



One year in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam

A case study on our collaborative approach to working with Remote & Vulnerable communities

Introduction

The goal of this document is to encompass and document the learnings and takeaways from Sauramandala Foundation working on the ground in Meghalaya to pilot and develop our model to engage with remote and vulnerable communities, starting in East & West Garo Hills. The report will focus on the projects and our learnings over the last year from April 2019 to date.

Sauramandala Foundation, under SELCO Foundation's NGO In-Residence program, had identified two schools in the East and West Garo Hills in Meghalaya that faced problems due to lack of access to energy and information. The goal was to use these projects with the schools to find inroads into the community and further build on it to gain insights and use it as a platform to aggregate organisations that can address problems faced by the people in the region and use these projects to advocate for larger District and State level implementation with the Government.

We will look at the successes and learnings from failures in the time spent by us on the field in the NE, especially Meghalaya.

Identified communities and their schools for energy access

- Bolmoram Training Centre, East Garo Hills, Meghalaya
- Addingre Community English School, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya

Identification process and rationale

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- **Bolmoram Training Centre, East Garo Hills, Meghalaya** - Located in East Garo Hills catering to a cluster of 5 villages with the nearest road access being 9km away, BTC is a residential community training center during the day and acts as a school during the evening. The [Remoteness and Incapacity Index](#) of the district is 9 and the center is thriving with skilling and training activities on a weekly basis and is supported by the State Council for Science and Technology. The rationale behind choosing this as our first project location was the remoteness aspect, coupled with access to communities, students and the involvement of the Government.
 - **Addingre Community English School, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya** - Located in West Garo Hills, the Addingre Community English Schools caters to the educational needs of 100 first generation learners in a small community settlement of 30 homes. The [Remoteness and Incapacity Index](#) of the district is 3, but the school is located in one of the more remote blocks with an extremely sparse population and a community that does not have land-holding. Our rationale behind working with this community was the uniqueness of working with a Low Income Private school, a small community that did not always receive the attention of the government due to its size and the heavy involvement of the community with the school.

With this we have developed an approach to entering and starting work in new communities. Some of the aspects of this approach for entry are

- Energy access is a great enabler to start working with the community.
- Working with a community center (School, training center, grassroots organisation) helps build social capital
- Spending large amounts of time empathising with the community (We divide our time mostly to be with the communities on the ground 60-70% and rest in office to reach out to the social sector)
- It is always about what the community wants, we are only there to guide them not to impose ourselves on them.

Both of these projects helped us gain deeper understanding into the different aspects of the communities and gain deep insights from their perspectives. These were documented [in this report](#) created with the help of Social Design interns from NIFT, Bangalore. With the help of these insights we were able to have conversations with the District Administration about some

of the insights that we had observed , this helped us build a relationship with the Government Line departments and work with them to design programmatic pilot projects to address some of the problems we had identified.

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A snapshot of projects in the state of Meghalaya post the inroads created in the last 12 months

Theme	Healthcare - SDG3 - Maternal and Infant mortality
Insights	<p>High maternal and infant mortality rates due to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Lack of available services at health center due to equipment not working 2 Staff not available due to poor facilities 3 Accessibility issues (Difficult terrain, too expensive) 4 ANM worker not equipped to test and diagnose at last mile home visits 5 Community prefers home deliveries due to above and cultural reasons
Role of Sauramandala Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct PRA, Ethnographic studies to understand the insights from all stakeholders (System actors, community, government administration, government policy) - Map the insights to existing organisations already addressing problem or work on creating a problem statement/solution towards this - Conduct due diligence on organisation. Solution and provide contextual insights from the field in the co-design phase - Provide access to the social capital of SMF on the ground - Advocate for large scale adoption of successful projects at district and state level
Potential Solution, is it already existing?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Access to decentralised energy and reliable energy efficient equipment to the health center can address point 1 & 2, the insight was mapped to SELCO Foundation and a district wide health and joint energy nexus study was carried out and a pilot was implemented by SELCO Foundation in West Garo Hills 2 To address accessibility issues some potential solutions have been mapped i) Mobile healthcare units ii) Pop up healthcare centers one weekly market days these have been mapped to SMILE Foundation based on existing solutions that they already have to address the insight and willingness+alignment to work in the region to contextualise solution 3 To address equipping ANM workers with diagnostic kits, SELCO Foundation and Digital Health Partners have been mapped as potential solution providers. The portable kits will enable the ANM workers to conduct tests, assist deliveries and maintain records during home visits 4 To address insight 5, we plan to conduct a more detailed ethnographic research to understand the dynamics of midwives (Daai's) and explore building their capacity to use assisted delivery tools or design a solution that can connect them to the ANM workers to create a more holistic solution. We currently do not have a solution or a partner for this.

Intended output and learnings	<p>1 Intended outcome of the work done with SELCO Foundation on the health and energy nexus is to demonstrate the impact that reliable energy and efficient equipment can have on Healthcare service delivery and use the initial pilot project as evidence to advocate for state-wide policy intervention.</p> <p>2 Intended outcomes of the mobile healthcare units and pop up pilots is to document evidence on impact created and if deemed successful use these to support the government with large scale design and replication</p> <p>3 Intended outcome is to demonstrate the increase in impact on healthcare diagnosis and service delivery after equipping the ANM workers and based on the results iterate on this pilot to a successful model which can be replicated at the state level</p>
Long term outcome for large scale systems change	Long term outcome for the pilots is to be able to arrive at a contextual model and solution to address each of these insights at a systems change level for adoption and replication by the state government
Funding source for pilot project	<p>Health care nexus study and pilot was funded by SELCO Foundation</p> <p>We are yet to design, raise funds and implement the other pilots</p>
Status	Based on the pilot projects and study done by SELCO Foundation and Sauramandala Foundation we have floated an EOI to solar power and equip 100 (25% in the state) sub-centers (and create design and procurement guidelines for the remaining 75%) with access to clean energy and energy efficient equipment - This was approved on 22nd July 2020 and the process has been started on the procurement. This is a big win for us and an ideal outcome

Theme	Healthcare X Early Childhood education - SDG3 X SDG4 - Anganwadi - Anganwadi worker & helper
Insights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prefabricated Anganwadis were not thermally suitable for the climatic conditions in Meghalaya - This causes children to feel uncomfortable and hence they do not like being in the Anganwadi 2. Prefabricated Anganwadi cannot be transported to remote locations due to lack of road connectivity and hence sometimes are not constructed 3. Prefabricated Anganwadi have proprietary nuts and bolts which are not available in local markets and hence in some cases they can not be setup 4. Prefabricated Anganwadis are designed for LPG usage but in most communities it isn't available and hence cooking smokes up the AWC or happens outside 5. Anganwadis do not have engaging Early Childhood content available in local dialects and languages which limits the engagement possibilities between Anganwadi workers , parents and children 6. They need support with access to nutrition charts and designing a more scientific approach to nutrition

	<p>7. Anganwadi workers are overworked and can not handle both nutrition and education of children - They need support</p>
Role of Sauramandala Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct PRA, Ethnographic studies to understand the insights from all stakeholders (System actors, community, government administration, government policy) - Map the insights to existing organisations already addressing problem or work on creating a problem statement/solution towards this - Conduct due diligence on organisation. Solution and provide contextual insights from the field in the co-design phase - Provide access to the social capital of SMF on the ground - Advocate for large scale adoption of successful projects at district and state level
Potential Solution, is it already existing?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sauramandala in collaboration with SELCO Foundation has designed an Anganwadi that looks at built environment using locally available materials and techniques, access to clean cooking, solar energy, education tools , this has been pitched to the Govt of Meghalaya as a Model Anganwadi and has been approved by the Government, though the funds are yet to be received 2. SMF in collaboration with Pratham Books facilitated the translation of 40 stories into Garo on the StoryWeaver platform to be shown as an pilot to the Govt of Meghalaya. 3. In collaboration with the District Administration we trained few bamboo artisans to create Bamboo toys that can be procured by the ICDS dept for Anganwadi and could also act as livelihood for the artisan
Intended output and learnings	<p>1 Intended outcome of the work done with SELCO Foundation is to create the model as a demonstration to the Government and use the successful parts to advocate for changes in existing Anganwadi and large scale adoption in different regions of Meghalaya</p> <p>2 Intended outcomes of the translation exercise with Pratham Books is to influence the Government to invest in building contextual early childhood content by leveraging on the strengths of a partner like Pratham Books for the three regions in Meghalaya - Garo, Khasi and Jaintia</p> <p>3 To build the capacity of artisans to produce high quality Bamboo toys</p>
Long term outcome for large scale systems change	<p>Long term outcome for the pilots is to be able to arrive at a contextual model and solution to address each of these insights at a systems change level for adoption and replication by the state government</p>
Funding source for pilot project	<p>Model Anganwadi project has been approved by the Govt of Meghalaya - we are yet to receive funds</p> <p>Pilots with Pratham Books translations were funded by Sauramandala Foundation</p> <p>Bamboo toys designs and prototypes are ready but implementation delayed due to COVID project funded by the district administration for small scale implementation</p>
Status	<p>Model Anganwadi - Proposal funding awaited (Site identification, structural design, assessment</p>

	completed) Pratham Books translation - Has picked up some interest in the Government during COVID, we plan to capitalise on it
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Theme	Education - SDG4 - Teachers Capacity building and continuous learning EGH, MEghalaya
Insights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of a DIET center for training and capacity building of teachers in the district 2. Lack of access to tools for teachers to constantly update themselves on teachers practices
Role of Sauramandala Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct PRA, Ethnographic studies to understand the insights from all stakeholders (System actors, community, government administration, government policy) - Map the insights to existing organisations already addressing problem or work on creating a problem statement/solution towards this - Conduct due diligence on organisation. Solution and provide contextual insights from the field in the co-design phase - Provide access to the social capital of SMF on the ground - Advocate for large scale adoption of successful projects at district and state level
Potential Solution, is it already existing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Azim Premji Foundation has a great teacher training program that is in person and effective - An EdTech solution can be explored to work with teachers to constantly update themselves and have access to content - but it needs to be contextualised - Meghshala was shortlisted for this due to - Modular content that can be contextualised, willingness to contextualise, have a focus on the NE and were looking for a community to implement their CSR project with Lenovo
Intended output and learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post initial teacher training of 85 teachers, APF to create master trainers in the district to be able to train all teachers in the year and conduct annual capacity building workshops - Replicate above process in other districts - Meghshala to conduct pilot in 80 schools and assess the impact jointly with SMF - create a local pool of resources to work on the field to assess impact
Long term outcome for large scale systems change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work towards APFs long term goal of being able to influence the textbook content and write text books in coordination with the state governments - Explore potential EdTech solutions that can enable teachers to build their capacity on a constant basis
Funding source for pilot project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - APF funded the program delivery costs and costs of coordination was funded by the district administration

	- Meghshala project funded by Lenovo CSR
Status	- Planning in process to carry out both programs in remote mode in East Garo Hills

Theme	Livelihoods - SDG8 - Creating an ecosystem for meaningful livelihoods and entrepreneurship EGH, MEghalaya
Insights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All skilling programs do not lead to meaningful livelihoods due to lack of follow-up support 2. Huge gap in hand-holding, inputs and financial linkage support 3. There is a need to demystify access to finance and government schemes 4. Demonstration of success is KEY for adoption
Role of Sauramandala Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct PRA, Ethnographic studies to understand the insights from all stakeholders (System actors, community, government administration, government policy) - Map value chains for livelihood activities - Map the insights to existing organisations already addressing problem or work on creating a problem statement/solution towards this - Conduct due diligence on organisation. Solution and provide contextual insights from the field in the co-design phase - Provide access to the social capital of SMF on the ground - Advocate for large scale adoption of successful projects at district and state level
Potential Solution, is it already existing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on existing value chains initial pilot projects were designed for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solar powered rice milling with Selco Foundation - Apiculture with Barefoot College - Solar powered waste to value (paper) setup with Selco Foundation - There is a need to design a process to create an incubation ecosystem that can provide mentoring, handholding, help with linkage etc - Sauramandala has developed a concept for social outcomes based tourism with an intent to influence policy at the government level
Intended output and learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create products that can be accessed by communities under many government schemes like PMEGP - Create demonstration setups for livelihood and incubation to improve adoption by the community - Create shared and service model based pilots to help bring in more models to increase adoption
Long term outcome for large scale systems change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the state and district government to create the required infrastructure and program design to be adopted across the state
Funding source for pilot project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apiculture project funded by District administration for the training and equipment for 25 women

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot projects with SELCO Foundation were funded by SF
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EOI submitted and approved for setting up livelihood and entrepreneurship hubs in collaboration with SELCO Foundation has been submitted to the Govt of Meghalaya - the first 10hubs will be funded by Sustain+ and designed by SELCO, Sauramandala and Sustain+ and the design will be transferred to the Govt of Meghalaya to be replicated in 45 other hubs. - EOI submitted for tourism model to the government and some foundations for pilot project funding - the design is attached here - Creating a incubation design at district level is in progress - the design is attached here

Building connections with Grassroots NGOs

We have created a strong bond with grassroots organisations in the state of Meghalaya to understand their work and to be able to support them better by connecting them to opportunities like funders, capacity building etc. We believe that this is one of the value adds that we can add to strengthen these organisations.

Events

Organised the Meghalaya Sustainable energy ecosystem development workshop along with Govt of Meghalaya, Selco Foundation and other organisations the details of which are [in here](#).

This helped us use it as a platform to bring forward our insights to range of audiences like CSO, Govt departments etc

We were able to mobilise close to 400 people from the community and government departments from Meghalaya to attend the North-East Trade Facilitation Fair in Feb'20. Which has helped us start meaningful conversations with the community and governments.

[MGNF Fellowship](#)

Along with Selco Foundation, Sauramandala is mentoring 4 out of 11 fellows in the state of Meghalaya with the intent of identifying opportunities in skilling and development using our collaborative approach. This has given us access to the DCs of all districts in Meghalaya forming a great platform to take our approach to working across some of the remote districts in Meghalaya.

The way forward

The team has spent the last 24 months as part of two incubation programs at NSRCEL and SELCO Foundation to build on our concept by testing it on the ground to reach a stage to develop a three year plan per district that we work in.

The goals at the end of the three years is to have

- Built deep insights on the needs and challenges of the communities from their perspective
- Aggregate organisations to co-design solutions to address these challenges
- Built a robust pool of human resources at the district and state level who have experience in gaining insights, coordinating and designing programs along with having a bridge into the social sector to take this collaborative approach further to improve development indicators
- Advocate for successful projects to be presented to the state government for large scale systems change
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Our approach to work with remote & vulnerable communities



Gain deep insights and build social capital through Ethnographic Research, PRA and need assessments across parameters like Health, Education, Livelihoods, Energy, Gender, Climate Resilience and Water



Match insights for social and economic parameters to organisations who can solve them and aggregate partners to solve specific problems



Co-fund, co-design and facilitate implementation of projects on the ground while actively advocating successes for policy changes to the government at District and State Level

We are now at a stage where we have begun reaching out to institutional funders for organisation development to build on this work to increase our impact on the ground.

Our work in Majuli and Manipur during this period

Majuli

- School electrification: Majuli Hummingbird School run by Ayang Trust

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- 3 Livelihood pilot projects
 - Connecting Ayang to Sustain+ for livelihood projects which has resulted in discussions for projects worth 40L - a huge boost to Ayang Trust

Manipur

- School electrification: Two schools run by Sunbird Trust electrified in Tamenglong district
- Connecting Sunbird to Selco Foundation resulted in further electrification of 5 schools and 3 livelihood projects - a huge boost to Sunbird Trust
- 25 beekeepers trained with Barefoot College
- 40 ECE books translated into 3 local dialects

Some pictures of our work

Bolmoram Electrification



Adinggre Community English School, Meghalaya



Beekeeping training for women



Teacher training



Bamboo toys



Hummingbird school electrification in flood prone Majuli

