

This 4th issue of 'Orchid', will focus on people's voices and the state leadership stressing on pushing all development initiatives fast forward. To that end, the project and its consultants continue to work strategically after the holiday halt.

For the government systems, the mantra seems to be around delivery, transparency and results – as this was made clear by the Chief Minister in the beginning of the year. Along these lines, the parallel intention is to curb migration from rural to urban areas and strengthen the village economy by relooking at the investments and commitments made for health and education.

As far as project activities are concerned, the notification for the second lot of schools where project operation will be implemented is underway. These 63 odd schools are predominantly from the Garo hills.

The last leg of 2014 has seen a series of project events, including

- ▲ The awareness events around teacher training in Shillong and Delhi
- ▲ The on-boarding of PIUs, focused group discussions that involved teachers, skills people at the ITIs, school management committee members and consultants.
- ▲ More conversations among group consultants and the PIUs followed by actions

The communications team (comprising of PMC and NGO) made it a point to visit school and ITIs to document the situation as it is, so more pictures are available now.

As things stand, 2015 looks like a busy year – whether at the financial front, infrastructure, safeguards or teacher training, there is enough in the project's plate.

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FGDs list 9 realities of Skills vis-à-vis gender

with input from British Council



A learner at the Advanced Course, Dress Making section of the Women ITI Shillong, Faculty working to help the girls meet industry standards – photo by Chandra Kiran, NGO

People of the Project continue to visit SMCs and ITIs and from the focus group discussions held, some very valid observations have been recorded. These comments come straight from committee members, teachers and learners during the FGD sessions on the skill sector vis-à-vis gender

- 1 Some of the trades at the ITIs are completely dominated either by male or female. One of the reasons for this, is due to the preconceived notions that render some of the roles gender specific.
- 2 Currently there is 25% reservation for women in general it is however, there is lack of women participation
- 3 Most of the trades that women take up are hair and skin care, dress making/tailoring, candle making, stenography, baking, hospitality and housekeeping, DTP, floriculture, weaving and food processing.

Observation: Keeping in mind local market demands and employability, women trades need to be recommended

- 4 There is a dearth of industries or avenues specific to certain skills/trades in the state. These conditions necessitate them to migrate outside of Meghalaya for suitable jobs. Its ramifications with regard to girls in particular can be quite stressful as this puts the young and most often naïve girls from rural areas in all sorts of vulnerable situations.

5 There is a need to allot specific trades for rural and urban sectors. The reasons being, most people do not wish to migrate. An exception however can be cited among the Garos, who are more willing to migrate than their Khasi, Jaintia or Ri Bhoi counterparts, perhaps owing to lesser availability of opportunities in their region and the constant vexation that militancy accords. It may be said here that the matrilineal setup is also one important reason why women in particular, from all districts, do not favour relocating as women carry out most of the roles pertaining to inheritance.

6 It is observed that most women in the rural sector continue to be engaged in agriculture, a sector in which training could help address low growth, productivity and income. Also, increased training in new technologies and skilled practices for women agricultural workers and small holders, including livestock and poultry will be an add-on.

7 There are no girls hostel facilities in the ITIs visited. Girl students from far flung areas have to find rental accommodation. The more fortunate few make arrangements in homes of relatives.

Observation: In the absence of hostel facilities, it might be appropriate to tie up with the community or private sector to arrange safe stay for women

8 Dropouts in ITIs are due either to pressure from parents to start making a living or the lack of motivation arising out of the lack of industries and market.

9 More often than not there is an immediate need to make a living, in which case the student is compelled to take up an available trade, which may or may not have any relation to the ITI course that he/she underwent. The prevalent mindset of the students is the importance and preference they accord to a government job over any other job.



Inviting teacher training focused organisations

To attract the interest of teacher-training providers, two awareness meetings were held in Shillong and New Delhi on 4 and 9 December 2014 respectively.

In both the places, there were 33 groups/ institutions that attended the meetings (11 in Shillong and 22 in Delhi). For those people close to the project, it was a learning experience getting to hear the ideas of other education experts who have worked in the state or been in the field for many years.

In the Shillong awareness event, Mr. DP Wahlang, Commissioner & Secretary, Education Department was present throughout the meeting along with representatives from the Finance Department, British Council and Accenture (PMC). "We were looking for interesting and fitting ideas and innovations. This meeting went beyond the scope of expectation", he said.

The meeting focused on the key stakeholders, the student community. The absence of interaction and culture of asking questions being the traditional practice, cripples the young thinking mind. Teaching is a ministry and a heartfelt profession, and how does one imbibe a heartfelt working culture to commit in changing the young mind was the issue at hand, pertaining to teachers' training.



Mr. DP Wahlang, Commissioner & Secretary, Education Department – GoM speaking to potential teacher-training providers in Shillong - all 4 photos by PMC Communications



On boarding PIU staff members

Consultants including PMC, TA and DSC conducted the on-boarding session with staff members of PIU 1, 2 & 3. Team leaders of Accenture, British Council and LEA introduced the project to the participants with stresses made on the Need Analysis, Objectives, Milestones and organizational structure.

The consultants also ran through the project aims, one of which is to improve the level of employability in the state- through better quality of education and vocational training

The modes of operation and meeting points between consultants and PIUs were also briefed, viz

DEPENDENT - The consultants make things happen

GUIDED - The consultants work with PIU to make things happen

ASSISTED - PIUs make things happen with the occasional prompt from the consultants.

INDEPENDENT - PIUs make things happen

The PIU staff members, some of which are new recruits showed interests to co-drive the project activities forward. The meeting ended with a team building exercise.



As part of the team building exercise, members of the participated in a very engaging mock planning session - all 4 photos by PMC Communications

Activities

Studying Trades

School Visit

Framework on baseline information for culturally sensitive communication material developed

A Framework for collecting baseline information on key social parameters in order to assist in preparing culturally sensitive communication materials developed and information collection of the same initiated in all the districts.

Framework & Indicators for collecting information from SMC developed

Framework & Indicators for collecting information from SMC aimed at Grading the Status of SMCs for planning capacity Building Programs have been developed by the Education Specialist and circulated across for inputs/suggestions. Information collection on trail basis would be initiated in the second half of January 2015.

SMCs oriented on their roles and responsibilities

Orientation & Discussion on the Roles & Responsibilities of SMC at large and pertaining to the project as per the MOU signed between the SMCs & the DOE have been held with 10 schools.



Photo by Sylvia Massar, Comm. Mobiliser

It has been planned to undertake orientation of these 10 SMCs on Retrofitting, and reading of simple architectural diagrams would be completed in the Second week of January 2014.

Aide et Action organises project review

On 18th December 2014, a progress review of the project was held. In addition to the review, a field level planning exercise was also organised for the forthcoming months.

Boys at the engineering section of Don Bosco ITI, Laitumkhrah, Shillong



Traditional weaving trade (Nongkrem Youth Development Association) Products from here have indigenous elements and can cater to the niche fashion market.



Youth at the electrical section of the Don Bosco ITI, Shillong tried his hands on the welding machine



Tool Box at the ITI: a matter of professional choice



Communication Specialists visit Vocational Training Centers and School for photo shoot



The Communication Specialists along with their Accenture counterpart visited KJP Girls Higher Secondary School, Government Girls Vocational Training Centre (ITI), Don Bosco Technical School and iLEAD to interact with students and teachers. They also conducted photo shoot of their activities. Along with the photo shoot, the specialists also interacted with teachers and students to get firsthand information on their needs and expectations from the project.



Anthropologist and Communicator input into Gender Specific Communication Framework

Anthropologist worked with the Gender Specialist of TA (British Council) and provided domain specific inputs for finalization of the Gender specific communication framework. Following this, the Communication specialist participated in a meeting along with Gender Specialists of British Council and Accenture and Communication Specialist of Accenture and provided inputs before finalizing the framework.

DistrictWise

NEW YEAR NEWS

State leadership's new year resolution: CM calls for fast track of all development initiatives

SHILLONG: The State Government is looking to push forward all its initiatives this year, Chief Minister Mukul Sangma said on Monday.

"We will try to fast track all the initiatives in terms of its implementations this year. We would also like to ensure complete transparency in the implementation of the various projects," the Chief Minister added.

The Chief Minister resolved that his government would also adopt a comprehensive approach to ensure sustainable livelihood for the people in the State which can be derived from various programmes being implemented by the state government. Sangma informed that the government had taken different new initiatives in the social sectors which include health and education.

According to the Chief Minister, people in rural areas would benefit from the various programmes of the government and would not feel the need to migrate to the urban centres.

"We have to create better facilities including access to quality education for people in rural areas," he said. Sangma said these are multifaceted initiatives under few sectors and now the government's focus would be to fast track them and create visibility.

New Governor

SHILLONG: West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi was on Tuesday 6 January, sworn in as the 19th Governor of Meghalaya.

The oath of office to 81-year-old Tripathi was administered by Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Meghalaya, Justice Uma Nath Singh, in the presence of Chief Minister Mukul Sangma, his cabinet ministers and senior government officials.

Tripathi replaces Krishan Kant Paul, who has been appointed as Governor of Uttarakhand. Tripathi will hold charge as Meghalaya Governor in addition to his existing duties in West Bengal.

District Featured: West Khasi Hills Started in 1976: October 28



West Khasi Hills District since its birth, has been the least explored till recent years. In 2011, West Khasi Hills had population of 385,601 of which male and female were 194,628 and 190,973 respectively.

The District may be divided into four broad geographical units. 1. The Western sector with dense jungles, bordering the Garo Hills. 2. The Southern sector, close to the plains of Bangladesh. 3. The northern sector bordering Assam and 4. the eastern part adjoining East Khasi hills.



Climate: The climate of the district is mildly tropical in the northern and southern foothills, while in the central upland zone, the climate is temperate and places at medium altitude in the northern, western and southern parts of the district, experience sub-tropical climate.



Geo Location: The district comprises an area of about 5,247 sq.kms which is 23 percent of the total area of the state. Nongstoin, covering an area of about 76.00 Sq. Kms, is the Headquarter of the District.



Administration: The district administration subscribes to the governance Philosophy which is "To uphold and uplift the Constitution of India and bringing the Government closer to the citizens of the region and helping the progress of rural and urban communities socially, economically and peacefully"



DEVELOPMENT

The organisational set up in the development sector is headed by the DC and assisted by the ADC in the District Head Quarter and by the BDO's at the Six block Head Quarters at Nongstoin, Mairang, Mawkyrwat, Mawshynrut, Ranikor and Kynshi.

IBDLP: The Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion Programme (IBDLIP) being the State Flagship programme was launched in April 2012 an initiative to improve the livelihood and quality of life.

MP and MLA Developmental, Rural Housing & Financial Inclusion: extend banking services to the doorsteps of consumers, especially the poor.

Chief Secretary on Results Framework Document (RFDs)



Performance - Delivery: mantra for government

SHILLONG: Chief Secretary Barkos Warjri inaugurated the three-day workshop for preparation of Results Framework Documents (RFDs) on 7 February.

Speaking on the occasion Warjri said "our performance should be good in delivery, be it at the Regulatory department or the Development department."

He added that RFD is a result framework wherein "the performance of the actual result of the Departments concerned can be judged." He also informed that RFD will be introduced in every government department in order to measure their performance in accordance with the system of implementation.

He called upon the officers to understand the method in which the RFD works and stressed upon the need for the officials to follow the procedures set up, prepare the report and submit the same to the Head of Departments for further steps.

STATE AGE

MEGHALAYA is 43 Years Old

The 43rd Meghalaya Day will be celebrated throughout the State on the 21st of January, 2015 with various programmes organised in District Headquarters and Sub-Divisions.

The theme this year revolves around peace, harmony, progress and preservation. While the state's culture evolves with time, it's leadership has been very intentional to hold on to traditional culture.

And given the situation in the Garo hills, the voice and the practice of peace is what ordinary citizens need to see.

This year, in Shillong – the government will organise a special event for youth engaging performing artistes to resonate the message at the polo grounds, Polo.