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Strengthening Last-Mile Healthcare Delivery Across Meghalaya



Mr. Ganesh Reddy, CEO-cum-Secretary of Citizens Foundation, recently visited the SBI Foundation supported Sanjeevani – Clinic on Wheels (MMU Project) across Ri Bhoi and East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, along with the project team.

The visit included meaningful on-ground interactions with healthcare teams and community members, focusing on assessing outreach, understanding local healthcare needs, and reviewing the impact of the initiative in remote areas. The field engagement also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen last-mile healthcare delivery and ensure accessible, inclusive, and community-centric healthcare services for underserved communities. The visit reaffirmed the collective commitment toward improving rural healthcare access and enhancing the quality of essential medical services across Meghalaya.



Sanjeevani Initiative Drives Swachh Bharat Awareness at Rapleng & Jaroit School, Meghalaya

The SBI Foundation's Sanjeevani – Clinic on Wheels initiative, implemented by Citizens Foundation, successfully organized a meaningful Swachh Bharat Abhiyan drive at Rapleng L.P. & U.P. School in Rapleng village and Jaroit COG L.P. & U.P. School East Khasi Hills. The activity witnessed enthusiastic participation from 157 and 105 students respectively, along with teachers and the school Secretary, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere. The program focused on promoting awareness around cleanliness, waste segregation, and personal hygiene through interactive sessions tailored for young learners. Informative pamphlets were distributed, along with essential cleaning supplies, to encourage practical adoption of sanitation practices within the school environment. The initiative aimed to instill a sense of responsibility and lifelong habits of cleanliness among students. The heartfelt appreciation expressed by the teachers and the Headmistress highlighted the positive impact of this collective effort in fostering a cleaner, healthier, and more conscious school community.



Community Comes Together for Cleanliness Drive at Sarna, Bhojpur, Bihar



Citizens Foundation, in collaboration with SBI Foundation, successfully organized a Swachh Bharat Abhiyan drive at Suchit Baba High School, Sarna (Bhojpur), bringing together 209 villagers in a spirited display of community participation.

The initiative focused on promoting sanitation and hygiene through the distribution of sanitation kits and active involvement of ASHA and Anganwadi workers. Community members were encouraged to adopt better hygiene practices in their daily lives, reinforcing the importance of cleanliness for overall well-being.

Special appreciation goes to Chandan Kumar and Rashmi Singh, along with all frontline workers, whose dedication made the drive impactful and meaningful. The collective effort reflects a shared commitment toward building cleaner, healthier communities and making hygiene a way of life.

Exposure Visit to Karjee Farm, Ambikapur Inspires Sustainable Agriculture Practices



The Gumla team of Citizens Foundation recently undertook a training-cum-field inspection visit to Karjee Farm, where they witnessed an impressive gathering

of over 5,000 farmers and delegates. The visit provided valuable exposure to innovative and sustainable agricultural practices, with a special focus on advanced grafting techniques such as brinjal with tomato and wild brinjal with hybrid brinjal. Live demonstrations across a variety of crops-including cucumber, bottle gourd, bitter gourd, watermelon, chilli, capsicum, cabbage, and cauliflower-offered practical, hands-on learning opportunities for the team.

The experience proved to be both inspiring and insightful, highlighting scalable models for sustainable farming and farmer empowerment. Such exposure visits continue to play a crucial role in strengthening field-level interventions and motivating teams to explore and replicate effective agricultural practices in their respective regions.



Empowering Rural Communities Through Sustainable Dragon Fruit Cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh



Under the HRDP Project, Citizens Foundation has launched a Dragon Fruit

Farming Initiative in Sagalee Block, Arunachal Pradesh, with the support of HDFC Bank CSR. The initiative is designed to promote high-value horticulture while creating sustainable and climate-resilient livelihood opportunities for rural communities.



The project is benefiting 10 groups, including Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and local farmer collectives, and is indirectly supporting 96 beneficiaries through the adoption of dragon fruit cultivation as an alternative source of income. Known

for its high market demand and suitability to the region's agroclimatic conditions, dragon fruit farming offers farmers an opportunity to diversify their livelihoods with comparatively low water requirements.

As part of the initiative, farmers are being provided with capacity-building support, quality planting materials, and technical guidance to strengthen cultivation practices and improve productivity. The project reflects a meaningful step toward enhancing rural incomes, encouraging sustainable agriculture, and fostering community-led climate-resilient farming systems in Arunachal Pradesh.



Smart Vegetable Farming Initiative Promotes Sustainable Agriculture in Sikkim



Under the HRDP-SIMANA Programme, Citizens Foundation, with support from HDFC Bank CSR, has launched the Smart Vegetable Farming Initiative at Barpipal Dara and Lingtam in Sikkim to strengthen organic and sustainable farming practices.

The initiative has benefitted 50 farmers, including 30 farmers directly supported through Smart Vegetable Farming Units and 20 indirectly supported through knowledge-sharing and peer learning. Farmers received training on organic farming, polyhouse cultivation, crop management, and efficient water use, along with support such as agronet houses, irrigation systems, organic seeds, and farming tools.

The project also promotes market linkages, sustainable farming techniques, and collective growth through farmer cooperatives, helping improve productivity, incomes, and rural livelihoods in Sikkim.



Welcoming Future Changemakers: Summer Interns Begin Their Grassroots Learning Journey with Citizens Foundation

Citizens Foundation is delighted to welcome a vibrant group of interns from Xavier Institute of Social Service and Azim Premji University for their summer internship programme across various HRDP projects.

Under the Holistic Rural Development Programme (HRDP), Ayush Nath, an MBA (Rural Management) student from XISS, has joined the HRDP project in Sagalee, Arunachal Pradesh, while Manish Kumar is interning with the HRDP-SIMANA project in Pakyong, Sikkim. From Azim Premji University, Anuska Vijay Bombekar and Gyatri Desetti have joined the HRDP-SIMANA Sikkim project, and Sachin Kharade has been placed with the HRDP project in Tamulpur, Assam.

Passionate about community development and grassroots engagement, the interns will immerse themselves in field realities, interact closely with rural communities, and gain practical exposure to sustainable development initiatives. The internship programme is designed to create a meaningful exchange of learning and perspectives, helping young professionals understand the functioning of the development sector while also contributing fresh ideas and energy to the organization's work. Citizens Foundation looks forward to supporting their learning journey and wishes them a rewarding and enriching internship experience.



SUCCESS STORY

Turning Sunlight into Sustainable Livelihoods

Background: In many rural areas, lack of affordable food processing and preservation facilities limits income opportunities for women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Solar dryers provided under the project were envisioned not merely as infrastructure, but as tools to enable livelihoods through value addition and market linkages.

The Opportunity: During a field-level interaction with Firgun Social Initiative Foundation, an NGO actively working in the area, a practical requirement emerged: drying 20 kg of Japanese fruit (Persimmon) within a short time frame. Instead of outsourcing the task elsewhere, this need was transformed into a local income-generating opportunity.

Recognizing the potential, a direct linkage was facilitated between the NGO and the SHG of Phey village, where a solar dryer was already operational.



The Process:

- ✓ A mutual discussion was held between the NGO and the SHG members.
- ✓ The SHG confidently agreed to take up the assignment.
- ✓ A service charge of ₹1,000 for two days of drying was finalized.
- ✓ The drying activity was successfully completed using the solar dryer.

The Outcome:

The activity demonstrated multiple tangible and intangible benefits:

- ✓ **Income Generation:** The SHG earned ₹1,000 through a single, short-duration assignment.



Location	: Phey Village
Stakeholders	: Self-Help Group (SHG), Firgun Social Initiative Foundation (NGO)
Intervention	: Solar Dryer under the Project

- ✓ **Efficient Food Preservation:** The solar dryer ensured hygienic and effective drying of persimmons without electricity or fuel costs.
- ✓ **Confidence Building:** SHG members gained hands-on experience in dealing with an external client, negotiating service charges, and delivering quality work.
- ✓ **Asset Utilization:** The solar dryer transitioned from being a static asset to a productive livelihood tool.

For the SHG members, this was more than drying fruit—it was their first step towards recognizing the economic value of their skills and resources.

Way Forward:

Encouraged by this successful pilot, efforts are underway to:

- ✓ Identify more NGOs, institutions, and local producers requiring drying services.
- ✓ Actively link them with SHGs in villages equipped with solar dryers.
- ✓ Ensure regular utilization of solar dryers as a sustainable source of livelihood rather than one-time installations.

Conclusion: This small yet impactful initiative highlights how simple, climate-friendly technology, when combined with community linkages and local entrepreneurship, can create meaningful livelihood opportunities. The Phey village experience stands as a replicable model for empowering SHGs and strengthening rural economies—one solar-dried fruit at a time.

“When technology meets trust and community initiative, livelihoods are created.”

GOALKEEPERS, MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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