



BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

THE RURAL FUTURES FELLOWSHIP

Transformation through
youth leadership

In Partnership with



3rd March 2023

THE STORY OF NIZORAM MILI

Nizoram Mili is a resident of Baligaon Miri Green Village, Assam.

A farmer, with 8 members in his family, Mili's income was coming from farming was not enough for their sustenance.

"We did not have a huge family income and we were scared that I would have to withdraw my child from school and engage him somewhere so that we have some money at home" expressed Nizoram.



THE CHALLENGES

Nizoram's situation was not unique. Most people in such villages face similar challenges in providing for their families and many more.



9.5% forest cover lost since 2000 i.e. an area greater than the entirety of Bhutan and Sikkim together



80% or 197 million people employed in highly nature dependent industries (e.g. agriculture, forestry, energy production, food & beverages, tourism)



80% are smallholder farmers. 40-50% of the region faces poverty intensity over a 40% threshold.



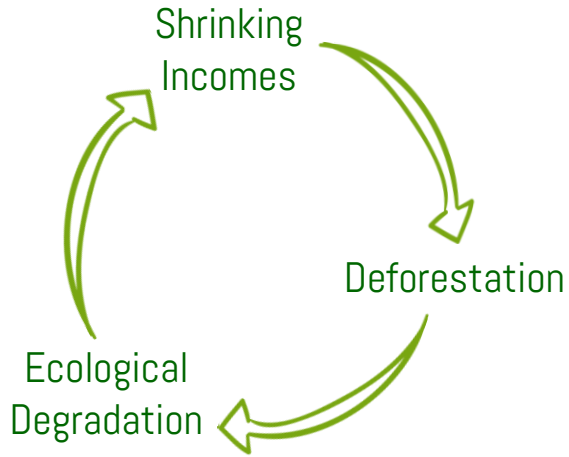
Poor rural incomes force communities to turn to forest exploitation to augment their incomes, to access universal basic assets like healthcare & education.



Low incomes and degraded habitats result in communities' reduced capacities to adapt to climate change and its associated challenges

Most of these people live in the region's valleys, at high risk because of deforestation and climate risks. Forests play a key role in regulating the hydrogeology of the region – river flows, groundwater & aquifer regeneration, flooding & soil erosion prevention – without which life in the valleys would be impossible.

THE PREDICAMENT

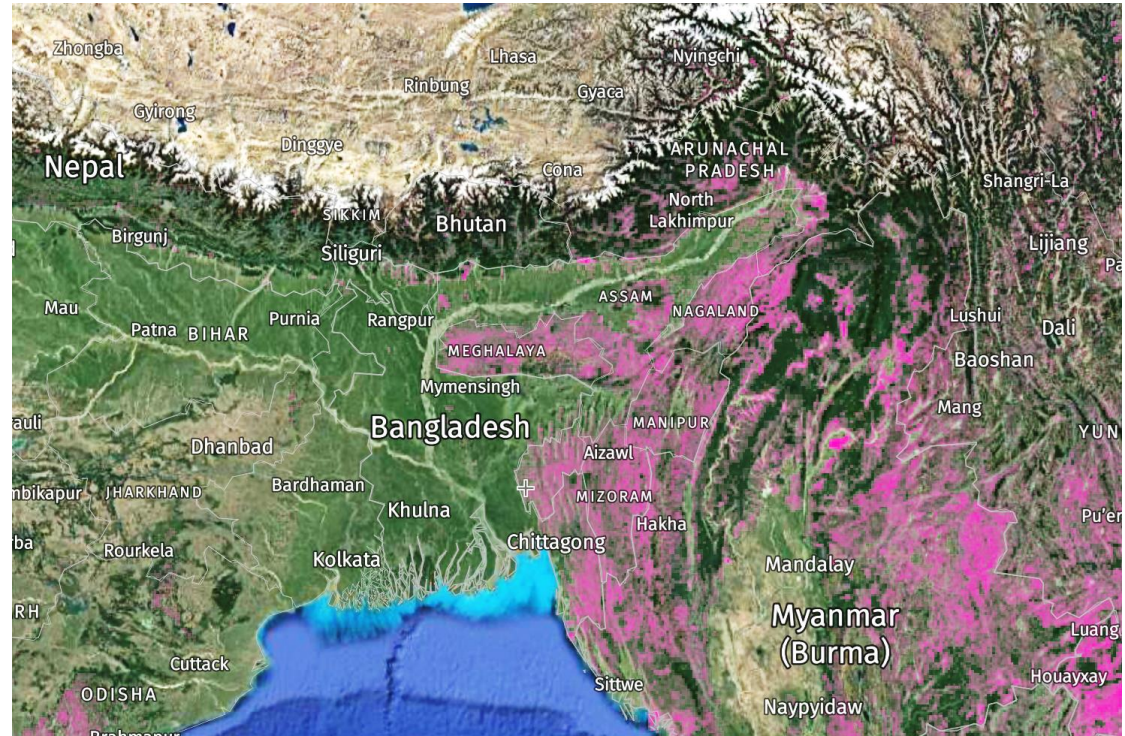


A Vicious Cycle

Long-term ecological degradation has contributed to declining incomes & yields in a primarily agricultural region, forcing people to exploit forests to augment incomes & access basic assets – spurring further ecological degradation.

Deforestation in the Eastern Himalayan region

Source: Global Forest Watch 2021



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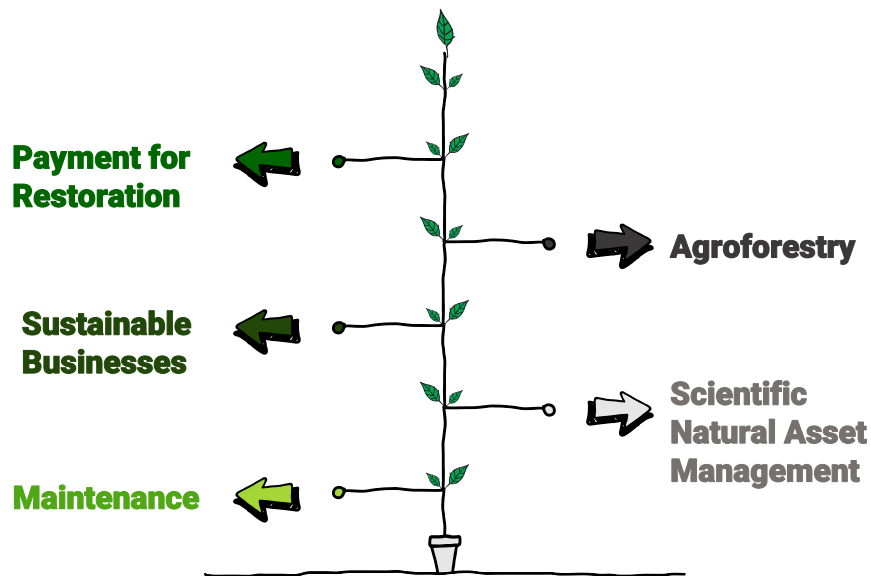
A RURAL DEAL FOR PEOPLE & NATURE



The Rural Futures model

for creating incomes linked to forest restoration among rural and forest-fringe communities, paving the way for socioeconomic mobility linked to natural capital regeneration

A natural capital based system to deliver universal basic assets (education, healthcare, water, energy, food security, transformative living spaces) to rural & forest-fringe communities



THE STORY OF NIZORAM MILI

Success Story: RuFu® In Baligaon

Natural Capital incomes help access education

Nizoram says the RuFu programme came in as a ray of hope as not only because it provided him and his wife with an additional income but also it aimed to restore the area's natural habitat.

"Our village is called a green village for a reason, it is because we the Mishing community are extremely passionate about nature and we like to live in harmony with it. Balipara Foundation has helped us in maintaining that."

Nizoram gets involved in plantation work during the season (April-Aug) along with his wife and during this time he also has engaged daily wage labourers for his field where he cultivates paddy and Colocasia. His children are attending school and he says that he wants them to become economically independent and work for the development of the village.





“

Be a part of the change!
You too can be an enabler in
improving the lives of the nation's
backbone!

”

RURAL FUTURES FELLOWSHIP

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THE RUFU FELLOWSHIP

An 18 months of immersive and residential training programme with young adults being introduced to the **philosophy, practice and science of rewilding**, **sustainable agriculture** and **community-led conservation practices**.



20 Fellows

Drawn from rural, indigenous & urban youth from across the Eastern Himalayas, with a focus on ensuring gender diversity & affirmative action for youth from lower socioeconomic status groups. 12 fellows receive grants for rewilding 100 hectares of land each after the fellowship



18 months across 6 semesters

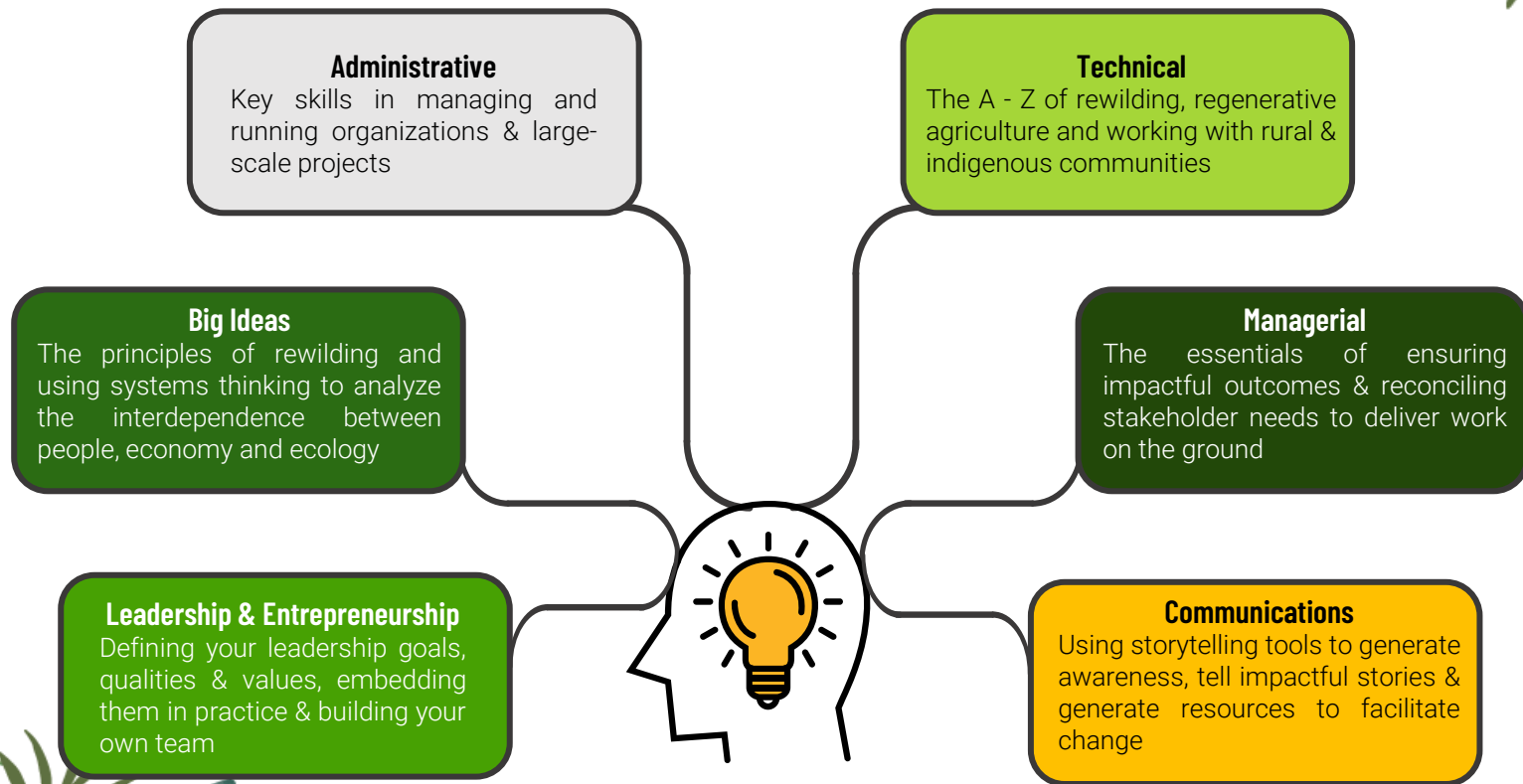
With 1 year of immersive residential experience that give fellows hands-on insights into the practical realities of managing large-scale rewilding and regenerative agricultural programmes co-created with local & indigenous communities in the Eastern Himalayas



Next-gen Environment Leaders

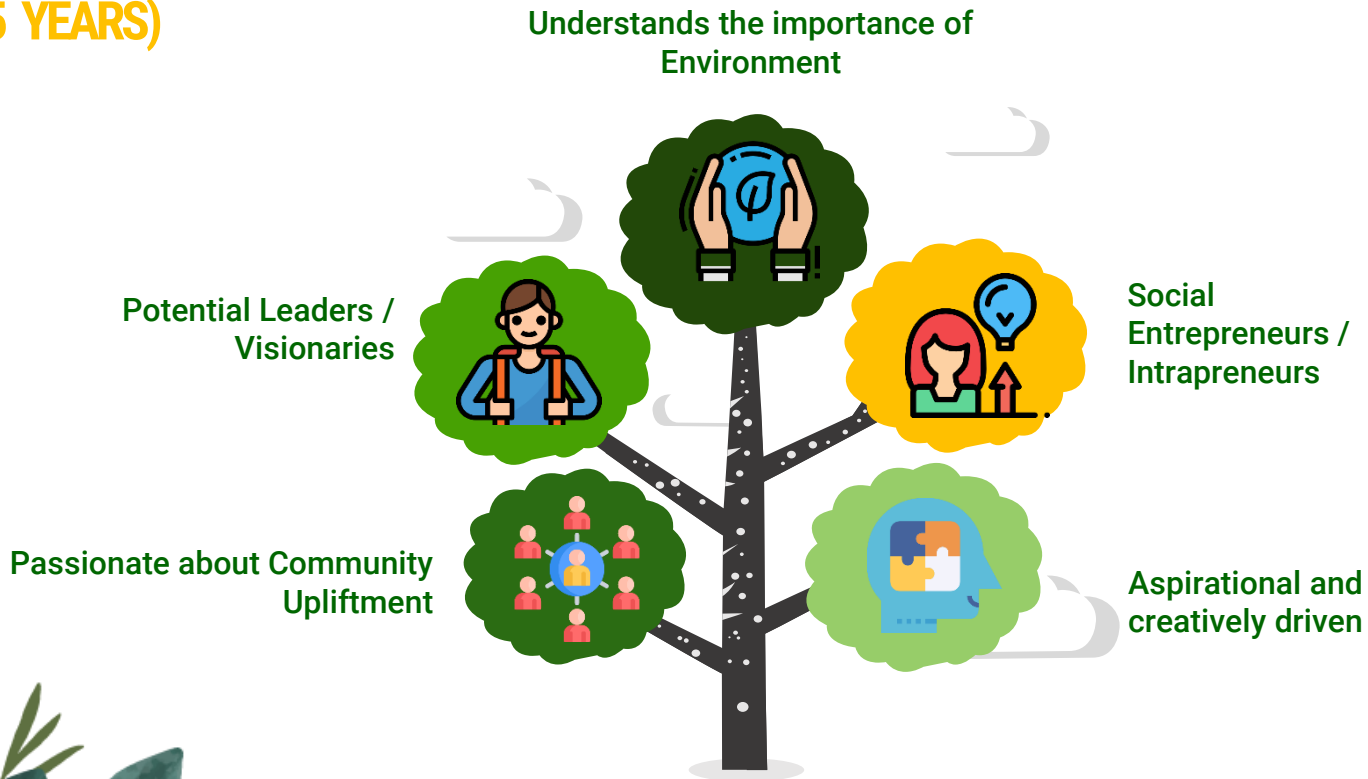
Building a network of leaders and strong peer-to-peer community to tackle environmental challenges and define their leadership & entrepreneurial goals

BUILDING SKILLS

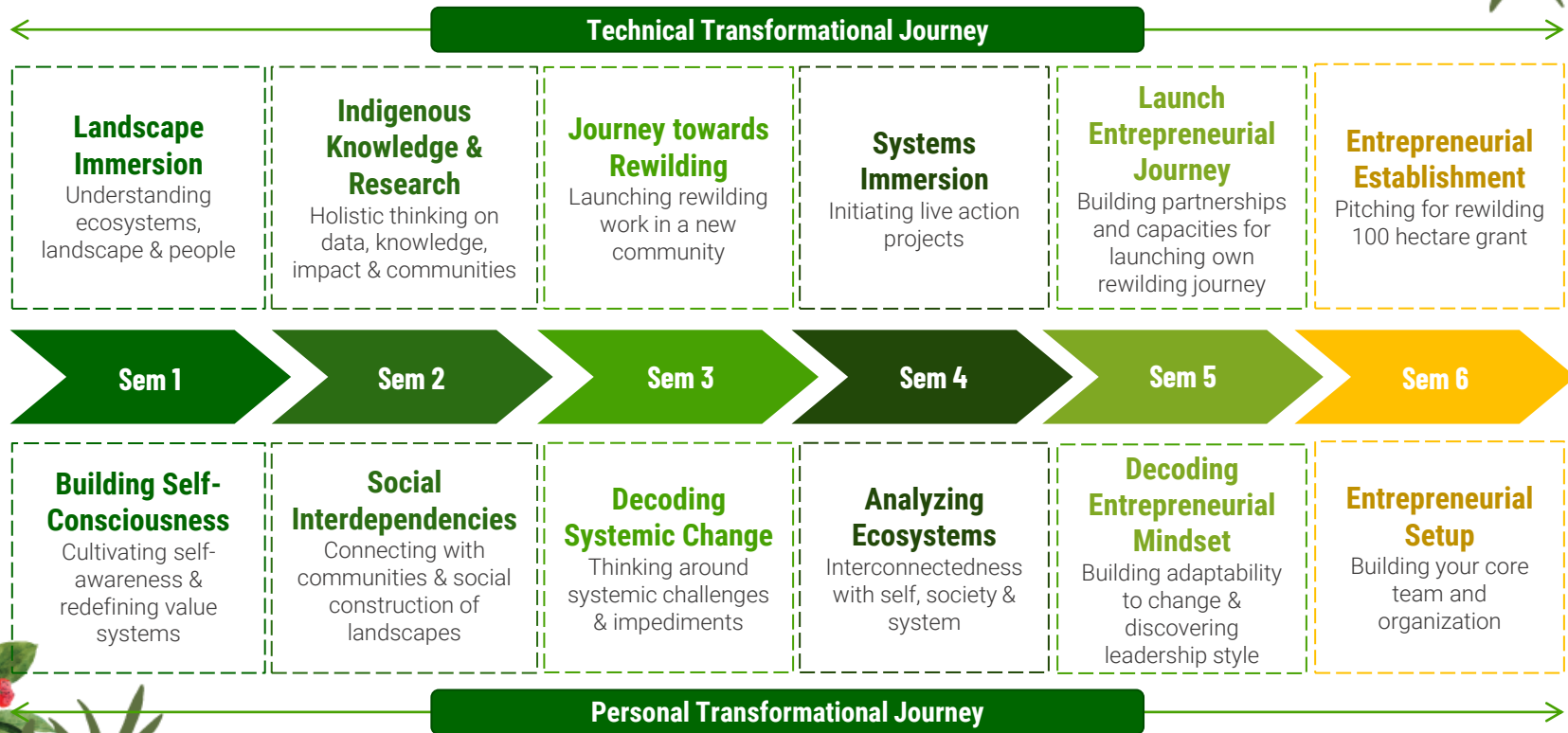


WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

(21 – 35 YEARS)



THE RUFU FELLOWSHIP JOURNEY



AFTER THE FELLOWSHIP FELLOWS GO ON TO



Rewild forests

Fellows will be able to pitch for 12 rewilding grants that support 100 hectares of restoration and will receive continued mentorship from the Balipara Foundation as they embark on their rewilding journey



Start their own sustainable businesses

Through their entrepreneurial journey, fellows may decide to take the skills and experiences they have gained to start their own sustainable businesses – whether in sustainable supply chains for commodities like tea or coffee, or regenerative fashion, mindful tourism, nature-based solutions & more



Create policy from the grassroots

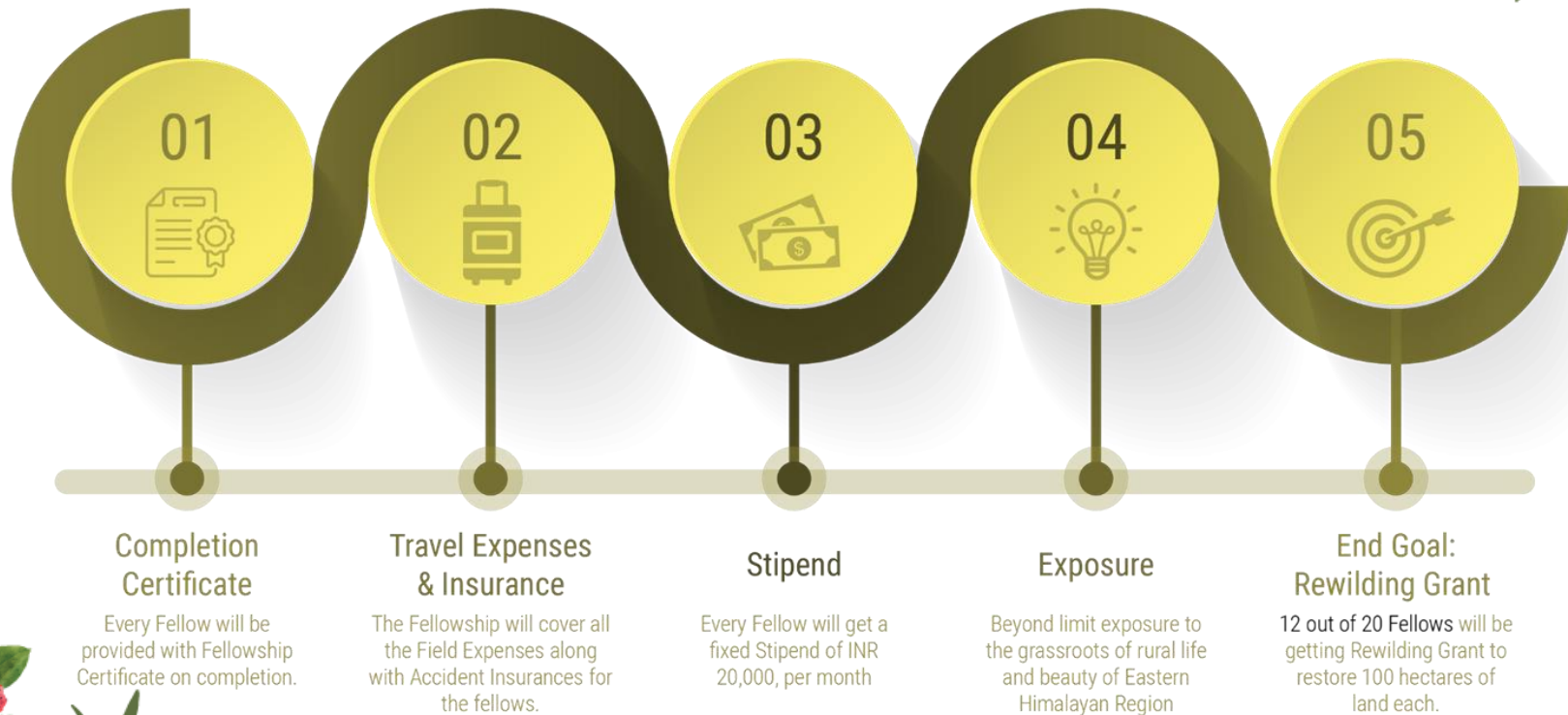
Using their training in qualitative & quantitative research skills, in systems-thinking and analysis and working with communities to create policies that put ecology at the heart of economy and people at the heart of conservation



Bridge resource gaps through storytelling

Equipped with storytelling and fundraising skills, fellows go on to draw attention to critical stories of communities on the frontlines of the climate and biodiversity crisis, stories of grassroots-led transformation and raise resources to scale and enable local solutions to complex ecological problems

WHAT THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERS

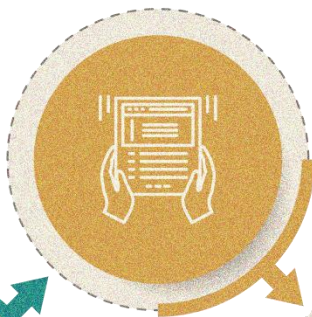


APPLICATION PROCESS

OPEN
REGISTRATION



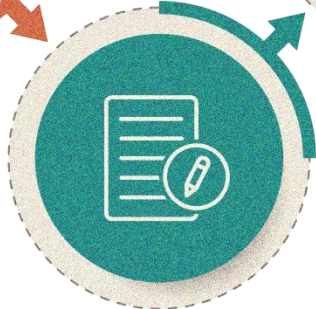
PROJECT
SUBMISSION



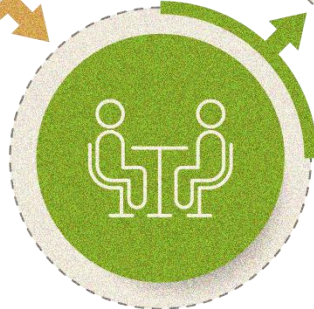
PANEL
SCREENING



APPLICATION
FORM FILL UP



FIRST ROUND
OF INTERVIEWS



FINAL
SELECTION



SUBMITTING A PROJECT

TOPIC: Imagine you have 10 hectares of land, ready for optimum utilization. How would you use this land to uplift the socio-economic conditions of your community/area in keeping with environment and sustainability?

Mode of Submission



Video

A short 1 Minute Video Presentation Introducing us to your topic and the solution



Slides

Powerpoint Presentation on the topic explaining your project in details.
Format will be provided.

OR



Drawing

A4 sized drawing depicting your vision which covers all the points mentioned in the format.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Fellows we look for are

21 to 35 Years

01

ASPIRATIONAL

Aspirational & Driven
towards Green
Economics

02

ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurial skills
with passion towards
agronomics and its
future

03

AWARE

Environmentally aware,
concerned about
climate change
impacts

04

LEADERS

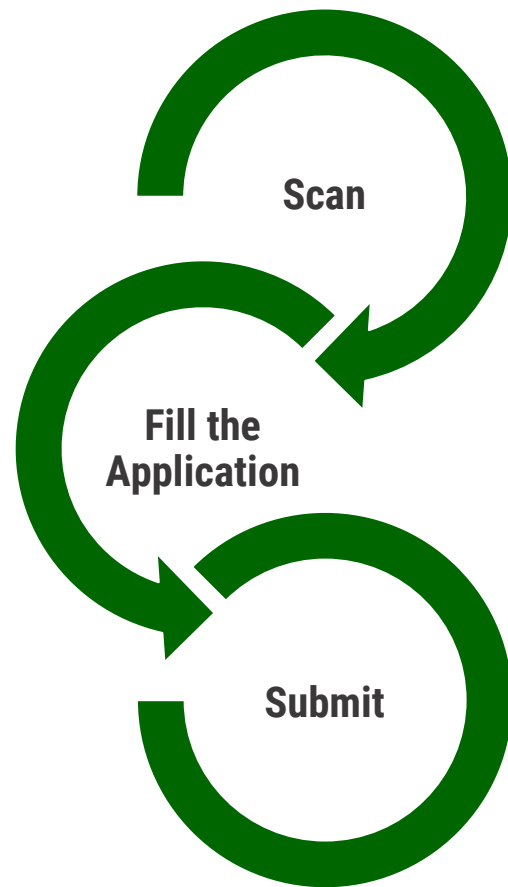
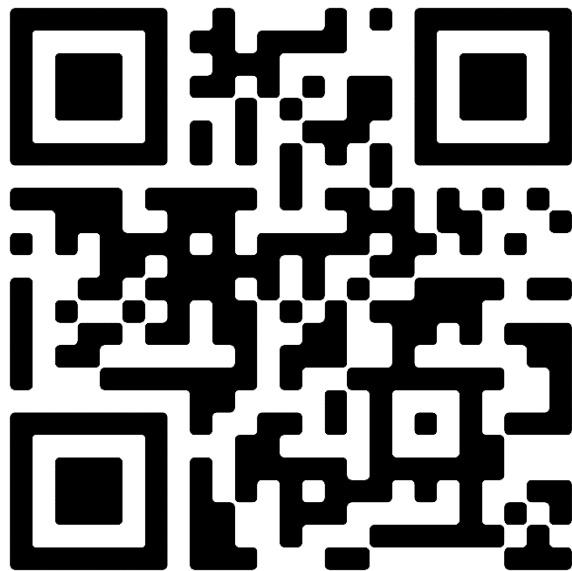
Leadership skills with
the zest of driving a
community towards
socio-economic
development

05

CREATIVE

Innovative, creative &
Technologically
Driven

HOW TO **APPLY**



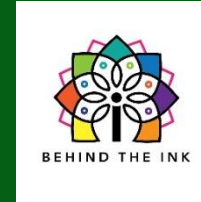
BALIPARA FOUNDATION

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The Balipara Foundation was established in 2007 and has been rewilding forests in the Eastern Himalaya since 2016. The organization achieves this through its Rural Futures model for rewilding forests and agricultural lands, while creating incomes that allow communities to pursue their wellbeing aspirations. Over the years, the Balipara Foundation has built strong networks with both local governments and forest departments, as well as with national and international businesses keen on furthering the cause of sustainability and emissions reduction nationally and globally.

As of 2022, the Balipara Foundation manages over 7000 hectares of restored forest land, with over 7 million trees, and positively impacting over 16,000 people through direct implementation and capacity building for managing and monitoring restored forest lands. The organisation is a member of the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance of King Charles III's (formerly HRH the Prince of Wales) Sustainable Markets Initiative, with its Rural Futures model being adopted as a living lab experiment in building a circular bioeconomy in the Eastern Himalayan region, through community-led reforestation and agroforestry for sustainable businesses, including the launch of sustainable fashion landscapes through the SMI's Sustainable Fashion taskforce.

In partnership with



i-Behind The Ink Foundation is a not-for-profit organization working on Mental Health and Wellbeing. With focus to engage on preventive care and awareness, working towards good mental health for all; we believe that prevention is better than cure. Our projects involves rigorous research and practical solutions to identify what's most helpful; public information that empowers beneficiaries to look after their mental health and influencing work to move policies in the right direction.

With backed experience and knowledge of working with over 1000 youth, the organization specializes in designing and customizing solutions to create impact on ground. We believe, in order to protect our future we need to engage youth today. We prioritize projects involving Youth Development and holistic wellbeing by creating meaningful engagements through fellowship programs.

Our past work on Fellowship development includes design & development for the Gandhi Fellowship.



REACH US



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