

# Annual Report 2015



SIL International  
Bangladesh







# Annual Report 2015

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2015 Annual Report



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**Language, Education and Development**



# SIL GOAL

**SIL International Bangladesh  
exists to serve ethnic  
communities of Bangladesh so  
that the communities achieve  
their language, education and  
development goals while  
retaining their cultural and  
linguistic identities.**



## SIL Annual Report 2015

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# Preface

## My Community, My Responsibility



It is great to see communities moving forward with their identity with bright dreams for the future of their society. As a language, culture and development focused organization, SIL is striving to bring significant changes in the lives of the core owners of the ethnic minority communities in Bangladesh.

Last year I visited several communities and talked with the people about the changes they are experiencing in their society. While I was talking with them, I was encouraged by their smiling faces, spirit of self confidence, and willingness to take responsibility in their society. I heard them saying, “We want to start doing something for our next generation, so that they can have a better society in the future”. This is the spirit of ownership and sustainability I see in the minority communities of Bangladesh.

We have contributed significantly in the sphere of multilingual education (MLE) in the last year. We introduced MLE materials to the Hajong community for the first time. We attended many seminars, workshops and discussion meetings arranged by the government, MLE forum, NCTB and other agencies committed to the development of MLE in Bangladesh. We put significant focus on building youth leadership in the communities through Generation Next Groups (GNG). SIL has encouraged youth to work for preserving the language and culture of their societies. We have engaged in different development initiatives to meet the needs of the community people e.g. health, livelihoods, environment and awareness raising programs.

I would like to give thanks to all the friends, well wishers, partners and staff who participated in this wonderful accomplishment through their significant contributions.

Cornelius Tudu

Country Director  
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## Who are we?

Bangladesh is a nation rich in languages and cultures.  
We support ethnolinguistic communities as they  
work towards their own development goals,  
while celebrating their linguistic  
and cultural identities.

SIL in Bangladesh is a research, training and consulting organization that facilitates and supports community-owned language and development initiatives. It is a branch of SIL International, registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau of the Prime Minister's Office of the Government of Bangladesh (Registration 1571, 05/10/2000).

SIL International, established in 1934, is a non-governmental organization that serves language communities worldwide as they build capacity for sustainable language development. It has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and Consultative Status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

### Our Guiding Principles

- Wholistic Care for Creation
- Unity in Diversity
- Serving with Compassion and Integrity
- Stewardship
- Building Vision and Capacity
- Depending on Divine Leadership



### Who are ethnolinguistic communities?

Ethnolinguistic communities are people groups who share a language, culture and identity. In Bangladesh this includes speakers of around 40 different languages.







## What do we do?

We support communities, governmental and non-governmental organizations with a wide range of language, education and development activities including:

1. Awareness and Community Mobilization
2. Research/Survey
3. Language Development-Dictionary Development, Orthography, Materials
4. Education-Multilingual Education, Adult Literacy



5. Community Empowerment-Learning Circles
6. Youth Development
7. Staff Capacity Building
8. Advocacy and Networking



## Awareness Raising and Mobilization

In Bangladesh, SIL is working to raise awareness of development needs and opportunities among ethno-linguistic communities. SIL believes community ownership is the key to sustainability and wants to equip communities so that they can identify and meet their own needs. It has been an encouragement for many people to meet and plan together for their own community development.







**825** People learned about language, education and development.

In 2015, SIL arranged different kinds of awareness raising meetings separately among the Koch, Kol, Koda, Mahle, Hajong, Kurux and Bishnupriya Manipuri communities. They were held on topics such as 'Building community ownership', 'Using local resources', 'Comparing relief and development', 'The Importance of Multilingual Education' and 'Language and Culture preservation'.

One Kurux lady, **Sheuly Toppo**, shared that if people work together and use local resources, their community will develop quickly. **Bimol Kujur**, another Kurux man, shared that SIL helped them to discover the community's resources and has given them a chance to come together in one place.

The UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) of Chapai Sadar Upazila, Ms. Mirza Shakila Dil Hasin, encouraged the Kol community in a speech. She said, *"I am really happy to stay for a while with you all. I have never been here before and wondered that there is no hygienic toilet in this village (Notun Para)! The government has some facilities for you such as sanitation, skill development training, quotas in education, and musical instruments to practice your culture. I am really interested to work with you, but I need your cooperation. There are many opportunities for us to overcome poverty; the government is there for you. We need your desire and hard work towards development and we have to be united."* Participants were encouraged by her speech.

Through awareness raising, SIL mobilizes the communities to reach their developmental goals.

This year SIL International Bangladesh has the opportunity to serve two more ethnolinguistic communities. Relationships begin with initial meetings with leaders of the Usoi Tripura and Thar Koch communities.



## Research

The cultures of some of Bangladesh's smaller ethnolinguistic groups are often little known and under-researched. We want to encourage communities to document their own cultures as well as give them a chance to speak out about their identities, experiences and hopes for the future.

In order to understand the present condition of the communities, the Development Team of SIL International-Bangladesh conducted some surveys using a questionnaire and PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) tools among the Kol, Koda, Koch, Mahle, Hajong and Kurux communities in the last year. Through the surveys, the team identified the local resources, needs, common diseases, and working opportunities and also observed their lifestyle.

**1153** People identified their own resources and needs.

As it was done in a participatory way, these surveys helped to build a relationship between SIL and the people of the community. The data and information helped them to think about their needs and their interest in development. SIL plans to run programs on the basis of their needs and interests.







## Language Development

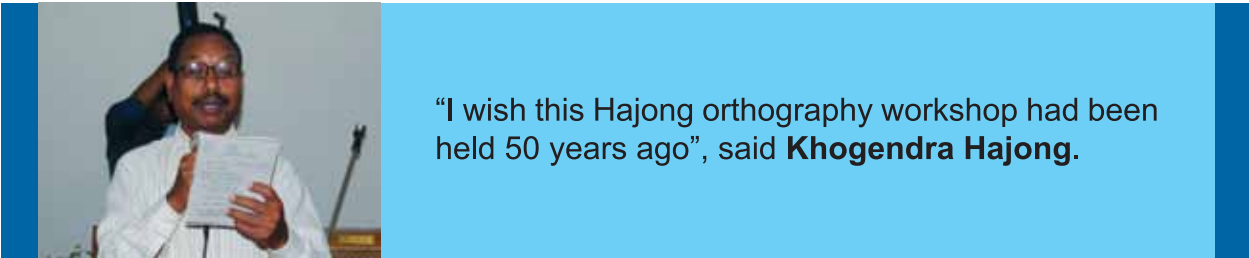
Having their own writing system (orthography) is an important step in the language and culture preservation of an ethnolinguistic community. Teaching and learning materials and a dictionary encourage people to practice their language and culture and are an important resource for schoolchildren, linguists and writers. Dictionaries are also an important method for documenting minority languages. Documentation is a legacy for future generations and also raises awareness of language and culture.

From September to November of 2015, SIL Bangladesh held an orthography development workshop in the Hajong community followed by developing mother teaching and learning materials in Birisiri, Netrokona. Fifteen participants from Sherpur, Kolmakanda and the Birisiri area worked with SIL Bangladesh staff as well as a representative from the Stromme Foundation to choose the Bangla script for writing the Hajong language and to develop spelling rules for Hajong. It was very effective to have participants of different age levels interact with each other. Older people helped the new generation to gather traditional stories, songs, rhymes and dance steps based on the themes identified for use in mother tongue based multilingual (MLE) classroom.





In August 2015, community representatives from the Mro and Khyang communities gathered together to edit their dictionaries which contain thousands of words that have been collected over years. SIL facilitators helped them to update those edits in the database. The Mro and Khyang communities are very keen to publish the dictionaries online very soon so that they can reach thousands of people from their communities. The Usoi Tripura community representatives also attended the event for the first time this year. The SIL team provided technical support so that they can continue their work by themselves in the community.





## Multilingual Education Programs

Ensuring inclusive and quality education, SIL has been supporting mother tongue based Multilingual Education for a number of ethnolinguistic communities of Bangladesh since 2004. The work of SIL Bangladesh is aligned with the aspirations set out in Bangladesh's National Education Policy developed in 2010, which recognizes the right of all children to receive education in their mother tongue. SIL's Language and Education (L&E) team helps communities to design and create culturally appropriate curriculum and resources, raises awareness among parents and community leaders, provides regular training for teachers and school supervisors and makes monitoring visits to schools.







## Community Empowerment

In the year 2015, 7 MLE schools teaching 124 children were functioning in the Bishnupriya Manipuri (BPM) community. The L&E team arranged teachers' training for all 15 teachers including the supervisor. In May, 65 children who had completed their MLE classes in 2014 took part in the graduation ceremony and were awarded certificates.

The Koch community ran 2 schools reaching 56 students. In a parents' program one of the guardians shared that in the early days some parents expressed concern that the MLE class was a front for kidnappers. These fears have been allayed and more parents expressed an interest in sending their children to the school. In addition, participants continued to learn of the benefits of MLE which include a decreased dropout rate, an increased interest

in studies, increased confidence and better grades in the mainstream school following two years of multilingual education.

**249** Children have their first education in the language they know best; their mother tongue.

The Kol community has 2 MLE schools taught by 4 teachers reaching 69 children. The L&E team arranged 2 teachers' training events and 2 follow up teachers' training events with the Kol and Koch communities in 2015.

All through the year MLE students and teachers celebrated mother language day, Independence Day and Victory day followed by sports programs in their respective MLE schools. SMC members, parents, teachers and villagers took part in these programs too.



**Suchitra Sinha**, a teacher from Madhobpur government primary school said, 'I always feel happy when I get the opportunity to spend time with the Children from MLE school. Naturally, children from ethno linguistic communities face more difficulties than Bengali children in adjusting to the environment of the Government primary school. They feel like outsiders because they do not understand the language of the mainstream community completely. But, I have seen that the MLE school graduates are doing well in Govt. primary school with their Bengali peers because they are already confident as the teachers prepared them for external challenges.'

Age doesn't matter for learning! This is true in our Learning Circles. A Learning Circle is a group of 7-12 people who learn together and implement the new information in their lives. It is a one year course using five books named 'Amrao Pari'. The groups are facilitated by volunteers from the community who have been trained by the SIL Development Team. They have been learning about a wide range of topics including sanitation, cleanliness, vegetable gardening, compost, income generating ideas, moral values, financial savings, alcoholism, disability, caring for children, and women's and children's rights.

In 2015, 5 Learning Circles among the Mahle community and 2 Learning Circles in the Koch community were running. SIL has extended 13 Learning Circles into four new communities, Kurux, Hajong, Koda and Kol. Around 78 persons from the Kurux community, around 44 persons from the Hajong community, 69 persons from Mahle, 26 persons from the Koch community, 13 persons from Koda and 26 persons from Kol community met regularly in 20 learning circles.

**255** People applied their learning from Learning Circle.

There have been many stories of change from members of the learning circles.

"I was busy with my household work, suddenly I heard my son's yelling and I ran to the spot. Already he was burned by the fire" said Josna Mardy, a Mahle lady who lives in the village of Rampur of Gaibandha district in Bangladesh. She was a member of the Learning Circle. One day her five year old son Shuvoo Mardy was playing with a football. Suddenly he fell into a clay oven and was burnt severely. Josna learned how to give first aid to a burn victim. She implemented her learning immediately! "I poured cold pure water and spread egg on the burned areas. Neighbors standing nearby were whispering, 'what's going on?'" added Josna. "But I didn't stop my work. Then I went to the doctor and followed his prescription. In this way my son was healed," said Josna very confidently.

In 2015, around 78 persons from the Kurux community, around 44 persons from the Hajong community, 69 persons from Mahle, 26 persons from the Koch community, 13 persons from Koda and 26 persons from Kol community met regularly in 20 learning circles.







## Impact Stories



**Mala Hasdak** - From Learning Circle book I come to know about woman rights. In past I did not take part in family decision making. Now I do. Now I can speak in front of local government officials too when they visit our village. I can share our problem with them. Recently we collect relief card for all villagers from the local government.



"I used make scary faces and shout on my neighbors' young children just out of fun," said **Rayenjeet Koch**. From Learning Circle book I come to know about early childhood care and development. Now, I neither make scary faces nor shout on them. Because now I know that it might hamper child's mental growth and lessen their confidence level. I have already shared this message with my friends too.



**Sumitra Hembrom** - We had a small pond which is enjoyed by others as lease. From Learning circle book I come to know about food and nutrition value of fishes and all about fishery. This year me and my husband started fishery by ourselves. Now we have lots of fishes in the pond. We feed them regularly therefore they are growing very fast.



**Shefaly Soren** - From Learning circle I learnt a lot about savings. In past these things never bother me. But now I come to know that savings is friend in deed. I don't have my own and land and other properties. I have started saving in 2 different cooperatives so that I can leave at least something for my children. These saving can be a great asset in my old age too.



## Youth Development

SIL Bangladesh formed the Generation Next Group in 2014 in the Mahle community with the aim is to empower 15 to 30 years olds with confidence and knowledge so that they can bring about positive change in their villages. They study topics such as leadership, language and culture preservation, alcoholism, gender, conflicts, early marriage, government facilities, income generating ideas, environment, garbage management, cleanliness, and courtesy. The group meets once a month for a year to discuss social issues and decide on actions that they will take to make their dreams a reality. They work to identify the strengths and needs of the community and search for available resources in the government and other places.

**231** Youths committed to bring a positive change for their community.







In 2015, there were three groups in the Mahle community. The young members of Generation Next Groups have started to take initiative. One group in Rampur village continues to practice their songs and dances and works together to get benefits from the local government. They have applied for widow allowances and electricity. Now two widows get allowances and the local administrative officer has given hope to set electricity in this village. Through this program people of three villages have become aware and are united to bring change for their villages. They also arranged a few cultural shows and performed together. These groups have built a good relationship with local government officials in order to receive facilities. They have increased their leadership skills. Members have also taken initiative on income generating activities.

In 2015, SIL worked with the British Council for implementing Active Citizen Youth Leadership Training programs for the youth of ethnic minority communities. The aim of the program is to build leadership, enhance communication skills, program planning and implementation within the less confident youths of minority communities. From September to December 2015, SIL staff provided this training for Kurux, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Uoi Tripura, Marma, Santali, Mahle, Koch and Hajong communities in different parts of Bangladesh. 165 youth directly benefited from the training. 23 social action plans (SAP) were undertaken after the training. Significant SAP's that have been implemented are: establishing a community library with more than 300 books, organizing an education fund with BDT 1,63,936, cleaning villages and garbage management, ensuring basic hand washing in the community, and distributing warm clothes. More than two thousand people have benefited from these SAPs.



## Capacity Building

SIL International Bangladesh believes in building the capacity of their own staff and the staff of other NGOs through:

- **Learning that LASTS Training** covering facilitation skills, teaching adults and designing modules using a design guide.
- **A training of trainers on MLE** covering an overview of MLE, materials development and classroom management.







## Monitoring and Evaluation

Using a number of qualitative and quantitative approaches, SIL Bangladesh continues to monitor its various projects. In addition to tracking these statistics, we use a “Most Significant Change” technique to learn about the impact of our projects. By listening to our community members’ stories of change we are learning more about their priorities.



- **A Child Protection training** regarding how to protect the children we work with and our own children.
- **Active Citizen Youth Leadership Training** for facilitators to equip staff to motivate youth leaders of Bangladesh.
- **Learning Circle volunteers training** not only helped a number of volunteers to be more confident for group facilitation for SIL but also the Christian Discipleship Centre (CDC).
- **Program orientation** for field staffs boosts them up to have clear understanding on SIL values and work so that they can run the field work smoothly.
- **Computer training** helped the field coordinators to improve their communication skills.
- A refreshers training on **SIL Guiding Principles**, reminding us of the values that underpin our work.
- **The staff retreat** which provided an opportunity for us to reflect on our work and deepen our relationships with one another.







Since SIL has quite a long history in MLE, we shared our experience, learning and technical perspectives in many MLE forum meetings in the last year. SIL also participated in several NCIP (the National Coalition for Indigenous Peoples) meetings on indigenous issues. In 2015, SIL provided consultancy on multilingual education materials development for the Stromme Foundation (SF). SIL also worked with British Council to build up capacity and leadership of youth in society through the Active Citizen Project.



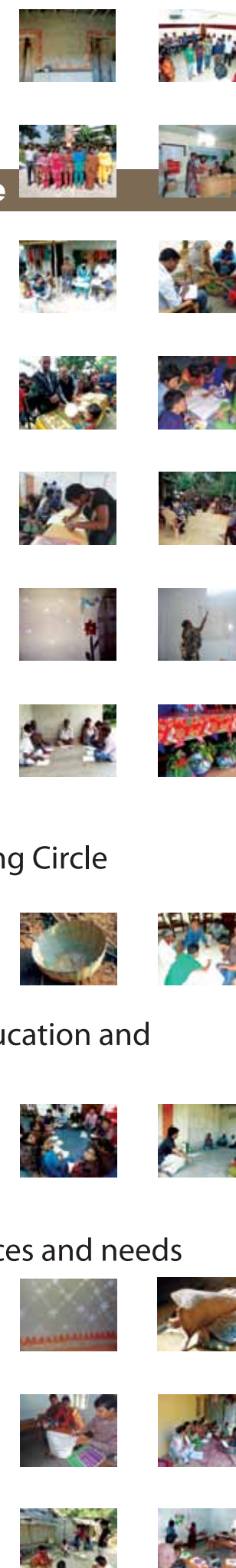
**249** Children enrolled for MLE

**231** Youths trained for Leadership

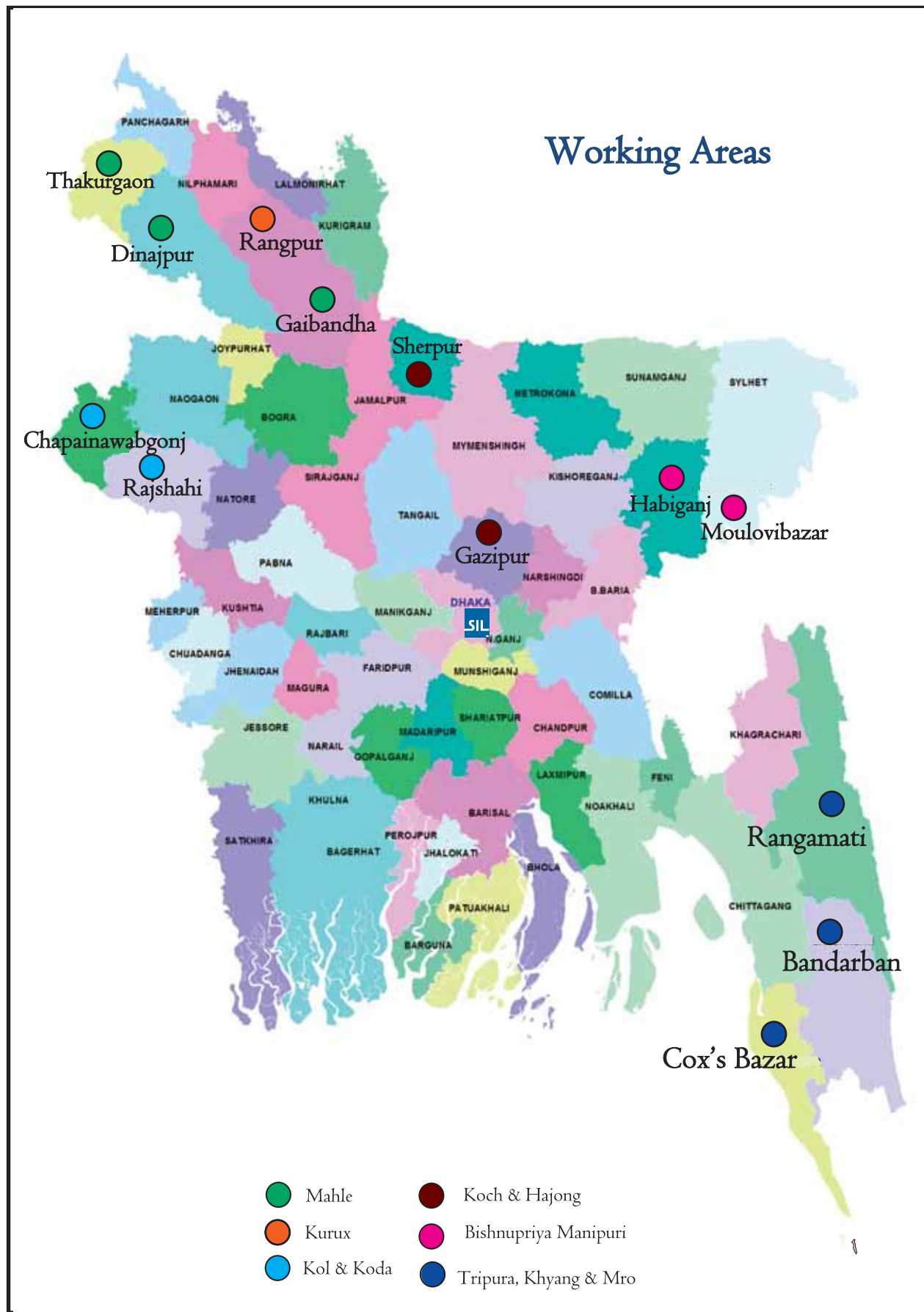
**255** People empowered through Learning Circle

**825** People learned about language, education and development through awareness

**1153** People identified their resources and needs through research







## Financial Statements

SIL INTERNATIONAL - BANGLADESH CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET For the years ending 30th June 2015 & 2014			
ASSETS AND PROPERTY		30/Jun/15	30/Jun/14
Fixed Assets		2,055,761	2,675,587
Advance Deposit and Pre-payments		1,725,000	2,325,000
Advance to Staff for Expenses		59,700	448,939
Cash and Bank Balance		6,879,344	5,080,048
		BDT	
		10,719,805	10,529,574
FUND AND LIABILITIES			
Capital Fund		9,609,215	8,192,687
Liabilities for Outstanding Expenses		1,110,590	2,336,887
		BDT	
		10,719,805	10,529,574

SIL INTERNATIONAL - BANGLADESH CONSOLIDATED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT For the years ending 30th June 2015 & 2014			
INCOME:		30/Jun/15	30/Jun/14
Foreign Donation		15,108,297	16,776,751
Consultancy fee		139,148	
Gain on Sale of Vehicle		722,294	
		BDT	
		15,969,739	16,776,751
EXPENDITURE:			
Pay & Allowances		8,163,945	9,424,324
Supplies and Services		5,341,764	7,575,005
Repairs, Maintenance & Rehabilitation		438,757	471,836
Capital Expenditure		73,625	76,745
Depreciation		535,117	668,899
Excess of Income Over Expenditure		1,416,531	(1,440,058)
		BDT	
		15,969,739	16,776,751



SIL INTERNATIONAL - BANGLADESH  
CONSOLIDATED RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT  
For the years ending 30th June 2015 & 2014

RECEIPTS:	30/Jun/15	30/Jun/14
Opening Balance:		
Cash in Hand	201,822	290,821
Cash at Bank	4,878,227	4,779,720
Foreign Donation	15,108,297	16,776,751
Prepaid Rent Realized	600,000	1,218,400
Consultancy fee	139,148	
Sale of Vehicle	807,000	
Advance to Staff Decreased	389,239	
	BDT 22,123,732	23,065,691
PAYMENTS:		
Pay & Allowances	8,163,945	9,424,324
Supplies and Services	5,341,764	7,575,005
Repairs, Maintenance & Rehabilitation	438,757	471,836
Capital Expenditure	73,625	76,745
Advance to Staff for Expenses Increased		16,367
Liabilities for Outstanding Expense Decreased	1,226,297	421,366
Closing Balance:		
Cash in Hand	240,686	201,822
Cash at Bank	6,638,658	4,878,227
	BDT 22,123,732	23,065,691







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