

# Annual Report 2024-2025

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## VISION

*An equitable society,  
with peaceful coexistence,  
where individuals thrive.*



## MISSION

*To work with different ethnic communities in Manipur,  
primarily in the hill districts of Chandel and Tengnoupal.*

*To foster child rights, gender equity, and psychosocial  
wellbeing.*

*To work with communities at the grassroots—by way of  
children clubs, women self-support groups, and youth  
cohorts—as well as stakeholders at levels ranging from the  
Village-level Child Protection Committees to the district  
authorities.*

# About Us

Centre for Women and Girls (CWG), estd. 2006, is a non-profit organization working in Manipur's southern hill districts of Chandel and Tengnoupal, which also border Myanmar.

We are staffed by people from different Kuki and Naga ethnic communities hailing from the hills.

Our work helps foster child rights consciousness, gender equity, and psychosocial wellbeing.

**We engage with different segments of the population—children, youth, and elders.**

**Striving to address short-term issues while also pursuing long-term change, we try taking a holistic approach to problems using a systems thinking lens.**



Team CWG!

# **I. Child Rights & Youth Resilience**

- Children Clubs
- Fabuloso reconstructed!
- Green Earth Team
- The Stars

# Children clubs

Fortnightly meetings, conducted using a Conscious Citizenry curriculum, provided a joyful space for children. As the conflict forced children to move between camps or from camps to temporary settlements, we nevertheless kept up contact, whether it meant forming a new club or merging two existing ones, determined as were to keep the children club meetings going.

Club meetings are a space for children to learn about different aspects of their identity, emotions, feelings, & recognizing their superpowers to help each other by listening closely.

**Over 200 conflict-affected children were engaged across 10 villages, incl. 3 relief camps.**



A children club meeting at Leipung Tampak



Children refine their demands during group work.

Months of village-level children club meetings eventually led up to discussions about the environment, children’s role in restoring it, the four principles of child rights, and eventually manifestos of demands.

**At a conference in October, almost 80 children from different clubs reflected on each others’ manifestos.**



Children clubs compared manifestoes with each other during a conference in October 2024.



**6 village-level Children Clubs submitted manifestoes to their respective Village Authorities with the following key demands:**

### **Right to be heard**

This demand—*Don't dismiss us!*—pleasantly surprised elders who appreciated children's engagement with ideas not being explored in schools. Their appreciation reflected their own growing awareness about child rights, a result of several years' sensitization efforts.

### **Right to play**

Children highlighted their exasperation with the daily cycles of school hours followed by tuitions, leaving little time for leisure.

### **Proper waste disposal**

Growing awareness helped children raise issues of inadequate dustbins and polluted streams to nudge village authorities towards action. Chumbang authorities, in response, began talking about an Eco Club, and initiated a cleanliness drive along the village stream.

### **Community libraries**

Our picture book readaloud sessions in club meetings sowed a love for libraries. While one village accepted this demand in principle, another will soon begin to host a community library by mid-2025.

**In response to children’s manifestoes, 3 villages adopted Child Protection Policies in their respective languages (Tarao, Chothe and Lamkang). The policies included aspects of emotional violence and neglect, principles of behavior, and responses to violations.**

**Before this development, a Village Chairman had reflected, “There are rules to deal with misbehaviour towards children post-facto, but no written [prescriptive] rules of behaviour towards our children, apart from those in the Bible.”**

In addition to village-level manifestoes, 4 children clubs submitted a manifesto of school-related demands to District Commissioner of Chandel and other district authorities. Their concerns included lack of good teachers, corporal punishment, lack of clean drinking water, and absence of functional toilets.

Hearteningly, a school at Phalbung, a village where we also have a children club, requested our team for a capacity building session for their teachers on a child-friendly, rights-aware approach in classrooms—again reflecting attitude shifts due to sensitization.



A children club member speaks during a meeting on the sometimes dismissive attitude of elders toward children.



An interaction with external evaluators Bharti Ali and Ravi Himadri.



Children observe Red Hand Day at the Loisi relief camp.

# Fabuloso - Reconstructed!

Our youth space in Zion village, inaccessible after the violent Sept 2023 attack, was reconstructed at Ziontlang.

Apart from resilience workshops with our youth cohorts—Green Earth Team and The Stars—Fabuloso is also a space for general youth meet-ups.

The youth co-created the principles for Fabuloso: non-discrimination, mutual respect, and participation, among others.

**Resilience workshops helped youth reflect on life skills they aspire to cultivate—ranging from decision-making to communication, healthy relationships to managing emotions—to become ever more curious, confident, and outgoing.**



Youth groups (Green Earth Team & The Stars) after an interaction with visitors at Fabuloso.



Breaking free from the straitjacketed aspirations for a government job, youth talked about wanting to be a social worker or working for LGBTQ+ communities. Farming, the one occupation that is looked down upon, was brought forth by a youth: “Even though we are poor, if we have food we can live.”



# Green Earth Team

The youth in Green Earth Team (GET) started out as members of our children club before growing up and organizing into an environmentally-conscientious group a few years ago.

To observe this year's World Earth Day, GET engaged in a week-long action that included tree plantation (in collaboration with the Forest Department) and installation of dustbins along the National Highway 102C that passes along their village.



Green Earth Team on their way to install dustbins along the highway.

During this year's Global Action Month—a month-long event in November that promotes children's ecological rights—Green Earth Team for the first time chose their own activities and organized their calendar with cleanliness drives, demonstration of cloth-bag making, and a biodiversity walk during which they took note of medicinal plants and their uses.

Moving forward, Green Earth Team is turning its attention to restoration of the village stream, their primary source of water.



Green Earth Team makes a presentation of their activities during a youth meet-up.

# The Stars

The Stars—an all-girl, mixed-ethnic Ultimate Club that took shape in late 2023, continued their weekly practice sessions.

Each session started with warm-up and strengthening exercises, moving on to drills and matches, and ended with a spirit circle with reflections on the day’s play.



The all-girl club aspires to be a safe and joyful space for players from different communities to come together.

This year, while the two Coaches-in-Training, Saineidam and Sushi continued to lead the weekly practice sessions, they also built on their own confidence, got quieter players to be more expressive, fostered inclusivity, and managed time better.

The Coaches-in-Training used their growing confidence and knowledge to begin initiating peer-led discussions on gender and sexuality, in a safe, mutually-respectful space, during their indoor sessions.



Saineidam and Sushi led this session on safe and unsafe touch.

We also engaged with the players' parents and guardians regularly to help appreciate why sports is important for girls, what they miss when they are unable to play, and how the club's in-house workshops on resilience help the players in more ways than one.

The goal was to ensure players find a supportive environment that enabled them to attend Saturday practice amidst all the school and care work.



Sushi's mother leads a group discussion on the question, *What is it that our daughters are doing at the very time our sons can be seen playing football?* The discussion provoked reflections on the unequal burden of care work.

## **II. Gender Justice**

- Team Capacity Building
- Gender Sensitization for Community
- Outreach for Victims/Survivors
- International Women's Day

# Team Capacity Building

Going forward, CWG team decided to conduct most of the Violence Prevention Programs in the community ourselves, reducing reliance on external resource persons. This meant a series of in-house capacity building workshops that began this year, and will continue in the coming years.

The workshop on gender helped us reflect on our gendered lives, how we have come to be socialized in different ways ever

since we took birth, the agents of this socialization, its repetitive aspects, and how we have internalized some expectations and obligations that may need a rethink and unlearning.

We also made efforts to localize our workshops, in terms of language and content, to help provoke reflections on forms of violence prevalent in our own communities.



A workshop on gender led by Program Manager Suraj Kamdar.

# Gender Sensitization for Community

Violence Prevention Program—a module of 8 workshops—was initiated with *What is Violence?* workshop in 7 villages (more to come), broadening our understanding of violence to include all its types, not just physical and sexual, but also verbal, economic and psychological.

We reflected on the forms of violence we normalize, their pervasiveness, and how none of us are untouched by them.



Group discussion during a case story to identify types of violence.



A presentation by men during the *What is Violence?* workshop.

### **Workshop reflections:**

- “**Verbal violence** is very common and we also normalize it thinking it is not violence.”
- “When I first heard about **psychological violence**, I felt like it is happening in our daily life, but we don’t count it as violence.”
- “Beating and **hitting our own children** is also violence.”
- Women shared personal experiences and recognized them for the first time ever as instances of **economic violence**. This also amounted to the beginning of empowerment by way of language.
- “Women should also **speak up**, because what men think of as normal might be very unbearable for women.”



A storytelling session with a Self Support Group, using a fable by Suniti Namjoshi to talk about patriarchal entitlement, gender-biased objectification, and freedom to choose.



# Outreach for Victims/Survivors

CWG, as the state-appointed Service Provider under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, extended comprehensive crisis intervention to 8 victims-survivors of gender based violence.

In 2024-25, CWG also continued to administer the Tengenoupal district's One Stop Centre, extending pre- and post-care delivery support to women affected by conflict, including IDPs.

## Comprehensive assistance for GBV victims/survivors:

- rescue
- temporary shelter
- legal counseling
- medical aid
- lawyer support
- therapeutic counseling
- accompanied visits to police stations and courts
- documentation for interim compensation
- follow-ups



OSC team member administers a health check-up during a legal camp for IDPs.

# International Women’s Day 2025

Women’s Day 2025 was observed with Conflict-Affected Persons in the Tengnoupal area alongside the DC, SP and other district-level officers.

Various opportunities were laid out by representatives of Manipur State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) and the forest department.

Women Self Support Group members set up a range of stalls for bakery items, processed foods and handicrafts, making impressive sales.



MSRLM District Manager spoke on Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme. At least 8 villagers secured support.



A Self Support Group member showcases fermented products to DC and SP Tengnoupal.



Above: A Self Support Group member interacts with the Tengnoupal District Forest Officer

Left: Tarao players of the Ultimate Club The Stars check out handicrafts at a stall after a performance.



### **Phalbung, where change is afoot...**

Women's Self Support Group at Phalbung village, after 5 years of working together, set aside their hesitancy during the annual village meeting to put forth an agenda different from village cleanliness to ask instead for upgradation of the village school to class IX—a demand they knew faced stiff objections.

They argued their case with conviction. The village chief accepted their demand, duly recognizing their persistence.

Phalbung SSG also took their own initiative to document the IDPs that their village hosts. They offered solidarity, inspiration to pursue livelihoods, and connected them to welfare support.

More generally, the women also reported lowered resistance from their family members with respect to meetings that they needed to attend.

## In Manipur, Kuki-Zo women are protesting customary 'settlement' of rape, domestic violence cases

Rokibuz Zaman

“

The way community elders, in the name of customary law, allow the accused to walk free just by paying some money or butchering a pig or a cow, is so regressive and unconstitutional.

- **Hechin Haokip**



“

These courts do not have the capacity for scientific investigation. We don't have experts in the village court or in the customary court to interrogate the accused. And even in terms of scientific medical examinations, how do we verify the severity of a sexual assault?

...

These agreements completely ignore or neglect the welfare or support for the survivor.

Excerpts from an article in Scroll on Kuki-Zo women protesting customary settlement of cases of sexual violence.

### **III. Psychosocial Wellbeing**

- Training as Barefoot Counselors
- Freelisting Interviews with IDPs
- Upgrade of Basic Living Conditions of IDPs
- Livelihood Support
- World Mental Health Day

# Training as Barefoot Counselors

CWG embarked on a 2-year journey to capacitate our team members, over 6 five-day workshops, as barefoot counselors, enabling us to begin offering non-specialized mental health support as well make referrals in Chandel and Tengenoupal, districts with barely any mental health professionals.

We have had as our guide Dr Shobna Sonpar who, with her extensive experience in Kashmir,

understood not only Manipur's context of mass violence but was also sensitive to our own team-members' experiences of trauma and displacement.

We learnt how the *psychological* and *social* come together in psychosocial support, the impact of trauma, and cycles of violence.

We reflected on our own trauma responses and practiced a range of mindfulness exercises.



Rinchui & Amos during a counseling roleplay overseen by Dr Shobna during a workshop.



Mindfulness breathing during the workshop.

The gaps between Dr Shobna's capacity building workshops were used to practice counseling in peer-groups, refining our abilities to listen actively, ask open questions, reflect back feelings, paraphrase, and make summary statements.

Each case was thought through in terms of a framework that included the client's mental state, circumstances leading to the present state, problem to prioritise, and the client's strengths and resources.



Workshop energiser

# Freelisting interviews with IDPs

CWG team conducted a series of free-listing interviews with married men and women among the IDPs to document struggles, esp. those related to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

The exercise revealed unique gendered pressures. Men, conscious of their burden to provide but helpless in the face of unprecedented devastation, struggled with loss of confidence —*I don't feel like myself*, more than one man said. They felt torn between the responsibility towards the family and towards defending the village.

For women, caregiver stress has become even more oppressive, even as they worry about nutrition and spousal conflicts.

Both men and women are assailed by overthinking, poor sleep and appetite, nightmares and flashbacks, inability to concentrate, loss of hope, fear of further displacement, anger, loneliness and pain of lost home.



Thangcha & Preityrose interview a married woman at Loisi relief camp.

**Freelisting interviews helped identify the most vulnerable who had discontinued ongoing medical treatment due to financial constraints and/or curtailed access to doctors (on account of demographic separations).**

**41 emergency cash transfers were consequently made for both health and education.**

# Upgrade of Basic Living Conditions

4 Low Cost Toilets (LCTs) and Bathrooms were constructed for IDPs at Loisi and ZEO relief camps, and the existing damaged ones were repaired to reduce wait times, improve hygiene, and ensure privacy. Construction of 12 more LCTs is underway.

Electrification of one camp was carried out, and a rain water harvesting system was set up at another to reduce dependency on private water suppliers.



Electrification at Loisi relief camp



Construction of a Low Cost Toilet at Loisi relief camp

Mattresses were also distributed at a relief camp amidst reports of some IDPs sleeping on the floor, and children were helped with emergency lamps (to endure power cuts) and raincoats.

Finally, tarpaulin sheets were provided to a grouping centre for resettled IDPs to make their work sheds for house reconstruction and for use as mats for paddy.



Raincoats for children at ZEO camp



Mattress distribution at Loisi camp at the onset of winter.

# Livelihoods

Livelihood support by interest-free loans was extended to 75 Conflict Affected Persons, including those displaced, to ensure a basic sustenance without which no talk about mental health is meaningful.

This included paddy farmers, livestock farmers, food processors, thrift store owners, tailors, weavers, handicraft workers and mechanics.



From rearing cattle and weaving when they were home, “Farming is now the only way,” this single woman from a displaced family of 10 told us. Their village was lost to arson. “We eat, we sell, we share with our relatives,” she told us, but her produce has benefited not just her own family. Long beans and mustard leaves were among the harvest she managed to donate to a grouping centre for IDPs.

- Thangkholun, who lost his village to arson and was displaced five times over, expanded his thrift store and began farming, enabling him to cover his children’s education.
- Lhingneithem, who also lost her village to arson and whose farm income did not allow investment after covering family expenses, purchased a juicer to make Ankam Thu—fermented mustard juice—and is now thinking of adding soybean paste to her repertoire.
- Chungkhokai, an IDP who is diabetic and thus unable to work as a daily wager, bought a portable rice mill, one of the few in the Tegnoupal township area. He used this income to set up a chicken centre, further augmenting his income.

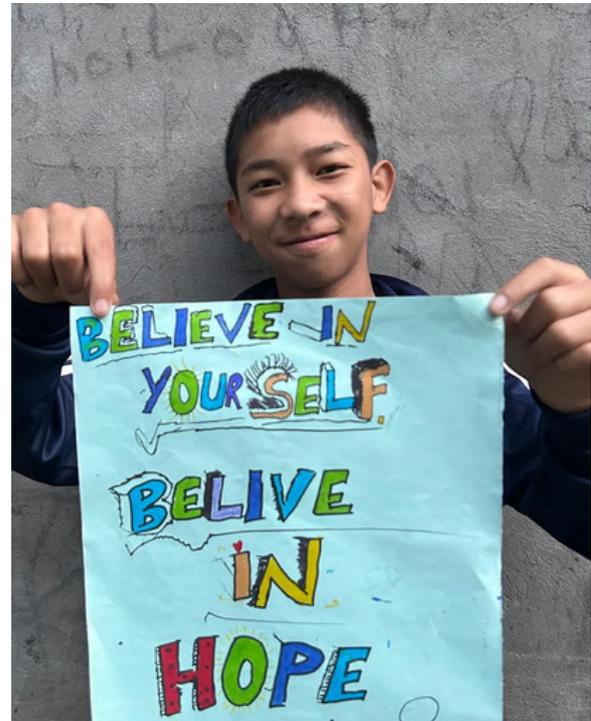


Displaced from Kangpokpi and living at Loisi relief camp, Tingneichong used her interest-free loan to buy a second sewing machine and now works alongside her husband, catering to the Tegnoupal township, earning a steady income thanks to school uniform orders.

# World Mental Health Day

Children from ZEO relief camp and Tengnoupal High School joined their friends at Loisi relief camp to talk about mental health, how we as a society don't talk about it, and how physical and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

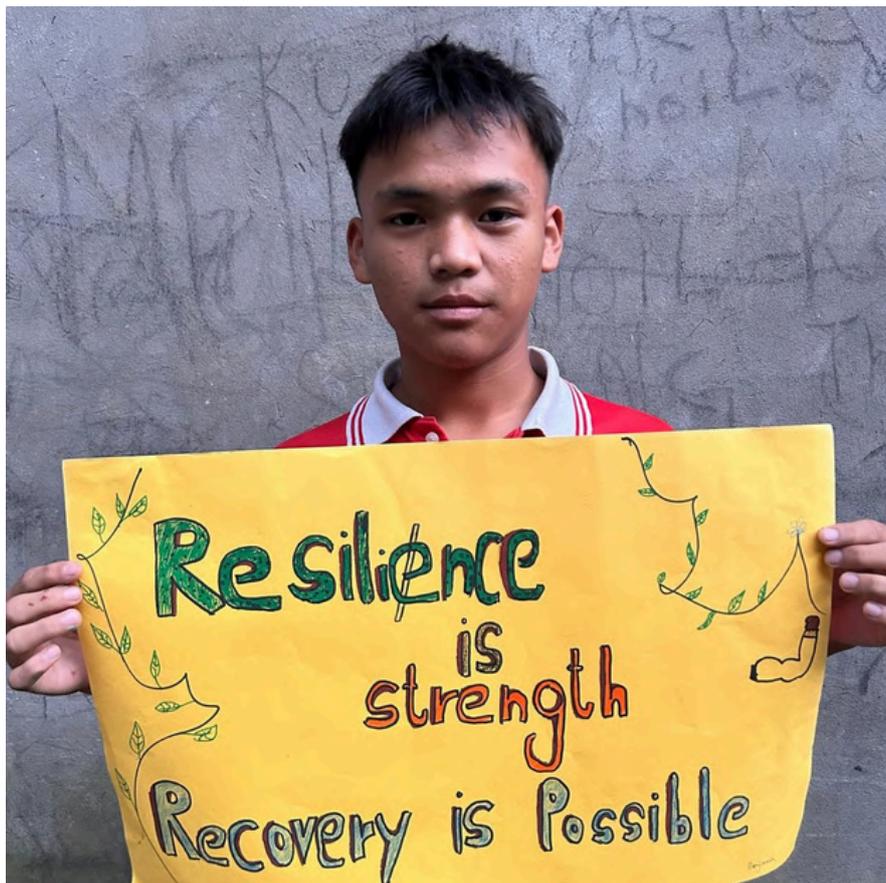
After some breathing exercises, we made colorful posters about sharing feelings, finding hope, selfcare and resilience. We also reflected on children caught in wars around the world.



Children at Loisi relief camp made posters after discussions on mental health.



Children at Loisi relief camp on World Mental Health Day 2024.



- No complaints were reported to CWG's Internal Committee constituted under POSH Act, 2013 during the reporting period.

# Donors





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