

A Cleaner Environment for a Happier Life

SIL
Bangladesh
helps
communities
achieve
their
development
goals
while
retaining
their
Ethno
linguistic
identities.

Fulbari, in the Rajshahi district of North West Bangladesh, is a very typical Santali village where you can see traditional painted mud houses. Fulbari is enriched by its inhabitants, the Santali people who belong to one of the largest non-Bengali ethnic groups in the region. Geographically this area is very green and it has mud roads, mud houses, a few ponds and a large number of young people who dream of bringing change to their village.

SIL came into contact with the young people in November 2018 through the Active Citizen Training. This is a four-day training for young people which focuses on capacity building, communication skills, managing small projects, advocacy skills and finally recognising oneself as an individual and changes that can be made when people work as a team. The training ends up with a **Social Action Plan (SAP)** where a group of young people identify some of the burning issues in their village and take initiative to address these.

The young people from Fulbari identified many problems in their village. They would like to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every single person in the village. They identified that the only road to the village is mainly made of mud, with some brick sections. Many parts of the road have been damaged by the rainy season. It is hard for people to use the road with carts, rickshaws or even large numbers of cattle. In the rainy season, school children sometimes fall as they are walking to school, missing the day at school and ruining their school uniform.

Apart from problems with the road, due to the low water table in this area, many people still use pond water for their daily needs. The young people found that the bank of the pond needed mending. The biggest challenge for the villagers is battling black fever, which is caused by insect bites. These insects often breed in the bushes near the village. Many young people say that they have missed their exams and their parents have taken days off work due to black fever. Many poor villagers cannot afford to pay the doctor's fee.



...SPECIAL COMMENTS

These young people are not very familiar with the terminology of the UN 's Sustainable Development Goals ' but as part of this project they directly addressed health and safety and environmental issues. They say that it is just the beginning and a small step towards changing their village.

... SNAPSHOTS ...
WHAT'S PLANNED FOR THIS
MONTH

April 1- 4, 2019 : Annual Retreat 2019

April 9-11, 2019 : Training On MLE for Teachers and field staff.

April, 2019 : Health camp with Reflection & sharing meeting among Koch & Mahle communities.

April, 2019: Community cultural Function in Kol community.

April, 2019 : Child parliament/child forum discussion meeting among Mahle, Kol, Koda and Koch communities.

April, 2019 : Training on poultry – duck rearing, chicken rearing, cow rearing etc with Koch community.

For more information on **topics mentioned in this newsletter**, please go to .

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A Cleaner Environment for a Cont'd

The young people gathered together several times along with the headman. They fixed a date to clean the entire village with the supervision of the village headman. They divided all the work amongst themselves. Some worked on repairing the road; some repaired the pond banks; some cleaned the bushes and other areas of the village. It was like a cleaning campaign which at one point involved the whole village. Parents were pleased to see the young people and even the children working together for the village.

Nowadays, there are a lot of negative complaints about young people being self-centred and unwilling to get involved in social activities. But the young people of Fulbari village have proven that with guidance and motivation, they can change the village. These young people are not very familiar with the terminology of the UN's 'Sustainable Development Goals' but as part of this project they directly addressed health and safety and environmental issues. They say that it is just the beginning and a small step towards changing their village. They are committed to continuing with their Social Action Plan in future too. SIL is happy to be part of this journey with the young people and wishes the team all the best.

Written by: Alpona J. Kujur

