethiopia, UK
Mr. Watu Ferdinandus, Indonesia

PROMOTING LOCAL INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES &
LIVELIHOODS FOR WELLBEING

CHAIR: Dr. Tirso Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Indigenous
Studies at The University of British Columbia, Aymara, Canada

KEYNOTE

Mr. Vijay Kumar, (IAS) Special Chief Secretary to Government of
Andhra Pradesh – Agriculture Department, India

PANELISTS

Ms. Nivedita Banerji, Founder and Secretary of Samaj Pragati Sahayog,
India
Mr. Lamen Gonnay, Kalinga, Philippines
Ms. María Teresa Zapeta Mendoza, Coordinator of the
International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), Maya, Guatemala
Ms. Esma Khalilova, Chairperson of Umyut Cooperative, Crimea Tatar,
Ukraine
Mr. Mohamed Hilal Abd Elrahman Elabd, Slow Food Member,
Egypt
Mr. Tony Skrelunas, Native America Program Director at Grand
Canyon Trust, Diné, USA

TASTE WORKSHOPS: INSECTS

PLENARY SESSION 2

UNDERSTANDING WELLBEING & THE FUTURE WE
WANT

CHAIR: Mr. Phrang Roy, Coordinator of the Indigenous
Partnership, Khasi, Northeast India

PRESENTATION OF STUDY

Ms. Elizabeth Hacker, Indigenous Partnership, Researcher

PANELISTS

Mrs. Byllaimon Swer, Farmer, Khasi, Northeast India
Dr. Manish Jain, Coordinator and Co-Founder of Shikshantar and
Swaraj University, Rajasthan, India
Mr. Jasbir Singh, Sikh Community Representative, Northeast India

AROUND THE LOOM: ERI SILK WEAVING (display)

THEMATIC SESSION 2

PEACE AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF
WELLBEING

CHAIR: Dr. Evaleen Jones, Medical Director at Maitri Medical
Center, Clinical Associate Professor, Stanford University, USA

PANELISTS

Mr. Noel Butler, Principal Educator at Nuragunya, Budawang Yuin, Australia
Ms. Gladis Dina Rurush Jorge, Ecash, Peru
Mr. Pius Rane, Associate at NESFAS, Khasi, Northeast India
Ms. Saoudata Walet Aboubacrine, Programme Coordinator of
TIN HINAN - The Association for the Empowerment of Nomadic
Women, Touareg, Burkina Faso

PROMOTING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES' & COMMUNITY CONSERVED TERRITORIES &
AREAS (ICCAs)

CHAIR: Mr Toki Blah, President of ICARE, Jaintia, Northeast India

KEYNOTE: Dr. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Global Coordinator of
the ICCA Consortium, Switzerland

PANELISTS

Dr. David Strelneck, Senior Advisor, Rural Innovations, Farming and
Ecosystems at the Ashoka Foundation, USA
Mr. H.H. Morhmen, Environmentalist, Jaintia, Northeast India
Ms. Dali Nolasco Cruz, Tlaola Nahua, Mexico
Ms. Maria Bautista Leon, Maya Tzeltal, Mexico

Ms. Elphia Daphney Khoza, Tsonga, South Africa

THE SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GARDENS
PROGRAMME

CHAIR: Mr. Roba Bulga, Slow Food Coordinator, Karrayyu-Oromo,
Ethiopia

PANELISTS

Mr. Ramasamy Selvam, India
Mr. Janakpreet Singh, Associate of NESFAS, Northeast India
Mr. Kubanych Tagaev, Kirgiz, Kyrgyzstan
Mr. Augustin Rosendo Uriana, Wayuu, Colombia
Mr. Gilani Daniel Mnisi, Tsonga Slow Food, Tsonga, Botswana
Ms. Aziza Arzanova, SFYN, Kyrgyzstan

POLLINATORS & BEE ENTHUSIASTS GET
TOGETHER

CHAIR: Dr. Vanda Altarelli, Chairperson of SONIA, Italy

KEYNOTE: Dr. Robert Leo, Deputy Technical Director, Keystone
Foundation, India

PANELISTS

Mr. Leonardo Durán Olguín, Coordinator of the Puebla Sierra Norte
Native Bees Honey Slow Food Presidium, Náhuat, Mexico
Mr. Eudes Lopes Batista, Sateré-Mawé, Brazil
Mr. Hassan Guyo Roba, Borana Oromo, Kenya

TASTE WORKSHOPS: WILD EDIBLES

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE PRIVATE
SECTOR & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES THROUGH
RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

CHAIR: Mrs. Rebecca V. Suchiang, Principal Secretary to the
Government of Meghalaya, Tourism, Khasi, Northeast India

PRESENTATION BY

Mr. Gautam Anand, Executive Vice President, ITC Hotels, Founding
Vice President of the Cuisine India Society, “Responsible Luxury”
ITC, India

COMMENTS BY

Dr. Dhrupad Choudhury, Programme Manager – Adaptation to
Change, ICIMOD, Nepal
Mr. Kazunao Sato, Deloitte Tohmatsu Consulting, UN Global
Compact Leader, UN and Business Development, Japan

DAY THREE 5 NOVEMBER 2015

NUTRITIONAL SECURITY & LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS:
LEARNING FROM MATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES

CHAIR: Dr. Peggy R. Sanday, Professor Emerita, Anthropology,
University of Pennsylvania, USA

REPORT PRESENTERS

Dr. Harriet Kuhnlein, Professor Emerita, McGill University, Canada
Ms. Rachele Ellena, Research Fellow, Indigenous Partnership, Italy
Dr. Treena Delormier, Assistant Professor, Native Hawaiian and
Indigenous Health, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Mohawk, USA
Dr. Solot Sirisai, Institute of Language and Culture for Rural
Development, Mahidol University, Karen, Thailand

COMMENT

Dr. Juliane Friedrich, Senior Technical Specialist on Nutrition,
International Fund for Agricultural Development, Italy

THEMATIC SESSION 3

STORYTELLING – A UNIQUE DOCUMENTATION OF
ORAL HISTORY & KNOWLEDGE

CHAIR: Dr. Desmond Kharmawphlang, Head of the Department of
Cultural and Creative Studies, NEHU, Khasi, Northeast India

PANELISTS

Ms. Rita Banerji, Filmmaker, Green Hub, Dusty Foot Productions, India
Mr. Edgar Hinge, Master Sand Drawer, Vanuatu
Mr. Tony Skrelunas, Native America Program Director at Grand Canyon Trust, Diné, USA
Mr. Bruce Pascoe, Yuin, Australia
Mr. Kegitar Lyngkhoi, Associate of NESFAS, Khasi, Northeast India

ARE TODAY'S MATRIARCHAL COMMUNITIES

SOCIETIES OF PEACE?

CHAIR: Dr. Treena Delormier, Assistant Professor, Native Hawaiian

KEYNOTE: Dr. Peggy R. Sanday, Professor Emerita, Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, USA

PANELISTS

Dr. Solot Sirisai, Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University, Karen, Thailand
Mr. Augustin Rosendo Uriana, Wayuu, Colombia
Dr. Aurelius Kyrham Nongkynrih, NEHU, Khasi, Northeast India
Ms. Maria Bautista Leon, Maya Tzeltal, Mexico
Ms. Saoudata Walet Aboubacrine, Programme Coordinator of TIN HINAN - The Association for the Empowerment of Nomadic Women, Touareg, Burkina Faso

THE PASTORALISTS & THEIR CHALLENGES

CHAIR: Ms. Munkhbolor Gungaa, Indigenous Pastoralist, Mongolia

KEYNOTE: Sami Parliament Representative

PANELISTS

Ms. Amina Duba, Pastoralist Representative, Kenya
Mr. Rinchin Garmaev, Lake Baichal Pastoralist, Russia
Mr. Darge Tsering, Yak Herders of Arunachal Pradesh, India

TASTE WORKSHOPS: HONEY

SUPPORTING AGROECOLOGY & AGROBIODIVERSITY

FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD

CHAIR: Dr. Jen Astone, Executive Director of the Swift Foundation, USA

KEYNOTE: Ms. Sunita Rao, Director of VANASTREE, India

PANELISTS

Dr. Toby Hodgkin, Coordinator, Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, Italy
Dr. Pat Roy Mooney, Executive Director of ETC, Canada
Dr. Stefano Padulosi, Theme Leader, Marketing Diversity at Bioversity International, Italy
Mr. Phrang Roy, Coordinator of the Indigenous Partnership, Khasi, Northeast India

THEMATIC SESSION 4

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND

NUTRITIONAL SECURITY

CHAIR: Dr. Yon Fernandez de Larrinoa, Indigenous Peoples Advocacy Officer, FAO, Italy

KEYNOTE: Dr. Daphne Miller, Physician, Associate Clinical Professor at the University of California, San Francisco, The Prevention Institute, USA

PANELISTS

Dr. Peggy R. Sanday, Professor Emerita, Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Dr. Aurelius Kyrham Nongkynrih, NEHU, Khasi, Northeast India
Ms. Faustina Sosima Alvarenga Pérez, Guaraní, Paraguay
Ms. Norma Rodriguez, Wichí, Argentina
Ms. Maria Bautista Leon, Maya Tzeltal, Mexico

INSPIRING STORIES OF ECOLOGICAL

APPROACHES

CHAIR: Ms. Kyra Busch, Program Officer, Agrobiodiversity and Resilient Bicultural Landscapes at The Christensen Fund, USA

KEYNOTE: Dr. Dhrupad Choudhury, Programme Manager – Adaptation to Change, ICIMOD, Nepal

PANELISTS

Ms. Mayumy Chiemi Villegas Huaycama, Peru
Mr. Ramasamy Selvam, Keystone Foundation, India
Mr. Matteo Tonini, Consultant, FAO, Angola

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS &

THE FUTURE WE WANT

CHAIR: Dr. Winona La Duke, Executive Director of White Earth Land Recovery Project and Honor the Earth, Anishinaabe, USA

PANELISTS

Ms. Antonella Cordone, Senior Technical Specialist, Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Issues, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Italy
Ms. Migdalia Pillicier, Senior Technical Specialist for the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Italy
Dr. Ashish Kothari, Indian Treaty Council, India

CREATIVE COMMUNICATION APPROACHES FOR

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

CHAIR: Ms. Patricia Mukhim, Editor of the Shillong Times, Khasi, Northeast India

PANELISTS

Mr. Raymond de Chavez, Philippines
Ms. Rita Banerji, Filmmaker, Green Hub, Dusty Foot Productions, India
Mr. Shobhit Jain, Community Media, India
Mr. Luis Arturo Agualongo Lemay, Kiwicha, Puruwa, Ecuador
Mr. Boa Waiko, Binandre People of Oro Province, Papua New Guinea
Mr. Inoto Nawang Khulu, Member of NEBuzz, Sumi, Northeast India

TASTE WORKSHOPS: FERMENTED FOODS

CLIMATE CHANGE: INDIGENOUS VOICES FROM THE FIELD

CHAIR: Ms. Anneli Jonsson, Slow Food SAPMI, Sami, Sweden

KEYNOTE: Dr. Gleb Raygorodetsky, Research Affiliate, Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

PANELISTS

Mr. Nick Lunch, InsightShare, UK
Dr. Joel Simo, Aneityum, Vanuatu
Mr. Jose Luis Gabriel Montenegro, Zapoteco, Mexico
Mr. Ankan De, Indian Youth Climate Network, Shillong, Northeast India

DAY FOUR 6 NOVEMBER 2015

ITM GRASS ROUTES: Field Trips

The delegates visit the hosting villages

DAY FIVE 7 NOVEMBER 2015

MEI-RAMEW FOOD FESTIVAL, Mawphlang

Local and Global tastes, fanfare, artisans make the meeting point for delegates, villagers and urban enthusiasts to cvelebrate food.



" It is time for us to enrich ourselves with the knowledge and skills that have been passed down through generations. "

Dr. Mukul Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya



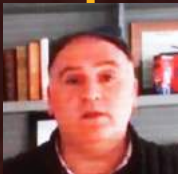
" The survival of our land is in our kids. They need to know about the foods and the flavors of our ancestors. "

Mr. Agustin Rosendo Uriana Teacher in Wayuu, Columbia



" Educarse y formarse es un acto revolucionario.["Educating ourselves is in itself, a revolutionary act."] "

Dalí Nolasco Cruz - Tlaola Nahua, Mexico



" We need to focus on which energy we are going to be using to cook food in the future."

- Chef Jose Andres



" We need to have peace, we need to be accepted and understood, our history needs to be told our story needs to be told. "

Noel Butler, Aboriginal Educator at Nuragunya, Australia



" Business can and must play a role in giving back to society and enriching the landscape of the country. "

Chef Manjit Gill - Corporate Chef, ITC Hotels



" It is okay to be different if we believe in what we are doing "

Helianti Hilman - Founder and CEO of JAVARA



" Hishuk ish Tsawaak. " ["Everything is one, everything is inter-connected."] "

Eli Enns, Nuuchah-nulth Leader, Vancouver Island,

ITM 2015 TEAM

NESFAS

- Phrang Roy - *Chairman*
- Bibhudutta Sahu - *Project Director*
- Wansalan Passah - *ITM Coordinator*
- Rahul Antao - *Consultant*
- Lajoplin Nongsiej - *Consultant*
- Leony Rynjah - *Consultant*
- Anandi Maria Soanes - *Consultant*
- Samaresh Ranjan Das - *Finance Manager*
- Sujata Chettri - *Finance Associate (Trainee)*
- Evangelene Synrem - *Office Secretary*
- Fabian Dkhar - *Office Secretary*
- Raisa Dalmair - *Sr. Associate (Communications)*
- Darylvert.Khyriem - *Assistant Communications Associate*
- Janak Preet Singh - *Associate*
- Kegitar Lyngdoh Lyngkhoi - *Associate*
- Phidarilin Uriah - *Associate*
- Pius Ranee - *Associate*
- Merrysha Nongrum - *Trainee*
- Reginald Sun - *Graphic Designer*
- Esther Marcia Sawian - *Flavour Innovator*
- Sanymika Khyriem - *Paid Interns*
- Daliwel Mawsor - *Paid Interns*
- Kyntiewborlang Rani - *Paid Interns*

- Salome Suchiang - *Paid Interns*
- Bapynshgain Khongngain - *Paid Interns*
- Lamphrang Diengdoh - *Paid Interns*
- Railang Mawlong - *Paid Interns*
- Markus Rani - *Driver cum office attendant*
- Jessica Rani - *Office Cleaner*
- Damanki War - *Intern Communication Associate*
- Khamkhangtang - *Intern Communication Associate*
- Dawn Mihsill - *Assistant Coordinator of ITM for Food*
- Peter Wahlang - *Assistant Media Manager*
- Amrita Ravimohan - *Associate Editor*
- Xavier D. Sunn - *Administrator cum Livelihood*

THE INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIP (TIP)

- Phrang Roy - *Coordinator*
- Carl O Rangad - *ITM Expeditor*
- Sara Manetto - *Project Officer*
- Ajay Nayak - *ITM Communications Consultant*
- Anita Roy - *Food & Hospitality Consultant*
- Anna Louise - *Weaving Consultant*
- Ashish Chopra - *Food Consultant*
- Beatrice Del Monte - *Assistant ITM Programme Coordinator*
- Allan Wahlang - *Youth Coordinator*
- Pooja Bhatt - *ITM Programme Coordinator*

ITM Inauguration.
PC: FH

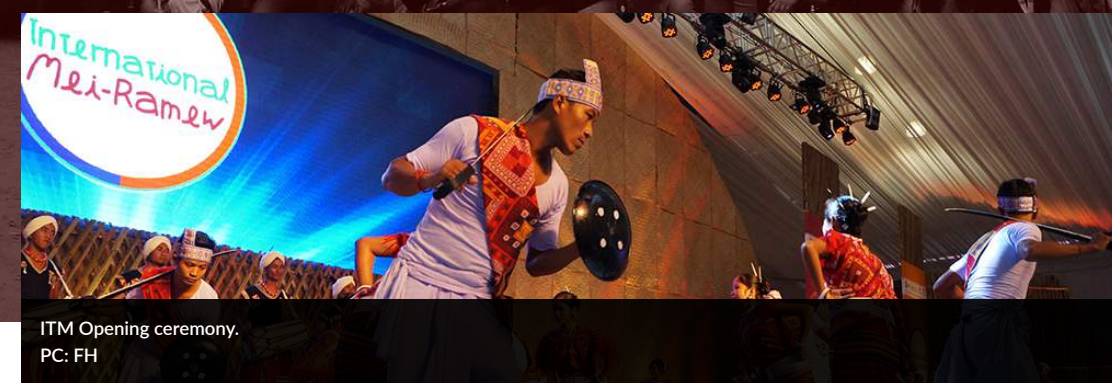


ITM 2015-3RD NOV TO 7TH NOV 2015 THE FUTURE WE WANT



THE FUTURE WE WANT : INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM 2015), which had a three-year preparation period, culminated in an event attended by 606 delegates from 62 countries representing 230 indigenous communities. ITM 2015 provided a unique opportunity for members of the agrobiodiversity networks to meet each other, exchange ideas, and showcase some of their initiatives. The ITM 2015 programme included an inauguration; plenary and thematic sessions; taste workshops; butchery training; public campus programs (including a film festival, photo exhibit, musical performance and speakers' series); field visits to nine host villages; and a public closing ceremony and food festival held at the Sacred Grove of Mawphlang. The closing food festival gathered more than 70,000 rural and urban people—making it the first of its kind, and, as one delegate remarked, “a rock show of agrobiodiversity”. The event, which was locally called International Mei-Ramew (meaning “Mother Earth” in the Khasi language), was also greatly the result of the close collaboration of 41 indigenous host villages in the three-year planning period leading up to the event. ITM 2015 showcased indigenous traditional knowledge, evolving skills and sustainable practices that safeguard natural resources and contribute to resilient, diverse food systems for a more humane and healthy future for all. It demonstrated that indigenous communities can set positive examples for promoting the pleasure of sustainable food systems that are more socially, economically and culturally just—where well-being comes not from the accumulation of wealth but from our connectedness with each other.



ITM Opening ceremony.
PC: FH

The event also served as a platform for these food communities to engage with scientists and policymakers on the theme of “The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions”. The event drew together indigenous delegates and their allies to raise issues and offer solutions for safeguarding their agroecological and culinary innovations, while bringing these ideas mainstream international attention through a broad communications strategy.

PARTICIPANT REPRESENTATION

In an effort to make this a truly indigenous-focused event, great care was taken to support the participation of a broad range of indigenous people, particularly those who have been traditionally marginalised (i.e., youth, women knowledge holders, the physically challenged, farmers, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, remote dwellers and fisher folk). The initial goal was to have a total of 400 delegates with at least 280 delegates from diverse indigenous communities. ITM 2015 exceeded this target with a total of 606 delegates, of which 375 delegates were from indigenous communities—meaning well over half (62%) of the total delegates were indigenous. Plenary and thematic sessions at ITM 2015 were designed as forums to explore these concepts and to spark future collaborative initiatives, while the inauguration, field visits and closing festival served to bring these concepts to vivid life.



ITM Opening ceremony.
PC: FH

DAY1: INAUGURATION (NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY), SHILLONG

Many Voices, Sing as One and dance to the tune.

The inauguration of ITM 2015 commenced with the beating of drums and a blessing of Mei-Ramew, without whose gifts none of the delegates could have gathered together. The event proceeded for the next several hours to showcase the broad diversity that is crucial to maintaining the health of our planet and our cultures. From musical performances to keynote addresses – the message was clear: “We must protect the diversity of languages, foods, music and dress woven into the culture of indigenous peoples and local communities if we hope to have any future at all. Only by learning from these agroecological systems, can we begin to gather the building blocks we need to construct a “more human and diverse world,” said Phrang Roy, Coordinator of the Indigenous Partnership and Chairman of NESFAS. With the opening remarks of the day.



Warning of the devastation that will result if we continue to worship the idol of money, Carlo Petrini, President of Slow Food International, called for a fight against globalisation of a “criminal” food system by defending our unique fruits and vegetables, animal breeds and processing techniques. The event included a blessing by indigenous leaders, keynote addresses by prominent dignitaries, the State Chief Minister Dr.Mukul Sangma and experts in the field. Also featured was a cultural showcase, featuring singing, dancing and the debut of the ITM 2015 theme song, Ko Mei-Ramew along with the unveiling of the coffee table book and films documenting the rich varied heritage of indigenous Meghalaya.

The indefatigable fighter for Native American rights, economist and activist Dr. Winona LaDuke shared a story of hope, and spoke of the battle that the Anishinaabeg have won in protecting their ancestral wild rice from genetic manipulation. Holding in her hand some of these sacred grains, she spoke of the amazing ability of the seed to wait patiently at the bottom of a lake until the conditions are just right, and only then will it rise to the surface and grow once more, providing life for the Anishinaabeg who protect the waters where it grows. Like the wild rice, she said the time has come for indigenous peoples and local communities to rise to the surface as leaders of a more just and equitable food system. The call for one voice was eloquently expressed by a young member of the Bethany Society singers, who, reading from her braille script, said that “human diversity must be a value for the future we want,” and argued for a world that respects the full spectrum of humanity. Pius Rane, Associate of NESFAS and from the local Khasi tribe, spoke of the challenges faced by indigenous youth who leave their home communities, many of them forced to forget their ancestral knowledge, and ultimately becoming disconnected from their heritage. Rane argued that even though outside knowledge in business and other mainstream professions can lead to some form of success, “it is difficult to learn others’ knowledge when we have to forget our own.” In a pre-recorded video address, HRH Prince Charles, apologised for his physical absence and expressed his dismay at the state we have reached where we no longer see ourselves as being within nature, but standing apart from it - a sentiment echoed by many of the other speakers. Land is the source of all, and until this is reflected in the food system, it will not be honored or protected. The inauguration introduced major themes that were to be explored in depth in the coming days, themes that had been raised by the global Slow Food community and The Indigenous Partnership, and continue to be at the fore of discussion at global gatherings with representative communities and indigenous leaders.

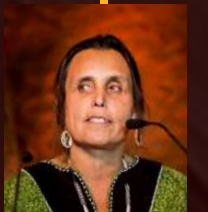
“ [Indigenous Terra Madre] is a model for linking traditional indigenous thinking with modern science as equal partners – a beacon of inspiration for others to learn from “

- HRH Charles, Prince of Wales



“ We are the people who care for our traditions, care for our future generations and our relatives, whether they have wings, or fins or roots or paws. If something that is brought to us ends with the word because it is a fungicide, a pesticide or a herbicide. ‘-cide’ has the same meaning as in homicide or suicide or genocide. You do not want to put things that end in ‘-cide’ on your food. “

Dr. Winona LaDuke, Environmental Activist



“It is taboo to disrespect the rice that feeds me, my clan, and my community; and it is a sin to waste food, when we were young our mothers, sisters, grandmothers would give us a grain of rice to protect us from the evil spirits.”

Toki Bah - President of ICARE, North East India



“We know the future we want; it is in our cosmovision, in our relationship with nature. The future we want is that others can understand this relationship with the earth; the only thing we need is the opportunity”

María Teresa Zapeta Mendoza, Coordinator of the International Indigenous Women's Forum, Guatemala



Indigenous communities and custodians of agrobiodiversity, academics, policy makers, international stakeholders, young people and each and every one, they are sitting here, reflecting, sharing and learning alltogether in one table, in one ‘pandal’, in one venue with the common menu

G. Dr Srivastav, NEHU



When we lose biodiversity, when we lose indigenous seeds, when we lose regenerative soil practices, and when we lose community ownership, we lose health. These (living root bridges) are the metaphor for what we want. It is this unbelievable marriage of human ingenuity and nature that took patience and a complicated way of thinking to make and once you make these bridges... they can last for 500-600 years.

“We are dying because of the lack of biodiversity” Daphne Miller, M.D.

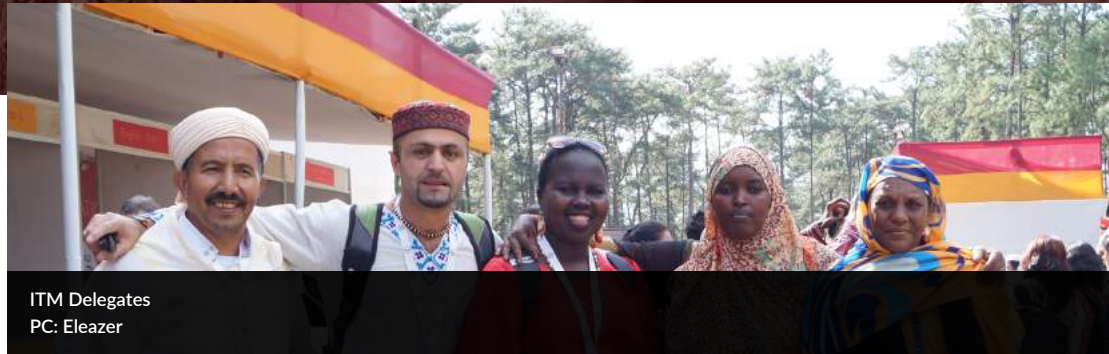
F.Daphne Miller



DAY 2 & 3 :WORLD INDIGENOUS CONCLAVE, NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY, SHILLONG

Local Voices, Global Audiences!

Held over the course of two days, the program included six plenaries and 14 thematic sessions on topics ranging from wellbeing and women's role in nutritional security, to storytelling and indigenous voices on climate change. Additionally, the program included taste workshops on insects, wild edibles, honey and fermented foods. NESFAS worked with the 41 hosting villages for three years to ensure that ITM followed a community-driven approach. The topics for the plenary sessions evolved from NESFAS' field discussions with community members in 2013 and 2014, and NESFAS backed these topics with rigorous academic and participatory studies



4TH NOVEMBER 2015, NEHU, SHILLONG

Day 2 marked the first plenary of ITM 2015, and highlighted the fundamental and spiritual connection that people have to soil, and how that relationship is the foundation for the health of the food system. Dr. Daphne Miller said, "We are the soil," and provided examples of the links between the health of our earth and our bodies – from the perspective of ecological and nutritional harmony, to the ways in which the layers and microbiome of our organs mirror those found in soil. This scientific evidence was corroborated by other panelists who shared origin stories and worldviews that make these same links; Esther Wanjiku shared that in Kenya all things, including food, come from the air, earth, fire or water ancestors, and those elements are expressed in the food we eat. She asked the participants to honor their ancestors and to allow themselves to be guided by their wisdom through the spirit of food. Helianti Hilman, founder of the artisanal food enterprise JAVARA, spoke of her indigenous colleagues, who have successful rice crops year after year without fail by looking to the wisdom of the stars. These narratives highlight the need to give equal footing to both scientific and traditional knowledge, without a need to validate indigenous wisdom under the lens of science. The challenge lies in finding a common language that can cut through differences of expression and get to the heart of shared meaning.

"WE HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY TO TELL"

Esther Wanjiku quoted Einstein, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." This sparked the dialogue on new stories of indigenous relationships with food – one that is not dictated by nation-states, or the media, but that comes from the ancient cosmo-visions that have guided indigenous food systems for millennia. After encouraging the audience to re-romance Mother Earth, Manish Jain suggested that, "Food is a great way to decolonise our minds... through our bellies." Dr. Tirso Gonzales challenged us to envision a world - as the Zapatistas have - in which many worlds fit. Rather than focus on the negative process of decolonising our food story, we should look to re-indigenise it. Sean Sherman, of The Sioux Chef, offered practical advice on how to tell a new food story. He uses native plant and animal ingredients to prepare gourmet meals that not only taste delicious, but also educate consumers on their regional food histories. Sherman has innovative models of promoting "pre-reservation" Native American cuisine, and prepared wild rice with local blueberries and maple glaze during the afternoon Taste Workshop on wild edibles to share his case.



1st Plenary session.
PC: Amanda

Watu Ferdinandus highlighted the work of the East Nusa Tenggara Local Food Farmers Association, whose philosophy is "one mother, one house and one kitchen," and their indigenous perspective is to focus on food as a source of culture and identity. He concluded by saying, "Seeds are related with culture and identity; when the seeds are lost, the culture is lost; Save seeds for the future to save our wisdom." Similarly Kaichou Titiana, from a New Caledonian fishing community, shared how she tells the stories of plants, like taro, with younger generations, so that their histories remain vital. There was a strong call to include youth in telling the stories of indigenous food. Nicole Yanes, a rising leader in her Opatá community, declared, "Youth is an asset not a problem". With her collaboration, the University of the Opatá Nation started a course in traditional knowledge and indigenous agriculture. School Gardens provided a way for children to explore their creativity and passion to engage with biodiversity that is otherwise stifled in the mainstream educational system. This raises the question of how local governments could enhance curricula to enable novel educational and teaching opportunities that include values of agrobiodiversity across the food chain.

WELL-BEING IN THE "WE FEELING"

The second plenary introduced a preliminary research study into indigenous conceptions of and pathways to wellbeing that was conducted by the Indigenous Partnership, with the help of researcher Elizabeth Hacker. The study utilised storytelling as a methodology to identify priorities for wellbeing among agriculturalists in Meghalaya, North East India and pastoralists in Isiolo, Kenya. What emerged from the study is that wellbeing stems from the combination of social harmony, cultural identity and the meeting of basic needs. It was clear that without peace and security, there cannot be wellbeing, as expressed by the Kenyan pastoralists, who said that conflict, unpredictable water for their cattle and restrictions to land diminished wellbeing and their cultural identity. Similar stories emerged for others who were ripped from their lands or links to culture, like when Esma Khalilova spoke emotionally of her experience as an Umyut being deported from her homeland: "We couldn't see the birds we grew up with." Clearly in order to maintain wellbeing among indigenous communities, there must be mechanisms in place to ensure cultural stability. Strong alliances and collectives are an important step to creating such safeguards. Indigenous peoples' and community conserved areas and territories (ICCAs) are another strategy. Lamen Gonnay, from the mountainous Kalinga province in the Philippines, told of the power that comes from uniting with people who are suffering the same injustices. The terrace rice farmers of his region organised into a cooperative to combat the increase of chemical farming and proved that together they could produce enough organic rice using indigenous methods for themselves and for export. In September of last year, they produced 13 metric tonnes for export to the USA. In turn, the local government went from supporting monoculture and chemical farming to creating a program that recognizes that "authentic ecological rice is from us [indigenous farmers]".



J. Jasbeer Singh, Sikh Community, Shillong, Meghalaya

In addition to the ideals of equality the tradition of Langar exposes the ethics of sharing, inclusiveness of all humanity.

Greater efforts have to be made to interact with other communities particularly with the indigenous ones, to learn from them the values of traditional farming and unique cultural traditions with greater participation with mutual exchange in the fields of biodiversity and to promote the economic well-being by buying their local produce and sharing their traditional and economic language.



K. Carlo Petrini, Slow Food

Our land, our Earth is suffering because of the greediness of those few people who want to deprive people it of its resources.

Over the last century economy has become our idol and the only God that seems like we all want to worship so people's happiness doesn't matter at all and as it does not matter to save the Earth and Nature. Food has been turned into a commodity and these commodities have to be paid the lowest possible price. We have to return value to our communities and restore value in the peoples and women that support the agriculture economy all over the world. I invite all of you to defend your own produce and defend your vegetables, your fruits and all the produce, defend your animal breeds, and defend all your processing techniques. This is a universal language.



L. M.S Swaminathan, Swaminathan Foundation

Women in the Northeast play a key role. (They are) really the custodians of food security and food sovereignty, thereby protecting national sovereignty in terms of food security.



M. Dr Tirso Gonzales

Living well is not like going for shopping on a weekend and going to a mall and being in the consumerist mall.

Our elders in the Andes are saying that all the problems we are facing, including climate change is due to a lack of respect.

ITM DAY 3: 5th November 2015, NEHU, Shillong

As the conference days of the ITM 2015 concluded with plenary and thematic sessions that addressed looking back with respect and looking forward with hope!

The second day of the World Indigenous Conclave of the Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 continued with plenary and thematic sessions. Getting to the heart of the matter, Day three of the conference was a day of diverging opinions and reactions to both panelists and sessions. Issues included the role of women and terms such as "matriarchy", "agroecology" and "sustainability", and whose voice is speaking when we hear these terms. While anthropologist Dr. Peggy Sanday expressed appreciation for this unique opportunity to engage with custodians of the land directly, rather than speaking to other academics, there was a feeling that our indigenous representatives were still not heard fully. Yet, many of their stories were documented during breakout discussions. In this edition, we attempt to address both the controversies and complimentary stories captured during the day, both by farmers and their allies.

The first plenary session of the day 'Nutritional Security and Local Food Systems: Learning from Matriarchal Societies', began with the Chair Dr. Peggy Sanday (University of Pennsylvania, USA) expressing her good fortune on getting to interact at this event, directly with the indigenous people gathered, rather than hearing their stories from anthropologists, as is usually the case. This session included the findings of the different studies undertaken on behalf of the indigenous peoples. Dr. Harriet Kuhnlein, Professor Emerita, McGill University, Canada shared the study that had collected data from the Khasi and the Chakhesang tribe in Northeast India. Dr. Juliane Friedrich (IFAD, Italy) spoke about the work done among indigenous peoples by her and Rachele Ellena (The Indigenous Partnership, Italy), who was also on the panel. The next panelist Dr. Treena Delormier shared her studies on food security and sovereignty, by which she concluded "we need to relearn" by which she meant to look back to indigenous knowledge. The next panelist, Dr. Solot Sirsai (Mahidol University, Thailand) spoke about the study that was done in the North West part of Thailand with the Sane Phong Community, who adopt a holistic approach for food systems and nutritional security. They also performed community work which looked into food systems survey and to promote gardening. There is a diversity of local food in the community and around 387 local foods are found there. Dr. Friedrich concluded saying that peace is just not the absence of war and nutrition security is not equal to food security.



Panelists of the 3rd Plenary session.
PC: Sally

The delegates then divided themselves into the parallel track sessions, the first of which was entitled 'Storytelling – a Unique Documentation of Oral History and Knowledge', chaired by Dr. Desmond Kharmawphlang (NEHU, India). The panel comprised of Rita Banerji (Green Hub, India), Edgar Hinge (Master Sand Drawer, Vanuatu), Bruce Pascoe (Writer, Australia) and Kegitar Lyngkhoi (NESFAS, India). The session was filled with the panelists recounting traditions of storytelling in their communities and the oral histories that are part of their heritage and their very being.



ITM delegates.
PC: Sally



Thematic sessions.
PC: Sally

The second track 'Are Today's Patriarchal Communities Societies of Peace?' continued the theme of the plenary session. The session was chaired by Dr. Treena Delormier (University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA) while the keynote address was by Dr. Peggy Sanday. The panelists Dr. Solot Sirisai, Agustin Urian (Teacher, Columbia), Aurelius Nongkynrih (NEHU, India), Maria Leon (Anthropologist/ Farmer, Mexico) and Saoudata Aboubacrine (Coordinator TIN HINAN, Burkina Faso) discussed how patriarchal communities are deeply rooted to Mother Earth and naturally tend towards peaceful solutions.

The third track session chaired by Munkhbolor Gungaa (Pastoralist, Mongolia) took up the topic of 'Pastoralists and their Challenges'. Pastoralists from Kenya, Russia, Arunachal Pradesh and the Sami people discussed being a pastoralist being in today's world and the struggles they face. Simultaneously, the Honey Taste Workshop treated the audience to varied honeys brought from Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Garo Hills and East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, while recounting their individual stories of beekeeping and honey collection, while explaining the origins and flavours of all the honeys.

The second plenary session of the day 'Supporting Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity for the Future of Food' was chaired by the Executive Director of the Swift Foundation, Jen Astone. The keynote address was by Sunita Rao from VANASTREE, India and the panelists from various international agro-biodiversity organisations shared their concerns regarding the direction in which food production, procurement and marketing is heading globally. The first track session thereafter focussed on 'Women's Role in the Future of Food and Nutritional Security'. The chair Yon de Larrinoa and the Keynote speaker Dr. Daphne Miller emphasised on the importance of women in relation to their role of gathering food and feeding their families since time immemorial. The panelists, Dr. Peggy Sanday, Dr. Aurelius Kyrham Nongkynrih, Faustina Sosima Perez, Norma Rodriguez and Maria Leon shared their stories of working with indigenous women in their own communities. The second track session concentrated on 'Inspiring Stories of Ecological Approaches', chaired by Kyra Busch from the Christensen Fund. The keynote address was delivered by Dhrupad Choudhury from ICIMOD, Nepal while the panel consisted of Mayumy Chiemi (Peru), Ramaswamy Selvam (Keystone Foundation, India) and Dr. Vincent Darlong (IFAD).

The third session 'Sustainable Development Goals and the Future We Want' was chaired by Dr. Winona La Duke (White Earth Land Recovery Project, USA). The panelists Antonella Cordone (Italy), Migdalia Pellicier (USA) and Ashish Kothari (India) spoke of their experiences of working in their respective countries keeping sustainable development goals in mind. The fourth track 'Creative Communication Approaches for Indigenous Issues' was chaired by Patricia Mukhim (Editor, Shillong Times). The panelists included filmmaker Rita Banerji, media expert Shobhit Jain, Ecuador Community Radio Host Luis Lemay, Binandre tribe member Bao Waiko and NEBuzz journalist Inoto Nawang Khulu discussed the challenges of representing indigenous communities appropriately in the media. The second taste workshop showcased Fermented Foods from different regions like Korea (Kimchi and Rice Alcohol), Thailand (Khao Mak), India (Phalap and Passion Tea from Assam) and Scandinavia (Sourdough bread and Tempeh), which was extremely well-received by the gathered audience.

The last plenary session of ITM 2015 addressed one of the most talked about issues of this century Climate Change but through the lens of indigenous voices. The session was chaired by Anneli Jonsson (Slow Food SAPMI, Sweden) while the keynote address was by Dr. Gleb Raygorodetsky (University of Victoria, Canada). The panelists Nick Lunch (InsightShare, UK), Dr. Joel Simo (Vanuatu), Jose Montengro (Mexico), Ankan De (India) and Eli Enns (Canada) shared their concerns of how climate change is affecting indigenous communities all over the world and what is the possible way forward.

WRITING OUR OWN NARRATIVES

Just as Edgar Hinge demonstrated through the sand drawings of Vanuatu, the stories we tell are constantly shifting and turning, sometimes coming back to the start in order to tell the whole tale. China Ching, an indigenous Hawaiian, promoted storytelling "as a process of reclaiming culture", and since culture is not linear or static, our narratives are always evolving and must continue to be told. Rita Banerjee reminded us that stories are not peripheral to communities, but are central and valuable. Ms. Banerji described many incredible digital storytelling projects she has been involved in over the years, painting for the audience beautiful pictures of honey hunters hanging from ropes and sari-clad women diving in the ocean for seaweed. Her most recent project, Green Hub, seeks to expand the capabilities of community storytelling by training young fellows from all over the North East of India in filmmaking basics and then placing them strategically in growing environmental groups where their cameras can amplify and document local projects. This was complementary to the work of InsightShare, which trains indigenous communities in Participatory Video so that they can tell their own stories and then, in turn, pass this toolkit along to other indigenous peoples through the practice of "each one, teach one." As a show of support for community-driven media, an audience member from Uganda stood up at the end of the session to say that, through the training provided by InsightShare, his community produced a video that has allowed them to successfully advocate their rights with local governments, and it continues to serve them in their efforts to raise funds for projects in their community. Bruce Pascoe opened his speech with a musical performance, reminding the audience of the centrality of performance in storytelling. He cautioned them that the stories that other people tell us about us can often be tools in oppression. We have to tell our own stories and refuse to abide the false narratives that people would use to dominate us. He uses the example of the label "hunter gatherer", which was falsely applied to the aboriginal peoples of Australia and how the term nomadic lifestyle aided colonists in land-grabbing. He has begun the process of recultivating ancestral crops that had disappeared from the aboriginal narratives, and proudly shared how his family now plants fields of crops that were once thought to be lost from his homelands.



Open discussions at the plenary session.
PC: Eleazer

AGROECOLOGY AS AN INTERCULTURAL PRACTICE

In the session on agroecological practices, it was shared that changing our ways is not only about changing production, but about the ways of thinking. As Ramasamy Selvam from Keystone foundation emphasised. Mayumy Chiemi from Peru called upon all to understand that food is more than productivity and that indigenous peoples must start creating the “human plot of land”, indicating the importance of values in any agricultural system. Mr. Ramasamy Selvam impressed the audience with his example of a farmer-to-farmer learning circle that has so far enabled as many as 1000 women and men to share best practices amongst communities as barefoot trainers. One agroecological practice that emerged as a controversial issue was shifting cultivation. IFAD Northeast representative Vincent Darlong began by stating that shifting cultivation is not only a productive method but also a cultural practice. This idea was echoed by numerous community members such as H.H. Mohrmen and many delegates from the Garo, Thai and Khasi audiences. “We have a chanting and singing practice connected to shifting cultivation, to show we honour the earth and carefully select our forest sites for cultivation and burning” said Mohrmen.

Others emphasised the importance of seed sovereignty that is ensured in this practice, while commercial alternatives cannot guarantee freedom of choice in what to grow. Inspirational stories such as the community based protected area showed how conservation and sustainable use of wild edibles, sacred forests and fresh water resources can create harmony between man and nature in this system. “To make swidden agriculture sustainable depends both on individual and collective choices. We cannot only talk about community, or only about women or men, we need all elements to work with the same approach of ecological sensibility - this is agroecology,” said Darlong. However, some community members argued that swidden agriculture is harmful to the environment. Many weighty questions that were raised by the audience could unfortunately not be answered fully, such as how political economy affects the custodianship of women in shifting agriculture and how a growing global demand to produce for an international market can be satisfied. In the plenary sessions, Pat Roy Mooney identified the false focus of thinking about “more quantity” instead of “more diversity”. This clearly indicates that this practice has huge potential but is misunderstood and undervalued by many. This led back to China Ching’s appeal to reclaim indigenous narratives, as she shared her frustration about the common narratives of indigenous peoples. She implored allies and supporters of indigenous peoples to stop talking about how indigenous culture is disappearing - that perspective is overwhelming and, furthermore, false. We have not “lost” our culture, she says; we must “trust in the magic again.” Harkening back to Winona LaDuke’s opening remarks, she added, “trust that the rice will come back.”

WOMEN’S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF FOOD

The word patriarchy is not relevant for understanding what matriarchy means, said Dr. Peggy Sanday at the opening plenary of Day Three at ITM 2015. Rather than a system of female power that simply replaces a system of male power found in a patriarchy, a matriarchy is instead an egalitarian system marked by consensus, cooperation, cosmology and caring, added Dr. Solot Sirisai, a researcher from the matriarchal Karen people. It therefore should not be measured against the metric of a nonequivalent system, but rather seen as an alternative that offers us the possibility to develop new mechanisms of governance and land stewardship. One representative of the Maori tribe in the audience suggested that Euro centric view of matriarchy fails to capture its essence. Matriarchal societies are not hierarchical but “a shared custodianship,” said Dr. Aurelius Kyrham Nongkynrih, and women and men have equal roles to play in maintaining the equilibrium in society. Instead of continuing to tell the same narrative of loss on indigenous knowledge and culture, Dr. Juliane Friedrich said we must practice “positive deviance” where we look to matriarchal societies for solutions that can free us from current oppression. Based on the show of hands at the end of the opening plenary, this is a topic that certainly is in need of further explanation, which delegates at an impasse and researchers acknowledging the gaps in understanding. The day raised the question of what agency women’s values have in a society and do what degree this agency can build resilience to external socio-economic and political ecological forces. Is it not people but people’s values, particularly that of women, that make decisions? And how do these values, as agents, mediate agro biodiversity and nutrition in a changing society?

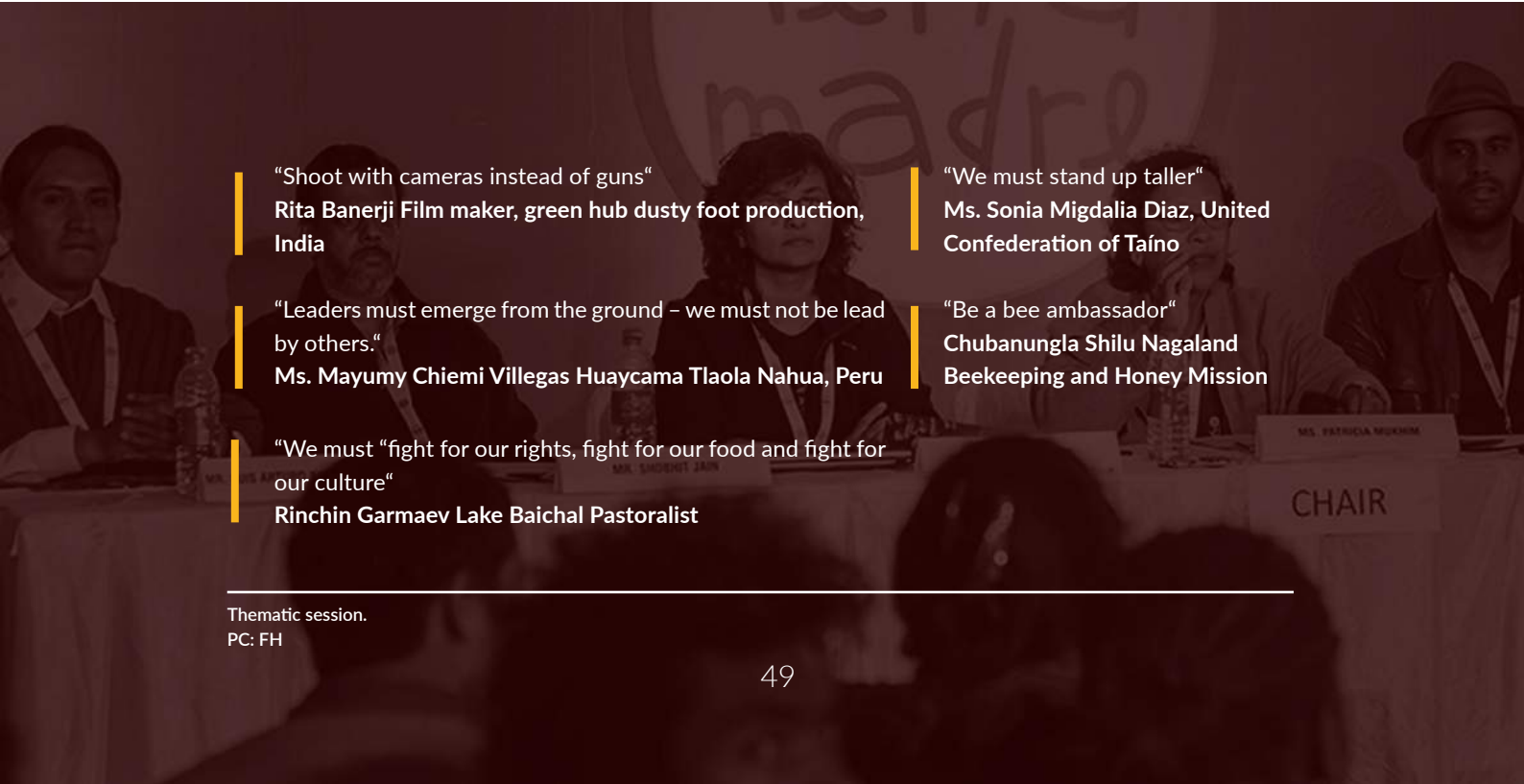
TASTE WORKSHOPS

Taste workshops were conducted parallel to the Plenary and Thematic sessions of the Conferences. They were on 4 themes –
INSECTS as the Future of food Thishad Sunita Rao from Karnataka in South India who shared the indigenous recipes for the Ant Chutney, Jimsi Tassar from Arunachal Pradesh (North East India) shared the cooking intricacies and nutritional value of riverbed beetles and grasshoppers, Plantina Mujai from Meghalaya’s Ri Bhoi district who runs a Mei-Ramew Café shared the sustainable cycle of the Eri Silk worms in their food and crafts. Chef Joel Basumatari from Nagaland joined the panel to share the value of entomophagy.

WILD EDIBLES: Prescilla Zinyu from Nagaland shared the cultures of foods from the forest where wines of Ciepho(Wild Apples) and Cielhu (gooseberry), gagi and Ketsaga (porridge), boiled Zehyu nyu create a versatile platter . Sean Sherman showcased the legacy of wild rice in the traditions of Sioux Cuisine of the ashenabe people of America. Sunita Rao shared the wild herb additives to the household buttermilk which makes all the difference also reflected in the presentation of Robert Paget from Austria who delved on distilled wild herbs.

HONEY: Honey the soul of many cuisines was shared in many of its hues as nurtured from nature in the southern Indian Hills of Kottagiri presented by Robert Leo, Chubanugla Shilu from Nagaland, Bakking R Marak from Garo hills and Shemphamg Shangdiar from east khasi hills in Meghalaya.

FERMENTED FOOD: The origins of Kimchi and Rice alcohol were shared by Tae-Kyung Jo from Korea, Khao Mak from Thailand was rendered in its strong flavours by Gai Lai Mitwichan, Phalap and Passion tea from Assam was brewed by Alpana Borpatragohain and the fermented rise of sourdough and tempeh was presented by the Nordic Food Lab.



Thematic session.
PC: FH



Village visit: Nongtraw.
PC: Pius Ranee

Village visit: Nongtraw.
PC: NESFAS

ITM DAY 4: 6TH NOVEMBER 2015

ITM 2015 “Grass Routes” Open Timeless Trails

Nine Host villages of Meghalaya welcomed the ITM 2015 delegates to explore the taste of tradition, cultural narratives and crafts born of the land they live in. Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 on the fourth day shifted venue to the villages who represent the 41 host villages of Meghalaya and Nagaland. These were within driving distance from Shillong to allow the visitors to go and come the same day. The villages created a treat of food, culture and landscape experiences for the delegates. The associates of NESFAS had worked over the last two years to prepare and work with the villagers for this gathering. Story-telling, which threaded the sessions of the ITM 2015, continued live in these scenic locales for the villagers to share and celebrate food, farming and cultural narratives. The villages shared various dynamics of indigenous habitats between man, nature, agrobiodiversity, forests and more.

If a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, then the journey to the heart of **NONGTRAW** begins with 2500 steps. This is how the delegates embarked on their visit to this picturesque village tucked in the misty green mountains of East Khasi Hills. The delegates had barely begun the decent when they were greeted by drummers and offered cups made of bamboo filled with a delicious local blackberry juice. The beat of the drum marked their pace as they walked down the stone and concrete stairway built by the residents of Nongtraw, which snaked its way down the hills to the community. The paths and walkways had been swept clean and trash baskets lined the path. Most houses were framed by beautiful ornamental and kitchen gardens. After receiving an official welcome from the headman, and being treated to a song by the youth of the village, the delegates divided themselves to visit one of three sites: the millet jhum fields, the beehives or the school garden. The school garden had been planted to supplement their midday meal and also became a record on the school wall as a colourful seasonal calendar. After the garden, the students took the delegates on a plant walk around the village, while rattling off names of plants in Khasi, plucking fruits or leaves, which they encouraged the delegates to try. A similar experience was encountered by the bee and jhum group before the delicious bounty they were fed for lunch.



Village visit: Dewlieh.
PC: Dewlieh Community

A pattern of these activities which had been planned with the villages was experienced by the delegates in each village but in their own local flavor. For the visitors to **KHWENG** it was a discovery of one of the few remaining weaving village to see the Eri silk weavers’ quarters. A delegate who went to Khweng was touched how the entire village had come out to welcome them with songs, led by their village headman. “An assorted menu of activities, feast and field trip blew my mind. The enthusiasm was so high that a few of the international guests joined in the song and dance” was her statement.

In **DEWILIEH** set in the East Khasi Hills, the Rangbahshnong, the village headman welcomed the guests and ushered them to the village to the beat of the traditional drums and the sharing of folklore. This was followed by a walk through the fields in different groups to share the stories of agro biodiversity, school gardens and reserve forests. Tribal daces and showcase of archery were interspersed between the walks. The school gardens became the continuation of the discussion at the ITM Conference sessions as an Ethiopian Slow food member said he remembered it and now understood it better. He also shared the thoughts on certain typology of plats that are deep-rooted and prevent soil erosion. The delegates were then invited to plant a “memory” in the garden by which they would be remembered for the time to come. Law Adong, as the community refers to the reserved forests was introduced to delegates, this means a controlled forest where the resources are touched only if necessity arises like for herbs and construction material. The community respects this as they have been taught over generations that these forests become catchment areas for water and also nourishes biodiversity in flora and fauna. One delegate also said, “Your forefathers were very wise.” The community honoured the visiting delegates with small minatures of baskets and jars hand made from their local materials as memoirs of their visit. The delegates who have travelled from different parts of the world and have been involved with shifting cultivation shared their knowledge of cultivation with the local farmers. The delegates were delighted seeing similar crops and methods of cultivation (right from sowing to harvest). The local farmers also shared the seeds with the delegates. These field visits ended with the Bamkhana- the community feast with cultural performances where the delegates joined into sing and dance with their hosts.



Village Visit: Khweng.
PC: Sally

The rice-growing community of **MAWHIANG**, in West Khasi Hills welcomed the guests with the now famous beating drums and ‘kwai’, beetle nut and leaf. Following a welcome speech, songs and traditional dance performances by the children and youth of Mawhiang, interaction over cups of tea and indigenous snacks like boilded tapioca, sweet potato, yam and a variety of rice cakes the visitors broke into four groups. A similar program to the other villages of school gardens and reserved forests gave views to the agroecology. At the school garden Dr. Mridula Banerji expressed her excitement on having the opportunity to sow some mustard seeds with the children. This was followed by a scrumptious meal of traditional dishes served with local wild edibles. A little more singing and dancing followed by a basket weaving demonstration and it was time for the guests to leave but not before a friendly football match between the visitors and the children of the community.



Village visit: Dewlieh.
PC: Dewlieh Community

LAITSOHPLIAH welcomed the delegates to the village with a song by the young school girls who led them to their village where the ladies were upto their waists in the water channels along the fields catching fish from the water that had been let out after the harvest. This was followed by a visit to the eri silk weaving centre where women weavers demonstrated the art of weaving. Some delegates tried their hand at weaving eri silk fabric and listened as the weavers explained how silk is harvested and that soon, come winter, silkworm production would stop.

The following meal included this and wild edible plants that were foraged from the forest and also grown in a kitchen garden. Discussions led to the identification of some plants used differently in other parts in the world. The sumptuous lunch of mustard leaf, fried fish, chicken and other items was followed by a folk songs session in the honour of the delegates. Delegates from the Philippines, New Zealand and Vietnam also joined in. The day ended with a group from the village and people from the delegation getting on their feet to dance to the beat of the drums.

They proud villaagers were happy to also share their traditions, particularly archery, for which they are well known, and dances, like the shad suk mynsiem ("the dance of the joyful heart"), which is celebrated every April. The villagers shared their attachment for the reserve forest and its varieties of wild plants, flowers and foxes, which only come out at night.



Village visit: Dewlieh.
PC: Janak



Visitors at the ITM closing ceremony

ITM DAY 5: 7TH NOVEMBER, 2015, CLOSING CEREMONY AND FOOD FESTIVAL MAWPHLANG

The concluding day of the Indigenous Terra Madre saw a joyous celebration of food, music, dance and culture as delegates and public mingled at the Mei-Ramew Food Festival at the Sacred Grove, Mawphlang.

An estimated 70,000 people flocked to the Mei-Ramew Food Festival on Saturday, 7th November, 2015 as the Indigenous Terra Madre concluded amid much fanfare at the Sacred Grove, Mawphlang. Envisaged as the closing Festival of the ITM 2015, it aimed to showcase the rich agrobiodiversity of North East India, and bring global attention to the region's challenges and strengths. By bringing local communities into the global discussion, ITM 2015 allowed for discussion between people who would rarely have the opportunity to network, and facilitated ways for those discussions to continue into the future. Around 40 food stalls showcased dishes from diverse regions such as Thailand, Sweden, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and of course all the Northeastern States. There were 16 stalls for the Biodiversity Fair showcasing the Khasi Traditional Herbalist, South West Khasi hills, Meghalaya, India, Biodiversity of West Khasi hills & West Garo hills, Meghalaya, India, Biodiversity of Tirap & Changlang districts, Arunachal Pradesh, India, Biodiversity of Ukhrul & Senapati districts, Manipur, India, Showcasing Biodiversity of Karbi Anglong & Dima Hasao districts, Assam, India. From morning itself, people were seen enjoying the fare with their friends and family on the greens that spontaneously transformed into a picnic area. Dignitaries from the region, including members of the cabinet were present throughout the event. In the afternoon, the Chief Minister, Dr. Mukul Sangma arrived and took the dais. He lauded the organizers of the event, especially NESFAS, for their efforts to get over 140 global indigenous communities to Meghalaya for this prestigious event. He emphasized that "This event has helped us open our eyes to the potentialities around us; it has shown our ability to be the best hosts". The cultural program organized for the delegates and public was launched amid much fanfare thereafter, while the CM was led to the special ITM Kitchen for lunch, where, during pre-decided time slots, four Chef pairings (one local and one international Chef) worked together to dish up a plated array of delicacies. The public too savoured the mouthwatering foods on offer, while enjoying a breathtaking view of the mountains around.

On stage, various dance troupes from the region such as the Nagas, Mizos, Kukis as well as international acts such as the Karen singers from Thailand and Mongolian throat singers regaled the audience with their performances. One of the highlights of the event was the Biodiversity Fair, which attracted a lot of audience, seen visiting the stalls, where the rich natural diversity of the Northeast was on display, in the form of produce such as rice, honey, millet and various flora and fauna. The Video Room where short films were screened was also a popular haunt for the young and the old alike. NESFAS had put up a stall with The Hive - A Honey Bar, Kids' Kitchen Initiative, the Presedia project as well as a showcase of various other projects that they have undertaken with the communities. In the Heritage Village, the Eri Weaves showcase 'Looms of Change' was one of the most popular, with visitors crowding to see the live floor handloom weaving demonstration, and were seen eagerly buying the silk stoles and shawls.

PC: FH

Non-government organizations supporting artists from other parts of India such as Vanastree, Gorilla Market, Empower and Warli painters from Maharashtra also exhibited their arts and crafts. During the evening, the Shillong Declaration was read out in the presence of NESFAS Chairman Phrang Roy and representatives from seven continents, each vibrant in their indigenous dress, who had gathered in Shillong for the ITM. Thereafter, the ITM 2015 Award of Appreciation was presented by Phrang Roy to Alan Christensen from the Christensen Fund for supporting and funding the event. The show ended with the crowd enthusiastically joining the performers gathered on stage to sing the ITM theme song 'Ko Mei-Ramew'. The event concluded at twilight with an extraordinary display of sound and light using the Sacred Grove as a backdrop, which mesmerized the entire crowd.

Dr. Mukul Sangma

" Appropriate innovative formats of livelihood activities which leverage upon both traditional and scientific knowledge to help realise optimum benefit by harnessing renewable natural resources which help us arrest the factors responsible for global warming and climate change is crucial for our sustainable livelihood and sustainable agriculture. "

Phrang Roy

" I'm sure that with all of us here, ITM 2015 will be a period of hope. We need to offer to our youth a hope for growth and prosperity with the growth and prosperity that is within the ecological boundaries of our lands and territories."

PARALLEL EVENTS

-ITM on Campus : During the first 3 days besides the sessions at NEHU, which were for the delegates for the host city fo Shillong seminars, exhibitions and film festivals revolving around the issues at the ITM2015 were organised in partnership with the local institutes. This allowed the local academicians and students to be an integral part of the dialogues and was essential, as Shillong is a major education destination in North East of India, especially for youth of indigenous origins in the region.

- Eri Weaves: Looms of Change (North Eastern Hill University, Mawphlang Sacred Grove) - An exhibition of artisanal Eri silk weaving that included educational materials and live demonstrations of the process—from cocoon to clothing.

- A Cut Above : A Slow Meat two-day training for regional butchers and students at the Institute of Hotel Management Shillong to learn about good, clean and fair meat production from farmers and butchers from the United States and Germany.



DINNERS BY RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Shillong religious communities, both the Sikh and Catholic communities in Shillong played an important role in building bridges with delegates by highlighting shared goals and expressing a desire to work together to have greater impact in protecting agrobiodiversity. The Langar dinner, initiated by the Sikh community of Shillong, was a moving example of this principle in action. Langar is a Persian word meaning "almshouse". In Sikhism, it is a kitchen run in the name of the Guru, where food is served free in the Gurdwara to all visitors regardless of caste, religion or background as an act of equality.

ITM Parish Dinner.
PC: Daryl Khyriem

DEEP REMEMBRANCE



Late N. K Lyngdoh, Lyngdoh of the Hima of Mawphlang, passed away on the 1st September 2016. As the traditional head of his indigenous community, his association with the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty (TIP) Rome and NESFAS began in 2010 when he along with Hima Mawphlang, whole heartedly partnered in setting up the first Mei-Ramew festival on the grounds of the Mawphlang Boys Home. It was here that the Lyngdoh encouraged that the Mei-Ramew festival be an annual event which led to the establishment of an office in Mawphlang.

It was the Lyndgoh who received from the Sami people of Sweden in 2012 Turin Italy, the reindeer skin, as an indigenous symbol of the task of the Khasi people and all indigenous peoples of north east India to carry forward the torch of the Indigenous Terra Madre movement. This culminated in the ITM in November 2015 at Mawphlang Sacred Groves.

He will be remembered for his vision and constant drive that drove forward the Khasi traditions and culture. An avid nature enthusiast he held deep knowledge of natural healing, the landscape, and the khasi heritage, all giving him authority, with dignity and humility.

The tireless work and dedication to the well being of his people is an example of the legacy of this great leader. His generosity, hospitality, service to the community and confidence earned him well placed love and respect from one and all and he has left an indelible footprint in the history of the Khasi heart land.

On behalf of the indigenous peoples across the world, NESFAS and TIP salute him and will always be grateful to have been associated with him and Hima Mawphlang and the legacy that he has left in our hearts and thoughts.

SPECIAL THANKS

ITC Hotel Group - ITM 2015 provided ITC with an opportunity to innovate in the realm of food service, while bringing mainstream attention to indigenous foodways. ITC, and in particular Chef Manjit Gill, embraced the spirit of the event, and was actively involved in the proceedings through the Taste Workshops, Chefs Alliance and plenary and thematic sessions.

INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT, Shillong for their support for the Butchery workshop and ITM Kitchen.

IDEX team for their support and the ITM 2015 Learning Report - The Indigenous Partnership has had extended discussions and email exchanges with the IDEX Learning and Evaluation team of ITM 2015. The Learning Report has suggested that leadership and capacity building; community ownership and management of natural resources; partnerships; movement building; indigenous knowledge systems; and wellbeing and happiness are major areas for the future focus of the Indigenous Partnership. Each of these topics is quite complex and will require much planning and consultation with communities from our side. We are in fact already doing this as we prepare for the next phase of the Indigenous Partnership's work, particularly in the light of the points of action recorded in the Shillong Declaration, which has been supported by all delegates.



Part 4 : The Road Ahead from ITM 2015

THE ROAD AHEAD FROM ITM 2015 THE SHILLONG DECLARATION

The Shillong Declaration, a summary of the discussions that took place during the ITM 2015, was put together by the organizers and aimed to create foundations for the road ahead for this international coalition of indigenous peoples. The statement was a collaborative effort not just of the ITM delegates individual but as representatives of their communities from across the world. The document puts the spotlight on the issues and priorities of these communities pertaining to food, agroecology, and traditional agricultural practices, among others.




Inter-generational knowledge sharing.
PC: Raisa Daimary

THE SHILLONG DECLARATION

(A living document based on the sessions held at ITM 2015 Shillong, Meghalaya, North East India)

Inspired by the Sami people who organised the First Indigenous Terra Madre in Jokkmokk, Sweden from 17 to 19 June 2011; Thankful to Pope Francis for reminding the world that Indigenous Peoples "should be the principal dialogue partners"; Grateful to His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales for his video message to ITM 2015, where he encouraged us to look to Indigenous wisdom to "develop an approach that acts locally by thinking globally, just as nature does with all parts operating harmoniously to establish a coherent whole"; Guided by three years of close interaction and exchange of ideas with local Indigenous communities of India (Meghalaya, Nagaland and Koli Hills), Thailand, Kenya, Ethiopia, Peru and representatives of other countries, including meetings at Terra Madre gatherings in Turin, Italy in 2012 and 2014; Impressed by and grateful to the Government of Meghalaya of North East India that joined in support of ITM 2015 and in particular to its Chief Minister whose strong personal collaboration is a model for similar indigenous events; Responding to the requests of these Indigenous food communities to continue creating a platform for the exchange of experiences and ideas for protecting our sustainable local food systems and our food and seed sovereignty; Acknowledging that Indigenous Peoples are breeders of agricultural biodiversity, that women and men hold rich agroecological knowledge and that their food systems need to be nurtured and, wherever possible, scaled up, since these healthy ecosystems produce micronutrient-rich foods;

Affirming and underscoring the provisions and principles contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, and in the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2014, which affirm the rights to food security and nutrition, self-determination, lands, territories and resources, free prior and informed consent, spiritual relationship with land and resources, traditional livelihoods, sustainable resource management systems, customary laws, traditional governance structures and the protection and transmission of traditional knowledge, amongst others; and Sharing the Slow Food and Terra Madre philosophy that everyone has a fundamental right to good, clean and fair food and consequently the responsibility to protect the heritage, tradition and culture that make this possible.



We, the representatives of 170 Indigenous food communities and delegates from 62 countries in Africa, the Americas, the Arctic, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific (see appendix), who have gathered in Shillong, North East India, from 3 to 7 November 2015, to participate at the Second Indigenous Terra Madre, hereby agree by consensus to the following commitments and proposals for action:

1. We highlight the fundamental and spiritual connection that people have to the Earth, and how that relationship is the foundation for the health or ill of our food system;
2. We reiterate that the agrobiodiversity created and maintained by Indigenous Peoples and rural communities throughout the world plays an essential part in achieving agroecological production for assuring improved nutrition for all;
3. We reaffirm that traditional knowledge plays an essential part in ensuring that agrobiodiversity and agroecological practices are maintained and made available for current and future generations;
4. We proclaim that Indigenous Peoples have already demonstrated the many ways in which agrobiodiversity can be used to adapt and build resilience. Adaptation to change, especially climate change, requires the use of the diversity present in and around production and consumption systems. Indigenous food systems can offer solutions to these current global challenges;
5. We call upon Governments and other constitutional bodies to make certain that Indigenous Peoples and local communities who care for and maintain their lands and territories be allowed to continue to protect, sustainably use, restore and enrich the variety of seeds, breeds, fish, bees and other living organisms they host. They must be respected and acknowledged in appropriate ways for their stewardship role and capacity to generate marvellously diverse food for people and cultures. They must be encouraged to nourish and strengthen the languages and traditional knowledge, practices and institutions that evolved with their agrobiodiversity, and be secured in their spiritual domains, collective governance, and management of relevant land, water and natural resources;
6. We encourage our Peoples and communities, including youth, to increase their consumption of local foods, both cultivated and collected, to keep us healthy and nutritionally secure, and we encourage chefs to use native plants and animal ingredients to prepare gourmet meals, thereby educating consumers;
7. We uphold that our concept of wellbeing stems from the combination of social harmony, cultural identity and the meeting of basic needs. United, we conclude that without peace and security there cannot be wellbeing. We call upon all to acknowledge that conflict, unpredictable climate and land alienation have diminished wellbeing;
8. We encourage all of our Peoples, communities and other traditional knowledge holders to identify the “gatekeepers of agrobiodiversity” (local producers/herders/fishers/hunters and gatherers) amongst them—women and men—who maintain, adapt and promote a large diversity of food plants, animal breeds, seeds and medicinals, and thereby are the custodians of our global agrobiodiversity;
9. We support the establishment, consolidation and strengthening of food system-specific networks (e.g., millet, rice, livestock breeders, corn, pollinators, shifting cultivation), so as to exchange experiences and best practices through meetings and learning channels. Members of these networks could then engage in policy dialogue at local, national and international levels;
10. We urge local governments to include in the school curriculum the teaching of agrobiodiversity across food systems, and to promote programs that incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of learning. Additionally, we encourage universities to promote Indigenous scholarly contributions through Indigenous-led research, trainings and programs of action;
11. We encourage our Peoples and communities to organise, in collaboration with local knowledge holders, eat-ins and biodiversity walks through their available forest, grassland, wetland, desert, and other natural areas, as a way for young people to develop a deeper relationship with locally available varieties of wild edibles and medicinal plants;
12. We endorse our Peoples and communities to establish community-based seed/breed banks in order to halt the disappearance of valuable seeds and animal breeds. We call on the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty to lead this initiative at the global level, and we call upon like-minded funders to sustain this initiative;
13. We urge our Peoples and communities to continue writing our narratives, digitally, orally or through any other culturally relevant practice, like sand drawing. Storytelling is “a process of reclaiming culture”, and since culture is not linear or static, our narratives are always evolving and must continue to be told;
14. We stress that our initiatives on food sovereignty, tenurial security and knowledge safeguarding are part of a larger movement to fundamentally transform the nature of economic and political systems away from those

dominated by the state or private corporations, and towards community-centred, ecologically sustainable, socially just, and economically equitable alternative models of human and planetary wellbeing;

15. We further call upon the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty to work with funders and supportive Governments, like the Government of Meghalaya, and NESFAS to promote appropriate intercultural Agroecology Schools that would encourage farmer-to-farmer exchange and traditional knowledge-to-modern knowledge learning circles;
16. We call upon Governments to adopt appropriate policies aimed at strengthening agrobiodiversity and ecologically sustainable food systems, reducing external inputs (chemical fertilisers and pesticides, in primis) and food waste, while promoting short chain distribution channels;
17. We note many food-secure Indigenous societies marked by the maternalover sight of both women and men that is characteristic of matrilineal societies. We encourage the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty to see these as matriarchal, democratic societies, ruled by peace and with equal roles for women and men. Marked also by consensus, cooperation, a forgiving cosmology and caring, such societies provide a much needed international model for social forms that reject all kinds of violence, including violence against women;
18. We recognise the power of youth networks to respond creatively to 21st century challenges and the ability of young Indigenous Peoples to link tradition with innovation in the most effective ways, and support the creation of an Indigenous Youth Network, which lies at the crossroads of Indigenous Terra Madre and the Slow Food Youth Network;
19. We continue to acknowledge the severe multiple impacts of climate change and its causes and urge the global leadership that strong provisions concerning Indigenous rights, nutrition, food sovereignty (including agroecology practices and support to small-scale producers), and the integrity and resilience of social-ecological systems must be included in the implementation of the Paris agreement;
20. We oppose the concept of “climate smart” crops developed by multinationals for their own profit and encourage our Peoples and communities, especially Indigenous women, to identify and catalogue climate resilient crops, rooted in dynamic, co-evolutionary processes between our Peoples and their agricultural landscapes;
21. We call for the implementation by UN Agencies, including FAO, IFAD, UNDP, IUCN, ILO as well as governmental bodies and agencies and supporting NGOs, of training programmes and activities to raise awareness about food sovereignty and related rights of Indigenous Peoples, including securing land rights in the face of land grabbing. We further call for respect and recognition at all levels for Indigenous Peoples’ local food systems, traditional use and practices;
22. We call upon the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in its 15th session to organise a discussion on agrobiodiversity gatekeepers and the networks established during ITM 2015, to raise awareness of the need (and current efforts) to strengthen Indigenous food systems around the world, including dryland agriculture, and pastoralists and other mobile peoples;
23. We desire that ITM becomes an autonomous and integrated Indigenous Peoples network that brings in diverse food communities linked to the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty, Slow Food International and other local, national and global organisations. It will uphold Slow Food’s shared values of good, clean and fair food by strengthening Slow Food in the different territories worldwide;
24. We will disseminate this Agreement through our communities and networks and share updates as to its implementation through social media. We recommend that NESFAS takes the lead by establishing a web-based knowledge network to which all ITM 2015 participants could post their achievements. NESFAS would aggregate the information provided on a quarterly basis and post it on the network;

Finally we express our appreciation for and solidarity with the Khasi People, and thank them, the Government of Meghalaya, the city of Shillong and the villages of Moosakhia, Khweng, Dombah, Mawhiang, Nongwah, Pyrda, Laitsohpliah, Dewlieh and Nongtraw, and NESFAS for their warm hospitality in welcoming us to their traditional homelands. We further express appreciation to Slow Food International, the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty, The Christensen Fund, AgroEcology Fund, Swift Foundation, Bread for the World, Tamalpais Trust, CS Fund, FAO and IFAD for supporting the development of Indigenous Terra Madre 2015. For our Lands, our Peoples, and our Future Generations, we approve this Declaration by consensus on 24 February 2016.

APPENDIX:

INDIGENOUS TRIBES REPRESENTED AT INDIGENOUS TERRA MADRE 2015

AFRICA

AGIKUYU,BAKANJO/BAKONZO, BATWA, BORANA, BORANA OROMO, BURJI , EL MOLO, GAMO, GEDEO, HADIYA, HOR, IMGHRANE,IGBOS, KALANGA, KALENJIN, KONSO, MAASAI, NYIRAMBA, OGIEK, OROMO, OROMO, KARRAYYU, PASTORALIST, RENDILLE, SAMBURU, TSONGA,

AMERICAS

ANISHINAABE, AYMARA, ECASH, GUARANI OCCIDENTAL, HAIDA, HOPI, JURUNA YUDJA/MEDIO, XINGU KANIEN/'KEHAKA, KANIENKEHAKA MOHAWK, KICHWA KARANKI, KIWICHA PURUWA,KOGUI MAYA PENÍNSULA DE YUCATÁN, MAYA TZELTAL, MAYAN KAQCHIKEL, MAPUCHE, MAPUCHE LAFKENCHE ,MDEWAKANTON DAKOTA, METIS, MOHAWK, MUWEKMA OHLONE TRIBE, NAHUA, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, NAVAJO NATION, OGLALA LAKOTA, OJIBWE, OPATA PEOPLE OF SONORA, OTOMÍ DE SAN FRANCISCO, MAGÚ, PUEBLO OF TESUQUE, TEWA, QUECHUA, QOMLE'EC, SATERÉ-MAWÉ, SENEC, NATION/HAUDENOSAUNEE, SYILX, TAÍNO TLA-O-QUI-AHT, WAYUU, WHITE MOUNTIAN APACHE, WICHI, XAKRIABÁS, ZAPOTECO-SIERRA SUR.

ASIA

AINU, AKHA, BAYANSONGINOT, BEDOUIN-SOUTHERN JORDAN, CHANIAGO, DAYAK LUNDAYEH, EVENK, IBAN, ICHANANAW, JAVARA, KALINGA, KAREN, KAZAKH, KHONGOODOR OF BURYAT- MONGOL PEOPLE KUI, KYRGYZ, MAN ZU, MONGOLS, QASHQAI-HEYBATLOO, RYUKYU,SHUGHNAN,SUNUWAR, TAJIK, TAMANG, TSONGOL OF BURYAT-MONGOL PEOPLE TUBULARS, WAKHAN.

EUROPE

CRIMEAN, TATAR, SAMI.

INDIA

ADI, ALUKURUMBA, ANAL, ANGAMI, AO, APATANI, BADGA, BODO, BOTO, CHAKHESANG, CHANG, DARLONG, DEBBARMA, DEORI, GANGTE, GARO SHOLIGA, HMAR, HRANGKHAWL, IRULA, JAINTIA, KARBI, KHIAMNIUNGAN, KONDH, KONYAK, KUKI, LAI LAINGMAI, LAMKANG, LOTH, LUSHAI, MAO, MARA, MAYALI, MEITEI, MISING, MONPA,NYISHI ORAON , POCHURY, POUMAI, PAITE, PANIYA, RONGMEI, RABARI, RENGMA, SANTAL, SIMTE, SUMI, TANGKHUL, THADOU, TODA KATTUNAICKAN, WARLI KHASI, YIMCHUNGER, ZEME,

PACIFIC

ANEITYUM, ATZERA, MARKHAM VALLEY, BINANDERE, BUGOTU, BUNURONG, DHURGA, GORORAVE, GUADALCANAL COMMUNITY, HUITA,KAFESA COMMUNITY, KANAK, LAWAKI COMMUNITY, LELEPA, MAORI, NARAK,YUIN.

Pecha Bareh, Nongwah Village.

“Because we were able to be a host village for ITM and worked together with NESFAS, I feel proud to see that my village has a solar light and is Open Defecation free.”

Tobias Mawlong, Dombah Vilage.

“It is for the first time that our agricultural practices (Sohphlag cultivation and the process of cleaning them) was appreciated by people from outside the village.”



THE ECHOES OF ITM 2015

ITM 2015 was a monumental undertaking, representing a first for the size of the event and the scope of the programming, both for indigenous gatherings of this kind and for Meghalaya. The fact that this was accomplished by a small team of relatively young professionals in the field makes this accomplishment even more remarkable. ITM 2015 certainly achieved its goal of bringing together diverse indigenous peoples from around the world to celebrate and discuss their agriculture, pastoralists and pollinators experiences while also drawing attention to the agroecology of North East India. The event sparked discussion, spawned networks and left delegates wanting to dig deeper on a conversation that only began to scratch the surface in Shillong.

With approximately 10% of the international delegates dropping out due to personal and professional reasons or visa issues, it seemed like there would be a significant gap in leadership, particularly since many of those who could not attend were established forerunners in indigenous rights. Instead, a surprising development was that this gap left space for emerging leaders to step up and let new voices be heard. Indeed, the active presence of youth at the event was felt, and gave encouragement that there is a future for food. Local involvement in the planning and implementation of the event meant that the message of ITM 2015 took hold in Shillong and Meghalaya—both at the government and community level—and residents are now eager to take the next step in implementing what was learned for the benefit of indigenous foodways and the environment. For every local event and even in the global context of food and indigenous gatherings ITM2015 became a benchmark of expectations and comparisons.

ITM 2015 FOLLOWUP

After the dust settled over the 9 communities that were visited by the International delegates, the NESFAS team visited the various villages to gauge and report from there the community's experiences. The communities reported that they have felt honoured to be a part of such a massive event and hope that such events are organised more often. In fact, the communities expressed that they would like to hold such events in smaller scale in their regions. They also expressed their gratitude for the attention received by them from the government and hope that this will only be the starting point of more sustainable development to come to their village in future. The community members said ITM 2015 reminded them of their wealth of traditional knowledge and biodiversity, the pride they feel in their culture and heritage only drives them to strive to protect it and cherish it more.



'Kriah tong doh'- A traditional fishing technique, Khweng
PC:Alethea Kordor Lyngdoh

THE CROSS ROADS OF THE FUTURE

Post ITM 2015 NESFAS took the opportunity to take its learnings from the last three years and chart for itself its future and discuss a possible change in approach. Early in 2016 from the 22nd January to the 4th of February, the team gathered close friends of NESFAS including people like Rucha Chitnis, Dr. Francesco May, Toki Blah, Carmo Noronha, Rathindra Roy, Ajay Nayak, along with board member including Anita Roy, Dr. Kyrham Nongkynrih, Patricia Mukhim and NESFAS Chairman Phrang Roy and Vice Chairman Carl Rangad to establish further paths of perseverance and impacts.

Areas of focus that were already established earlier included Food and Festivals, Livelihoods, Community Initiative, Communication and Participatory video and newer areas that were adopted included Agroecology and Rural Habitats & Infrastructures. These areas were approached as direct points of concern from the partner communities. Each of the areas were discussed in detail, keeping in mind the vision and mission of NESFAS. The road ahead was paved out and positioned under the following heads:

RURAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

Agrobiodiversity Networks (Millet, Pollinators, Shifting Cultivation, Cook's Alliance)

Youth & Education (School Garden, Agrobiodiversity Walk, Workshops/Seminars/Conferences, Internships)

Local Events (Seed fair/Diversity Fair, Mei-Ramew Day (Mother Earth Day), Eat-ins)

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Communications Unit acts as the mouthpiece of NESFAS and at the same time an internal documentation portal. The actions of this unit link the world's perception of the organization and the communities it services. The team aims to truly translate "Local Voices, Global Audiences" by sharing

LIVELIHOOD UNIT:

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) (Organic Certification for farmers) Farmer Markets, Mei-Ramew Cafes, Mei Ramew Weaves, Mei Ramew Festivals, Eco-Tourism, Agro-based handi & building craft

HABITAT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

Assessing available resources (Physical, manpower, cultural and traditional skills)
Village mapping and planning (Understanding land use and land cover)
Housing and Infrastructure
Waste Management (Compost making, waste recycling, etc.)
Water Management (Conservation of water sources, rain water harvesting and storage, etc.)



Agroecology Training Workshop with DR. Francisco Rosado May
PC: NESFAS

ORIENTATION ON AGROECOLOGY

Agroecology was recognised as an ideal tool for NESFAS in its aim to promote and protect agrobiodiversity with special focus on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge. The concept was formally introduced to the NESFAS team by Dr. Francesco J Rosado May, earlier in September when he visited Meghalaya and visited numerous villages to review the scenario keeping agroecology in mind. He joined the team again for the retreat where he helped the team, along with youth and community members present, define the term Agroecology in the local context. The exercise brought forth the following definitions -

-Agroecology is the study that focuses on modifying agricultural science and implementing it considering the ecosystem which is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable incorporating the Traditional ecological knowledge with the participation of the local community.

-Agroecology is a science which brings together the different concepts and principles of ecology, sustainability, indigenous/traditional practices and technological know-how.

TRAINERS WORKSHOP ON AGROECOLOGY

These internal sessions were followed by a Orientation workshop for young professionals and rural youth to become Agroecology Trainers. Dr Francisco Rosado May created a curriculum of classroom modules and field visits to engage with landscapes and farmers to mark this future for Agroecology. These modules covered Abiotic factors in Agroecosystems, Biotic factors in Agroecosystems. The visits to the rural communities and then to the local market of Shillong, aimed towards understanding of the various socio-cultural dynamics in addition to the sciences that influence the overall system that also marks NESFAS journey from Farm to Fork.

SCHEDULE

Day 1 - Abiotic factors in Agroecosystems

Day 2- Biotic factors in Agroecosystems

Day 3 - Types of food products available in the market at a time of year, which of these vegetables are sourced locally and which of these are imported from other states, the cost of the different agro products and investigate the extent of influence of middlemen, and most importantly to understand the producers connection with their products in Lewduh.

Day 4 - Socio Economic Factors affecting Agroecosystems



HIGHLIGHTS:
NESFAS CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES 2015-16

April

April 6th - 18th : 2nd Khneng Workshop at Mustoh. It focused on advanced patterns following analysis of old pieces of embroidery. A third workshop was conducted later on the possibilities of use of natural fibers as thread for Khneng.

April 6th : A meeting with the representatives of the 40 host villages at the MBDA hall to discuss roles at the ITM 2015 and preparations required, with Dr. AK Nongkynrih.

School Garden at Nongnah inaugurated

School Garden at Nongktieh inaugurated



May

May 9th : Dr. Gleb Raygorodetsky, Conservation biologist visits Nongtraw to study the Shifing Cultivation Practice there.

May 12th : State Level Open Defecation Free (ODF) training at the Gurudwara, Sikh Centre, Shillong, in collaboration with the District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) with the 40 host communities facilitated by Mr Mark West Kharkongor, District Coordinator, Water & Sanitation Mission.

May 13th -16th : NESFAS holds talk on “Back to the Origins of Taste” at the CALM (Creative Arts, Literature and Music) fest at State Central Library. Friends of NESFAS Joel Basumatari and Rahul Marak, NESFAS Board Member Kong Bibiana Ranee with moderator Rahul Antao, Consultant to NESFAS, discuss what ‘taste’ is, how is it manifested in the world of creative arts and what are the cultural aspects around it.

May 19th : Session at Laitsophliah, East Khasi Hills, for the District level orientation on ODF status facilitated by Mr Mark West.

June

June 5th : Dr. T Longvah, Scientist and Director in charge of the National Institute of Nutrition meets with NESFAS to discuss a collaboration for the case study of Nutritional status of Women and Children in certain areas of Meghalaya in preparation of the ITM 2015.

June 6th : Community plantation programme conducted in Khweng to observe World Environment Day with government given saplings to increase Eri food plant production.

June 22-26th : Training by Keystone Foundation on Organic Agriculture and Participatory Guarantee System certification of the communities of Khweng,Nongtraw,Moosakhia, Mulieh,Dewlieh, Laitsophliah followed by a field visit to and finally a discussion with NESFAS team



July

July 1st : Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 was launched

August

August 17th : Meeting with the 40 co-hosting communities at Pastoral Centre-Shillong, to discuss the communities' participation in the various discussions at ITM 2015 and Govt. Schemes needed by the villages.



August

August 18th : Meeting of Friends of NESFAS attended by 13 people including Board Members of NESFAS, lecturers, and government officials, among others. The session was facilitated by Mr Rathrindra Roy, Facilitator of learning, strategic thinking and change as well as a close supporter of NESFAS.

August 22nd : The Shillong's Sikh Community extends a hand of bonhomie to NESFAS and offers to delegates from 52 countries to a *langar* (community feast) and also support the food festival at Mawphlang with volunteers and a stall of authentic Punjabi Food.A NESFAS representation comprising Chairman - Mr. Phrang Roy, Associate - Janak Jassal, Consultant for Capacity Building on Slow Food Issues and Networks - Rahul Antao and Program Officer for Indigenous Partnership- Sara Manetto met representatives from the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Shillong.

August 20th-25th : Visiting Agroecologist from Mexico and founding member of University of Quintana Roo, Mexico, Dr Francisco J Rosado May visits Porksai and Pydengmawlieh in the Lyngam area, West Khasi on the 20th and 21st of August, and Khweng in Ribhoi on the 25th of August and Moosakhia in West Jaintia Hills on the 25th of August to get a sense of the various agricultural practices of Meghalaya.

August 26th : Following a hectic week travelling to various parts of Meghalaya, Dr Francisco J Rosado May ended his stay in Meghalaya with two back-to-back lectures. The first was held at the Integrated Agriculture Training Centre, Upper Shillong at a meeting with various officers from the Directorates of Agriculture and Horticulture called by Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Mr Pochester Kharkongor. The departments have been supporting NESFAS in its various agriculture related activities. The second was held later in the day at the MBDA Hall, Shillong which was organized by the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority. These lectures were the second and third of the NESFAS Lecture Series that were organised as a run up to the Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) 2015 locally known as International Mei-Ramew (IMR) 2015.

August 28th : NESFAS attended the Millet Festival in Chizame, hosted by North East Network on the 28th August 2015. The millet festival was a celebration of the millet farmers of North East India, with representatives from Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur. The NESFAS delegation included Dr Francisco, who contributed to the festival program with a speech on agroecology, congratulating the farmers on their indigenous biodiverse farming practices.

August 31st : Father Anthony Marak, the Vice Principal of Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Tura, visited NESFAS with the preparatory news for ITM 2015.

September

September 1st : NESFAS chairman, Mr. Phrang Roy inspires youth representatives from 50 North east tribes at a session hosted by the Department of Sociology, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

September 2nd :International Mei-Ramew / Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 shifts into final gear as the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Chair of the State Level Steering Committee of the IMR/ITM 2015, NESFAS and Government departments meet and share enthusiastic steps being taken towards the success of the event.

September 4th : Bethany Society in partnership with NESFAS organizes solid waste management session for ITM 2015 villages at the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority Hall.

September 4th : A tie up between NESFAS and the Institute of Hotel Management Shillong towards facilitating skill development in the areas of hospitality and culinary skill.

September 5th : The Women's College Social Work Department (BSW students) initiates a college vegetable garden under the Youth Food Club banner of NESFAS.

September 8th : The Cooks' Alliance from ten host villages displayed an array of delicious traditional foods at the NESFAS office in the presence of Culinary expert Dr. Ashish Chopra and NESFAS Food and Flavour department for review.

September 11th : Orientation programme with the teachers of 9 visiting villages on School garden and their management.

September 11th : Orientation of 1st semester social work students of Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong.



September

September 11th : 'Clean and Green' Shillong Campaign kicks into gear with a meetig with the Deputy Commissioner of East Khasi Hills Shillong, Shri P.S. Dkhar and officers of the various government departments along with Rangbah Shnongs of various localities in the state.

September 11th : Meeting with the communities of Mawphlang for home stays, volunteers, Mei- Ramew committees, waste management, tie up with IHM for training of some of the youth of Mawphlang, cultural representation, and security during the event.

September 3rd : Meeting with the Theme Song team comprising of Mr. S. Mukhim, Ms. G. Khongjee, Bah Kit Shangpliang, Bah Rana Kharkongor, Mr. P. Marbaniang & Mr. R. Kharshiing for the ITM 2015 Theme Song.

September 17th : Artiste Group shares the first cut of theme song for feedback with NESFAS team.

September 22nd to 25th : NESFAS promotes ITM 2015 at the 7th NEAT (North East Agro Business and Trade) Fest 2015 organised by NERCOMP. The Chief Minister inaugurated the event and shared appreciation.

September 25th : Medical Eye Check Up of the 12 Khneng Embroidery artisans in Bansara Eye clinic in collaboration with Special Purpose Vehicles Society, Shillong.



October

October 2nd : Khrawsing Eco Club members, in collaboration with NESFAS and the support of the Block Development Officer, Shri P.T. Passah conducted a cleaning drive at the Mawngap Stand.

October 3rd - 6th : Representative of NESFAS and the North East of India, Kegitar Lyngdoh Lyngkhloi, Associate NESFAS, participates in "We Feed The Planet".

October 10th : Press Conference on ITM 2015 at the Shillong press club.

October 12th: The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in preparation for the ITM 2015 trained students from Shillong on Rapporteurship.

October 13th : Flavours of Mei-Ramew, an ITM 2015 Pre-event, was organised at Hotel Pinewood where the Chefs Alliance comprising national, international chefs and those from the villages of Meghalaya served up a delectable indigenous cuisine which was tasted by Chief Minister Dr Mukul Sangma and his cabinet colleagues Ms Roshan Warjri and Ms Deborah Marak. Also present was the State Chief Secretary, Mr PBO Warjri and officers connected to the ITM 2015. The Chief Minister, on this day also released a CD with the theme song for the ITM 2015.

October 17th : A Discussion on the "Clean and Green Shillong" was organized by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, EKHD, Meghalaya at At Arts & Culture Hall, State Central Library, Shillong. Various principals of schools and colleges and business houses attended the program.

October 17th : St. Edmunds College organised a photography & art exhibition that highlighted tradition, culture and Mei-Ramew (Mother Earth).

October 26th : Volunteer Training conducted at the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority hall by the event management company for the ITM 2015, Fountainhead.

October 31st : Chief Minister Mukul Sangma hosted a Pre- ITM 2015 evening, 'ling Shet Ja', the Earth Kitchen, at the Meghalaya House in Delhi. Also unveiled was the Exhibition 'From the Eyes of Mother Earth' by eminent photographer Andre J Fanthome.



November

November 3rd to 7th : Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 takes place over 5 days with a grand finale, the Mei-Ramew Food Festival at Mawphlang receiveing a footfall of over 70,000 people.

November 14th : A week after the close of the ITM 2015, 18 of the 40 host villages of Meghalaya who participated at the ITM 2015 gathered together at the MBDA Hall, Shillong to discuss the Shillong Declaration which was an outcome of the discussions that took place during the ITM 2015.

November 18th : The organizers of Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 hand over the International Mei-Ramew Food Festival venue, the Lawkyntang Mawphlang and the Heritage Village, to the Hima Mawphlang in a formal manner. The groups present for the hand over includ the Hima Mawphlang, the Rangbah Shnong, the Seng Kynthei and the community members of Mawphlang. Following a walk around the premise to inspect the cleaning work done, the group visit the compost pit created and maintained by the Waste Management team of ITM 2015. The Waste Management team was created and coordinated by NESFAS, Indian Youth Climate Network and Bethany Society.



December

December 6th : To observe Terra Madre Day, the students and teachers of Lairsluid LP school, Ribhoi, conducted a cleaning drive in and around the school premises. The school children also planted around 20 tree saplings of 3 local varieties.

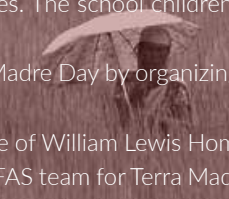
December 10th : The NESFAS family observed the Terra Madre Day by organizing an eat in with foods cooked with local ingredients.

December 11th : The trainees of the Kids Kitchen Initiative of William Lewis Home for boys, Mawphlang, host a lunch for the fellow residents of the home and the NESFAS team for Terra Madre Day. Along with the lunch, under the Umbrella of the Kids Kitchen Initiative, a drawing session around the theme of "Mother Earth".

December 15th : Laitsohpliah RCLP/UP School celebrated Terra Madre day with interactive sessions, music and Bam Khana (Community Feast)

December 18th : Pyrda Holy Family RCLP School celebrated Terra Madre day through interactive sessions where teachers and parents gave their insight on 'Respect to Mother Earth.' The children composed songs on Mother Earth followed by an eat-in traditionally called Bam Khana with teachers, parents and children enjoying a lunch prepared with indigenous vegetables.

December 16th : To celebrate Terra Madre Day, the school children and teachers of Wahsohra LP SSA school - East Khasi Hills District, organised an interactive workshop on the importance of Seed Selection, Storage and their Usage followed by a drawing session on the theme' Mei- Ramew' or Mother Earth and then an eat-in.



January 2016

January 21st -30th : Retreat for the NESFAS team over 10 days with focus on the following topics -

Day 1 - Rapid assessment of ITM 2015 learnings: "The Future We Want and What Will Get Us There?".

Day 2 - Giving Direction to NESFAS with focus on various pillars of the organization.

Day 3 -Topic: Orientation on agroecology by Dr. Francesco May.

Day 4 - One-on-One discussions between leads, senior managers and resource persons on concepts and work plans.

Day 5 - Field trip to Laitsohplah village was organized to give Leads opportunities to hold discussions with communities and resource persons to align their ideas and plans to ground the truth.

Day 6 - Getting Things Done

Day 7 - A talk on communication by Kong Patricia Mukhim, Editor, The Shillong Times.

Day 8 - Presentations by the NESFAS pillars

Day 9 - Agroecology and Inter-cultural Studies Conversation Café & finalization of work plan.

Day 10 - Finalization of work plan & a talk on Leveraging Innovations, Enterprise and Markets Conversation Café by Rathindra Roy



February

January 30th - February 3rd : Training on Agroecology by Dr Francisco Rosadao May for future Agroecology trainers and NESFAS staff.

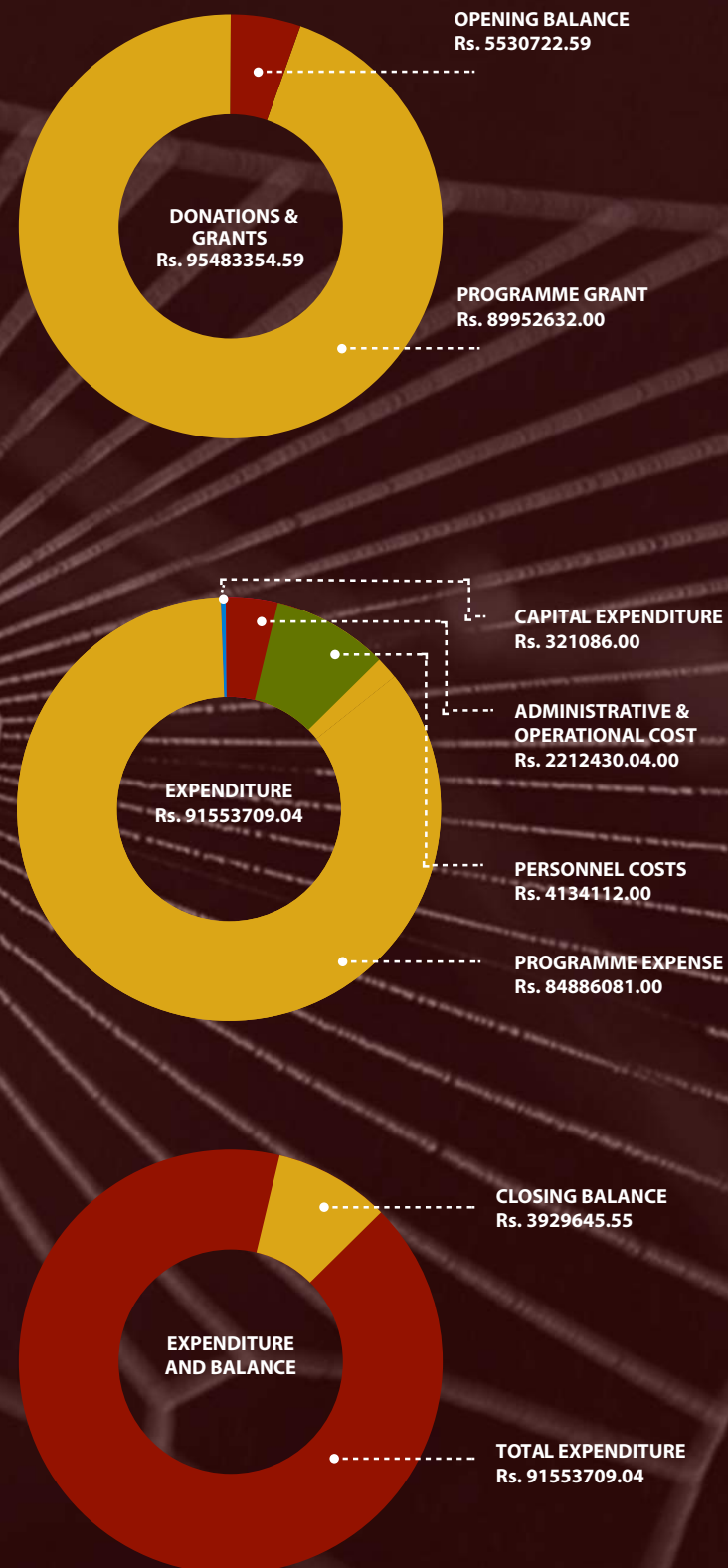
March

March 8th - 9th : NESFAS, for a second time around, was invited to be a part of the International Women's Day and Biodiversity Festival at Chizami, Nagaland, annually organised by the North East Network (NEN), a women's rights organisation working in the north east region of India with a focus on women's human rights. NESFAS representatives including Merrysha Nongrum, Associate, and Custodian Farmers Kong Yardalin Kharbhoi, Laitthemlangсах Village; Kong Spermon Kharnaioir, Pyrda Village and Bah Rielsing Muksor, Moosakhia Village joined participants from other states and Nagaland in celebrating women and biodiversity.

March 10th - 16th : NESFAS participated in a 7-day celebration of bamboo, a collaborative effort of the India Gandhi National Centre for The Arts, Dept. of Culture and Creative Studies, NEHU and Riti Academy of Visual Art, at the Cultural Centre at NEHU. The event also included a symposium cum workshop on the significance of bamboo in the Socio-Cultural and and Economic development of NE India. NESFAS communities of Khweng, Ri Bhoi; Nongtraw, EKH, and Chandigre, Garo Hills prepared food for visitors. Bamboo crafts form various NE were also sold there. Apart from bamboo art, on display were renowned German Architect, Markus Heinsdorff's work on bamboos.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2015-2016



GLOSSARY

Agrobiodiversity: Agricultural biodiversity, sometimes called 'agro-biodiversity' encompasses the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms which are necessary to sustain key functions of the agro-ecosystem, its structure, and processes for, and in support of, food production and food security.

Agrobiodiversity Networks: Initiated by NESFAS, these networks namely - Millet, Pollinators, Shifting Cultivation, Rice, and Cooks' Alliance, connect individuals, communities, institutes and organisations working in these fields.

Agroecology: Agroecology is the study of ecological processes that operate in agricultural production systems.

Agronomy: Agronomy is the science and technology of producing and using plants for food, fuel, fibre and land reclamation.

Anganwadi: Meaning "courtyard shelter" in Indian languages, they were started by the Indian government in 1975, as part of the Integrated Child Development Services programme to combat child hunger and malnutrition.

Ark of Taste: An international catalogue of endangered heritage foods maintained and coordinated by the international Slow Food movement based in Bra, Italy.

Biocultural: Biocultural diversity is defined by Luisa Maffi, Co-founder and Director of Terralingua, an international NGO devoted to sustaining the biocultural diversity of life, as "the diversity of life in all its manifestations: biological, cultural, and linguistic - which are interrelated (and possibly co-evolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system."

Custodian farmers: Farmers, who maintain, safeguard and promote agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge of farming practices.

Digital Story Telling: It refers to a short form of digital media production that allows people to share aspects of their life.

Family farming: A means of organising agricultural, forestry, fishery, pastoral and aquacultural production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour.

Food Security: This concept is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences.

Food Sovereignty: A concept that allows communities to control the way food is produced, traded and consumed.

Indigenous: Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native to a region.

Indigenous Terra Madre: Organised for the first time in 2011 in Jokkmokk, Sweden, the Indigenous Terra Madre is the Slow Food's event dedicated entirely to the Indigenous People.

Jhum Cultivation: Jhum also known as Shifting Cultivation, Swidden Farming or 'Slash and Burn Agriculture', rotational farming is an ancient form of agriculture practiced by hill-dwelling communities. It is characterised by the use of fire to prepare fields for cultivation and the subsequent abandonment of those fields to let the soil recover its nutrients.

Matriarchy: A form of social structure in which the mother is- 1) the co-head of the family, 2) the custodian of land resources and 3) the determining factor in family or clan decisions and legacy. Not to be confused with 'Matrilineal', where the descent is reckoned in the female line.

Mei-Ramew: The Khasi (local language of the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya, India) expression for 'Mother Nature or Mother Earth'.

Mei-Ramew Café: A local food joint that operates in line with the principles of 'Good, Clean and Fair'.

Mei-Ramew Festival: An annual festival organised by NESFAS.

Natural Farming: Natural Farming is a form of sustainable agriculture that dictates the use of natural materials, observes the laws of nature and respects the rights of crops and livestock, along with the avoidance of manufactured inputs and equipment.

Participatory: Affording the opportunity for individual participation; "participatory democracy".

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): A set of participatory and largely visual techniques for assessing group/community resources, identifying and prioritising problems and appraising strategies for solving them.

Participatory Video: Participatory video is a form of media, in which a group or a community creates their own film, allowing them to explore issues, voice concerns or simply be creative and tell stories.

People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR): Biodiversity registers documented and maintained by communities.

Pollinators: Agents (mostly biotic) that help in carrying pollen grains from the male anther to the female stigma of a flower to complete the natural process of how plants reproduce.

Presidia: A project run by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity for quality produces that are at the risk of extinction, the Presidia Project strives to protect unique regions and ecosystems, recover traditional processing methods and safeguard native breeds and local plant varieties.

Sensory Games/Taste Workshops: Games that use innovative approaches to food and taste education by getting participants to use all their five senses of taste, touch, sound, smell and sight, to guess what a given food item is.

Terra Madre: Launched by the Slow Food, Terra Madre is a network of food communities, that comprises groups of small-scale food producers, committed to producing quality food in a responsible and sustainable way.

Traditional Knowledge: Knowledge, know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming a part of its cultural or spiritual identity.

Youth Food Movement: The Youth Food Movement is part of an international network which was launched in Australia in 2011. It aims to bring young people together around food and make them aware of their power as conscious consumers, by building an understanding and value for the food we eat.

GRATITUDE FOR SUPPORT



GOVERNMENT OF
Meghalaya

सत्यमेव जयते

TIP and NESFAS would like to acknowledge the major role played by the Government of Meghalaya for the encouragement from the onset and drive throughout the journey, that ensured the success of the Indigenous Terra Madre 2015 or the International Mei-Ramew 2015. From being the single largest financial supporter of the event by contributing 50% of the total cost of the event to the upgradation of the infrastructure of the host villages. From the consistent sanctioning of the funds for the pre-ITM activities to the active involvement of all the government officials in being forthcoming with physical assistance from their respective departments. The initiatives and upgradations became the installers of ambition for the people of the State as it got ready to welcome the world of indigenous peoples. The Public Works Department (PWD) bent backwards for the repair of roads, PHE took up special programs for water connectivity and the toilets at the venues; alternate-energy benchmarks in solar street lighting; KHADC for beautification of entry to the Sacred Groves; the BDO of Mawphlang used all his resources and manpower for mobilising the people of Mawphlang that expedited the ODF(Outdoor Defecation Free) works, home stays, volunteers, the support from the DIPR in ensuring the outreach and much more. Over all govt. sanctioned about INR 14.67 Crores (USD 2.2 Million) towards ITM 2015 expenses to NESFAS and the event would not have been possible without this financial support or successful without the consistent efforts of all the associated Departments of the Government. The proactive support of the Government in aligning with the activities and policies such as the Organic Mission, scrapping of schemes on fertilizers and plant protection chemicals, sanitation and hygiene through the ODF program has helped prepare the villages as showcases and give hope for future policy making. To quote one of the delegates from Africa, who said that the role played by the Government in supporting the indigenous movement is impressive and serves as an example for global governments to empower its people. NESFAS has been privileged and encouraged by the Government of Meghalaya and its various departments for supporting this mammoth task and we hope for its continued support in chartering future challenges and ambitions as stated in the "Shillong Declaration".

A SPECIAL THANKS TO



CONTACT NESFAS:

North East Slow Food & Agrobiodiversity Society
Kerie Ville, Arbuthnott Road, Laitumkhrach,
Shillong 793003, Meghalaya, India

infonesfas@gmail.com
+91 8575039852
www.nesfas.in