

# the ant

Quarterly Newsletter

(3rd Quarter, 2023)



the ant's 23rd birthday celebration with community  
Photo Courtesy: Alongbar Wary

## Shiksha Team's Village Meetings

In August, our Shiksha team held exit meetings with 20 Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs) in Kuklung and 14 VEDCs in Udalguri Cluster. Discussions revolved around FCRA suspension, unexpected project pauses, and the potential for community-led continuation of Remedial Learning Centers (RLCs). Currently, 10 centers in Kuklung have 308 students (Girls: 142, Boys: 166) while 4 centers in Udalguri (Girls: 53, Boys: 26) are operational. An additional center in Assamese medium will start in November 2023.

## Wrapping Up the MOULD (Making Opportunities to Uplift Lives in Deosiri) Project with a Focus on Sustainability

In August, as the final working month of the MOULD Project after the FCRA suspension, the team's activities primarily revolved around follow-up activities and project exit meetings with communities and groups. The team conducted exit meetings with five VOs, including Jagadatri, Nayanjyoti, Samaj Susar, Aronai, Mulijuli Afat, and their respective communities. In the meantime, the team did horticulture training and animal health camp cum interaction program with the farmers through Krishi Vigyan Kendra Chirang.



## Observation of International Safe Abortion Day



On International Safe Abortion Day, an awareness program was held at the Mwinaguri Community Hall on September 28, 2023, with 179 women and 13 staff members in attendance. The event aimed to break the stigma surrounding abortion, provide accurate information on safe abortion care and relevant laws, and improve the quality of abortion services for women and girls. The event hosted two distinguished guests, Dr. Prem Nath Patel (SDM & HO at Ballamguri) and Azgar Ali (Advocate, Chirang, DLISA).

## Quarterly Coach Forum Meeting

On September 24, 2023, the Quarterly Coach Forum Meeting took place at Ulubari M.E. School. The event, organized by CTR Project and local youth, involved 32 participants, including 20 males and 12 females, from six different communities: Bodo, Muslim, Nepali, Rajbongsi, Santali, and Urang. The meeting highlighted the dedication to promoting Ultimate Frisbee and overcoming obstacles in the community.

## Celebration of World Food Day



World Food Day was observed on 16th October 2023, at Kuklung Cluster Office. This event was organized by Sus-Farm (Sustainable Livelihoods for Smallholder Farmers), aiming to foster our relationship with food and with each other through the joy of sharing food. The program included recipe presentations by six ethnic communities (Rajbongshi, Nepali, Bodo, Bengali Muslim, Garo). The event was organized to promote intercommunity exchange and learning on food diversity for health and nutrition.

## New short films by the ant

the ant Community Media Unit released five short films from August to October: **'How to make bio-pesticide at home' (in Bodo)**, **'The Inspirational Journey of an Ultimate Frisbee Player'**, **'Ultimate Frisbee'**, **'Seeds Foundation of Life'**, **'The journey of Sulekha'**. These films that cover a diverse range of topics, from making bio-pesticides to inspiring stories of personal transformation, are an incredible blend of education, inspiration, and to amplify voices of local communities on socio-economic and development issues of the region. Click on the titles to access the video links.





## MITA Cohort 2023 Training

The MITA Cohort training initiative, which took place from August 3rd to August 6th, 2023, was specifically designed to provide guidance and knowledge to the new MITA partners, namely the Xeuji Foundation from Dhubri, ESPT from Dhubri, and the Seven Colors Society from Bihar. It spanned from the 3rd to the 6th of August, encompassing a wide array of topics and activities.

### Camp for Developmental Disorders

In a collaborative effort with Shishu Sarothi, a camp for children with developmental disorders took place on the 22nd and 23rd of August. This event was made possible through the dedicated support of Shishu Sarothi, an organization committed to helping children with special needs.



### World Mental Health Day

To observe 'World Mental Health Day', an event titled "Mental Health as a Universal Right" took place on the 8th October 2023 at the MITA camp, the ant campus, Rowmari. The objective was to promote mental well-being and cultivate a supportive community within the organization. The resource person for this event was Advocate Asgar Ali. On World Mental Health Day itself, a program was organized at the ant for the staff. It featured mindfulness meditation, awareness of mental illness, and a creative stress relief activity — mandala colouring competition.



### School Outreach Program by SIFUNG

In September, SIFUNG began its weekly workshops in government model schools across Chirang district as part of the school outreach program. The team introduced Folk music and dance to students at Danswrang ME School and Bhabanipur ME School during September and October, with 84 and 38 participants, respectively. The workshops were led by Kwrwmdaw Basumatary, Ashak Basumatary, and Akhrang Basumatary.



### Youth Exit meeting in Bengtol

On August 25, 2023, a Youth Exit meeting was held in Bengtol, with 43 participants from 17 clubs. The Project Coordinator discussed FaB, project suspension, and decisions to sustain Ultimate Frisbee. Bengtol Youth Club (BYC) leaders expressed readiness to support youth activities if provided with a center. Between August 15 and 30, the youth team visited 17 clubs and 15 revenue villages, informing youth and parent about the FCRA project suspension.



## Stories of Transformation

### Leaders of today: Bikrampur Sunrise Club of FaB

Meet Sonalikhya, a young woman whose life took a remarkable turn thanks to the game of Ultimate Disc. She's been a part of the ant since 2019, and her story is nothing short of inspiring. Earlier Sonalikhya used to be a shy and introverted person with limited self-confidence. She rarely interacted with people outside her family, and her communication was restricted to her mother tongue. But everything changed when she started participating in Ultimate Frisbee.

Through this sport, Sonalikhya blossomed into a confident and outgoing individual. She not only improved her communication skills but also overcame her shyness. She learned to engage in meaningful conversations with people of all ages and backgrounds. Sonalikhya's involvement in Ultimate Frisbee also allowed her to break free from her predominantly Bodo neighborhood and interact with people from various backgrounds. She's now proud to say that she can speak multiple languages like Nepali, Hindi, and Assamese.

Today, Sonalikhya is an active member of the FaB Youth Club, leading the Ultimate Disc team and mentoring junior players. She's also a part of the Assam Youth Network and the Aronai Harimu Afad cultural group, where she showcases her musical talents by playing the flute and kam. Her mission is to prove that girls can excel in music as well as dance. Moreover, Sonalikhya has become a leader in her community by conducting workshops on gender equality with local institutions like SHGs and parents' groups.

Her journey took her to a South East Asia seminar where she addressed the issue of gender inequality in the Chirang district. Participants from different states, including Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, attended the seminar. Sonalikhya could not be happier with the transformation she has experienced. Her next goal is to become a certified Ultimate Frisbee Coach and inspire the next generation to embrace the spirit of the game.



## Strategic Planning meeting of the ant

In a three-day strategic planning meeting with 18 participants led by facilitators Jenny and Enakshi, the first day saw the introduction of the Six Thinking Hats method. Participants shared their emotions in response to the FCRA suspension, identified impacts on the organization, explored new opportunities, and considered risks. The second day involved group discussions to establish working principles and strategies for the organization's future, focusing on community-led initiatives, inclusion, collaboration, sustainability, transformation, and value-based approaches. Participants also discussed four key work areas: 1) Health and Wellbeing 2) Children and Youth 3) Women and Girls Empowerment and 4) Livelihood. On the third day, participants reviewed the organization's structure, and formed four working groups: 1) Collaboration and Convergence group, 2) Project Development and Resource Mobilization group, 3) Training group and R4) Inclusion and Equity group to develop strategies aligned with their principles. These groups addressed collaboration and convergence, project development, resource mobilization, training, and inclusion and equity, aiming to guide the organization's future efforts effectively.



## the ant's 23rd birthday



On October 13, 2023, the ant celebrated its 24th Foundation Day with a sense of unity and collaboration. This year, the organization celebrated its anniversary alongside its community, extending its appreciation beyond the organizational staff and recognizing the significance of its commitment to the people it serves. During the celebration, the executive director, Netaji Basumatary, took a moment to express his heartfelt gratitude to all the dedicated members of the organization's extended family for their remarkable work and unwavering service.

## IDeAting For Change

### IDeA Incubation Training Series

As part of the Caring Friends Incubation Grant Program, IDeA introduced a comprehensive training series designed exclusively for the partner organizations this year. From August to October, IDeA hosted four distinct training workshops, tailored to empower and equip their partner organisations from various parts of the north-east. These trainings covered crucial areas like Project Development & Management, Children's Libraries, Livelihoods Promotion, and Accounts & Financial Management. More than 15 partner organisations across the north east participated in these workshops.



### Graduating Ceremony of IDeA Incubation Partners

On the 13th of October, IDeA organized a special graduation ceremony to celebrate the achievements of our partners who have successfully completed their journey with us through the ant Incubation Grant program. This year four organizations graduated from the incubation grant program. The day started with a warm welcome note from Ronald Basumatary, who shared the remarkable incubation journey thus far. During the ceremony, each organization was given a certificate and a stole as a token of acknowledgment. In a heartwarming gesture, the partner organizations also joined IDeA in celebrating the 23rd birthday of the ant.



Thank You for reading!

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