

## Press Release

### **Entrepreneurship development workshop aims to bolster community participation in conservation**

Guwahati, February 23: Region's premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak organised a workshop on 'Entrepreneurship Development' for team members of its Tiger Research and Conservation Division (TRCD), Elephant Research and Conservation Division (ERCD) and Conservation and Livelihood Division (CLD) and a group of selected community members from Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong and Manas Landscapes, during 10 - 18 February using both online and face-to-face training methods.

The programme was attended by 18 participants from these three divisions. The training was organised in collaboration with Kalpavriksha Trust, Guwahati. The objective of the Entrepreneurship Development programme was to enhance the capacity of the Aaranyak team members and community leaders on various aspects of entrepreneurship so that they can support the community partners to strengthen their entrepreneurial ventures through innovative ideas and approaches.

The online sessions of the workshop on Entrepreneurship Development were organised between 10 and 13 February. During the online sessions, participants were introduced to the basics of entrepreneurship, its aim, objectives and scope with special reference to the local, state and national contexts. The online sessions provided holistic ideas of entrepreneurship based on the traditional knowledge and natural resources in the forest fringe areas; critical case studies of entrepreneurial ecosystems; and highlighted the potential for innovations in an entrepreneurship venture.

The face-to-face workshop on Entrepreneurship Development was organised on 17 and 18 February at Manas Conservation and Outreach Centre (MCO), Bhuyapara, Baksa district of BTC in Assam. On the day one of the workshop participants were introduced to the concept of entrepreneurship, the different types of entrepreneurs, the Indian approaches to entrepreneurship and the different modalities for mentoring budding entrepreneurs, compliances the upcoming entrepreneurial ventures need to adhere to and the basics of enterprise creation and management.

Different aspects of these topics were explained to the participants through examples of successful entrepreneurial ventures across the state and the country. Furthermore,

challenges faced by the participants in the field were also discussed during the day's programme and the trainers provided valuable inputs to overcome these challenges.

Day 2 of the workshop commenced with a revision of the key topics discussed during the opening day of the workshop. This was followed by a group exercise wherein the participants were divided into two groups and were asked to develop a product prototype for a hypothetical entrepreneurial venture with the resources available nearby. The two prototypes developed by these groups were Green Cooking (Dung-based Charcoal fuel) and Blessing (a flower industry based around waste flowers), respectively. The processes of ideation, resource or raw material selection, process review, and testing of product quality using scientific approaches, one needs to adopt during an entrepreneurial venture, were discussed during the plenary discussion. During the post-lunch session, the participants interacted with Mrs Anu Mandal, Managing Director of Ava Creations (a not-for-profit company) and an entrepreneur, on the styles of entrepreneurship venture that one requires to follow conscientiously.

Mrs Mandal emphasized that a successful entrepreneurial venture can be built and sustained around a comprehensive understanding of the needs and requirements of the specific product and by following the five Ps of marketing - product, packaging, pricing, placing and promotion - religiously. During the feedback session, Miss Bidisha Baruah expressed that the workshop was able to enlighten the participants on entrepreneurship and the possibilities it can generate to uplift the rural population and her views were strongly supported by her fellow participants.

During the post-workshop discussions, the participants were asked to develop small green ventures through community-based entrepreneurial initiatives at their respective landscapes, and it was decided that their understanding of the topic would be evaluated based on their successful execution of experimental entrepreneurship ventures.

Both the online and face-to-face sessions of the workshop were mentored by Dr Pranab Kumar Sarmah and Shri Himanshu Barman of Kalpavriksha Trust. Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma and Dr Partha Sarathi Ghose coordinated the programme on behalf of Aaranyak.

The programme was organised as part of the IUCN-KfW supported project "Securing population of tigers, habitats and biological corridors in Assam, India". The programme was further made successful by tireless support from Dr Binita Baruwati, Binod Deuri, Jeetu, Pankaj Das and the entire team of Manas Conservation and Outreach Center.

Aaranyak is committed to the conservation of forests and the upliftment of the life and livelihood of forest-dependent communities in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong and Manas Landscapes, respectively, through education, training and capacity-building.

***Press statement issued by Bijay Sankar Bora, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.  
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