



OPERATION around **Supporting Human Capital Development Project in Meghalaya** is gathering revised momentum as the NGO Aid et Action joined the bigger team, with DSC LEA Associates, CBTA British Council and the PMC, lead by Accenture.

The project has witnessed realistic progress. In the month of October, a key meeting between the School Management Committees and the Government of Meghalaya, Department of Education had happened, after which, the signing of MOU between the SMCs and GoM took place.

Orchid is getting popular among the people connected with the project. The November issue will be intentional in featuring more stories from the field and activities directly concerning with the project. Last month, we had two pages to start with – this month **Orchid** comes in four pages.

As representatives of PMC, NGO and DSC make more effort to visit the field, the learning from ground zero is providing them with firsthand knowledge. From these visits, arise the need to make the project more visible not only among the target audience but also among staff members of those concerned GoM departments. The *Brochure* on the project which is underway and the *one-on-one* meetings with concerned officials at the district and state level are helpful to build on the project's visibility.

To that end, **Orchid** welcomes the contribution of group and individual consultative partners to share their insights, findings, stories, suggestions, announcements etc, that will help all stake holders to stay on top of the game. As **Orchid** is a newsletter with multi-audience, some of what you read may not interest you as much as it attracts the interest of others. Nevertheless, we hope you find this collating work useful.

For more information:

Kit Shangpliang, Comm. Specialist,
PMC - Accenture
Email: kitkumar.shangpliang@gmail.com
Phone: +91 98630 27061
NGO Input:
Chandra Kiran & Kamki Diengdoh

First Meeting with SMCs: significant milestone



Mr. DP Wahlang, Commissioner & Secretary, Education Department interacting with the SMC members

The meeting with the School Management Committee Members, SMC on Oct 13 was promising and successful as different stakeholders lead by the GoM briefed the gathering on the project purpose, the work done so far, the benefits to the schools, the supporting role of each group consultant, brief preview of the future plan of action and the urgent call to sign the MOUs. The meeting was primarily aimed to clear the doubts (if any) of the SMCs – and towards that end, the Q&A session towards the end served to bring clarity of purpose, especially on issues surrounding the signing of the MOU.



One of the SMC members seeking clarity from DOE officials during the meeting

Another participant said, "We welcome this initiative, and we will see to it that the government and the other stakeholders get the support they need" – Mr. K. Lyngkhoi, President of one of the SMCs.

Key Outcomes

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: The SMC key representatives showed willingness to work with the other stakeholders. There is now, a common understanding about the overarching benefit of the youth/ student community who will constitute the quality future workforce of Meghalaya. The overarching benefit of the target beneficiaries will be followed by mutual benefits of SMCs and other stakeholders.

SIGNING OF THE MOU: SMC representatives gave their word to speed up the process of signing the MOU. Other related paper works with regards to land, space, permissions etc will be taken care of, keeping in mind the last date of submitting the signed MOU on or before October 22nd 2014.

ONE ON ONE MEETING WITH THE SMC MEMBER: The one on one meeting was very useful to the individual consultants attached with PMC, DSC and NGO. There is better chance now to continue the conversation at an individual level and getting the jobs done faster.

VISITING OF GROUP CONSULTANTS TO SCHOOLS: Members of the group consultants and other key stakeholders can visit the schools for assessment, documentation works etc working along with the school Principals. (In October, members of NGO, PMC and DSC have successfully made an effort to reach out to the community).

SORTING OUT OF PWD, BUILDING & LAND RELATED ISSUES: Both Mr. LD Suchiang, SE PWD and Mr. DP Wahlang, Commissioner & Secy. Education Department – took time to raise concerns over the issues of land, building and PWD related works. They also responded to the questions raised by the attendees around the same issues with the help of the people from DSC.



NeedBased



School children having lunch at the Village Dorbar School, Swer village, East Khasi Hills District. This particular school is run by the village administration and SMC members are from among the village leaders. The infrastructure facility is average but there is much more to be done to raise the standard of learning here.

Learners-friendlyFacility



Boys playing basketball during recess in Village Dorbar School, Swer village about 30 kilometers south of Shillong. In the background, there are cycles. Some students feel that cycles are effective means of transportation even in this hilly area. Cycles also create excitement for school going children not to miss school.

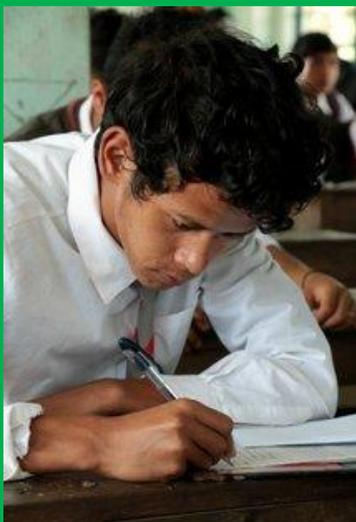
MeetingSMC

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PMC representatives visiting Raid Lyngkhat Secondary School. The gender specialist trying to understand the SMC's take on gender parity issues. Gender issues in the Khasi and Jaintia hills are socially intertwined (matrilineal system) and in a way, making it more complex than the concept of gender elsewhere in the country. Each village leadership's understanding of gender issues is as different as it is similar.

FinalTest



In Meghalaya, November is the season for the final examination. For many students, it is a dreadful experience as basic foundation of their primary and upper primary level education had not prepared them well to face the final tests. Many feel relieved even to scrape through – would that kind of transition help them to face the future?. Here is a boy in 9th standard, at Raid Lyngkhat Higher Secondary School writing his exams.

ResponsiveLearners



Many children in the village take time to respond, but for those who are naturally responsive – other peers brand them as over-smarters. While this is not a healthy trend, there is a need to value responsive learners. There is also a need to create a culture of responsiveness, lateral and creative thinking, asking questions and quick decision making. Children, parents, teachers and SMC members need to be more aware of these classroom psychological realities.

GenderConcerns



Girl students in the rural areas usually find themselves in a predicament, even after toilets have been provided – it is not always easy to find the keys. In some cases, there is not enough water to clean the toilets, forcing school immediate authorities to use the lock. For the benefit of learners, SMCs, village leadership and parents' organisations could take gentle steps to monitor the proper use of toilet facilities.

Note: The photo captions above are based on what was shared by the learners, the teachers, the community leaders, the SMC members and educationists (of which some of them are government staff members). This Constructive Intention is to inform and to remind all stakeholders of the ground realities. Such knowledge should help all project implementers to be more solution oriented.

Candid Observation

On Gender and Occupation

- Male members are focal persons of the household to earn for the family. In most of the villages it has been reported that their primary occupation is Agriculture, Agricultural Labor, seasonal traders & Middleman.
- Most Women engage in agricultural field work and household work while very few of them run small shop or sell vegetable in the market and a negligible segment work in the Government.
- Almost every house or family owned a piece of land which they use for homestead orchards or plant cash crops. They also rear livestock for generating additional revenue
- Others occupation includes Teaching, tailoring, lime stone quarry, coal mining, forest product.

Infrastructure in Schools

- The school buildings are different from one school to another as in urban and rural.
- Some are functioning in old school building, some in semi constructed with no proper finishing, semi pucca, etc.
- Most of the schools lack infrastructure - Many schools in the rural areas do not have the school boundaries. Schools lack many basic requirements such as proper classrooms with TLMs, no modern teaching equipment, good tables and chairs/benches for the students, the classrooms are congested, no teachers common room in some schools, no library with sufficient books, ill-equipped laboratories, no computer lab with internet facilities, no auditorium, no play ground with sports materials, etc. Some schools are not electrified and some do not have sufficient lights inside the classrooms.
- Many schools lack toilets and water facilities in the school premises. The facilities of separate toilet for boys and girls are not present in many of the schools. The more extreme finding is that some schools do not have toilets. This has been a problem among the female teachers as well as girl students. Many feel uncomfortable using the same toilets.

Community Mobilisation

Meeting with the learners in their school



Meeting SMC: Understanding field dynamics



Going the distance: a typical field or school visit



Meeting with DC of South West Khasi Hills



Meeting with SMC members at Swer village



Induction Page 3

Aide et Action organised a six day orientation cum induction workshop from 13 October 2014, for all its project staff. Mr Sreedhar Rao, Regional Head – Human Resources (AEA), Mr Shekhar Ambati, Campaign Planner and Mr Pranab Panging, Team Leader – SHCDM project facilitated the orientation workshop along with the support of other key experts. Ten key experts and the community mobilisers attended the orientation training along with the Project Management team. Special focus was laid on introducing the team to project stakeholders – Government of Meghalaya, British Council, Accenture & LEA Associates.



On day four, the team was divided in three groups of 8 members and visited Nongkrem & Smit Village, Maraikaphon village, Mawkdok & Swer village in East Khasi hills to understand the communities. Subsequently, the teams divided themselves into smaller groups and visited all the districts of Meghalaya to have a first-hand experience of the issues faced by all the stakeholders involved in the project.

PeopleVoice

Reasons cited by School Principals and SMC members for high drop-outs in school:

- Most of the students are economically poor; they have to go for work after school to earn their livelihood and to support their family.
- Early marriage is one reason, especially among girls. They discontinue their studies once they become pregnant
- Peer group influence & Failure in examination
- Lack of proper guidance and motivation from the parents as many of the parents are illiterate and economically poor
- Superficial Influence of modern life style fashion, mobile phones etc. In not being able to afford – learners get demotivated.
- Lack of parent follow-up and moral education
- Migration, domestic & Sibling care

"Early marriage is a bigger cause of dropout not poverty." - Willing Khonglah, Principal of Laishnong Secondary School Nongbarehrim)

DISTRICTWise

Project in the news

GoM's prepare for rolling out of ADB sponsored project

The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) Meghalaya in collaboration with the Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE) and the Meghalaya State Skill Development Society (MSSDS) organised a "Workshop on Promoting Entrepreneurship in Meghalaya: Way Forward" here on Wednesday.

The workshop aimed at strategizing and rolling out a workable plan to implement the ADB sponsored project on Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya. Chief Secretary, Barkos Warjri said that there is a need to identify the problems and strengths that exist with regards to promotion of entrepreneurs.

Principal Secretary, C & RD Department, KN Kumar informed that under the ADB project, the skills of 45000 youths between the age group of 18-35 years would be developed to enhance their employability.

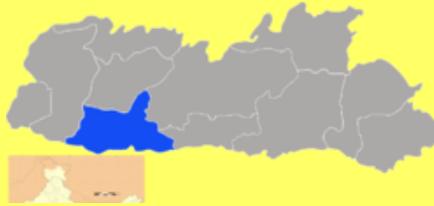
He stated that the aim of the workshop was to learn from everyone and evolve suitable strategies to equip the unemployed in order to ensure livelihood for all in the State. Commissioner & Secretary Planning Department, P Jain shared insights of the ADB project for promoting entrepreneurship and steps that are being taken by the Government to promote entrepreneurs through the Enterprise Facilitation Centres (EFC).

Edu@BUZZ

Seminar on Improving Learning Outcomes

A two-day national seminar on "Improving Learning Outcomes at School Level: Issues in Policy Planning and Implementation" organised by North East Regional Institute of Education (NERIE) in joint collaboration with North Eastern Council (NEC), was held at the NEC Secretariat auditorium on 16&17 October with a declarative action plan for improving the quality education in India. Director, School Education and In Charge, Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools, Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Caralyn Khongwar Deshmukh, chaired the session.

Featured District South Garo Hills



Area (Square/ Km)	1,887
Population (as per 2011 Census)	1,42,574
Literacy (as per 2011 Census)	70.41%
Development Blocks	4
S/SH School	22
Middle/ UP School	71
Primary School	416
District Quarter	Baghmara

Distance from Baghmara to

Shillong via Tura	449 kms
Shillong Guwahati	336 kms



People

The Garos have a matrilineal society where children adopt their mother clan. The simplest pattern of Garo family consists of the husband, wife and children. The family increases with the marriage of the heiress, generally the youngest daughter. She is called Nokna and her husband Nokrom. The bulk of family property is bequeathed upon the heiress and other sisters receive fragments but are entitled to use plots of land for cultivation and other purposes.



Administrative Units

South Garo Hills District is divided into four community development blocks (Baghmara, Rongara, Chokpot, Gasuapara) with one Municipal Board to look after the development of rural/urban areas. The district is divided into three Assembly Constituencies viz. Rongara-Siju Assembly Constituency, Baghmara Assembly Constituency and Chokpot Assembly Constituency. The matter concerning the administration including judiciary rests on Deputy Commissioner and matter pertaining to revenues lies with the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council.

All Line departments like P.W.D. (Building and Roads), Irrigation Department, Public Health Engineering Department (P.H.E), Minor Irrigation Department, Forest Department etc have their divisional and circle level headquarters at Baghmara. Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Soil Conservation, Health and Family Welfare, Statistic and Evaluation and Sericulture Handloom and Weaving, Education Dept., ICDS, CPWD, Industry Departments have their district and sub-divisional level headquarters at Baghmara. This provides an additional infrastructure and readymade set up for administering and implementing various development initiative programmes.

Workshop on Financial capability approach held

A state level workshop on financial capability of rural low-income households was organised recently by the Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE) under the aegis of the Meghalaya Basin Development and Livelihood Improvement Programme. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH was the technical partner for the workshop.



The workshop was attended by key officials and representatives from various government departments, banks, Reserve Bank of India, NABARD, insurance companies, NGOs and microfinance institutions.

CCTV in Shillong soon

With the installation work for the cameras going on in full swing, Shillong is all set to be under CCTV surveillance soon. The installation of CCTV cameras is expected to act as a deterrent to anti-social elements besides helping in crowd and traffic management.



In the first phase, advanced CCTV cameras are being installed in 28 vital locations in Shillong and 10 locations in Tura.

3 day training on Gender Equity



A three-day Gender Equity Training (GET) of trainers from NYKS youth club leaders was inaugurated on October 14 by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Meghalaya Zone at the Youth Hostel, Shillong.

40 youth club leaders of NYKS from all the districts of Meghalaya participated in the training programme. Speakers thrust upon the need for gender equity in sphere of education, political participation, freedom to marry and divorce, access to health care, feminization of poverty, restricted property ownership, feticide, violence and limited mobility.