



taungya

Taungya E-Bulletin

A Bi-Monthly News Letter of Taungya

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Editorial Message:

We are really happy to publish our first **volume - 8 and Issue -1 of 2023**. Efforts to make the *Bulletin* much informative of works of Taungya is in progress as well. NGO development activities has been reduced in CHT since last few years and there are very limited scope of works for the local NGOs in CHT. Funding opportunities are limited to very few donors and CSOs whereas there are still crying need of different development scope in the remote areas of CHT that have been deprived of any initiatives. Taungya has been being committed to work in the remotest corners and for the really vulnerable communities that need support but lack of funding opportunities has dimmed its scope of work. This volume and first Issue so presents only one project information and a limited programs of volunteerism of Taungya. Anyway it is a matter of sorrow that we could not include any new writings from our organization members in this issue too. However, we will continue the effort to enrich our publication by involving more researchers or writers from our honorable GB members and other NGOs too. So, those who are interested please contact with us as .

Taungya wishes a Prosperous New Year to all its readers, well wishers and followers.

Project News

Annual General Meeting 2023 of NARI held at Bandarban Hill District

Taungya participates in the AGM of NARI (Network for Adolescent Rights Initiative) 2023 held on 26th January 2023 at Parjatan Motel, Meghla, Bandarban. ED, Taungya, PC and LAO of the OLHF Project participate in the AGM along with the EDs, PCs and LAOs of rest of the 9 CSOs of the project from three hill districts. PM of BNPS and other respective staff of BNPS and Simavi Netherlands were also present in the meeting with the CSOs.



Photo: Departing chair, ED of CSO Progressive handover the duties to the new EC members with flower bucket

The network is working for last two years for right based approach of the adolescent girls of CHT which is a planned activity of the OLHF project focusing to fetch all the 10 CSOs of CHT under one umbrella to work for the target aged group of girls and young women. From the development stand points the 10 CSOs under technical support of BNPS and Simavi, Netherlands found committed to work on volunteer basis to address different issues of CHT adolescent girls and carry out the right based works as a social commitment and ownership of the work.

The AGM was arranged in festive mood and departing EC of the previous year (2022) happily handover the duties and responsibilities to the new elected committees with vote of thanks and gratitude. The departing chair of the committee, Ms. Sucharita Chakma, ED of Progressive Rangamati delivers her welcome speech where she focusses the major activities of NARI in 2022 and expressed her gratitude to the members for engage their proactive participation in NARI activities. She also informs the participants that the membership in NARI increased notably from the year 2021 and encourages others to be a member of NARI. Then the PM of BNPS, Mr. Sanjoy Majumder express his valuable opinion on NARI's future activities and endeavors. After that, the main part of the event took place which was the new committee formation of NARI. ED of Progressive Rangamati moderates the session with active participation of the members. The new committee was formed with Ms. Dawnai Prue Naly, ED of AKS Bandarban as the Chairperson, Mr. Chaing Seing Moun, ED of Graus Bandarban as the Secretary, Ms. Sucharita Chakma, ED of Progressive Rangamati as the Vice-Chairperson and Mr. Ramesh Chandra Tanchangya, PC of AKS Bandarban as the Treasurer for 2023.



Photo: New EC members of NARI after the election process at Parjatan Motel, Meghla, Bandarban

Departing EC members hand over their duties in formal manners and by welcoming the new EC members with flower bucket along with the small funds contributed by the members since last two years to use in need of NARI works.

The newly elected chairperson Ms. Dawnai Prue Naly expresses her humble gratitude to the participants and the previous executive committee members for choosing them. She along with the new EC members express bright hope to work for the betterment of NARI in the future on basis of its vision and mission.

Staff Capacity Building Training on "Monitoring & Evaluation Tools and Methods" arranged in Rangamati Hill District

Under the OLHF Project, a long desired staff capacity building training on M&E tools and methods were arranged by project technical partner BNPS & Simavi. The training was arranged from 27 February to 1 March 2023 at Resource Room, Motel George, Rangamati Hill District. Taungya PMEOP participate in the 3 day long training along with other PMEOPs of rest of the 9 CSOs from three hill districts. The training was facilitated by M&E Officer, Richard Collin Deory of BNPS and MEL Officer, Tuhin Sarkar of Simavi, Netherlands.



Photo: Taungya PC, Kuldip Roy and ED, WEAVE on the first of the M&E training

Advocacy training under OLHF Project was held for the Lobby & Advocacy Officers

On the 24th January to 25th January 2023, a two day long staff capacity building training on **Project Advocacy** was held at Parjatan Motel, Meghla, Bandarban Hill District. The training was arranged and facilitated by BNPS and Simavi, Netherlands. PC and Lobby & Advocacy Officer of Taungya participate with all the PCs and LAOs of the rest 9 CSOs from Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban Hill Districts along with the three Master Trainers of BNPS.



Honorable chairman Mr. Kyaw Shwe Hla with the training participants

Mentionable that the Our Lives, Our Health, Our Future in short OLHF Project has inbuilt advocacy strategic work to implement certain objectives to achieve and make functional of the AFHS- adolescent friendly health service corners at union/upazila/district levels GoB health service centers like- Upazila Health Complex/ Union Family & Health Welfare Center/ Family Planning/ Sadar Hospitals. Under the OLHF Project Taungya is working in three upazila (Bagheisori, Borkol and Bileisori upazila) and targets to make functional of 6 corners in Bagheisori, 6 in Borkol and 4 in Bileisori upazila.

The training was inaugurated by Sanjoy Majumder, PM, BNPS and facilitated by Ishaque Faruq, Advocacy Officer, BNPS. The two day long training focused to strengthen basic advocacy knowledge of the recruited officers, share project advocacy strategy and on the last day development of the project advocacy plan. The participants shares their previous work experiences with the government and other stakeholders, CHT context and realistic advocacy challenges. Later in a participatory way, a broad discussion regarding proper communication, rapport building and maintaining linkages with the Govt. and other stakeholders took place during the training. OLHF Project Coordinator of Taungya express opinion in this regard- "I assume the training has enriched technical knowledge of the LAO and the sharing and discussion of the advocacy strategy of the project as well as the plan will contribute to better understanding of the officers though we know the challenges and some constrain need to be addressed in much tactical manner."



A girls club member request for a sewing machine for preparing reusable sanitary pad for their club members in Bandarban

On the final day honorable chairman of BHDC Mr. Kyaw Shwe Hla joined as chief guest in the closing session and Master Trainer, Sumit Banik from BNPS presents a power point presentation on project activities, achievements and current status of the project. During the welcome speech Executive Director of GRAUS requests the honorable chairman for infrastructure and water supply support for establishing MHM-friendly toilets in schools. Singmau Marma a girl from Talukder Para Girls' Club, Bandarban also delivers a speech and also shares her experiences and learning from the club activities. Later she ends her speech and requests for a sewing machine for making reusable MHM materials for their club members besides another request to provide support for Karate training for self-defense for the club members. Mr. Chairman, in his speeches, expresses gratitude to the CSOs that working for the adolescent girls in CHT and says- "It is not easy to work in CHT remote corners and the native girls must be aware of their customs and practices for learning their rights and activities. We all have different customs, traditions and beliefs. So, we will understand the women rights aligning with these as the society is not yet ready for many issues from global context".

The training was inaugurated by Executive Director Ms. Naie U Prue Marma of women led NGO WEAVE, Rangamati district. During her speech, she expresses that "It should be arranged earlier for better understanding and qualitative work of the project but due to various reasons it could not be arranged. Anyway, it is good that finally we could arranged it and I believe it will significantly contribute to organizational and professional skill development of the trainees"



Photo: Participants of the M&E training with the EDs of Taungya and Hill Flower in photo session

On the final day ED, Taungya and ED, Hill Flower join in the closing session and encourages the participants for developing M&E system of their respective organizations.

Sanjoy Majumder, PM, BNPS and Liaison Officer, Sharif Abu Raihan Chowhan of BNPS were present in the training along with MT Rimi Chakma of BNPS, Rangamati Cluster.

CASE STUDY

Girls' Club Awareness Session Started to Positively Contribute to Prevent Early Marriage Among the Indigenous People in Hard to Reach Areas of Borkol

18 years old Minati Chakma (pseudonym) lives with her husband, my father and mother in laws in Mora Thega village. Her husband is a farmer and daily wage labour. She was forcefully married in 2019 when she was only 15 years old. Besides the income of her husband she tries to provide support by helping her mother-in-law to make their traditional cake/pitha and selling them to local market.

Minati is the third child of four children of her parents. Her father is a fisherman and mother is a house wife. Though her father is a poor fisherman but he tries hard to provide support to education of his children. The village of Minati Chakma is located in a remote corner of the upazila and disadvanced in all aspects like- education, primary health service and availability of sanitation, communication etc. There are 60-70 households live in the village and when anyone get sick they go to the village quack though the villagers do not get good result from the treatment. As she belongs to a financially poor family it was always difficult for them to get better treatment from the Upazila Health Complex or live and study there. So, they did not have good idea about women's rights, gender based violence, menstrual health management. Now she understand for this unawareness she was forced to married early and before she was ready for it.

After completing her primary education from the primary school of their neighboring village in 2016 she was admitted to the high school about 8-10 km. distance from their village. She was not bad at her study and her family had good hope on me. So she starts living as pay guest type system in a respected villager adjacent to the school. In 2018, when she was studying in class eight, she became acquainted with a boy from their neighboring village and after sometime it turns into love affairs. They used to meet secretly. He was in class nine at that time. Within a yearlong secret relationship there were no physical relation between them and they only meet for chatting and spend some time together. One day afternoon in 2019 when her annual exam was completed and they both decide to meet to the backside of the school. At that time few youths discover them alone backside of the school and accused them for doing sex and force them to village elders for judgement. After two days of that incident the village elders summon their parents and start village court against them. The elders find them guilty and verdict to married each other or parents of her boyfriend must compensate one lac taka to her parents which was not possible as they were also very poor and they disagree to compensate and demand to let them married. The elders, considering their tender age decide it to be arranged when we will be physically matured. But whether one month passes or not her would be mother-in-law creates pressure on her family for marriage. Her parents become motivated and arrange their marriage without thinking. An elder brother of the village requests both of their parents not to do it and tries to make them understand that it will create many problems if they get married such tender age. But both their parents ignores it. They both were not ready for this marriage. At this time, impact of worldwide COVID-19 also reaches their locality and their study becomes completely closed for it as the school was declared closed for uncertain period.

She had no idea of running a family and her mother-in-law themed to mean on me for it. She becomes pregnant in the year end of their marriage and within three months she faces miscarriage and mental torture of her mother-in-law increases. She could not say nothing as she was scared.

One day in 2023, she came to know about the opening of a girl's club under OLHF project by local NGO Taungya. A didi comes to their village and informs them about it works and she becomes interested and get herself admitted as a member of Thega Mukh Marma Para Girl's Club. During the first few days she was irregular but she becomes interested, attentive and regular when session on MHM, SRHR, girls' rights and early marriage start. But for spending time in the club her mother-in-law themed to mean to me. Carefully she tries to discuss with her about the knowledge she learned on negative impact of early marriage and immature condition of the girls reproductive organs and body but she does not become slight interested rather ignored it consciously. One day the elder brother that tried to stop her early marriage visit their village and she share her story after marriage to him. He becomes sad to hear it. But he tries not to discuss about the matter with her mother-in-law rather one day takes her to a session in the club. That day their club Mentor discusses on information on sexual and reproductive health & rights, gender based violence and especially on negative impact of early marriage. She presents and moderate the sessions with the mother groups nicely as usual. After that day miraculously and silently she starts to change and began to lessen her mental torture on her gradually. Latter she starts making her as beloved one and sometime expresses her regrets for her rough attitude she did to Minati. Consequently her torture totally stops in short time.

At present there is no such problem in their family. Her mother-in-law guides her in their household jobs and she also heartily assist her. On the other hand she shared her knowledge with her husband that she has been learning from their girls' club so they decide to take baby when they both will be physically matured and ready for a new comer in the family. Her husband also agrees with her in this decision. *"Like all other Girls' Club members of the project that had very little knowledge on menstrual health management, sexual and reproductive health and gender base violence, concept of friend selection, women's rights, I can say that the project did not provide us money or other facilities for livelihood development but what the project has provided us is priceless and it was the just thing that we adolescent girls' needed the most"* said Minati Chakma.

Project and Other News

International Women's Day 2023 was observed Bagheisori Upazila

Taungya observed the International Women's Day 2023 at upazila level and district level under the on going OLHF Project funded by EU and technical support provided by BNPS and Simavi, Netherlands. In this regard Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Bagheisori Ms. Rumana Akhter join the day observation and conducts a progress monitoring visit at Poschim Bagheisori Girls' Club and exchange opinion with the father, mother and brother groups of the club and the club girls and Mentor. UP chairman Olive Chakma was also present as the special guest of the event.



Photo: UNO, Ms. Rumana Akhter of Bagheisori upazila conducts a progress monitoring visit to Poschim Bagheisori Girls Club

During the meeting UNO wants to know about club activities and engagement of the gatekeepers. The discussion was fruitful and UNO emphasizes on early marriage and its negative impact on society and on women's life. UP chairman shares the existing challenges of the community girls to solve their sanitation and MHM problem during the discussion with the mothers', fathers' and the brothers' groups.

"It was the second official visit from govt. department in the project of Bagheisori Upazila and UNO expressed satisfaction of the project thematic works and mass level sensitization on SRHR, MHM and GBV of the OLHF Project" said Project Coordinator, Kuldip Roy.



Photo: The Girls' Club members show case two creative projects on discrimination/ violence against women and equality between men and women in education through poster presentation

"The visit encouraged the girls as the UNO discussed all the issues easily with the girls and the parents. She also praised the show casing on two common but realistic issue that women and girls suffers silently in our societies" said Project Officer cum Trainer, Mithila Roy.



Photo: ED, Taungya discusses the implementation strategy of 2023 and quality of field works

Staff Coordination Meeting of OLHF Project

Two staff coordination meeting under OLHF Project were held in January and February 2023. It is a regular activity of the project. The meetings were presided over by PC, Kuldip Roy and participated by the all staff of the project.. The newly recruited Lobby & Advocacy Officer, Rocktim Dewan was welcomed in the team and he also requests for necessary team support for implementing project advocacy works at field level.

In the first meeting of the year last year project progress, challenges and change in activity plan was shared by PMEo of the project. The team than discuss on the learning of last year project activities. Project Coordinator than shares the activities of 2023 with a special focus on advocacy activities.

International Mother Language Day 2023 observed in the remote Siyaldailui Para, Sajek Union, Bagheisori Upazila

Chakma Circle Chief and Chairperson of Taungya observes International Mother Language Day 2023 at a hard to reach village locally known as Shiyaldailui Para in Sajek Union under Bagheisori upazila of Rangamati Hill District. Village karbari, students of Shiyaldailui Para Govt. Primary school and teachers and were present in the observation. In this regard a rally was arranged with the school goers and villagers of Tripura community of the Siyaldailui Para led by honorable Chakma Raja barrister Devasish Roy and the karbari of the village that starts from the Karbari house to the Siyaldailui Govt. Primary School. Raja Devasish Roy was in his regular mauza visit during the day observation and the program was arranged on 21February 2023. Taungya Executive Director and Officers and staff of the Chakma Raj Office also participate in the day observation. Hand-made banner with three languages- English, Chakma and Trpura was used to observe the day that reminds the rights of language of the 11 indigenous communities in CHT.



Photo: Honorable Chakma Circle Chief and Taungya Chairperson, Raja Devasish Roy and Executive Director of Taungya observe International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2023 at the Shiyaldailui Para with the community school goers of the village of Tripura Community



Photo: The rally was led by Raja Devasish Roy and ends at Shiyaldailui Govt. Primary School.



Taungya also commemorates the Language Movement of 1952 by laying a wreath at the District Shahid Minar in Reserve Mukh, Rangamati Hill District along with other NGOs in the district. Admin Officer, Tejodipta Chakma along with other staff of Taungya represent Taungya