



India Khasi Hills

Mid-year report 2020



Supporting Khasi communities to regenerate their forest

The Khasi Hills in the Indian Meghalaya ecoregion is known for its unique biodiversity. It's also the wettest place on earth. The forest is being cleared by charcoal production, stone quarrying and animal grazing, and alternative sources of fuel and new farming techniques are key if we want to stop further forest degradation.

With the KSKHAWUM Welfare Society, WeForest is supporting 75 traditionally forest-dependent villages in the east and north Khasi Hills to restore their forests. This community project manages tree nurseries, carries out thinning and weeding and establishes the natural fire lines to protect the forest.

The Khasi Hills project is restoring the greatest number of endangered flora species of all WeForest's projects: ten in total.



Our Khasi Hills project

Our goals for the Khasi Hills project:

2020 goals:

Protect and restore
350 ha
291,500 trees

By 2021:

Protect and restore
3,150 ha
2,623,950 trees
using Assisted Natural
Regeneration (ANR) and
enrichment planting

What's new in India?

Recent highlights from the field

We've been continuing to expand the Khasi Hills project **further north**. It's more tropical there than in the east, where the restoration activities have been taking place so far. The new polygons were mapped during the first months of 2020.

Some new **forest-friendly activities** also started there. 52 fuel-efficient cooking stoves, which encourage a reduction in fuelwood consumption, were distributed to households in the area, and another scheme will take advantage of the 25 plants used for dye for the traditional dress of the area. Fruit trees were distributed in the new district in July.

Many hands make light work! In the existing project area in the east, residents were being **trained in tree planting**, as previously only team members and volunteers had been doing this activity.



laishah R., a member of a society which manufactures the traditional dress, explained about the trees which produce dye and the process of soaking the cloth for dyeing.

January

February

March

April

May

June

Assisted Natural Regeneration: weeding, protecting saplings

Firelines created and maintained

Rainfall measurements; biodiversity sightings collated

Training in new livelihoods opportunities

Monitoring of fuelwood use and training in cookstoves

Annual supplementary planting

Nursery monitoring and permanent plot surveying

Training of youth volunteers and awareness raising in schools

Key

Restoration activities

Monitoring

Livelihood activities

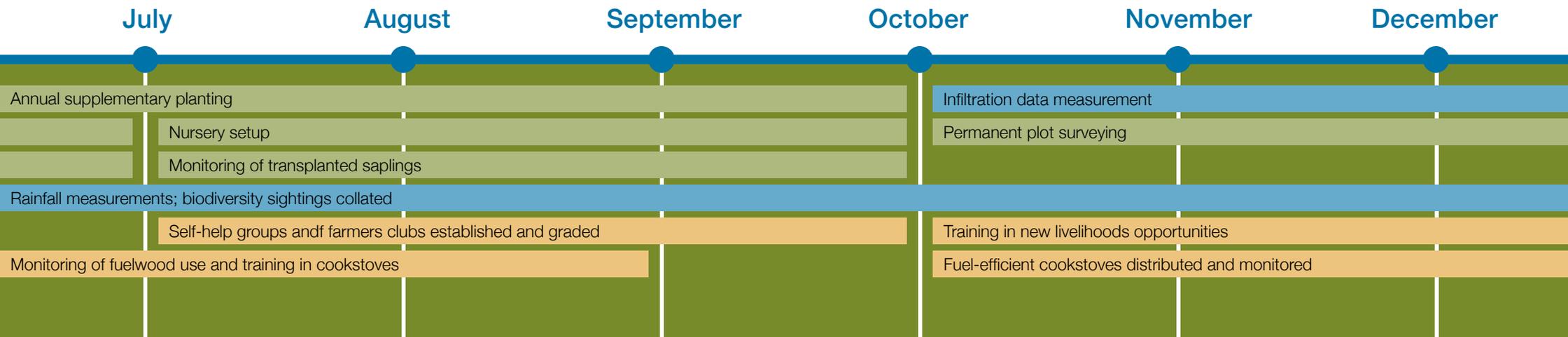
The trainers stressed the importance of the distance of saplings from one another, the depth of the pit and the careful handling of sapling during the process. Residents will receive a small compensation for helping out with this activity.

The **collection of rainfall data** is a unique aspect of the Khasi Hills project. Although the region is the wettest place on earth, there can be droughts in summer, and the communities expressed concerns about water availability and quality. Measuring the rainfall intensity and analysing the infiltration data is an effective quality indicator about how effective the forest restoration has been.

COVID-19 has had a big impact in India, with many temporary workers going home and a curfew imposed. Fortunately for our Khasi Hills project, activities were able to continue as planned, as there haven't been many cases in the area so far, although the office was closed for some time. We continue to monitor the situation.



East Khasi Hills residents were trained in tree planting in June.



What's next?

- Enrichment planting takes place from April until September. We want to reach 833 mature trees per hectare.
- Towards the end of the year, firebreaks will be established to protect the regenerating areas. They have to be at least seven metres wide.
- Rainfall and infiltration data will be collected at the newly renovated stations and analysed with external consultants.

In March 2021, the active part of restoration for this project will be finalised. WeForest will be monitoring the sites and reporting back to sponsors once per year for the next five years, until 2025.

Thank you for your incredible support. Please do come and join us in another project!

A progress report covering the project's full year is published every February.



A nursery worker. The red colour of her teeth is from chewing betel nut, known as *kwai* to the Khasi people, which is an integral part of their culture.

How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of beneficiaries, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [Why and How](#) webpage for more information.

Stay up-to-date with our interactive [Khasi Hills map](#).

Check out the photos in our [Khasi Hills album](#) on Flickr!

