

# 3-Day workshop at Paschim Banga Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samity, Purulia

6-8 March, 2025

*Spread the word, bird by bird*



*"The world is our classroom  
and each day is a lesson"*

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## Seven Songs, Seven Imaginary Birds



*Pakhur Mongarai (Sabar) - Imaginations take flight as children sketch their dream birds under the canopy of an old tree!*

At the onset of spring, while the Palash bloomed in its fiery colours across Purulia, a group of young storytellers wove magic through song at Rajnowagarh. Over three days, forty-six children from the Sabar community came to indulge in their imagination and explore the natural world through their ancestral gift – music. This was the second workshop in our ongoing initiative, Bridging Traditional Knowledge Gaps through Storytelling, organized in collaboration with The Keystone Foundation and the Paschim Banga Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samiti (PBKSKS). What unfolded was nothing short of extraordinary.

Anyone who spends some time with the Sabar people will quickly find out that they have a strong musical tradition. They have long preserved their stories, traditions, and relationship with nature through music and often make up songs as they go about their day. Inspired by this, the workshop channeled their natural rhythm and musical instincts into a new kind of learning – one that blended ecological awareness with free artistic expression. Music became the catalyst for the unhindered sharing of the children's thoughts on birds, biodiversity, and the environment.

## Seven Songs, Seven Imaginary Birds



Sketches to Verses - Children weaving poetry  
where the Palash blooms!

The children embraced the process with enthusiasm. We began with *Pakhur Mongarai* (Sabar - Birds of Imagination), where the children created imaginary birds as groups and gave them names. Over the next two days, while sitting in fields of Palash or through intense music sessions indoors, the children crafted their own tales about their new imaginary birds. They created and illustrated story cards inspired by their observations in the field as well as by their inherent knowledge of the natural world around them. One of the more striking illustrations has been used as the cover image.

By day two, their creativity had taken flight. Their tales inspired small poems which were later transformed into something truly special. They worked in groups to refine their ideas, translating Bengali verses into Sabar, and merging them with traditional folk rhythms and melodies. As the day progressed, the air was filled with laughter, music, and dance, and the children finalized their compositions. Since the children are familiar with both the Bengali language as well as the Sabar language, each of the seven songs which were created by the end, were written both in Bengali and their native Sabar.

## Seven Songs, Seven Imaginary Birds



Music meets the wild and the beat goes on!

Day three was all about the grand finale. The kids practiced their songs and dance with traditional instruments, polished their performances, and got ready to shine. They decked up in costumes created with leaves and flowers in their unique style. Finally, surrounded by their own creations, artworks and writing from the workshop, they delivered a performance to remember. Onlookers peeped in to see the children belt out their original songs accompanied by traditional dance, set against the backdrop of their illustrated story panels.

Their excitement was infectious and their pride and joy unmistakable. If this workshop taught us anything, it's that knowledge doesn't have to be dry – it can be loud, colorful, and full of rhythm. By blending traditional music with nature education, we ended up in a new world of storytelling with these kids. And we carried the poetry and tunes with us even after we bid goodbye to the children for this time. As the songs echo in our memory and escape our lips from time to time, one thing is clear: these young artists have found their voice in music, in the wild world around them. And that's a song worth singing over and over again.

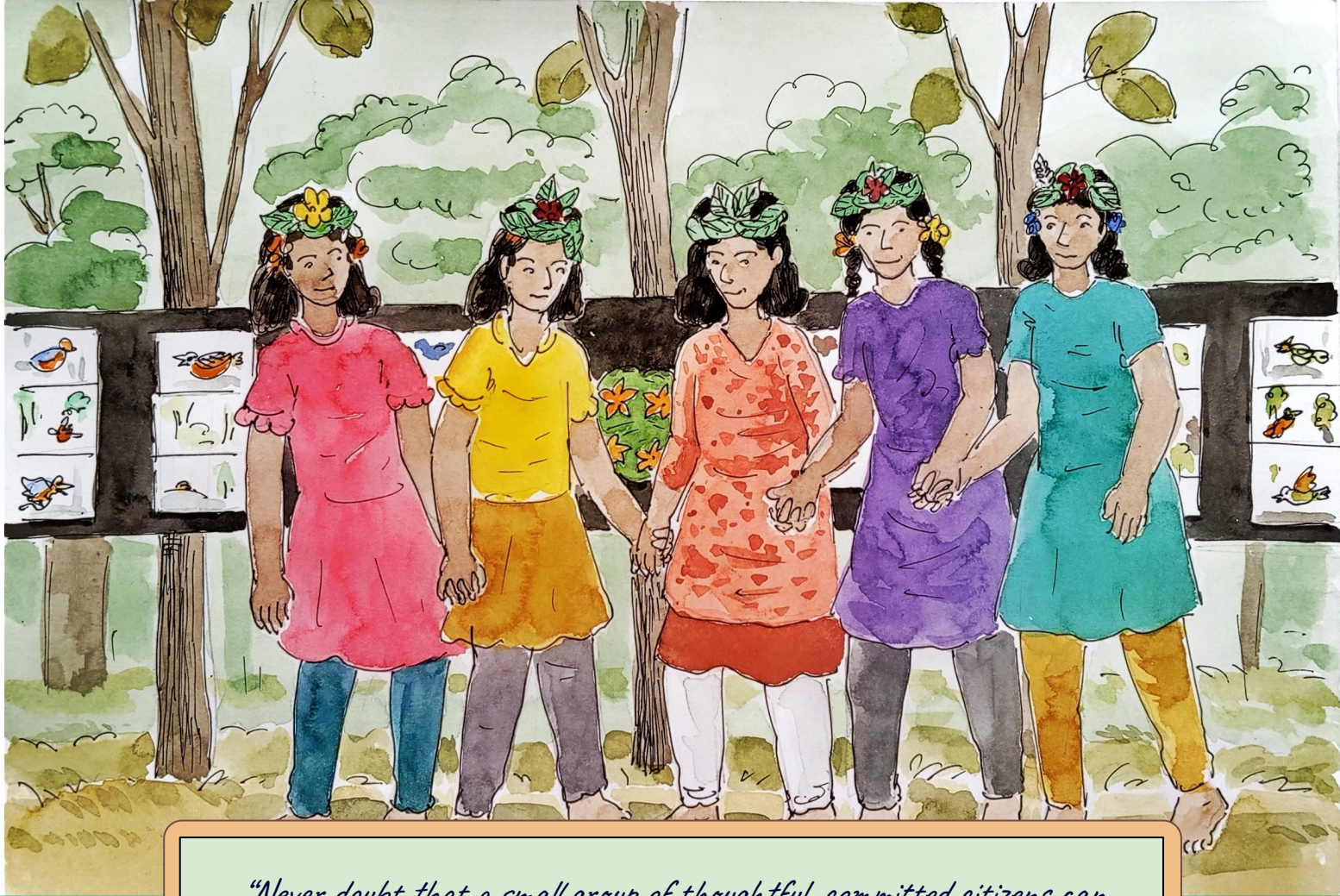
## Event Details

Date	Session	Time	Activity	Number of children	Duration (hrs)	Children Contact Hours
6th March 2025 (Day 1)	Pre-lunch Session	10 am to 1 pm	<i>Pakhur Mongarai</i> - Mind mapping backyard birds and previous workshop, Music Ice breaker with familiar Sabar songs, Illustrating imaginary bird in groups and naming them, Creating story cards for each bird in groups	46	3	138
	Post lunch session	3-30 pm to 6 pm	Nature Walk with Group 1 - Birdwatching using scope, Story card sequencing, Story expansion with prompts	22	2.5	55
7th March 2025 (Day 2)	Pre-breakfast Session	6-30 am to 9-30 am	Nature Walk with Group 2 - Birdwatching using scope, Story card sequencing, Story expansion into small poems	24	3	72
	Pre-lunch Session	11 am to 1 pm	Songwriting Writing & Composition in groups - Finalizing poems on story card narratives, Translation from Sabar to Bengali, Putting poems to Sabar folk music templates	46	2	92
	Post-lunch Session	4 pm to 6-30 pm	Song & Dance in groups - Ice breaking with traditional dance along with folk music, Finalizing music of songs, Practising songs with dance, Recording songs with dance	46	2.5	115
	<i>Evening Session</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Local exploration by walk</i>	0	0	0
8th March 2025 (Day 3)	<i>Pre-breakfast Session</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Local exploration by toto</i>	0	0	0
	Pre-lunch Session	11 am to 1 pm	Practising Sabar songs with local instruments	46	2	92
	Post-lunch Session	3 pm to 6 pm	Exhibition and cultural program - Displaying illustrations & stories, Performing songs developed with other traditional songs and dance	46	3	138
<b>Total-&gt;</b>						<b>702</b>

**BWS facilitators:** Titash C, Santanu K, Sougata H, Anandarup B

**Illustrations (except cover image):** by Santanu K

**eBird Checklists:** <https://ebird.org/tripreport/342871>



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has"*

**- MARGARET MEAD**

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