



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

ECOSS celebrated **International Youth Day** 2026 in Gangtok under the theme “**Discover the Wonders of Sikkim’s Rich Biodiversity.**”

The celebration brought together young people for a **Biodiversity Walk at Bulbulay**, led by renowned naturalist, researcher and conservationist **Mrs. Usha Lachungpa** (Retd. Principal Chief Research Officer). The walk offered participants an opportunity to explore Sikkim’s diverse flora and fauna, observe local biodiversity, and learn about the ecological importance of the region’s natural habitats and ecosystem.

By bringing youth closer to nature, ECOSS continues to encourage a generation that not only appreciates Sikkim’s natural heritage but also feels responsible for protecting and sustaining it for the future. The program highlighted the important role of youth in connecting people, nature and culture.



The walk encouraged youth to explore Sikkim’s biodiversity, deepen their connection with nature, and envision a future built on sustainability and conservation.



Ridgeline Reflections: From Biodiversity to Foraging to Music

Where Mountains, Music & Biodiversity Meet

As part of International Youth Day 2026, ECOSS hosted an engaging and interactive session with **Ms. Prashanti Pradhan**, Assistant Professor, Sikkim Alpine University, exploring the connections between mountains, biodiversity, music and our love for place.

The session brought young participants into an open exchange of ideas, stories, sounds and experiences, encouraging them to reflect on their own connection with Sikkim's landscapes and biodiversity.

Through discussions and interactive activities, youth explored how nature, culture and music shape our sense of belonging—leaving them with a powerful reminder: when we connect with and love our place, we are inspired to care for it.



Ms. Priyadarshini Shrestha, Founder of **Zero Waste Himalaya**, further highlighted the connection between biodiversity, zero waste and sustainable mountain living, while sharing the important role of the Ecoss Sikkim and Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) in bringing people and organisations together to address challenges faced by mountain communities.

The session encouraged young people to see the mountains not simply as landscapes, but as living spaces that connect nature, culture, livelihoods, creativity and community.

When we understand our mountains, we value them. When we value them, we care for them.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

ECOSS conducted a field visit to **Gaucharan, Pastanga**, on 7 August 2026 to assess Large Cardamom plant health and management. The team cleaned the field, removed weeds, and treated 837 saplings from Dar West Sikkim, with a foliar spray of Effective Microorganisms (EM).

Discussions focused on disease management, soil health, climate adaptation, pollination, productivity, labour, youth participation, and market development. These efforts will support the development of a Package of Practice (PoP) and strengthen farmer resilience.



On 21 August 2026, ECOSS visited **Malinggo Homestay**, Assamlingzey, run by **Mr. Paul Karna Rai**, highlighting how community participation and perseverance can create rural tourism opportunities. Our young participants learned about its focus on local culture, organic food, biodiversity, and livelihoods, and how ECOSS and VHAS support strengthened local hospitality skills. The visit encouraged youth to start small, stay consistent, embrace challenges, and create opportunities within their communities.



Nepal- Tibet flood 2026

On 26 August 2026, flash floods and debris flows devastated the Gyirong Port on the China–Nepal border and settlements along a 72-km stretch of Nepal's Trishuli River. The disaster claimed 1,451 lives and left 5,745 missing in Nepal, while 43 deaths and 519 missing were reported in Tibet. Floodwaters also carried some victims 240 km into neighbouring India.



At the 81st UN General Assembly, Nepal's Prime Minister **Balendra Shah** proposed a **Himalayan Climate Resilience Mechanism** involving **Nepal, India and China** to strengthen regional cooperation on climate and disaster risks.

The proposal focuses on sharing satellite data and expertise, monitoring vulnerable glacial lakes, strengthening early-warning systems, and coordinating cross-border disaster response.



Rimbi Village landslide

At least 35 houses were damaged in a major landslide triggered by incessant rainfall which led to extensive damage in West Sikkim's Rimbi village on 24 September 2026. The landslide occurred after several days of recurring mudslides in the area, raising serious concerns over the safety of residents. More than two dozen families have already been shifted to safer locations and are currently staying in a relief camp.



From the Editor's desk:

Monsoon Rains and Disasters

Our second newsletter is now available, covering the monsoon months of July through September. A changing climate has made this monsoon severely destructive across the world, and nowhere more so than in the Himalaya.

On 26 August 2026, we watched in horror as a landslip, and the collapse of a glacial mass high in the mountains of Nepal, came crashing down several hundred metres and devastated everything in its path downstream in Rasuwa district. The latest estimates put the toll at 1,451 dead, with more than five thousand still missing.

Closer to home, the entire village of Rimbi in West Sikkim had to be evacuated after a massive landslide on 24 September, following flash floods brought on by incessant rain. Over 32 houses, four government quarters and the residential colony of a local hydropower project were destroyed or swept away. And so it goes, across the length of the Himalaya. Each year the monsoon months seem to bring more destruction.

Yet we should not forget that we need these rains. They feed our rivers and rivulets and recharge our aquifers, and with the onset of the monsoon nature bounces back in all its glory. We grow our crops. The monsoon has two faces, like so much else in life.

But the disasters expose the fragility of our mountains, and the need for far greater conservation effort across the Himalaya. Disasters do not respect the borders between neighbouring countries, and neither can our response. This is why the work of ECOSS matters now more than ever, and why we must rededicate ourselves to it in whatever way we can. Can we learn to work with the goodness of the rains while doing more to build our resilience?

- The Editorial Team



NMHS UPDATE

Agro-Ecology, Climate Resilient Farming & Livelihood Enhancement in Border Villages of the Indian Himalayan Region

Dzongu, North Sikkim · Sangdong · Lingthem · Pentong

Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) · National Mission on Himalayan Studies

JULY Foundation & training

- **PPV&FRA:** Pure Tukmor Dzo seed and Murali Makai maize seed collected from custodian farmer Mr. Chewang Lepcha submitted to KVK Mangan on 16 July; application accepted.
- **Natural farming:** One-day hands-on training at BAC Passingdang (17 July) on Jiv Amrit, Beej Amrit and Ghan Jeev Amrit. First biodynamic input trial in Dzongu.
- **Cooperative:** Horticulture Department feasibility report obtained and submitted (22 July); registration certificate received.
- **Knowledge documented:** Chee, a tree-fern and millet fermented beverage (Lingthem); Ru-Soam cane bridge workshop attended at Sung Sa Lee.

AUGUST Institutions & monitoring

- **PPV&FRA:** Both applications forwarded to Delhi for DUS testing (about one year).
- **DIG Society:** Elected 18 Aug, felicitated 21 Aug: Chewang Lepcha (President), Sonam Lepcha (VP), Angumit Lepcha (Secretary), Palden T. Lepcha (Manager-Treasurer).
- **Trace Net ID:** Application for existing Dzongu farmer records forwarded to Sikkim Organic Mission (24 Aug).
- **Livelihoods:** Discussion on cultivating nutrient-rich wild edibles in private forests and marketing them.

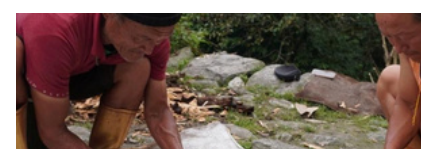
SPOTLIGHT Community Seed Bank, Sangdong

Journey so far

- **19 July:** site inspected, stone foundation partly built, materials estimated.
- **4 Aug:** IMI-ECOSS MoU signed; seed bank tent completed and received.
- **20 Aug:** Sangdong awareness meeting with 19 farmers.
- **21 Sep:** bamboo for the structure treated under the researcher and FA.
- **4 Oct 2026:** completion and inauguration of the seed bank.

Values it stands for

- **Conservation:** keeping indigenous landraces, rich in nutrition, alive in farmers' own hands.
- **Community ownership:** seed bank models shared so villagers shape how theirs is run.
- **Seed sovereignty:** avoiding hybrid seed and using organic manure to protect local varieties.



Meet a Farmer



In the terraced hills of Dzongu, North Sikkim, farmers are embracing climate-resilient and sustainable practices through the Agro-Ecology Climate Resilient Farming Project, supported by NMHS.

A hands-on workshop at BAC Passingdang brought together 17 farmers from Sangdong, Lingthem and Pentong. Among them, **Mr. Pempa Tshering Lepcha** took his learning from the workshop straight to his farm, preparing 200 litres of Jeeva Amrit, a natural microbial formulation made from locally available materials.

After a week of careful preparation and fermentation, Mr. Lepcha applied the formulation to his ginger crop, where he observed healthier soil and more vigorous plants. Encouraged by the results, he plans to extend its use to his vegetable crops.

His experience shows how local knowledge, simple resources and practical learning can support sustainable and climate-resilient farming, while inspiring others in the community to explore eco-friendly agricultural practices.

Meet an Ecotourism Practitioner



Nestled in North Sikkim, Dzongu is a protected reserve of the indigenous Lepcha community, known for its terraced hills, cardamom groves, rivers and views of Kanchenjunga. Here, **Mrs. Samsey Lepcha** welcomes visitors into her homestay, where hospitality meets heritage in an ecotourism setting.

A dedicated practitioner of eco-tourism, Mrs. Samsey promotes responsible travel that benefits both local communities and the environment. Through traditional Lepcha cuisine, locally grown ingredients and conversations around customs and folklore, guests experience the culture beyond simply observing it.

Her work supports local livelihoods, preserves Lepcha traditions and demonstrates how community-led tourism can protect nature while creating meaningful connections between visitors, culture and the mountains of Sikkim.