

Wind of Change

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

Youth are at the heart of our nation and our society. They can stimulate development in the society. They often have great communication skills, enthusiastic leadership and can play a role as mediators between the younger and the older generation in society, helping to transform society.

The GNG (Generation Next Group) movement, in partnership with SIL International Bangladesh, has a vision to develop ethno linguistic communities in Bangladesh and improve their quality of life by mobilizing the younger generation. At present there are six GNG groups running in the Oraon community, in the Rangpur district of northern Bangladesh. Recently a team from SIL International Bangladesh visited some Oraon villages and met with three GNG teams to observe their activities.

“SIL is an inspiration to us,” said a young leader, Polash Toppo from Molong Para village. The awareness program and the GNG group’s activities have helped people to improve their living conditions significantly. Polash compared the past with the present. Previously there were no toilets and the environment was unclean. In 2015 many families used to eat only one meal a day. In terms of leadership, there were not many opportunities for young people to discuss and share their opinions. Now 41 of the 58 families in Molong Para have toilets. People are eating enough food every day and the younger generation have a chance to express their views, contribute to the welfare of society and work together with senior citizens. Polash also said that without SIL’s support they would have struggled to run and follow up on their development activities. They feel that the ideas and awareness which SIL has provided have been very important.

The villagers of Molong Para said that they have learnt many valuable things from each other. This is a result of their hard work and their openness to change. Significant changes in society cannot be achieved by just one person, but by a group. They said that the GNG’s awareness raising activities have helped them to protect their language and culture and develop their health and environment.

The community believe that there have been important changes in their attitudes to education. Oraon children and the younger generation are now more concerned about becoming educated to help with their career development. A few of the GNG members now give free tuition to other students who cannot afford to pay. They encourage children to continue their studies and some older students are attending well known academic institutions in Bangladesh, like the University of Dhaka,



...SPECIAL COMMENTS

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

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July 7 - 10, 2019 : MTBAL Material (KEP)
Development - 1

July 12, 2019 : Bolte chai (Annual Program,
CREM project) with Kurux community

July 14-18, 2019 : Awareness on Unity +
Community ownership, Gender & Good
relationship.

July 16-17, 2019 : Strategic Planning
meeting 2019, Dhaka.

July 21 2019 : Awareness Raising Seminar on
ensuring Health services among Koch com-
munity.

July 22, 2019 : Family sharing and award
program and MLE seminar with Government
& Teachers among Koch community.

July 30 2019 : Advocacy and Networking
Seminars on rights and different services for
Kol community.

Wind of Change. . . . Cont'd

Begum Rokeya University and Notre Dame College.

In the past there were high rates of child marriage, alcohol abuse and domestic violence, but these issues have reduced. Many of the fathers of the GNG members drank traditional rice wine on a regular basis. However, the efforts and awareness raising activities of the GNG group are having an impact. Women in the community used to make the wine, but have contributed to a reduction in drinking by producing less. People have also learnt more about nutrition. It used to be hard for the community to access government services but it is now easier for them to get the same services as other people groups.

Meera Khalko, an 'animator' who helps to facilitate the Paccha Para GNG group, said that people sometimes felt ashamed to speak in their mother tongue outside of their community. After joining the GNG group they realized that if they want to preserve their own language (known as Kurux) and culture, then they need to use their mother tongue more. Young people are now more interested in attending and performing at Oraon cultural events. Senior citizens are trying to keep cultural activities alive so young people are able to learn about their norms, ethics and attitudes and can make a greater contribution to Oraon society.

The winds of change are blowing through these Oraon villages. They are thinking out of the box and coming up with new ideas. The community's own initiatives are bringing about new possibilities.

Written by: DONY GOMES

