

# The AIDA nicle

stories from inspiring...enabling...empowering journeys

## THREE YEARS OF 'GRAM SEVA' IN NAMSAI VILLAGES (P-11)



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Cover photo: SBIGS Namsai beneficiary tilling vegetable  
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*Random thoughts*

**"We do not learn from experience...  
we learn from reflecting on experience."**

— John Dewey

## A note from the editor



Dear friend,

Welcome to the 8th issue of AIDA Chronicle, where we bring you stories of resilience and community-led development from across our operational areas in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and the upper districts of Assam.

In this edition, we journey through a year of growth under the PULEM piggery project, expanding youth employability through the Job Placement Network, inspiring victories from the DB Sports Academy, and the three-year impact of the SBI Gram Seva program in Namsai.

The sustainability factor of community development projects is discussed under 'Reflections.' As always, our Executive Director opens this issue with a warm message to all of us.

With every good wish,

J Matthew

# Message from the Executive Director



As we come to the close of another wonderful year, 2025, my heart is filled with gratitude. We thank God for His constant guidance and blessings, and we express our sincere appreciation to all who have been part of our journey: our partners, beneficiaries, dedicated staff, and well-wishers. Your trust and collaboration have strengthened our mission and enabled us to reach communities with renewed purpose and hope.

In this final issue of the year of 'The AIDA Chronicle', we are delighted to present stories that reflect the spirit of resilience, growth, and transformation. The PULEM Project, now completing its first year, highlights how backyard piggery initiatives are enhancing livelihoods and creating pathways for economic security.

We also feature the AIDA–Don Bosco Job Placement Network, which continues to empower young people to fulfil their dreams and aspirations through meaningful employment.

As the three-year journey of SBI Gram Seva at Namsai draws to a close, we look back with pride at the integrated development achieved with the active participation of the communities.

This issue also brings inspiring stories from the Don Bosco Sports Academy, Dimapur, where sports continue to shape discipline, confidence, and future opportunities for youth. The resilience of the Adivasi communities of North Lakhimpur, Assam, further reminds us of the power of collective action and sustainable change.

As we celebrate Christmas, I extend my warmest wishes for a joyful season and a grace-filled New Year 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Roy George SDB'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Fr. Roy George SDB  
Executive Director, AIDA

# 'PULEM' COMPLETES ONE YEAR

By Siiroula Lucy Ph

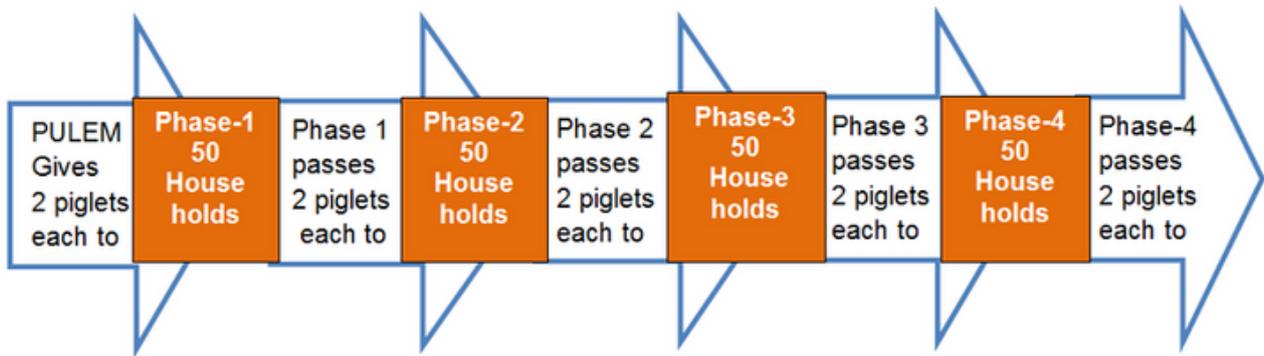
**The project 'Piggery Units as a Livelihood Enhancement Means for Maram' (PULEM), implemented by AIDA since November 2024, is a three-year piggery-based livelihood initiative aimed at strengthening rural household economies in Maram. Designed to support 200 families with two piglets each, the project promotes income generation, asset creation, and long-term self-reliance.**

As the project completes first of its three years in December this year, its early achievements reflect steady progress and a strong foundation for broader community transformation. The model encourages households to raise piglets as an income-generating asset while participating in a collective responsibility framework that benefits both individual families and the wider community. Year one has shown encouraging participation, growing skills among farmers, and the emergence of a self-sustaining support system for pig rearing.



## **The PULEM model**

The PULEM Project follows a simple yet powerful model rooted in sustainable asset creation and community solidarity. Each selected household receives two female piglets, which serve as the initial foundation for their livelihood activities. Once the first litter is produced, families are required to pass on two piglets to another identified household, ensuring that the benefits extend progressively. The project creates a chain of support that will eventually include all 200 families by end of the project period, even if the initial distribution phase begins with fewer households. And the process mandated to keep going beyond the project period duration and the village boundaries facilitated by the Pig Rearing Farmers Union which is established in every project village.



**The PULEM project model for shared growth**

This approach nurtures a culture of shared growth, where progress is not confined to individual households but reaches across the entire community. By encouraging families to invest care and effort in rearing pigs, the model builds naturally multiplying assets that can enhance income over the long term. “The pass-on mechanism ensures that the progress of one family becomes the starting point for another,” shares Ms. Kala Marina, Community Mobilizer of the project. “It is a simple yet change-making practice that turns individual success into a shared, ever-growing community asset.”

### **Achievements for the first year**

During this first year, the project focused on building the capacity of beneficiaries to rear pigs effectively and profitably.



PULEM beneficiary Pungdila at her piggery unit in Kabinam village / image credit : S, Lucy

Training sessions and guidance were provided to help households adopt proper feeding, housing, and health management practices. So far, 54 households have been supported with two Sow each and 4 households with one boar each, making a total of 104 piglets distributed in this initial phase.

The health and growth of the piglets have been encouraging, with the first litters expected by February. This milestone will enable the first round of “passing-on-the-gift,” thereby extending the benefits to additional households.

A total of 108 households are Identified inclusion of phase-I (54) and Phase-II (54), marking the halfway point to the project’s overall goal. Families have shown enthusiastic participation, embraced new practices, and contributed to keeping the project on schedule.

“As a beneficiary, I now have better knowledge, healthier livestock, and more confidence in managing my livelihoods,” ,” shares Ms Pungdila, a beneficiary from Kabinam village. “ This support has given me hope and a stronger foundation for my family’s future. We are eagerly waiting for the first litters so that we can pass on the gift to others.”

### Strengthening local capacity

One of the key accomplishments in the first year has been the introduction of four ‘Pashu Sakhis’ one for each of the four project villages. They are trained, village-based livestock caregivers who serve as frontline support for the pig-rearing households. These community resource persons are equipped to provide essential services, including basic animal care, first aid, and preventive health measures.



Four Pashu Sakhis were trained by Dr. HB Warngam Anal / image credit:S.Lucy

They received targeted training from Dr. H. B. Warngam Anal who is the local Veterinary Officer at Maram Senapati district.



Trained Pashu Sakhis of all the four Project Villages / image credit:S.Lucy

The training focused on pig health, nutrition, disease prevention, and timely intervention techniques. The Pashu Sakhis now play a vital role in safeguarding the well-being of the animals and strengthening the confidence of farmers as they build their livestock assets.

“Empowering local caregivers with practical skills is essential for the success of a livestock projects,” notes Dr. Anal, “The Pashu Sakhis are now capable of providing timely interventions that protect both animal health and household incomes.”

## Organising farmers for future

To ensure long-term sustainability, Pig Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) have been formed, with each group representing around 10 beneficiary households. These FPOs serve as platforms for collective decision-making, particularly in areas such as feed procurement, marketing strategies, and planning for future expansion. This organisational structure is helping farmers move from individual efforts to collaborative enterprise, laying the groundwork for improved market access and more efficient resource use in the future.



Training for FPO office bearers at village Kabinam / image by: S.Lucy

## Looking Ahead

As the project moves into its second year, the emphasis will shift towards completing the piglet distribution cycle, ensuring all 200 families are included. With the first litters expected soon, the second phase will accelerate the “passing-on-the-gift” process. Income generation through the sale of mature pigs is also anticipated to begin, marking an important milestone in financial empowerment.



FPO Office Bearers / image by: S.Lucy

Alongside this, plans are underway to strengthen market linkages, enhance veterinary support, and deepen community training to ensure that the PULEM Project continues its journey toward sustainable, community-driven livelihood development beyond the project period duration.

“Year one has built the foundation—the assets and the knowledge. In Year two, we move from growth to generating tangible income,” Executive Director of AIDA, Fr. Dr. Roy George, sums it up. “Our focus will be on ensuring easy market access and that every participating family realizes the full economic potential of their efforts. This is when self-reliance truly takes root.” ■



Siiroula Lucy Ph is Coordinator of PULEM project.

# ADVANCING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY ACROSS NORTHEAST INDIA IN 2025

*By Sebi Chacko*

**The AIDA – Don Bosco Job Placement Network (DBJPN), Dimapur, continued its mission of strengthening youth employability across Nagaland and rest of north-east region, in 2025 as well, through structured career guidance, multi-state job fairs, and strong partnerships with government and private employers. This year marked a period of steady expansion, improved systems, and effective outreach.**



Image from an interview at Job-fair conducted in Don Bosco College, Maram during the year / image by Sebi Chacko

## **Strengthening career readiness (January–June 2025)**

The year began with renewed focus on school and college outreach, covering 16 institutions across Assam and Nagaland. Through sessions on stream selection, vocational pathways, Multiple Intelligences Theory, and informed career decision-making, 635 students were equipped with practical guidance.

“For many of our learners, these sessions are opening doors they never imagined,” remarked the principal of the Evershine School, Dimapur, after the program was conducted in their school.

DBJPN reinforced institutional partnerships through 15 sensitization visits, integrating career services into school calendars and sharing resource kits. Candidate support also improved through strengthened follow-up systems and enhanced recruiter verification using online checks and direct employer confirmation.

## Skilling, networking and recruitment (April–June 2025)

During the year, JPN conducted 35 activities under this section; Three major job fairs were conducted, one of which was conducted in collaboration with Bosco Reach Out, Guwahati, Two walk-in interview drives and one employer meeting were organized. 16 institutional engagement were also made during the year.



Collectively these programs reached 407 youth. Psychometric assessments for 165 candidates enhanced guidance accuracy.

To address rising job expectation mismatches among unskilled youth, the team implemented eight pre-placement orientations with 264 participants, five expectation-alignment workshops, and regular employer feedback loops. By June, placement conversion improved from 28% to 41%, reflecting better candidate readiness.

## Multi-state engagements (July–October 2025)

DBJPN carried out 17 major activities across Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, and Delhi, benefiting over 512 youth, and jobseekers. Participation in the Job Fair & Donors' Meet in Delhi and the exposure visit to NICS Noida strengthened national-level networks. DBJPN Staff also upgraded communication competencies through digital and Canva training at SPCI (Don Bosco House) Delhi.

Employer linkages expanded steadily. Recruitment for KFC Mokokchung resulted in 16 shortlists, with 10 candidates joining OJT, while a Kohima fair attracted 92 youth.

In August, employability skilling at Don Bosco College, Golaghat and Don Bosco College Maram (A), Senapati covered 164 students; the Public Job Fair at DBSTI Tezpur registered 254 walk-ins with 109 shortlists; and two Career Counsellor Training Programmes in Dimapur and Agartala capacitated 69 teachers.



Inclusivity remained a cornerstone. The Inclusive Job Fair in Dimapur registered 178 candidates, with 101 walk-ins and 43 shortlists across ITES, hospitality, insurance, QSR, and service sectors. The first-ever Job Fair in Maram, Manipur attracted 87 youth, resulting in 40 shortlists and 22 candidates received offer letters. “It was the first time opportunities of this scale reached our hill district,” a participant noted.

### Overall Reach and Impact (Jan–Oct 2025)

Over ten months, JPN reached 1,500+ youth, facilitated 300 placements and trained 120 teachers, and organized 10 major job fairs, including 5 standalone DBJPN fairs and 2 collaborative fairs with Bosco Reach Out–DB JPN, Guwahati



From expanding career guidance to executing inclusive job fairs, AIDA–Don Bosco JPN has strengthened pathways to dignified employment across the Northeast. The first ten months of 2025 highlight its growing role as a bridge between education and industry, empowering youth with skills, confidence, and real opportunities for decent work. ■



Sebi Chacko is Coordinator at AIDA-Don Bosco Job Placement Network, Dimapur

# THREE YEARS OF 'GRAM SEVA' IN NAMSAI VILLAGES

*By J Mathew*

**Over three years, the SBI Gram Seva Programme has helped five Namsai villages grow stronger, more connected, and more self-reliant through a holistic blend of social, economic, and community-led initiatives.**



SBI Gram Seva program supported Farm mechanisation in program villages / image by: Chau Chanak Minnow

Namsai district, the eastern gateway of Arunachal Pradesh, is a landscape of low hills, plains, and lush tropical forests stretching across 1,587 sq. km geographical area. Home to nearly 96,000 people, who predominantly belong to the Tai-Khamti and Singpho scheduled tribes, the district is known for its Buddhist heritage and cultural identity.

Despite its natural and cultural wealth, Namsai district continues to face development challenges. Most families rely on traditional farming methods, while weak public infrastructure, limited health services, and inadequate educational facilities persist across its rural areas.

These gaps have contributed to the district being designated an Aspirational District by the Government of India.

It was against this backdrop that the Mumbai-based SBI Foundation partnered with Nagaland's Dimapur-based ANMA Integrated Development Association (AIDA) to launch the SBI Gram Seva (SBIGS) programme in the district's five villages of Adi Ningroo, Ningroo Charali, Nampong, Piyong Khamti, and Piyong Singpho.

### **Launching the Gram Seva programme**

The three-year program, covering January 2023 to December 2025, began with an exploratory visit by a four-member AIDA team in late 2022.

With the support of local government agencies and village leaders, the team identified the five villages where the programme could have the most meaningful impact. Public meetings in each village ensured that the program was well explained and that community expectations were clearly understood.



Public meetings in each village ensured that the program was well explained and that community expectations were clearly understood. / Image by: AIDA

After these initial discussions, village authorities led by the Gaon Burahs consulted their wider communities and later invited AIDA back to implement the program in their villages. The program was formally launched following further deliberations involving the Namsai District Administration, SBI Foundation, and AIDA, which led to the appointment of the Circle Officer of Piyong Circle as the nodal officer of the program by the district administration. This was AIDA's first intervention in Namsai district, although it had decades-long experience in its neighboring Tirap and Longding districts.

### **Ten Pillars of Intervention**

The SBIGS programme rested on ten interconnected pillars designed to strengthen village systems and ensure holistic rural development. These are:

**Digitalisation:** Gram Seva Kendras (GSKs) were established in four villages, with one shared by Piyong Khamti and Piyong Singpho. Managed by trained local youth, these centres serve as digital access points for online services, printing, government scheme applications, and community awareness programmes.

**Education:** Creating better learning environments was a major focus. A Smart Classroom-cum-Computer Lab and a renovated Science Lab were set up at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Piyong. In addition, remedial classes, study-space upgrades, and SBI OJAS scholarships helped nurture children's academic growth.

**Health:** The SBI Sanjeevani mobile medical unit conducted monthly OPD camps offering free consultations, medicines, and basic diagnostic support. PHC Piyong received essential upgrades, including hydraulic beds and an extended maternity ward. Nutrition awareness and household kitchen gardens further supported community health.

**Livelihood:** Women were trained in traditional handloom weaving, while SHGs cultivated vegetables and mushrooms. Farmers received support for farm mechanisation, and livelihood options expanded through pig rearing, goatery, and poultry units—creating diversified and sustainable income streams.

**WaSH:** (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene): Safe drinking water facilities were renovated or newly installed across the villages. RO water coolers were placed in schools and community centres, while sanitation facilities, especially school toilets, were upgraded. Dustbins promoted a cleaner, more hygienic environment.

**Women & Youth Empowerment:** The Prerna Centre became a dedicated space for women’s skill building in weaving, catering, and crafts. A Girls’ Room at GHSS Piyong created a safe, dignified environment for adolescent girls. Youth development was supported through open gyms and distribution of sports equipment.



#### **Infrastructure:**

Community buildings were renovated into functional GSKs, while Anganwadi Centres and classrooms were upgraded to improve early childhood and school learning conditions.

**Community Engagement and Environment:** Regular observances of Statehood Day, Yoga Day, and other community events strengthened social bonds. Environment initiatives such as Jal Kunds (household water-harvesting structures) and community forest development promoted sustainability and resilience.

Together, these ten pillars created a comprehensive model that strengthened institutions, expanded opportunities, and improved quality of life across the five program villages.

#### **Challenges and Key Learnings**

The program’s rollout was not without challenges. As a new agency in the district, AIDA initially faced delays in administrative approvals, pushing the implementation timeline back by nearly three months. Early community participation was also hesitant. For instance, at the Prerna Centre, only one or two of the eight enrolled women regularly attended the advanced weaving classes during the initial weeks.

Logistical constraints posed additional difficulties; essential materials and technical services had to be sourced from Tinsukia in Assam, nearly 100 km away.

However, persistent field engagement, flexible scheduling, and strong local leadership gradually increased trust and participation.

“Those early months taught us that meaningful change takes time,” reflects Shera Minin, the Program Manager. “Once the community saw our consistency, their trust and participation began to grow.”

These experiences underscored the importance of patience, cultural sensitivity, and continuous presence in community-based development.

### **Cooperation and Positive Partnerships**

The progress made under Gram Seva reflects the strength of collective action. The SBI Foundation provided the vision, resources, and strategic direction necessary for implementation.

Village committees, elders, and Gaon Burahs contributed leadership and community mobilization.

Government departments ensured administrative support, while AIDA’s field team maintained the consistent village-level engagement required to drive change. This multi-stakeholder synergy became one of the programme’s defining strengths.



Rev Dr Roy George, Executive Director, AIDA visited program villages from time to time./Image by: AIDA

“AIDA is privileged to partner with the SBI Foundation in implementing the Gram Seva program in Namsai District,” says Rev Dr. Roy George, Executive Director of AIDA. “Our deepest appreciation goes to the SBI Foundation, the Namsai District Administration, and all our dedicated partners for their trust and collaboration. Together, we are building vibrant villages, strong in spirit and rich in potential.”

### **Sustaining the Initiatives**

As the programme approaches closure in December 2025, the five villages stand visibly changed. Livelihoods have strengthened, women have gained confidence and skills, children enjoy improved educational facilities, and local health systems are better equipped. Importantly, village institutions are now more organized, capable, and proactive.

In the words of Mr. Bolaram Paron, Gaon Burah of Adi Ningroo village, “The SBIGS program has changed life in Adi Ningroo and the other four villages. The program has created new opportunities, strengthened livelihoods, and given us hope for a better tomorrow. We are truly grateful for this support in our journey of progress.”

All programme assets will be formally handed over to village bodies that have been active stakeholders since the beginning. Self-Help Groups, youth groups, and Gram Seva Kendras are now positioned to continue the momentum.

The SBIGS program villages of Adi Ningroo, Ningroo Charali, Nampong, Piyong Khamti and Piyong Singpho in the Aspirational District of Namsai are models to follow in achieving sustainable rural development through partnership, persistence, and community ownership.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

Over the past three years, the SBI Gram Seva programme has brought measurable and visible improvements across the five program villages – Adi Ningroo, Ningroo Charali, Nampong, Piyong Khamti and, Piyong Singpho in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Digitalization:** One of the most significant achievements has been the strengthening of digital access.



GSK, Adi Ningroo. (inset- the structure of program) / Image by: AIDA

One of the first activities implemented was establishment of a Gram Seva Kendra (GSK) in all the villages by renovating dilapidating or out of use public structures. Four GSKs were thus established - villages of Piyong Singpho and Piyong Khamti sharing one GSK. These GSKs, managed by trained local youth, now serve as digital service hubs where more than 5,000 residents access online applications, scheme enrolments, printing, and essential information—

services that were previously 8–15 km away.

The implementation of the Gram Seva program had started off by each of the five villages selecting a Gram Seva Committee (GSC). These GSCs have played a vital role, ensuring that every intervention is need-based, participatory, and rooted in collective decision-making.

**Education:** Education infrastructure has seen major upgrades, including a Smart Classroom, a Computer Lab, and a refurbished Science Lab at Government Higher Secondary School, Piyong. Remedial classes in renovated classrooms benefitted 230 children, while 34 students received SBI OJAS scholarships. Two Anganwadi Centres were improved, and a Girls' Common Room now provides a safe space for adolescent girls at the GHSS, Piyong.

**Healthcare** access expanded significantly through the SBI Sanjeevani Mobile Medical Unit, which reached over 2,500 patients through monthly OPDs and special camps. The Primary Health Center at Piyong received upgraded maternity facilities, semi-automatic beds, and equipment to improve care and administrative efficiency. Kitchen gardens and Anganwadi nutrition support further strengthened community wellbeing.



**Livelihood** promotion has been another key pillar, with 98 households receiving livestock support—piglets, goats, ducklings, and chicks—along with training in agriculture, horticulture, and apiculture. Over 200 people attended income-generation trainings, enabling 144 to start or enhance livelihood activities.

### **Women & Youth empowerment**

A Prerna Centre established in Piyong Singpho village, equipped with three handloom machines and one Jacquard unit to promote hands-on skill development in weaving among women.

125 women sensitized through awareness meetings on women's rights and domestic violence.

A Girls Common' Room set up at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Piyong, to support adolescent students.

Two open gym facilities installed at public playgrounds in Adi Ningroo and Piyong Khamti. Sports activities were encouraged through jerseys and equipment support. 30 young women received training in basic self-defence.



## Community engagement & environment

Awareness created in all five project village communities on PRIs, government schemes, rights, entitlements, and improved livelihoods.



Celebration of national days and important events in community halls since project implementation, unlike before, fostering wider participation and social cohesion. 15 Jal Kunds constructed, 3 each in all five project villages to support water conservation efforts of people in project villages.

2+ acres of Jan Van, community forest, established in project village Ningroo Charali.

## Infrastructure development

4 Gram Seva Kendras (GSKs) established by renovating unused community buildings in four villages. 20 solar-powered streetlights installed in project villages where none existed before. 5 school toilets and community toilets repaired. 4 classrooms renovated. Govt Upper Primary Schools to support remedial classes. A Prerna Centre set up with handlooms to enhance women's weaving skills. 3 Roadside waiting sheds renovated in Adi Ningroo, Ningroo Charali and Nampong villages.



Across all pillars, the project's greatest achievement has been the active participation and ownership of villagers, whose collaboration has ensured sustainability and long-lasting impact. ■

*(With inputs from SBIGS Namsai program Team)*



J Mathew is M&E Officer at AIDA

# DBSA MARTIAL ARTISTS SHINE AT SOUTH ASIAN GAMES

*By Seng Kamei*



The Don Bosco Sports Academy (DBSA) in Dimapur is celebrating a proud moment as two of its young martial artists, Abdul Sahir and Nyurhunlo Kent, brought home gold medals from the 4th South Asian International Games held from 10–12 September in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Their journeys, shaped by personal drive, family support, and rigorous training at DBSA, reflect AIDA's mission of empowering young people to reach their full potential.

## **The road to Kathmandu: Sahir's rise through sudden passion**

Thirteen-year-old Abdul Sahir, a Class 7 student of Assisi Higher Secondary School, Dimapur, discovered his passion not in a traditional dojo but on his parents' mobile phone, fascinated by Shaolin Kung-Fu videos.

Inspired by what he saw, he joined DBSA in April this year, with encouragement from his friends and strong support from his father, a daily wage earner who ensured Sahir never missed a training session.

Though the first weeks were demanding, Sahir adapted quickly under the patient mentorship of his coach. His progress at the academy was remarkable: he moved from Shaolin Belt to White Belt in July and earned his Yellow Belt by September.

Representing DBSA and the All Nagaland Shaolin Kung-Fu Association in the Junior Category, Sahir competed with confidence and courage, ultimately securing a gold medal, a moment of immense joy for his family, his academy, and the state.

*“It felt amazing to win! I was a little scared, but I remembered everything my coach taught me. This gold medal is for my parents, my coach, and everyone at DBSA,”* said an excited Sahir.

### **The road to Kathmandu: Sahir’s rise through sudden passion**

Equally compelling is the journey of Nyurhunlo Kent, a Class 9 student at Mount Mary Higher Secondary School, Dimapur. Unlike Sahir’s sudden spark of passion, Nyurhunlo began training in Shaolin Kung-Fu in Kohima back in 2007. His commitment strengthened when his family, also daily wage earners, moved to Dimapur, giving him a chance to reunite with his coach at DBSA, where he enrolled in March this year.



For Nyurhunlo, Shaolin Kung-Fu is a daily discipline—practiced every morning and evening with unwavering dedication. His consistent performance had earlier earned him silver medals at the National Games in Darjeeling and the Indo-Nepal International Games. His hard work got rewarded when he was selected to represent Nagaland in the Senior Category at the 4th South Asian International

Games 2025. Demonstrating impressive strength, focus, and technical skill, Nyurhunlo clinched the gold medal, adding further honor to DBSA, Nagaland, and the nation.

### **AIDA’s commitment to youth development**

The achievements of Sahir and Nyurhunlo testifies to the vision of the Don Bosco Sports Academy, a flagship youth development initiative of AIDA. Their stories highlight how talent from humble backgrounds can thrive when provided with the right environment, encouragement, and opportunities. These victories are more than individual triumphs—they serve as motivation for countless young learners across the region who aspire to excel in sports and beyond.

*“Winning gold is fantastic, but the real success is seeing how opportunities and hard work transform young lives. AIDA remains committed to nurturing the youth,”* noted Rev. Dr. Roy George, Executive Director of AIDA, as he congratulated the two champions. ■



Seng Kamei is coordinator of DBSA at AIDA

## SAFE program launched in 8 Lakhimpur villages

AIDA has launched a six-month flood emergencies program, 'Strategic Action for Flood Emergencies' (SAFE), in eight highly flood-prone villages in Assam's Lakhimpur district. The program aims to strengthen community readiness to face emergency flood situations before the next monsoon season.

Launched on the 1st of October this year, SAFE is operating in four villages each under the Bihpuria and Karunabari development blocks of the district, and it is scheduled to conclude on March 15, 2026.

A core component of the program is the creation of local Disaster Response Support Teams (DRSTs). Towards this, SAFE will train 20 youth volunteers in essential skills including early



Training session for 20 youth volunteers in essential skills / image by: Karishma Ekka

warning, basic rescue techniques, first aid, and coordination with state and national rescue teams (SDRF/NDRF).

It will also conduct awareness campaigns for over 1,300 people, including local leaders, youth, villagers, and school students, focusing on flood risks and safe evacuation procedures.

Additionally, 1,200 waterproof document holders and flood-preparedness posters will be distributed among at-risk families, ensuring they can protect themselves and their vital documents during floods. SAFE will also provide necessary flood-rescue equipments to the local administration after conducting a needs assessment.

AIDA reaches out to these and other affected villages in the area with relief assistance during floods every year. This experience has contributed to the implementation of the SAFE program. ■

## Job Fair Connects Job Seekers to Credible Employment

40 local job seekers were shortlisted for various roles across India at the first-ever Job Fair hosted by Don Bosco College (Autonomous), Maram, in collaboration with the AIDA-Don Bosco Job Placement Network (DB-JPN), Dimapur, on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, in Senapati District, Manipur. The event saw over 80 registered participants attending on-the-spot interviews.

The fair was specifically organized to connect local youth with credible employment opportunities in sectors like education, corporate services, and hospitality. Leading recruiters present included SBI Life Insurance, Chilli Breeze, Ashyam Restaurant, and various schools. Rev. Fr. Dr. Roy George, Executive Director of AIDA, and Rev. Fr. Palatty Devassy, Rector of Don Bosco campus, emphasized the event's importance, calling the partnership a "powerful step towards realizing the career aspirations of the youth."

Rev. Fr. Dr. Roy George, Executive Director of AIDA, and Rev. Fr. Palatty Devassy, Rector of Don Bosco campus, emphasized the event's importance, calling the partnership a "powerful step towards realizing the career aspirations of the youth";



Dr. Anna Lungbila Bibiana, the HR Manager of AIDA and Sebi Chacko, the coordinator of AIDA-DB Job Placement Network, also lauded the participating youths' encouraging them to use such purpose-driven platforms to advance their careers meaningfully.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by the coordinator of the college's Placement Cell, Mr. John Britto, who appreciated the recruiting companies, faculty, students, and especially Rev. Fr. Dr. K.O. Sebastian, who is the principal of the college, for his leadership. Encouraged by the positive outcome, the college plans to institutionalize the Job Fair as an annual event. ■

## Career Guidance Sessions conducted in Dimapur Schools

Over 80 students from Classes 8 to 10 participated in a one-day career counseling sessions organised by the AIDA-Don Bosco Job Placement Network (JPN) in two Dimapur schools in October. The program was held at Evershine School on the 7th and at Grace Academy on the 13th.

JPN Coordinator Mr. Sebi Chacko briefed students on academic streams, vocational options, and emerging career pathways, and introduced them to Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory to help them assess their strengths. The participants and school authorities expressed their satisfaction with the program. ■

# THE RESILIENT ADIVASI COMMUNITIES OF ASSAM'S LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

*By Karishma Ekka*



The story of the Adivasi community in Assam is inseparable from the history of tea. In the early 19th century, the British East India Company began commercial tea cultivation, establishing the first major commercial plantation at Chabua in 1837, following an experimental garden in Lakhimpur.

To sustain this industry, the British brought Adivasi workers as indentured laborers starting in 1831. This massive migration from the Chotanagpur plateau (present-day Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal) included multi-ethnic groups such as the Munda, Oraon, Santhal, and Kharia.

Their shared, harsh experiences forged a collective identity of contribution and resilience. Today, these communities (also known of late as “Tea-Tribes”), representing an estimated 20% of Assam's population, are an essential part of the state, blending ancestral languages and traditions like the famous Jhumur dance with the broader Assamese culture.

Though a growing portion of the community has moved out of the tea plantations over the years, the vast majority remain economically tethered to the very industry they built.

## **Challenges and progress in Lakhimpur**

In Lakhimpur District, the Adivasi presence is vital to the rural economy. Most remain economically dependent on the tea sector, often residing in or around tea garden lines. Low wages and marginal land ownership continue to perpetuate socio-economic challenges. Despite these hurdles, the community is forging its own path.

Educational mobility is rising, leading to economic diversification through non-farm sector jobs, small businesses, and livelihood initiatives like livestock rearing.

### **AIDA's commitment to partnership**

This enduring narrative of resilience is what anchors AIDA's decades-long commitment to the Adivasi communities of Lakhimpur under Bihpuria and



From a meeting of AIDA's 'Integrated Development of Rural Communities-Lakhimpur district' project, in Goumaridipa village / image by: Karishma Ekka

Nowboicha Circles . With approximately 70% of AIDA beneficiaries in the district coming from these groups, our focus is on integrated development that recognizes and supports their existing socio-economic status.

### **Economy and Livelihood**

Mirroring the agricultural reality of the district, the majority of the community has access to paddy cultivation land, with ownership ranging from small residential plots up to about two acres. Housing standards vary: most homes are traditionally constructed with mud floors, bamboo walls, and tin roofs, while some have upgraded to brick walls, cement floors, and tin roofs, reflecting gradual improvement.

Their annual economic cycle is tied closely to agriculture:

- Paddy Cultivation and Harvest (May–July and November–January): During these seasons, nearly all community members—excluding those in tea gardens and children attending school—are engaged in cultivation activities on their own land or as laborers on others' fields.

- **Other Employment:** In the remaining months, men primarily engage in daily wage labor or part-time work, often requiring travel. A growing number are securing stable employment, such as teachers in government and private schools, and many young people also migrate to other states for unskilled work.
- Rice is the staple food, but the yield from personal cultivation is usually insufficient for year-round household consumption. The free ration of rice and cereals provided by the government through fair price shops is therefore crucial for annual food security.

### **Economy and Livelihood**

While the literacy rate has been historically lower, almost all school-aged children now attend schools, predominantly government institutions. The number of college graduates is steadily rising within these communities.

Culturally, Adivasi communities are highly conscious, celebrating major state festivals like Bihu alongside their own unique festival, Karam Puja, which serves as a vital unifying event for all sections of the Adivasi community.



Women and children at a cultural event / image by: Karishma Ekka

Our work, including projects like the current six-month flood emergency preparedness SAFE Program, is a strategic partnership. It is designed to empower the community to claim the socio-economic equality they have earned through generations of hard work, ensuring their full participation in the open opportunities of the state and the country. ■



Karishma Ekka is Coordinator of SAFE program, AIDA

# COMMUNITIES LEAD SUSTAINABLE CHANGES

*By Garrol Lotha*

Projects may end, but meaningful change lasts only when communities are empowered to carry the work forward. This article explores why sustainability hinges on local ownership, strong exit strategies and long-term engagement.

Sustaining meaningful change has always been the promise and paradox of community development work. Every NGO enters a community with a long-

term vision of empowerment, yet the daily reality is shaped by short project cycles, rigid donor frameworks and the pressure to deliver quick, measurable results. In the rush to meet targets, the deeper purpose of nurturing self-reliant, resilient communities is often pushed to the margins. Lasting impact of a community development



A cleanliness drive at Govt Hr Sec School, Piyong, Namsai district, Arunachal Pradesh / image by: Shera Minin

project, therefore, is not determined by its duration or financial investment, but by deliberate planning, strong local ownership and exit strategies woven into the very act of implementation.

## **Nature of community development projects**

While the mission of NGOs may be long-term, the projects they execute are inherently time-bound. Some interventions deliver immediate results; others aim for gradual change.

But the diversity of project designs makes sustainability difficult to guarantee. Many initiatives show impressive progress during implementation, yet their impact weakens once external support is withdrawn. It is invariably so when local mechanisms are not strengthened to take over.

Short-term, service-based projects illustrate this challenge clearly. Health camps, free medicines and mobile clinics bring undeniable benefits: improved well-being, timely care and relief for underserved communities. Yet these gains often fade once the project ends.

Without local health workers, permanent facilities or a community-managed system, sickness rates may rise again, undoing much of the initial progress.

## Personal Experience

My own work in the field of child rights has revealed both the inspiring and disheartening sides of project dependency. Communities sometimes resist awareness programmes, only to later recognize their value as positive changes emerge. But without embedding activities in local institutions or linking them to long-term structures, continuation becomes uncertain.

What truly survives after a project ends depends on the nature of the intervention. Infrastructure such as schools, anganwadis or health centres may remain—but without teachers, facilitators or trained personnel, the impact weakens. Many NGOs in our State deliver strong outcomes during the project period yet struggle to sustain them due to financial limitations, lack of exit strategies or due to staff turnover.

Even when stakeholder involvement during implementation is strong, the absence of follow-up after project closure creates a gap that hampers long-term results. Monitoring, mentorship and continued engagement are essential to keep the momentum alive.

## Sustainability as community-led legacy

Yet amidst these challenges, the most encouraging signs of sustainability come from the communities themselves—the trust they build, the cooperation they extend and the relationships they continue to maintain with NGOs long after a project ends. Under AIDA's Child Friendly Dimapur initiative, for instance, Child Rights Clubs and Child Rights Facilitators became active agents of change—monitoring violations, spreading awareness and strengthening child protection long beyond the project boundaries.



Waste-collection vehicle of Gram Seva program villages, Namsai district Arunachal Pradesh / image by: Shera Minin

Though four years of implementation brought remarkable progress, it was not enough to transform the city into a truly child-friendly environment. Such transformation requires integration into school systems, continued adult awareness and unwavering collaboration among government, institutions and communities.

Ultimately, sustaining change demands early exit planning, strong local leadership and a community equipped to carry forward the work independently. Sustainability is not guaranteed by funding—it is ensured by community readiness and ownership. When people themselves become custodians of change, the work of the NGO does not end; it lives on in the hands of those it sought to empower. ■



Garrol Lotha is Zonal Manager at ELEMENT project, Nagaland

# AIDA'S PROGRAMME AREAS



<b>Project</b>	<b>Improved Goat Farming for Sustainable Livelihood</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Pinakate Assam
<b>No. of Villages</b>	9
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	100
Indirect	500

<b>Project</b>	<b>Integrated Development of Rural Communities of Lakhimpur District (IDRCU)</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Lakhimpur District, Assam
<b>N. of Villages</b>	25
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	8250
Indirect	41250

<b>Project</b>	<b>Action for Protection of Environment in Northeast India Region (APENI)</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Dimaapur, Chumouadima, Kohima, Jirwa, Nisaland Districts of Nagaland
<b>No. of Eco Clubs</b>	200
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	10000
Indirect	50000

<b>Project</b>	<b>Solar Muzana</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Tamenglong and Jirwa Districts, Manipur
<b>No. of villages</b>	15
<b>No. of households</b>	750
<b>No. of persons trained</b>	15
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	15
Indirect	13750

<b>Project</b>	<b>Solar Sakshi</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Anunchal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam
<b>No. of villages</b>	36
<b>No. of persons trained</b>	36
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	36
Indirect	180

<b>Project</b>	<b>AIDA Don Based Job Placement Network, Dimaapur</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Anunchal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Upper Assam
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	5000
Indirect	20000

<b>Project</b>	<b>Female Disempowerd</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Bardonia, Muzang, Fula, Nupul, Phokpon, Dimaipur
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	1079
Indirect	4376

<b>Project</b>	<b>Digital Community School</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Tamenglong Manipur
<b>No. of villages</b>	3
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	32
Indirect	792

<b>Project</b>	<b>Madara Education Programme</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Peren, Nagaland (MPPN)
<b>No. of villages</b>	2
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	4512
Indirect	4512

<b>Project</b>	<b>Backyard piggy units as a livelihood enhancement means for 200 vulnerable Muzan tribal households of Senapati district of Manipur, Northeast India</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Senapati District, Manipur
<b>No. of villages</b>	4
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	200
Indirect	1000

<b>Project</b>	<b>Child Friendly City Initiative- Dimaipur</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Dimaipur, Chumouadima, Nagaland
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	4065
Indirect	19625

<b>Project</b>	<b>SRI Gram Srus</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Chumouadima, Nagaland
<b>No. of villages</b>	5
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	4000
Indirect	4000

<b>Project</b>	<b>SRI Gram Saksham</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Chumouadima, Nagaland
<b>No. of villages</b>	18
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	301
Indirect	1505

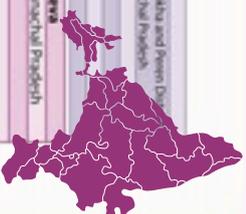
<b>Project</b>	<b>Bostonia Shani School</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Dimaipur, Nagaland
<b>No. of Schools</b>	6
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	418
Indirect	2090

<b>Project</b>	<b>Sampervani - Clinic on wheels</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Tripi District, Anunchal Pradesh
<b>No. of villages</b>	25
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	21,000
Indirect	24,000

<b>Project</b>	<b>Solar Muzana</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Langting District, Anunchal Pradesh, Tirunelveli District, Assam, Peren District, Nagaland
<b>No. of villages</b>	9
<b>No. of households</b>	400
<b>No. of persons trained</b>	9
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	400
Indirect	2350

<b>Project</b>	<b>USHA Sash School</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Dimaipur, Nisaland, Chumouadima, Kohima, Wokha and Peren Districts, Nagaland, Longleng and Tripi Districts, Anunchal Pradesh
<b>No. of villages</b>	115
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	173
Indirect	861

<b>Project</b>	<b>SRI Gram Srus</b>
<b>Project Area</b>	Tirunelveli, Anunchal Pradesh
<b>No. of villages</b>	5
<b>No. of Beneficiaries:</b>	
Direct	1500
Indirect	3500





## Training facilities available at AIDA

Type of facility	Details	Person capacity	Food available
Conference hall	A/C, LCD, PA system	50	Yes
Conference hall	Non-A/C, LCD, PA system	50	
Training hall	A/C, LCD, PA system	100	
Training hall	Non-A/C, LCD, PA system	100	
Guest rooms	A/C	2	
Guest rooms	Non A/C	4	
Dormitory	Non A/C	80	

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