

# ROOTED IN HOPE

Umswai's Forest Journey 2025



# THE VISION

Umswai, a serene valley in Assam's West Karbi Anglong district, is a living example of how communities and nature can grow together in harmony. Deeply rooted in animistic traditions, the people of Umswai regard the forest as sacred and essential to their way of life.

The Umswai Afforestation Project was launched to restore degraded lands, revive sacred groves, and bring back ecological balance through community participation. With guidance from environmental leaders and local elders, over 30,000 saplings, carefully selected for their environmental benefits, have been planted across the valley.



Led by the local community, the initiative empowered young people and women through hands-on training in composting, biochar production and sustainable farming. Sacred rituals, traditional knowledge and modern conservation techniques came together to rejuvenate both land and culture.

Beyond environmental restoration, the project laid the groundwork for eco-tourism and learning trails, preserving Umswai's heritage while creating sustainable livelihoods. The vision is clear: to grow not just forests, but a future where communities and ecosystems thrive together.

# THE PROCESS

## THE GREEN RISE OF UMSWAI



### Community Mobilization

Local youth, elders, and women united to revive degraded forests and sacred groves, driven by a shared vision of ecological restoration and cultural revival



### Eco Warriors Formed

25 local community people were trained in plantation care, composting, and biochar-making, forming the “Eco Warriors” — the core team leading environmental action on the ground



### Tree Selection & Plantation

Under Jadav Payeng's guidance, fruit-bearing, pollinator-friendly, and soil-enriching native saplings were planted in sacred groves, homesteads and farmlands.



### Cultural & Sacred Grove Revival

Tree planting was aligned with traditional rituals and beliefs, especially in Amsai and Bormarjong villages, reviving sacred forests and reinforcing community identity.



### Sustainable Practices & Livelihoods

Raised bed farming, composting, medicinal plant conservation and traditional crafts were promoted, engaging especially women in eco-enterprises and sustainability efforts.



### Maintenance and Monitoring

Saplings were geo-tagged and monitored using drone mapping. Local teams documented growth and care with smartphones, enhancing efficiency and transparency.





### COMMUNITY-LED AFFORESTATION

- A dedicated team of trained local community members initiated and led the plantation of over 30,000 trees across Umswai, focusing on restoring degraded lands, reviving sacred groves, and greening homesteads.



### REVIVAL OF SACRED FORESTS AND CULTURE

- Their work contributed to the restoration of sacred Tiwa forests, reviving cultural practices, rituals and protecting over 1,000 ancestral monoliths.



### TRAINING IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

- Eco Warriors received hands-on training in composting, bamboo biochar production, nursery development, and soil conservation, transforming them into dedicated environmental stewards of the valley.



### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- The youth are actively involved in raising environmental awareness within the village, engaging with schools, children, elders and visiting farmers from other regions.



### FOUNDATION FOR ECO-TOURISM

- The Eco Warriors are preparing to lead agro-tourism learning trails that will offer visitors immersive experiences in sustainable living, traditional crafts, and ecological restoration.





# ECO WARRIORS IN ACTION:

Green Commando Training as the first step towards Youth Leadership



## About the training

A two-day hands-on training was conducted in Umswai Valley to equip local youth with practical skills in sustainable farming, tree care, bamboo biochar making, composting, and agroecology. The participants explored native plants, learned soil enrichment techniques, and committed to sharing this knowledge with other farmers, ensuring long-term care for the trees planted under the project.

### Day 1

- Agroforestry and tree planting methods
- Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA) to understand local biodiversity
- Hands-on practice in:
- Bamboo biochar making
- Liquid Organic Fertilizer preparation
- Soil carbon understanding

### Day 2

- Fungi and mycorrhizal networks for soil health
- Heap composting
- Preparing bamboo herbal tea
- Building bio-intensive raised beds
- Creating seed bombs for re-greening barren lands



## IMPACT & NEXT STEPS

- Participants to train 5-10 local farmers and SHG members
- Apply bamboo biochar and organic mix to all project saplings
- Certified as Green Commandos for their dedication and action
- Foundation laid for future eco-leaders in the region



PLANTING TREES, GROWING FUTURES

# THE IMPACT

## TOTAL SAPLINGS PLANTED

Trees are geo-tagged and photographed for transparency and monitoring

**30,000+**

## LOCAL YOUTH TRAINED

The youth trained in composting and sustainable farming

**25**

## SACRED GROVES REVIVED

Trees planted in the sacred groves of Amsai and Bormarjong

**10,000**



## UMSWAI'S YOUTH REVIVING NATURE THROUGH ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The initiative aims to restore degraded forests via community-led tree planting, revitalize sacred groves, promote traditional farming, and empower local youth and women through sustainable practices.





# UMSWAI'S LEGACY

Measuring Umswai's Progress

## TANGIBLE IMPACT

- 30,000+ sapling clusters planted across degraded lands and sacred groves
- 3,000+ saplings geo-tagged for tracking and monitoring
- 25 local youth trained in afforestation and sustainable farming
- Local farmers trained in natural farming practices



## DEEPER IMPACT

- Reviving traditional ecological knowledge and sacred groves
- Boosting pride and leadership in local youth
- Enhancing biodiversity with pollinators, medicinal plants and native species
- Strengthening community ties to nature and environmental stewardship

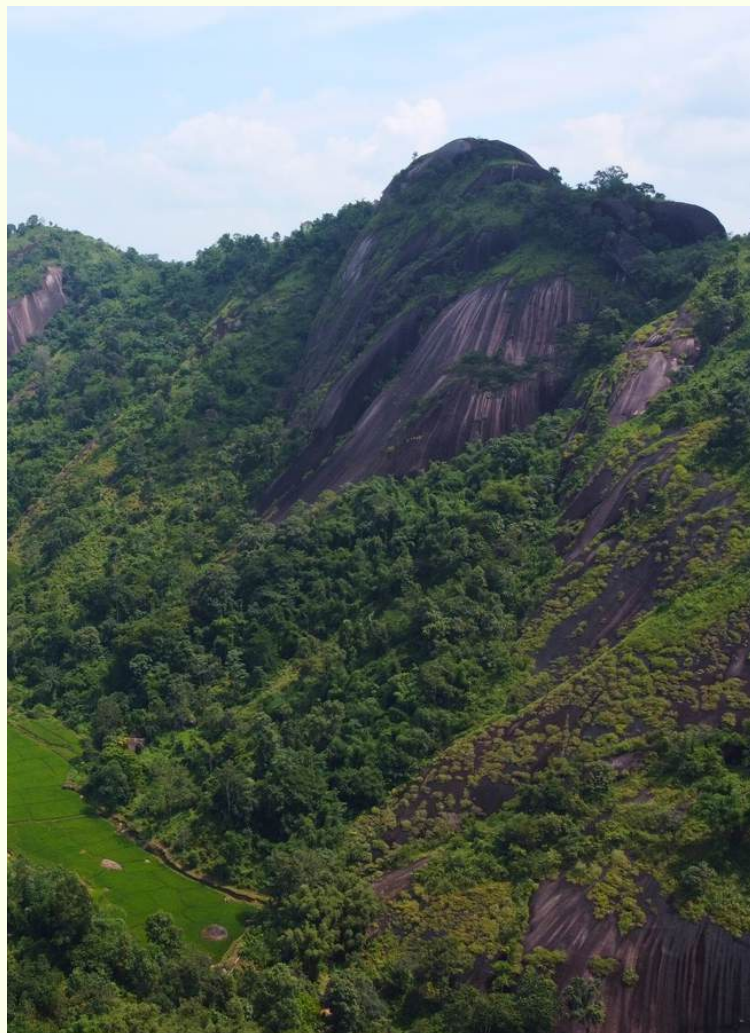




# THE FUTURE

The Umswai afforestation initiative has united local youth, elders and women to restore forests and revive traditional ecological knowledge through tree planting, sustainable farming and cultural conservation.

A key future plan is the development of agro-tourism learning trails, which will offer visitors hands-on experiences in tree planting, traditional crafts and sustainable living. These trails will create new income opportunities for the community while spreading awareness about environmental stewardship.



There is strong potential to expand the Eco Warriors program by training more youth and forming community groups focused on eco-enterprises, composting and biodiversity conservation. This will enhance skill-sharing, improve coordination and attract support from government and NGOs.

Additionally, connecting Umswai with wider rural tourism circuits can boost cultural exchange and economic growth, allowing the community to preserve its sacred groves and traditional practices while welcoming sustainable tourism.





*"How a Small Valley in Assam is Growing a Greener Future"*

