Youth Conferences were organized like a festival with the Kol and Mahali communities by SIL International Bangladesh with the inspirational theme, ‘Be the Change Maker’. There were day-long events with the youths of each community along with a few local leaders from every village. A few important and high-profile government officials were present at the events, which added extra value to the event and made those successful.

This is the beginning of the youth activities with the indigenous communities. SIL Bangladesh has plans hold activities with two more communities and their youths. The youth program aims to enhance active youth participation in civil society among the indigenous population of Bangladesh and empower them to become leading agents for change in their communities. Creating new platforms and opportunities for dialogue will enable young people from different indigenous groups and areas to exchange experiences. These platforms will also cater to a strengthened dialogue with the local leaders and government representatives.

SIL Bangladesh helps communities achieve their development goals while retaining their Ethnolinguistic identities.
Through capacity building, the youths will be strengthened in awareness about rights, leadership, advocacy, and networking skills. They will also have opportunities to implement their own social action plans based on problems they have identified. This project will help to unite the youths in the target communities and empower them to address the discrimination they currently face, as well as strengthen their relationship with the government and civil society.

The most important learning from both sides after these two events was that, from the organization team’s side, ‘if you have a good organized plan and understanding with your team players, you will win’. Another, from the community youths’ side, is that youth can be the Change Maker of the society if they are determined to achieve their goal. We hope that our next two events will open more possibilities for the communities and the youths as well.

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