



**Sunbird Trust**  
PEACE THROUGH EDUCATION



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2021 - 2022

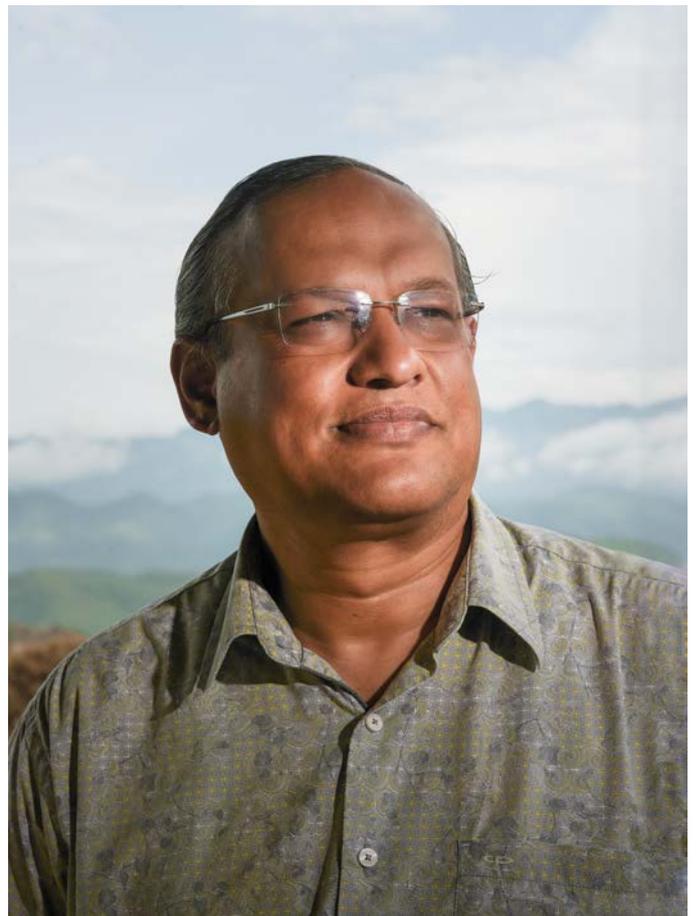
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## From The CEO's Desk

Dear Friends,

Another year has passed and as we take stock in the post-pandemic era, we reflect on the recovery from a very challenging period for most of us. At this time, embedded in our host communities, our team members have shared the trials and tribulations, while seeking to constantly lead, inspire and add value, especially in our schools. Looking back, two years of relative uncertainty seem to have brought out the best in the team. Sunbird's work in trying times has helped demonstrate organizational resilience, innovation and agility in adversity. Our fairly exponential growth continues – into new areas - We are proud to be invited by Mr. Pasang Dorjee Sona, honourable Speaker of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly to take over the running of the Government Residential School at Papikrung village located on the Sino Indian border in Shi Yomi District of the state. This brings new opportunities...and challenges, that we embrace. It would appear that word is spreading of our committed, all-inclusive, and humanistic work. Thanks to our valued advisors, mentors and generous donors, we can march forward to take up new assignments like this with the confidence of their committed support.



The pandemic has certainly impacted our mission of building 50 institutions (schools or hostels) by the year 2025. Yet, it remains our job to keep trying, the fruit of our exertions not always being in our hands. That being said, we hope we will near the halfway mark in the coming year which would be quite satisfying considering the circumstances we work under. As we expand, we embrace new partners and enrich our relationship with the old ones. As always, our endeavour is to scrupulously avoid creating dependency and instead holistically capacity-build our partners and put them on the road to complete self-sufficiency and sustainability.

As our relatively young organization matures and grows to now work in the remotest parts of six northeast

Indian states, our team members are playing critical role in bringing in more and more process and structure. Each is a “force multiplier” helping build capacity in entire schools and spreading Sunbird’s work across villages. Hailing from several different backgrounds, religions and parts of the country, they bring to Sunbird a wealth of knowledge from across domains. Particularly satisfying is the validation of the work that we do in that so many of our own graduate alumni, some sponsored since their school days, are returning for one to two year long internships at our project areas. Many have now crossed the threshold to self-sufficiency and supporting their entire families.

Thank you, dear friends, for your enduring support for our journey of Peace through Education.

With gratitude,

**Col Chris Rego (Retd.)**  
Founder and CEO



## Trustees' Report



Dear Friends,

The all-round challenges of the past two years have left Sunbird Trust stronger, more mature and far more resilient. If anything, this has displayed the commitment and sacrifice of our team members and their immense potential to work under pressure. As we look at the challenges in the coming year, we are pleased to present the highlights of the year gone by: -

- A total of 5933 students are now sponsored for education under our "Sponsor a Child" scheme in 58 partner institutions across 7 North East Indian states including Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim.
- It is with great satisfaction that we see things taking a full circle with several of our very own ex-sponsored graduate alumni return to the mother organisation to intern. One, by

one we are witnessing their transition to self-supported adults. We are proud that Dollar Konjengbam, our sponsored Engineering graduate has secured a full-fledged scholarship for his Masters at the University of Padova in Italy.

- During the year construction of schools or school infrastructure was carried out at 12 locations in Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Sikkim states.
- We were privileged that Shri Pasang Dorjee Sona, hon'ble Speaker of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly invited our founder Col Chris Rego to take over (through Sunbird Trust) a Government Residential School at Papikrung village in Arunachal Pradesh on the Sino-Indian border.
- During the year, with the generous support of Manas Foundation, we were happy to inaugurate the new Haite Memorial Friendship School at remote Mualdam in Dima Hasao District of Assam. Also inaugurated was the Yaapal Friendship Hostel at Khangshim Village in Tengnopaul District of Manipur. The hostel was sponsored by HDFC Credilla. In addition, we have raised a 6-classroom block and 2 new hostels at Majuli Island, a 50,000-litre water tank at Puichi Village besides two toilet blocks and a 30,000 litre water tank at Kachai Village.
- With the generous support of partner organizations like Crypto Relief and Caring Friends, Sunbird Trust distributed rations for over 10,000 people. Through the support of Anaha Trust and its founder Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar, several tons of medical equipment and supplies were distributed to Government hospitals in Churachandpur and Tamenglong District of Manipur. At the specific request of the District Commissioner of Tamenglong District a critically required Arterial Blood Gas machine was contributed to the Tamenglong District Hospital.
- Our three Fellows of our North East Sunbird Trust Fellowship (NEST) have been receiving more opportunities to hone their skills. The Fellowship aims at building leadership and agency amongst dynamic local youth.
- Amongst our livelihood development activities, much progress has been made on our Sloping Land Agriculture Technique (SALT) demonstration farm at Puichi village. We are much indebted to Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar, founder of Anaha Trust for sponsoring the project and to SALT expert Mr. David Gandhi for overseeing the work. Sunbird also continues with our initiatives in roselle tea, mushroom cultivation and solar hatcheries.
- Our largest project of the year is the reconstruction of the entire school and ancillary buildings of Alpha Friendship School at Kachai in Ukhrul District of Manipur. During the year, a 30,000-litre water tank and girls' and boys' toilet blocks were constructed. Work also commenced on extensive renovation of the girls' and boys' hostels, the multipurpose hall and on construction of the new school building.
- During the year, 6 members transitioned out and 17 members joined the team. Among those who transitioned out was our COO Dr Sonal Sethia, who, during her tenure, has helped take our young organization to a new level. Even as she pursues her studies, she remains in the team as our Chief Mentor. At the same time, we were pleased to that our old team member Mr. Aliasgar Janjali, Teach for India Fellow and a former Vice President, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and Senior Vice President, Edelweiss Capital. He returns to the organization to seamlessly take over the responsibility of COO from Dr Sonal. With the rapid expansion of our work and footprint across northeast India, we anticipate that our team will grow substantially in the coming year.

We express our profound gratitude to our generous donors - it is their dependable support that is helping our young Sunbird slowly acquire the wings of a falcon. We are also grateful to our Board of Advisors who have provided us with valuable guidance at a critical time.

As Sunbird Trust alights to a new phase of scaling and growth, we thank you for your support and seek your continued guidance and participation in our activities.

Mr. Ryan Lobo (Founder Trustee)

Dr. Dayaprasad Kulkarni M.D. (Trustee)



## ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

The last two years will be remembered for COVID 19 and the impact of the contagion on the entire world population. Despite the pandemic, work at Sunbird continued as normal without any interruption and, in fact, expanded considerably.

During the year 2021-2022, Sunbird Trust had 8 base locations. At these locations, team members are posted for helping develop capacity of the partner schools or to engage with the local communities. In these places, Sunbird has made major contributions to raising educational infrastructure besides sponsoring children and community outreach. These locations are: -

- Paangkriang Friendship School, Ijeirong Village, Noney District, Manipur
- Lyzon Friendship School, Khomunnom Village in Churachandpur District, Manipur
- Hope Friendship Academy, Langmai in Tamenglong District, Manipur
- Alpha Friendship School, Kachai in Ukhrul District, Manipur
- Haite Memorial Friendship Academy, Mualdam Village, Dima Hasao District, Assam
- Sungcham Friendship School, Puichi Village, Noney District, Manipur
- Oinam Hill Village, Senapati District, Manipur
- Majuli Island, Majuli District, Assam

In addition to the base locations, Sunbird partners with 45 institutions in six Northeast Indian states of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

### PAANGKRIANG FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, IJEIRONG VILLAGE, NONEY DISTRICT, MANIPUR



Located in the picturesque village of Ijeirong, Paangkriang Friendship School was Sunbird Trust's first partner institution in Manipur. Due to lack of resources and prolonged conflict in this region, this village suffered from lack of social and educational infrastructure such as schools and health care centres. The primary schools run by the government were either defunct or poorly staffed. With this, in 2013, Sunbird Trust approached to help build the capacity of the school. Since commencing the partnership in 2014, Sunbird Trust, with the help of generous donors, has raised substantial infrastructure including two hostels, a large dining hall, assembly hall, computer and science laboratories and a music academy. The entire complex also has solar lighting.

The post-pandemic year has seen a significant reduction in the number of students. At the end of March 2022, the strength of the school is 417 students in classes KG to Std 10. Out of these, approximately 250 students stay at the Sunbird Friendship hostels, while the rest commute to school daily from the nearby villages. Sunbird sponsors the tuition fees for 180 students and the hostel fees for 250 students. Two of Sunbird Trust's former sponsored students, one of them an alumnus from the school, were posted at Ijeirong. They took classes and participated in capacity building of the school and campus.

**School Events and Activities.** At the request of the school administration, Sunbird sponsored educational resources and Teaching/Learning Materials (TLMs) for the school. These included whiteboards, globes, charts, stationery, books and a variety of TLMs.

With the resumption of school, a Teacher's Training program led by team member Anindita Chatterjee was launched in Sept-Oct 2021. The program focused on Team-Building and integrating Community and Socio-Emotional Learning into our daily classrooms, especially in the backdrop of the pandemic. For many teachers, it was a first-of-its-kind training and they enthusiastically participated in discussing classroom ideas and strategies.



During the year, an Annual Literary and Sports Meet was conducted. Spanning a week, students and staff came together to co-design and execute several creative, cultural and sports events. The event provided a platform to our students to showcase their skills and talents and also take pride in their cultural heritage and roots.

With their last year in school, the tenth graders enjoyed a farewell riverside picnic organized by team member Siam Paite before the school session ended.

**Computer Lab. PFS**



students are fortunate to have a state of the art 17-terminal computer centre sponsored by Anaha Trust. Teachers and students alike have used the space to explore new technology, tools, and applications to enhance their education. With school re-starting, the students rejoiced in the resuming of the computer classes after a long Covid-19 break.



**Infrastructure.** The “downtime” during COVID was used to effect repairs and maintenance of the hostels and some of the classrooms. A critically needed staff toilet was constructed for the school. Water pumps were installed to ease the water supply problem. The football ground was extended to give more play area to the children.

**Furtados-Sunbird Trust Music Academy.** Thanks to the generosity of Mr Joseph Gomes, part owner of Furtados, the well-known music company, PFS received instruments for an entire music academy. Team members Samuel Luis and Siam Paite coached the children in vocals and a variety of music instruments including guitar, keyboards, drums and violin.

**Community Outreach.** During the COVID 19 lockdown and closure of all schools, parents were guided to encourage their children to continue the learning. With schools closed,

the children were encouraged to help out in the farms and learn skills like basket making and weaving from their parents. Sunbird team members helped in distribution of ration relief to the entire village. With all team members remaining at their posts rather than returning to their homes, they too endured the same difficulties faced by the community such as shortage of rations, fresh vegetables and even gas. During the pandemic, they participated in all community activities, festivals and village events, limited though they were.





## LYZON FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, KHOMUNNOM, SINGNGAT

Lyzon Friendship School (LFS) Khomunnom, Singngat Sub-Division, Churachandpur District, Manipur was initially established as Ebion Public School in Muvanlai Village near Singngat in the year 2014. The idea of raising this school came about after the fierce ethnic conflicts in the 1990s, which prevented children from many villages around Singngat from accessing an education. In 2014, the founder Mr. Lanchinthang along with Mr. Sem Haokip approached Sunbird Trust with concrete ideas to support the school. Seeing the dire need for this institution, it was decided to raise the school. With the help of generous donors and the Assam Rifles, the first school buildings were raised and classes held from Nursery to class 2. However, with the unpaved access road to the school almost impassable in the monsoons, the school was shifted in 2019 to nearby Khomunnom village. An entirely new school building was raised courtesy of our generous donors Mr. Ravishankar Dakoju and Ms. Paola Dakoju. Today, there are 378 students in the school from classes Nursery to class 10. Presently, Sunbird sponsors tuition fees of 85 students in the school and hostel facility is available for 60 students. Over the years, Sunbird Trust has also set up a library, a fully equipped computer lab, Tab

classroom and science laboratory. LFS also has provisions for conducting smart classes.

Some of the initiatives and projects undertaken at LFS and neighbouring areas for the year 2021-2022 are as follows: -

**Post Pandemic Classes.** Schools reopened in February 2021 but had to shut down once again in April 2021. While the schools were closed, classes



continued online so as to continue the children's education. Teachers were given proper and detailed training on how to conduct online classes, and use Google Meet and other online educational tools. An important addition to online education were the tablets provided by Axis Bank under their DilSe initiative. They proved to be a huge help in the process, and for the teachers to conduct regular classes. Regular assessments and tests were also done during the online class phase.

**Tablet Classes.** Tablet classes have been designed to make learning subjects comfortable with the intervention of new-age technology. The aim is to provide and deliver education that's at par with the best classrooms elsewhere. The tablet programme was piloted for the students of class IV and VII. Each student is allocated a tablet with the educational apps preinstalled. The teachers handling the tablet classes were given prior training and were accompanied by one of Sunbird Trust's members during the pilot period.

**Co-Curricular Activities.** While the school remained open, many activities took place in the campus for the students, parents and teachers. Among them were the Sports Day, PTA Meeting, Student Council Oath Ceremony, Cleanliness Drive, Teacher Trainings, Staff Excursions, Pi-Day and Drama Day in the functional



months of 2021. BaLa Project (Building as learning aid) was also initiated by teachers and students wherein, 3 walls of class 3 were painted with elements from the food chain, transport system, vowels, the map of India, great places of the world etc.

**LFS Online Seminars.** LFS introduced bi-monthly online webinars, where SMEs presented/shared experiences in their respective fields of work. The main intent of the online seminar series was to build capacity among the teachers of LFS and give them exposure to different experiences that are related to their professional environment.



**Student Council.** Lyzon Friendship School encourages the formation of a Board of Students or a representative body for the students every year. Since Sunbird Trust's intervention, this process is managed by NEST Fellow Khamkhanmung, with help of LFS staff and team members. The main aim for forming a student body is to let the students be aware, and to participate in the functioning of the school and have a say in the welfare and development of the school. The students also learn the democratic form of government in the most practical way instead of just learning a textbook. This process also helps students to understand the Indian Election System.

**Infrastructure.** Sunbird and the school founder are endeavouring to ensure continuous development of the school infrastructure to ensure the best learning environment for the school children. All construction work is being done through the Axis Bank DilSe project. With the unavailability of a gathering space and assembly conducted on open ground even on harsh-weather days, a covered multi-purpose hall was the need of the hour. The construction of this hall commenced in November 2021. The building will have a stage, a store room, a green room, an art room and also two indoor badminton courts. Given the critical water shortage in the dry season, a 40,000-litre rainwater harvesting water storage tank is being constructed adjoining the multipurpose hall.



**Community Interventions.** In partnership with Selco, a solar egg incubator was set up in the first week of April 2021 in the village of Khualnam. One cycle has already been run with an attrition rate of 60% in chicks, but this is expected to improve significantly with experience. The egg incubator will help the beneficiary families to increase the production rate at their farms and in turn, increase their income. In addition, Sunbird Trust is supporting mushroom production by helping local farmers set up the infrastructure. Sunbird Trust also continued with its roselle tea production. Roselle is a wild flower from the hibiscus family that grows freely in many parts of North East India. Team Sunbird is helping farmers pack and market the product as a means of livelihood.



**Covid-19 Relief Work.** Many contributors from across India found Sunbird Trust to be a trustworthy partner for distribution of COVID relief supplies. Our valued partners included Caring Friends, Prestige Foundation, Anaha Trust, Life Foundation, Crypto Relief and Azim Premji Foundation. This included medical equipment such as oximeters, PPE, masks, sanitizers and gloves. The items were distributed to District Hospitals and Community/Public Health Centres across five districts in Manipur. In addition, 4,000 ration kits were distributed across seven districts in Manipur. A vaccination drive project targeting up to 1,00,000 doses was commenced in March 2022 along with our partner organization Highland.

Partnership with Haqdarshak. Sunbird Trust collaborated with Haqdarshak to get 2000 households in remote areas around Singngat access to numerous government schemes. 1500 application benefits (including govt life insurance scheme, Eshram card, Pan card etc) have already been received.

**Sloping Agriculture Land Technology (SALT) Farming.** Sunbird Trust Advisor David Gandhi visited Singngat to conduct SALT demonstration training. This training was attended by 10 members from Singngat, Haijang, Saichang and Khualnuam Villages. SALT is a far more efficient, less labour intensive and productive method of farming as compared to the omnipresent slash-and-burn (jhum) shifting cultivation.



**Digital Literacy Program.** The computer club at Singngat was opened to children and youth to induce more interest and curiosity about computers and to help them keep up with the latest tech advancements. 10 students from classes 7 and 8 as well as 3 local youth were chosen to participate in a 'Summer Computer Camp'. The chosen students enjoyed the computer literacy programme. A digital literacy fun activity-based curriculum was designed that challenged the learners. Apart from basic computer skills, the curriculum also focused on the introduction to algorithmic thinking and block coding

through experiential learning philosophy.

**NEST Fellowship.** The North East Sunbird Trust Fellowship is an attempt at build social changemakers and leaders from the community. The Fellowship was started by Sunbird Trust in 2020. In the year 2021-22, the NEST fellows worked on community projects, held community meetings and awareness campaigns, learnt and executed Social Work Methods, attended online capacity building sessions and courses.



**HOPE FOUNDATION ACADEMY, LANGMEI, TAMENGLONG DISTRICT, MANIPUR**

Langmei is inhabited primarily by people of the Liangmai Naga Tribe. After being invited in 2017 by the local Army Brigade Commander, Sunbird entered into a partnership with Hope Foundation Academy (HFA) to capacity-build the small village school. Hope Foundation Academy was a dream come true for its founders Judith and Namthonbou Newmai. With few good and affordable schools in the area, Namthonbou raised the school in 2008 to commemorate the memory of his late father. It first started in rudimentary accommodation with 12 orphans. At the start of Sunbird Trust's partnership with HFA in 2018, the school was rendering yeoman service for about 80 underserved children from Langmai and several neighbouring villages. Since then, with the generous support of Anaha Trust and its founder and Sunbird Trust adviser Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar, Sunbird has commenced completely rebuilding the entire school replacing hitherto dilapidated structures. With the support of Aspect Software (now Alvaria) the Kahiupong Friendship hostel was constructed in 2020. Today, the school has classes from KG to Std 10 and serves 208 students and 81 hostel students hailing from 15 neighbouring villages. All the students are sponsored by Sunbird Trust. Sunbird Trust's two team members, Amisha Singh and Priyanuj Sharma, both Teach for India Fellows, are based at the location and are instrumental in the capacity building of the school.



**School Activities.** A major activity during the year was the Teacher Development Program. and PostArt Pilot programme, an initiative where HFA students interacted with fellow students from Delhi through art exchange and real time zoom meet-ups to understand the differences, similarities and key elements of each other's culture. The school also celebrated Teacher's Day, Children's Day, Annual Sports Meet and the school's 13th Foundation Day in the academic year. Amongst other activities that Sunbird supported, the teachers were taken on an excursion and the Sunbird team together with teachers and students painted the school campus.



digital literacy to students and staff and for teacher training programmes.

**Partnership with Dikiuram School.** Sunbird Trust entered into a partnership with Inbiu Longrian School, Dikiuram with an eye to furthering relationships with the community. Inbiu Longrian is an under-resourced school at the heart of the remote village of Dikiuram. Serving the most underprivileged children, the school has immense potential for growth if supported. Sunbird sponsored the construction of a toilet block for the school while also providing the school with various sports and academic resources.



**School Infrastructure.** During 2021 - 2022, Sunbird Trust with the help of generous contributions from Anaha Trust facilitated raised critically required educational infrastructure. The old crumbling classrooms were replaced by a new school block, activity room and staff and students' toilets. A new water tank of 50,000 Litre capacity has greatly eased the water supply issue for the hostel students, especially during the dry months. The school block, computer laboratory and water tank were inaugurated by Col. Nishant Nair SC, Commanding Officer of 4 Bihar Regiment on 15th Aug 2021, Independence Day.



**Digital Literacy Programme.** Our long-standing partners Kurlon sponsored 12 computers and a television set for the computer laboratory at HFA. [1] The equipment is being employed for imparting



**Partnership with the Army.** The very initiation of the Sunbird Trust and HFA partnership was through the local Army Brigade. During the year, senior officers from the Army units visited the school regularly and conducted medical camps for the children and students. Army personnel also celebrated Republic Day with the school staff.

**Crypto-Sunbird Trust COVID-19 Relief.** To help ease difficulty faced by the community amidst the COVID lockdown, ration packets were distributed among 171 households of Langmei and Kualong Villages in

Tamei sub-division of Tamenglong district. The ration packets included rice, pulses, salt, poha (puffed rice) and spices. The aid was donated by Crypto Relief India.

**Solar Electrification of LNBA-Manipur Office.** The Liangmai Naga Baptist Association plays a primary role in the social life of the Liangmai community. At their request, Sunbird Trust supported the solar electrification of their office in Langmei.





## ALPHA FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL (AFS), KACHAI

The village of Kachai, renowned for its lemons to which it lends its name, lies in Ukhrul District of Manipur. It is home to over 500 households of people predominantly belonging to the Tangkhul Naga tribe. Alpha Christian School was founded by Mr. Mataisang, a school principal, when he had to flee from his school in Senapati District due to ethnic conflict. Realizing the dire need for a viable school for the least privileged around his hometown Kachai, he founded Alpha Christian School (Now called Alpha Friendship School) in the year 1995. The school currently has 225 students from Kindergarten to Std 10. 210 of these are boarders who hail from 22 neighbouring villages.

In 2021, seeing the contribution of the school to less privileged children, an Army Brigadier posted at Imphal suggested a partnership between Sunbird Trust and AFS. Finding many synergies, it was decided to collaborate. With that Sunbird Trust commenced support by providing sponsorship for 225 students. This ensures that the students get access to education and also facilitates payment of reasonable salaries to the staff. In addition, Sunbird sponsors a nutrition scheme for 225 “self-help” hostel students. This scheme ensures that these lesser privileged

children get adequate vegetables, eggs and meat.



**“Self-Help” Children.** AFS is unique for its 225 “self-help” children. Coming from families of subsistence farmers and daily wage labourers, the children hailing from remote villages cannot afford to pay hostel fees. Similarly, without financial resources, it has not been possible for AFS to run a hostel. Consequently, the children in groups of 2 and 3 have small kitchenettes on the campus where they cook their own food. At the stroke of 4 o’clock in the evening, the children head to their kitchenettes to prepare supper. The eldest child in the group of siblings or relatives is usually responsible for preparing the meal while the younger ones help out with smaller tasks. This

compulsion to cook imbibes the children with self-dependence, stock management and versatility.



**School Infrastructure.** Given the inability of the school children to pay fees regularly and the lack of any alternate financial support, the existing buildings at AFS had fallen into disrepair. The wooden walls and tin sheet roofs had developed holes allowing freezing breeze to enter the rooms in the frigid winter. The floors too were pitted and required to be redone. There was thus a dire need to replace 100% of the existing structures. Thanks to a generous donor who prefers to remain anonymous, Sunbird Trust was able to construct a 30,000-litre water tank and toilet blocks for girls and boys (Pic 26 A). Both these were inaugurated on 15th Aug 2021. In the coming year, through the support of Manas Foundation and its founder Mr Ravi Modi, plans are afoot to reconstruct the entire school, hostel blocks and multipurpose hall. This work is expected to be completed in the next financial year.

**Support of Assam Rifles.** The school and the Sunbird Trust team was provided with immense support from 35 Assam Rifles under 10 Sector Assam Rifles. The battalion assisted in transportation of bunk beds and mattresses, blankets and bedsheets contributed by Featherlite Industries and Kurlon respectively for our students.

**Renovation of Student Hostels and Assembly Hall.** The renovation of hostels and assembly hall commenced at AFS soon after the school closed for Christmas break. The walls and roofs of these buildings were old and rotten which led to a very cold and damp environment in the hostel. The wood from the walls and CGI sheets on the roof are being replaced and extra insulation was set up on the inside to ensure more comfortable accommodation for the students.





**School Activities.** Though AFS, Kachai is one of our newer partner schools, it has been performing exceptionally well, thanks to the on-field team and fullest participation of all stakeholders including the founder, school board, parents and staff. Sunbird Team members Chitra Suvarna and Ayushi Pande have embarked on a slew of activities aimed at capacity building and knowledge delivery. An Intern Training Program was conducted for Sunbird's own ex-sponsored graduate interns, who have returned to their state after graduation in cities like Bangalore. During their internship they were helped to improve interpersonal and professional skills such as communication, leadership, teacher training and digital training.

Team member, Naman Goel, conducted an arts-based intervention for students of middle and high school, to develop 21st century skills - creative thinking, critical thinking, communication and collaboration to give them an edge for their holistic development. With the help of audio-visual aids provided by Sunbird, classes in value education were also conducted. For the first time student council elections were conducted giving students a first-hand experience of the democratic process including organisation of elections. Multiple events such as

annual sports day, movie screenings, Diwali and other festival celebrations, staff picnic and a teachers orientation program were conducted.



**Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE).** Kachai had the opportunity to host two students from the Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM), Bhubaneswar for 45 days for their Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE). The purpose of the program was to give them an exposure to rural realities and livelihood challenges.



### **HAITE MEMORIAL FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, MUALDAM VILLAGE, DIMAHASAO DISTRICT, ASSAM**

Haite Memorial Friendship School (HFMS) is located at tiny and remote Mualdam Village in Dima Hasao district of Assam. The school was founded by William Ngamlai with the aim of providing basic education to children in the area, most of whom did not have access to any viable school. The partnership between Sunbird Trust and HMFS commenced in 2019, when a member of the national NGO Goonj, moved by the poor condition of the school requested Sunbird Trust to step in to help build a viable school. The school has 15 staff and serves 201 children from 10 neighbouring villages around Mualdam who are studying in classes from KG to class 7.

**School Infrastructure: Inauguration of the new HMFS School Building.** Considering the dire need for a new school building with adequate space for the children, Sunbird through the generous sponsorship of Manas Foundation and its founder Mr. Ravi Modi constructed a brand-new school building. The building has 12 rooms including classes from KG to Std VII and. The construction was particularly challenging given the COVID lockdown and very

poor road conditions. Regardless, the team persisted

and the new school building was inaugurated in Sunbird Tradition on 15th Aug 2021 by Col Ashok Bhandari, the Commandant of 11 Assam Rifles in the presence of Col Chris Rego, our founder, heads of the neighbouring villages, parents, children and other guests. Col Chris expressed his immense gratitude to Manas Foundation for their generosity and to Col Bhandari for travelling to and consenting to inaugurate the school at the remote location in his area of responsibility.

Until the previous year, students and teachers had only a single makeshift toilet. That was remedied with Sunbird Trust constructing a large toilet block with separate toilets for boys and girls adequate for the entire school.





**School Activities.** The challenges thrown up by the pandemic made team members come up with creative solutions to continue imparting education to the children of HMFS. Due to the lack of resources for digital classes, the Sunbird team in Mualdam led by Ravi Kumar and supported by Ruby Sam, strove hard to hold informal classes for all students of the village thrice a week, even though the schools were shut. A worksheet programme was also started for the school students to make sure that the students were actively learning at home. During this time, teachers were given training to develop their capacity

to give their best in the online and offline classrooms and to set realistic classroom goals, mapping these to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) learning outcomes laid down by NCERT.

As in other partner schools, Sunbird Trust has encouraged extra-curricular activities that help shape the growth of the children. With this, off-syllabus activities are included in the daily curriculum. To that effect, Sudoku, Origami and campus painting activities were conducted in HMFS during the academic year.



On 11 Dec 2021, to celebrate 7 years of Sunbird Trust, a cultural show was put up by the school children. Team Mualdam invited all the parents, village heads and community members to the school for the viewing of the anniversary program. A gift of bedsheets from our partner Kurlon was distributed to all the staff of the school.

**Exposure visit to Hummingbird School and Ayang Trust.** As part of the teacher's capacity building program, Sunbird's HMFS team organized an exposure visit for all teachers to The Hummingbird School of Ayang Trust at Majuli Island. Sunbird Trust has played a pivotal supporting role in the early years of Ayang Trust and the raising of the Hummingbird School. The

purpose of the visit was to provide the teachers with exposure to better learning and teaching practices. The teachers also got an opportunity to learn overall school management, utilization of teaching and learning resources, school's library operations and organized extracurricular activities. Along with this, teachers also got to learn about Ayang Trust's community and livelihood projects.

**Covid Relief Ration Distribution.** In the second lockdown, many villagers lost their jobs and came back to their respective villages. To support them in the difficult times, Sunbird Trust distributed ration kits to 260 families from 6 different villages around Mualdam.

**Language Revival Project.** Team member Ravi Kumar is taking the lead on a very interesting community project in Mualdam – Biate Language Revival Project. The project an effort to revive the native language of the locals. Biate is listed as an endangered language in India by UNESCO. According to UNESCO only 15 to 18 thousand people can presently speak the

language in the whole world, putting it under risk of extinction. As part of the project, the team and volunteers are collecting folk tales from the elders of the community to make story books for children, and translating and recording familiar Hindi/English songs into Biate. Two volunteers – Rucha Deshpande and Rhea Rego- were invited to be part of the project, to train and record music videos and document folk tales respectively.

### SUNGCHAM FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, PUICHI



Sungcham Friendship School at Puichi in Manipur has the unique distinction of being created in a vacated Army camp with the initiative of Sunbird Trust and kind facilitation of the local Army authorities. A place that once held weapons is now is a happy and safe space for children of the village for their education. The school now has 11 staff including 3 Sunbird team members and 117 students from Nursery to ClassIV.

When Covid-pandemic hit, the alternative of school was online classes, all over the world. However, our schools in remote villages did not have that option due to irregular electricity and poor network coverage. Hence, Sunbird Trust's team at Sungcham Friendship School along with the local teachers, initiated a strategy called '**The Distant Learning Program**'. Teachers, parents, students and Sunbird team members joined hands to let learning continue, with the help of worksheets and regular personal evaluation. Our partners HT Parekh Foundation supported the idea of distant learning program for

SFS and donated laptops to be used as learning and teaching material. The staff of SFS were given digital literacy training by introducing the hardware and software functions. Youth leaders, teachers and interns of Sunbird Trust participated in the training. Thanks to the capacity building sessions, some of the teachers achieved their goal of typing their own question papers using Microsoft Word by the end of the academic year.

**Personal and Professional Development Trainings (PPDT).** SFS teachers receive PPDT on the 4th Saturday of every month. In addition to that, SFS teachers engaged in Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) approach on types of skills, self-to-text connection, creativity, distant learning strategy for effective parents' engagement, digital device operation in this academic year.

As a part of teachers' orientation, SFS staff was given sessions on building school culture. 'Reading Circle'



was practised daily by all staff as part of this session. The long-term goal of this initiative is to expose teachers to literature around child-development and improve their reading skills. Teachers were also trained to maintain uniformity in blackboard management and to use similar instructional strategies across grades.

**COVID Relief.** In July 2021, during the lockdown, Sunbird Trust members in Puichi arranged a distribution program for the village with the generous support from Crypto Relief. The rations supplied was a package of essentials like salt, rice, pulses, Ngari (fermented fish), dal and millets. This provided great relief for the villagers at a most challenging time, when the foreseeable future seemed uncertain and bleak.

**SALT (Sloping Agriculture Land Technique) Demonstration Farm.** After Sunbird secured the old Army barracks for setting up the Puichi Village Primary School, the village donated an entire hillside to Sunbird Trust for the purpose of setting up a SALT demonstration farm. SALT is a process to stabilize the slope and improve the terrace or the contours in order to control soil erosion along the slopes and improve soil fertility. It is a far more productive, environmentally friendly and efficient form of agriculture as opposed to the widely practiced slash-



and-burn cultivation.

The SALT project at Puichi is sponsored by Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar through his Anaha Trust and overseen by SALT expert Mr David Gandhi. Since the farm was started, it has developed considerably and attracting the interest of local farmers. Mr Gandhi also conducted a seminar in September 2021 around the theme of 'Sustainable Agriculture over Shifting Agriculture'. During the seminar he presented and covered the basics of natural resource management, causes of land degradation and challenges faced by farmers. He also expounded the virtues of the SALT methodology.

**SALT study tour to Aben Village.** After the seminar held in Puichi, Sunbird team members under the mentorship of Mr Gandhi and in collaboration with the Aben Village Development Committee (VDC) organized a four-day SALT study tour Aben village. The main objective of this study tour was to give theoretical and practical knowledge on sustainable agriculture to the newly formed SALT body members of Puichi village in order that they can adopt it in their own farm in whichever way they see fit.

**Inauguration of an 80,000 Ltr Water Tank and Classroom for SFS.** The community in Puichi has





suffered from years of water scarcity which was hampering daily life profusely. With the generous sponsorship of Anaha Trust and its founder Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar, an 80,000-litre water tank was inaugurated on Republic Day, 26 Jan 2022 at Puichi by Col. Jatin Mittal, the Commandant of 10 Assam Rifles.



As Sungcham Friendship School was short of a classroom a new classroom sponsored by Sunbird Trust was raised with the collaboration of the parents. The village folks contributed bamboo for the walls and helped do the bamboo cladding. A 260 square feet classroom was quickly raised and greatly eased the problem of space in the school.

**Social Work.** Every 4th Saturday is observed as “Social-work Saturday”. Students bring their gardening tools like spades, sacks, bamboos to clean and maintain their school campus. Every grade chooses whether they want to engage in gardening, weeding, ground levelling, classroom cleaning or sorting out learning materials.





**OINAM HILL VILLAGE, SENAPATI DISTRICT, MANIPUR**

Oinam Hill village is a small hamlet of about 250 resident families belonging predominantly to the Poumai Naga ethnic tribe. The village is renowned for a centuries-old tradition of pottery made uniquely by the women of this village. Sadly, the village also has a dark history of violence associated with the fierce attack by militants there in July 1987 that killed nine



soldiers of the local Assam Rifles camp and the subsequent events that followed to apprehend the culprits and recover the looted weapons through Operation Bluebird. The large number of deaths among soldiers and civilians alike led to severely strained relationships and broken trust lasting nearly three decades.

Sunbird Trust was

invited to spread its work at Oinam Hill through persons from the village during pandemic COVID - 19. Subsequent to that, during pandemic covid-19, Sunbird Trust through the generous contribution of Prestige Foundation donated a critically needed ambulance to the PHC located at the village. The enhanced trust earned has led to a much deeper involvement with two Sunbird Team members Suinila and Richard working with two schools, village youth, SHG and embedded in the community. Suinila is delegated as a nurse with the Oinam Hill PHC and Richard as the Community Outreach Manager. At the initiative of the village community, Sunbird Trust is now involved with building capacity at the Oinam Hill Government High School and the St. John Bosco English (Primary) School, a small private school in the village. Sunbird is also involved in various community outreach programmes.





**St. John Bosco English School, Oinam.** Established in 1989, St. John Bosco School, is an English primary school established in the village with the help of a donor. The school has been very effectively imparting quality education from nursery to class 5. Sunbird Trust currently sponsors all the 74 students in this small school. In addition, 2 computers and a printer have been donated to the school.

**Oinam Hill Primary Health Centre.** Sunbird Trust's partnership with the village of Oinam commenced with the donation of an ambulance to the PHC on 15 April 2021. The PHC serves 33 neighbouring villages and is grossly under equipped and understaffed. Through Sunbird Trust, an ambulance and a nurse (Suinila Joseph) were allocated to this PHC to provide medical aid and services. Suinila has actively cared for COVID patients and held vaccination drives. She has also conducted Menstrual Hygiene and general care awareness programs in and around Oinam and other locations of Sunbird Trust including for the girls at the village Government High School. While on duty she attends to routine PHC work including assisting in delivery of babies and attending to patients. Off PHC duty hours, she joins Richard in community outreach work.

**COVID Relief Work.** As part of the COVID Relief Program, Sunbird Trust distributed urgently needed rations on 17th Aug 2021 (sponsored by The Life Foundation) and medical aid. At a time of crisis, the timely assistance was deeply appreciated by the

local community.

**Women Empowerment.** The pandemic led to immense loss of employment and income for many. On 20th Sep 21, pitching in to help, Sunbird Trust distributed 15 tailoring machines to underprivileged women at Raibasti, Maram to facilitate them earning a living. The machines were distributed by Col. Manoj Sharma, Commandant of 35 Assam Rifles.

**Winter Relief.** Oinam Hill village faces harsh winters with temperatures dropping to zero degrees, giving the elderly and children a very difficult time. To provide relief to the impacted people, Sunbird Trust distributed 150 blankets to needy persons in the village on 28 Oct 2021. Clothes contributed by Ramakrishna Mission were also distributed to 95 boarding students in the Government High School.





## MAJULI ISLAND, MAJULI DISTRICT, ASSAM

Embraced by the mighty Brahmaputra, beautiful Majuli, one of the world's largest riverine islands, has a population of over 1,70,000 people. 83% of the people belong to Scheduled Tribes and 75% of them are subsistence farmers. Annually, during the monsoons, almost the entire island is flooded. In fact, numerous houses are built on stilts to remain above the floodwater line. The frequent flooding causes a loss of crops and livelihoods besides negatively impacting the quality of life, healthcare and education. The average annual income of tribal households here is less than Rs. 25,000. Sunbird Trust works with 8 schools at Majuli, all of which cater to lesser privileged children. All in all, the education of 792 children on the island including some in under graduation courses in nearby towns is sponsored on the island.

### MAJULI ISLAND HUMMINGBIRD SCHOOL, KULAMAO VILLAGE, MAJULI

Majuli Island Hummingbird School, Kulamua Village, is a primary school providing education to around 220 students (Classes Nursery to Std VII) in rural Assam.

The school was started in 2017 by Bipin Dhane, an IIT Kharagpur post graduate, who gave up the corporate world in Singapore to serve here. Sunbird Trust has been closely associated with the raising of the school since inception. Last year, with the generous support of the Prestige Foundation, the Friendship Boy's Home, in Mising language called as Ayang Unne Okum (meaning Bright Home) hostel was inaugurated on 14 Nov 21. Sunbird sponsors the education of 250 students at the Hummingbird School. Incidentally, Aswathy Jayakumar, the Director-Education of Ayang, was the very first employee of Sunbird Trust before she transitioned to Majuli.



**Majuli Gurukul Academy, Balijakoibowa, Majuli, Assam.** Sunbird Trust commenced its partnership with Majuli Gurukul Academy in the year 2019, when it was approached by the school management for financial assistance to support the running of the school. The school has 101 children studying in classes from Nursery to Std 7. Sunbird trust sponsors all the students including 57 of them in the hostel. The minimal fees paid by the lesser privileged children did not allow for developing the infrastructure. With the help of generous contribution from Mr Irfan Razack of Prestige Foundation, Sunbird Trust was able to support construction of a block of five new classrooms that was inaugurated on Republic Day, 26th Jan 2022. Sunbird Trust has also contributed computers to the school.

**Vivekananda Vidyalaya, Chelek Chapori, Kamalpur, Majuli, Assam.** Founded in 2010 by Nilakanta Pegu, Vivekananda Vidyalaya is an English medium school affiliated to the Assam State Board. Students come from over 20 neighbouring villages to study in this school. 135 students here are sponsored by Sunbird Trust.

**Kulamua Friendship English School, Kulamua, Majuli, Assam.** Kulamua Friendship School started as a small coaching centre by Sanjay Pegu in 2010. Upon seeing the response of the villagers, he established a school with his own savings and a little help from the community. The school commenced functioning with 142 students. Soon after, however, due to the fierce storms in the area, the rudimentary bamboo and tin structure of the school was irreparably damaged. This is when Mr. Pegu approached Sunbird Trust for help with rebuilding the school infrastructure. Since then, Sunbird Trust has helped construct a new school building and hostel with concrete posts. 157 children studying in classes Nursery to Class 8 are sponsored in this school.



**Arda Public School, Chelek Sesachuk, Kamalpur, Majuli, Assam.** Arda Public School in Majuli was discontinued in the year 2017 due to lack of finances and the inability of children to pay their full fees. The dire need to rejuvenate and reopen this school was brought to Sunbird Trust's attention in 2019. With the concern that many children were missing out on an education, Sunbird offered to sponsor all children who would attend the school. Currently, the school has 120 children in classes from Nursery to 9, all of who are sponsored by Sunbird Trust. Sunbird Trust is also helping upgrade the school infrastructure including the toilet blocks.





**Naharbari Friendship School, Naharbari, Majuli, Assam.** Naharbari Friendship School was established in the year 2016, only to be shut down later due to financial constraints. This school was the only means of education for children from over 16 villages. Taking the initiative, the present principal Mina Pegu, approached Sunbird Trust for help. Sunbird Trust has since then been sponsoring tuition fees for 80 students and hostel fees for 28 students. Some improvements in the school infrastructure will be made in the coming year.

**Berbhanga Friendship School, Berbhanga, Dhemaji District, Assam.** At present there are 120 students studying in this school from classes Nursery to Class 6. Sunbird Trust is sponsoring 83 students in the school and 6 children in the hostel.

**Karchang Public School, Ligiramukh Chanang, Majuli, Assam.** Karchang Public school is a primary school having 66 students from L.K.G to class 1. The village suffers from flood damage immensely in every monsoon due to its proximity to river Kerkota. Presently, the school has only make-shift infrastructure. But Sunbird Trust is committed to setting up a concrete school building, a toilet block, a teachers' room as well as providing teaching

equipment to the school at present, Sunbird Trust sponsors tuition fees for 70 students in the school.

**Dew Drop Academy.** Sunbird Trust's first project area in Meghalaya is a partnership with Dew Drops Academy at remote Nongshken in the East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya village near the Bangladesh border. Finding that there were no viable schools in the area and that numerous children from Nongshken and neighbouring villages were going without an education, Geny (as she is commonly called) raised a rudimentary school with resources raised from her family and friends. Hearing about the work of Sunbird, she reached out to us for support to raise the school infrastructure. Seeing much alignment in her work and that of Sunbird Trust it was decided to enter into a partnership. With this, Sunbird, with the help of its generous donors, is helping raise the basic infrastructure of the school and has contributed to construction of the school building and toilets. 121 students studying in classes from Nursery to Cl. IV and a staff of 10 persons.

**Hope Children's Home.** Founded by Gangaimai Phaomei in the year 2014, this home is an abode for 24 destitute and underprivileged children. Sunbird has partnered with this institution since 2019 and



provides child sponsorship for tuitions and boarding besides material assistance for running of the Home.

**Mercy Home.** Located in Churachandpur District of Manipur and serving as an abode for destitute and lesser privileged children, Mercy Home receives support from Sunbird Trust for nutrition. Thanks to the generous contribution of Kurlon, mattresses, pillows and bedsheets were donated for all the children in the home. Our founders Col Chris and Mrs Myrna Rego also visited the Home during the year.

**Creative Vision Football Academy.** Sunbird Trust partners with Creative Vision Football Academy in Churachandpur in Manipur to provide avenues to lesser privileged youth for developing their sporting talent. The founder of the Academy, Mr. Ginkhanmang (Mang) Taithul is a passionate footballer and coach. In this partnership, Sunbird Trust sponsors 50 children including their football kits at this Academy.

**Support for Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Karnataka.** 12 youngsters of the Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Karnataka hailing from Manipur are sponsored by Sunbird Trust. They represent the state at the nationals – winning any medals could mean permanent employment under the sportsmen quota of government and even private companies. As they compete in various competitions, these youngsters now proudly wear have the Sunbird logo emblazoned on their sleeves.



**Annual Sunbird Trust Conclave.** As a tradition, Sunbird Trust has an annual conclave of its team members from all project areas. This 3-day event is a time for bonding and fun as also to take stock of work and strategize for the future. It provides an ideal



opportunity for all to share their learnings and suggest improvements to the structures and processes of the organization. After hard confabulations and a host of project-wise presentations, the evenings are meant for bonhomie, song and shaking a leg.

During the current year, the conclave was held on 21st and 22nd August. Due to the pandemic, this was the first meeting after two years and much to discuss. Several new processes were put in place and iterations made to existing ones. During the conclave,

we bid farewell to Dr Sonal Sethia, our COO, who is proceeding for her Masters in Public Policy and Governance at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.



## 7TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Sunbird Trust's 7th Anniversary celebrations were held on 11th Dec 2021 with much aplomb and fanfare. Congratulatory messages and well wishes were received from all over the world. There were special performances from our various locations and numbers from team members and the special invitees. An hour-long video of all the items was put up on Youtube. At the start, our founder Col Chris gave a short welcome speech. This was followed by a song "Friendship" with the lyrics and music composed by our team member Siam and sung by our children from Paangkriang Friendship School, Ijeirong. We were privileged to receive a congratulatory letter from the hon'ble Shri Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur and a short video with sweet words from Chanu Saikhom Mirabai, international gold medal winning weightlifter. Principals of our partner schools all shared their best wishes and words of appreciation. Popular North East Indian artists from across the NE states such as Tips from Soulmate, Manda Leima, Mangka Mayangiamba and the Tetseo Sisters also sent in their wishes or short videos. National award winning folk artist and Padma Shri awardee (Guru) Rewben Mashangva performed especially for us.

## SPONSORED STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

While most of our alumni are doing exceptionally well after their graduation, a mention can be made of a few. Konjengbam Dollar Singh from Moirang Town in Manipur completed his Electronics and Communication Engineering at Dr.

T. Thimmiah Institute Of Technology at Kolar Gold Fields and was immediately successful in getting a comprehensive scholarship for pursuing his Masters in Internet and Communication Technology in Life and Health at the University of Padua in Italy. Haobijam Abokson, also from Moirang, who completed his BTech in Civil Engineering from the same institute was successful in getting a year-long internship in Bangalore with Prestige Projects Private Ltd, one of the country's largest real estate companies in their Prestige City project. Shangamba Bariamtak was



selected as a Field Officer with Hamara Grid (Mithun Rural Development Foundation), a company working with solar solutions in remote and underserved areas of the country. He is currently posted in Chenwetnyu Village in Mon District of Nagaland, close to the Myanmar Border.

Chitaranjan Khuman from Imphal, Manipur was passionate about making movies and had participated in National Film Festivals and got various awards. Wishing to gain more knowledge and experience on the subject matter, he applied for, and got accepted for his MA in Filmmaking in the University of Creative Arts in Farnham in the UK. Noting his talent and potential, he has been provided financial support from Sunbird Trust.





## FAREWELL

We bid farewell to the following members of Team Sunbird who move on for educational, career and life options: -

Dr Sonal Sethia	21 Aug 21
Akanksha Rajgulati	31 Aug 21
Arjun Beliappa	31 Aug 21
Sharmistha Dey	11 Sep 21
Kunal Singh Thakur	06 Nov 21
Arjun Manjeri Seshadri	31 Mar 22

**Our Graduate Alumni Interns.** Our graduate alumni students continue to do us proud in India and other parts of the world. Completely rewarding the faith reposed in them through sponsoring them through graduation, many have voluntarily returned to the fold while others have moved on for higher studies, studying for competitive examinations or employment.

On completion of their graduation in varied fields such as Agriculture, Law, Social Work, B.A. or B.Sc, our voluntary interns are deputed to our various project areas under the mentorship of senior members. At these locations, they garner on-ground experience of teaching, community work and basic administration. Importantly they are helped to develop their soft skills in communication, leadership and time management. During this time, they also get to imbibe Sunbird's organisational culture and values and contribute their own ideas. Post their internship of a year to two years, they can either chose to remain in the organisation as permanent members or move on for their further studies or employment.

Sunbird trust alumni act as anchors and arrows for peace in their own communities and around the country and help scale Sunbird Trust's presence and work.

## FAREWELL TO OUR COO DR SONAL SETHIA



Our COO, Dr Sonal Sethia, transitioned from Sunbird Trust on 21 Aug 21. An IIT Mumbai postgraduate with a doctorate from Glasgow University and Teach

for India Fellow, she proceeded to Azim Premji University, Bangalore for doing her Masters in Public Policy and Governance. Joining Sunbird Trust in July 2017 as an intern, she formally joined the organization as a School Leader at our partner Lyzon Friendship School at Khomunnom, Churachandpur District, Manipur. Here, she quickly built the capacity of this fledgling institution bringing in the latest methods of teaching and substantially improving the overall functioning of the school. Within a short period, her leadership and management skills soon led to her being promoted as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Sunbird Trust. Now, tasked with

leading all Sunbird Trust operations across five northeast Indian states, she quickly streamlined the working of multiple teams at Sunbird base locations. She took on multiple challenges and, in her three years at Sunbird Trust, helped take the work of the organization to a new level altogether.

While Sonal has moved on for her higher academic pursuits, given the vast experience in her duties as COO, she remains on the team as honorary Chief Mentor. She now extends her support and shares her considerable learnings with newer members of the organization.

## WELCOME

During the year, we were happy to welcome seventeen new members to our fold: -

Sunila Joseph	23 Apr 21
Aliasgar Huseini Janjali	01 Aug 21
Siam Paite	01 Aug 21
Samuel Luis	01 Aug 21
Anindita Chatterjee	04 Aug 21
Pushkar Manoj Tiwari	09 Aug 21
Ayushi Pandey	10 Aug 21
Naman Goel	10 Aug 21
Niang Neih Kim	17 Aug 21
Priyanuj Sharma	19 Aug 21
Ruby K Sam	01 Sep 21
Ringkila J Tainamei	01 Oct 21
Shomrorphi Shangh Shimray	01 Jan 22
Sunil Vijayan	03 Jan 22
Khangembam Malemthaba	01 Feb 22
Khuraijam Banty Singh	01 Feb 22
Lino Awomi	07 Feb 22

**Welcome to Aliasgar Janjali, our new COO.** A former Vice President, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and Senior Vice President, Edelweiss Capital, Ali is a career finance professional having worked with some of the largest financial intermediaries in India. A Teach for India Fellow, he first joined Sunbird Trust in July 2018. He served as a School Leader at Sunbird Trust partner Paangkriang Friendship School at remote Ijeirong village in Manipur. Faced with immense challenges in a remote, conflict-affected rural community, quickly helped build up structures and processes in our then-fledgling organization. During his year-long stay he helped bring in the latest pedagogy skills and state-of-the-art infrastructure at the school.

Transitioning out of Sunbird Trust in July 2019 for personal reasons, Ali served as Chief Mentor of the organization before returning in August 2021. With Dr Sonal Sethia transitioning out of Sunbird Trust for her further studies, Ali seamlessly took over the reins of Chief Operating Officer. He returns to an organization that has more than doubled in size since he left after his first tenure. He now will doubtlessly bring his considerable managerial and professional teaching experience to the fore as he takes on his challenging new assignment.

## WORK WITH OUR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Sunbird Trust is privileged to have corporate partners and private individuals who stride with us in our challenging journey of Peace through Education. While India's North East is sometimes at the margins of our larger national consciousness (out of sight and out of mind?), we are immensely to them for their thoughtfulness and generosity in partnering with us in the remotest areas. It is their support that is helping positively impact the lives and destinies of more than 10,000 children and the altruistic objective of national integration. As ever, we are immensely aware of the trust and faith that they have reposed in us to effect the maximum assistance for the the intended beneficiaries. While we are privileged to have so many organisations and individuals to support us, we are unable to mention all here. However, prominent among our partners are the following:-

### Caring Friends

Helping Good NGOs Perform Better

**Caring Friends.** We are deeply indebted to Mr. Ramesh Kacholia, who, through the immense generosity of his son Mr. Ashish Kacholia, has for over 8 years mentored and supported us. Furthermore, has tirelessly campaigned to bring many new contributors to support us through his organisation Caring Friends. This support has helped take our Trust's work to a new plane altogether. Incidentally, just as we have been mentored, we too have helped raise other social organisation, many of which are also being supported by Caring Friends.



**Prestige Foundation.** For the past four years, Prestige Foundation, through the kind mentorship of their Chairman, Mr. Irfan Razack, has joined us in supporting our operations and raising educational infrastructure across North East India. During the

current year, they have helped us rebuild renovate schools and hostels in Majuli Island Assam and construct a second Boys' hostel at Kulamao village on the island. In the past, they have also contributed to constructing Dew Drops Academy in Meghalaya, building a toilet for girls in Happiness Home and contribute an ambulance for the Primary Health Centre at Oinam Hill village in Manipur.



**Axis Bank Dil-Se Project.** Our partners since 2019, Axis Bank have contributed immensely to developing our partner Lyzon Friendship School at Khomunom Village, near Singhat in Churachandpur District of Manipur. Besides school infrastructure like new classrooms, an auditorium, water supply and toilet blocks, they are also sponsoring the salaries of teachers and team members under their Axis Dilse Project.



**HT Parekh Foundation.** Our partners since the past three years, the HT Parekh Foundation has supported building of educational infrastructure like the HDFC - Sunbird Trust Dining Hall at Ijeirong Village for 250 children at Ijeirong, a Sunbird staff centre and a hostel for lesser resourced children. The Foundation also helps sponsor the education of over 112 children besides supporting teacher training and staff salaries.



**Manas Foundation.** Our generous donor Mr Ravi Modi, owner of the renowned Vedant Fashions (Manyavar) has sponsored building of an entire school at Mualdam Village in Assam (Haite Memorial Friendship School). Post visiting us in March 2021 along with Mrs. Shilpi Agarwal, he has contributed more funds to build another school (Alpha Friendship School) in Ukhrul District of Manipur. We are hopeful of this school being inaugurated by the

second quarter of 2023. Manas and its sister Vedant Foundation help sponsor nutrition support of 130 children and teacher salaries at the same school.



**Srijan Realty.** Mr Pawan Agarwal, a generous and long-standing supporter, has through his foundation Srijan Realty been instrumental in bringing up many infrastructures at various locations. A partner of Sunbird Trust's since past 2 years, Srijan has helped us construct a 50,000-litre water tank at Yapaal Friendship Hostel, Manipur and funded a Home Solar lighting Community Project which benefited 150 households in Singngat region, Manipur. Srijan has also been supporting the educational cost of more than 700 students in the past years including 100 children of migrant labourers in the Senapati District of Manipur.



**Kurlon.** In the past, Kurlon has provided us with hundreds of blankets, bedsheets, pillows and dohars. During the current year, they have supported raising a Computer Laboratory at Hope Foundation Academy at Langmei Village in Tamenglong District of Manipur. The laboratory is likely to be inaugurated in August' 21 Aspect (Now Alvaria). Our partners since three years, Aspect had earlier sponsored the building of a hostel for 50 children at Hope Foundation Academy at Langmei. They continue to partner with us by sponsoring the education of 250 lesser privileged children in Manipur.



**Featherlite.** One of the top furniture companies in India, Featherlite has contributed chairs for our schools across Manipur and also contribute to our

Nutrition Scheme. Additionally, they have helped completely renovate a hostel at Sikkim Himalaya Academy at Pani Tanki Dara, Bariakhop in West Sikkim. Featherlite has also pledged to send us over 120 bunk beds for our Sunbird Trust hostels.



**Anaha Trust.** Mr. Balagopal Chandrasekhar, a former IAS Officer and renowned entrepreneur, Chairman of Federal Bank and philanthropist, the founder of Anaha Trust has visited Sunbird Trust's remotest villages twice over in the past couple of years. He has contributed most generously towards raising the entire Hope Foundation Academy at Langmei Village and 4 computer centres. With a deep interest in environmental protection, he sponsors Sunbird Trust's pilot SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) project at Puichi Village. Mr. Balagopal is a father figure and mentor to several of our young team members.



**Smith's Detection Systems.** During the Financial year, Smiths Detection Systems have made a generous contribution towards sponsoring 240 underprivileged children in three schools, one in Manipur and three in Assam. Their generous support is making a major contribution to impacting the lives and destinies of these children.



**Aspect Software (now Alvaria),** our partners for three years, had earlier sponsored the building of a hostel for 50 children at Hope Foundation Academy at Langmei. They continue to partner with us by sponsoring the education of 250 lesser privileged children in Manipur.

# CONNECT WITH US

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