

YOUTH INVOLVE JOURNEY

Vol. I

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF YOUTH INVOLVE

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Youth Involve Journey

Editorial team:

- Sentirenba
- Anita VI Nunmawii

YOUTH INVOLVE EXPOSURE VISIT

- Sonal Roshan

Co-ordinator, Youth Involve Social Initiatives

Requests:

For the next issue of Youth Involve Journey, we request everyone who have website and social media account to send us the link and user name, respectively



YOUTH INVOLVE (2024 COHORT) EXPOSURE VISIT TO VAGRA COMMUNITY

CONDOLENCE



Francis Lyngshing

05-10-1963 - 14-02-2025

We express our sympathy and grief at the demise of Mr Francis Lyngshing, a beloved father of Shantilang, Founder of Na Lyngkha of the 2024 cohort

The Journey Begins...

The Trip started with a 3 days train Journey from Guwahati to Chennai and then to Pondicherry. But the three days journey was not the start of the trip for some of us. For Lalliansanga, it was a day long Journey from Lunglei to Aizawl, then another day to Guwahati. For Apong, if he set out from his village Khongka, it would have been two days earlier, same as Lalliansanga, but (un)fortunately, Apong had to come to Guwahati in advance for some other work. The point is, for most of us, to start the journey from Guwahati to anywhere in the world, we have to move out from our home at least a day or two in advance.

The world today is very fast - people can choose to travel thousands of kilometers in short hours. Yet we choose to travel for days. I want all the readers to reflect upon these questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we trying to reach?

We as northeastern people have faced hardships all our lives- no railways, no roads, no schools, no hospitals, one way or other we have always been managing with the least. And it's the hardship that have made us who we are today. The inconveniences that we have faced made us stronger,



Note from the editor

It has been a pleasure to read and hear news about the Youth Involve family from all around the north east states. The stories and news that have been shared give us inspiration, strength and the will to go on our journey, which is oftentimes quite a struggle and a difficult path. Most of us are not individuals from entrepreneurial background, or with such knowledge. We are people with dreams and passion, with a wish to help others. Unlike most entrepreneurs out there, our vision is to touch lives and help people. For this reason and many other reasons, we often have to pave our own path, sometimes against the wish of our family, our loved ones and sometimes even against the wish of the community we are working for.

But we keep going anyway, with wavering hearts and uncertain fate. However, faith and hope has kept us alive and help us reached where we are now, with the help of good people and a few people who believe in our dreams. Youth Involve is one such believer. Many of us would not be where we are now without Youth Involve. So, when stories, activities and news- the good and the bad, success and failures, are shared here in this newsletter- *Youth Involve Journey*, it could be an inspiration and strength to a dying flame.

Let us continue to be a candle to each one of us by sharing our stories through the **YOUTH INVOLVE JOURNEY**

-Editor

bonded to each other. It taught us equity, it taught us to respect our culture, our people, our ecosystem.

Similarly, during this trip we have visited such organizations who have sustained in this cutthroat and fast paced world. And not only they have sustained but have created perspectives which would have never existed if these visionaries hadn't stepped up in the first place.

Organizations Visited and Insights



1. Anankaputhur Weavers

Anankaputhur is situated in the suburb of Chennai, it is mainly known for the weavers community who has been making traditional *hand woven saris, dhotis, lungis, and fabrics*. From generation to generation, the community has been sustaining through weaving. But the introduction of automatic machines, inflation in the market, faster and higher

demand of products made it quite difficult for the weavers to sustain in the current market. Mr. Sekar, who belongs from the 6th generation of the weavers community, introduced the technique of extracting fibre from the banana stem. Now, they have been able to create products with 100% banana fibres, this has brought down the cost of materials. Also the extraction is very simple which does not involve any machinery. He shares that he is just a simple craftsman who is doing what is best for the community. The weavers community consists of many Self Help Groups who create these materials to be sold all around India and abroad.

"I have observed that here in Anankaputhur, men also engage in weaving activities, whereas in our state weaving activities are carried out only by women. I feel in near future I would like to introduce the weaving skills to men of our community to build a sustainable and equitable community," Vianney observed.

2. CONCERN

CONCERN is an NGO based in Chennai. It is a De-addiction centre, which aims to trust their clients in holding onto their life and find their chance to life. CONCERN does not believe in forceful rehabilitation, does not enforce restrictive measures and the patients are allowed to interact with visitors. The organization focuses on restoring the self esteem of the patients, make them see their self-worth rather than using force to stop continuing in their destructive behaviours or addictions.

“CONCERN is another inspiration. Having asked the question “what made you start” to the founder, she smiled and said “I have my share of experience in my family”. It all made sense when she answered the question, no one would love to work with addicts, if only it was for bread and butter. One of the recovered addicts mentioned how addicts are treated in society and all, I realised the best therapy or the medication for addicts is not detox or OSTs (Opioid Substitution Therapy) but *Care and Respect*.” - Apong



3. Solitude Farm

Krishna Mckenzie the founder of Solitude farm at Auroville talked about *connection of oneself with mother earth*. He has created a food forest and has abundant supply of fruits and vegetables. The commercialization food we eat has severe dour connection with mother earth. As a result there is no emotional linkage with food or the people who grow them. Krishna is originally from United States of America, but he has been living here at Auroville for 15 years.



He is also very famous in social media and strongly advocates the connection of human being with mother nature in his videos.

“Meeting him inspires me to value the mother earth and know where our food comes from. Knowing about the origin and roots of our food which has been forgotten and replaced by the trending brands of fast food and packaged food, we have forgotten to appreciate our farmers. Valuing local food, we learn to value intergenerational knowledge allowing us to learn how to honour our mother nature for its contribution the healthy food presented abundantly for us.” - Vianney

4. Palmyrah

The ‘Palmyra Centre for Ecological Land Use and Rural Development’, located in Aurobrindavan, oversees a Rural Development Project funded by the DIK/OIK, Germany, which includes improvement in the standard of education for school children, physical education programmes, and the support of sports and health care activities.

“I’m thrilled to see the initiatives using it in such innovation ways. We also came across an initiative that works with water conservation which broadened the understanding of how important it is to work in an eco friendly manner in bringing the ecological balance together with positive changes.” - Rongsenmongla

5. Sristi Foundation

Sristi Foundation is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to building an inclusive, self-sustaining community where persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) can live, learn, work, and thrive. Their mission is to empower people with IDD to lead independent and dignified lives through meaningful engagement and economic participation.



“Sristi is not just a center; it is a home, a place of belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). Here, inclusivity is not just a principle but a lived experience. The foundation empowered its members through education, skill-building, and sustainable farming, allowing them to lead dignified, independent lives. What struck me the most is how they truly listened to the voices of those they supported, ensuring that everyone feel seen and valued. Their self-sustaining model—where young people engaged in farming, poultry, and other livelihood activities—allowed both individuals and the organization to thrive.” – Purbali

“Visiting the Sristi foundation was a priceless experience. As a farming enthusiast, I am able to dissolve myself to their farming approach and I am impressed by their sustainability. It is amazing how young organisation that was started in 2013 could attain such growth and I ended up questioning what is that special ingredient? It didn't take long for my brain to kick in the answer this time as usually, my brain works like a tortoise. I then heard the inspiring story of the founder and I am sure that it is not the fame, awards or money that he is working for, but it is the love and passion that is fuelling this person and it is reflecting in every brick of the wall and the food they are serving.” - Apong

Learning/takeaway



“One unique takeaway from the trip that I want to carry forward for my initiative is the deep sense of respect shown by CONCERN and Srishti Foundation towards their clients. As someone working with children and adolescents, who are often overlooked and whose opinions are frequently disregarded, I strongly believe they deserve the same respect instead of being seen as merely ignorant kids. This is a value I hope my team will uphold in our interactions with children and adolescents.” – Laltlankimi

“One unique thing that keeps popping into my mind is what Krishna McKenzie (Solitude Farm) said, “Food is the lowest common denominator”. This was something I never thought about, specially in terms of keeping a community together! It may or may not be ‘food’ but, I learned that having a common denominator is a key for building and keeping a community together which is one thing I would take ahead with my initiative.” – V Lalliansanga

“Through each visit, I noticed a common pattern where every initiative was born from the personal struggles of its Founder. These organizations were not abstract solutions imposed from the outside; they were organic responses to deeply felt needs. The leaders had first changed themselves, confronting their own hardships and transforming them into forces for good.” – Purbali

“Chennai visit has been a profound experience not only professionally but spiritually as well. I was hesitant to take the trip because of many engagements and plans but I am glad I made it to the trip.” – Apong

“It's my first adventure to the Southern part of the country and it doesn't disappoint me. The places, the people, the food, the rapport that was built and everything in between is just what we needed for inspiration to keep doing what we've started. The organisations that we have visited were solid models of what I envision of a business with a purpose. There was so much take away to improve my project's models.” - Shantilang

Closure



The exposure visit is important to test and strengthen the bonding among the fellows. Not only we learned about the culture of different states, we also learned about how everyone is upholding each other and at the same time maintaining their culture. During this trip, we all took collective decisions, we learned to be responsible for each other, we motivated each other to take the step ahead and most importantly, we all had fun together.

“As the trip came to an end on March 24, I carried with me a profound realization— **true change begins within**. Each of these organizations reflected the journey of an individual who dared to transform their pain into purpose, and in doing so, uplifted an entire community. Walking away, I knew that whatever I chose to do next, it had to begin from that same place of personal truth and deep-rooted commitment.” – Purbali

Acknowledgement

This trip was made possible because all of us believed that this was important and much needed.

We would like to forward our thanks to Fr. Jerry Thomas who have made this project possible with his envisioning and thoughtfulness, Dr. Eva Wallensteiner without whom this trip or even this whole project wouldn't have been possible, Zabi Darnei & Katia Chakre for being there as a constant support, Lavinia Sadap who ensured that we receive all the funds that is needed, Marie Banu, Latha Suresh, Pradeep, Lakshmi & Kartik from CSIM who helped us connect with all the organisations and also arranged for our travel across Chennai and Pondicherry, Fr. Cholas From Don Bosco Citadel, who provided us shelter in Chennai, Fr. Balraj Antony from Don Bosco Boys Home, Pondicherry, who provided for our accommodation, all the members of the organisations we visited and lastly the whole Bosco Institute and YI Family for their constant appreciation and encouragement.



A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUTH INVOLVE FELLOWSHIP

I applied for the YI Fellowship, and since 2017, I have been a part of the Fellowship with my social intervention, helping the widows and widowers in my village.

Brother Jenpu Rongmei, Founder of CAN Youth Dimapur, invited and assisted me in my journey of taking my Initiative further through the Youth Involve (YI) Fellowship.

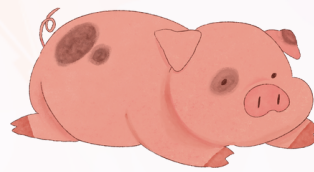
Before joining the YI Fellowship, I have very few social contacts and networks with other young social workers; besides I have limited knowledge about social initiatives and various legal and financial processes.

My journey along with the YI Fellowship is truly/both experimental and practical learning for me. From social interaction among the fellows, field visits and tours for various programs conducted under YI Fellowship, our experienced mentor Father Jerry working with the youths with his extensive experience and knowledge on social interventions to YI annual review meeting, it is not just a fellowship to me but like a temple of knowledge from where I learn, see, feel and experience the life of social workers and social entrepreneurs.



I attributed my achievements during the 2017-2019 years journey to the YI Fellowship and my failures on my part

when I stopped engaging myself in the fellowship programs and meetings, which kept me further away from being an active member of the YI Fellowship.



My initiative of helping widows and widowers had the worst setback during the Covid-19 years. With Covid-19 came swine flu, which has brought a tremendous set back to us and initially to the failure of my initiative as most of widow's piglets succumbed to it. All I could do was to help them through another little way. My failure was also due to my teaching profession, and because of that, I couldn't participate in many meetings and programs of YI. All I could do was continue to help the widows and widowers through small acts of kindness, or else nothing major could be done to date after the YI Fellowship funding years.

I remain grateful to the Bosco Institute - Youth Involve Fellowship, and it will always remain one of the best experimental and practical learning years for my social initiative journeys.

Dikugong Esalung
Youth Involve Fellow (2017-2019 cohort)
Old Tesen Village, Tening block
Peren, Nagaland.

(Thank you so much Diku for sharing your journey. Your failures did not break you down but it let you keep growing to the point that you have the courage to share your failures. - Ed.)

MY JOURNEY AS A YI FELLOW

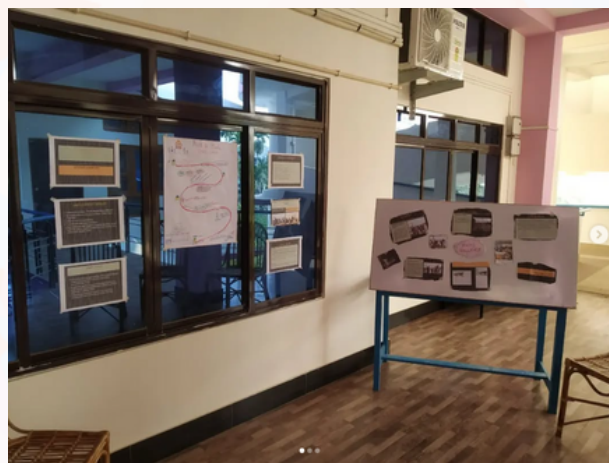
My associate with the Youth Involve (YI) family is unique. Initially, I joined YI as a Youth Volunteer in the year 2014-16 and as a Fellow of YI from 2022-2023. As I look back on my journey as a YI, I have a deep sense of complacency. I was given space to retrospect, introspect and reconsider so many things towards improvement in my life. Over the years I have seen the Youth Involve program evolving to serve the community in the best way possible.

My ways of connecting with people and working with people have improved a lot over the years of working with the YI family. Everyone deserves to live the way they wanted and today, I am complacent with the transformation that had occurred in my life and I am still working towards bringing out the best version of me.

Being a part of YI Fellow I have done something that I always wanted to achieve which means to me. I was able to display my essence of transformation in my locality in the terms that work for me; I may be just a fellow among the YI Fellows but today, the people with whom I worked in my locality look up to me as a beacon of hope and transformation.



There were times I almost gave up on things but the Run Away Space (RAS) concept always help me to take my time and re-evaluate,



reassess and continue my journey. In my failures, I learned that failures and turbulent situations are very much a part of success and one should not avoid or get stuck with negative thoughts. To me personally being a part of the YI was a unique learning platform; there were times I experienced failures, but the constant support and motivation from the YI community didn't allow me to give up.

As a former YI Fellow, I feel fortunate that I am one of the youths from the state of Nagaland who could be a part of the YI family. The basic core values and operating system of the YI is what I am applying in any platform that I am engaged in today and many positive outcomes have been witnessed.

I am grateful to Father Jerry, Jenpu, Bala, Sonal and all my fellow friends and mentors of YI for always being kind and supportive throughout my entire journey as a part of Youth Involve. God bless!

Vezito Tetseo
Co-founder of Pick-a-book Foudation
Nagaland



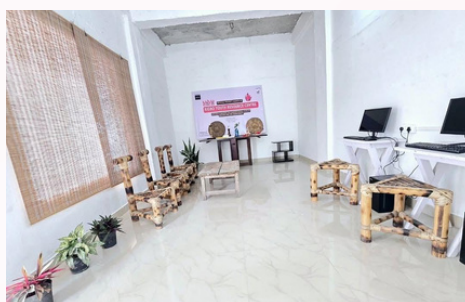
RIGBO YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE RELAUNCHES WITH RENEWED HOPE

After a brief hiatus, RIGBO Youth Resource Centre has reopened its doors to serve the rural youth of Majuli. Since its inception in 2018, with support from the Youth Involve Social Initiatives Support Program by Bosco Institute, Jorhat, RIGBO has been dedicated to providing a holistic range of services, including: - 99 Street Cafe, a hangout space, Entrepreneurship workshops, Life skills sessions, Career guidance, Networking opportunities, Resource materials, Internet access and Computer education. These services have enabled rural youth to access information, develop new skills, and connect with peers and mentors.

Unfortunately, due to unresolved political reasons, RIGBO had to vacate its original space in August 2024. However, with determination and resilience, the team secured a new space and received the CSO Resilience Grant 2024-25 from NFI.

On March 29th, RIGBO relaunched its Youth Resource Centre, inviting local community members and NGO representatives to experience the center's offerings. The event featured a life skills session on Communication, Problem Solving, and Time Management.

RIGBO is committed to continuing its mission of empowering rural youth in Majuli. We look forward to a brighter future and renewed opportunities for growth and development.



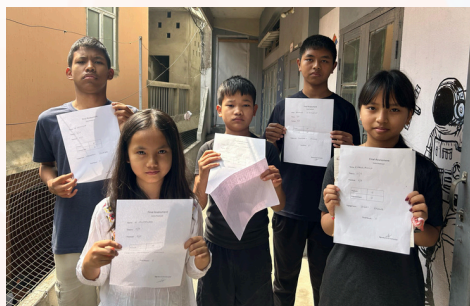
MISCHIEF & MAYHEM (MnM) - NEW CREATIVE SPACE IN LUNGLEI.



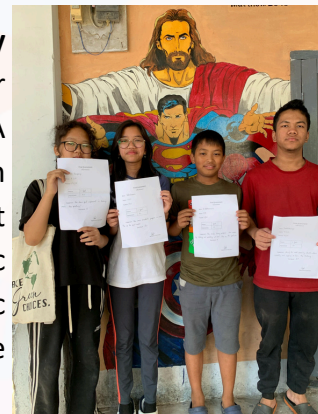
Mischief & Mayhem has made significant progress towards its vision by securing a dedicated space in Venglai, Lunglei, Mizoram, for its upcoming Art Café & Creative Space. This venue aims to become a vibrant hub for artists, musicians, and creatives, fostering a culture of collaboration and artistic expression. The space is currently under development, with plans to officially open in May.



PROJECT FAITH ACADEMY



The students of **Project Faith Academy Music** have successfully completed their course 'Fundamentals of Music Theory: A Practical Approach'. They had an assessment on 03.04. 2025 and had a great time of interaction with their music instructors. The new batch of music students will begin their classes once the admission process are completed.



The first batch of **Project Faith Academy - Art** students have successfully finished their course as well, the course being 'Artistic Vision: Art with a purpose' under the guidance of our talented artist and core team member Lalhmingfaki Famhawite. The new batch of students will soon start their classes again after admissions are done.

ONGOING REGISTRATIONS:

Whu Mi Enterprise: After extensive discussions with Sir Mohan (CODE Coach), Sonal and Lakshmi from CSIM Chennai, Whu Mi decided to register as a Cooperative Society. As a preliminary step, the initiative visited various cooperative societies across Nagaland to understand the advantages and challenges of cooperative registration and gain insights into the registration process under the Cooperative Societies.

In Lehkha Foundation, formerly known as In Lehkha is going through the registration process as a society under the Government of Mizoram, with the help and guidance of Rebek Khiangte, Co-founder and Director of FLAT, Lunglei.

In Lehkha now also launched its website and can be visited at [In Lehkha](https://inlekhka.in/) or through the link <https://inlekhka.in/>

NEWS UPDATE

NA LYNKGHA - A MODEL FARM FOR INTEGRATED FARMING

March 2025; Umsohlait Village, Ri Bhoi, Meghalaya

Na Lyngkha Initiative serves as a model farm for integrated farming and has implemented various agricultural activities to establish the farm. The setup includes a vegetable garden, several fruit



trees and plants, along with a growing population of chickens and healthy pigs. While farm work can be physically demanding, it offers great emotional rewards. This initiative not only enhances emotional well-being but also provides a sense of purpose and contentment to everyone involved.



REVIEW MEETING & CODE TRAINING

6th - 7th January, 2025. Jorhat, Assam: Youth Involve Review Meeting was held on 6th January, 2025 at Bosco Institute, Jorhat, Assam. Seven members of the cohort 2024, 3 lead team members, 1 member from the cohort 2022, the DKA team, and the YI coordination team attended the meeting.



The review meeting started with introductions and a short description of the work and activities each member is involved in during the past 9 months of the cohort 2024 journey. It was ended with conversation with Eva and handing of the map of North East India, hand sewed by the Youth Involve Members.



The Review meeting was followed by Coaching Embedded Organisation Development Engagement (CODE) from 7th January, 2025 to 11th January, 2025. CODE is a six months program which enables young people to become informed and clear about their actions on ground. It's a carefully designed process which not only prepares the Youth Involve Social Entrepreneurs professionally but also spotlights on their value system, and helps them to inculcate healthy practices towards self-development.

**Detailed Report had been sent by the co-ordinator in the email, refer to your emails for detail. -Ed.*

SPONSORSHIP & COLLABORATION WITH “THE PIT: SHOW OFF”

10.01.2025. Lunglei, Mizoram: Mischief & Mayhem (MnM) proudly co-sponsored Episode 5 of “The Pit: Show Off” on January 10, 2025. This popular TV show is hosted by renowned Mizo artist and rapper G’nie and produced by Lailen TV. The show highlights the talents of both emerging and established rappers in an engaging and entertaining way. Additionally, MnM provided outfits for rising Mizo rapper Keimi in Episode 6, further supporting the local hip-hop community.



BOOK SIGNING

01.02.2025. Aizawl, Mizoram: A book signing was held for a local prominent author Mr. Lalhruaitluanga Chawngte at In Lehkha Book Cafe, Chaltlang Venglai, Aizawl, Mizoram. The author and the readers enjoyed the quiet book signing- with no public speech. This is the first time such book signing is held for the public in Mizoram as book signing in Mizoram are usually accompanied by public speech and talk.



Training session on Indigenous Alder-Based Jhum Cultivation by Whu Mi Enterprise

11.02.2025;Kiphirie, Nagaland: A training session on Indigenous Alder-Based Jhum Cultivation was held on 11.02.2025 at Khongka Village, Kiphirie, Nagaland with local Jhum farmers. The primary aim of this training was to impart knowledge about Indigenous Alder-Based Jhum Cultivation to the local farming community.

The event featured several esteemed guests, including Jennifer Liang and Kayia from the Roots to Branches Foundation, Sonal Roshan from Youth Involve, Bosco Institute, Jorhat, Assam, and Neichükho-o Nicholas Leno, Information and Publicity Secretary of the Nagaland Tourism Association.

Seyiepfulie Sara, an expert with first-hand experience in Alder-Based Jhum Cultivation, facilitated the training. Participants received in-depth information about the ecological and agricultural benefits of integrating alder trees into jhum cultivation. This practice, traditionally utilized in Khonoma Village, Kohima, is a sustainable alternative to conventional slash-and-burn farming, enhancing soil fertility and reducing deforestation. A total of 47 participants from the jhum farming community attended the training program and actively engaged in learning sustainable agricultural practices.



NURSERY CUM BOTANICAL GARDEN FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

14.02.2025. Khongka, Kiphirie, Nagaland: A Nursery-cum-Botanical Garden was established by Whu Mi Enterprise for school children using locally available bamboo resources on 14th February 2025 at Khongka GPS, Kiphirie. This space will serve as a collection hub for various tree saplings while also acting as an interactive learning environment, fostering ecological awareness and hands-on education for the students to ignite the conservative spirit among the children and provide a space for learning.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN (DRAWING COMPETITION & FILM SCREENING)

17.02.2025. Khongka, Kiphirie, Nagaland: An Awareness Campaign on Drawing Competition & Film Screening was conducted by Whu Mi Enterprise on February 17, 2025 at Khongka Government Primary School, Kiphirie, Nagaland where 75 students enthusiastically participated. The main objective of this campaign was to ignite the conservative spirit among the children. To encourage creativity and engagement, prizes were awarded to the top three winners. The event aimed to inspire young minds while fostering awareness about conservation.

Various documentary films produced by GreenHub, Dusty Foot Foundation, and The Habitats Trust were screened using a projector to educate and inspire children about wildlife conservation and environmental protection.



NEW PUBLICATION:

21.02.2025 . Aizawl, Mizoram: The newest publication by In Lehkha Publishing “Wild Whisper by Emmzee” a collection of contemporary English poetry was launched on February 21, 2025 By PC Lalremruati, a prominent author.

**“SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH CLUB”.**

18.03.2025. Nongkrem, Shillong: Next Space Organisation successfully organized an orientation program on self-employment to establish a Youth Club in the Pahsyntiew Secondary School, Nongkrem, Shillong, on March 18, 2025. The objective was to educate students and raise awareness about social entrepreneurship through the Youth Club. The Youth Club framework includes components such as design thinking, mind mapping, kitchen gardening, crafting, exhibitions, fundraising, and surveys.



In collaboration with the school, the organization has initiated the establishment of a Model School, where the Youth Club will function as a key sub activity. Additionally, the organization aims to expand the concept of Model Schools and Youth Clubs to various communities and schools.

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WORKSHOP AND TRAINING ON CREATIVITY

20.03. 2025; Kohima, Nagaland: Erui Designs conducted an engaging workshop on March 15, 2025, in collaboration with the Bosco Creativity Club, Don Bosco College, Kohima, on the theme “Creativity as a Lifestyle,” with a special focus on jewelry making and embroidery.

115 students—38 males and 77 females participated in the workshop. Following the session, 12 students enrolled for a dedicated jewelry-making class, 8 students opted for both jewelry and embroidery training, showcasing their keen interest in learning these traditional crafts.

Following the workshop, Erui Designs conducted the first training class on jewelry with 12 ladies at Gianna Girls Hostel, Kohima on March 20, 2025.

**OBSERVING WORLD POETRY DAY**

21.03. 2025 . Aizawl, Mizoram: In observation of world poetry day, open mic poetry reading was held at In Lehkha Book Cafe, Chaltlang, Aizawl on 21.03.2025.

The theme for this year’s World Poetry Day is “Poetry for Peace and Unity.