

NERSWN

2015-16

*Yet another year passes by,
Journeying towards the peaceful sky;
Turning the red stains into bloomy rose,
The smiles spread across the rosy nose.*

*The path of Peace, justice & dignity,
Has brought our thought and vision to unity;
Together we are, together we will,
Strive to build the hearts of broken hill.*

*Transforming lives being our anthem,
Always believed education as our totem;
Infant we were, adolescent we are,
Yet miles to travel far.*



From Chairperson's Desk

12th years have gone by. NERSWN began as a small group of people wanting to do constructive work for the region. Today, it has transformed into an institution that is responsive to the issues of the region. In last twelve years, it has faced tremendous challenges including ethnic conflict, large scale internal displacement, political instability, armed violence and so forth. However, taking the challenges head on, it has only grown and grown with full speed.

The fact that it operates with six programmatic themes, built a sprawling campus for smooth functioning, reaches out to 400 villages and 200,000 populations is really an achievement that marches towards the dream of the founders.

At this moment of stepping into 13th years of successful voyage, I congratulate each one at NERSWN. I also thank them for their relentless efforts and commitment to contribute towards breaking vicious cycle of poverty and marginalization.

I also take this opportunity to extend gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all our partners, generous donors, supporters, well wishers and particularly community that we work with for their kind support, encouragement, care and love.

Let us all strive to do even better in future. Thank you all so much.

Sincerely yours'



Birphung Narzary
Chairperson-Cum-Director
NERSWN, Kokrajhar



A Note from Executive Director

Friends and colleagues, it has been an enriching and exciting journey so far. When we began, there was only enthusiasm to do something in life, however; 12 years have helped us to add a bit of deliberateness in our action.

Last 12 years are filled with learning and action. Every passing year, NERSWN with the help of its vibrant governing board, generous partners, supportive community and demanding surroundings have added new feathers to its programmes.

In the backdrop of protracted conflict, large scale internal displacement, shrinking democratic spaces, limited financial resources, I think we can claimed to have done our job sensibly. Courage to defeat the fear of unknown has led us to what we are today. Tomorrow too is unknown, maybe we will have to follow the same path, if we wish to see even better change in the days to come at least in our surroundings.

On behalf of NERSWN team, I take this opportunity to extend our gratefulness and indebtedness to all our partners, supporters and friends for the generous support and for kindly being part of journey so far.

All my colleagues at NERSWN thank you so much for all your support and help. I am really grateful to all of you for giving me wonderful opportunity to be your co-worker.

We solicit help, cooperation and guidance for our future endeavours too, thank you.

Sincerely yours'



Raju Kr. Narzary
Executive Director
NERSWN, Kokrajhar

Peace & Justice Programmes

Relief, Resettlement and Recovery: Post December 2014 ethnic conflict, NERSWN carried out relief work to reduce human crisis in more than 42 relief camps across Kokrajhar district reaching out to more than 100,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It has distributed Non Food Items, Food Items, provided Water Sanitation and Hygiene Facilities with generous support from Oxfam India, Tata Trust, Care India, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Action Aid India, Caring Friends Mumbai, the action north east trust and other individual donors.

When IDPs returned to their native villages, NERSWN channelized its resources towards meaningful recovery work reaching out to 36 violence affected villages inhabited by different ethnic groups. In this NERSWN has Provided Un-Conditional Cash Transfer to 120 most marginalized families with an amount of INR 6500/- each, Conditional Cash Transfer to 450 with an amount of INR 6500/- WASH facilities to 600 households and cash for work to hundreds of conflict affected families.

Peace Committee Formation: On New Year's Eve, a small quarrel erupted on a minor issue of vegetable tilling, and two communities came face to face in an almost riot like situation in Bidyapur of Chirang district. In order to prevent flaring up of tensions between the Bodos and Bengali Muslims, NERSWN with the active support of, the action north east trust, Chirang and





members from Lower Assam NGO Forum started continuous dialogues separately with both communities and their leaders. Finally, after a series of consultations, a Peace Committee was formed on 6th of January 2016 at Bidyapur Police Station. It was one of the most successful reconciliation initiatives so far.

Local Mohalla Samiti's for Peace:

Post 2012 and post 2014 ethnic conflict, NERSWN has promoted 4 Local Mohalla Samiti's in most violence hit and sensitive areas such as Chakrasilla, Choraikhola,

Korida Chandla (Fakiragram) and Kazigaon. These Local Mohalla Samitis besides regular interactive meetings for confidence building measures have organized several events for bringing peace and stability in their respective localities. The village elders with the support from youths have organized several events for ensuring security, reconciliation and lasting peace. These initiatives have been possible with the generous support from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK.

Peace Rally: A Peace Rally was conducted by NERSWN and Lower Assam NGO Forum on 23rd Dec, 2015 on condemnation of 23rd December Massacre of innocent people in Kokrajhar and Sonitpur Districts. In these Rallies hundreds of peace loving people from different estranged communities participated overwhelmingly.

15th August Celebration for Peace and Reconciliation: Nilaijhora and Sukan Baonai two villages with 5 hamlets have been burnt to ashes four times in a span of 15 years. More than half of families have not returned after the long term internal displacement post each of the conflict. In the after math of 23rd

December 2014 massacre of innocent Adivashis across 3 districts of Assam, all the hamlets were again turned into ashes. Many people have lost their precious lives too. Reluctantly, few families returned amidst the tight security coverage. Nevertheless, all socio-cultural ties have been snapped with the estranged community.

With the view to reconciled the estrange communities a day long sports, cultural, interactive sessions, children's rally etc were organized on India's Independence Day of 15th August 2015. People for first the time in the area turned up in large numbers, chatted with smiles and laughter, vowed for peace, played for unity, sang and danced with hopes for better future.

Suluk-Gwjwn Vidyalaya, Jhawarbil: With multiple purposes of contributing towards peace building in the region, NERSWN had started a school with the kind support from National Foundation for India, New Delhi. Though the primary objective of the school is to ensure basic education for internally displaced Adivashi children, the larger purpose is to build responsible citizens who in turn will stand for peace and justice. Thus the school is named as Suluk-Gwjwn Vidyalaya, Jhawarbil (*read-Peace Academy in Santhali and Bodo*).



Health Programme

Health programme being the oldest in the organization, it has grown with many branches. While the community health remains the focus, the mental health, water sanitation and hygiene, nutrition promotion, empowering community to take actions for their own health, promoting gender equity for health etc have been the some aspects of health that NERSWN deals with.



Strengthening Community Based Health Institutions: In the year 2015-16 total of 100 Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committees, have been given orientation on different policies and legislation through regular village level focus group discussion, block level workshop and district level workshop. Similar orientations were extended to 30 Sub-Centre Management Committees, 100 ICDS Centre Management Committees and 150 School Management Committees. People's entitlement under National Health Mission, Swach Bharat Abhiyan, National Food Security Act 2013, Right to Education Act 2009, Assam Nutrition Mission etc have been elaborately discussed and debated. This strategy has enabled the people to take part in the decision making processes more efficiently.

Advocacy Events: Total of 4 block and district level advocacy events have been organized in last one year. 1 BTC Level Consultation was also organized. In these events duty bearers and different stakeholders especially government department such as Health, Education, PHE, Social Welfare, Rural development department and people's representative also have taken part. These events have helped in creating a synergy of action of different government department and community party participation.

Monthly Mental Health Camp:

2000 people with mental illness were given care and treatment through the Monthly Mental Health Camp in past 1 year, with a camp being organized every month with attendance of a psychiatrist from NEIGRIMS, Shillong and a General Physician from RNB Civil Hospital, Kokrajhar. This initiative has also led



to a regular functioning of OPD at the district hospital, as well as regular referrals of severe cases to Guwahati Medical College and Borpeta Medical College.

Staff Capacity Building: It is essential that when dealing with the mental health field, training is imparted to all those involved in the change-making process. The programme personnel of the project, supported by PHF, UK underwent three phases of Art Based Therapy training, imparted by renowned resource person Mr. Vikramjit Sinha. This training was useful in helping the project team deal with personal, emotional, social, cultural and psychological issues that are associated with conflict in the region.



Training of ASHA workers in Psycho-Social Intervention: Though mental illness is widespread in villages, few understand it or are able to identify it. To tackle this, 4 trainings were conducted for over 150 ASHA workers, ASHA Supervisors and ANMs.

Home Visits: Eliminating the taboo associated with mental illness is a major focus area. Over a 200 homes of people with mental illness have been visited by the NERSWN

health team in this period. The objective of these visits was to provide on the field counselling, monitor the medication, spread awareness about mental illness, promote family care and others. It was encouraging to find that treatment had led to improvement, with 2 youth having recovered enough to seek employment.

Caregiver's meeting: Other stakeholders involved with mental illness treatment are caregivers. 4 Caregivers Meets were organized, with an attendance of over 300 family members of patients. Games, songs, dance and other art-based methods were used to provide psychological support and much needed recreation for caregivers. These events have become a common platform for sharing each other's pain, agony, frustration, joy and success, thereby proving to be a major support structure.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene: In an area strife with water disease, the NERSWN team with the support of Oxfam chlorinated water sources in conflict affected villages. More than 500 different water sources have been chlorinated to provide safe drinking water and prevent water born diseases. It also provided 40 new handpumps and 150 latrines to most needy families.

Public Health Promotion: PHP Activities supported by Oxfam India were carried out in 34 targeted villages in order to demonstrate the proper use of toilets, importance of personal hygiene, systematic disposal of waste, hand-washing practice and testing of safe water.



Women's Programmes

Since inception, women's issue has been a core focus of NERSWN. Initially, village community mobilization began by working with women-folk from the foothills of Bhutan. In a voyage that has surpassed a decade, women's programs in the organization have travelled quite a distance. Carrying forward from the previous year, the following activities are some of the notable endeavours that were carried out this year:



Women Street Vendors' Support Initiative: One of the oldest initiatives in the organization, mobilization of women street vendors has been continued, by capacity-building, strengthening of collectives and facilitation for claiming rights and entitlement. These women now have an understanding of gender dynamics in society and seek equality and justice in all spheres. The result has been the formation of 2 strong women vendor organizations- Kokrajhar Aijw Falangi Afad (Kokrajhar Business Women Association) and Gossaigaon Aijw Falangi Afad (Gossaigaon Business Women Association). Both these organizations now are visible in all the processes of both the towns.

Kokrajhar Aijw Falangi Afaad (KAFA): Formed in 2010, KAFA has made quite a departure in promoting the interests of women vendors. Being more than just a collective for convenience, the women involved have stood by each other in sorrow and in happiness. Though their demand from the government for an all-women market at the heart of Kokrajhar city is yet to be fulfilled, the year 2015

saw a remarkable step forward with the allotment of a plot of land by the Kokrajhar Municipal Board for a market place. This is a quantum jump over the previous roadside space which had created mutual inconvenience for both commuters and street vendors.

This year KAFA has celebrated its 8th Foundation Day with great fanfare, has sat for 4 General Body Meetings and 6 Executive Meetings and their demand for a reduced tax rate for street vendors, basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities at workplace, and an all-women market have been taken up by the Municipal Board and the BTC government.

Gossaigaon Aijw Falangi Afaad (GAFA): Formed in 2008, GAFA too, consisting of women vendors in Gossaigaon, celebrated its 8th Foundation Day this year, and has collectively been dealing with day-to-day issues faced by its members.



Women's Bank: Both KAFA and GAFA started financial bank to provide internal lending facilities to its members. Both the associations have INR 200,000/ each to lend small amount of money to the needy members at the interest rates of just 2%. In 2015-16 total of 70 people have received small loan.

Women's Cycle Bank: Both GAFA and KAFA also has one Women's Cycle Bank each. Both the association started the cycle bank with an amount of just INR 10,000/-. Till date two associations together has given 35 cycle loan in last four years.

Women Self Help Group: Until 2015, NERSWN has formed and promoted 37 women self help groups. These groups are collectivised into 3 different SHG Federations. All these federations have been linked with National Rural Livelihood Mission and Banks. Besides, the revolving fund and the credit linkages for internal lending to meet the small financial needs in the family, the Women SHG Federations are taking up several meaningful transformative initiatives in the villages such as preventing child marriage, ensuring education for out of school children, tackling trafficking in women and children, reducing alcoholism and so on. NERSWN team is really overjoyed with the progress made so far in this journey.



Aijw Falangi Bantha 2016 (Women Entrepreneur Award 2016): This Award was instituted by NERSWN in 2010, with a goal to give recognition to the remarkable contribution made by women entrepreneurs in the region, for economic and social upliftment. The Award is presented to individuals who despite difficult circumstances, manage to excel in a self-initiated enterprise. The 5th edition of Aijw Falangi Bantha 2016 has been conferred upon Ms. Demola Mushahary on the occasion International Women's Day celebration.

Education & Children's Programme



With children being the future of any nation, NERSWN recognizes that change has to start at the earliest stage of human development. Circumstances have made it so; that children are the receivers of abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. For this reason, all NERSWN's programme by now have child rights as cross cutting themes besides a large education and children's programme. Be it through Child

Protection initiatives, Education initiatives or Childs' Rights initiatives, NERSWN aims at taking holistic approaches to tackle problems that children face.

The Suluk-Gwjwn Vidyalaya: In last five years, the Sulukh-Gwjwn Vidyalaya, (*Read Peace Academy in both Santhali and Bodo language*) has imparted free and quality education to more than 1200 children who are victims of repeated ethnic & armed conflicts. Within a 12 km radius of Jhawarbil (8 Adivasi hamlets), there is complete absence of educational institution; resulting in hundreds of children being deprived of fundamental right to education. Thus, this school



became the only institution for ensuring education to first-generation school goers of the Adivasi community in the area which has been possible generous support from National Foundation for India, New Delhi.



Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLPCPC): As of 2015-16, total of 75 Village Level Child Protection Committees have been formed. Each of the VLPCCs has 15 members each with 50% women's participation and at least 2 children's representation.

Child and Youth Empowerment Centres: Total of 25 child and youth empowerment centres have been set up by NERSWN. With the generous

support from UNICEF, these centres become village level child friendly spaces for learning, recreation, participation, empowerment, prevention and response to the child rights violation. The centres cater to more than 10,000 children across 25 villages and many outreach villages.

Children's Collectives: In last few years of making efforts to ensure rights of the children, NERSWN has realize the building capacities children to enable them participate in the processes that affects their life is of utmost importance. This not only provides them space to participate but empowers the children to take action. So far 150 children and adolescent clubs have been promoted by NERSWN.

Residential Workshops: Two residential workshops were organized with 140 adolescent peer leaders from 25 programme villages. The agenda of the workshops was to enhance leadership and life-skills amongst its participants.

Exposure Visit: Total of 10 exposure trips have been organized for 250 children from most backward and conflict affected villages. These visits have been really empowering for children.



Livelihood Programmes

NERSWN having been situated in one of the most backward district in the country itself coupled with repeated conflict and large scale internal displacement, it had no choice but tasked itself with improving the livelihood scenario of people. NERSWN is making best of its endeavours through taking farm and non-farm activities as path to improve livelihood scenario in the region.

Weaving Unit for Women in Distress: With the help of Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK, a weaving unit named Swrkhi Weaving is successfully up and running. An RCC weaving unit and 19 looms have been installed. Presently, 21 women who have faced traumatic experiences have been trained and employed as weavers. Each woman earns Rs. 160 to Rs. 200 per day. Until now, this program has been functioning in collaboration with The Action North-East Trust. Moreover, efforts are currently underway to make it an independent unit by setting up a craft store in Kokrajhar town.

Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Distribution: As the ethnic conflict victim families starves of cash after losing everything having A total of 120 individuals from different communities benefitted from this scheme supported by Oxfam India. The major productive activity encouraged in this project was rearing livestock for business.





Capacity Building Training for Farmers' Club:

Two capacity building trainings were organized in the preceding year for members of the Farmers Club. The first training focussed on the Club's Management with discussions revolving around its vision, mission, aims and objectives. Moreover, the roles of the Executive Members and management of the Farmer's Resource Centre were detailed. The second training

was delivered by resource person Mr. D.S. Negi from Navdanya Trust, Dehradun on Sustainable Farming. This training emphasized the importance of organic farming and its role in protecting the ecosystem.

Exposure Trip for Farmers' Club: This year, 20 farmers from Jhwarbil and Sapkata were taken for exposure visits to the field sites of SeSTA, an organization which majorly focuses on livelihood. Commercial vegetable production, paddy cultivation and organic manure production through Vermi-Compost were some of the techniques displayed to participants. In the last couple of years, these exposure visits have been one of the key reasons that have helped transform a place like Jhwarbil into its present form; from a frustrating dry sight to a progressive green pasture, it has made a considerable departure by drawing motivation from the success stories of farmers who were visited in different regions.





Livestock based Livelihood Action: 28 families were given access to piglet loans from a Piglet Bank. The success stories from these families will be big step in the community considering livestock rearing as a viable option.

Self Help Group Promotion: The Self Help Group initiative flourished in the previous year. Two SHGs that were set up in Jhawarbil are functioning optimally, despite

not being linked with any bank or NRLM. The savings and credit activities are regularly carried out by women members. Both the SHGs have also been doing share-cropping of sesame, jute and black gram. In one cropping season, the groups have earned from Rs. 7,500 to Rs. 10,000 as profit.

In Sapkata, 6 SHGs have been promoted, out of which 5 groups have been federated and linked with NRLM. All of them have received revolving fund of Rs. 15000 and in addition have received Rs.50, 000 as a loan from the bank. In a cash-starved area, inflow of such considerable amount of money has infused a new enthusiasm which NERSWN is intending to tap and use for improvement of the livelihood conditions of the families.

Commercial Vegetable cropping: One focus of the NERSWN team in the previous year was promotion of commercial vegetable cultivation. In the Rabi season, more than a 100 farmers were mobilized under the project and of these, 60 were supported with different varieties of seeds by the Farmers' Club. The varieties were mainly cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, nolkhol, tomato and some varieties of leafy vegetables. But due to unforeseen conflict in



the area, not much income could be generated in this endeavour. Although, the farmers were happy with the production, the vegetables cultivated were consumed during the relief situation by the villagers.

For Kharif season, 62 farmers were chosen by the Farmers Club. The farmers were supported with seeds of different vegetables such as lady's finger, chilly, ridge guard, sponge guard and long bean. The crops have been grown well and some farmers have started selling initial produce. Farmers are expecting to get good returns from this season's cultivation.





Staple Food Crop Cultivation: 130 farmers have been motivated to cultivate staple crops with modern methods to enhance production. Each of the farmers have on an average reported increment of 2 quintals of paddy with the new method such as seeds treatment, nursery preparation, line sowing, weeding, controlled irrigation and some of them going for full fledged SRI method.

Promoting Horticulture Based Livelihood: This year, 64 farmers were supported by Farmer's Club. The selected farmers were provided saplings of betel nut, coconut, teak, gambari and black pepper. Hearing success stories of these farmers, many others have been inspired to pick up horticulture based production.

Long Term Livelihood planning: Though there was no systematic activity organized for long term planning, NERSWN this year has gathered valuable plethora of ideas, skill and knowledge on the livelihood front. It has also hosted a 2-days consultation of livelihood promotion network anchored by KABIL in which representatives from Kabil, B-ABLE, Grameen Sahara, Aajgar Social Circle, Dia Foundation, MASK and PIRD were attendees.

All its livelihood intervention was carried out with generous support from National Foundation for India, The Hans Foundation and Oxfam India.



Gwjwn Dera NERSWN Complex



On 7th of October, 2014, Foundation Stone for proposed official campus of NERSWN in a plot of 10 bighas (3 acres) was laid by its Co-Founder, Chairperson of the Governing Board Mr. Birphung Narzary and Governing Board Member Ms. Pratibha Brahma. On the day of foundation of the proposed campus, the Chairperson made two announcements- 1. The Campus will be named as Gwjwn Dera (*read-Peace Camp*) NERSWN Complex 2. His personal land just adjacent to the Gwjwn Dera will be distributed amongst the founder of NERSWN. He further continued that a new village will be set up with the name of Jwmwi Puri (*read- Kingdom of Cloud*). Since then, the NERSWN Campus is known as *Gwjwn Dera* and the new village is known as *Jwmwi Puri*.

A weaving shed has been completed along with makeshift weaver's hostel, makeshift kitchen and a small makeshift staff quarter. As the name of the campus suggests, the weaving is aimed at contributing its bit towards crafting peace in the region by bringing hapless women of different ethnicities. Through this, NERSWN intends to send out a message to rest of the world that if women of different estranged communities can co-exist peacefully why not the rest? The 52 ft length and 32 feet breadth weaving shed now can house 20 looms.



Last two years, 10 bighas of land has witnessed alluring changes. Apart from accommodating a large training hall, women's hostel, men's hostel, kitchen and a weaving, seasonal flowers of nutritious vegetables have become an example for the marginalized farmers in the community. Organic cultivation of vegetables has been promoted on the campus premises as part of its campaign for sustainable farming,

which proves to be an inspiration for the local farmer. Small but a worthwhile pond has been dug which besides supplying fish to the common kitchen, provides opportunities for leisurely time.

We at NERSWN, take this opportunity to thank Paul Hamlyn Foundation (Phf) UK, DKA Austria, Caring Friends, Mumbai, the action north east trust (*the ant*), Sunil, Jenny and Birphung for their care, love and support for making the dreams of NERSWN to have its own campus come true.



We are really thankful to following partners and friends for being so generous in supporting our work:

- ❖ National Foundation for India, New Delhi.
- ❖ Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK.
- ❖ Tata Trust, Mumbai.
- ❖ DKA-Austria,
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- ❖ Meljol, Mumbai.
- ❖ Caring Friends, Mumbai.
- ❖ the action north east trust (***the ant***) Chirang.
- ❖ Department of Health Services, Bodoland Territorial Council.
- ❖ NABARD

Without your helping hand, we could not have travelled this far. All of us at NERSWN are humbled by your generosity. We solicit your kind support from you; for our future endeavours too. Thank you so much.





***Reaching out with
Social Endeavour***



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