

GREEN NOTES

December 2024
Issue # 01

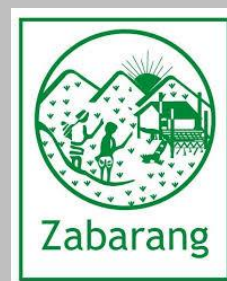
News and Bulletin of STNRM Project



Editorial

Welcome to *Green Notes*, the chronicle of community-driven change. This newsletter captures a powerful movement taking root across Khagrachhari, where villages are reviving traditional crops to reclaim food sovereignty and strengthen cultural identity. From district launches to active village committees, we see a unified commitment to blending ancestral wisdom with sustainable practices for a more resilient future.

Yet, the path is not without its thorns. Seed scarcity, water crises, and wildlife threats pose significant challenges, demanding our collective resolve and innovative solutions. *Green Notes* stands as a testament to this shared journey, documenting both struggles and triumphs. Let these stories inspire continued collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and an unwavering spirit among communities, government bodies, and non-governmental actors. Together, as dedicated custodians of our natural heritage, we can cultivate a resilient and bountiful future for generations to come.



ST-NRM Project Launched

To Revive Traditional Crops and Boost Resilience

**Khagrachhari Sadar,
December 29, 2024**

An introductory meeting for the ST-NRM (Revival of traditional crops and sustainable technologies for a resilient food system and sustainable natural resources management) project was successfully held on Sunday, December 29, at the Gearing Hotel Conference Room in Khagrachhari Sadar.

Organized by Zabarang Kalyan Samity with technical assistance from the Tebtebba Foundation, the initiative aims to restore early crops, enhance farmer access to government services, and build community capacity on climate change and gender equality.

The event saw high-level participation, with Ms. Jiruna Tripura, Honorable Chairman of the Khagrachhari Hill District Council, gracing the occasion as Chief Guest. She stressed the importance of protecting the region's rich natural resources and encouraged seasonal, diverse cultivation.



Special Guests included Mr. Md. Basirul Alam, Deputy Director of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Khagrachhari, who praised the project as a timely effort to revive lost, chemical-free foods, and Mr. Md. Jahirul Islam, Deputy Director of the Horticulture Center, Khagrachhari. Additional guests were Mr. Amir Hossain, Deputy Assistant Agriculture Officer, Matiranga Upazila, and Mr. Sujan Chakma, Deputy Assistant Horticulture Officer, Khagrachhari.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mathura Bikash Tripura, Executive Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, who also presented the project overview. Mr. Binodan Tripura, Program Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, delivered the welcome speech and moderated the session. A total of 40 participants, including youth, adults, and elderly community members, attended the launch.

The **ST-NRM project** is a timely and essential initiative, lauded by the guests, for its work in reviving lost, endangered and traditional crops, ensuring environmental balance without harm, addressing climate change challenges, and fulfilling development goals, especially women's empowerment, in the Khagrachhari Hill District.

Celebrating Resilience

Rural Women Revive Traditional Crops on World Rural Women's Day



Khagrachhari, October 15, 2024

Rural women from Khagrachhari demonstrated their vital role in food security and seed conservation by participating in a lively agricultural fair at Keshab Mahajan Para to mark World Rural Women's Day 2024. The event, held at 10:00 AM, was jointly organized by Zabarang Kalyan Samity and the International Rural Women's Day Celebration Committee, Khagrachhari District Branch, with technical support from the Tebtebba Foundation.

Focus on Sustainable Agriculture and Seed Conservation



The fair was conducted under the ST-NRM project- “Revival of traditional crops and sustainable technologies for a resilient food system and sustainable natural resources management”- which is funded by IFAD-IPAF and the Tebtebba Foundation. The theme for the day was “Creating Awareness and Taking

Effective Initiatives of the Government to Protect Women in Disaster,” highlighting the intersection of women's rights and climate resilience.



A total of 61 participants attended, including 29 youth and 32 elders, showcasing a multi-generational commitment to sustainable practices. Nine rural women from six nearby villages presented seeds from their personal collections in a spirited competition, underscoring their dedication to preserving Jhum (shifting cultivation) crop diversity.

Angari Tripura from Keshab Mahajan Para secured first place with an impressive display of 45 different Jhum crop seed varieties, emphasizing the wealth of indigenous knowledge held by rural women.

Call for Support and Scientific Methods

The discussion and prize distribution ceremony featured Mathura Bikash Tripura,



Recognition of Women’s Vital Role

Special guests included Binodan Tripura, Program Coordinator of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, who emphasized women as custodians of natural resources; Dalendra Tripura, Committee Advisor and Karbari (village chief), who praised the fair for rediscovering “lost seeds” vital for community health; and Umendra Tripura, Ward Member, who encouraged the adoption of eco-friendly farming and the creation of a strong support network for rural women.



Executive Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, as the chief guest. He stressed the importance of men's support for the development of Jhum

cultivation and the active participation of women. He also called for the adoption of scientific methods to improve traditional cultivation practices, aligning with the ST-NRM project’s goal of creating a resilient and sustainable food system.

“Rural women are the backbone of our agricultural system,” said Mr. Tripura. “Through the seed fair, women have once again demonstrated their vital role in agriculture by showcasing their dedication to preserving and promoting traditional crop varieties.”



Kamiranjan Tripura, Chairman of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and the event's president, emphasized the need for collective effort to

ensure the success of the ST-NRM project, which focuses on agricultural training, resource access, and financial literacy for women. “We must work together to make this project a success,” he stated.



The event concluded with the distribution of certificates and prizes, celebrating the innovative skills of rural women and strengthening their

contributions to seed conservation and sustainable agriculture. Participants like Angori Tripura used the platform to advocate for land rights, reflecting the broader challenges rural women face in accessing resources and achieving economic empowerment.



This World Rural Women's Day celebration highlighted Zabarang Kalyan Samity’s continued efforts to empower women through agricultural cooperatives,

training, and programs like ST-NRM, which focus on building a resilient and self-sufficient community.



Jhumia Communities Unite to Revive Indigenous Crops and Climate Resilience



In a significant, coordinated movement spanning July and August 2024, six jhumia communities—Kumardhan Para, Simana Para, Kalapha Para, Keshab Mohajan Para, Bhangamura, and Kaptala Para, have simultaneously launched a major sustainability initiative. The ST-NRM project aims to revitalize traditional crops and farming techniques across these villages to boost food security, biodiversity, and community resilience against climate change. Each community has formalized its commitment by constituting a Project Implementation Committee (PIC), marking the official start of a collective journey to blend indigenous wisdom with modern sustainability practices.



Focus on Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity

A core principle of the ST-NRM project is the preservation and application of traditional agricultural knowledge. Leaders across the

paras emphasized that the revival of indigenous crops is crucial not only for environmental restoration but for cultural survival. In Simana Para, Karbari Mr. Hemanta Das Tripura stressed, “The revival of indigenous crops is not just for agriculture; it’s about preserving our identity.” Similarly, Mr. Kali Bhushan Tripura of Kalapha Para noted that reviving these native varieties will help restore the natural balance lost to monoculture. Speakers throughout the inception meetings advocated for integrating time-tested ancestral practices, such as the use of organic fertilizers into the project’s training and implementation.



Building Resilience Against Climate Change

The project is a direct response to the increasing threat of erratic weather patterns, including prolonged droughts and rising temperatures. In Keshab Mohajan Para, Karbari Mr. Dalendra Tripura underscored this urgency, highlighting that native crops are “naturally resilient to local climates.” The communities believe that prioritizing these climate-hardy native seeds is the most effective way to secure a stable food system. Farmers also stressed the need for better water management and conservation practices to combat the changing weather. The focus is on agricultural diversification to adapt and ensure long-term food security.



Community Ownership and Leadership

A spirit of unified community ownership has been central to the project's launch. All six communities held well-attended inception meetings, often including a strong presence of women, youth, and elders. For instance, 50 members attended the initial meeting in Kumardhan Para. Ms. Benuka Tripura, Chief Guest at the Kumardhan Para launch, emphasized the critical need for community ownership to ensure the project's success. The subsequent formation of a PIC in each village, with members primarily drawn from local farmers and youth, formally empowers the residents to guide and execute the initiative.

Empowering Women and Engaging Youth

In Kaptala Para, a Jhum farmer Ms. Monita Tripura highlighted that women play a “central role in agriculture,” possessing crucial knowledge of seed selection and crop management. She urged for their active involvement in decision-making and training to boost productivity. Simultaneously, the community of Bhangamura focused on bridging the generational gap. Karbari Mr. Digendra Tripura proposed integrating agricultural education into schools and



forming youth clubs to counter the drift away from farming, which he warned “threatens the sustainability of our traditional farming systems.”

Addressing Health and Economic Benefits

Beyond environmental and cultural goals, the project also seeks to improve community health and generate new income streams. Several speakers linked the decline of traditional foods to a rise in health issues like malnutrition and diabetes, stressing that native crops are inherently nutrient-rich. Initiatives



like community gardens and nutrition education were proposed to promote healthier, traditional diets.

Key Committee Formations Signal Active Start

The decisive formation of leadership structures in each village signals a powerful collective readiness. Each PIC is led by local dignitaries and committed community members like Mr. Kasarang Tripura, President for Kumardhan Para, Mr. Hemanta Das Tripura, President for Simana Para, Mr. Kunja Mohan Tripura, President for Kalapha Para, Mr. Kamiranjana Tripura, President for Keshab Mohajan Para, Mr. Shasi Mohan Tripura, President for Bhangamura, and Mr. Pravangshu Tripura, President for Kaptala Para.

With these committees in place, the ST-NRM project is officially set to move from planning to action, weaving traditional wisdom into a modern strategy for a resilient, sustainable future for these communities.

ST-NRM Project Holds Quarterly Review

Focus on Scaling Traditional Farming, Women's Role, and Resilience

The ST-NRM Project, focused on the revival of traditional crops and sustainable resource management, held its quarterly progress meeting on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at the Zabarang Hall Room in Khagrachari. The session, organized by Zabarang Kalyan Samity and the Tebtebba Foundation, brought together project leadership and volunteers to evaluate progress and address implementation challenges.

Chaired by Program Director Binodan Tripura, the meeting included 10 participants and six dedicated project volunteers who shared critical field insights. Hridoy Tripura from Kumardhan Para, Bhagya Laxmi Tripura from Kaptala Para, Lajen Tripura from Keshab Mahajan Para, Shepali Tripura from Kalafa Para, Natu Roy Tripura from Simana Para and Ranibala Tripura from Bhangamura outlined efforts to integrate traditional knowledge into school curricula through workshops, preparing younger generations for



sustainable agriculture. They also stressed the vital role of women's empowerment through traditional technology, which has strengthened household food security and enhanced community leadership.

Freelance Researcher Preetikana Chakma provided technical guidance, offering actionable recommendations for blending modern sustainable technologies with traditional practices.

Program Director Binodan Tripura acknowledged the significant volunteer contributions but highlighted key challenges, including low community participation and delays in the baseline survey due to instability in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Mr. Tripura stressed the urgency of completing the survey and urged volunteers to intensify efforts to scale successful practices.

The meeting concluded with a clear set of next steps: 1) Increase awareness initiatives to improve community participation. 2) Plan special activities to commemorate Rural Women's Day on October 15. 3) Strengthen the involvement and leadership of women in all project activities. 4) Focus on scaling successful sustainable resource management practices and providing additional training to communities.

ST-NRM Project Volunteers Orient on Baseline Survey to Map Community Needs



The ST-NRM Project (Revival of traditional crops and sustainable technologies) held a Baseline Survey Orientation Meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 10:00 AM in the Zabarang Hall Room. The session equipped volunteers with the necessary tools and knowledge to collect crucial data that will guide the project's interventions in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

The orientation, organized by Zabarang Kalyan Samity with technical assistance from the Tebtebba Foundation, was attended by 11 participants, including a strong contingent of youth and experienced adult and elderly men.

Manas Tripura, Technical Expert and developer of the survey tools, led a detailed discussion on the survey's importance, methodology, and implementation. He explained that the primary goal is to gather essential information on the community's current socioeconomic status, needs, and resources. This data will serve as a foundation for tailoring project activities to be most effective.

The meeting underscored the critical role of accurate data in ensuring the project's success.

Mathura Bikash Tripura, Executive Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, urged the volunteers to focus on technical preparation. He stressed the importance of thoroughly understanding the KoboCollect app and the survey questions to "avoid challenges while collecting data in the field."

Binodan Tripura, Program Coordinator, highlighted the deeper meaning of the data collection process in his closing remarks. He stated that the baseline survey is not just statistics, but "represents the voice of our community." He cautioned volunteers to approach the fieldwork with care, ensuring each question is clearly explained to avoid incorrect answers that could affect data quality.

With the orientation complete, the volunteers from six villages are now prepared to launch the survey, marking a vital preparatory step toward the full-scale implementation of the ST-NRM project.

Jhum Farmers of Six Villages Press Forward on Traditional Crop Revival, Confronting Climate and Crop Security Challenges



From October 14 to October 19, 2024, six tribal communities in Khagrachari and Matiranga, Keshab Mahajan Para, Kalapha Para, Simana Para, Kumardhan Para, Bhangamura, and Kaptala Para- held a crucial series of bi-monthly meetings to review the progress of the ST-NRM Project. The meetings served as vital platforms to celebrate early successes, address significant challenges, and collectively strategize the path toward a resilient food future. Across all villages, community leaders reaffirmed their commitment, recognizing the initiative as a landmark effort in local development and cultural preservation.

Progress and the Battle Against Climate Variability

The reviews revealed notable progress in preparing to reintroduce native crops. Kalapha Para specifically reported significant advances in reviving Marku, Bekang, and native rice varieties, with villagers enthusiastically utilizing traditional knowledge. In Keshab Mahajan Para, President Mr. Kamiranjana Tripura emphasized that revitalizing these crops is restoring the community's identity and increasing resilience against climate challenges.

The meetings also highlighted the persistent threat of climate variability. Farmers across the paras, particularly in Keshab Mahajan Para and Bhangamura, cited erratic rainfall

and depleted water resources as major hurdles. In Bhangamura, participants noted that erratic weather, coupled with the reliance on chemical fertilizers, has led to declining crop yields and increased soil susceptibility to pests and diseases. The community acknowledged the difficulty in balancing time-tested methods with modern agricultural demands in the face of these environmental shifts.



The Critical Need for Youth Engagement and Knowledge Transfer

A central concern across almost every meeting was the increasing disinterest of the younger generation in traditional agriculture. Leaders stressed that this migration away from farming threatens the continuity of invaluable traditional knowledge and practices.

- In Kumardhan Para, speakers called for specific initiatives to engage youth in sustainable farming to ensure the transfer of knowledge.
- In Bhangamura, farmer Mr. Basanta Tripura warned that forgetting these traditional practices risks the loss of valuable biodiversity and agricultural resilience, leaving the community disconnected from its cultural heritage.
- The community in Kaptala Para underscored the necessity of being proactive in organizing women and ensuring that traditional knowledge is

effectively passed down. Mr. Mathura Bikash Tripura, Executive Director of Zabarang, urged villagers to actively share stories of traditional wisdom with the project team to effectively pass this knowledge on.



Crop Security and Socioeconomic Challenges

The communities are grappling with unexpected and long-standing development hurdles. In Simana Para, farmer Ms. Lalita Tripura raised the alarm about a severe and escalating monkey infestation, which is destroying crops, particularly those grown through traditional *Jhum* cultivation. She noted the animals are no longer easily intimidated, posing a serious threat to the harvest.

Additionally, socioeconomic factors loom large:

- Kalapha Para appealed for extended partnership and development support, noting their remote location (2-3 hours on foot from the nearest city) has historically led to them being deprived of essential facilities.
- In Bhangamura, poor infrastructure, especially for transportation to markets, compounds the problem of high production costs and debt from chemical fertilizer reliance.
- Kumardhan Para emphasized the need to secure fair value for their traditional crops

through better marketing and commercialization strategies.

Unwavering Community Commitment and Local Ownership

Despite the acknowledged difficulties, an overwhelming sense of commitment to the project was evident. Attendees in every village, who included a strong presence of youth and women, reaffirmed their resolve.

- Prabhangshu Tripura, President of the Kaptala PIC, urged his community to "treat it as our own" and to continue to support each other and share knowledge.



- In Simana Para, participants recognized the ST-NRM project as a "critical opportunity for sustainable development," noting no other NGO project had been introduced in their village before.
- Project Officer Dayanath Royaza consistently moderated the sessions, facilitating the sharing of expertise and the call for continuous knowledge-sharing, emphasizing that "The more knowledge we share, the more resilient our food system will become."

The key insights from these bi-monthly reviews will now inform the next phase of the ST-NRM project, leading to tailored interventions designed to tackle climate, crop-protection, and capacity-building challenges, thus ensuring the long-term sustainability and well-being of the participating communities.

Linkage Meeting Fosters Collaboration for Resilient Farming in Rural Khagrachhari



Khagrachhari, December 29, 2024

A crucial Linkage Building Meeting with Service Providers was successfully held today at the Deputy Director's room of the Khagrachhari Horticulture Center, aiming to strengthen sustainable agriculture under the ST-NRM project. The project, titled “Revival of traditional crops and sustainable technologies for a resilient food system and sustainable natural resources management,” is being implemented by Zabarang Kalyan Samity with technical support from the Tebteba Foundation.

The event saw a diverse turnout of 30 participants—including youth, adults, and elders from various communities- who engaged directly with key stakeholders. Mr. Dhaneswar Tripura, Member of the Khagrachhari Hill District Council, graced the occasion as Chief Guest, alongside Special Guests Mr. Md. Jahurul Islam, Deputy Director of the Horticulture Center, and Mr. Sujan Chakma, Deputy Assistant Horticulture Officer.

The meeting focused on bridging the gap between farmers and essential services. Mr. Sujan Chakma assured attendees of the Horticulture Center's support, stating, “Accessing government programs can sometimes seem complicated, but we are here to simplify the process.” He highlighted the availability of subsidized seeds and fertilizers and promised training sessions on planting and pest management, noting that ST-NRM participants would be prioritized for future opportunities.

Mr. Md. Jahurul Islam championed the shift towards organic farming, emphasizing its role in environmental sustainability and self-sufficiency. He provided practical, easy-to-implement

recipes for natural organic fertilizers and pesticides using local ingredients like neem, cow dung, and basil, empowering farmers to reduce dependency on market-bought products.

Chief Guest Mr. Dhaneswar Tripura encouraged villagers to adopt innovative farming techniques while preserving cultural heritage, recognizing the challenges posed by climate change. He affirmed his full cooperation, committing to leveraging government schemes to provide high-quality seeds and modern equipment. The meeting, conducted by Mr. Binodan Tripura, Program Director of Zabarang Kalyan Samity, marked a significant step toward a sustainable and prosperous future for the region's agricultural communities.



Volunteers Receive Intensive Training for ST-NRM Baseline Survey



Khagrapur, November 22, 2024

The ST-NRM project successfully conducted its second Baseline Survey Orientation at the Zabarang Hall Room today, a crucial step aimed at bolstering the quality of upcoming data collection efforts. The session, which commenced at 11:00 AM, was specially organized for newly recruited project volunteers after a review found that data from the first village-based survey did not meet the required standards.

The baseline survey is vital for the project, as it establishes the current socio-economic landscape, resource availability, and challenges within the project area, providing a benchmark for all future activities.

A total of seven participants attended, including five male and three female youth volunteers, and one male adult. The orientation was led by a team of experts: Manas Tripura (Technical Expert), Preetikona

Chakma (Freelance Researcher), and Dayanath Royaza (Project Officer).

The day's agenda included a detailed discussion on the project's purpose and the profound importance of high-quality data. Volunteers received intensive retraining covering effective data collection methods, precise guidelines for completing questionnaires, and strategies for establishing strong, respectful communication with rural populations. Interactive workshops were a key highlight, providing participants with practical, hands-on practice in filling out forms and verifying information. The session concluded with a review of the previous survey's shortcomings and specific instructions to ensure meticulous attention to detail in the new data collection process. The ST-NRM project is now better positioned to gather robust data essential for effective planning and execution.



Planting Seeds of Hope

Jhum Farmers are Revolutionizing Agriculture with Natural Compost

In the remote villages of Khagrachari, jhumia (shifting cultivation) families are embarking on a powerful agricultural transformation through the ST-NRM project, supported by the Zabarang Kalyan Samity and the Tebtebba Foundation. The project's core objective is to promote sustainable agricultural practices to help communities adapt to climate change and reduce dependency on expensive chemicals.

The catalyst for this change is the hands-on training provided to twelve *jhumia* families in making Tricho-Compost. This eco-friendly and cost-effective fertilizer, made from local materials like cow dung and agricultural waste, is enriched with *Trichoderma* fungi to boost soil fertility naturally.

“ I never imagined such an effective fertilizer could be made at home. Now I no longer need to buy fertilizer from the market. ”

Ms. Hiranbi Tripura a jhum farmer from Keshab Mahajan Para

The results are immediately empowering. Similarly, Mitra Tripura shared, “Previously, chemical fertilizers from the market damaged my crops. Now I can make natural compost by myself.”

This initiative has quickly transitioned from individual benefit to community empowerment. Families like Ms. Soleka Tripura are establishing visible demonstration plots near their homes, turning their success into a learning center for others. Ms. Rujina Tripura from Kumaradhan Para sees an income opportunity, stating, “If I’m successful, this could be a great way to earn an income.”



As Suren Tripura from Simana Para noted, this method is cost-effective, maintains soil health, and increases productivity. The project is doing more than just creating compost; it is planting the seeds of hope, fostering self-reliance, and paving the way for a sustainable, resilient, and organic farming future for these tribal communities.

Photo Story



Celebration of Rural Women's Day; 15 Aug 2024



Kumardhan para launch; 15 Jul 2024



Simana Para launch; 2 Aug 2024



Kalapha para launch; 2 Aug 2024



Keshab Mahajan para; 3 Aug 2024



Female Karbari



Celebrating Indigenous Culture



Kaptala para launch; 4 Aug 2024



Keshab Mahajan para bi-monthly meeting;
14 October 2024



Kalapha para bi-monthly meeting; 16
October 2024



Keshab 3 December 2024



Kumardhan Para Bi-monthly meeting; 17.10.2024



Kalapha bi-monthly meeting
03 December 2024



Simana para bi-monthly meeting;
16 October 2024



Bhangamura bi monthly
19 October 2024



Linkage meeting

STNRM : Revival of Traditional Crops and Sustainable Technologies for a Resilient Food System and Sustainable Natural Resources Management



Project duration: 1 June 2024 to 30 September 2026

Supported by: Tebtebba Foundation and International Food and Agriculture Development (IFAD)

Goal: Enhanced food security, improved nutrition, and strengthened resilience for adaptation to climate change in the project area.

Purpose: Increased availability of nutritious food and strengthened resilience for adaptation to climate change.

Output-1: Restored the Indigenous crops promoting ancestral knowledge and agro-ecological farming system.

Output-2: Increased access to technical services from the government line departments on agro-forestry farming.

Output-3: Enhanced the capacity of the community leaders on IP rights, gender and climate change issues.

Project Budget: BDT 4,809,152.00

Project Area: Bhangamura para and Keshab Mahajan Para from Matiranga Upazila, and Kaptala pata, Kumardhan para, Simana Para and Kalapha para from Khagrachhari sadar Upazila under Khagrachhari Hill Dsitric.

Project Activities:

1. Provide agricultural technology support to 120 families for Jhum and seasonal farming, including tricho-compost training and establishment of agro-forestry for 42 families.
2. Support 60 marginal farmers to cultivate and boost the production of traditional crops, Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS), and medicinal plants.
3. Conduct community-level training for local leaders, youth, and women on crucial topics, including development rights, women's rights over resources, climate change adaptation, gender equality and mainstreaming, and Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL).
4. Establish liaisons and conduct meetings with the Forest and Agriculture Departments to secure subsidies and social safety net benefits for Jhum cultivation and eco-friendly tree plantation.
5. Promote the preservation of food systems knowledge through Inter-generational Dialogues on indigenous and traditional practices.

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Reports:

Dayanath Royaza, Bhagya Laxmi Tripura
Hridoy Tripura, Lajen Tripura, Ranibala Tripura
Shepali Tripura and Natu Roy Tripura