

ALL ABOUT Rebuild's North-East Regional Gathering

GUWAHATI |

11th February 2025

A gathering that introduced 40+ stakeholders to meaningfully engage and explore synergies.

18

Non-profit Organizations

35+

Leaders & team members

8+

Facilitators from the Rebuild Portfolio

AGENDA SNAPSHOT

Welcome Address

Wellbeing

Theme-based discussions

Exhibition walk

Way forward

80%

Participants formed meaningful connections



A snapshot of attendees at Rebuild's North East Regional Gathering



The Rebuild India Fund Northeast Regional Gathering brought together **18 partner organizations** in a vibrant space co-curated for meaningful connection and collective action. Martin Rabha and Meraj Ahmed welcomed participants with greetings in various Northeast languages, setting an atmosphere of inclusion while honoring the distinctive cultural tapestry of the region.



This day, co-curated with participants, focused on engaging discussions acknowledging that the eight Northeast states represent unique landscapes of diverse communities, each with their own narratives, hurdles, and remarkable resilience.



With interactive elements, the day commenced with a Wellbeing session featuring an indigenous practice of opening a circle that encouraged participants to be present and mindful.

What followed was a day filled with deep discussions on critical regional challenges across livelihoods, health, education, and child rights moderated by Mayfereen Ryntathieng and facilitated by Martin Rabha, Nani Saikia and Ningkhanhoih.

Participants engaged in conversations about the Northeast's unique contexts—emphasizing that development requires continuous effort and weaving indigenous practices through collaborative approaches in their work.

The gathering concluded with stronger feelings of a collective unit as a region—ideas for joint endeavours, acknowledging the power of shared wisdom, and reinforcing the spirit that unites us all: **"We are Rebuild."**





Wellbeing

The day began with an intentional focus on well-being facilitated by Peacefully and Arnicia, acknowledging the unique stressors faced by social sector professionals working in the Northeast's complex landscapes. Participants shared personal reflections on self-care practices that sustain their work in communities experiencing various forms of distress across the region.



The session created a safe space for sharing culturally relevant self-care activities meaningful to participants from diverse Northeast communities—from tending garden plots with Indigenous plants to hiking ancestral trails and engaging in traditional reading practices. Collective wisdom emerged as participants agreed to use "self-care" terminology in their communications, recognizing the importance of destigmatizing mental health conversations within their varied cultural contexts.



The wellbeing circle closed with a ritual incorporating sounds indigenous to the Northeast, grounding participants in their shared commitment to both community care and self-nurturing—essential foundations for the substantive discussions that would follow throughout the day.





Thematic Group: Livelihoods

Challenges

- Systemic barriers manifest uniquely across Northeast states through gender wage disparities, particularly affecting women in traditional craft sectors, while insufficient market linkages isolate remote hillside communities from economic opportunities.
- Government schemes often bypass proper aspiration mapping in tribal and indigenous communities, creating communication gaps between farmers and officials unfamiliar with the Northeast's diverse agricultural practices.
- Environmental factors increasingly threaten traditional livelihoods unique to the region—border flooding displaces communities, changing monsoon patterns disrupt cultivation cycles for indigenous crops, and commercial cash cropping contributes to soil degradation of fragile mountain ecosystems.
- Poor transportation infrastructure in remote areas coupled with high-input costs and low returns drives youth migration from agriculture to precarious labor markets, threatening generational knowledge of traditional farming practices.

Best Practices

- Community organization through cooperative societies and village committees built on traditional governance structures enables collective marketing and improved access to government resources across Northeast states.
- Value chain development for culturally significant sectors like handloom and eri silk preserves indigenous heritage while creating economic dignity for artisans, particularly women.
- Integrated approaches combining indigenous afforestation techniques, traditional land title security systems, and balanced farm/non-farm opportunities create resilient livelihood systems rooted in Northeast cultural contexts.

Call to Action

- Develop culturally-sensitive awareness campaigns that bridge knowledge gaps between farmers and officials while incorporating financial literacy components relevant to Northeast communities.
- Strengthen grassroots organizations through knowledge transfer between communities facing similar challenges across the eight states, establishing farmer schools with practical demonstrations of indigenous and sustainable techniques.
- Create collaborative networks that improve market access for remote communities, encourage entrepreneurship building on traditional skills, and ensure community participation in designing livelihood strategies that honour cultural values.





Thematic Group: Child Rights and Education

Challenges

- Education access varies dramatically across Northeast states, with high dropout rates (1/3 of Assam girls by grade 10) influenced by geographical isolation, ongoing conflicts, and gender expectations that prioritize girls' household responsibilities.
- Child protection concerns center around vulnerable adolescent girls aged 13-18, particularly in communities where social media connections introduce new risks within traditional settings.
- Displacement from regional conflicts and climate disasters creates educational discontinuity for thousands of children annually, while marginalized communities face limited social exposure beyond immediate village contexts.
- Parental resistance to education beyond textbooks reflects concerns about cultural preservation and community values rather than disinterest in children's development.

Best Practices

- Community systems are strengthened through pictorial rights education accessible across language barriers, empowered mothers' groups reflecting traditional women's collectives, and child-friendly policing approaches.
- Educational continuity is supported through vocational training relevant to Northeast livelihoods, crisis-responsive digital learning adapted for low-connectivity areas, and community-identified local volunteers who bridge teacher shortages in remote regions.

Call to Action

- Policymakers must increase educational investment in marginalized areas while expanding resources for child protection approaches that respect Northeast cultural contexts and family structures.
- Government institutions should prioritize programs engaging men and boys in gender equality initiatives that build on positive traditional values rather than imposing external frameworks.
- All stakeholders must address root causes of educational inequity across the diverse Northeast landscape, particularly focusing on creating safe learning environments that honor cultural heritage while expanding opportunities.





Way Forward



As the day's rich discussions concluded, participants turned attention to sustaining regional collaboration beyond this gathering. The group committed to meeting twice yearly for two-day sessions that would balance programmatic work with relationship-building elements essential to cross-cultural understanding within the Northeast network.



Acknowledging the persistent challenge of limited statistics and data across Northeast states, participants planned focused workshops with external resource persons to strengthen organizational capacities in Management Information Systems, Logical Framework development, and data management approaches appropriate for complex regional contexts.



The network will maintain momentum through quarterly online catch-ups while exploring collaborative regional funding proposals that address shared challenges identified during thematic discussions. This approach recognizes both the unique circumstances of individual states and the power of collective action when Northeast organizations speak with a unified voice.

As participants exchanged final reflections, the sense of regional solidarity that had strengthened throughout the day crystallized around a shared vision: development work in the Northeast requires approaches as diverse and resilient as its communities, with solutions emerging from within rather than being imposed from outside.

The gathering concluded as it began—in a circle that honored the distinctive wisdom each organization brings while celebrating their collective identity as Rebuild partners committed to sustainable, culturally-grounded transformation across Northeast India.



Access more pictures and videos from the gathering [HERE](#)

Learn more about leaders & organizations [HERE](#)

Access contact details of the leaders [HERE](#)

For more updates on the Rebuild India Fund, follow us on
[LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)

